



The Caller

First Congregational
United Church of Christ

MUSINGS ALONG THE WAY

Dear Friends,

A recent article in *The Presbyterian Outlook* (Greg Brekke, “Gen Z’s Complicated Return to Faith”) highlights something surprising and hopeful: a renewed interest in faith among Gen Z men. After years of declining church attendance and participation, new research shows that many young men are rediscovering Christianity and committing themselves to following Jesus.

Gen Z (ages 13–28) is at the heart of this movement. Studies from the Barna Group and the American Enterprise Institute report that since 2021, the number of Americans saying they’ve made a personal commitment to follow Jesus has grown from 54% to 66%. Remarkably, this rise is being led by Gen Z and Millennial men — a reversal of past trends, where women were more likely to report deeper involvement in faith and church life.

So, what’s behind this shift? A longing for community, purpose, and meaning. Many young adults are finding these in church. They aren’t just showing up for tradition’s sake — they’re looking for a space to grow spiritually.

One church that has seen this trend firsthand is First Presbyterian Church in Durham, North Carolina. Their “somethings” group (20-somethings, 30-somethings) has become a place where young adults gather to share life and faith together. “It’s a beautiful community where all the people are finding joy and fellowship together,” says Associate Pastor Esther Hethcox. She notes that it’s not about programs so much as “spiritual gatherings.”

(cont. on page 2)



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



October
2025

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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!



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First Congregational
United Church of Christ
171 West Pulteney Street
Corning, NY 14830

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Office hours:

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

Pastor: Rev. Henry Pascual
Pastor’s e-mail: pastor@corningucc.org
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E-mail: office@corningucc.org
Web: www.corningucc.org
Facebook.com/FCUCCC
Instagram: @corningucc
Secretary: Brenda Passmore
Keyboardist: Katie Klawitter
Choir Director: Mike Flanagan

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.

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Andy Skipper, a Gen Z participant, explained that he returned because he was missing community and having conversations with peers about life, faith, and careers. If the data and testimonies are accurate, this is good news for churches that have struggled with decline. But it’s also a challenge. How do we welcome and nurture this youth’s hunger for meaning and belonging? Or, as Rick Warren puts it, how do we ride the “spiritual waves” of God’s Spirit—those periods when people are receptive to God’s message? (*The Purpose-Driven Church*, p. 13).

One thing is clear: this longing isn’t limited to Gen Z. People of all ages are searching for purpose, meaning, and connection. I hope that we, as the church, can recognize this moment, rise to meet the need, and offer the love of Christ in ways that truly embrace the next generation.

Yours for the journey,
Pastor Henry

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@corningucc.org.





WORLD
COMMUNION SUNDAY

WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY
OCTOBER 5, 2025

A dish to pass luncheon after worship will be held to celebrate World Communion Sunday. Please bring a favorite dish from your family heritage, a favorite potluck dish, or any item that you wish to bring.

There will be breads from different countries on the altar during the worship service and we will all enjoy them at the luncheon.

Communion bread served will be a little different also. Everyone please plan to join us. If you have any questions, please contact Joyce Nelson.

Family Dinner: Sunday evening, October 26, 5-7:00 pm hosted at Josh and Chris Wilken's home.

All are welcome to join.
Contact the office for details.



October Birthdays

- 5th Sophia McMaster
- 7th Lois Katt
- 8th Abigail Kohnke
- 12th Sue Milazzo
- 18th Bruce Graf
- 20th Graham Simons
- 22nd Debby Perry
- 23rd Patrick Wilken
- 29th Cheryl Cancel



MIDDAY FELLOWSHIP MEETING: WED., OCTOBER 8TH, 11:30 A.M.



COME LEARN ABOUT WILLS AND TRUSTS

Mike Martino, Esq. of Rossettie, Rosettie and Martino, will be the speaker at the October 8 Midday Fellowship meeting. He will discuss "Wills and Trusts" and be happy to answer your questions.

NOT TOO SOON TO GET THOSE NEEDLES/HOOKS CLICKING!

Some time in early November, the Midday Fellowship will be putting out the Mitten Tree to gather, yes, mittens AND hats for elementary school kids in our area.

Handmade is great (you know - watching football is the perfect time to knit or crochet); but, purchased mittens and hats are welcome, too. Please make sure that they are warm and sized for kids.

STILL TIME TO BRING IN NEW/GENTLY USED BLANKETS

But you only have until October 8! At that time, the Midday Fellowship will be bundling up the blankets that have been so generously donated to take them to the Corning Community Food Pantry. The blankets will be available to those who need them along with food and other essentials.

Thank you for helping your neighbors.

MEET THE NEW WORSHIP TECH STAFF

Harrison Moon (foreground) and Finn Barber (background) are our new Worship Tech team. These talented young men alternate Sundays running the new cameras and improved sound system enabling us all to enjoy and participate in the worship service.

Be sure to say "Hi" when you see them at the oak console at the rear of the church.



welcome

NEW ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Please welcome Charlette Smith when you see her in the church office. Charlette will be training with Brenda in October and will soon take over as our Administrative Assist.

Charlotte brings a wealth of experience in marketing, digital and social media content, grant writing and volunteer coordination. In addition, she has worked at the Corning Painted Post Historical Society, All Saints Academy and All Saints Parish and the Corning Community YMCA.

And when you say hi to Charlette, please thank Brenda for her many years of faithful service.

Bob Walker for the Personnel Committee



SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE ANNOUNCEMENT

In July, the Scholarship Committee, Dave Lambert, Judy Garrett, and Margo Brown, awarded scholarships to two deserving young members of our church.

Patrick Wilken, our faithful Zoom tech, is a freshman at SUNY Oswego. While doing our Zoom on Sundays, he worked to upgrade our set up. At Corning Painted Post High School, he was active in the Theater Club and participated in the cast of the school's outstanding musicals.

