



First Congregational Church of Greene, New York  
United Church of Christ - Founded 1811

# The Congregation

The Congregation is published monthly, except July and August, which are combined.

Volume LXX April 2024 Number 60



**Spirituality:** The center of our Daily life is to continuously improve our relationship with Christ and all God's Creation.

**Compassion:** Actions that welcome and accept all people and help them experience the good feeling of God's unconditional love.



**Integrity:** With honesty and respect we support everyone's freedom to develop their relationship with God.

**Belonging:** In sharing and celebrating life, we support our commitment to all others to nurture a family relationship of belonging.

*Communion Sunday, April 7th*

*May Newsletter Deadline, Monday, April 22nd*

**PTSD/RTM Suicide Prevention presentation by Dr. Greg Jolissaint,  
Thursday, April 25th at 7:00 p.m.**

*Harvesting the Past —Sowing the Future —Growing with God*

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**OFFICE TELEPHONE: 607-656-4923 E-mail address: [uccgreeneny@gmail.com](mailto:uccgreeneny@gmail.com) Pastor's Study: 607-656-7449**

**Website Address: <http://www.uccgreene.org>**

**Facebook Page: [www.facebook.com/uccgreene](http://www.facebook.com/uccgreene) - Worship each Sunday at 10:00 a.m. in person & with Facebook Live**

**Church Office Hours: Monday - Thursday 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.**

**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC  
28 N. CHENANGO STREET  
GREENE, NY 13778**

## ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Pastor: Rev. Curtis Whitman

Moderator: Jim Gagnon

Board of Deacons: Donna Possemato

Board of Property: George Estey

Board of Christian Ed.: Lyndsie Jones

Treasurer: Alta Martin

Choir Director: Ken Jones

Organist: Kristi Ruffo

Office Assistant/ Newsletter Coordinator: Linda Teter

Custodian: Vincent Green



**First Congregational Church, UCC**

# APRIL 2024

*Harvesting the Past — Sowing the Future — Growing with God*

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Please check your e-mail and the church facebook page for updates as this calendar may change.	1	2 Women's Fellowship 9:30 a.m. Property Board 6:30 p.m.	3 WIC 8:30-3:00 Zoom Bible Study 12:00 p.m. Choir 7:00 p.m.	4 Prayer Team 10:00 a.m. Yoga 5:30 p.m.	5	6
7 Worship with Communion 10:00 a.m. Facebook Live Coffee Hour	8 Deacon Meeting 7:00 p.m.	9 Greene Garden Club 5:30-8:00 p.m. Yoga 5:30 p.m.	10 Zoom Bible Study 12:00 p.m. Choir 7:00 p.m.	11 Prayer Team 10:00 a.m. Yoga 5:30 p.m.	12	13 Train Club 9:00 a.m.
14 Worship 10:00 a.m. with Facebook Live Coffee Hour	15	16 Yoga 5:30 p.m.	17 Choir 7:00 p.m.	18 Yoga 5:30 p.m.	19	20
21 Worship 10:00 a.m. with Facebook Live Coffee Hour	22 <b>NEWSLETTER DEADLINE</b>	23 Yoga 5:30 p.m.	24 Zoom Bible Study 12:00 p.m. Choir 7:00 p.m.	25 Prayer Team 10:00 a.m. Yoga 5:30 p.m. <b>PTSD/RTM Suicide Prevention by Dr. Greg Jolis-saint 7:00 p.m.</b>	26	27
28 Worship 10:00 a.m. with Facebook Live Coffee Hour  Susquehanna Assoc. Spring Meeting at Maine Federated Church 2:00 p.m.	29	30 Yoga 5:30 p.m.				

Address:

28 N. Chenango Street  
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Website: [www.uccgreene.org](http://www.uccgreene.org)



## MINISTER'S MUSINGS

"After the Sabbath, at dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went back to look at the tomb.

There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, and going into the tomb, rolled back the stone, and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid of the angel that they shook with fear and became like dead men.

The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified, he is not here; for he is risen." (Matthew 18:1-6)

I love these opening verses to Matthew's account of the resurrection. It is a text filled with power: words like "violent earthquake" and "lightning". But I also find in this passage words of emotion. Words that you would expect when seeing angels: "they shook like dead men" and "fear" filled them. I often encounter non-believers who, like the disciple Thomas, will say to me, "I need proof, otherwise the resurrection of Jesus is a made up story!" and I will think to myself, "You have no idea what you are asking!" look at the emotion and drama these individuals went through. It almost killed some of them to experience angels first hand.

