



# The Caller

First Congregational United Church of Christ December 2024

## MUSINGS ALONG THE WAY

Dear Friends,

December is the month of Advent, a season of quiet anticipation as we prepare for the joy of Christmas, the coming of Christ. It's a season full of wonderful surprises, paradoxes, and reversals. Though the calendar year draws to a close, the church year—our liturgical calendar—begins anew. The days grow shorter and darker, at least in the northern hemisphere, yet during Advent, we await the arrival of the One who is the Light of the world. Paradoxes and reversals!

Advent invites us to look back and remember that holy night when an angel appeared to humble shepherds, proclaiming the birth of a Savior (Luke 2:8-14). But it also draws our gaze forward to the fulfillment of God's ultimate reign in the world, the consummation of salvation history. Paradoxes and reversals! We see this upside-down nature of Advent and Christmas in Mary's song, where she sings of the mighty being scattered and the powerful brought low, while the lowly are lifted up and the hungry filled with good things (Luke 1:51-53). In Jesus, the Word incarnate, we encounter a God who confounds our expectations but fills our hearts with hope.

As we journey through the sights and sounds of Advent and Christmas—the hanging of greens, the multi-colored pine cones and bows (a new tradition this year!), the lighting of the Advent candles, the choir's cantata, the Christmas pageant, and the Christmas Eve service—let us pause to give thanks for the precious gift of Jesus, while not neglecting to look ahead with hope, trusting in the fulfillment of God's promises for us and for the world.

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



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**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

*No matter who you are  
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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](mailto:pastor@corningucc.org)  
Pastor’s phone: (908)801-7007  
Church Phone: (607)962-7423  
E-mail: [office@corningucc.org](mailto:office@corningucc.org)  
Web: [www.corningucc.org](http://www.corningucc.org)  
Facebook.com/FCUCCC  
Instagram: @corningucc  
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.

*(continued from page 1)*

In this season of anticipation and waiting, let us be vigilant about how God works for righteousness, justice, and peace. Like Mary, let us keep singing God’s wonderful deeds, glorifying the One who is always at work in the world, often in mysterious and surprising ways.

Wishing you a meaningful Advent and a blessed Merry Christmas!

Yours for the Journey,  
Pastor Henry



Pastor Henry and Brenda won’t be in the office for scheduled hours:

Wednesday, December 25 -  
Friday, December 27th.

*Merry Christmas &  
Happy New Year!*

**Looking for help?**

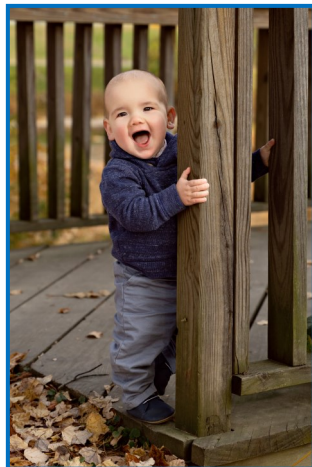
If you are sick, have a problem, or just want to talk with the Pastor or one of our Tender Loving Care (TLC) Responders, or if you know someone who does, please contact the church office. You can call and leave a message at 607-962-7423, or email [office@uccorning.org](mailto:office@uccorning.org). The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



Baptism



*You are invited to join Melody and Mike Flanagan for the baptism of their son Paul Michael Francis Flanagan during worship on Sunday, December 1st, the First Sunday of Advent.*



December Birthdays

- 4<sup>th</sup> Amanda McCaslin
- 8<sup>th</sup> Pearl Cooper
- 8<sup>th</sup> Marian Cooper
- 9<sup>th</sup> James Flaws
- 13<sup>th</sup> John Madison
- 13<sup>th</sup> Bob Walker
- 25<sup>th</sup> Jesus
- 28<sup>th</sup> Peter Zimmermann

Happy Birthday!

Christmas Pageant

You are invited to be part of the No-Rehearsal Pageant **Sunday, December 15!**

We need people of all ages to be angels, shepherds, magi, and animals. No experience or costumes needed – we will provide it all!

Costumes will be figured out on **December 8** after worship.

We will meet at 9 AM on the 15<sup>th</sup> to make sure we have everything set.

See Jill VanDewoestine for more information.

Midday Fellowship  
Annual Christmas Cookie  
Exchange & Packing  
Tuesday December 10th, 11:30 am.

Bring a bag lunch and 3 dozen cookies.  
Cookies may be brought to church  
**Sunday December 8th.** Everyone is invited.



## Mission and Outreach

### December Mission - The Christmas Fund

For over one hundred years, The Christmas Fund has provided direct financial assistance to United Church of Christ ministers, church workers, and their families. Last year, over 1,800 congregations joined together to secure the physical, financial, and spiritual health of those engaged in the life of the Church. Thank you to our community for your continued support!

Receiving The Christmas Fund this year ensures more ministers, church workers, and their families receive the loving support of the Church in their moment of deepest need.



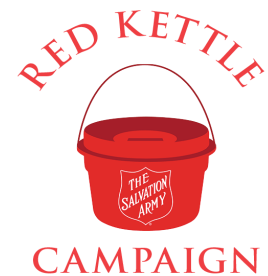
*Donations may be made during the entire month of December. Check donations may be made out to the First Congregational UCC with "Christmas Fund" in the memo line.*

### Bells Will Be Ringing

Please offer your gift of time to the Salvation Army's Red Kettle campaign this season. This major fundraising collaborative supports the numerous programs offered to uplift our vulnerable community members. From purchasing Christmas toys to providing life enhancement skills, the Salvation Army is there for our less fortunate neighbors throughout the year.

A sign up sheet is posted in Fellowship Hall for your participation at Corning Building Company and TOPS in December. You may ring alone, in pairs or groups during a shift that is convenient for you.

