

The United Church
 Presbyterian-American Baptist
 11 Gibson Street
 Canandaigua, NY 14424

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 Permit No. 26
 Canandaigua, NY 14424

Or Current Resident



The Lamplighter

The United Church
 11 Gibson Street



Canandaigua, NY
 585-394-0503

Worship Service, 8:45 and 11:00 am, switching to 9:30 am as of May 26th

May 2024

Rev. Dr. Wade Allen



- May 5 – Exploring Membership Class, noon
- May 6 – Trustees meeting, 7 pm
- May 7 – Stewards, 6:30 pm
- May 11 – Youth BBQ at Runnings, 10:30 till runs out
- May 14 – Committee Night, 7 pm
- May 19 – Pentecost
- May 19 – Sunday School Breakfast, 9:45 am
- May 19 – Children’s Day, 11am service
- May 20 – Official Board Meeting, 7 pm
- May 26 – Summer Worship Schedule begins, **one service at 9:30 am**
- May 27 – Memorial Day (office closed)

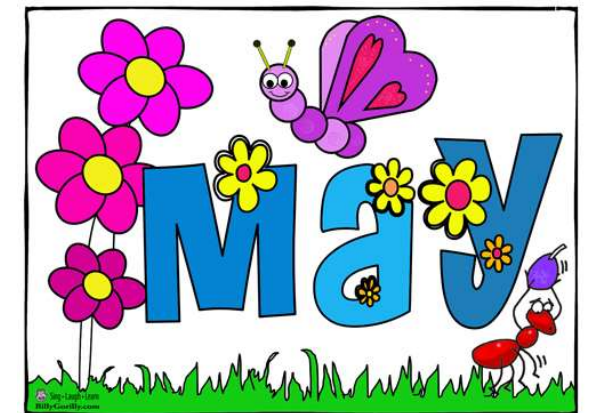


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Variety in May

Each month, I try to give you an idea of where we are going in our worship gatherings over the next month. May will include a variety of topics and passages as we transition from one series to the next. At the beginning of May, we will wrap up our 1 John series. As I mentioned in the April Lamplighter, John's epistles offer fundamental teachings of the Christian faith. In an ever-changing world, John reminds us of the centrality of Jesus in matters of love, truth, and life.

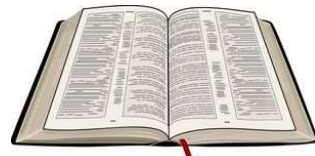
On May 19, we will celebrate Pentecost together. This will also be Children/Youth Sunday with our children and teens participating in various aspects of the service.

Finally, on Memorial Day weekend, we will transition to our summer service schedule (one service at 9:30 AM). This will be the first Sunday of our Genesis series. We will spend a large portion of 2024 in the book of Genesis. I am looking forward to exploring this foundational book with you.

Wade

Worship Schedule and Readings

- May 05 - Love is Obedience (1 John 5:1-5)
Additional Readings: John 15:9-17, Psalm 98
- May 12 - Eternal Life (1 John 5:9-13)
Additional Readings: John 17:6-19, Psalm 1
- May 19 - Pentecost (Acts 2:1-21)
Additional Readings: Romans 8:22-27, Psalm 104:24-34, 35b
- May 26 - In the Beginning (Genesis 1:1-31)
Additional Readings: Acts 17:24-27, Romans 8:19-22



The QR code to the right will also take you to the streaming page

Are you curious about JOINING the United Church?

Come to an Exploring Membership class from 12:00-1:00 pm on Sunday, May 5th!

The purpose of the class is to help you learn more about The United Church and encourage you to consider membership. During the class, you'll learn about the church's history and how the church is connected to two denominations. You might be wondering what this means and how this works? We will talk about how the church is organized/governed and what it means to become a member. We will discuss the various boards and committees in the congregation. You will learn more about the staff and worship services.

There will be plenty of time for you to ask questions about the church or Pastor Wade Allen personally. We'd love to have you join us, and please understand there's no commitment to join just by attending the class. We'd love to get to know you better and spend this time with you.