This year, as we celebrate the Easter resurrection, I would like to express my thoughts to believers and non-believers, that this is a day of celebration. It is a day of power and extreme emotion. Who among us today, could ever express 50 years after the resurrection event, the joy and glory of the resurrection like the gospel writer Matthew? He wrote for the churches and early Christians of his day that were being persecuted. He wrote to express the powerful victory over death that Christ gained for all people. He wrote to share the celebration of Easter for his people then and for us today, and to show that Easter is one of the most important events in all of history. I believe the angel said it best to the women that day, "He is risen!" This is a statement that still carries tremendous power to this very day.

We are called, like those first disciples of Christ, to carry this message to believers and non-believers in our culture today. Even though the Easter event was two thousand years ago, we need to allow the Holy Spirit to transform our lives like the angel did to the women that day. We are joyous participants in the great resurrection event and are asked to glorify God to all we meet. We do this so that all may hear, accept the transforming power of Christ, and the message of Jesus' victory over death may be passed on to others who do not believe.

Embrace this powerful, emotional message and carry it with you wherever you go. Let it become who you are in this culture of today. It is a message not just for Easter, but for every moment of your life. May God be with us all as the angel comes into our lives saying, "He is not here. He is risen!"

Blessings and Peace,  
*Pastor Curtis*



## APRIL BIRTHDAYS

- 5 Joan Budine
- 10 Phillip Whitman
- 11 Adrienne Silvernail
- 19 Korbin Neudel
- 24 Barbara Putrino
- 28 Brian Breck



*(Please contact the Church Office at 607-656-4923  
with any changes or additions.)*

## USHERS FOR 2024

**April:** Phil & Sharon Barton, Stephen &  
Cherie Bentley

**May:** OPEN

**June:** Tom & Faith Neal

**July:** OPEN

**August:** OPEN

**September:** OPEN

**October:** OPEN

**November:** Phil & Sharon Barton, Stephen &  
Cherie Bentley

**December:** OPEN

***There is a signup sheet on the table in the social  
hall for 2024 Ushers. Please sign up.  
Thank you.***

## CHURCH EMAIL ADDRESS

The church's e-mail address is:  
**uccgreeneny@gmail.com.**



## FACEBOOK WORSHIP

Don't forget to watch every Sunday at 10:00 a.m.  
<https://www.facebook.com/uccgreene/>



### Just a reminder...

If you change your mailing address, phone number or email, please notify the church office at [uccgreeneny@gmail.com](mailto:uccgreeneny@gmail.com) or call 607-656-4923. We need to keep our records up to date for mailings and the church directory. THANKS!



## COMMITTEES AND CHAIRS

Church Family Council - Jim Gagnon, Moderator  
Property Board - George Estey, Chair, 607-656-4564  
Deacons - Donna Possemato, Chair, 607-656-7964  
Board of Education - Lyndsie Jones, 607-238-1154  
Women's Fellowship - Katha Root, 607-656-9654  
Mission Committee - Ruth Bennett, Chair, 607-656-9707  
Head Usher - Deacons  
Altar Flowers - Kathy Estey, 607-656-4564  
Prayer Chain - Kathy Estey, 607-656-4564



## Prayer Team

We are looking for individuals who would like to join Pastor Curtis on Thursday mornings at 10:00 a.m. for a time of prayer. Prayers will be lifted up for those who are mentioned on Sunday mornings during our **"Sharing of Joys and Concerns"**. In addition we will be lifting up prayers for those listed from week to week in our **"Remember in our Prayers"** section of the bulletin. Come and be a part of this prayer team as we lift our concerns to God and join our spirits in prayer. **Prayer Team will not meet on April 18th.**



## MAY NEWSLETTER DEADLINE: Monday, April 22nd.

Please e-mail your article to  
[uccgreeneny@gmail.com](mailto:uccgreeneny@gmail.com)



## SUNDAY PRAYER REQUESTS

If you would like to send a prayer request for worship services each Sunday please e-mail to the church at [uccgreeneny@gmail.com](mailto:uccgreeneny@gmail.com) by Thursdays at 10:00 a.m. Thank you.



## FOOD PANTRY DONATIONS

Thank you all so much for your support of the Food Pantry. Until further notice the food will only be delivered to the Food Pantry on the third Saturday of the month. PLEASE continue to give generously. The church has donation boxes located in the social hall. **The food pantry is in need of instant oatmeal, cereal, juice, canned peas, spaghetti sauce, canned meats/chicken, etc.**

## SUNDAY COLLECTION COUNTERS

April 7: Phil Barton & Marlene Sherwood  
April 21: Laurel Acunto & Stephen Bentley  
May 5: Jim Gagnon & George Estey  
May 19: Kathy Estey & George Marr  
June 2: Tom Neal & Ruth Bennett  
June 16: Sharon Barton & Donna Possemato  
June 30: Sharon Barton & Kathy Estey

*If you are unable to count for the week you are scheduled, please find someone to take your place and notify the church office with the new name.*

## COFFEE HOUR

If you are interested in hosting a coffee hour please sign up. The signup sheet is on the table in the social hall. **Coffee hours will be held each Sunday.** If you would like to host you are asked to provide one or more of the following: coffee, tea, punch or water. Thank you.



