

FIRST CHURCH CONNECTION

First Congregational UCC of Onekama,
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Church Website: <https://onekamaucc.org/> Click the Link and Check it out!

February 2026

PASTORAL PONDERINGS

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your , and with all your soul, and with all your might.”
Deuteronomy 6:5



When hearts are mentioned, I am sure that this mention conjures up visions of February 14th and Valentine’s Day for a lot of you, as it does for me. If one were playing “Pictionary” or other of the many games based on word associations, and a symbol like the emoji in the above quote in place of the word “heart” were drawn or shown, I am sure that the word “valentine” would come to mind. In fact, valentine would be considered a synonym for “heart.” But, just like the observance of St. Valentine’s Day has been subverted to be a day given over to romance and a day to choose and communicate with sweethearts—even though February 14th is actually the anniversary of the Martyrdom of St. Valentine, a Roman priest who refused to pay tribute to the pagan Roman gods, (a far from romantic event), “heart” has undergone much of the same transformation over the centuries.

The transformation of Valentine’s Day from a sorrowful observance of the death of a martyr to a romantic holiday seems to have happened because the Roman feast of the Lupercalia, when youths chose by lot their sweethearts for the following year, almost coincided with February 14th, and over the centuries these two events merged into one “celebration.” How ironic that a pagan celebration, the Lupercalia, should overshadow the celebration of the death of a Christian martyr who had been condemned to death precisely because he refused to observe these very kinds of pagan practices!

In our modern mindset, the “heart” which is spoken about here in Deuteronomy could connote romantic visions—sentimental or nostalgic—as we have been brought up on romantic movies, like “Rom Coms” and Hallmark films, fairy tales, soap operas and historical romances, and have continued to celebrate “holidays” such as Valentine’s Day and Sweetest Day, without any idea of their historic significance. But the word translated as “heart” here in Hebrew, means something totally different. The Hebrew in this passage says something like we should love our God with all our “quick intellect. moving to and fro; with all of our vital animal spirit, and with all of our strong vehement endeavoring.” The heart in Hebrew is definitely not a noun—it is a verb—and the heart is not just a passive paper valentine, found only in the mind—it is a heart of action.

As we are contemplating sending Valentines to loved ones this year, maybe we could also think about what kind of *actions* of loving-kindness we could offer to make people’s lives more vital and meaningful.

Happy February!

Pastor Alison

Community Outreach

Baby Pantry

St. Philips Episcopal Church in Beulah sponsors an extensive Baby Pantry for those young families that are in need. Janet Adam and Pastor Alison delivered our "white gift" baby shower gifts to them on the 17th of last month. We also presented the check from our Christmas Eve Offering. They were thrilled with our gifts! Thank you all for your generosity!



Ukrainian Children's Art Auction



This is one of the 10 art works that will be auctioned to raise money for the U-Care (Ukrainian Children's Aid and Relief Effort). This organization benefits children living under care in institutions, orphanages, and foster care whose parents are at war or lost in war: those internally displaced and homeless, as well as vulnerable Youth. The art is part of the activities at the camps and restorative events run by U-Care in and around Ukraine for these children.

The artwork will be on display in Fellowship Hall at the end of February. The auction will begin on March 22nd (online) and end on April 18th, with the winners being announced at our Spring Brunch on April 19th. Our Spring Brunch this year will be in benefit of a local children's agency, the Lakeshore Children's Advocacy Center in Manistee. Bringing these two outreach events together is a way to serve both the global and local needs of vulnerable children.

February local food pantry

Collection items are canned vegetables. You can drop them off at the back of the sanctuary and we will see they get to the St. Joseph Church.



February

- 1st Carol
- 8th Shelley
- 15th Steve
- 22nd Joy



In the upcoming months, if there is a Sunday that you could help by volunteering, it would be greatly appreciated!

Just send me an email with the date.

Carol Rackow – rackey1992@gmail.com

Exercise Classes “Stretch & Balance”

Are you looking to burn a few calories and improve your health while having fun with a jovial bunch of people?

Tonya Evans’ exercise classes meet in our Fellowship Hall on Tuesdays and Thursdays 3:30 – 4:30 pm. The class will be split into two sessions as follows:

“Winter” session – Jan. 13 through March 12 9 weeks

“Spring” session – March 24 through May 28 10 weeks (20 classes) for \$85 prepaid

**For the discount, please prepay by the first night of class for each session.



Class Description: A strong core, flexibility and balance are your most important assets regardless of your fitness level. This class incorporates core strength training, light weight training upper and lower body workouts, stretching and balance practice for an overall effective yet not so strenuous workout. This is a Co-Ed Class. Bring your own weights, and yoga mat or towel for floor exercises. Chair exercises are an option to floor exercises.

About the instructor: Tonya Evans is a Physical Therapy Assistant at the Manistee County Medical Care Facility. She helps patients to follow an appropriate exercise program that will increase their strength, endurance, coordination, and range of motion. She has been in the business 27 years! Come enjoy the fun, puns, upbeat music and great camaraderie... You know, misery loves company!

Monthly 2026 Events & Dates

Worship – Every Sunday at 10 a.m.

Financial Advisory Committee –Will meet as announced

Music & Worship – Will meet on Sunday, February 8th after goodies.

