

# The Caller



First Congregational United Church of Christ of Corning



## Musings along the way

By Pastor Henry

Dear Church Family,  
We are well into our Lenten journey, a season that traditionally begins with Jesus' temptation in the wilderness. Recently, my family and I drove through the iconic desert highways of the American Southwest. Mesmerized by the dramatic red rocks, arid landscapes, and the historic Route 66, I found myself dreaming

of returning someday. It's easy for us to romanticize the desert as a place of recreation, retreats, or hiking. But for Jesus—and for the Israelites wandering Sinai for forty years—the wilderness wasn't a vacation. In the Bible, the “wild” is a place of hardship and danger, hunger and thirst, struggle and testing. It is the difficult terrain one must survive

### Annual Event

Upcoming Church and Family Life events

Page 3

### Update

From Mission and Outreach Team

Page 4

### News and Notes

Midday Fellowship, and Small Group Dinners

Page 5

before reaching the Promised Land.

Yet, the wilderness is also where God meets us. God often speaks in the desolate places of our lives. For strength. For inspiration. For growth. Throughout Scripture, the wilderness represents a place of preparation for the great work ahead. Even Jesus spent forty days in that solitude for clarity of purpose and to learn to trust God.

This Lent, consider this challenge: In a world of 24-hour news, social media, and digital noise, how do we hear the "still, small voice"?

Perhaps our fast this year isn't about chocolate, but about clearing emotional and digital clutter. By slowing down and resisting the urge to be constantly productive and on the go, we create space for prayer, worship, meditation, study, and simply being present.

To help find that focus, I invite you to our ongoing **Ecumenical Lenten Study**.

We gather every Thursday at 6:00 p.m. at the Community Mennonite Fellowship (290 Park Ave., Corning.)

We are exploring lives that offer hope through courage and compassion—including, believe it or not, Dolly Parton! That's right—the rhinestone queen herself, singer-songwriter, and philanthropist. Now, that's one "sparkly" case study!

Yours for the journey,  
Pastor Henry

...”still, small voice?,”...

“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](http://corningucc.org) for Sermons, Events, and other Happenings at FCUCCC



**Ecumenical Lenten Study & Soup Supper**  
Thursdays 6pm at Community Mennonite Fellowship



**Midday Fellowship**  
March 11, 11 a.m.  
Bring a dish to pass lunch & stay for a guest speaker, see pg. 5

The new March/April 2026 edition of The Upper Room Daily Devotional Guide is available in the Narthex. Please help yourself.

Don't forget to sign-up for 2026 Flowers, Coffee Hour and Faith Formation Leaders. The sheets are located on the Bulletin Board.

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## Plans for Church and Family Life for 2026

- Small Group Dinners – February 20th, John and Margo Brown to host, Star will host one in early March
- Corning Tree Project – meeting soon, stay tuned for more information
- Earth Day – April 22nd, another clean-up project for us. Check out details on FLX
- Pickleball at the Arnot Mall late March – 15\$/person, sign-up sheet will be in Fellowship Hall
- Biking at Pine Creek – May 30th, back up May 31st
- Kayaking and Picnic – Cowanesque Dam – September 26th, back up Sept. 27th
- Rochester Baseball Game – September 30th

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## SAVE THE DATE:

June 12th-13th: We Bloomed Anyway Southern Finger Lakes Pride's 7th Annual Pride Festival Weekend. More information to come, stay tuned!

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### Follow us



@FCUCCC



@corningucc

### March Birthdays

3<sup>rd</sup> - Brynn Simons

7<sup>th</sup> - Tom McGrew

Dean Simons

11<sup>th</sup> - Geoffrey Tennent

12<sup>th</sup> - Joey Hogan

13<sup>th</sup> - Joseph Reif

15<sup>th</sup> - Pauletta O'Donnell

23<sup>rd</sup> - Lucy Breslin

28<sup>th</sup> - Charles Hogan

29<sup>th</sup> - Grace Lubold

29<sup>th</sup> - Aidan Wilken

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From time to time the **Mission and Outreach team** will provide in *The Caller* an update on one of the numerous local non-profits that have participated in our speaker series. The message below from CCFP was copied with permission from a January email.