A light lunch will be served so please let us know if you plan to attend so we have enough food. You can contact the church office at (585) 394-0503 or secretary@uccdga.org or use the link or QR code below to register.

<https://bit.ly/uccdgaEM>



BIBLE & THEOLOGY

I recently had a student ask me why God calls Himself "*I AM*," such as in Exodus. I thought this was a great question, so I told her I would do a study and write a Lamplighter article on it.

I AM – In Exodus 3 (the story of Moses and the burning bush), God calls Himself "I AM WHO I AM". In my studies, there seems to be a connection to God's name YHWH, interpreted as LORD in some translations. YHWH is the third person masculine singular form of the verb, and may be translated as "He is" or "He will be". To better grasp what is meant by *I AM*, it is necessary to survey the rest of God's revealed Word to learn about "who He is" as revealed in Scripture.

In my study, I did find two neatly compiled categories in the *Dictionary of the Old Testament Pentateuch* that concisely lists characteristics and roles of God (as found in Scripture), especially found in the first five books of the Old Testament, that may prove helpful:

God's Character

Creator – God is our Creator! God *creates* as an expression of His own plan and purpose. God brought order to His creation, and assigned responsibility to His creation. God gave humans their own respective *creative* purposes. God is also a Creator with no opposition.

Sovereign - Deuteronomy 10:17 – "God of gods and Lord of lords". God has no rival. God has the right to pronounce commandments, decrees, and statutes. God is the determiner of right and wrong. This is not expressed by mere force, but can even use sinful human choices to accomplish His purpose (e.g. the hardening of Pharaoh's heart).

Father/Parent – God's *parental relationship* expresses personal intimacy. The relationship between God and His children is dialogical (two-way), not monological (one-way). God is creating a family, one that invites His creation to freely be in relationship with Him.

Redeemer – God *restores* those that rebelled back into fellowship with Him. Redemption is always initiated from the personal sovereign Creator. God's redemption overcomes any opposing power in the universe – nothing can inhibit God's redeeming work.

Judge – God is glad to restore sinners back into fellowship with Him, but it should not lead anyone to go forward and sin with impunity. Sin has consequences, and for God not to judge would destroy God's good creative order.

God's Roles

Holy – In short, this is God's "*otherness*". There are essential differences between the divine and ordinary. God's behavior is *holy*. God also calls those in covenant with Him into "holy character" the fits within His *own* holy character.

Unfailing Love – This can be described as a favor *to* someone who does not have a right to that favor, *by* someone who does not have to give that favor. God's love is unlike any other love – a love that includes self-denying faithfulness.

Truth – God is true to His people in unheard of ways. He is *true* to His covenants, *true* to His promises. God is entirely dependable. God's truthfulness lays down the foundation for the concept of objective truth.

Just – God has consistently right behavior. God's ordinances are always the right way for people to live.

Purity – God is wholly *good*, wholly *clean*. Anything not good or unclean is best described as an absence, rather than having self-existent.

So, how shall we comprehend *I AM*? Perhaps we shall let the name direct our attention to who God is. Let *I AM* guide our thoughts to His revealed Word, which shares with us these characteristics and roles of God.



PASTORAL MINISTRY

As noted in last month's article, I am preparing myself for the 2024 election. I desire to have my thoughts and behaviors suitable for the calling God has on my life. As part of my preparations, I plan to read a list of books from trusted authors that I believe will challenge me to be the person I should be.

The first book I read was **Exiles: The Church in the Shadow of Empire**, written by Preston Sprinkle. Since I've been consuming other content from Preston in the recent months, and since I am well-aware of his easy-to-read writing style, I figured this would be a good book to start with. Below is the book description, followed by my personal takeaways.

Dr. Preston M. Sprinkle reminds us that the first-century church was not an apolitical gathering, where Christians left their Roman politics at the door. It also wasn't a place where Christians mounted a Roman flag next to—or above—a Christian one. Church was a place where God's plan for governing the world was revealed, where one could witness what it means to follow the Creator's design for human flourishing.

