



Walton First Congregational Church
United Church of Christ

Updates July 15, 2026

Celebrations

July

Birthdays

2nd: Elinor Tempel
4th: John Kipp
10th: Keygan Epps
16th: Lori Ogden
24th: Austin Clark
30th: Mayla Evans

Anniversaries

1st: John & Judy Kipp
11th: Marc & Chrissy Evans

August

Birthdays

3rd: April Epps
8th: Jenny Clark
23rd: Charlene Gregory
29th: Roy Tiesler
30th: Pastor Janet

Anniversaries

2nd: Glen & Ann LePinnet

Remembrances

July

Day of Resurrection

24th: Francis Kennedy

August

Heavenly Birthdays

4th: Maureen Kennedy
5th: Francis Kennedy

On the Calendar

Sunday, July 19: Sanctuary Worship with the Evans Family 10:15 am; **No** Sunday School

Sunday, July 26: Sanctuary Worship with Ron Galley 10:15 am; **No** Sunday School

Thursday & Friday, July 30 & 31: April will be working remotely

Sunday, August 2: Sanctuary Worship with Ron Galley 10:15 am; **No** Sunday School

Sunday, August 9: Sanctuary Worship with Rev. Ryan Henderson and **Communion** with Pastor Janet 10:15 am; **No** Sunday School; **Coffee Hour**, hosted by the Ministry Committee

Sunday, August 16: **No Worship**. See you at the Delaware County Fair Vesper Service!

Sunday, August 23: Sanctuary Worship with Ron Galley 10:15 am; **No** Sunday School

Friday, August 28: Operations Committee Meeting 4:00 pm

Sunday, August 30: Sanctuary Worship with Pastor Janet 10:15 am; **No** Sunday School; Birthday Celebration for Pastor Janet

Elijah's Closet

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

Board Updates

**** There will NOT be any worship service on Sunday, August 16th ****

****Coffee Hour has moved to Sunday, August 9th for a special worship service with Rev. Ryan Henderson, Associate Conference Minister, New York Conference of the United Church of Christ and communion with Pastor Janet****

Construction Updates

Before

After



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

❖ July 12, 2026

- ▶ Sermon: Peace, Life and the Promise
- ▶ 1st Scripture Reading: Psalm 119:105-112
- ▶ 2nd Scripture Reading: Romans 8:1-11

Pastor's Pen

Who Am I? by Pastor Janet Schwengber

While in Tegel prison, Dietrich Bonhoeffer a German theologian, was waiting for his eventual death. He wrote a poem titled "Who Am I?".

In this poem he asks if he is the strong, faithful and stalwart person he shows to his captures or is he the weak, doubtful and questioning person when he is alone? He dwells on this fact to decide if he is a person of strength one day and a person of weakness another day. Actually he, like us, is both.

Bonhoeffer is describing the 'human condition'! Showing doubt in what we sometimes question that is true and at the same time act confident that we know it all.

Bonhoeffer was in a transition of life and death and he was aware of this. It's like us too. We have many transitions in life, maybe not death and life transitions, but changes in our lives. We go through job change, family growth and change, retirement, decisions of where to move or live and many decisions on a daily basis. We all go through changes in life. Yes, some may include the transition of life and death. It is in these transitions that we struggle to know who we are.

Bonhoeffer, as a theologian, was aware of how he viewed God in his life. He writes in another place that Christ calls a person to come and die and be a part of Christ in one's life. Jesus said that those who seek to save their lives will lose them, and those who lose their life for his sake will gain them. Christ is constantly asking us to come to a spiritual rather than a secular life. To go through our transitions with faith in the journey, even if it seems like we are not the same in all instances.

As Bonhoeffer decided, death is not the final statement, even if we seem strong, faithful and determined. We are all doubters of our life but we are strong with Christ who is the "I am". Who am I? I am called by Christ to live a life of faith and courage, even if we seem to fail. We are called to come and lose our life in Christ and to be raised with Christ. This is the spiritual life of the 'human'. Bonhoeffer did realize this and went willingly to his death knowing that his transitions in life will be part of Who He Is!

Meditations from Pastor Janet

Better Recognize: The Anna Fast by Kaji Douša

There was also a prophet, Anna. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child [Jesus] to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. - Luke 2:36–38, abridged (NRSV)

It seems that Anna recognized God immediately. Would I? Do I?

Scripture shows us a woman whose life had been shaped with intention. When God arrived, Anna didn't hesitate. Recognition came naturally to her because she'd formed her life to receive it.

Luke tells us that Anna was always in the temple worshiping, praying and fasting. She watched and waited, attentive to what God was up to around her. Her practices protected her attention and shaped her readiness. Because she stayed present to God's presence, she missed nothing.

When Anna saw Jesus, she praised God and spoke to everyone who was looking for redemption. Her voice carried clarity and authority. Her readiness flowed from a life tended with care.

At the turn of the new year, I invited my congregation into a practice I decided to call, "[The Anna Fast](#)." It's pretty simple: we're just trying to be a little more like Anna. We're trying to shape that same kind of readiness in our own lives. This is an unrestrictive fast that's meant to form, not diminish us in the way some fasts can. We want the kind of disciplines that make recognition happen.

We strive to do the following in lasting ways, in the hopes that we continue this fast throughout our lives. It involves through commitments:

1. We guard the gate of our attention.
2. We protect the body that carries our calling.
3. We tend the gifts God has already placed within us.

Together, these practices help us live steady, available, and responsive.

Anna shows us what becomes possible when we position our lives for revelation. So that when God shows up, we see it. And when we see God, we respond with confidence and joy.

Prayer

Holy God, shape our lives with care and intention. Help us to recognize you clearly and to respond with praise. Amen.

Prism by Mary Luti, the parable for the lectionary for Sunday, July 12th

And [Jesus] told them many things in parables. - Matthew 13:3a (NRSV)

The wonderful thing about parables is that they have a surplus of meanings. You can turn them 'round in your heart like a prism, and in the changing light of life's different seasons, each facet shows you something new.

Take the parable introduced by the scripture above, the sower and the seed (Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23). Jesus says it's about things that impede or favor the rooting, growth, and yield of the gospel in our lives. It's about us, whether we're thin, brambly, rocky, or good soil.

That's a helpful interpretation. But there are times in life when it could come down on you heavy, moralizing, implied judgment.

Turn the prism. Now it isn't only about whether your soil is good enough. It's also about a farmer's effort to go out of himself, to risk everything, as year after year farmers always do.

It's about the ancient hope that compels him to sow, the urgency of sowing at just the right time, and waiting for growth that is, by the nature of things, always delayed.

It's about yields that depend not only on the soil's quality but first on that risk, the work, the waiting. It's about the holy service of preparation, and the letting go.

Turn the prism, and it's not a hard question about our spiritual condition. It's a contemplation of hope that steps into the field, wisdom that knows the time, love that takes the risk, labor that expects nothing and maybe something, patience that abides.

Turn the prism, and the parable isn't measuring our faithfulness. It's celebrating God's, inviting awe and praise.

Prayer

Let me hear what the Spirit is saying in your stories, Jesus, even if it's not what you had in mind.

Lifted in Prayer

Lorraine Miller

Randy Stanton

The family of Carol Raymundo

The family of Rosemary VanValkenburg

Pastor Janet

Sherrie Hobbie

Karen Eckhardt

The family of William Wright

The family of Clair Gray