

JANUARY 2026

Lamplighter

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JANUARY 2026 EVENTS

Dec 24-Jan 2

Office Closed for holiday

Jan 4

Intergenerational Sunday School, 9:45 am

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Trustees, 7:00 pm

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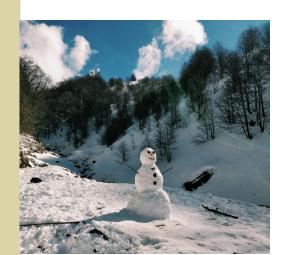
Stewards, 6:30 pm

Jan 19

Office closed for holiday Official Board, 7:00 pm

Jan 25

Remembrance Service, 11:00 am Annual Meeting, 12:00 pm



ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of the United Church will be held after the second service, in the dining room, on **Sunday**, **January 25**, **2026**. Immediately after the 11:00 service, the youth will host a lunch as a fundraiser. This will be followed by the Annual Meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to approve the 2026 budget, elect officers, review the activities of 2025, and do any other business appropriate to the meeting.



As we step into the new year, we find ourselves embarking on a journey together. We actually begin this journey on January 4, still in the season of Christmas, as we open John's Gospel with the words "In the beginning was the Word." Then on January 11, we enter the season of Epiphany, and from there through Pentecost Sunday in May, we'll remain in John's Gospel.

This isn't just a sermon series. It's an invitation to walk with Jesus through one of the most theologically rich books in Scripture. John doesn't just tell us what Jesus did. He shows us who Jesus is.

John wrote with a clear purpose:

These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name (John 20:31).

As we study this Gospel, we are not just learning information about Jesus. We are challenged to be transformed through believing in him.

Over these months, we'll witness Jesus' first sign at the wedding in Cana, continues Page 2

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hear him tell Nicodemus he must be born again, watch him offer living water to a Samaritan woman, and listen as he declares "I am the bread of life," "I am the good shepherd," "I am the resurrection and the life." We'll walk through his final week, stand at the cross, run to the empty tomb, and meet him in locked rooms and by the sea.

I want to encourage you to do more than just show up on Sunday mornings. This article includes not only the John passage for each week but also a Psalm and an Epistle reading that connect thematically with John's message. These readings help us see the larger story and deepen our understanding.

Can I challenge you during this series? Read the passages before Sunday. Sit with them. Ask questions. Notice what stands out to you. When you come on Sunday already having wrestled with the text, you'll find the sermon connects differently. You'll hear things you might have missed. You'll be ready to go deeper.

Remember what Philip said to Nathanael when he was skeptical about Jesus? "Come and see." That's the invitation John extends through his gospel, and it's the invitation I extend to you for these coming months.

Come and see Jesus revealed in all his glory. Come and see what happens when the Word becomes flesh and dwells among us. Come and see how water becomes wine, how the blind receive sight, how the dead are raised.

This journey through John isn't just about learning more about Jesus. It's about encountering him, believing in him, and finding life in his name. I'm excited to take this journey with you.

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

January 04 - The One Word That Changes Everything (John 1:1-14) Additional Readings: Psalm 147:12-20, Ephesians 1:3-14

January 11 - Pointing to Jesus (John 1:19-34) Additional Readings: Acts 10:34-43, Psalm 29

January 18 - Come and See (John 1:35-51) Additional Readings: Psalm 40:1-11, 1 Corinthians 1:1-9

January 25 - Seeing His Glory (John 2:1-11)

Additional Readings: Psalm: 27:1, 4-9, 1 Corinthians 1:10-18



The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only,
who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

- John 1:14



Finance Update

The 2026 Stewardship Campaign is underway. If you have not yet turned in your pledge form, please do so at your earliest convenience. This gives us important information as we plan for next year. One thing to look forward to: staff, Trustees, and major users of the downstairs kitchen are planning the renovation that so many people recommended, and I'm excited about the changes to come. They are currently collecting estimates for various parts of the project. Stay tuned for more information. Work is tentatively planned for the summer of 2026.

Nancy Lamberson, Treasurer

New Year's Resolution: Use Your God-Given Gifts

Consider Serving on a Care Team

As a new year begins, many of us pause to think about where we are and who we're becoming. We make resolutions about health, habits, family, and time. But what if this year's resolution looked a little different?

