

The Lamplighter

The United Church
11 Gibson Street



Canandaigua, NY
585-394-0503

Worship Services, 8:45 and 11:00 am

January 2025

Rev. Dr. Wade Allen

- Dec 23-Jan 3 – Church Office closed for holidays
- Jan 5 – Intergenerational Sunday School (and potluck), 9:45 am
- Jan 6 – Trustees meeting, 7:00 pm
- Jan 7 – Stewards, 6:00 pm
- Jan 11 – All Church Game Night, 6:30 pm
- Jan 12 – Boyce Memorial info meeting, 9:45 am
- Jan 19 – Mission Trip info meeting, noon
- Jan 24 – Youth Fun Night, 5:30 pm
- Jan 26 – Remembrance Service, 11:00 am
- Jan 26 – Annual Meeting and Potato Bar, noon



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Embracing the New in 2025



The word "new" comes from Old English and means "fresh, recent, or not previously existing." While we casually use it for novel purchases or experiences, its deeper meaning suggests transformation - something emerging for the very first time, unmarked by previous existence. This understanding enriches our perspective on renewal and new beginnings.

As we think about the new year, it should be more than just turning our calendars over and continuing life with the same rhythms and habits. We are entering into something that has not previously existed. What does that mean? How might we approach the new year with this mindset?

Scripture offers powerful insights about the word "new." Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV): "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!"

Paul speaks of the transformation that Jesus brings to our lives. While dramatic conversion experiences aren't necessary to know Christ, experiencing His love should bring freshness to our lives. As Paul declares, "the old is gone, the new is here!" Let's step into 2025 with this posture, putting away whatever hinders us spiritually and embracing new patterns that deepen our experience of Jesus.

In Revelation 21:5 (NIV), Jesus speaks from His throne in John's vision of the new heaven and earth. After four verses describing God's beautiful preparation for us, Jesus declares, "I am making everything new!"

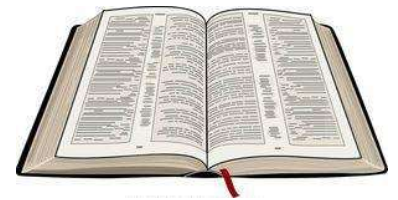
Paul tells us that Jesus makes us new, but this is just part of His work. Ultimately, He will make "everything new."

So what does a "new year" mean for you? God is in the business of replacing the old with the new. May our prayers be that God would do this work in us, forming us more fully into His image in 2025.

Wade

Worship Schedule and Readings for January

- January 05 - Following the Light (Matthew 2)
Additional Readings: Isaiah 60:1-6, Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14
- January 12 - Light, Fire, and Water: The Baptism of Jesus (Luke 3:15-22)
Additional Readings: Isaiah 43:1-7, Acts 8:14-17
- January 19 - Empty Jars, Abundant Grace (John 2:1-11)
Additional Readings: Isaiah 62:1-5, Psalm 36:5-10
- January 26 - Coming Home: Jesus in Nazareth (Luke 4:14-21)
Additional Readings: Psalm 19, 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a



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



Care Ministry, Christy Allen Director

Thank You to Stewards Margie and Becky!



As their six-year term as Stewards comes to a close, we extend our deepest gratitude to Margie and Becky for their dedicated service to our 90+ members. Through countless visits, thoughtful gestures, and unwavering care, they have been a source of love and encouragement to those they served. Their ministry has truly exemplified God's compassion.

Thank you, Margie and Becky, for your faithful hearts and the joy you've shared over the years!

Opportunities to serve within the Care Ministry:

These four teams offer the opportunity to serve only when you are available. Great for those who are snowbirds or have hectic, unpredictable schedules:

Transportation Team - Coordinator Margie Wall - Our mission is to provide reliable transportation to assist individuals in accessing medical care, doctor appointments, and other essential needs, fostering care, connection, and support within our church community.

Meal Train Team - Contact Christy Allen - Our mission is to extend Christ's love and compassion through the gift of a meal, supporting our church family in times of need. The Meal Train Team offers flexibility, allowing volunteers to sign up for meal delivery on days that fit their schedules, creating a community of care that brings comfort, nourishment, and encouragement to those we serve.

