

# UCC News

JUNE 2025

A monthly publication of  
United Church of Christ, First Congregational, Norwich, NY

[www.uccnorwichny.org](http://www.uccnorwichny.org)



### CONTACT US

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### CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

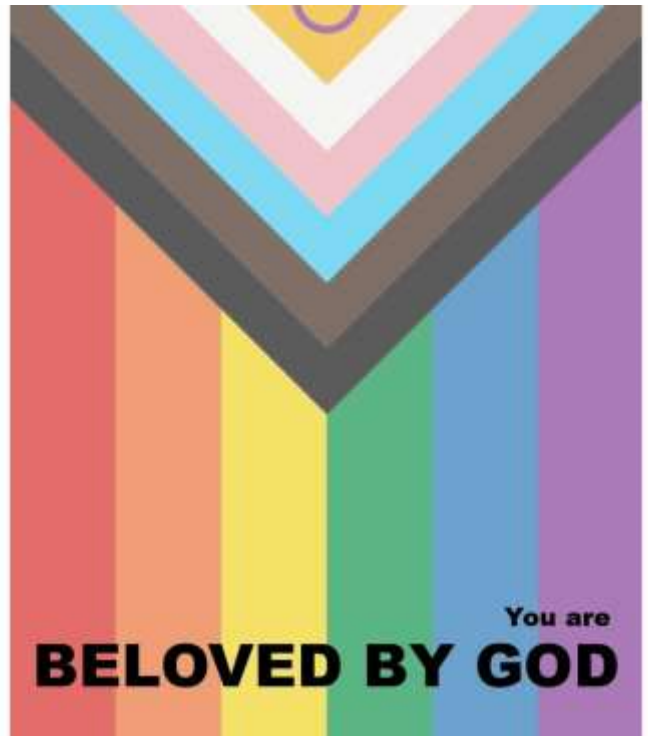
*Monday, Tuesday, Thursday*  
8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. (Closed for lunch 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.)  
*Friday*  
8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

### WORSHIP SERVICES

Sundays, 10:00 a.m. in the Nave  
[Click here for live stream.](#)

Ministers: All the People  
Pastor: Rev. James K. Boodley  
Moderator: Pete Williams  
Director of Music Ministries: Mary Williams  
Organist: David Burch  
Director of Children/Youth Ministries: Ericka Tyler  
Parish Coordinator: Cheri Oakley  
Financial Assistant: Jennifer Mallozzi  
Sexton: Eric Burgher

## Pride Sunday June 22 - 10:00 a.m.



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# From the Pastor

Rev. James K. Boodley

## Hope Springs Eternal: Spring Honeybees



When I got home from the NY Conference annual meeting, I was pleasantly surprised to find a swarm of honeybees had moved into a honeybee hive I had that was currently empty. This wasn't unusual in that similar swarms moved into the same equipment over the past two springs. They always start off as a small group (photo, left), but grow into a large group by late summer (photo, right). Honeybees are quick to move into "prefurnished" hives that still have bee combs in them from the previous colony (photo, center). And while the existing comb is interesting because it looks like what one would find in a wild colony, its placement inside the hive makes it nearly impossible to check the health of the brood, harvest honey, etc.

Honeybees face a variety of challenges – a mite that spreads disease, loss of wildflower habitat in which to find food, and most mysterious to scientists, a phenomenon called "colony collapse disorder." Researchers suspect pesticides sprayed on food crops and lawns – or bred into genetically modified corn – may lead the bees to leave the hive to die or become disoriented so they can't find their way back to their hive. Either way, the result is the same: the hive dwindles down in size until it empties out completely. The swarm I had last year survived all the way to fall, but died out before winter set in. The swarm I had the previous year made it through the fall and winter, however, as spring approached, there were too few bees in it to sustain the population. In that case, they still had a supply of honey in the hive, just not enough bees to make it through a few late winter cold spells.

And yet. And yet somewhere in the woods surrounding my house, there's a bee tree (ie., wild beehive) that makes it through the winter then grows quickly enough in the spring to send out swarms in late May / early June. Scientists at Cornell doing research on wild hives that survive from year to year have found those hives to be fairly small while having adequate honey stores to make it through winter along with a tendency to build up quickly enough to send out numerous small swarms in the spring.