What if your resolution wasn't simply to *do* something new... but to *be* someone who faithfully uses the gifts God has given you?

Scripture tells us that the body of Christ is made of many parts-each one essential, each one shaped for a purpose (1 Corinthians 12). Every smile, every prayer, every meal delivered, every visit to someone who is hurting is a reflection of Christ's compassion. Some serve by listening. Others by hospitality. Some through writing cards, providing transportation, or sitting quietly with someone who needs a steady presence.

If you've felt a nudge to serve, or if you're unsure where to begin, this may be the moment to ask, "Lord, where would You have me use my talents this year?"

Our Care Ministry has several Care Teams, each offering simple but meaningful ways to support individuals and families facing illness, grief, transitions, or practical needs. Whether you have one hour a month or one hour a week, there is a place for your gifts to shine.

You don't need special skills, just a heart that is willing. Training is provided, support is ongoing, and we serve as a team. You won't do ministry alone.

If you're curious, if you feel led, or if you want to learn more about where your gifts might fit, I would love to talk with you. Let's prayerfully explore how God may be inviting you to serve this year.

To learn more or schedule a conversation, please talk with **Christy**.

Remembrance

Our prayers and sympathy are with Natalie Clark, whose father, Roderick Simonds, passed away on November 21st. Please keep the family in your prayers during this difficult time.

Our prayers and sympathy are with the Hildebrandt family on the loss of Kyle's father, Thomas Hildebrandt, on November 23rd. Please keep the family in your prayers during this difficult time.





CARE MINISTRY Birthala

Senior Companions Birthday January 15 - Jim H.

Jim enjoys the simple and joyful things in life - long summer walks, music, and good food. His favorite hymns include *When Morning Gilds the Skies* and *Great Is Thy Faithfulness*. Summer is his favorite season, with winter coming in as a close second. He's a former avid bicyclist and golfer, and enjoyed ice skating. When it comes to favorite foods, you can't go wrong with roast prime rib (with popovers!), potato chips, and olives. We're grateful for Jim and wish him a very happy birthday! Happy Birthday Jim!

Stewards Welcome Doris and Shirley to our Circle of Companionship

We're delighted to welcome **Doris G**. and **Shirley B**. as the newest members of our Senior Companion Circle: a ministry that celebrates

those who have reached a special season of life, marked by wisdom, faith, and grace.

Our **Board of Stewards** and Senior Companions share a bond of faith and friendship, walking together in mutual care and encouragement.

We are grateful to have Doris and Shirley in our circle and look forward to spending time together and getting to know these ladies better.



Annual Remembrance Service - January 25, 2026

On Sunday, January 25, 2026, a portion of our late worship service will be dedicated to our Annual Remembrance, a meaningful tradition in which we honor those of our church family who have passed into God's care during the past year.

During this brief time, we will speak the names of our loved ones, accompanied by a bell chime, and reflect on Jesus' promise: "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die."



This moment offers gentle space for gratitude, healing, and hope within the larger flow of worship.

We welcome you, and your family and friends, to join us as we remember together. Whether you come carrying recent grief or simply wish to support others, your presence is a blessing. May this time remind us that we do not walk through loss alone: God is near, and we walk together as a community held in His love.

"He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds." Psalm 147:3

A Heartfelt Thank-You to Our Stewards Completing Their Service

This month, we express our sincere gratitude to two Stewards who are concluding their service on the Board.

Rachel has faithfully served for six years, offering steady leadership, compassion, and deep relational care to her Senior Companions. Her long-term dedication has been a gift to our church family, and her presence has shaped the ministry in meaningful ways.

Wanda has served for three years, bringing warmth, kindness, and a genuine heart for those she visits. Her love for our Senior Companions has been evident through every call, conversation, and connection.

Together, through visits, phone calls, prayers, and countless acts of encouragement, Rachel and Wanda have reflected Christ's love with humility and grace. In addition to their companionship ministry, they have also faithfully prepared and cared for the sacred elements of communion, serving our congregation in quiet, reverent ways that often go unseen but are deeply appreciated.