Greeter - Contact Steward Coordinator of the Month or Christy Allen - A church greeter offers a warm, friendly welcome to everyone arriving at the church, helping them feel noticed and valued. They set a positive tone by opening doors, sharing a smile, and offering assistance or directions as needed

Take Up Offering - Contact the Steward Coordinator of the Month or Christy Allen - Those who take up the offering in church collect tithes and gifts from the congregation during the service with reverence and gratitude. They help facilitate worship by serving with care and respect in this act of giving.

"Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

Galatians 6:2



The **Helping Hands Care Team** is an upstarting team dedicated to supporting those in our church family during challenging times, such as illness, grief, or other life transitions. Team members will be trained to meet a variety of spiritual needs, as well as help to coordinate meals and transportation arrangements. Please contact Christy Allen or Louise Van Iseghem if you feel called to serve our congregation in this unique way.

Greeter/Offering Coordinator for January:

Steward Bev Fehrenbach

*Bev is available to help sign up anyone interested in serving for either or both of these ministries.



Faith and Action

Hurricane Relief Mission Trip

We all know of the devastation left by Hurricane Helene, especially in western North Carolina. The rebuild of that area will take years! We all wonder what we can do to help in addition to providing funds. **The mission team is coordinating an inter-generational work trip to Fairview, NC** which is just 11 miles from Asheville the week of April 14. Seabees Outreach Ministry, a ministry of Navy veterans, is establishing a work camp there to help locals devastated by the hurricane. They have assured us that they will find appropriate work for any skill level. **Please join us for an informational meeting on Jan. 19** after the second service. If you cannot attend the meeting feel free to reach out to Sonya Brooks (sonya.brooks99@yahoo.com).

Holiday greetings to all from *Called to Care, Canandaigua.*

We are again experiencing the joy of welcome and resettlement! Recently Good Neighbor Team "Esperanza" (hope) welcomed a family of six from Venezuela. Cathy Bush and her amazing housing crew turned our newest rental into a new home for this family. We are co-sponsoring them with World Relief Western NY. Unlike families who are here under humanitarian parole this family is a true refugee family with a path to citizenship. Many thanks to all of the volunteers who are busy assisting this newcomer family make a new home here in Canandaigua. Special thanks to the team of nine whose lives have already been enriched by this experience: Jaryn and Nick Abdallah, Anne Gilson, Kristine Hayes, Jill McLellan, Jesus Melendez, Sarah Tuttle, Joy Underhill, and Karilyn Valesko-Foster.

As we approach the new year some of our families are coming to the end of their two-year stay. Please keep them in your thoughts and prayers as they file for temporary protective status or make other plans to delay returning to either Ukraine or Haiti.

In other news a Good Neighbor Team is forming to welcome a Ukrainian family of six. We are hoping to have them arrive in January. Thank you to Donna and Don Cotter who are sponsoring this family.

The work of *Called to Care, Canandaigua* continues. We are filing for not for profit 501(c)3 status which will make your future donations tax deductible.

And as always we have next ups...

--On **January 7, 2025** we are partnering with Worldwide Documentaries and Wood Library for a **film screening of *Running to Stand Still - Migrants Search for Hope in the Promised Land***. The documentary will be shown at 5:00pm. Please register at Wood Library.

--**Chasin' the Blues** returns for its third year on Friday, **February 7, 2025** at 7:00pm at Crosswinds Wesleyan Church. This event, our signature fundraiser, is immensely popular and sells out each year. Tickets will soon be available. Or you may reserve a table now by contacting Cheryl Drake at drakec5@yahoo.com. \$300 reserves a table for six. \$400 reserves a table for eight. Checks may be mailed to: Called to Care, Canandaigua, P.O. Box 885, Canandaigua, NY 14424.

We treasure your continuing prayers and support of *Called to Care, Canandaigua* as we continue the work of welcome here in Canandaigua.