My Takeaways

Christ is King. No matter what the results are on November 6, 2024 (the day after the election) the "breaking news" is that Christ is King. The reality of Christ's Lordship is always the most important news. If Jesus truly has risen and sits at the right hand of God, there is no reason to place my hope (and allegiance) in anyone else. This *doesn't* mean that the next elected president is inconsequential. What it *does* mean is that I view the president (and any earthly leaders) through the reality that Jesus is in charge.

Christ's Kingship is political. This proclamation was a direct threat to Rome. *Jesus was king, not the emperor.* Jesus as King turns the world upside-down. This is true today as it was then. The *hatred* for someone's political enemy is subverted by Christ's *love* for the enemy. A nation's ambitions for peace through strength is subverted by Christ's modeling of peace through weakness (think about the beatitudes). The commission Jesus places on His followers is essentially incompatible with the self-preservation needs of earthly kingdoms.

Christ's Kingship is best proclaimed through the church, not an earthly nation. Since the nature of Christ's rule is incompatible with the nature of earthly nations, we must function through God-given infrastructure, specifically the Church. No earthly nation aspires to inherit the earth in meekness (again, think about the beatitudes). The body of Christ, however, can and must. The whole reason the institutional church exists is precisely to proclaim Christ's rule. If Jesus wanted to demonstrate His kingship through a militarized, earthly nation, we would have seen Jesus' *first coming* as one that so many were (wrongly) expecting in the first century. But, that's not what the Holy Scriptures show. Jesus came from the throne room and made Himself a servant. I'm convinced no earthly nation would want their ruler to truly be like Jesus.

Citizens of Heaven serve as Prophetic Witness – God has placed me in America in 2024 for a reason. I'm not called to live completely detached from the society around me, nor am I called to actualize the values of heaven through earthly kingdoms, that were *never designed* to view the world as the church does. Rather, I'm called to operate through the body of Christ as *prophetic witness* in my interactions with earthly nations. In other words, in any moment that I plea / take action for a societal change in America, I make that plea / take action as part of the church (Preston would describe the church as an "outpost" of heaven on earth).



Care Ministry

Christy Allen Director

Happy Birthday to our Special Member:

May 28 Rita Ebersol will be 93 years old. She joined our church 24 years ago. Rita has always been known for her incredible pies - "legendary" is the term used to describe them! Rita served as a Steward, choir member and helped fold the Lamplighter. These days she is known as the "queen of bingo" where she resides. Have a blessed birthday Rita! Love from your Church family.

We are collecting donations for **The Stewards Assistance Fund** on **May 5** and **June 7**. This fund supports our church families in times of financial distress. We may help with groceries, medical bills, utilities, car repairs and more.

Monies can be placed in the offering plate, given to Christy, or see Carolyn in the Church office. Be sure to note checks for **Assistance Fund**. Any loose change will be collected towards the fund.

Dear Church Family,

I have been called to minister in the area of caring for our Church family - to nurture and support each and every one of you. I'm genuinely thrilled about the opportunities this will bring to cultivate stronger relationships with each person of our congregation.

I encourage you to reach out to me with your praises, concerns, or simply for a chat. I am here to listen, support, and pray with you through all of life's joys and challenges.

With Love and Blessing, Christy

JOIN OUR SUNDAY MORNING GREETERS MINISTRY

Would you enjoy extending a warm welcome to those entering our building on Sunday mornings?

Handing out bulletins?

Collecting the offering during service?

Sign up on the Church Office door. ANY age is welcome! Reminders and instructions are emailed the Friday before your scheduled Sunday.

If you have any questions please talk with any Steward.

Our **May Steward of the month is Sharyn Canham**

REMEMBERING:

Our prayers and sympathy are with the family of **Carole Dinmore**, who passed away on March 17. Carole was a friend and regular visitor from Ferris Hills. Please keep all of her friends and family in your prayers during this difficult time.

CELEBRATING:

We joyously celebrate the birth of **Jack Alan Quimby** on April 3rd. He is the son of **Chloe and Matt Quimby**. Please keep the family in your prayers during this special time.