What fascinates me is it isn't the big hives that are more likely to survive, but the smaller hives. That's also often true for smaller congregations. The danger of "not having enough bees for the hive" is ever-present, however, those same congregations are also survivors. In seminary, we called them "cat churches" – they had nine lives and you just couldn't kill them off. With its financial resources, Norwich UCC will always have enough "honey in the hive." And as long as it's able to attract a steady group of new members, it will have enough "worker bees" to keep the place going. As with any congregation, the challenge will be to find what it takes to attract new members while retaining current membership. Fellowship and enjoyable services are a good start. For the long-term success, however, figuring out how to serve God will ensure God has a reason to keep the place open from one season to the next.

In hope and faith,

J.K.

# About the 2025 NY Conference Annual Meeting

The annual UCC NY Conference was held June 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> in Albany this year. This was attended by Pastor J.K., John Kolb and Pete Williams. The annual meeting consisted of many activities, break-out sessions, workshops, meals, as well as three plenary sessions and two worship services. Many of these are activities which can be considered optional. This meeting is a gathering of all nine associations within the NY conference with representatives from all churches. In total, there were somewhere between 150 and 200 people from all parts of the state who came together for this event.

This time allowed many folks to re-connect with fellow UCC members and have conversations where ideas could be shared and discussions about what everyone is experiencing in their different churches. The theme of this year's meeting was *Creating Community and Connection*. Throughout the three Plenary sessions, many folks talked about programs that they were involved with as well as many opportunities for people to get involved in making a connection with folks who may not be in the church pew on Sunday morning. The key-note speaker on Friday was the Rev. Sheri Prestemon, Acting Associate General Minister and Co-executive of Global Ministries. She is based out of Washington and manages 250 partnering organizations in over 90 different countries. She is a fabulous speaker and discussed social loneliness and mending the social fabric of our communities.

One of the key ideas I walked away from this was that we (I) need to get out of our comfort level and attempt to **make a connection with each person we meet. Not just a "good morning", but to have a conversation and be a better listener.** With all the troubling things in our society right now, we cannot do everything all the time and need to focus on our own priorities. Another concept that was talked about and became much clearer to me was the concept of "The Body of Christ". **The analogy of a human body illustrated the unity and interdependence of the components of the UCC body. Even though we are all individual members, we all are members of the "Body of Christ". We must use this unity to stay grounded and strong, working together to build a better world.** This concept emphasizes the importance of unity, diversity, and individual contributions within the Christian community.

The session about the state of the Conference was enlightening as it is clear that everyone seems to be struggling with some of the same issues. Decreasing membership, limited resources, and the impact of social changes. Sometimes it may feel like we sit alone with some of our own issues but in reality, we are all in the same boat. But have no fear. The UCC Conference is strong, has great leadership, dedicated staff, and energy to keep marching forward. If we each work together in unity with a common mission, we can move mountains.

Finally, I would strongly encourage anyone to consider attending this annual meeting in the future to hear all that is happening across the conference and the difference that is happening in peoples lives along with the challenges we face and the progress being made against these challenges. This is a spiritually uplifting event and recharges the spirit to go out and make a difference.

## AARP Tax Season Summary



The AARP Tax Preparation Volunteers once again expressed their gratitude for being able to use our building for their free tax preparation service, available regardless of age and income level. This year, they e-filed 506 tax returns -- 39 more than last year. And they had fewer volunteers this year!

Some interesting facts about who uses their service:

- 433 clients were age 65 and up.
- 115 clients were age 80 and over
- 4 clients were age 25 or less.
- In the largest group of 65+ participants, results of the tax preparation ranged from owing \$35,373 to a refund of \$11,324, with an average refund of \$410.

The AARP volunteers hope to be able to hold another successful tax preparation season in our Founders Room next January through April.

# MEET OUR New Members

## Reception of New Members, June 1, 2025



Pastor J.K. Boodley, Joe Phelps, Naomi Mahaffey, Heavenly Mahaffey and Deb Phelps, Vice Moderator



Joe Phelps, Naomi Mahaffey, Heavenly Mahaffey

### Joe Phelps

I was born in Norwich and raised by a Catholic family. I was an altar boy for several years in St. Paul's Church. I attended St. Paul's School from Kindergarten thru 9th grade. I worked at the family business for over ten years. I attended Norwich High School where I met my wife, Deb Phelps (our Vice Moderator) of 41 years. We have raised two amazing daughters and have lived in Norwich all our lives. I have been involved in the American Heart Association in my earlier years due to the fact that I have survived five open heart surgeries. I became an Emergency Medical Technician back in August of 2010 and still enjoy doing this job. I am honored to be joining the United Church of Christ as a member. Thank you.