Gratefully, Linda Werts, Board of Directors

Though the church office will be **closed from Dec 23 through Jan 3**, we will be checking phone and email messages, so please let us know if you have any prayer requests or need to contact a staff member. There will be folks about, but the flexibility for the staff to work from home as we're able during the holiday week is a special treat.



Join Us for a Listening & Feedback Session: The Boyce Discernment Team

Dear Church Family,

We are excited to invite you to a special meeting during the Sunday School hour (**9:45-10:45 AM**) on **Sunday, January 12**, where the Boyce Discernment Team will present their work on discerning the best uses for a significant donation generously given to The United Church in the fall of 2023. This gift presents a wonderful opportunity for ministry growth, and the discernment team has been prayerfully considering how we can honor the spirit of this gift while meeting the needs of our church and community.

During the meeting, members of the Boyce Discernment Team will share their findings and insights, providing a glimpse into the process they've undertaken to thoughtfully evaluate potential uses for the donation. Most importantly, this session will be an opportunity for you, the congregation, to share your own perspectives and feedback. We value your voice, as each member's insight is crucial in shaping how this gift can impact our community for years to come.

Please mark your calendars for this meaningful time of listening, learning, and sharing together. We hope you will join us to engage with the discernment process, lend your voice, and help us steward this gift with faith and vision.

Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the United Church will be held after the second service, in the dining room, on **Sunday, January 26th, 2025**. Immediately after the 11:00 service the youth will host a baked potato lunch. This will be followed by the Annual Meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to approve the 2025 budget, elect officers, review the activities of 2024, and do any other business appropriate to the meeting.



Stewardship Update

If you have not yet returned your 2025 pledge form, you can find additional ones in the welcome center.



Returning your pledge information promptly helps us to create a more accurate budget for 2025! Watch the frog poster outside the office to gauge how close we are to our pledging goals! Our aim is to have 130 families pledge and an Operating total of \$398,160. As of this writing (12/17), we have received 105 pledges indicating gifts of \$315,617 to the Operating budget and \$100,114 to the Missions budget.

Tech Corner

The church has recently installed some new hardware, so there is a **new guest wifi password**. Look for the signs around church to update your devices if you use our wifi!

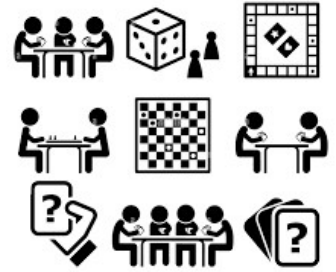
If you are struggling to access the church app or sign up for volunteer slots, ask any church staff member, or look for one of our **tech helpers** after church on Sundays!



Fellowship Events

Game Night – January 11th

Come join us for a fun family game night January 11th from 6:30-8:30 in the Fellowship Room. Feel free to bring a friend, a favorite game to play, or a snack to share. We hope to see you there!



Stampin' Up! The next Stampin' Up class is scheduled for January 18th from 9 – 12 in the Fellowship Room. Please contact Nancy Burt-Preece to make a reservation by January 12th.

Potato Bar Luncheon



Come join us for a delicious lunch at noon on January 26th while you wait for the Annual Meeting to start! The youth will be selling tickets the 2 Sundays prior as a fundraiser (or you can pay at the door.) If you'd like to volunteer by making a pot of chili, baking desserts or set up/tear down, watch for a sign up on Mark's door.

REMEMBERING:

Our prayers and sympathy are with the Boseck family for the loss of **Charles Boseck** on December 9th. Charles was the father/father-in-law of **Jim and Becky Boseck** and **Philip and Alison Boseck**. Please keep his grandchildren (**Benjamin, Matthew, Tyler and Andrew**) and great-grands (**Charlotte and Emerson**) in your prayers as well during this difficult time.



CELEBRATING:

We joyfully celebrate the birth of **Juliet Lord Mergenthaler** on November 25th. Her parents are **Derek and JoAnna Mergenthaler** and her grandparents are **James and Joni Mergenthaler** and **Virginia Holroyd**. **Cathy Benedict** is her great-grandmother! Please keep the family in your prayers during this special time.

