



## Connecting UCC and Disciples Congregations in Western New York

### Seeing Through a New Lens

By Rev. Nadine Schrodtt, New Light Chrisitan Church

The book of Acts in the Bible introduces a man named Saul, also known as Paul, who was a persecutor of the early Christian church. We first meet Saul when he approves, and is present at, the stoning of Stephen. Following Stephen's death, *"Saul was ravaging the church by entering house after house; dragging off both men and women, he committed them to prison"* (Acts 8:1b-3, NRSV).

I have read this verse many times over the years but never considered it in the way I do today. I read and understand it now in relation to the Karen refugee church where I serve as pastor, and the current political climate in the United States.

In the United States there are few days that go by without hearing something related to immigration issues. Amongst the complexity and chaos of all these issues are refugees.

Refugees are defined by the United Nations Higher Council for Refugees (UNHCR) as "those who have been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. Most likely, they cannot return home or are afraid to do so" (Refugee Facts: What is a Refugee?, 2025).

I am privileged to pastor New Light Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Buffalo, NY. Our congregation, mainly Karen refugees, has been worshipping and

serving the community together for seventeen years. Our Karen members include Green Card holders, naturalized citizens, asylees, and foreign students, all legally residing in the U.S.

The Karen people are from Myanmar (formerly Burma). For decades, the Karen people and other multiethnic groups have left Myanmar to avoid the conflict with the Burmese army. Most of the refugees at NLCC waited several years before they could relocate to the United States, residing in some of the nine camps along the Thailand-Myanmar border.

On his first day as president, Trump signed executive orders to indefinitely suspend the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP), stopping refugee admissions and processing, with a few exceptions. Foreign aid was frozen (Laurence Benenson, 2025). This action drastically impacted refugees and those involved in their relocation and safety.

This administration's policies have created a climate of fear and uncertainty here and around world. NLCC experiences it as we have friends and loved ones in camps and who are displaced within Myanmar, facing reduced or no humanitarian aid. There is uncertainty about reuniting with family members who were undergoing resettlement processing. Students worry about deportation before completing their education, and those wishing to visit family abroad fear they may not be allowed back into the U.S. There is anxiety over being targeted by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and deported for being Asian. Who would think that we would have to discuss how to be safe

in a country meant to welcome and protect those who live here.

It is not legal to deport refugees on the basis that they are refugees. However, this administration's policies have created an environment where even refugees with no criminal record could encounter an increased risk of deportation because of stringent enforcement and potentially broader interpretations of immigration violations (Barrón-López, 2025).

While the Trump administration aims to deport unauthorized immigrants and criminals, Green Card holders, students, asylees, and even citizens are sometimes detained and deported. ICE has been prioritizing rapid processing and having to meet daily arrest quotas, leading to wrongful arrests. They can also enter courthouses, schools, hospitals, and places of worship, exacerbating the fear (Walters, 2025; Laurence Benenson, 2025).

The story of Saul's beginnings can be easily read through the lens of a refugee, as Saul's early story reflects the current situation of refugees in the U.S. They fear prison or deportation due to their identity, similar to how early Christians feared Saul's persecution. Luke, the author of Acts, highlights the suffering and fear Saul caused, depicting him as an evil figure. Perhaps Saul can be understood as representing those who inflict harm and fear on others today.

Thankfully, Saul's story has good news. In Acts, chapter nine, Saul's life was changed (Acts 9:1-31, NRSV). Saul is on the road to Damascus, with persecutions on his mind, when "*a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?' He asked, 'Who are you, Lord?' The reply came, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting'"* (Acts 9:1-5, NRSV).

Following that encounter of God's grace and call on his life, Saul became a dedicated follower of Jesus, spreading the Good News of the risen Christ in word and deed.

This story gives us hope! If God can change the heart of a contemptible person such as Saul, God can change the hearts of those who contribute to the unjust treatment of God's people today. We pray for them, and we continue to show forth God's love, hoping it will find them. That Jesus will stop them on their path, speak their names and hold them accountable by asking, "Why do you persecute me?"

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#### References

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## Kenmore UCC Celebrates 99 years!

Kenmore UCC is celebrating its 99<sup>th</sup> anniversary all during 2025 while looking forward to our hundredth anniversary next year.

- In April, we celebrated the retirement of our most recent pastor, Rev. Dawn Marie Meier.
- In May we had our annual plant sale which is our largest fundraiser. Sales were excellent this year.
- Save the date, June 22, for our Chicken BBQ (by BW's) from 1-3 PM. Cost is \$16. This will be drive-up only.
- Each summer we have a church garden walk. Some members invite us to visit their yards and gardens. After enjoying the beautiful blooms, we all come back to church for a potluck dinner. July is the perfect time for this.
- The first week of August will find several members traveling to the Chautauqua Institution for the day where they will host the Social Hour at UCC Headquarters. It's a great day trip. Maybe you'd like to join us and enjoy the Chautauqua experience, too.
- We will be sending more information in the next *Vineyard* about our meat/basket raffle which will be held in September.