As they conclude their service, we celebrate the ways God has worked through them. Their ministry has made a difference, and we are deeply grateful.

Thank you, Rachel and Wanda, for serving faithfully and loving well

You have helped nurture a caring community at The United Church.

With gratitude, we pray God's blessing over you in the season ahead, that your service continues to bear fruit, and that His joy fills you as you follow His calling.

"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others... as faithful stewards of God's grace." -- 1 Peter 4:10



How Care Ministry Touches Hearts Shared by Those We've Served

Thank you Steward Friends

"Thank you for many special cards and messages of encouragement that you sent me. I am blessed and enjoy each note. I am happy when I am able to see friends at church, or a visit.

The Friends and Fellowship luncheon was great - wonderful food and fun. Marion, hugs to you. Good wishes to all. Thanks Christy and the Care Ministry."

Joy and Blessings, Shirley

Dear Care Team,

"This is a huge "thank you" for sending Louise and Kevin over to help me remove the tarp from my pergola. They did a wonderful job in record time! You guys are doing a great service to those who are in need of help now and then." God bless you! Susan G.





Youth Club

During the month of December, our **Youth Club** kids learned about the true meaning of Christmas and Advent during Bible time and Worship time. We also made placemats for Senior Companions and Advent wreaths during recreation time. We were able to share Christmas joy on December 10th, and go caroling at Elm Manor. **Youth Club will take a break** for Christmas and New Year's, and **we will meet again on January 7, 2026**.

Youth Club kids will **invite friends** to join them for one night of **Youth Club on January 21, 2026**. 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 usually some of them decide to join Youth Club for the rest of the year!

Sunday School

During the month of November, our Sunday school kids were invited to take part in a Mission Project. Our goal was to bring in 50 items over the course of the month for local food pantries. We surpassed our goal and brought in 64 items. Thank you, Sunday school families, for your generosity!

Sunday school kids shared our **Christmas Pageant** with our church family on Sunday, December 14 at 10am. This beloved annual tradition is a fun way to involve preschool through High School aged kids in the retelling of the Christmas story. Each year, a variety of children are able to participate. The pageant was followed by a birthday party for Jesus in the fellowship room.

Sunday school will resume on January 4, 2026 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.







VBS: Save the Dates!

Rainforest Falls VBS: Exploring the Nature of God. Beneath a canopy of chattering birds and howling monkeys, kids plunge into a lifelong adventure of discovering the nature of God. They'll explore what it means to be rooted in relationship with God, their creator, a safe place in life's storms. July 13-17, 2026, 9am - 12n00n; Kick-off: Sun., July 12, 2026 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!

Upcoming Events...

Sunday, January 4 - 8:45am service, 9:45am Intergenerational Sunday school (please bring a dish to pass if you're able), 11am service

Sunday, January 11 - Sunday school resumes for all ages at 9:45am



Join Us for Game Night!

Looking for something fun to do? Join us for Game Night on Saturday, January 10, from 6:30-8:30 pm. This family friendly event offers an opportunity for church members of all ages to come together and enjoy a variety of board games, card games, and friendly competition. Whether you're a seasoned game master or just looking to have fun, there's something for everyone. Snacks and refreshments will be available to enjoy as you engage in lighthearted fun and connect with others in the church community. Bring your friends, family, or come solo -- game night is a great way to meet new people and build lasting relationships. We look forward to seeing you there!





Stampin' Up January 17th from 9:30-noon

Come join us to create some cards. No experience is needed. Cost is \$20 for 4 cards and envelopes. Please bring a tape runner or glue. I will have everything else needed. Please let me know if you are coming by the Monday prior. Email Nancy Burt-Preece: nancyburtpreece@gmail.com



Sunday School

Our Middle School and High School classes continue in early January, after the Christmas break. With pageant practice behind us, we are resuming our joint activity time at

the beginning of

the Sunday school hour. We pray this

helps our students build stronger relationships across grade levels, and adds a bit of high-energy fun on a Sunday morning.