ADULT ED MINISTRY

Reflections & Learnings

The **Adult Education Sunday School Hour** is finishing up the program year! We have a large group that is venturing through a conversation about faith, sexuality and gender. The primary focus of our time together is on LGBT people and what the Bible says about their experience. For those that feel called to participate, we also have a Corporate Prayer Group (meeting in the Youth Office). This Corporate Prayer Group will be praying for the large group as we journey together as a church family.

Our **Young Adult** lunch meets every first and third Sundays of the month, 12:00 PM – 12:50 PM, after service. The **Young Adult** group also meets every second and fourth Saturday evening, 6:30 PM – 7:30 PM. This event includes worship, Bible study, and discussion.

As always, **Adults** in our church are engaged in various small group ministries. To name a few, we have our Men’s breakfast, Women’s circles, Bible study groups, knitting group, and prayer shawl knitting. Check out the church calendar for times and locations of these different groups!

As for **Special Events**, our **Adult Education Retreat** will be August 17 at Onanda Park. Wally Fleming will be our guest speaker! We are also conducting our **Sunday Service** on August 18th at Onanda Park. Into Fall 2024, we are hosting our first **United Church Seminar**, November 2. Our guest speaker is Dr. Richard Middleton, Professor Emeritus at Northeastern Seminary.

The **Adult Education Ministry Team** continues efforts, facilitation, and discernment for the 2024 Sunday school groups. Please continue to keep this team in prayer as they serve in this important ministry. Also, our **Young Adult Ministry Discernment** is scheduled to meet a second time, as we prayerfully consider how to best minister to our Young Adults.

Looking Forward

Adult Education Retreat & Sunday Service – August 17 & 18 (Onanda Park)

Young Adult Watkins Glen Trip – Date TBD

Young Adult Beaver Camp Weekend – Date TBD

Young Adult Retreat – August 17

Adult Education Seminar – November 2

Financial Items

Treasurer's Financial Summary for Mar 2024

Description	Jan-Mar 2024 Actual	Jan-Mar 2024 Budget
Income		
Total Giving	148,543.41	119,207.69
Other Income	196.78	3,366.61
Total Income	148,740.19	122,574.30
Spending		
Education and Ministry	11,601.24	10,257.50
Operating	21,395.79	18,791.67
Personnel & Related	90,945.04	93,525.13
Total Expenses	123,942.07	122,574.30
Net Income Year to Date	24,798.12	0.00

From January through March, we have taken in \$24,798.12 more than we have spent. This is because of the donors who choose to pay their entire pledge at the beginning of the year. We have received \$26,165.89 more than we budgeted and spent \$1,367.77 more than we budgeted.

Thank you for your faithful giving!

Nancy Lamberson

Treasurer

Online Giving

Our new church management program makes online giving very easy! Access it through our website, app, or scan this QR code. You can give one-time gifts or set up recurring giving to happen on whatever schedule you choose.



YOUTH MINISTRY

Reflections & Learnings

The Cause youth program is finishing their curriculum on human sexuality. The class touches on several topics, including dating & singleness, pornography, marriage, LGBTQ matters, and more. After this human sexuality conversation, we plan to invite our 8th grade students to the Cause on May 19.

Our Youth Ministry Team continues their faithful work! The team plans to meet in April for another connect. They are focusing on how to best support our students entering into the high school ministry here at the church, and will be considering a discernment exercise that we can use with our youth, to help them biblically navigate what they encounter in the world around them.

Our Youth Sunday School continue their activities between church services! For our High School students, they are wrapping up a series titled **Rescue Me**, which helps our students understand their need for a Savior. Our Middle School students are journeying through a series titled **From Death To Life**, which helps our students understand the truth that resurrection can be found in Christ alone.

The Middle School Youth Club group has recently covered sessions about forgiveness, community, being known by God, and remembering that God is with us. These sessions are all produced by Hyfi curriculum.

For our Special Events, we are planning a United Church Summer Missions Experience, where our youth and their families will create their own missions experience! We pray this will provide the flexibility that our families need this summer.