*Kenmore UCC's  
Annual Plant Sale in  
May 2025.*

***Congratulations, Kenmore UCC on 99 years!***

## Palm Sunday Community Cantata 2025 Pioneer Area Churches – Arcade UCC and Beyond!



*Photo credit: Ginger Comstock*

The Palm Sunday Community Cantata was held at Hope Lutheran Church on Sunday, April 13 at 3 pm. Talented singers and musicians, comprised of performers from all around the Arcade/ Pioneer Area, lifted their voices and sang songs of praise. Laurie Sledge, organist at Arcade UCC expertly accompanied under the direction of Dona Roll.

Thank you to everyone who helped to make this glorious production of *Sanctuary* come together! This event is always a meaningful beginning to Holy Week. If you missed the performance, or would like to watch it again, simply click the link here:

<https://www.facebook.com/hopearcadeny/videos/9470845036298672>

Special thanks to Dona Roll for organizing and directing the performance and to Pastor Shawn Hannon and Hope Lutheran for welcoming everyone to their community center on Palm Sunday!





**Faith United Church  
of Christ,  
Williamsville  
Celebrating 65  
Years of Ministry  
1960-2025**



***Congratulations, Faith UCC!***

**Summer Devotional:**

**Seeking Peace Amidst the Chaos:**

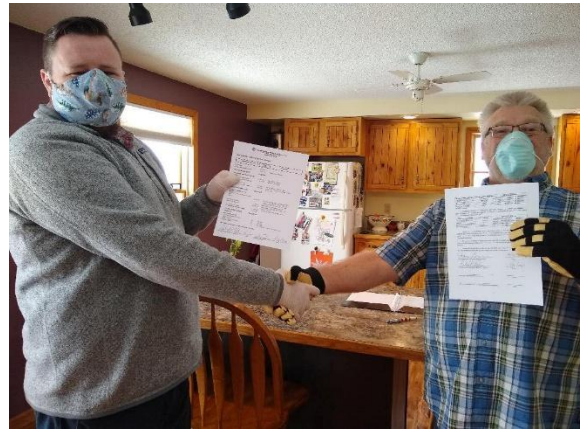
**Verse:** "[Psalm 118:24](#) "This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it."

**Reflection:** Summer can be a busy time with family, vacations, and other commitments. Amidst the hustle and bustle, find time to focus on God and seek His peace. Remember that each day is a gift from Him, and it's a time to rejoice and be glad.

**Prayer:** "Lord, help me to find peace in Your love, even amidst the chaos of summer. Guide me to prioritize my relationship with You."



**Congratulations, Pastor Josh Bower on  
Five Years of Ministry with Arcade UCC!**



April 15, 2025 marked five years of ministry with the great folks of **Arcade United Church of Christ, Congregational!** We've come a long way since this early pandemic picture where we completed the call agreement while social distanced. It has been and continues to be a very blessed journey!

- Pastor Josh Bower, Facebook post,  
April 15, 2025



From the entire Arcade UCC Church family, we thank you, Pastor Josh, for all you have done and continue to do for our church and our community. Your generosity, love, genuine care and passion for helping others and for making a positive impact in the lives of our area youth is something that we are forever grateful for. You are truly a blessing and a God-send. Congratulations on five years of amazing ministry and outreach through Arcade UCC!

A poem by Jaime L. Hodge



## Menagerie

The sun and moon,  
in harmony,  
Play emotional chords  
strung in our  
mechanical center.  
The flesh toned oval  
displays the music  
played across it.  
The earth and the sky  
on a palette of hues  
Draw multitudes of  
rainbows and bluebirds  
Human brushes show where  
each stroke is placed  
in this grand work.  
The dew and the crystalline waters  
swim through the paths of years.  
Running through our  
centers and  
soothing our souls.  
Unbridled and untouched  
the stream and brooks  
flow purely.  
For now until eternity;  
the sun, moon,  
the earth, sky,  
the dew, and the waters  
show us our life.  
The world is truly a menagerie.



*Hi, friends: I don't know about you but recently I had been completely immersed in viewing television as journalists and photographers, clergy and parishioners, brought us right into St. Peter's Square to witness the funeral of Pope Francis. Then, I became immersed in watching the next historic process involving Cardinals electing the new Pope. I became so caught up in these doings, that I decided to share with you **my** story about **my** Pope. Yes, I had one (a story, that is). Enjoy!*

## "Papal Ponderings" by Lois Vidaver

I once 'met' a Pope. We didn't shake hands, he didn't offer me a personal blessing, but I felt his powerful spirituality reaching me all the way to the back of the room of the conference room we shared.

