Pastor Marraine’s Musing........

As we enter into the season of Epiphany, I am aware of the transformation the season can offer. Below is a prayer that I used to begin an Administrative Support Team meeting in November.

May our prayers strengthen our mission and ministry of the First Congregational United Church of Christ in Corning

“Prayer for a Community in Transition” by Judith Dunlap.

Loving God, Thank you for the gift of family and community, for the life and love we share.

We ask you to make us aware of your presence during this time of transition.

Help us to know that we are not alone in life’s comings and goings.

Help us to accept change as an opportunity to grow in our trust and understanding of each other and you.

Help us to refocus on who we are and what we are about.

Remind us that change can bring new energy, new life, and a re-commitment to all we hold sacred.

Grant us the security of knowing we rest in faithfulness of your care.

May this period of transition be a time of transformation, allowing us to become all we are to be.

Amen.
“The Caller” is published by the First Congregational United Church of Christ
171 West Pulteney Street
Corning, NY  14830

No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here!!

Office hours:
Tuesday– Friday: 9:00 a.m. - noon
Phone: (607)962-7423
E-mail: office@corningucc.org
Web: www.corningucc.org
Facebook.com/FCUCCC
Pastor: Rev. Marraine C. Kettell
Secretary: Brenda Passmore

BE THE CHURCH
Protect the environment. Care for the poor.
Forgive often. Reject racism.
Fight for the powerless.
Share earthly and spiritual resources.
Embrace diversity. Love God. Enjoy this life.

Dates to Remember:

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<th>Event</th>
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<td>Preliminary Budget</td>
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<td>Annual Meeting</td>
<td>January 28</td>
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<td>Jazz Sunday</td>
<td>February 11</td>
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This poem written by Howard Thurman was taken from Associate Conference Minister Rev. Freeman Palmer’s thoughts in the NYUCC Conference Happenings newsletter.

The Work of Christmas
When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and the princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:
To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among brothers,
To make music in the heart.

If you’d like to stay informed about happenings around the conference, you can subscribe to the electronic NYUCC newsletter at communications@uccny.org

The deadline for submitting articles for “The Caller” is the 25th of each month.

Office Hours:
Church Office: Brenda is in the office Tues.-Fri. 9am-12pm.
Tuesday-Thursday: Mornings in the office, appointments appreciated.
Friday and Saturday: Days off unless there is a church event.
Emergency Number: (607)438-2634

May the new year bring happiness, love, and good cheer to you and your family.
Women’s Fellowship
Please bring your donations of hats, scarves, mittens, & gloves to church for the Women’s Fellowship collection, which will be donated to the Salvation Army and local elementary schools.

Updated Church Directory!
If you’d like a directory, they’re on a table in the Fellowship Hall. If you don’t find one with your name on it, please take one of the others. Just let us know you took one by signing your name on the clipboard and make any corrections to the copy on the table! Corrections?!?!! Oh yes- please make these changes to your directories:
Bob Garrett’s e-mail: ragarrett34@gmail.com
Jan Kostolansky’s e-mail: jjk35@empireaccess.net
Noel Sylvester’s e-mail: noelasylvester@gmail.com
Nicolette’s phone #: 917/991-0575

Please let the office know if you are aware of any other changes or corrections! Thanks.

*Remember that an updated phone book can be found on the church website under the member resources tab. This page is password protected, so please contact the office for the password.

Community Office Hours
Pastor Marraine will be at Soulful Cup
Tuesday, Jan. 16th, 9-11am
Wednesday, Jan. 17th, 3-5pm
Come by for a warm drink and a visit. Bring a friend or colleague to meet her!

Women’s Fellowship
Happy New Year everyone!!
Our January Women’s Fellowship meeting will be held -
Wednesday January 10, 2018 at 11:30 am
Central Restaurant
104 Village Square in Painted Post.

We will have a short business meeting before lunch. If you are interested in attending please let Jan Kostolansky or Beth Briggs know.

Corning Area Aging in Place
Thursday, January 18th at 10 a.m.
Nancy M. Reigelsperger, Financial Educator,
Cooperative Ext., Steuben County

Are you feeling like you are drowning in clutter or overwhelmed by the sheer volume of “stuff?” Discover strategies to clear the clutter and simplify your life and finances.
God Squad

Here are God Squad dates to mark in your calendars starting in January!