### Naomi and Heavenly Mahaffey

Let us introduce ourselves. We are the Mahaffey family. Naomi is a retired Occupational Therapist, who spent her career working mainly with children age birth - 3. Now in her retirement, she enjoys being a mixed media artist. Many of her works are based on her spiritual journey. Here at UCC she is on the Personnel Committee, the Worship Team and part of the Zoom prayer group. She has taken over more responsibility for decorations in the Nave and recruiting people to sign up for coffee hour, liturgist and usher. So be kind if she begs you to help her out!

Heavenly is finishing the 9<sup>th</sup> grade at Norwich High School. She plays the clarinet and guitar and has had the honor of playing both instruments at church. Heavenly also plays in the UCC Bell Choir and enjoys being a member of *Free2BMe* youth group. Heavenly loves basketball and horses. She just finished playing her season of Unified Basketball. Every Saturday she volunteers at a local stable for rescue horses named Purple Haze. Her job is to bring the horses into the barn and groom them. In the Spring it is a mighty muddy job! She is an advocate for Epilepsy and Autism awareness among her peers and frequently speaks out for LBGTO+ acceptance.

Glenn (not pictured) is currently serving as an Episcopal Priest in Binghamton. He has been in conversation with the Susquehanna Conference of the UCC since March of 2024 in hopes of being able to serve the UCC church in the future. Glenn loves reading, music, art and history and loves to dance. He was raised in Montgomery, Alabama during the Civil Rights Movement. Hopefully he will be joining us in becoming a UCC member soon.

We all feel strongly about inclusion of all people and respecting the dignity of every human being. We are happy to become a part of the UCC congregation.

# Livestream

## Jen Mallozzi, Director

Many people don't know how our livestream started. The church was originally doing Sunday videos during COVID-19. There were meetings held about what we should do once people were able to come back to church, which also raised the question of "what do we do for those people who either couldn't come back or those who were afraid to be around anyone?" This was when the idea of livestreaming the worship service came into the forefront. A Livestream Committee was formed and we began the talks.

Originally we had two person set up. It was myself on a gaming computer running the software OBS, running the laptop connected to the TV in the church and Chris McSweeney running the simple point and shoot cameras and sound. We both have experience. I have my Masters in Technology and Chris spent a majority of his life in theatre (sound, lights, etc). **We did bring on a Livestream intern then, Liam Hunter, after a few times of realizing we couldn't run the livestream effectively if one of us got sick.**

As you can tell from the picture of the old system, we needed a new home, with us using the entire choir loft nobody but us and the organist could use it. I was also having issues keeping OBS software from disconnecting from the internet. The committee started to talk about and get quotes on a new system and construction of our now Livestream booth.



Old System



New System



I do want to acknowledge Chris McSweeney because we had the entire new system put in and we all had training on one piece of equipment. I was on the graphics computer learning the new program Pro-Presenter, Chris was on sound and Liam on cameras. We had only done one Sunday on the new equipment and software before my battle with cancer. **Chris stepped up and tried to do everything on his own, but couldn't so he brought Jess Strough in as a livestream sub.** He had to learn everything that I learned quickly on top of his job. He was the Interim Livestream Director for the year and couple of months that I was out. **It is not easy stepping into a roll you weren't ready for. So, Chris, you are greatly appreciated for all the hard work you've done and training people while I was out! I am grateful to have the opportunity to work alongside you.**

Now, we have a staff of 5. We take pride in offering a Livestream that was deemed **"One of the best livestreams seen out there"** by Rev. Ryan Henderson. It takes a lot of work to be where we are. Lots of behind the scene activities happen. The cohesiveness amongst our staff is something to also take pride in, because we are a family bringing visuals, sounds (including hearing assist), and words to the congregation and online.