In 1957, after college graduation and a year of hard work, I managed to stash enough money away to plan a summer's trip to Europe. Two other friends from Hunter College did the same. We sweet-talked our bosses into giving us the summer off (without pay, of course) and sailed on an Italian ship to England's white cliffs of Dover. From there, on a tour with 10 other graduates from around the U.S., we made our way by trains, buses and planes through six countries until we landed in Rome.

I soon learned that one of those friends, Mary, had come from home with two invitations to pay a visit to Pope Pius XII. I felt like she had won the lottery. Putting my envy aside, I convinced myself she would ask Marianne, who was also Catholic, to join her on this memorable occasion.

Instead, Mary invited me to go along. I have never known why, but true to my religious heritage as a Protestant, I protested. Well, sort of, but she convinced me. I could not have been more excited. The day finally arrived. Picturing us joining the thousands of pilgrims who routinely greeted the Pope in St. Peter's Square, I was proven wrong. We didn't go there but instead made our way to his summer residence, Castel Gandolfo, 16 miles from Rome on Lake Albano.

When we reached our destination, we were ushered into a large reception area filled with maybe 100 folks. It felt intimate, as if we were waiting to greet our own pastor during the church coffee hour. I thought I would be nervous but was soon marveling at the diversity in that room: a sea of faces from many cultures, all sizes, all colors, all excited to be there. Several agile men scrambled up on the wide windowsills to gain a better view.

Finally, Pope Pius XII joined us and advancing toward the mic, began speaking. Fluent in seven languages, he spoke slowly in several, including English. I don't remember what he said, but I do know it felt welcoming. The spirit in that room was electric, all of us holding our breaths and standing absolutely immobile so that we wouldn't miss a word. Then, it was time for him to bless rosaries. The one I held tightly in my hand I presented to my sister-in-law later, to her amazement. She certainly wasn't expecting that! The time with him was too short. I imagine others felt that way, too, as we made our way quietly out into the sunshine.

I share this memory with you because of the headlines that dominated the newspapers at this time in our history; the funeral of Pope Francis exemplified the simple life he lived daily among the faithful.

Now we have experienced another historic Papal occasion. The flick, "Conclave" unlocked a door we have not been able to go through before. I hadn't realized there was so much politicking among the Cardinals!

It was an exciting time for those of us watching the black smoke turn white. My trip to visit a Pope makes it so much more alive to me. Thank you, Mary, wherever you are....

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***From Pastor Krista Ulrich, Co-Leader, Western Area Youth***

### **Western Area Youth Updates!**

The early spring has been an exciting time for youth activity in the Western Area of the UCC. Our Jr. WAY youth (ages 4 yrs. – 6<sup>th</sup> grade) met at St. James UCC on May 10<sup>th</sup> for a Jr. WAY Animal Day. We talked about how magnificent God's creation is, did a "duck feet" experiment, made edible animal crafts, sang songs and read a great animal book. Kids from five UCC churches enjoyed their time together.

Our WAY youth group (grades 7<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>) is traveling to Sunderland, MA from July 7<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup>. We alternate locations each summer between an urban location and a rural location. We hope to do some work with Habitat, on a local farm, at a food pantry, helping elderly with gardening and serving community dinners. Our free day will be spent hiking and swimming!

Our Sr. WAY group (ages 18 – 35) is in the process of restructuring so they will be self-directed and self-led. The initial activity for this group was a weekend at DCC in January. 25 young adults gathered for the weekend. Many of them gathered for a facilitated conversation at the WNYACIC Spring meeting. It's exciting to see this age group gathering momentum

when many areas see a decline in activity within this age group.

A WAY Advisory Council has been formed. It is composed of area youth leaders and pastors within the UCC. Our mission is to continue bringing young people together to experience fellowship and share the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I believe it would be safe to say that the Western Association is on the cutting edge of youth activity in New York State! If you have any questions or have a youth who would like to become more involved in any of our programming, please don't hesitate to reach out!

In peace,

Pastor Krista (716-572-5642)

Co-Leader Western Area Youth



**For more information on the upcoming WAY Mission Trip, please visit:**  
<https://www.zionuccton.com/way/>



### **Outreach at East Aurora Christian Church**

East Aurora Christian Church's long running Annual Pie Sale will occur on July 3 at Hamlin Park, East Aurora. EACC members will bake and donate at least 25 fruit pies for the sale. Members will also cut the pies as pie slices are sold at the event. The pie sale begins at 5 pm and runs until sold out. All proceeds will be donated to a local non-profit.

EACC welcomed new members Peggy and Dan Minotti, Sharyn Cass, and Tom Marsteller on Palm Sunday.