Our Monthly School Youth Connects continue! This mid-week program is aimed at providing positive connections for youth with their faith family. This is also a great time for the parents to connect with one another! Check out the dates below for the next connection dates, times, and locations.

Looking Forward

Connect Canandaigua – May 8 @ 6:45 AM (North Road Tim Horton's) (Second Wednesday)

Connect Marcus Whitman – May 13 @ 2:30 PM (Gorham Free Library) (Third Monday)

Connect Victor – May 15 @ 6:45 AM (Main Street Dunkin Donuts) (Third Wednesday)

BBQ Fundraisers – May 11 and July 7 @ 10:30 am (in front of Runnings)

Cause – 8th Graders Join – May 19

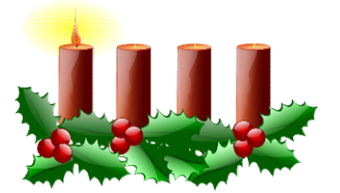
Summer Youth Retreat – August 16-17 (Onanda Park)



Mark Slomski | Pastor of Youth & Adult Ministry | Mark.Slomski@uccdga.org | 585-455-7491



Faith and Action



Advent candles? Yes, Christmas was months ago. We observed Easter in March this year. As followers of Jesus, we know Hope, Peace, Love, and Joy are not just for Christmas.

Because of our faith we are working together. In action 24/7 and in prayer 24/7.

Thanks for One Great Hour of Sharing \$3435 contributions. Many families whose lives were disrupted by war, famine, floods, or tornados will have more hope, more joy, and more peace because we care from this Special Offering.

Our March contributions to the mission budget provided support for GenOn (Wednesday Youth Club national org.), for Family Promise of Ontario County, for Canandaigua Churches in Action, and for Baptist and Presbyterian resources. Mission contributions enable us to provide camperships.

Each week we collect food and supplies for CCIA and the Salvation Army food pantries. **Thank you for the generous contributions each week.** Each month several of our members join other volunteers for a FoodLink PopUp food distribution at the Canandaigua Town barn location. May 20 will be the next food distribution, look to the May 12 and 19 bulletins for additional information.

Migrants are arriving at international borders and displaced families are looking forward to leaving refugee camps. All are created in the image of God. The BGs, Smith Mather family, Long family, and White family each connect with multiple congregations in Europe, Mexico, Africa, Central America, South America, and the USA. Pray for these leaders.

“The Fellowship of the Believers devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles.” (Acts 2:42-43)

Let us never tire of doing good. Hope, Peace, Love, and Joy.

Blanket Sunday May 12

Church World Service Blanket Offering is all about sharing love through a simple act of kindness. Your gift of only \$10.00 provides a warm blanket to a person in need.

For many, a simple blanket given when they most need it is a loving way to offer warmth and hope. When tough times arise, whether caused by natural disasters or a humanitarian one, a simple act of kindness can make all the difference.

God has blessed us with so much and when we share these blankets with others we are sharing God's love with our neighbors. We are so grateful to our congregation for your kindness and desire to share love and compassion with others.

Thank you for doing your part to blanket the world with love.

SAVE THE DATE! Tuesday, May 21st... for **dinner and program** with visiting Presbyterian Mission Co-Workers Ryan and Alethia White! The Mission Committee will be hosting either Ryan or Alethia during their upcoming visit to our Presbytery. We hope you will want to join us, along with some of our refugee families, as Ryan or Alethia will share news of their work as Co-regional Liaisons for Northern and Central Europe with a special focus on displaced peoples and refugees. More details will follow.



SILENT AUCTION 2024 BENEFITS MISSION TRIPS

DATE CHANGE: Sunday, June 9th through Sunday, June 16th.

On Sunday, June 9th you are invited down to the dining room to view all items and begin your bidding. Bidding opens 9:00 am on Sunday, June 9th and items will be available for bidding Monday – Friday [9am – 1pm] during office hours and Saturday, 9am – 1pm.

On Sunday, June 16th bidding will end at 9:30 am [beginning of service]. After church you can go down to the dining room to see what you have won! You will need to pay for items before taking them home. All items must be paid for and picked up by Saturday, June 22.