## ZOOM BIBLE STUDY MEETINGS

Bible Study will be held each Wednesday at noontime for about an hour to look at and discuss the lectionary readings for the following Sunday services. Please join in to learn more about God's word and to enjoy the fellowship of other church members and friends. Be sure to check your email for the zoom link and join in on the experience and joy of being the body of Christ through a zoom meeting. The zoom links will be sent a few days before each event. **Bible Study will not meet on April 17th.**



## SCRIPTURE READERS

**April 7: Tom Neal**

**April 14: Judy Travis**

**April 21: Stephen Bentley**

**April 28: OPEN**

*Thank you to everyone who has signed up to read scripture.*



## PENNIES FOR PEOPLE

Each Sunday we will have a large container in church where you can place your pennies. This will be on a stand in the sanctuary as you enter from the social hall. This is an outreach project of the United Church of Christ New York Women. Any church which sends in money, may nominate a worthy group to receive funds. These nominations are submitted to the Women's Association for review. The Association's Executive Board will select worthy community groups to receive funds that do not have government funding. Pennies do add up,

please save your pennies and place them in the container to help families in need, soup kitchens, food pantries and many other organizations.

Thank you,  
Women's Fellowship



## DEACONS

Many, many thanks to everyone who helped to make the Lenten season so special. Further thanks to those who have donated flowers for the altar for Easter Sunday, as well as the choir and Ken and Kristin for the time they have spent preparing special music.

Moving ahead into spring (and summer) we have special dates on the horizon. Members with fifty (and more) years of membership will be recognized on Sunday, May 19th. Our annual summer picnic will be held at The Lions Park on Sunday, July 21st.

Sometimes accepting the responsibility of being a committee member is just not the right fit. BUT ... maybe stepping in to volunteer to "man" the coffee hour following the worship service, or reading scripture is something you could do. Ushers are needed. If the thought of having to light altar candles prevents you from volunteering ... just let one of us know that you will usher, but lighting candles just isn't your forte. We will have that duty covered. We are looking for people willing to do only one week, not a month. Signup sheet is in the social hall. Last, but not least, a spring work day will soon be scheduled. All of these need your help!! Thank you in advance for your volunteering!

- Joan Paino

## WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP BEGINS SUNSHINE CONNECTION

While the deacons send cards to members for birthdays and anniversaries, the Women's Fellowship felt there was an opportunity to reach out to those who are ill, have a loss in their family, or just may need a little extra support. So, thank you to Judy Halstrom who has agreed to start this connection for us. To make it work, Judy will need to hear from you with information about someone you may know who needs this little touch to brighten their day. Information can be sent to Judy at any of the following:

*Judy Halstrom*  
14 Grace Drive, Apt. A2  
Greene, NY 13778  
607-226-0928  
[judyhalstrom@rocketmail.com](mailto:judyhalstrom@rocketmail.com)

You can also give her information when you see her at church.



### WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Our group has been busy! We continue to send greeting cards and prayer shawls of love and support to friends who need a cheerful word and a prayer from the group. We sponsored a World Day of Prayer service on Friday, March 1 with 12 people attending. Many thanks to the Evening Sun for promoting this event with a front page article. We are selling RADA cutlery and popular Streak-less cloths each Sunday after church. We will be promoting Blanket Sundays in May in support of the Church World Service program. Carol DeJager is designing and making a beautiful quilt for a raffle to be held at our rummage sale in August.

Our next project is preparing and delivering hygiene and school kits to support the efforts of Church World Service. We are asking for your donations to help with this project. Here is a description of the kits and items we need. Cash donations are also welcome. There is a box in the social hall so you can donate these items. Thanks in advance!

**HYGIENE KITS** - Everyone deserves access to basic necessities to feel clean and stay healthy.

*Items needed:*

*Hand towels (15" X 28" to 16" X 32") No fingertip, bath, dish or micro-fiber towels.*

*Wide tooth combs removed from package. Sturdy with 6" of teeth, no pocket combs or picks*

*Fingernail or toenail clipper removed from packaging*

*Bath-size bar of soap in original package*

*Standard size band-aids*

**SCHOOL KITS** - Starting a new school year can be exciting, but for children who do not have needed supplies, it can be terrifying.

