



Walton First Congregational Church
United Church of Christ

Updates March 18, 2026

Celebrations

March		April	
<u>Birthdays</u>		<u>Birthdays</u>	<u>Anniversaries</u>
2 nd : Betty Johnston	13 th : Eliose Kelly	10 th : Ann LePinnet	14 th : John & Janet Brienza
	26 th : Paige Clark	11 th : Libby Kelly	
		13 th : Heather Ogden	
		19 th : Ron Richards	
		26 th : Debbie Caruso	

Remembrances

March		April	
<u>Heavenly Birthdays</u>		<u>Heavenly Birthdays</u>	<u>Day of Resurrection</u>
12 th : LeRoy Sawyer	18 th : Margaret Cooke	8 th : Don Ogden	5 th : Margaret Cooke

On the Calendar

- Thursday, March 19:** Chair Yoga 11:00 am-12:00 pm
- Friday, March 20:** Calling Hours for Don Ogden 4:00 pm-6:00 pm
- Saturday, March 21:** Funeral Services for Don Ogden 3:00 pm, Reception Following at the Walton Fire Hall
- Sunday, March 22:** Sanctuary Worship 10:15 am; Sunday School
- Tuesday/Thursday, March 24 & 26** Chair Yoga 11:00 am-12:00 pm
- Saturday, March 28:** Gathering Table 11:30 am-1:00 pm
- Sunday, March 29:** Palm Sunday Sanctuary Worship 10:15 am; Sunday School; Coffee Hour, hosted by Rosemarie Tiesler; Names and optional donations due for Easter flowers/remembrance
- Tuesday/Thursday, March 31 & April 2:** Chair Yoga 11:00 am-12:00 pm
- Thursday, April 2:** Maundy Thursday **Communion** and Worship 4:00 pm
- Friday, April 3:** Good Friday Tenebrae Service 3:30 pm
- Sunday, April 5:** Walton Ministerial Association "Son-Rise" Service at More Park 6:30 am; Easter Sunday Sanctuary Worship and **Communion** 10:15 am; **No** Sunday School; "Risen" Free Movie Night at Riverside Alliance Church 7:30 pm
- Sunday, April 12:** Sanctuary Worship 10:15 am; **No** Sunday School

Tuesday/Thursday, April 14 & April 16: Chair Yoga 11:00 am-12:00 pm

Thursday, April 16: Ministry Committee Meeting 3:30 pm

Friday, April 17: Operations Committee Meeting 4:30 pm



Elijah's Closet

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

Board Updates

This year, we would like to honor and/or remember your loved ones in our Easter Sunday bulletin. We will be collecting a special offering to purchase lilies, tulips, and hydrangeas for our Easter Sunday Service. Envelopes are located at the back of the Sanctuary and will be included in the March 22nd bulletin. Please return your envelope by Sunday, 3/29. ****Donations are not necessary to have a loved one honored or remembered.**

Coffee Hour has been rescheduled to Palm Sunday, March 29th, hosted by Rosemarie Tiesler

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.

HOLY WEEK SERVICES

Palm Sunday
Sanctuary Worship at 10:15 am, Coffee Hour to follow

Maundy Thursday
Holy Thursday Communion and Worship at 4:00 pm

Good Friday
Tenebrae Service at 3:30 pm
Tenebrae is a religious service of Western Christianity held during Good Friday and characterized by gradual extinguishing of candles, and by a "loud noise" taking place in total darkness at the end of the service which represents the placement of Christ in the tomb. It is a somber service to lead toward a spiritual preparation of the Easter Day Glory!

Easter Sunday
Celebrate Christ's resurrection with Sanctuary Worship and Communion at 10:15 am

First Congregational Church
4 Mead Street, Walton, NY 13856

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	February 24 & 26	April 14 & 16
January 20 & 22	March 3 & 5	April 21 & 23
January 27 & 29	March 10 & 12	April 28 & 30
February 3 & 5	March 17 & 19	May 5 & 7
February 10 & 12	March 24 & 26	May 12 & 14
	Mar 31 & Apr 2	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

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

Previous Sermons and Liturgy

❖ March 8, 2026

- ▶ Sermon: If Today You Hear His Voice, Harden Not Your Heart
- ▶ Scripture Reading: Psalm 95: 1-2, 6-9
- ▶ Gospel Reading: John 4:5-42

❖ March 15, 2026

- ▶ Sermon: Suffering, Mud, and Grace
- ▶ Scripture Reading: Ephesians 5:8-14
- ▶ Gospel Reading: John 9:1-7, 13-17, 34-38

Devotionals from Pastor Janet

An Honest Prayer by Talitha Arnold

Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear to my cry; hold not thy peace at my tears! For I am thy passing guest, a sojourner, like all my [forebears]. - Psalm 39:12 (RSV)

I wonder if Jesus prayed Psalm 39 in the Garden of Gethsemane. He would have known the songs of his people just as he knew the Torah and Prophets. Only a few hours later, he would cry out Psalm 22 from the empire's cross: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

So I wonder if that night, when he was alone, praying in the shadows of Gethsemane, Jesus remembered this psalm by someone who'd also found themselves lost in the valley of the shadow of death.