Cash or check only

To Donate an Item forms and information are available in the Welcome Area.

1. Please fill out a form for each item you are donating and place it in the box as soon as you know what you will donate.
2. Bring the item to church between May 28th and June 5th and leave it with the secretary. [This allows us time to prep for the auction.] Please label it with your name and phone number so we can match it up with your donation slip.



If you would like to help with the auction, please contact Regina Allen, 585-260-4060 or regieallen@gmail.com
Thank you for supporting our Mission Trips:

Youth Trips
Mexico Trips
Nicaragua Trips

2024 RELAY FOR LIFE

Do you have a friend or loved one who is a CANCER SURVIVOR or has PASSED FROM CANCER? Please consider giving a luminaria in their HONOR or MEMORY to be displayed at our Finger Lakes RELAY FOR LIFE on SATURDAY, JUNE 1ST at 3 PM by Seneca Lake in Geneva.

Our church team, “United Against Cancer” has been participating in this event for decades. Anyone can join us!! We will be in the Welcome Center each Sunday in May with these luminarias (bags) to be written on, by you or us, in honor or memory of loved ones. COST: \$5 each. Thank you, Sandi and Sue.



Stampin’ Up!

The next Stampin’ Up class is scheduled for May 18th from 9 – 12 in the Fellowship Room. We will make the 5 cards pictured below. If you have any questions or are interested in signing up, contact Sharon Meyer.



CHILDREN’S AND FAMILY MINISTRY

What’s happened...

Our Youth Club year wrapped up this month with LOTS of fun! On April 17th, we had first graders visit Youth Club, which also meant the middle schoolers got to go out for one last dinner at Tom Wahls!! Sunday school resumed after a 2 week hiatus for Easter and Virginia’s retirement celebration, and we will be wrapping up our Sunday school year this month. At the end of April, we celebrated our Youth Club year together with a carnival and a special closing program and pizza dinner with Youth Club families! WOW! Thank you, God, for all this FUN!

What’s happening...

It’s time to get kids set for summer with some activities they might enjoy. *Parents*, don’t forget that we offer **camperships!!** Our church believes that the Christian camp experience is so important that **we will pay half the cost for one week** at any **Christian day camp** or **overnight camp!** This is *not* a need based scholarship – this is for every family sending a child to Christian camp this summer! The only qualification is that your child currently participates in Sunday School, Sunday morning services, Youth Club, and/or The Cause. So, sign up for camp, send the registration confirmation to Deb, and we will take care of the campership. We sent 17 kids to camp last year; let’s try to send more this year!!!

Also in **May**, we will wrap up our Sunday school year for all ages. We like to remember and celebrate our year together with a **Sunday School celebration breakfast**, which will happen on **May 19th at 9:45am**. All are welcome to join us for this special time together! Please bring a dish to pass if you’re able.

Once we transition to summer services, on May 26, we also transition to asking people to **volunteer** each week for **nursery duty**. We do this because summer schedules are busy and it is difficult to “pre-schedule” people for summer Sundays like we do the rest of the year. Even if you don’t usually volunteer in the nursery, you can **sign up to help once or twice during the summer**. *All nursery volunteers need to be background checked* – you can ask Carolyn about how to get a background check – it’s quick and easy! **Thank you** so much for **sharing in this ministry** to the **youngest in our church family!**

Upcoming Events...

- May 12** – Last day of Sunday school classes for children, teens, and adults
- May 19** – Sunday School celebration breakfast at 9:45am for all ages and Children’s Day service at 11am
- May 26** – One service of Worship begins at 9:30am
- June 2** – Church picnic after 9:30am service at Baker Park
- June 9** – Graduate Sunday during 9:30am service; cake and punch celebration following the service

July 8-12, 9am – 12noon, Scuba VBS:

Diving Into Friendship with God!

We are planning and preparing for VBS. We need volunteers to help *before* VBS begins with scenery and preparations and LOTS of volunteers to help *during* the week of VBS with crews, stations, and snacks. So, please think and pray about how YOU can help with VBS this year. This is an all-church family event! Everyone can play a part!!

