



The Caller

First Congregational
United Church of Christ

Our mission is to create and nurture a family of faith to do God's work, modeling the gospel of Jesus Christ.

June
2024



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Pastor's Pondering -

I recently read this line from *Working Preacher*, a preaching resource from Luther Seminary: "Good preaching changes lives." I chuckled because its opposite could just be equally valid: "Bad preaching changes lives."

But what is "good" preaching and vice versa? What constitutes a "good" sermon and a "bad" one? I don't know, to be honest. People have their own ideas. I remember a story about a parishioner who bragged to a professor of preaching about how good his pastor's preaching was. He invited the professor to attend his church to listen to his pastor preach. The professor went and listened to the sermon. But he wasn't particularly impressed. Later in class, the professor said that if he were to give it a grade, it would be a mere C+, and that's being generous. They laughed. But he told them not to laugh. He said the pastor's sermon may not have passed homiletical standards, but it was the best for the parishioner. That's because the pastor knew him and addressed his needs and what he wanted to hear from a sermon, and therefore, his sermons spoke to that church member. This anecdote made me reflect on the subjective nature of preaching and how it can deeply impact individuals in different ways.

I've been preaching now for more than thirty years. I'm not sure I have always agreed with the professor's assessment of what counts as good preaching. It sounded like the pastor preached *therapeutic* or "feel-good" sermons. But what do I know even after all these years? Interestingly, I am scheduled to attend a preaching institute at Princeton Theological Seminary this second week of June.

(continued on page 2)

The First Congregational United Church of Christ of Corning, NY believes we are all made in the image of God and we are called to celebrate our God-given identities regardless of age, class, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, physical ability, marital status, race, ethnicity, or mental ability. Jesus calls us to love each other as we are loved by God, and we welcome, affirm, and support all people into our full life and ministry. **No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here!**



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

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or where you are on life’s
journey, you are welcome here!!*



Office hours:

Thurs./Fri.: 9:00 a.m. - noon

Pastor: Rev. Henry Pascual
Pastor’s e-mail: pastor@corningucc.org
Pastor’s phone: (908)801-7007
Church Phone: (607)962-7423
E-mail: office@corningucc.org
Web: www.cornngucc.org
[Facebook.com/FCUCC](https://www.facebook.com/FCUCC)
Secretary: Brenda Passmore

Office hours

Church Office: Brenda is in the office on Thursday and Friday mornings from 9:00 a.m. – noon. Please leave a message if she’s not there to answer the phone, and she will return your call.

Pastor Henry’s Office Hours:

Tuesday - Friday: 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
His visitations are scheduled on
Tues. - Fri. afternoons. **Mondays and Saturdays are his days off.**

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.*



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

I am proud to have been accepted and very excited about this learning opportunity. Plus, I only had to pay for the registration; meals and lodging are free. I’m also scared. Homiletics (fancy word for preaching) has grown much larger as a discipline since my seminary days.

At 67, I feel too old, outdated, and much slower, not to mention technologically challenged. Most of the attendees will probably be young, creative, and bright with advanced degrees. I hope I won’t embarrass myself.

Well, at least I can say I “went” to Princeton.

Yours for the Journey,
Henry



SCHOLARSHIP

SCHOLARSHIP REMINDER

Please find scholarship information and an application form on our church website under the Resources Tab.

Applications are due in the church office by **Friday, June 14, 2024**. Scholarship recipients will be notified of their application status on **Friday, July 12, 2024**.

Looking for help?

If you are sick, have a problem, or just want to talk with the Pastor or one of our Tender Loving Care (TLC) Responders, or if you know someone who does, please contact the church office. You can call and leave a message at 607-962-7423, or email office@ucccorning.org. The office voice mail is checked regularly, and the pastor can be reached directly at pastor@ucccorning.org.



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Sunday, June 16th after worship

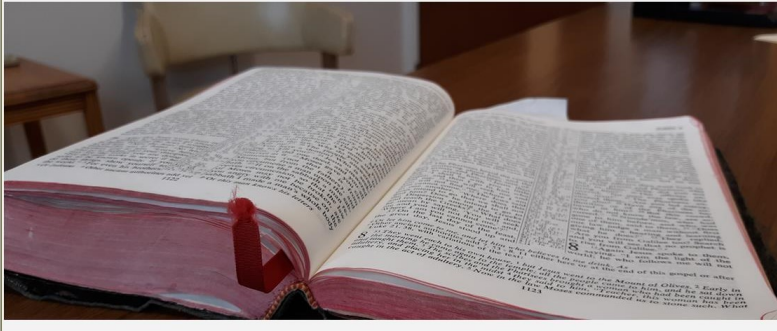
Difficult Bible Verses

Ever hear a Bible verse and think, "that was unpleasant!"
Join Pastor Henry, the Faith Formation team, and the Worship
team during Coffee Hour for an exploration of how we deal
with violent or troubling Bible verses.