**January 7 - 5:30-7:30**
We will host Beanie McGrew at the church. She will talk with us about the State Youth Event in March.

**January 21, 5-7pm**
Fundraising Meal for the State Youth Event. Youth arrive at the church at 4 to prepare meal.

**February 4, 5:30-7:30pm**
S’mores and Games here at the church.

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Annual Finance Meeting and Budget Workshops Scheduled

The first of several opportunities for the congregation to consider the church’s finances will be Sunday, January 7, immediately following the worship service. At this meeting, the finance subgroup of the Administrative Support Team will present its recommendation for the annual budget and seek feedback from the congregation.

The entire Administrative Support Team will meet on January 9 to consider the congregation’s inputs and prepare a final budget proposal. This will be presented to the congregation after worship on Sunday, January 14, and voted on at the annual congregational finance meeting on Sunday, January 28.

In formulating a budget proposal, the Administrative Support Team has grappled with the joint issues of declining church membership and pledged income. Consequently, one of the messages of this year’s stewardship campaign was a request to the congregation to increase its financial commitment in order to maintain our current ministries. In response, the membership has been very generous, with most members increasing their giving to the church and several families becoming pledgers for the first time.

Even with this renewed commitment, the overall revenue from pledges has declined due to the loss of several long-time members who had previously made major financial commitments to the church. This has happened at a time when our reserves are at an all-time low. As a result, the budget recommended by the AST will include reductions that impact the ministries of the church.

Please mark these dates on your calendar. We need everyone’s input in this critical budget decision, and we need the support of the congregation to respond to the financial need of the church.

**Sunday, January 7** - Preliminary Budget Presentation and Workshop after worship

**Sunday, January 14** - Presentation of Proposed Budget after worship

**Sunday, January 28** - Annual Meeting of the Congregation after worship

Some other dates:

**February 13** – Shrove Tuesday Pancake dinner – location TBD

**March 2-4** - The State Youth Event. More information about signing up at [uccny.org](http://uccny.org) will follow. We will know cost per family after the fundraising dinner.
Many thanks to all of you that pledged over the past four years for our recent capital campaign and for those who made contributions as you were able. In the past four years your generous support has enabled us to replace the flat portion of our roof with a white EPDM rolled roof that deflects heat making Fellowship Hall cooler in the summer and so far eliminated those annoying leaks; replaced the original windows with energy efficient windows in Fellowship Hall, classrooms and the office wing; laid vinyl plank flooring throughout ¾ of the church; replaced 71 pew cushions; replaced cabinets, counters, dishwasher and garbage disposal, as well as installed new plumbing and electrical work in the kitchen giving it a much more modern look; replaced sidewalks from the parking lot to the back door as well as most of the sidewalk at the perimeter of our property; replaced the back door with an automatic door as well as expanded it to accommodate large items; replaced and sealed the parking lot; removed several room dividers that were over 50 years old and had become unsightly; replaced a folding door in the hallway with a wooden folding door. The cost of these projects was paid for as we received funds for a total of about $217,000.

However - we are not finished completing all the projects that we initially said we wanted to complete. The final projects are outside ones. Improvements to our front and back landscapes are still in the works. Before we adopted our new governance structure, these projects were discussed and approved by the Trustees as funds became available. While I have been shepherding these projects along for the past four years along with support from Jim Nelson and the Trustees, the remainder of the projects will be approved by AST before we embark on them. If you would like to be involved and have some ideas you would like us to consider, especially if you were part of the landscape committee some years ago, please contact me. Over the next few months we will decide what would be the best use of our remaining assets (approximately $34,000) in order to make our church more appealing from the exterior as well as keeping in mind other capital projects that may be in the future.

By working together, I believe we have made our building an attractive facility for not only our church activities, but for the many nonprofit organizations in our community that ask to use our building. We hear many positive comments and it is all because of your willingness to see this through over the past four years. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

Judy Garrett

Stewardship Report

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Stewardship for 2018</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>Percent Change</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Pledge Units</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<td>Pledged Amount to Date</td>
<td>$146,726</td>
<td>$130,782</td>
<td>-11%</td>
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<td>Average Pledge Amount</td>
<td>$3,335</td>
<td>$2,972</td>
<td>-11%</td>
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Looking at a significant budget shortfall, approximately $30K, in 2018
From the Mailbag

Pastor Kettell,
Merry Christmas and Thank You!
May this season be filled with precious treasures.
The Thursday and Saturday Night AA Groups
Bonnie T.