To donate, please visit [corningfoodpantry.com](http://corningfoodpantry.com) or send it to CCFP, PO Box 1255, Corning NY 14830. Thank You!

### **A message from the Corning Community Food Pantry**

"As we look back on the past year, we want to pause and express our deepest gratitude for the extraordinary support we received in the fight against hunger. In all honesty, 2025 was one of the most challenging ones in our 52-year history, especially this past fall. Our all-volunteer staff felt the strain but pushed through with compassion. Donations of food, essential items and money kept pouring in, just in time. You pulled through in a big way!

Thank you to every individual and family who helped in some way. Thank you to the local businesses, schools, churches, and organizations that hosted drives, fundraisers, special offerings, grants, and matches. And thank you to the gardeners, gleaners, and farmers who shared fresh produce from their harvests. Your kindness, compassion, and generosity continue to inspire us.

In 2025, we served 15% more people than in 2024, including a 22% increase in the number of children. Many of our neighbors are facing heartbreaking challenges, but because of your support, we were able to help ease their burden.

#### **People Served by Corning Community Food Pantry in 2025**

- 8,458 Children
  - 12,517 Adults
  - 4,059 Seniors
- 25,034 Total

We remain committed to serving people from all backgrounds and offering the dignity of client choice, allowing individuals and families to select the foods that best meet their needs. Special distributions and outreach projects continue to be an essential part of our work, including partnerships with Head Start, Dayspring, Family Service Society, Stewart Park Apartments, Holiday Food Bags for Veterans (through the Bath VA), and Essential Needs Bags for Girls and Women. Our pantry does far more than provide groceries—we strive to both feed and educate, offering support with kindness and respect.

We simply could not do this work without you. Thank you for standing with us and caring for our community with such generosity."

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



### March Midday Fellowship Meeting

Our next Midday Fellowship Meeting will be Wednesday, March 11, 2026, at 11:00 am we will be meeting in Fellowship Hall. Please bring a Dish-to Pass.

Our Meeting begins at 11:00am with our Speaker Joel Vanslyke, Physical Therapist from Choice Physical Therapy. Lunch will follow and we will be making our Spring Plans.

#### Payment Information

Comments (optional)

Add \$1.80 to cover the processing fee  
The fee would be \$0.76 for an ACH bank transfer.

**Give \$50.00**

#### An Optional Way to Maximize Your Impact

Your generosity is so important to sustain our church! When you donate online, a small processing fee is applied. If you're able, you may choose to cover this fee by check marking the box to cover the processing fee.

This is entirely optional, and we are sincerely grateful for your support in any form. Thank you for supporting First Congregational UCC!

<https://www.corningucc.org/pages/give>

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!





## ECUMENICAL LENTEN STUDY

*“Making Our Way Forward:*

*Lenten Wisdom from Remarkable Lives”*

Thursdays, February 26–March 26

*Join us as we explore the lives of remarkable people whose courage, compassion, and conviction help shape a more hopeful world.*

*February 26: Jan Richardson*

*March 5: David Bentley Hart*

*March 12: Dietrich Bonhoeffer*

*March 19: Dolly Parton*

*March 26: Stephanie Spellers*

**Soup Supper at 6 p.m.**

**Study & Discussion at 6:30 p.m.**

**Location: Community Mennonite Fellowship**

**290 Park Avenue, Corning, NY** *(entrance on Hammond Street)*

***All are welcome!***

**Participating Churches:** *Christ Episcopal Church, Community Mennonite Fellowship, Emanuel Lutheran Church, First Congregational United Church of Christ, First United Methodist Church, First Baptist Church of Painted Post, United Church of Painted Post, and First Presbyterian Church.*



If you are interested in learning more about our church, please visit our website at [corningucc.org](http://corningucc.org) or scan the QR code on the right.



## Contact us

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### *"The Caller"*

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*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.