We don't know who that someone was. Tradition says King David, but it could have been anyone in deep distress, fearful of the future, certain only of life's transience. "Let me know my end," the psalmist cried. "Let me know how fleeting my life is!"

The psalmist was also honest about *all* human life. Our days last less than the fingers of one hand, the psalmist wrote, our lives fade as quickly as a shadow or a breath. We're all passing guests and strangers in a strange land.

Psalm 39 prays a hard prayer. Yet I wonder if the depth of the psalmist's honesty about life's transience offered some comfort to the 33-year-old Jesus that night. I wonder if it helped to know that someone else had felt as afraid and confused as he did. Perhaps knowing they had walked their own lonesome valley gave Jesus the strength to walk his.

I wonder if Psalm 39 can give us that strength, too.

Prayer

Thank you, Lord, for hard prayers—and for the people who pray them. Amen.

Centurion by Mary Luti

A centurion came to [Jesus], saying, "Lord, my servant is at home paralyzed, in terrible distress." And he said to him, "I will come and cure him." The centurion answered, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only speak the word, and my servant will be healed." - Matthew 8:5-8 (NRSV)

Most Catholics know the centurion's reply by heart. They recite it at every Mass before receiving Communion: "O Lord, I am not worthy..." But many progressive Protestants find those words unutterable before receiving Communion, or at any other time. We recoil from anything that questions our fundamental goodness in God's sight. Not for us this self-abasing confession.

But when I remember that it's a Roman centurion who utters these words, it's hope—not self-abasement—I feel in his confession.

Here is an enforcer of the Empire's military dominance, striding though the world powerful, confident, and unafraid, backed by full imperial authority, accustomed to great latitude in the exercise of brute force, issuing orders and expecting to be obeyed—or else. He can crush you on a whim, crucify you and not feel a thing.

If someone like him can come to Jesus, moved by a servant's suffering; if someone like him can confess that his power is powerless; if someone like him can see that his high worth is worthless, maybe there's hope for me and you—wallowing oh-so-worthily in our own self-importance and privilege—to be converted to mercy.

And maybe there's still hope for the world's haughty powers, that one day they'll be moved by their victims' suffering, utter an honest word, discard their overweening pride, lose their lust for dominance, abandon their trust in violence, humbly come to the One in whom all have sacred worth, and pray with a faith that amazes:

Prayer

O Lord, I am not worthy, but only speak the word, and I will be healed.

Mess-iah by Mary Luti

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. All went to their own towns to be registered. - Luke 2:1, 3 (NRSVUE)

The Romans loved order. They liked making it and imposing it, and they were not squeamish or ambivalent when it came to maintaining it. As Jesus would one day discover amid loud hosannas in Jerusalem, the mere hint of unruliness was enough for the Romans to set up the crosses.

Caesar Augustus was an orderly man with an orderly plan to keep track of the empire's inhabitants: conduct a census. The decree goes out, and everyone heads to their ancestral towns to be counted—creating interrupted lives, lost wages, traffic jams, price-gouging and, the story tells us, overbooked inns.

But when order is your god and goal, it doesn't matter how many lives you disrupt, how much hardship you unleash, how much injustice you overlook, or the violent messes you create to achieve it.

Meanwhile in Bethlehem, where his parents have gone to be counted, a child is born who, like all the prophets before him, will recognize the deep human disorder embedded in this lust for order, for law-abiding conformity, for reducing human beings to numbers in a register.

His life won't be a long one. But he'll spend it calling out order's violence and dehumanization. He'll employ all his human creativity in imagining a liberating way for people to live together. And he'll be killed for welcoming everybody into it.

They aren't done ordering the world, those Romans. But ever since a resurrecting God messed with death, our Messiah isn't done messing with the Romans, either.

At the manger tonight, promise him you'll keep messing with them, too.

Prayer

Christ Jesus, where there is lust for order, mess with it, liberate us, and grant the whole world peace.

Lifted in Prayer

Lorraine Miller
The family of Lester Darling
The family of Don Ogden

Ginny Wilcox
The family of Betty George
The family of Daniel Jacques