High School Youth Group (The Cause)

Like much of the other programs, we are are starting back up in early January, after the Christmas break. We are still working through Romans, and conducted a "testimony night" in December. We also enjoyed a Christmas party mid-December (always a fun time with out energetic students!).

Youth Club Middle School Group Bible Study

This class is following the same studies as the high school group. "Testimony day" was particularly impactful; several of them (including HS'ers Sunday night) made mention that this was the first time they sat down to write out their testimony. We pray this was a fruitful exercise for them!

School District Connects

Our mid-week connects continue, with Victor, Marcus Whitman, and Canandaigua connects active. We hope to perform a homeschool connect this month, or next.

Youth Mall Trip

While this article was written a few days before the mall trip, all signs point to another memorable middle school and high school Christmas event. This year, we scheduled the event on a Saturday, which takes advantage of being just after the Pageant practice, a longer window of time to enjoy the mall, and coupled with the church game night. With adults and students combined, we are hovering around 30 people involved.

Youth Ministry Activities - Also on the church calendar online Youth Club - Every Wednesday in January!

Sunday School - Every Sunday in January! (9:45 am)

• Intergenerational Sunday School - January 4

The Cause - January 4, 11, 18 (no youth group on 1/25) 4:30PM - Youth Band Practice 5:00PM - Students Arrive

Connects - 1x month per school district

- Canandaigua Thursday, Janaury 8, 6:45AM (Tim Hortons, North)
- Victor Thursday, January 15, 6:45AM (Dunkin', Main Street)

Student Spotlight

Name: Anna Grade: 11th

School: Victor Senior High

Fun & Personal

My favorite way to spend a Saturday would be sleeping in, hanging out with friends, and relaxing on my own throughout the day.

If I could travel anywhere I'd want to travel to France. I've always been interested in seeing France, and I know a little of French and French culture through school.



I love to do artsy things, such as drawing or painting.

I am looking forward to experiencing college and pursuing psychology.

Faith & Reflection

My favorite verse is 1 Peter 5:7, "Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you." I really like this verse because it always reassures me that God will always provide for my needs, and worrying won't make it happen faster.

If I could share one thing about Jesus with someone who doesn't know Him, I would tell them that he cares for and died for them.



- Marcus Whitman Monday, January 19, 2:30PM (Gorham Free Library)
- **Homeschool** Contact Mark for month-specific meetups!

Youth Fun Night - Saturday, January 24, exact time TBA Annual Meeting Fundraiser - Sunday, January 25, after the 11:00 am service

Sunday Morning Small Groups

After the Christmas break, we resume our normal Sunday school offerings. As a reminder, we have the parenting group*, which will spend time on "The Art of Parenting" curriculum from Family Life. The group designated for choir members will finish their "Case for Christmas" curriculum. The Bible study group continues on their journey through James. Finally, our young-adult group continues through a deep-dive into select passages of Romans.

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Mid-Week Connects

Our Ferris Hills group has been meeting monthly (though we will not meet in January), which includes

worship and a devotional. The Quail Summit group has started to meet, which has involved fellowship and snacks!

Adult Ministry Bible Studies

Start your year off right by getting involved in our various mid-week Bible Studies! As a reminder, we have a men's group that meets every Wednesday morning at 7am at the church for breakfast, fellowship, Bible study, and prayer. We also have a group of women that meet every Thursday at 1pm at the church - also a Bible study.

Young Adult and Adult Ministry Activities - Also on the church calendar online

- Sunday School Every Sunday in January! (9:45AM)
- Intergenerational Sunday School January 4
- Men's Weekly Bible Study and Prayer Breakfast Every Wednesday, 7:00AM
- Weekly Adult Bible Study Every Thursday, 1:00PM
- Connects -
 - Ferris Hills None in January
 - Quail Summit January 27, 3:00 pm
- Game Night Saturday, January 10, 6:30PM





CPR/AED Class Offered

January 24. 9am - 1pm, here at the United Church

American Heart Association Standard CPR/AED for the Adult, Child and Infant, and First Aid Skills. Taught to certification level for \$30 per person. Free if no certification is requested. We will do CPR first at 9am, then start First Aid @ 11am. Same cost for the combination or single subject certification. CPR includes choking relief and Naloxone (Narcan) administration. For questions, contact Instructor Holger Stave at holger@wfany.net or find answers at www.wfany.net. There will be a sign-up on the office door.