Dec. 28, 2018

Dear UCC Church Family -
Thank you very much for the monetary gift and the confidence and support I receive from you. I appreciate it all very much.
In your service,
Eleanor Perry

Thank you UCC Church Family for my wonderful staff gift. Definitely very handy this time of year! Thank you also for the best gift - your friendship. And Women’s Fellowship, for the cookies, .....they were so appreciated, well at least until I tried to button my pants.
Your friend and administrative assistant,
Brenda!

My beloved congregation -
Thank you so very much for the generous Christmas gift. My daily prayers include my thanksgiving for this church family and the way we care for one another. Thank you for extending those gifts to your pastor as well.
Blessings, Pastor Marraine

Birthdays

Recognize this pair from First Congregational UCC? They were spotted at an Orchestra of the Southern Finger Lakes Concert! Who said over time couples start to look alike?

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>Don Keck</td>
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<td>Sue McMaster</td>
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<td>Jill VanDewoestine</td>
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<td>Cooper Grinnell</td>
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<td>Dave Howard</td>
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<td>Mary Daly</td>
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<td>28th</td>
<td>Cory Fisher</td>
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<td>Josh Wilken</td>
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Forget about meal preparation and dishes for an evening. Bring the family, bring a guest, and come join us for a work free-hassle free community meal. This event is focused on fostering friendships among our current and future younger families with high school or younger children.

Volunteer help of all ages needed in the kitchen.

Sponsored by the Church Family & Community Life Ministry Team.

Contact Tom Wilkinson (316-2504) or Mary Daly (761-5494).

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Family Dinner - "No Responsibility Night"
Wednesday January 10th at 6pm.

Readers Wanted!
The African American Read-In of the Southern Tier is looking for volunteers to read to elementary school classrooms during Black History Month in February 2018. This program was started by several Employee Resource Groups at Corning Incorporated in 2012, and reaches over 250 public and private school classrooms in Corning, Elmira, Horseheads and beyond.

This year, the program is going public and encouraging everyone in the community to participate. You do not need to be African American to be a reader! You just need to love sharing the history of America with young people. The program provides the books, helpful instructions on points to highlight, and training sessions. Several people in our church family have volunteered for this program over the years and have learned a ton about history, race, and how kids see the world. And best of all, it’s fun!

To get more information and sign up, visit www.readinsoutherntierny.com.
Please mark your calendars because there will be no worship service here at First Congregational UCC on Sunday, February 11th. We will join Emanuel Lutheran and First United Methodist at Christ Episcopal for Jazz Sunday!
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<td>9am - Bone Builders</td>
<td>9am - Church Office Hours</td>
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<td>7:30am - Walk &amp; Walk in with Pastor Marraine’s Day off</td>
<td>7am - AA @ Hall, Lounge, and Breakfast</td>
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<td>11:15am - Books Sandwiched In</td>
<td>10am - Jazz Sunday @ Church Hall</td>
<td>11am - Lucinda Baker memorial</td>
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<td>12pm - Ecumenical CPP Clergy</td>
<td>6pm - AA @ Hall and Lounge</td>
<td>7pm - AA @ Hall, Lounge, and Breakfast</td>
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Hanging the Greens Dec. 1st

First Sunday of Advent, December 3, 2017

Advent 1 KinderTinder
The Christmas Cantata and Pageant on December 17th was a hit!

Thank you Mike Flannigan and the Choir for inviting the youth to participate in this year’s presentation of *Child of Hope*.

Thanks to our verbal participants:
  Youth readers and wise ones: Graham Simons, Sophia McMaster and Patrick Wilken.
  Monologue reader: Jill VanDewoestine

Thanks to our silent participants:
  Mary: Tess Barber
  Joseph: Christian Bratti
  Donkey: Mira Simons
  Sheep: Lilly Matusick, Beanie McGrew and Camden Conklin
  Angels: Elaina, Sue McMaster and Gary McCaslin
  Shepherds: Dean Simons, Finn Barber, Patrick McGrew and Judy Graf
  Prop Master: Tom McGrew
  Director: Bob Walker

And thanks to the choir for their lovely music and the congregation for their participation.