Birthday Blessings Boxes was an outreach project led by members Jessica Gainey and Michelle Philbin. Donations were sought from the EACC members to create boxes with all the ingredients for a child's birthday party including cake making supplies and party decorations. Thirty-two boxes were created and donated to low-income families served by ROC and Family Promise. Happy Birthday!

The third annual Food Drive for food insecure students at the Parkdale School in East Aurora occurred. Member Nancy Higgin served as leader of this project. Our partner ROC provided a list of needed food and EACC members donated the requested food for 38 children in 18 families. The donated food was bagged for each child and delivered to the school. The estimated value of the donated food was \$900.

EACC is a Green Chalice Church and participated with the Waterkeepers on Earth Day in the cleanup of the creek at Knox Farm, East Aurora. Members and other volunteers picked up 42 bags of garbage and nine tires for the beauty of the earth.

## Dunkirk Camp & Conference Center News



### DUNKIRK CAMP & CONFERENCE CENTER 2025 CAMP SCHEDULE

DCC is excited to announce registration is now open for the 2025 Camping Season which includes camps for everyone! We offer First-Time Camper, Multi-Week Camper, and Sibling Discounts. Camp registration still open! **Register Today at** [www.dunkirkcc.com](http://www.dunkirkcc.com).

#### JUNE

June 6 – 8 Women's Weekend  
June 16 – 20 **(NEW) Fun over 50 Camp**  
June 22 – 28 Family Camp I

#### JULY

June 29 – July 5 Senior High Camp  
June 29 – July 5 Pilgrim Camp  
June 29 – July 2 Pilgrim Mini Camp  
July 6 – 9 **(NEW) Camp Good Ol' Days**  
July 13 – 19 Outdoor Adventure Camp  
July 20 – 26 Family Camp II  
July 27 – Aug 2 Pioneer Camp

#### AUGUST

August 3 – 9 Soccer Camp  
August 3 – 9 Swim Camp  
August 10 – 16 Junior High Camp  
August 17 – 21 **(NEW) Clergy Retreat**  
August 21 – 24 One Piece at a Time Camp

#### SEPTEMBER

Sept 12 – 14 Star Wars Camp  
Sept 19 – 21 Harry Potter Camp  
Sept 26 – 28 Wellness & Mindfulness Retreat

#### OCTOBER

October 10 – 12 Fall Adventure Camp

#### NOVEMBER

Nov 7 – 9 DCC Scrapbook Weekend



Dunkirk Camp and Conference Center was voted Best of the Best Summer Camp in Chautauqua County for the second year in a row. Come experience why!

# PILGRIM CAMP

## AT DUNKIRK CAMP AND CONFERENCE CENTER

Mini Week: June 29th – July 2nd, 2025

Full Week: June 29th – July 5th, 2025

Early Bird Special Until 4/15  
**SAVE \$25**

**Overnight Summer Camp for youth grades entering 1–5 in Fall 2025**

This camp is for young or first-time campers who want to begin summer with lots of fun activities with other campers. We will splash in the creek in search of crayfish, explore the beach for sea glass souvenirs, swim in our pool to cool off, sing silly songs around the campfire, play goofy games, and MUCH, MUCH, MORE! We create an atmosphere to make new friends in a Christian environment. Join us for the whole week or just for the 3-day "mini" camp.

**Register Now!**  
 ☎ 716-366-1900  
 🌐 [www.dunkirkcc.com](http://www.dunkirkcc.com)  
 📍 3692 Lakeshore Dr. Dunkirk, NY 14048

First Time Camper Discount  
**SAVE \$100**

Reach out to [exec.director@dunkirkcc.com](mailto:exec.director@dunkirkcc.com) with questions!

This camp is for young or first-time campers that want to begin summer with lots of fun activities with other campers. We will splash in the creek and look for crayfish, explore the beach for sea glass, swim in our pool that now has a slide, sing silly songs, play goofy games and MUCH, MUCH MORE! We create an atmosphere to make new friends in a Christian environment. Join us for the whole week or just for the 3 day "mini" camp. Cost is \$520.00 for full week and \$350 for the mini week.

Directors are Kathy and Amanda Aldrow.

**FUN AFTER 50** June 16 - 20 2025  
DUNKIRK CAMP & CONFERENCE CENTER SLEEP AWAY CAMP FOR ADULTS!

Early Bird Special Until 4/15 **SAVE \$25** Sign up with a buddy! **SAVE \$25 EACH**

- ENGAGING WORKSHOPS
- DAILY HAPPY HOURS
- AFTERNOON POOL TIME
- EVENING ENTERTAINMENT
- CAMPFIRE
- GET YOUR OWN ROOM
- CABINS HOLD UP TO FOUR PEOPLE
- MEALS INCLUDED
- MAKE NEW FRIENDS!