Chris McSweeney, AV Tech , Jen Mallozzi, Livestream Director



Livestream Techs: Jess Strough, Liam Hunter, Breanna Rogers

# Music Ministries

## Mary Williams, Chair



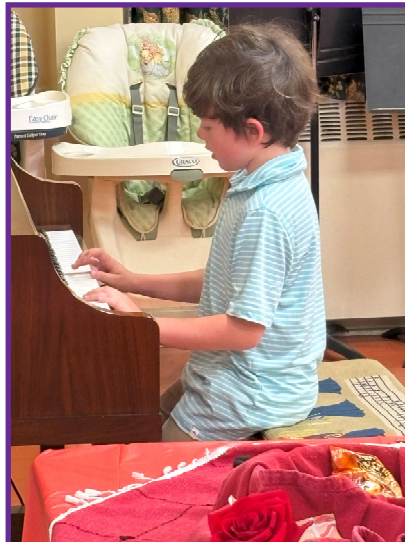
Piano Students: Teddy Williams, Neil Conant, Kyle Conant, Jay Conant



Neil Conant



Jay Conant



Teddy Williams



Kyle Conant

On Pentecost Sunday, June 8, our piano lesson scholarship students played for us at coffee hour. Thank you Jay, Neil, Kyle Conant and Teddy Williams! (Watch for more photos from Pentecost Sunday in the July/August Newsletter)

**Special music plans for June 22:** The Bell Choir will be playing *When Love Is Found* and *Festive Day*. The choir will be sharing an anthem by our friends, Joe Connolly and Tom Rasely, called *Including Me, Including You*. One of our music scholarship students (and new member!) Heavenly Mahaffey will join the choir on the guitar.

Special music performers are needed for July and August. If you would be interested in performing, please contact Mary Williams.





# JUNE

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 10:00am Worship/ Communion New Members Sunday School 11:00am Coffee Hour 12:30pm Youth Group 12:30pm Service at Chenango Valley Home 1:30pm Chenango Change, Founders Rm.	2 10:00am Knitting Group, kitchen 2:00pm Tai Chi, Founders Rm.	3 1:00pm Piecemakers, Kitchen	4 10:00am Prayer Circle, Zoom	5	6	7
8 <i>Pentecost</i> 10:00am Worship/ Strengthen the Church Sunday School 11:00am Coffee Hour 12:30pm Youth Group 1:30pm Chenango Change, Founders Rm.	9 2:00pm Tai Chi, Founders Rm. 6:30pm Music Committee, Chapel, Zoom	10 1:00pm Piecemakers, Kitchen 5:00pm Pride Alliance Meeting, Founders Rm. 7:00pm Executive Council, Chapel, Zoom	11 10:00am Prayer Circle, Zoom 7:00pm Choir, Nave	12 1:00pm Piecemakers Monthly Meeting, Founders Rm.	13	14 <i>Flag Day</i>
15 <i>Trinity Sunday</i> <i>Fathers' Day</i> 9:00am Nursery 10:00am Worship Sunday School 11:00am Coffee Hour 1:30pm Chenango Change, Founders Rm.	16 10:00am Knitting Group, kitchen 1:00pm Worship Team, Chapel 2:00pm Tai Chi, Founders Rm. 6:30pm (tent.) Norwich Theater Co., Founders Rm.	17 1:00pm Piecemakers, Kitchen 6:30pm (tent.) Norwich Theater Co., Founders Rm.	18 10:00am Prayer Circle, Zoom 4:00pm Laundry Love at Byrne Dairy 6:00pm Democratic Committee, Founders Rm. 7:00pm Choir, Nave	19 <i>Juneteenth</i> <b>Church Office Closed</b> 6:00pm Helping Hands Give-away at YMCA 6:30pm (tent.) Norwich Theater Co., Founders Rm.	20	21 9:30am (tent.) Norwich Theater Co., Founders Rm.
22 9:00am Nursery 10:00am Worship - Pride Sunday 11:00am Annual Meeting 11:15am Coffee Hour 1:30pm Chenango Change, Founders Rm. 4:30pm Free Take Out Dinner at Broad St. UMC. See p. 7/	23 2:00pm Tai Chi, Founders Rm. 5:00pm Town & Country Garden Club, Founders Rm.	24 1:00pm Piecemakers, Kitchen 6:30pm (tent.) Norwich Theater Co., Founders Rm.	25 10:00am Prayer Circle, Zoom 11:00am Free lunch at Emmanuel Episcopal Church, 37 W. Main St., Norwich. 7:00pm Choir, Nave	26 4:30pm Family Enrichment Network Preschool Graduation, Founders Rm.	27	28 9:00am Diaper Giveaway, First Baptist Church 9:30am (tent.) Norwich Theater Co., Founders Rm. 11:00am Family Pride Picnic at Rogers Center. See p. 9.
29 9:00am Nursery 10:00am Worship - 11:00am Coffee Hour 1:30pm Chenango Change, Founders Rm	30 10:00am Knitting Group, kitchen 1:00pm Worship Team, Chapel 2:00pm Tai Chi, Founders Rm. 6:30pm (tent.) Norwich Theater Co., Founders Rm.					