Intergenerational Women's Retreat

Saturday, January 31, 10AM-1PM at The United Church

Women of all ages are invited to connect through faith, fellowship, food! During our time together, we will engage with biblical stories of women how these stories may guide us in our journey today. More details to come, but you can expect a time of learning, engagement through breakout sessions, and open discussion over lunch. Register now in the Welcome Center (or online) to help us prepare for your attendance!



MISSIONS

2026 Mexico Mission Trip "Sharing the loy of Togetherness!"

For those of us traveling out of the country for this year's short term mission experience there will be risks, high costs for travel, and lives spent outside our comfort zone for a bit of time...March 19th-28th. But also we will experience the joy and wonder of seeing the possibilities of God working through each of us as we engage in physical activities, meaningful relationships, and shared covenants with brothers and sisters of faith in four communities in Quintana Roo: Bacalar, Cedralito, Limones and Tabi.

So...what happens on these yearly visits to Mexico? There are always multiple purposes. In the covenants signed with Living Waters for the World (LWW) and between the United Church and our in-country partners there is an agreement to communicate regularly with each other regarding the operation and maintenance of the water plants,

share information about the amount of water produced and distributed, discuss continuing education sessions in the community, and assess the benefits of and sustainability of the project. Although communication happens periodically throughout the year over what's app, Ken Allen and I have always felt these conversations happen best during a yearly visit. For additional understanding of our relationship with Living Waters for the World and each community..."the minimum covenant period (after a water plant is installed) is for 3 years, however a longer term may be negotiated between the parties if desired. The covenant will remain in effect until terminated with 60 days notice in writing by either partner to each other and to their Network." (In our case it is the Yucatán Network.) To date the communities of Cedralito (install was 2011), Limones (install was 2018), and Tabi (install by Newark Rotary was 2022) have all desired to continue in this covenant relationship. Continuing our partnerships of water ministry within these rural communities remains an important focus of our mission.

In addition to the ministry of empowering local leaders to bring purified water to their communities at affordable prices, next year's trip will seek to strengthen a developing relationship with the congregation of Iglesia Emmanuel in Bacalar. There is rich history between the United Church and Iglesia Emmanuel going back to the days of Rev. Fred Magley's many Mexico trips with some of you. We are now supporting Pastor Leodegario Hernández as one of our Presbyterian missionaries. We will be in Bacalar for four days and have plans to join the congregation in worship, small



groups, social gatherings, and a day of activity in their mission community of San Fernando.

We recognize that many of you cannot commit to such a mission trip as this one. But we hope that by supporting us you will feel a connection with our in-country faith communities and our shared ministry with them. We encourage you to pray for our mission team of United Church members SheaLeigh Brown, Mary and Ben Holm, Ray and Lori McMillen, Linda Werts, and LWW participants Marion Nicastro, Paul Salisbury, and Eigner Juarez as we set the plans in place for purposeful mission work. Please pray for the continued sustainability and ministries of our incountry partners. We invite you to support the trip financially through a Go Fund Me "Support Volunteers Mission Trip for Clean Water in Mexico," and join us for a Mexican dinner on Sunday, March 1st which will be open to the community.

We are reminded often of the scripture from Psalm 133 "How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!" May it be so again next March. Submitted by Linda Werts, Team Leader

In Memory of Ken Allen

The mission committee has established a scholarship(s) to the Living Waters for the World's "Clean Water U." It was Ken's greatest hope that the United Church would put together a water team to partner with another community in Mexico in need of clean water. The first step would be to train at a "Clean Water U" session in either the Spring at Camp Johnsonburg, New Jersey or in the Fall at Camp Hopewell in Oxford, Mississippi. Volunteers train in one of three workshops...CWU 101-Water Management and Relationship Development, CWU 102-Health and Spiritual Education, CWU 103-Water Testing, Water System Installation, Operation, and Management. As a legacy to Ken Allen's commitment to water-focused mission work, contributions to the scholarship fund may be made with checks to United Church with memo "CWU Scholarship." To express an interest in CWU training speak with Linda Werts.