**Only \$425!**

3602 Lakeshore Dr. Dunkirk, NY 14048  
716-366-1900  
www.dunkirkcc.com

*An escape from the outside world, to learn a little, have fun, and enjoy fellowship*

Do you miss those days of waking up, knowing you were going to camp? Where you see all of your friends from last year and spend a few days laughing, running around, and exploring? Well here's your chance to have that again! Camp Good Ol' Days is for adults ages 21-35 to spend time being a kid again. Adventures, games, crafts, hikes, and bonfires all centered around our adult selves being a child at heart.

### DCC VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY



We could use some volunteers to help mow the lawn this summer season at Dunkirk Camp & Conference Center! Interested?

Contact Anne or Larry Cornwall  
716-366-1900

## MOTHER'S MEMORIAL ROOF PROJECT UPDATE



We are pleased to announce the completion of the roof and dormer window replacement at Mother's Memorial. This iconic building had taken a beating from Father Time and Mother Nature. You'll notice a new black metal roof, as well as new clean and clear glass windows that are tightly sealed and let in abundant light. This major renovation will enhance the exterior of Mother's, as well as protect the interior of this historic building for generations to come.

The structure was designed to serve as an all-purpose assembly hall. Construction began in 1923, with funds collected from the Atlantic, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana and New York State Sunday School leagues. The primary fundraisers from these groups were mothers who had lost their sons in World War I. Later, as a fitting tribute to their sacrifice, this building was renamed... Mother's Memorial.

There is still time to donate if you would like a chance to support this project In Memory of, or In Honor of, a mother, grandmother or veteran.

### Ways to Donate:

- Visit our website: [www.dunkirkcc.com](http://www.dunkirkcc.com) (PayPal, Venmo, Credit/Debit Card)
- Call our office: 716-366-1900
- Mail a check to:  
Dunkirk Conference Center  
3602 E. Lake Rd  
Dunkirk, NY 14048

# CLERGY RETREAT

August 18-21, 2025  
at Dunkirk Conference Center

A retreat for clergy to find respite and fellowship. There will be planned discussion sessions (that are optional) or simply take some time to read, nap or sit and look out over beautiful Lake Erie. In addition to morning communion and evening worship, we will enjoy the pool, walks down to the lake, campfires and more.

*This time is meant to feed the one who feeds others.*

Registration fee: \$150.00  
Register online at [dunkirkcc.com](http://dunkirkcc.com) (use QR code)  
or by phone @ 716-366-1900

## From Ginger Comstock, NY/HELP



## NY/HELP Honduras Plans an August Trip

Long-time member of NY/HELP, Judy Toner is planning to lead a 10-day trip to Honduras at the beginning of August. So far there are five people who will be on the trip. Arrangements have been made with their Honduran translator, Rigo, who is excited to travel with them again. There is still room for one or two more people to join this group. Each person will be paying their own airfare as well as \$800 toward trip expenses including supplies and projects to be done while in Honduras. The last two days are expected to be a trip to Copan to see the Mayan ruins. If you wish to send a donation to NY/HELP, simply scan the following QR code:



## From Robert Christmann

## Changes at Kenilworth UCC

The Kenilworth UCC continues its very active church life in dealing with many past changes and many more ahead. Our church property and building is up for sale both on the residential and commercial side. We have been facing diminishing financial resources for a number of years. Hopefully we'll be able to complete this sale in the next few months.

During this time of transition, we have been very warmly welcomed by the St. Stephens-Bethlehem UCC Church family. We are moving toward a full partnership and have been worshipping in their building with them since January, 2025. We feel almost fully integrated into our new church. The leadership of both churches continues to plan for a total implementation of the two church families.

With our church membership doubled as a result of our merger, many more opportunities have opened up for good works to continue.

**PLYMOUTH CROSSROADS**

# OPEN HOUSE

Sunday, June 8th From 1-5pm

3566 Clinton St, West Seneca, NY 14224  
RSVP to [nbarton@plymouthcrossroads.org](mailto:nbarton@plymouthcrossroads.org) by Friday, May 30th

Plymouth Crossroads, 3566 Clinton Street in West Seneca, is holding an Open House on Sunday, June 8, from 1-5 p.m. Come and see for yourself the great things happening at Plymouth Crossroads! We're excited to share our new home and introduce ourselves to more people in our Western NY community. <https://www.plymouthcrossroads.org/>



## Vacation Bible School 2025 “Road Trip”

First Congregational UCC  
132 N. Main St.  
Angola, NY 14006

**Monday, July 28 – Thursday, July 31**  
**8:45 am – 11:30 am**

**FREE for all children beginning at 3 years old**  
**All community children are invited!**

\*Games \* Snacks \*Crafts \*Stories \*Music

Call 716-549-2115 to register

Dear God,  
I adore how beautiful  
the glimpses I get of You  
through the fragrance of sweet  
summer  
and by the rainbow of her blooms

~

I adore how lovely  
the glimpses I get of You  
through the birdsong in my garden  
and by the flouncy flowers too.