Sophia McMaster is a sophomore at Case Western Reserve University and completing a very successful freshman year. She was active in several professional societies, participated in the United Protestant Campus Ministry, and was principal violist in the Case Camerate Chamber Orchestra—all while maintaining a 4.0 GPA.

We honor and celebrate these two outstanding individuals and wish them every success as they pursue their further education.



LEAF PEEPING EVENT!!
SATURDAY OCTOBER 18TH, 2:00 - 6:00 PM
(Rain date: Sunday October 19th 2:00 - 6:00 pm)

The leaves will be near peak colors. Walk, cycle, or kayak at Pennsylvania's Ives State Park (Or bring a lawn chair and simply *enjoy* the colors, views and conversations). Join us once again at this beautiful state park just 30 minutes south in Tioga, Pa. Choose an activity of your preference, or simply relax and enjoy the peaceful scenery and warm around the fire. Hot dogs and burgers provided at 5:00 pm. Sign-up on the bulletin board to bring a dish or dessert.

There is a beautiful lake, scenic walkways and low-traffic cycling within the park - and a "rails to trails" route for those more adventurous. Rides available to the park.

Directions are simple. Take 99 south (route 15) from Painted Post to exit 191 Tioga. Turn right {south} on route 287. The park entrance is approximately 6 miles on the left. After entering the park, take the first left to the first boat launch and pavilion.

Sponsored by the Family Life Ministry Team

A BEAUTIFUL GIFT ENJOYED BY THE CONGREGATION - SUNDAY SEPT 14, 2025

What a joy it has been to share friendship and good food under our new pergola! The pergola is a gift to our church in memory of Bob Garrett who passed away in November 2024 and to honor his contributions to the church. Bob painstakingly designed the beautiful stained glass windows that have graced our sanctuary for years. Children have cherished the Sunday School room where Bob painted Biblical stories on each wall and his Christmas angel banners drape our walls each Advent season. Bob also artistically created the large sign that we display bi-annually to announce our rummage sale. There is a remembrance of Bob's warmth, talent and dedication to our church in almost every corner of every room.

We thank Joyce Nelson for all her months of diligent and challenging work in coordinating the construction of the pergola from beginning to end. Thank you, Joyce!



A TIME TO REMEMBER...
All Saints Sunday, November 2

It's our sacred time to remember the friends and family members who have passed on since last November. We honor them by lighting a candle and reciting their names as their images are cast on the wall near the cross.

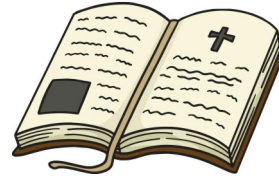
If you would like someone remembered, please submit their name, birth date, death date, and a picture to faisjennifer@gmail.com or drop off a photograph at the church and we'll scan it and return the original to you.

Thank you for taking part in this thoughtful service of remembrance.

The Worship/Music Team

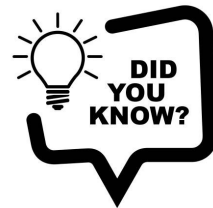


Bible Study starting September 9th in the Lewis Lounge, Tuesdays at lunch time.



The format will be 12:00 to 1:00 for study, discussion and prayer with no homework. Bob Walker and Henry will co-lead this study. Please feel free to bring a brown bag lunch and your favorite Bible.

Note that this study will be in person only. (no Zoom). Please join us!



Did you know that First Congregational Church helped to launch the Community Foundation's Human Services Fund for Southeastern Steuben County? Our church joined with others in the Corning community to support rebuilding efforts following the 1972 flood.

Since then, Human Services Fund grants have been awarded each year to Corning-area programs serving residents in need. A committee of representatives from each of the participating churches recommends projects for funding through a competitive application project. Our church's members on this committee are Pam Walker and Judy Garrett. A report on funds awarded by the Human Services Fund is attached.

Thanks!

Pam

Mission and Outreach

October Special Mission:
Be the Hope They Need: Therapeutic Foster Care

Imagine being the reason a child smiles again. The Pathways, Inc. Therapeutic Foster Care (TFC) program is passionately committed to transforming the lives of young individuals who face emotional and developmental challenges. Community members are sought to open their homes and hearts to these remarkable children.



Foster Parents provide more than just a roof; they create a safe, nurturing environment where children can grow and remain connected to their communities. Pathway's experienced team stands by every step of the way, offering comprehensive training; 24/7 support; and guidance to ensure that foster parents are never alone on this rewarding journey.

Right here in the Southern Tier, there are children eagerly waiting for a chance to belong and flourish. Fostering might help reunite families or pave the way for new beginnings through adoption. Fostering is crucial in providing stability and hope, making a lasting impact on a child's future. Currently 15 youth are benefiting from a loving foster home environment. Ages typically range from 8-18.

To learn more, please attend the October 5th Sunday service.

Elizabeth Duerr, Foster Parent Homefinder, will present a brief program overview and answer questions during Fellowship. A literature table will remain available for two weeks.

Donations to benefit fostered youth may be made by check payable to First Congregational UCC with "Pathways TFC" on the memo line. Online donations may be made at www.corningucc.org. Thank you!

The Mission & Outreach Team: Pauletta O'Donnell, Rachel Gustina, and Lynn Decher

Pathways, Inc. is a not-for-profit human service organization serving approximately 4,000 individuals and families across the Finger Lakes, Southern Tier, and Rochester, New York areas through an array of services including: Care Coordination, Childcare, Clinical Services, Community and Habilitation Services, Residential Services, and Therapeutic Foster Care.

33 Denison Parkway West
Elizabeth Duerr (607) 937-4503
www.pathwaysforyou.org/tfc



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