*Items needed:*

*Blunt Scissors, rounded tip only*

*70-count bound notebooks. No loose leaf or filler paper.*

*Hand-held pencil sharpener, removed from packaging*

Please see Katha Root (607-656-9654) with any questions and thank you for supporting this important project.

As a reminder, all women of the church are members of this group and are invited to join in our projects and activities, even if they cannot attend our monthly meetings.

### CHURCH COUNCIL

Meetings for the rest of the year are:

June 11, 6:30 p.m.

October 8, 6:30 p.m.

November 10, budget meeting after worship

December 10, 6:30 p.m.

January 26, Annual Meeting after worship

## **Thank You, Dear Friends**

**Thank you, dear friends in Christ, for the lovely cards, well wishes, and especially the prayers following my GI surgery on March 6. I am feeling better each day and consider it a special blessing to be able to attend church on Sunday and a joy to be able to attend most of the Lenten lunches and services.**

**It has been a long journey since February 1 when I learned I would need surgery to correct a condition I had been dealing with since before Christmas. I feel so blessed to be a member of First Congregational Church. Thank you so much for your caring concern.**

**Peg Marr**

## **HISTORICALLY SPEAKING**

Our busy month of March began with the World Day of Prayer service on March 1. The service was held in the chapel and arranged by Women's Fellowship with the program prepared by Katha Root. Each year a different country is chosen to be featured. This year's country was Palestine.

The service began with a history of World Day of Prayer, followed by a Scripture reading of Ephesians 4:1-3 and the hymn "Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying." The service continued with a reading and a message by Katha, followed by A Prayer for Gaza written by the students and faculty at Bethlehem Bible College. The second Scripture reading was from 1 Thessalonians 5: 16-18. The service closed with the Lord's Prayer and the hymn, "Hear Our Prayer, O Lord." Following the service, we adjourned to the social hall for a lunch of soup and sandwich.

We celebrated Communion on March 3, the third Sunday in Lent.

### **Women's Fellowship**

Women's Fellowship met on March 5 in the social hall. We reviewed the Lenten luncheon which we hosted on February 22. Fifty people were served at a cost of \$157. Rada knives and Streak-Less cloths

will be sold after church in March. Church World Service hygiene kits and school kits are being collected. A list of kit items is listed in the Sunday bulletin and a box is placed in the social hall for donations. Eighty kits will be assembled at the next meeting on April 2. We will be selling raffle tickets for Carol DeJager's quilt at Hymn & Hawe during the Greene Craft Fair on Saturday, July 27. Judy has received a large supply of cards for our Sunshine Connection project. Many cards have been sent to families and individuals who are ill.

The Lenten Service and Luncheon was held March 7 at the Methodist Church.

The fourth Sunday in Lent was celebrated on March 10. The One Great Hour of Sharing collection was received at this service. Social Hour was hosted by Sharon Barton and Kathy Estey.

Zion Episcopal Church hosted the Lenten Service and Luncheon on March 14.

March 17, the fifth Sunday in Lent, was also St. Patrick's Day, and an abundance of green was seen throughout the congregation. Social Hour was hosted by Cliff Jones and Karen Bryant.

Central Baptist Church hosted the Lenten Service and Luncheon on March 21.

### **Palm Sunday**

Palm Sunday, the beginning of Holy Week, was celebrated on March 24. The message for the day was given through the cantata titled "No Greater Love" by Lloyd Larson, delivered by the choir directed by Ken Jones with Kristi Ruffo organist. Each song of the cantata was prefaced by readings from various choir members: Curtis Whitman, Greg Smiley, Art DeJager, Judy Travis, Katha Root, Donna Possemato, and Ken Jones and Kristi Ruffo. The first part of the cantata (Message) included "Remember Me"; "Alone in the Garden He Prays"; "Betrayed, Rejected, Condemned" followed by "Surely He Has Borne Our Griefs" during prayer time, and concluding with the Postlude, "There Is No Greater Love." Thank you, Ken, Kristi, and choir for your inspiring performance!



**Prelude: "Sing Hosanna to the King"**



Curtis and Greg



Choir



**"Betrayed, Rejected, and Condemned"**  
Greg and Art



Acolyte Lauren

**"No Greater Love"--- Lloyd Larson**



**"Remember Me" - Katha and Donna**



**"Alone in the Garden He Prays" –Art and Judy**



**"There Is No Greater Love"**  
Ken and Kristi

Holy Week continues with Maundy Thursday Service on March 28 at 7 p.m. at First Congregational Church. The Good Friday Service will be held at noon at Central Baptist Church on March 29.

Easter Sunrise Service is at the Greene Primary School at 6:30 a.m. on March 31 with Pastor Curtis presiding.

Easter Service is at 10 a.m. on March 31. Happy Easter, everyone!

Peg Marr, Historian