

The Caller



First Congregational United Church of Christ of Corning



Musings along the way

By Pastor Henry

Dear Church Family,

As we close out this past year and look back, our hearts are full of gratitude. We are thankful for the new families and guests who have joined our faith community and worshiped with us, and for the new staff who have blessed our music and office ministries. We have seen our campus and technology

improve in ways that enhance our worship experience and better serve our ministries.

From the new pergola that makes our lunch fellowship even sweeter and brings us closer together, to the advanced sound equipment that enriches our worship, these tools help us offer our best to God. Through worship services and our

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various ministries, we have offered to God our gifts and talents, and God has been faithful to every offering. We have walked through seasons of joy and trial together. In every step—from quiet prayers to loud celebrations—we have seen God’s hand and steadfast love. I am confident these experiences have prepared us for the journey ahead.

As we usher in the new year, we turn our eyes forward. The coming months are not just dates on a calendar; they are a fresh invitation to grow, to be transformed, and to transform the world.

Together, we will deepen our love for God and our service to others in the name of Jesus, who came not to be served but to serve.

...we have
offered to God
our gifts and
talents,...

Please know that you are not alone. We walk together, held by the grace of the One who calls us and makes all things new. I am excited to see how the Spirit moves as we worship, pray, and serve God in the world together.

Wishing you all a blessed and fruitful New Year!

Yours for the journey,
Pastor Henry

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

This Month Events

Visit our website at corningucc.org for
Sermons, Events, and other Happenings at FCUCCC



Midday Fellowship Meeting

January 13th - 11:30am



Annual Meeting

To Be Announced

The 2026 **Flower Chart** is hanging on the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall. Please sign up to give Sunday altar flowers. The flowers can be given to honor or in memory of a special person, celebrate a special event, wedding, etc.

While there, sign-up to host **Coffee Hour** for January & February 2026 too!

MIDDAY FELLOWSHIP NEWS

The December Midday Fellowship had a big agenda.

We collected 37 handmade and/or new hats and 16 pairs of mittens. When a bag of gently used hats and mittens were divided up, we had a full bag each for Winfield, Severn, Gregg and Calvin Smith Elementary Schools. Joyce Nelson will deliver them. Thank you everyone for your hard work knitting and crocheting.

Our next project was to prepare our annual Christmas Treats. Instead of our usual home baked

cookies delivered to our homebound church members and friends, we went a different direction: Homemade Soup! Thank you, Lois Katt, for the idea and to Greg Brown for the delicious vegetable soup! Midday Fellowship members worked together to pack up one quart of soup, one min-loaf (banana, lemon-poppy seed, cranberry-nut or zucchini), one hot chocolate pouch, one homemade cookie and a decorative Christmas napkin in each festive bag. Members then delivered them to ten church friends as well as to each staff member.

And, as luck would have it, we each had to take some of that delicious soup home for ourselves! We are looking forward to 2026. Our first meeting will be held from 11:30 to about 1:30 on January 13th. This is our standard time.

We will be planning our activities for the rest of 2026.

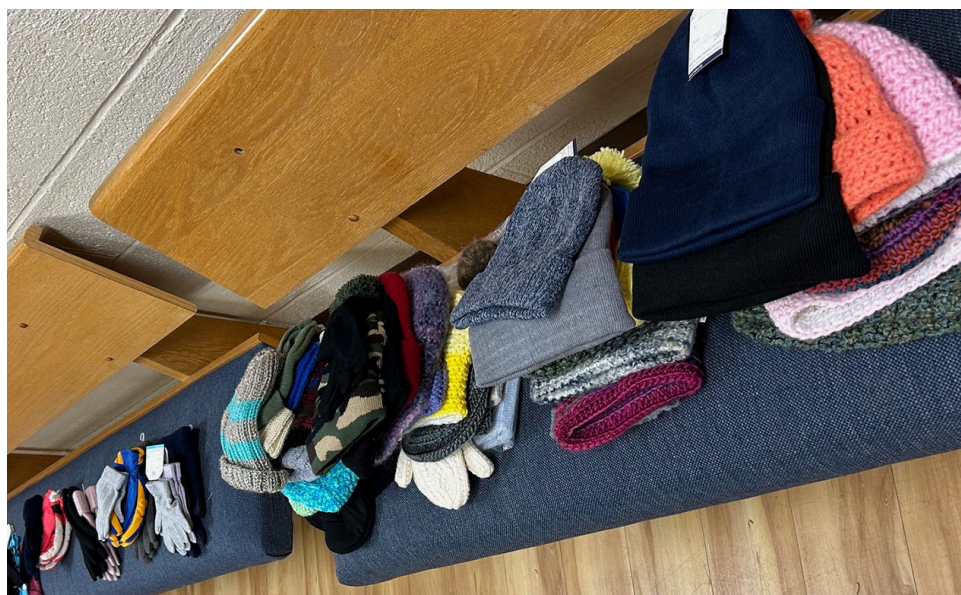
Remember: everyone (including those who can get away from work during their lunch hour) is welcome!