\*\*\*SAVE THE DATE\*\*\*

**150th Anniversary Celebration**  
of the  
**Emmanuel Episcopal Church Edifice**  
37 West Main Street  
Norwich, NY

Saturday - September 6, 2025

10am-2pm

Open House

Numerous displays in the  
church and parish house

Free hot dog lunch

Sunday, September 7, 2025

9:30am

Worship Service

with

Bishop Dede Duncan Probe

Reception to follow



**Remembering Robert O'Keefe, DVM**  
(Dr. Bob)

with family, friends, food, music, and story

Please join us in remembering and celebrating the life of **Dr. Bob O'Keefe** — beloved veterinarian, storyteller, patron of the arts, friend, and family member. Martha and their sons and grandchildren will be there.

Music and Memory Sharing

Saturday, July 19 · 1:00–3:00 PM

6 on the Square, Oxford NY,

Music by **Jim O'Keefe and friends**

Stories and shared memories with **family and friends**

All are warmly invited.

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Additional Opportunities to Remember Dr. Bob:

6 on the Square

Saturday, July 19, Doors open at 9:00 AM

Coffee, conversation, and a welcoming space to gather

Light Lunch Served from 12:00–1:00 PM

Before the main event, join us for a simple lunch at 6 on the Square

Farmers Market

Saturday, July 19 · 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Lafayette Park, Oxford NY

A favorite Saturday tradition for Dr. Bob

Sunday in the Park

Sunday, July 20 · 2:00 PM · Lafayette Park, Oxford NY

Free outdoor concert featuring **Simmerin Stew**

(newgrass style) With a tribute opening on the

**bagpipe** by Gil Mason Sponsored by 6 on the Square

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RSVP

Let us know you're coming by signing up here: <http://bit.ly/3SSfGXb>

Or email Tom at <[okeefe@riversandcreeks.com](mailto:okeefe@riversandcreeks.com)> with your RSVP or any questions.

## Volunteer Registry



The Chenango County Area Agency on Aging is putting together a resource list of all those who volunteer in the county. Whether you are helping a friend or relative or caring for someone with challenges that come with age, illness, or handicap,

we'd like to hear from you.

If you want to volunteer, we've got many places for your help! You can fill out the form online at <https://www.chenangocountyny.gov/500/Volunteer>.

The Senior Center in Norwich is held at the American Legion, Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. -2:00 p.m. Call the Agency on Aging at (607) 337-1770 for more locations or other information.



# You're Invited



## Family Pride Picnic - 6/28/25

Hosted by Chenango County Pride Alliance at Rogers Center  
2721 State Hwy 80, Sherburne, NY.

11 AM to 3 PM

### Rainbow Tracks: A Queer Critter Nature Walk - 12 PM

Encounter animals that bond in colorful partnerships on this guided hike.



## SUNDAY, JUNE 22<sup>ND</sup>



COMMUNITY DINNER

**MENU:** *pasta served with meatballs, sauce, a roll, and cookies.*

**LOCATION:** Broad St. Methodist Church

74 North Broad St. Next to YMCA

**4:30 – 6:00 TAKE OUT ONLY**



#### LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE CONTENTS

- Position Posting
- Who Is God Calling Us To Become?
- Who Are We Now?
- Who Is Our Neighbor?
- References
- Consent and Validation

*"God is able to provide you with every blessing, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work."  
(2 Corinthians 9:8)*

## Profile Update

The 2025 Profile document has been completed and is currently being reviewed and finalized. Many thanks to those who have contributed to the process: Pat Burke, Miranda Hunter, Michael Moren, Judy Smith, Jessica Strough, Ed Tucker, Mary Williams. Thank you also to Pastor J.K. Boodley for providing guidance throughout the process

## Letters - Emails - Notes

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Dear United Church of Christ Community,

I am writing to express my heartfelt gratitude for your generous donation that helped replace my roof. Your support has been invaluable in saving my house and ensuring that my family feels safe and secure.