-By Wendy L.  
Macdonald



Trinity UCC is Cooking for Their  
Community

**Free Community Meals**

Erie Ave. & Park St., Gowanda, 14070  
Use Park St. entrance – follow the signs

**June 14- Pork Medallions, mashed potatoes,  
veggie, applesauce & cookie**

**July 12- Italian Sausage Hoagies, Tossed  
Salad, Chips, fruit & cookie**

**Aug. 9- Sloppy Joes, pasta salad, chips,  
fruited jello & cookie**

**Sept. 13- Chicken Fritters w/country gravy  
over rice, veggie, applesauce & cookie**

4 until 6 pm or until gone, drive-thru or walk up

Free will donations are appreciated but not  
necessary. All donations are used to help other  
organizations in our community.

**facebook**

## *Have You Seen the WNY Area Churches in Covenant Facebook Page?*

*When you are scrolling around  
Facebook, be sure to check out the WNY  
Area Churches in Covenant page! Stay  
up-to-date on upcoming events, links for  
registrations to various meetings, live-  
streamed services and much more!*

*Simply click the link below to go  
directly to the Facebook page now!*

*Then “like” the page to receive  
notifications in the future!*

<https://www.facebook.com/WNYACIC>



## 53<sup>rd</sup> Annual Strawberry Social

First Congregational UCC  
132 N. Main St.  
Angola, NY 14006

Thursday, June 12, 11 am – 8 pm  
Friday, June 13, 11 am – 8 pm

Hot dogs, hamburgers, cheeseburgers, grilled cheese, Italian sausage, grilled chicken, French fries, sweet potato fries, sundaes, milkshakes, cones, strawberry shortcake, pop, water and coffee (*Menu subject to change*)

Bake Sale inside.

New this year: DUNK TANK

Back again this year: Decorating Main St. with chalk:  
Fri., June 13, 4:30-7:30 pm

Entertainment:

Thurs. - 2-5 pm: Michael Skowronski  
5-6 pm: "The Love Movement" Exercise  
6-8 pm: "Gang of Scoundrels"

Fri. - 3-5 pm: Burdick, Kody & Herren  
5-8 pm: "Gang of Scoundrels"  
Please bring your lawn chair!



Inside Garage Sale

St. Paul's United Church of Christ  
11 Washington Street, Attica NY 14011

June 14th 8:30 am - 2 pm

Refreshments available

Over 15 tables inside to purchase from.

FOOD TRUCKS! BASKET RAFFLE! MUSIC!



# Baskets and Bites

## Sun., June 1<sup>st</sup> 11 am – 2 pm

- \* Cheesy Chick Food Truck
- \* Great Aussie Bite Food Truck
- \* Lots of Great Baskets!  
(usually over 100!)
- \* Music by the Buffalo Silver Band

Compliments of the Boy Scouts:

- \* Foam Tip Archery
- \* Bounce House

Items for Baskets or completed basket donations are requested.  
They may be dropped off at the church office during business hours  
Mon. – Fri. from 9 am – 2 pm.

Ebenezer United Church of Christ  
630 Main Street, West Seneca



Payne Avenue Christian Church  
1459 Payne Ave.

North Tonawanda 14120

Is having a drive-through Chivetta's  
chicken dinner from noon – 4 pm on  
Saturday, July 12, 2025.

Ticket price will be \$15 and dinner  
includes: ½ chicken, roll and butter,  
macaroni salad and baked beans. Arrive  
early before they are sold out!  
Questions, call Brett 716-491-6205  
Or the church office 716-260-1217  
We accept cash and Venmo.

**From Rev. Lynn Morgan, Treasurer,  
WNYACIC**

### **Western Area Treasurer's Report**

As summer (finally) dawns in Western New York, your Area treasurer knows what every church treasurer knows: that although bills have a metronomic regularity, giving does not. I get it; it's distracting to see sunshine in WNY. We all have plenty of pent-up demand for play.

Covenant Share obligations for most of our modest-sized churches are not budget breakers. Typically, the majority of churches put off paying the year's "dues" until close to the end of the year. That's perfectly sensible and we are happy to take the funds whenever they come in. But it would be helpful to consider perhaps scheduling that one-time payment halfway through the year, or breaking it into a couple chunks and sending one mid-year and the remainder at the end of the year. Although we can manage our cash-flow requirements without a steady flow on the supply side, it would be helpful to have a little more flowing in through the summer.

Your local church treasurer would tell you the same thing, I'm sure, so don't forget to send your envelopes to church even when you're playing hooky. This is my public service announcement on behalf of church bookkeepers everywhere. Thanks for your attention. You may now return to your gleeful appreciation of late spring and summer.