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The Interesting History Behind New Year's Resolutions

Short History of New Year's Resolutions

From the Babylonians who resolved to return borrowed farm equipment to medieval knights who would renew their vow to chivalry, New Year's resolutions are nothing new. In 2000 B.C., the Babylonians celebrated the New Year during a 12-day festival called Akitu (starting with the vernal equinox). This started the farming season to plant crops, crown their king, and make promises to pay their debts. One common resolution was the return of borrowed farm equipment (which makes sense for an agriculturally based society.)

The Babylonian New Year was adopted by the ancient Romans, as was the tradition of resolutions. The timing, however, eventually shifted with the Julian calendar in 46 B.C., which declared January 1 as the start of the new year. January was named for the two-faced Roman god, Janus, who looks forward to new beginnings as well as backward for reflection and resolution. The Romans would offer sacrifices to Janus and make promises of good behavior for the year ahead.

Janus was also the guardian of gates and doors. He presided over the temple of peace, where the doors were opened only during wartime. It was a place of safety where new beginnings and new resolutions could be forged.

New Year's resolutions were also made in the Middle Ages. Medieval knights would renew their vow to chivalry by placing their hands on a peacock. The annual "Peacock Vow" would take place at the end of the year as a resolution to maintain their knightly values.

By the 17th century, New Year's resolutions were so common that folks found humor in the idea of making and breaking their pledges. A Boston newspaper from 1813 featured the first recorded use of the phrase "New Year resolution." The article states:

"And yet, I believe there are multitudes of people, accustomed to receive injunctions of new year resolutions, who will sin all the month of December, with a serious determination of beginning the new year

with new resolutions and new behavior, and with the full belief that they shall thus expiate and wipe away all their former faults."

How Resolutions Have Changed

In the United States, New Year's resolutions are still a tradition, but the types of resolutions have changed. As a legacy of our Protestant history, resolutions in the early 1900s were more religious or spiritual, reflecting a desire to develop stronger moral character, a stronger work ethic, and more restraint in the face of earthly pleasures. Over the years, however, resolutions seem to have migrated from denying physical indulgences to general self-improvement, like losing weight. Medical sociologist Natalie Boero of San Jose State University suggests that today's resolutions are also a reflection of status, financial wealth, responsibility, and self-discipline—which isn't that different from how the New Year's resolution tradition began.

*Written By: Catherine Boeckmann,
Executive Digital Editor and Master
Gardener*
<https://www.almanac.com/history-of-new-years-resolutions>



Pictures of the Season



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!



Our church has a history of building community and friendships through **Small Group Dinners** meant to foster feelings of genuine connection. Depending on the hosts' preference, the meal is usually a simple soup, bread, and salad with six to eight attendees. Someone volunteers to bring dessert.

- The dinners are open to everyone and anyone.
- There is often an "after dinner topic" for discussion.
- This is an ongoing outreach. We hope to schedule more as our long winter progresses.
- If you would like to host dinner, please let me know. (phone number below)
- Transportation is available if needed.

Signup at the bulletin board outside the kitchen and/or call Margo Brown at 607-725-0264.

Signup sheets will be up after the first of the year. Updates to follow.

Sponsored by the Church and Family Life Ministry Team



Zoom Update

We know how frustrating it's been to deal with technical issues for all of you. We have already identified and solved some problems but more remain. We are firmly committed to improving the Zoom experience for everyone who calls in. We have identified some external experts who have already helped us a great deal and continue to work with us. We appreciate your continued patience with us and ask that you please keep tuning in on Sundays. Also, if you have issues during the service, please send us a note in the Chat so we can respond quickly and accurately.

The Mission and Outreach team offers our heartfelt thank you for the generous outpouring of kindness shown during the holiday giving season.

We sincerely hope that your gifts to the Salvation Army and Pathways brought you smiles and a sense of meaningful connection.

We acknowledge the many ongoing needs in our community, and the difference that our contributions do make in the lives of others, our neighbors, especially at Christmas. Thank you!

Rachel Gustina, Pauletta O'Donnell, and Lynn Decher

Here are the photos of the **Mission and Outreach Team** busily putting the Treat Bags together.

Those shown include Diane Haskins, Rachel Hofstetter, Pat Iddings, Laurie Johnson, and Jan Kostolansky.

Thank you to everyone for their generosity and giving!



January Birthdays
5th - Sue McMaster
6th - Jill VanDewoestine
7th - Tom Wilkinson
10th - Lucille Gorton
14th - Matthew Reif
15th - Diane Legendre
22nd - Angela Allis
24th - Steve Grinnell
Rev. Henry Pascual
Gwen Zimmermann
27th - Mary Daly
29th - Josh Wilken





If you are interested in learning more about our church, please visit our website at corningucc.org or scan the QR code on the right.



Contact us

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"The Caller"

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

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

Office hours:

Tues/Fri: 9:00am-Noon

Pastor Office Hours:

Tuesday-Friday:

9:00am - 2:00pm

His visitations are scheduled on Tues - Fri afternoons. Mondays and Saturdays he is off.

Sunday Service

In-person worship and Zoom worship every Sunday at 10 AM
<https://www.corningucc.org/>

Nursery

Nursery provided from 9:30am-11:30am for children under 4.