Congratulations to Tyler and Adam DiCicco (now 34 and 38) for being inducted into Midlakes Sports Hall of Fame this Fall! Adam was assistant coach for Tyler's 2007 volleyball team that won the championship two years in a row. The event was held at Club 86 in Geneva where the team received medals.



CHILDREN'S AND FAMILY MINISTRY

What's happened...

During the month of December, our Youth Club kids learned about the true meaning of Christmas and Advent during Bible time. We also made Advent wreaths during Recreation time. **Youth Club ministry** will take a **break for the holidays**, and we will **meet again on January 8, 2025**.

The **Youth Club** and **Sunday school** children and youth shared a *new Christmas Pageant* with our church family on Sunday, **December 15 at 10am** (during the Sunday school hour). The beloved annual tradition is a fun way to involve kindergarten through High School aged kids in the retelling of the Christmas story. Each year, a variety of children are able to participate and this year it was extra special to have Youth Club and Sunday school kids all together!

Thank you for your generosity in helping others during the Christmas season! Our congregation fulfilled 100 gift tags through St. Benedict's Parish (St. Mary's).

What's happening...

Sunday school will resume on **January 5, 2025** with an **Intergenerational Sunday school class** in the **downstairs dining room**. *Please bring a dish to pass if you are able*. We look forward to this time of learning and fellowship.

Youth Club kids will **invite friends** to join them for one night of **Youth Club** on **January 22, 2025**. Each year, we invite friends to join us for one night. It is exciting to share the fun we have at Youth Club with our friends – and some of them even decide to join Youth Club for the rest of the year!

Save the dates for 2025 VBS...

True North VBS: Trusting Jesus in a Wild World!

As kids trek the tundra, they'll explore how easy it is to lose sight of what's true in our wild world today. But through True North VBS, we will point kids to Jesus, a faithful friend we can always trust. He's our True North.

July 14-18, 2025, 9am – 12noon; Kick-off: Sun., July 14, 2025 at 6:30pm

All children, **ages 4 years old through those who completed 5th grade**, are welcome to participate!

Kids who completed 6th – 12th grade are *encouraged to volunteer!*

CHILDREN'S AND FAMILY MINISTRY

Personal reflection...

Human beings are wired for connection. At our core, we were created for relationships—with God first and foremost, and with others as well. Whether introverted or extroverted, each of us has a need for meaningful connections, though the way we express that need may differ. Introverts may have a small circle of deep relationships, while extroverts might have many acquaintances, but both need those deeper, more meaningful connections.

We are more alike than we often recognize. Each person is made in the image of God, and our shared human experiences—whether physical, emotional, or spiritual—create deep connections between us. Even simple conversations about favorite foods, hobbies, or music can reveal unexpected bonds. These commonalities remind us that, despite our differences, we are all part of God's beautiful creation.

As we look ahead to 2025, one of my primary goals is to continue building and strengthening relationships within our church family. Our community is growing, which is both exciting and wonderful. We also have members who've been part of this family for many years, some longer than I've been alive, which brings rich history and wisdom. While I'm familiar with many of our children and families, I'm also focused on getting to know new families and deepening the bonds with those I already know. Beyond our church, it's equally important to foster relationships with those outside our faith community. How can we share the love of Jesus if we only interact with those who already know Him? We never know how God might use a connection—whether it's with a coworker, a long-time friend, or even a stranger we encounter at a store. God works through relationships, and I believe this is one way His kingdom grows.

In today's polarized world, it's easy to focus on what divides us. But the church offers a powerful example of unity in diversity. Within our own community, we have differing opinions, yet we come together each Sunday to worship and fellowship. How can we extend this same spirit of unity to the world around us? We're bound to encounter people who disagree with us—maybe even close friends or family. But rather than retreating into our echo chambers, we can seek common ground. Can we break bread together, have respectful conversations, and listen with empathy? If we approach these relationships with grace, truth, and love, God can use them to fulfill His purposes.