Please consider organizing a block of time filled by UCC bell ringers! Thank you!



### Collection Boxes are Overflowing with Kindness

Thank you for your very generous donations to the Salvation Army Christmas Dinner collection of grocery items. Many families will be able to prepare a traditional and much longed for dinner that provides comfort beyond measure.

**Our drive ends on Sunday, December 8**, so there is still time to provide fried onions and stuffing mix, or we can shop for you!  
The Missions Team





Advent and Christmas 2024  
First Congregational  
United Church of Christ  
171 West Pulteney Street,  
Corning, NY 14830  
[www.corningucc.org](http://www.corningucc.org)



Hanging the Greens

**Sunday, December 1st**, after worship

**Choral Christmas Music**  
**Sunday, December 8**



Christmas Pageant  
Sunday,  
December 15th



**Christmas Eve**  
**Candlelight Service**  
**Sunday, December 24th, 7pm**  
Carols, Candles, and Bells!  
*Please bring your bells and a dozen cookies  
to share after worship.*



*You still have a couple days if you'd like to place a poinsettia on the altar during Advent and Christmas Eve Worship. Please contact Joyce with your order*

*Poinsettias for the  
2024 Advent Season*



PRICE: \$18.00

COLORS:

- Red       Jingle Bells (red & white)  
 Pink       White

In Honor of \_\_\_\_\_ or

In Memory of \_\_\_\_\_ or

In Celebration of \_\_\_\_\_

Ordered by \_\_\_\_\_

Orders, **with check**, payable to **First Congregational Church Flower Fund** can be mailed to Joyce Nelson at 104 Pritchard Avenue, Corning, NY 14830 or placed in the offering plate.

**Orders must be placed by December 1, 2024.**

*Plants may be taken home after the Christmas Eve Service.*

## Christmas Cards

What better way to celebrate Bob Garrett's wonderful Christmas banners, painted back in 1994, than to create a series of Christmas cards? Each package of cards will contain 8 cards, 4 of each design. Please complete the form, and put it in the collection plate or mail it to the church along with your check. \$10 suggested donation for each pack. They are available now.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of packs: \_\_\_\_\_



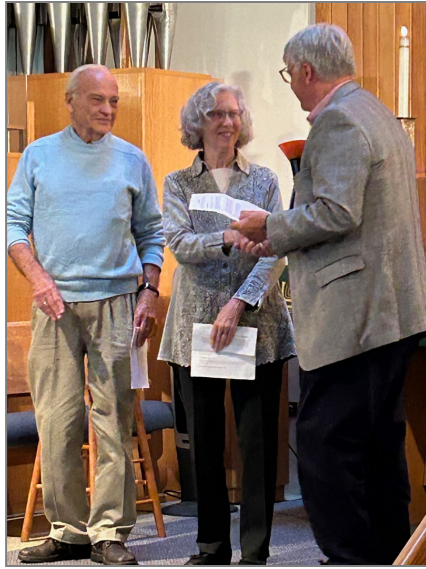
The Holiday Season has arrived, and it is again time to thank our church staff with Christmas wishes from our Congregation. Each year we gather monetary gifts from members and friends, and distribute the cash gifts to our staff. We do the collection in this manner so that it does not come from the Church funds directly, and therefore is not taxable to the staff.

If you wish to participate in this tradition, you may give your gift to me. Cash is the best choice. If you prefer, you can send a check (made out to me) to the church or directly to my home address.

Thank you for remembering our staff at this time of the year.

Pam Schmitt  
2867 Downing Street,  
Big Flats, NY 14814  
(607)331-4277

# Photo Gallery



*Congratulations to our new members  
Laurie and Ron Johnson on Sunday, October 27th .....*



*...and to our Bell  
Choir Director of 15  
years, Liane Watson!*



*Shirley and Tom Kowalik  
and Bob Walker worked  
with Joyce and Rachel to  
upgrade all light bulbs in  
Sanctuary and replace  
parking lot lights.*



Our church calendar changes all the time, so please check our website [www.corningucc.org](http://www.corningucc.org) under the Calendar/Events tab for the most up-to-date version.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 10am - Worship - in 7pm - Corning Brass	2 8am - Cleaning Service 9:30am - Bone Builders	3 7pm - Chorus of the	4 7pm - Choir	5 9am - Office Hours	6 9am - Office Hours 9:30am - Bone Builders @	7 6:30pm - AA
8 10am - Choir Cantata 10am - Worship - in 2pm - Starlike Band @ 7pm - Corning Brass	9 8am - Cleaning Service 9:30am - Bone Builders	10 11:30am - Mid Day 1pm - Scottish American 6:30pm - Zoom 7pm - Chorus of the	11 7pm - Choir	12 9am - Office Hours	13 9am - Office Hours 9:30am - Bone Builders @	14 12:30pm - DAR 6:30pm - AA
15 10am - Christmas 10am - Worship - in 2pm - Refugee 7pm - Corning Brass	16 8am - Cleaning Service 9:30am - Bone Builders	17 7pm - Chorus of the	18 7pm - Choir	19 9am - Corning Area Aging 9am - Office Hours	20 9am - Office Hours 9:30am - Bone Builders @	21 6:30pm - AA
22 10am - Worship - in 7pm - Corning Brass	23 8am - Cleaning Service 9:30am - Bone Builders	24 7pm - Christmas Eve	25 Merry Christmas	26 9:30am - Bone Builders @	27 9:30am - Bone Builders @	28 6:30pm - AA
29 10am - Worship - in 7pm - Corning Brass	30 8am - Cleaning Service 9:30am - Bone Builders	31 7pm - Chorus of the	1 7pm - Choir	2 9am - Office Hours	3 9am - Office Hours 9:30am - Bone Builders @	4 6:30pm - AA



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