**From Jeff Mason, Finance/Endowment  
Committee**

### **ENDOWMENT REPORT**

The Finance Committee voted at its September 2024 meeting to move from the Capital Group's American Funds to a more socially responsible group of funds. Our investment advisor found several funds that are managed by Osaic Wealth, Inc., and the transfer from American to Osaic took place on January 6 and 7, 2025. The value of the American Funds on December 31, 2024 was \$49,258.12, and on March 31, 2025 there was \$3.78 in interest remaining in that account. The total value of the Osaic funds on March 31 was \$48,576.34, so the combined total for the two funds decreased by \$677.78 in the first quarter of 2025.

The value of the United Church Funds account ending in 010 was \$70,272.97 on December 31. The value at the end of March was \$73,975.64, an increase of \$3,702.67.

The largest share of our endowment funds is in the United Church Funds account ending in 009. This is the account from which we usually transfer money early in the year as our annual disbursement to the Western Area checking account. The 2025 Western Area budget that was approved at the annual meeting in November called for a disbursement of \$36,181, and that transfer took place on February 18. The value of that account on December 31 was \$650,619.06, and the value on March 31 was \$610,193.01. This decrease of \$40,426.05 was largely due to the disbursement that took place in February.

The total value of our investments at the end of 2024 was \$770,150.15, and the total value at the end of the first quarter was \$732,748.99. We always show a decrease during the first quarter, and our decrease in the first quarter of 2025 was \$37,401.16. We usually catch up by the end of the year, but with the current uncertainty in the financial markets, that might not happen in 2025. This could affect the amount of disbursement that will be determined when we develop the 2026 budget.



## WNYACIC Prayer Lists: June-August 2025

### June Prayer List

St. John's UCC, Buffalo. Elaine Utech, pastor  
Trinity UCC, Gowanda. Jess Kowalski, pastor  
First Congregational UCC, Jamestown.  
Rev. Rick Miller, pastor  
St. Paul's UCC, Wendelville, N. Tonawanda.  
Rev. Anne Dunlap, supply pastor  
Community Ministries Committee  
Chautauqua Association of Disciples of Christ  
Chautauqua UCC Society  
Global Ministries – prayers for Haiti and Ukraine

### July Prayer List

Phoenix UCC, Amherst. Marcia Tolman, pastor  
Riverside-Salem UCC/DOC, Grand Island.  
Rev. Catherine Rieley-Goddard, pastor  
First Congregational UCC, Niagara Falls.  
Kalee Mielke, pastor  
Rev. Marna Pritchard, pastor emerita  
Church of the Nativity UCC, Town of Tonawanda.  
Rev. Scott Thomas, interim pastor;  
Rev. Dan Schifeling, pastor emeritus  
East Aurora Christian Church (DOC).  
Rev. Jan Mahle, pastor;  
Rev. amos acree, pastor emeritus  
Department of Local Church Ministries  
VOICE Buffalo  
Dunkirk Camp & Conference Center  
Global Ministries – prayers for Sri Lanka

### August Prayer List

St. James UCC, Hamburg.  
Rev. Paul Werner, pastor  
Ebenezer UCC, West Seneca.  
Rev. Gary Gossel, pastor;  
Rev. Miranda Hammer, pastor  
United Baptist-Christian Church (DOC), Lewiston.  
Vince Eisaman, pastor  
New Light Christian Church (DOC – Karen Ministry),  
Buffalo. Rev. Nadine Schrodt, pastor  
Northeast Region, Disciples of Christ;  
Rev. Thaddeus Allen, Regional Minister,  
Northeastern Region  
Christian Women's Fellowship (DOC)  
Western Area Nominating Committee  
Global Ministries – prayers for Venezuela

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### ***From Rev. Gary Ferner, Assoc. Conference Minister***



### **CHURCHES IN TRANSITION**

Amherst Community Church UCC  
Kenmore UCC  
St. Paul's UCC, Wendelville  
St. Stephen's Bethlehem/Kenilworth  
Salem UCC, Tonawanda

*I invite the entire Western Area Churches in  
Covenant to keep these churches in your prayers as  
they journey through their respective transitions.*

\*\*\*\*\*

Peace and Greetings to each you, my siblings in  
Christ in the Western Area!

I will be taking a Sabbatical during the months of  
July, August, and September, and would like to let  
you know who will be covering for me during this  
time of rest and reflection.