In a world that often feels divided, we have an opportunity to be agents of connection and reconciliation. It's not our job to change people's minds, but to love them as Christ has loved us. As we build relationships in 2025—whether within our church, with friends and family, or with strangers—we can be vessels of God's love, bringing hope and unity to a fractured world. I pray you'll join me in the quest as we begin a new year.

~ Deb

*"So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other.
Just as I have loved you, you should love each other" John 13:34*

YOUTH

Reflections & Learnings

The Cause continues with the curriculum titled “Can I Ask That? Hard Questions about God and Faith”. During the holiday season, we have also taken time to reflect on what we are thankful for, and focus on the reason for the Advent season.

Middle School and High School Sunday School continues with Deep Discipleship as our curriculum. We have covered a few topics by now, and are currently working through Christmas-based themes, along with a series titled "Amazed".

Middle School Youth Club also continues using Deep Discipleship for their curriculum. We are lined up with the Middle School Sunday School curriculum. Like The Cause, we are also detouring to spend increased time with Advent-themed conversations.

Regarding **special events for January**, we have a youth night, along with the annual meeting's potato bar fundraiser. Funds raised go to supporting our youth programs and mission experiences. As always, our monthly school district connects (including Victor, Canandaigua, and Marcus Whitman) continue!

Our **Youth Ministry Team** continues its work. We meet about every other month. This year's team includes: Julie Zajac, Dale Zajac, Lauren Slomski, Kayleigh Sheppard, Ray McMillen, Sandi DiCicco, Jen Callard, and Jini Hildebrandt!

Looking Forward

Connect Canandaigua – January 9 @ 6:45 AM (North Road Tim Hortons) (Second Thursday)

Connect Victor – December 16 @ 6:45 AM (Main Street Dunkin' Donuts) (Third Thursday)

Connect Marcus Whitman – January 21 @ 2:30 PM (Gorham Free Library) (Third Monday)

Youth Night - January 24 (details to be found when the event registration page is created)

Potato Bar Fundraiser - January 26 (during the Annual Meeting)



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ADULT & YOUNG ADULT

Reflections & Learnings

A group of **young adults** (our group this year is primarily college-aged students) are preparing for the January 2025 trip to Atlanta for the Passion Conference! Please keep them in your prayers as they prepare their hearts and minds to worship the Lord and engage in the Scriptures with thousands of other young adults.

The **women's group** (a 20/30-something ministry) continues to meet at our church every other week or so. The Christian club at FLCC also continues, with Wendy Bacon supporting this cl

The **Adult Education Sunday School Hour** continues! Our Bible Study class ended their Genesis series, and (as of this writing in Mid-December) are discerning 2025 classes. We also continue to host the Parenting Coffee Hour. This casual group has covered a number of topics, including forgiveness, strengthening our faith, seeking what matters to God, patience, taking risks, and more.

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. In October, Jen Eveleigh and I hosted a small group facilitator information meeting, and are taking next steps towards new small group formation! Some new small groups have already formed, and other potential facilitators are considering what they'd like to do.

Our **monthly connect** at Ferris Hills on the first Wednesday of the month continues (we have an exception for January... we meet December 8!). Discernment for more monthly connects for adults continues!

The **Adult Education Ministry Team** continues to meet every other month or so. This year, our team includes: Brenda and Bob Cunningham, Steve Simpson, Gary Preece, Gail Benjamin, Adam Thorman, Bev Fehrenbach, and Melissa Long. In December, Joan Danaher will be joining the team, too!

Looking Forward

Adult Connect - Wednesday, January 8 @ 1:00 PM (Ferris Hills; First Wednesday of the month)



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PASTORAL MINISTRY

This article is part two of a larger reflection on the mission of the Church in a post-Christian culture. Last month, I wrote about the importance of publicly proclaiming the faith. In this proclamation of the Gospel, we must be biblically and historically rooted. This proclamation must be especially expressed during preaching - and done so by preachers who are likewise rooted biblically and historically. This month, I emphasize the importance of knowledge and wisdom (instruction)...

Knowledge & Wisdom (Instruction)

In complement to proclamation, knowledge is attained through catechesis, or as the late Timothy Keller words it, **counter-catechesis**. Just like how belief is commissioned through preaching, **knowledge is commissioned through wisdom**.