Thank You, Johnsons!

It is with great appreciation that the Mission Team thanks Beth and Paul Johnson! They so graciously had an estate sale on two different days with all the proceeds designated for our church's mission work! A total of \$1,363 was raised and lots of wonderful items found new homes. Thanks again Beth & Paul!!

And Thank You, Congregation!

The Mission Collections Team thanks you for your generous donations these past months for the Christmas Angel Tree (110 families!), the Winter Wear Collection (4 big loads), and your quick and generous response to the Urgent Food Collection. We'll have a total for the Christmas Joy Offering in the next Lamplighter. It is surely our privilege to share with others

in need. God is so good to us and we share out of what he has provided for us. Thank you, Lord, and thank you, congregation! ~ Cathy and Mary Lou



Silent Auction

The mission committee will be holding it's bi-annual silent auction from June 7th to June 14th, 2026. This is our biggest fundraiser for the Trip Fund, which will assist our Youth and Adults as they go out into the mission field. (Youth Group Trips, Trip to North Carolina to assist with flood recovery, Mission Trips to Mexico to install clean water plants through Living Waters for the World, and Mission Trips to Nicaragua with AMOS to provide health clinics, Computer labs and libraries.) It takes much planning and many hands to make this happen. Please prayerfully consider how you can help us raise money for our Trip Fund by participating as a donor of an auction item, a member of the planning committee, a bidder at the auction, or an auction worker. Donations for the auction can be home crafted items, store bought items, gift baskets, pledges of your time or talents to help someone (such as 1 or 2 hours of gardening or babysitting time), antiques, a boat ride on Canandaigua Lake, a home cooked meal for a group of people, etc. This will be Regina's last year leading the auction. If you might consider taking on this responsibility, please volunteer to help with this year's auction (you don't have to mention your interest to possibly take over, just help and see what is involved.) To volunteer to help or if you have any questions, please contact Regina Allen at 585-260-4060 or regicallen@gmail.com

Chasin' the Blues

Called to Care, Canandaigua continues to work with our families from Ukraine, Haiti, Venezuela, and Honduras as they navigate the everchanging landscape of immigration challenges. Our Chasin' the Blues fundraiser with food, music and sharing will be held Friday, February 6th. Doors open at 6pm for the silent auction and 7pm for the event. Advance tickets are \$35. Tickets will be for sale in the Mission Center between services starting mid January. You can also contact Linda Werts, Cathy Bush, Sonya Brooks, Sarah Gross and Regie Allen for tickets. Thank you for responding with God's heart to those in need.

North Carolina Hurricane Relief Mission Trip 2026

2026 is almost upon us and that means the North Carolina hurricane relief mission trip is only 3 months away! It's not too late to sign up for the trip. The dates are March 28/29 - April 3. The work, connections made, and views of destruction during this year's trip were all incredibly moving. While Valley Hope Foundation (the group we worked with) continues their efforts, much more needs to be done. There will be work for all ages and abilities and it is a wonderful time to get to know other church members in a missions setting. There will be a meeting at noon on Sunday January 11 in the Fellowship room for all who are going on the trip. Please contact Sonya Brooks (sonya.brooks99@yahoo.com) for more information.

Hands on Missions

"Hands On" Mission Volunteers served well in 2025, finishing up by ringing bells for the Salvation Army.

- As we look into a new year please consider joining volunteers at Foodlink's "Pop Up Food Pantry" on Monday, January 26th at the Town of Canandaigua Highway Barn. Volunteers are needed from 9:00am until about 11:00am. See Linda W. for info.
- First Fridays at Cameron is on holiday break until February 6th. Talk with Mary Lou H. to learn more.
- Habitat for Humanity is requesting volunteers to work on the Tillotsin Street home...yes it's the one we framed the walls for last summer! Volunteers are needed for Mondays and Fridays. Contact Linda W. For the details.



The United Church Presbyterian-American Baptist 11 Gibson Street Canandaigua, NY 14424 Non-Profit Org. Postage Paid Permit No. 26 Canandaigua, NY 14424

Or Current Resident