Ministry Council – 3rd Thursday, this month it will be February 19th at 7:00pm n Zoom



Game Night will meet in the *fellowship hall* with potluck on Friday the 20th at 6:00pm – A Mardi Gras Pancake Supper will be provided by Pastor Alison, so bring something to add to that! Masks and beads will also be provided! (It’s supposed to be on Tuesday, but we will enjoy it anyway!) Sweet & Salty Bingo will follow the meal, so bring your sweet and salty prizes!

Choir Practice - Sunday afternoons 3:30 to 4:30pm.

Bible Study – is on Saturdays in Fellowship Hall (unless otherwise announced) 10-11:30am.

Community Outreach- February 10th at 1:00 pm at the church.

JOIN US FOR LENT



Wednesday Soup Suppers & Lenten Services

Onekama UCC & The Church of the Brethren

5:30 Soup Supper and 6:15 Service

Ash Wednesday, February 18—Church of the Brethren

February 25th - Onekama UCC

March 4th—Church of the Brethren

March 11th-Onekama UCC

March 18th —Church of the Brethren

March 25th—Onekama UCC

Onekama UCC is at 4920 Spring Street

Church of the Brethren is at 8266 Mill Street

January Treasurer Report

Income from Contributions \$9,469.56 Flowers \$50.00

Expenses of \$ 9,110.46

Line of credit loan for basement project is \$3,154.11

**Line of credit loan for the parsonage shed
\$2,979.59**



Beginning Knitting

This 4-week class provides a comprehensive guide to the basics of knitting to set you on a new adventure.

Classes held at the Onekama First Congregational United Church of Christ fellowship hall on Spring Street, Onekama, MI

Tuesdays, February 10 & 17; March 3 & 10, 2026

(no class February 24)

5:30 to 7:30 pm

Cost \$50 – supply list included in class description

Register online using this code:



Or go to

<https://square.link/u/QXAsFqfh>

Bea Cuthbertson, Instructor

Aunt Bea's Farm

auntbeasfarm.com

517.518.0519

AuntBeasFarm@gmail.com



Intermediate Knitting

This 6-week class is designed for those with basic knitting knowledge who wish to expand their skills.

Classes held at the Onekama First Congregational United Church of Christ fellowship hall on Spring Street, Onekama, MI

Thursdays, February 5, 12, 19, 26, March 5 & 12, 2026

5:30 to 7:30 pm

Cost \$60 – supply list included in class description

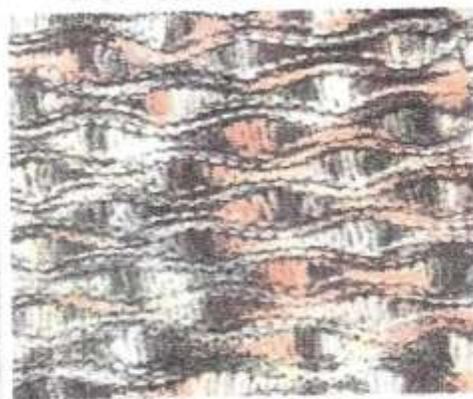
Register online using this code:



Or go to
<https://square.link/u/R8eBd2wb>

Bea Cuthbertson, Instructor
Aunt Bea's Farm
auntbeasfarm.com
517.518.0519
AuntBeasFarm@gmail.com

Interested in
beginning lessons?
Contact me to get
started!



Second of Eight “Aging Well” Forums

Fourth Fridays from Jan. thru May then September, October & January



Dr. Carol King. Presenter

February 27, 2026

11am-1pm

First Congregational UCC of Onekama Fellowship Hall

Corner of Zosel and Spring Streets in Onekama

A Free Lunch will be catered by “Carefree Catering”

Dr. Carol King is a family practice physician who works at the Crystal Lake Health Center in Bear Lake, MI. and is affiliated with Munson Healthcare, Manistee Hospital. She has been in practice for over 20 years.

She graduated from Northwestern University Medical School in Chicago and was a Resident and Intern at Sparrow Hospital in Lansing, MI.

The topic for her presentation will be “10 Things I Wish my 50+ Patients Knew.”

Dr. King specializes in treating obesity, diabetes, hypertension and high blood pressure among other things. Her practice has many patients who are in need of geriatric care.

Sponsored by Onekama Congregational UCC

And the Portage Lake Association

FMI: Alison at 802-829-3211

Our Olivia Medals at Special Winter Olympics!

At Traverse City over the last week in January Olivia Rackow won several medals in the snowshoeing event. She won a 3rd place in the 50 meters and tied for second place in the 25 meter race—We are so proud of you, Olivia!



February Birthdays

6th Frieda Wilson
7th Lynn Jans & Kelly Keys
11th Ried Martin
16th Gib Lucas
24th Bill Sawhill & Karen Barnes

Anniversaries

10th Lesley & Drake DeCator

Steps for viewing Facebook Live -Streamed Services...

Be sure to like our page on Facebook "First Congregational Church of Onekama".

Find the three dots on a post. Click or touch the dots.

Scroll down and turn on notifications for this post.

You will be notified when the page goes live

Church Staff

Pastor – Rev. Alison Andrea Young

Choir Director – Dan Wilson

Moderator – Bill Sawhill

Vice Moderator - Marcia Rogers

Treasurer & Secretary – Joy Lind

Clerk – Lynn Jans

Pianist – Carolyn Brooks

Choir Accompanist - Kathy Wilson

Bell Choir Director – Carol Worch

Sexton – Carol Rackow

Custodian – Janet Adam