We'll start with comments from Pastor Henry and then have
smaller discussions at our tables
(and on Zoom!) about specific Bible verses.

This will be a family-friendly opportunity to explore our faith and
build community. Please address questions to Pastor Henry or
any Worship or Faith Formation team member.

Hope to see you there!



June Birthdays

- 3rd Kristen Bennett
Rachel Hofstetter
- 8th Ethan Bratti
- 8th Christine McGrew
- 10th Grace Cooper
- 18th Nicholas Reif
- 20th Darlene Schieber
- 20th Mike Simons
- 22nd Owen Watson
- 22nd Nicholas Bennett
- 23rd Rachel Hageman
- 26th Maria Quintal

Happy Birthday!

GRADUATION NEWS

Is anyone in your family graduating this year?
Would you like to have it honored in *The Caller*?

Please inform the office of who, with what, and from where
so we can share the good news!



Special dates:

Happy 10th anniversary! 10 years ago, our church officially became Open and Affirming ("ONA"). **On June 8th, we will again have a table on Market Street to share our story and meet new friends.** People are needed for 2 hour shifts at the table. Please sign up in fellowship hall if you can help.



June 30th is our Annual Program Meeting. Please stay after church to vote on the new slate of officers and learn plans for the upcoming year. We will have reports ready – printed and emailed – prior to the meeting.

Happy summer! Star Bright, moderator

Volunteer Work Week 2024 - New Bern, NC April 21 to 27

Six travelers from Corning visited and spent a week working on three homes damaged by floods and a fallen tree. The work we did ranged from installing flooring and sub-flooring, painting, installing light fixtures and sink plumbing and even a little office work. We met four residents of the local area, one of whom relocated there from New York over 20 years ago. In addition, we spent time with Kristy (the administrative lead) and her husband Jeremy (the construction lead) and learned about the history of their local non-profit agency and the opportunities, challenges and changes they face.



Most houses we work on were damaged several years ago. Many homeowners had given up hope that anyone would help. Kristy describes them as people who fell between the cracks of the federal flood response. Some have received a little assistance but not nearly enough. Others were denied payments by their insurance companies or fell victim to unethical contractors. Kristy and Jeremy have ample funds for materials but almost none for labor, so volunteer workers are essential. Their agency improved 51 homes last year and they estimate the value of donated labor at over \$600,000. Most of the year, the volunteers are retirees with the exception of March, when the agency hosts lots of college students on spring break.



Our work was more than construction. The leader guide from Presbyterian Disaster Assistance states that “Oftentimes, our presence as volunteers is even more significant than the work we do. ... If you interact with a homeowner, put down your tools and listen.” This is good advice. When we set our hammers and paint brushes aside, we heard stories of overwhelming trauma, but also gratitude for the concern and care of volunteers.

At the end of the week, our team drove past two homes we worked on in past years. Both look great. They are obviously well cared for, with tidy, freshly mowed lawns and new features added since our teams departed. Kristy and Jeremy shared that many homeowners come alive with new hope during and after these repair projects. They have new interest in improvements, new pride in their homes that were once damaged, and new optimism about the future. Repairing homes repairs lives.



Ask the travelers if you would like more information:
Pam Walker, Mary Daly, Tom Wilkinson, Gary Brown, Ernie Danforth or Bob Walker.



Wednesday, June 26, 2024

7:00 PM

First Congregational United Church of Christ
171 W Pulteney St, Corning, NY 14830

Admission Free

The Baltimore Children's Choir is a non-profit arts organization that serves and empowers K-12th grade youth from Baltimore City and its surrounding counties. While on tour, our organization presents a varied repertoire ranging from classical choral literature to multicultural and contemporary works.

The Baltimore Children's Choir has opened a concert for the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and performed at multiple prestigious venues including most recently, St. Patrick's Cathedral in NYC, and Strathmore Concert Hall.



BCC Summer 2024



Help is needed for the Blair-Bigler-Perry Concert Dinner and Reception. We are in need of cookies. You may bring cookies to the church on Sunday morning or Wednesday afternoon.

