



Walton First Congregational Church  
United Church of Christ

Updates February 16, 2026

## Celebrations

### February

#### Birthdays

15<sup>th</sup>: Nancy Macneill 18<sup>th</sup>: Sierra Caruso  
20<sup>th</sup>: Fran Robinson 25<sup>th</sup>: Cooper Evans

### March

#### Birthdays

2<sup>nd</sup>: Betty Johnston 13<sup>th</sup>: Eliose Kelly  
26<sup>th</sup>: Paige Clark

## On the Calendar

**Wednesday, February 18:** Ash Wednesday Service **9:30 am\*\***

**Sunday, February 22:** Sanctuary Worship 10:15 am; **No** Sunday School

**Tuesday/Thursday, February 24 & 26:** Chair Yoga 11:00 am-12:00 pm

**Thursday, February 26:** Ministry Committee Meeting 2:00 pm

**Friday, February 27:** Operations Committee Meeting 4:30 pm

**Saturday, February 28:** Gathering Table 11:30 am-1:00 pm

**Sunday, March 1:** Sanctuary Worship and **Communion** 10:15 am; Sunday School; Prudential Board Meeting in lieu of Coffee Hour

**Tuesday/Thursday, March 3 & 5:** Chair Yoga 11:00 am-12:00 pm

**Sunday, March 8:** Sanctuary Worship 10:15 am; Sunday School

**Tuesday/Thursday, March 10 & 12:** Chair Yoga 11:00 am-12:00 pm

**Saturday, March 14:** Gathering Table 11:30 am-1:00 pm

**Sunday, March 15:** Sanctuary Worship 10:15 am; **No** Sunday School

## Elijah's Closet

Fridays and Saturdays 10:00 am-2:00 pm

### Ash Wednesday

**\*\*Please note the time change\*\***



*God always forgives us*

Begin the Lenten season with prayer and reflection as we receive ashes, a symbol of repentance and renewal.

February 18th, **9:30 am**

## Board Updates

To honor loved ones that are no longer with us, we would like to add birthdate/memorial dates to our newsletter. If you would like to have a loved one included, please submit their names and dates to April.

## CHAIR YOGA FOR OLDER ADULTS CONTINUES



IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO START!

**WHERE?** First Congregational Church, UCC  
Corner of Mead and North Sts., Walton, NY  
Enter using the North St., back entrance

### WHEN?

Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:00 am - 12:00 pm

January 13 & 15  
January 20 & 22  
January 27 & 29  
February 3 & 5  
February 10 & 12

February 24 & 26  
March 3 & 5  
March 10 & 12  
March 17 & 19  
March 24 & 26  
Mar 31 & Apr 2

April 14 & 16  
April 21 & 23  
April 28 & 30  
May 5 & 7  
May 12 & 14  
May 19 & 21

If you have any questions call the church at  
607-865-4066

Wear comfortable clothes and bring water with you.

## Member Updates

A pair of gray gloves were left during our Annual Meeting. Please let April know if they are yours.

Please place your non-perishable food and toiletry donations in the wagon located at the back of the sanctuary. Loraine Davila will drive donations to the food bank the last Tuesday of each month.

If you have anything that you would like included in our bi-monthly Updates, please contact April at 607-865-4066 or [secretary@uccwalton.com](mailto:secretary@uccwalton.com)

## Previous Sermons and Liturgy

### ❖ February 1, 2026

- ▶ Sermon: The Beginning
- ▶ Scripture Reading: Micah 6:1-8
- ▶ Gospel Reading: Matthew 5:1-12

### ❖ February 8, 2026

- ▶ Sermon: Saltiness
- ▶ Scripture Reading: 1 Corinthians 2:1-12
- ▶ Gospel Reading: Matthew 5:13-16

### ❖ February 15, 2026

- ▶ Sermon: Transition of Change
- ▶ Scripture Reading: 2 Peter 1:16-21
- ▶ Gospel Reading: Matthew 17:1-9

## Pastor's Pen

### Love by Pastor Janet

Saint Benedict of Nursia is often referred to as the Saint that established the greatest rule for a community of believers. Believers who are in monasteries and convents and believers who are in homes and families. Since the sixth century, he has asked the key question we still ask today: What is life's ultimate meaning and destination? What are we all about? His answer to both was a question: "Are we living a life of humility to reach our heavenly home?"

Saint Benedict advised people that the key to life's journey was humility. Humility is not a popular word today. It suggests to some people that it is a diminutive lifestyle that disallows success. But for Benedict "humility" meant not thinking about "me, myself, and I" but rather to think of the other first. He taught that "love" is the basis of humility. To love as God has shown us love is to love as we also should. To St. Benedict this is a God given gift. A gift we need to use for all people regardless of who they are or where they are on life's journey.

Wouldn't the world be a better place if we adopted this form of humility and ultimately love in our lives? Would we have wars as we have? Would we have insurrections as we see in our country? Would we have prejudice and judgements of people who are not as we are? Would we have anger and distrust? Benedict saw that "community" needed humility to love one another!

The whole of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation tells of all the stages of life we go through to reach the value of life's meaning. In the end we see the Great Revelation of God's gift of love by envisioning our heavenly home.

Today we often use the “power” of love to hold others in our control, but Benedict saw that the humility of loving was accomplished by accepting others as they are. The same love that created us, the love that guided us, the love that was a sacrifice for us, and the love that has shown us the resurrection.

Benedict asks: “Are you hastening toward your heavenly home?” Love is the vehicle.

## **A Devotional from Pastor Janet**

**Adorable** by Mary Luti

*Finally, beloved, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.* - Philippians 4:8, excerpted (NRSV)

The only thing wrong with cat videos is that they're too short. There's one teensy orange kitten I could watch all day, but the clip's only 20 seconds long.

Now, before you judge me – “The world is on fire and you're watching cats?!?” – please note that the apostle Paul approves.

Well, no, he wasn't thinking cat videos when he urged us to dwell on commendable things. But he could've been. Kittens are pleasing, and way worthier of our attention than conspiracy theories, alarmist memes, the pitiful performances of pusillanimous politicians, and the grotesque perversions of the vastly wealthy.

Paul knew that dwelling overlong on crapioca like that is deforming and enervating. It takes the fight out of us. Whereas dwelling on honorable and pleasing things inclines us towards the good, strengthens us for doing it, and encourages us to keep at it.

And – all appearances to the contrary notwithstanding – there's so much good to think about, so many good people to honor with our attention, so much good justice being waged that we can celebrate. And, yes, so many adorable cat videos to enjoy.

So don't judge yourself (or me) for watching kittens and frolicking adolescent otters. It's not evasive or shallow. Well, maybe it is a little. But in this hard-edged age when the powers take pleasure in being cruel, to let your spirit be shaped, your mind filled, and your heart reoriented by good and pleasing things – however small, silly, or trite – is nothing short of an act of faith.

The pleasure we feel in them is akin to prayer, our relief is praise, our laughter is defiance, and the sweetness that pervades us is God's own.

### **Prayer**

Did you see the one with the teensy orange kitty, God? Wasn't it adorable? You are, too.

## **Lifted in Prayer**

Lorraine Miller  
The family of Roberta Lacey  
The family of Dorothy Elmore

Nadene Kopetz

Janet Brienza  
The family of Margaret Cobane  
The family of Dakota Mann