Catechesis was a primary tool of instruction for the primitive church. One of the earliest forms of catechesis from the first Christians includes the *Didache*. Didache, which means *teaching*, is an ancient Christian apologetic that instructed believers in the first century. The Didache serves as a manual on morals and church practice, including an early Christian liturgy, and is considered a complimentary contrast to preaching (kerygma). Fast-forwarding to the reformation, counter-catechesis was produced in great variety, whether it be the Westminster catechism, contents found in the Book of Common Prayer from the Church of England, or the decrees published from the Council of Trent.

This knowledge is commissioned into the world through wisdom. Wisdom ties knowledge recorded in catechisms such as the Didache to the Kerygma (preaching) as introduced under the section about proclamation. The **Qoheleth** (preacher) in Ecclesiastes expresses wisdom with his knowledge on the meaning and joy of life, social injustice, problem of evil, etc.. Biblical wisdom gives to the believer and the collective faith community what knowledge so badly needs, namely the ability to “cross boundaries, and bridge divergent perspectives, genres, languages, and societies.” Dr. Christopher Watkins elaborates: “the biblical wisdom literature [Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes] provides a more discerning, complex blueprint for Christian engagement with secular learning, one which takes wisdom wherever it is found and respects its domain of competence... Refusing to reduce the multifaceted biblical account to its single lens.”

The international scope of wisdom literature also proves suitable for our globalized world. Old Testament Scholar John Walton explains, “Biblical wisdom literature, like Hebrew poetry, must be understood in an international context.”

Conclusion

Our post-Christian society needs the church to conduct its mission with knowledge and wisdom. We do so by focusing on education and living in biblical wisdom. Join me in 2025 to be the people God has called us to be, for the sake of the world.

"And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ..."

- *Philippians 1:9-10**



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

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US Postage Paid
Permit No. 26
Canandaigua, NY 14424

Or Current Resident

January 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 All-day Office closed All-day Happy New Year 7am Men's Prayer Breakfast	2 All-day Office closed 1pm Bible Study	3 All-day Office closed	4 1030am AFG District mtg
5 845am Worship Service 945am Intergenerational Sunday school 11am Worship Service 5pm The Cause	6 1130am AFG 7pm Trustees	7 10am Knitters 10am Staff meeting 6pm Stewards: Stewards Meeting 7pm NA	8 7am Men's Prayer Breakfast 1pm Adult Connect - Ferris Hills 330pm Youth Club 7pm Choir rehearsal	9 645am Connect CA 1pm Bible Study	10 No events today	11 630pm Game Night
12 845am Worship Service 945am Sunday school for all ages 945am Boyce Discernment Informational Meeting 11am Worship Service 5pm The Cause	13 10am Worship Team: Worship Planning Team Meeting 1130am AFG 3pm ARC 7pm Cheerful Service Circle	14 10am Knitters 10am Staff meeting 1130am Circle 7 7pm NA 7pm Committee Night	15 7am Men's Prayer Breakfast 330pm Youth Club 7pm Choir rehearsal	16 645am Connect Victor 1pm Bible Study	17 All-day Lamplighter due 130pm Georgia's event FR	18 9am Stampin' Up
19 845am Worship Service 945am Sunday school for all ages 11am Worship Service 12pm NC Mission trip info 5pm The Cause	20 1130am AFG 230pm Connect MW 7pm Official Board: Meeting	21 10am Knitters 10am Staff meeting 7pm Prayer Shawl Ministry 7pm NA	22 7am Men's Prayer Breakfast 330pm Youth Club 7pm Choir rehearsal	23 1pm Bible Study	24 530pm Youth Fun Night	25 No events today
26 845am Worship Service 945am Communicants 2025: Class 945am Sunday school for all ages 11am Remembrance Service 11am Worship Service 12pm Annual Meeting	27 1130am AFG	28 10am Knitters 10am Staff meeting 7pm NA	29 7am Men's Prayer Breakfast 330pm Youth Club 7pm Choir rehearsal	30 1pm Bible Study	31 No events today	