Ministerial Profiles will be validated by Rev. Barbara

VanOlpen: [Bvanolpen@uccny.org](mailto:Bvanolpen@uccny.org)

Receiving and distributing Ministerial Profiles for open pastoral positions will also be Rev. Barbara

VanOlpen: [Bvanolpen@uccny.org](mailto:Bvanolpen@uccny.org)

Responding to Western Area and Association concerns of clergy, congregations, or laity will be

Rev. Ryan Henderson: [Rhenderson@uccny.org](mailto:Rhenderson@uccny.org)

Validated Local Church Profiles will be posted to the UCC Opportunities Webpage by Rev. Ryan

Henderson: [Rhenderson@uccny.org](mailto:Rhenderson@uccny.org)

Supporting Western Association Committee on Ministry: Rev. Marjorie Purnine:

[mpurnine@uccny.org](mailto:mpurnine@uccny.org)

Supporting the Western NY Area Churches in Covenant monthly meetings will also be Rev.

Marjorie Purnine: [mpurnine@uccny.org](mailto:mpurnine@uccny.org)

Each church in transition listed above will have a staff person assigned to them for support and resources. I will communicate with the individual search teams so that they have the proper contact information.

I'm really looking forward to this time away, and I look forward to sharing with you some of my reflections upon my return in October!

Feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions that I can help with before I take my Sabbatical: [gferner@uccny.org](mailto:gferner@uccny.org)  
Blessings on your ministries, and blessings on your summer!

Rev. Gary Ferner, Associate Conference Minister for Search and Call



## Strengthen the Church

The Strengthen the Church (STC) Offering reflects the shared commitment of people across the United Church of Christ to

cooperatively build up the UCC. Conferences and the national setting equally share the gifts given by members and friends through their local congregations. The funds raised support leadership development, new churches, youth ministry, and innovation in existing congregations. **By your generosity to this offering, you build up the Body of Christ.**

As God calls our congregations to be the church in new ways, your generosity will plant new churches, awaken new ideas in existing churches and develop the spiritual life in our youth and young adults. Contributions can be made online at any time [here](#).

## Money for WNYACIC Churches

**Does your church have an outreach ministry to your community, or hopes and dreams of a new initiative?**

*Enhance a clothing or food ministry ... strengthen outreach to homeless or refugees... build or enhance a website... fund a free lunch or afterschool program... start a support group...*



The Community Ministries Committee (formerly Department of Community Ministries) provides grants to congregations to help them develop new and/or expanding ministries or projects that bring them into closer connection with their community or neighborhood. We also seek to encourage members of WNYACIC congregations to be involved in community groups doing community ministry. A grant can be requested for a maximum of \$2000 and can be renewed for a maximum of three years per project, per church. A church can request a maximum of two grants per year.

Send applications or inquiries to: Ted Brelsford, [pastor@faithunitedchurchucc.com](mailto:pastor@faithunitedchurchucc.com), or hard copies to

Faith UCC, 8651 Boston State Rd., Boston, NY 14025.  
716-941-3529.



*In the Vineyard* asks the question:

***What's your favorite way to take communion and why?***

***From Betty Lamb, Commission on the Ministry, Christian Church (DoC) Western Section***

"...Sitting down in the choir loft because intinction causes anxiety as I walk down steps from the chancel with my robe picturing myself becoming the flying singing cherub!! If without robe, I would pick intinction. It feels like more commitment because walking up to receive and many times the person serving says a reminder, "body broken for you...blood shed for you!"

***From Rev. Gary Burdick, Pastor Emeritus, Faith UCC, Boston***

"I cherish Morning Communion on the deck of Mother's Memorial Building at Dunkirk Camp and Conference Center during Family Camp. As we look out over the lake, Communion is served very informally following a meditation on a thought for the day. Often as the elements are passed the campers give a blessing to their neighbor."

***From Chris Kelter, St. John's UCC, Strykersville***

"For St. John's UCC in Strykersville, our favorite way to have communion is to gather around the communion table together. Whether it's just a few of us or quite the group, we make it work so that everyone is together around the table. It is such an amazing "family" feeling! No matter who you are or what your background may be, everyone is welcome to gather with us around our table, no one is too young or too old!"

We thank all of you for your feedback and replies to our queries each quarter and encourage anyone who would like to submit a response to do so! We love to hear from you! Please send them to [inthevineyardeditor@gmail.com](mailto:inthevineyardeditor@gmail.com). Thank you!



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**New York Area Churches in Covenant (WNYACIC)**

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**<https://wnyuccdoc.wixsite.com/wnyadic>**

**Send newsletter items to:**

**[inthevineyardeditor@gmail.com](mailto:inthevineyardeditor@gmail.com)**

*In the Vineyard*, published four times a year, invites you to send us your comments and opinions, expressions of faith and announcements of events. We welcome information regarding the health and welfare of our clergy and others in the Western Area. Please write us when you know of a birth or celebration, a serious illness or a death in our church family – please include your name and telephone number.

**\*\*\*\*Please have submissions for the upcoming Fall issue in by August 14, 2025.\*\*\*\***