Women's Fellowship



Women's Fellowship Meeting - Tuesday June 4th, 2024 @ 11:30 am

Please bring a bag lunch. We will finalize plans for the Blair-Bigler-Perry Dinner and Reception, end of year fundraiser, and discuss the Fall Flea Market.

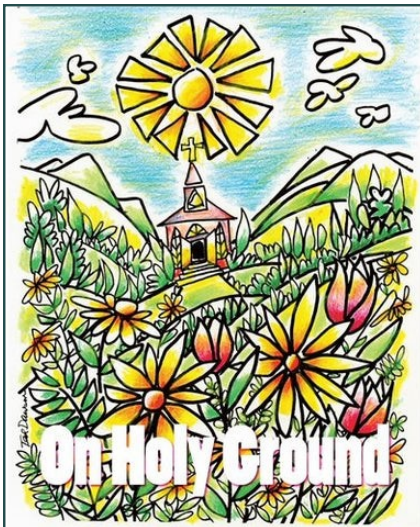
At their last meeting, Women's Fellowship welcomed Danielle Strom from Blocks in Bloom Corning to speak about her newly-launched program to support residents in planning, planting, and maintaining front-yard gardens to grow community and pollinator habitats. If you have plants or garden items to share or a gardening need—contact her at blocksinbloomcorning@gmail.com!



Join us
for
**Youth
Sunday**
on
June 9th!



Mission and Outreach



MISSION FOR JUNE: Strengthen the Church

The Strengthen the Church STC offering reflects the shared commitment of members across the United Church of Christ to build up our individual churches. Conferences share equally the gifts by members and friends through the local congregations. The funds raised support leadership development, new churches, youth ministry, and other innovations.

We are called to be the church in new ways, plant new churches, awaken new ideas in existing churches, and develop the spiritual life in our youth and young adults.

Please give generously through the month of June.

Thank you from our Mission/Outreach Team:

Lynn Decher, Pauletta O'Donnell, and Margo Brown

Calendar: Events are always being added, so please check our website for the most up-to-date version.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
26 10am - Worship - in 7pm - Corning Brass	27 8am - Cleaning Service 9:30am - Bone Builders	28 7pm - Chorus of the	29 6pm - Bell Choir 7pm - Choir	30 9am - Office Hours	31 9am - Office Hours 9:30am - Bone Builders @ 5pm - Piano Recital @ F.	1 6:30pm - Alcoholics
2 10am - Worship - in 1pm - Piano Studio 7pm - Corning Brass	3 8am - Cleaning Service 9:30am - Bone Builders	4 11:30am - Women's 7pm - Chorus of the	5 6pm - Bell Choir 7pm - Choir	6 9am - Office Hours	7 9am - Office Hours 9:30am - Bone Builders @	8 12pm - Pride Table 12:30pm - DAR 6:30pm - Alcoholics
9 Youth Sunday 10am - Worship - in 7pm - Corning Brass	10 8am - Cleaning Service 9:30am - Bone Builders	11 1pm - Scottish American 6:30pm - Zoom 7pm - Chorus of the	12 6pm - Bell Choir 7pm - Choir	13 9am - Office Hours	14 9am - Office Hours 9:30am - Bone Builders @	15 6:30pm - Alcoholics
16 10am - Worship - in 11am - Difficult Bible 7pm - Corning Brass	17 8am - Cleaning Service 9:30am - Bone Builders	18 6:30pm - Membership 7pm - Chorus of the	19 6pm - Bell Choir 7pm - Choir	20 9am - Corning Area Aging 9am - Office Hours	21 9am - Office Hours 9:30am - Bone Builders @	22 6:30pm - Alcoholics
23 10am - Worship - in 7pm - Corning Brass	24 8am - Cleaning Service 9:30am - Bone Builders 2pm - Piano Tuning	25 9am - Caller deadline 7pm - Chorus of the	26 Blair Bigler Perry	27 9am - Office Hours	28 9am - Office Hours 9:30am - Bone Builders @	29 6:30pm - Alcoholics
30 Program Meeting 10am - Worship - in 7pm - Corning Brass	1 8am - Cleaning Service 9:30am - Bone Builders	2 11:30am - Women's 7pm - Chorus of the	3 6pm - Bell Choir 7pm - Choir	4 9am - Office Hours	5 9am - Office Hours 9:30am - Bone Builders @	6 6:30pm - Alcoholics

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