The impact of your kindness cannot be overstated. Knowing that we have a sturdy roof over our heads has greatly relieved the stress and worry that came before this. It has allowed us to focus on what truly matters – our family and our well-being.

Thank you for your compassion and for being a beacon of hope in our community. Your generosity has made a significant difference in our lives, and I am truly grateful to be a part of a caring and supportive congregation.

With warmest regards and appreciation,

Jessice Rocker

(recipient of a new roof from The Impact Project, an organization that we support through our Missions Committee)

Dear UCC,

Thank you for your recent donation. National Child Safety Council takes pride in working with dedicated law enforcement departments such as yours who are committed to teaching your children and community how to prevent accidents and needless tragedies through child safety educational programs. Your generosity will allow your local law enforcement to distribute these materials to a larger number of children and individuals in your area. On behalf of your local law enforcement department, parents and their children, we thank you for recognizing the need for this type of life-saving prevention program. Your donation may directly save the life of a child.

The National Child Safety Council

Dear UCC,

On behalf of the volunteers and clients that are part of Our Daily Bread Food Pantry, we want to thank you for the generous donation that you made recently. We certainly appreciate your continued support for Our Daily Bread. And our clients continue to be grateful for the food and milk we are able to give them.

Barbara and Gary Tompkins, Co-Coordinator  
Our Daily Bread Food Pantry

# Prayer Concerns

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Let us keep in our prayers the following concerns:

- families, families that may be going through particularly difficult times, families seeking God's guidance;
- those who are moving because of their work, those looking for work, and those looking for meaning in their work.
- those who are ill, who are recovering from illness or surgery, or who anticipate going to the hospital.
- those who grieve over the death of someone they love.
- our church, that it might be faithful to its calling, our pastor, all staff members and committees.
- peace in the world.
- gay, lesbian and bisexual and transgendered persons, and all those who feel isolated and alone.
- the people of Ukraine, Russia, Israel, Gaza, Haiti

**Prayers and Sympathy** to the family and friends of **Betty Krech**, who passed away on Friday, May 16. Betty was active in the NY Conference and the UCCNY Women for many years.





# JUNE

## Birthdays & Anniversaries

1 Jane Prime  
5 Jenna Bonney  
7 Elinor Beebe  
13 Jessica Posner  
18 Bill Aitken  
26 Brooke Bonney  
27 June Granz  
28 Jack Brereton

06/10/2017 Richie and Jenna Bonney  
06/12/1993 Jeff and Janet Johnson

Norwich  
Community



# JOIN US!!!! JESUS IS THE GREAT "I AM"

**WHEN:** Sunday, July 20 - Wednesday, July 23

**WHERE:** Christ Lutheran Church, 94 N. Broad St.

**TIME:** 5:30 - 7:30 PM

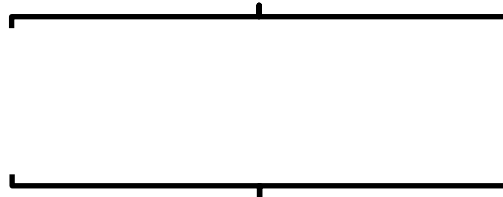
*Dinner provided each night. Family BBQ Wednesday!*

**FOOD - CRAFTS - GAMES - MUSIC FUN**

Registration forms are available at Christ Lutheran, Broad St. UMC, First Baptist and UCC Norwich or at Registration on July 20.

**Volunteers Needed!** Contact the church office for information.

This year's theme is centered on the powerful "I Am" statements of Jesus. Music, storytelling, object lessons, creative (and messy!) crafts, and energetic games are designed to help children encounter the love of Jesus in fun and meaningful ways. We'll be drafting the daily schedule at our next planning meeting. Stay tuned for more details—and **please pray for this ministry as we prepare to welcome our children and community in Christ's name.** There will be opportunities to serve as volunteers, and all volunteers are required to have taken the Safe Sanctuary training. More information will be forthcoming about donation opportunities. If you're interested in attending meetings or volunteering, please contact Cheri in the church office. Volunteers are required to take a "Safe Sanctuary" training, so the sooner we know, the better.



**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

11 West Main Street  
Norwich, NY 13815-1612

