

DECEMBER 2025



WEBSTER UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST CONGREGATIONALIST



United Church of Christ, Congregational
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www.uccwebster.org



[United Church of Christ, Congregational](https://www.facebook.com/uccwebster.org)

Shining Light for Others: Small Acts of Presence That Matter - A message from the WISE Team

As the days grow shorter and December wraps around us with its early darkness, we often think of light in big, dramatic ways—lighting Advent candles, Christmas trees glowing in living rooms, or the bright sparkle of holiday celebrations. But some of the most powerful light we offer one another doesn't come from decorations or events. It comes from the simple, ordinary ways we show up for each other.

This time of year can be joyful for some and heavy for others. Grief feels sharper in the cold months. Loneliness can echo a little louder. Exhaustion, anxiety, and “holiday overwhelm” are real experiences. And sometimes the greatest gift we can give is not a present wrapped in paper, but our gentle, grounded presence.

Small acts matter more than we realize. A quick check-in text that says, “Thinking of you.” An offer to sit with someone who's having a tough time. Holding space for a friend's story without trying to fix it. Leaving a note of encouragement on someone's desk. Pausing on a busy Sunday morning to really listen. These tiny gestures—these “mustard seeds of compassion”—have a way of growing into something much bigger: hope, trust, connection, healing.

When Jesus said, “You are the light of the world,” He didn't say, “Be the biggest light.” He simply asked us to shine in whatever ways we can. Sometimes that looks like leading boldly. And sometimes it looks like quietly being with someone who needs a moment of peace.

As a WISE congregation, we are committed to mental-health support and emotional well-being—not just in programs, but in relationships. This December, may we look for the small ways to carry light to one another. A smile. A moment of patience. A listening ear. A kindness that doesn't seek attention.

In a season that can feel both beautiful and overwhelming, these small acts of presence remind us that no one walks alone, and that God's light often moves through us in the gentlest of ways.

May we shine that light—softly, faithfully, and together.



Breakfast in Bethlehem

**Dec. 7th
11:00**



**breakfast, carolers, crafts
community service project**

Live Animals from Two by Two Petting Zoo



Emergency Closings

In the event of inclement weather or other unforeseen situations that require cancellation of Sunday Worship or other activities during the week, the closure will be announced via:

- UCC-announce email
- Church Facebook page (United Church of Christ, Congregational)
- Church website (uccwebster.org)

If Webster school activities are canceled, the church, including the office, will also be closed.

Channel 13/WHAM no longer announces church closures on air. **If you do not have internet access and would like to be added to a phone tree for notification, please let the office know.**



Hot Topics Discussion Group

The "Hot Topics" discussion group will meet on Tuesday, December 2 and December 16, at 6:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary. We will be discussing socialism. What is it? What is democratic socialism? To what extent do we already practice socialism? All are welcome. For more information, or to be added to our mailing list, contact richard_kendrick@verizon.net.

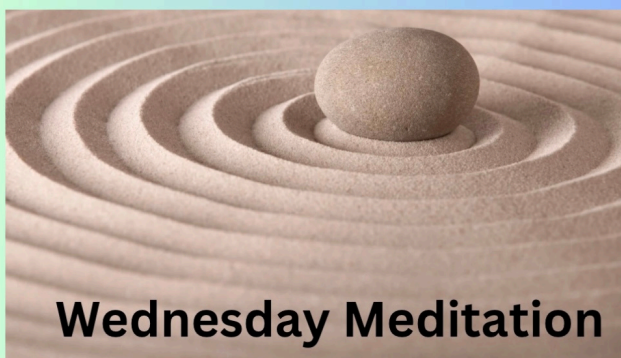


Wine & Cheese

January 26th at 6:30 pm

Come as you are.

Optional: bring a snack or drink to share



Wednesday Meditation

Interested in finding a quiet & calm space for spiritual openness and practice? Wednesdays at 11:00.



free community Sunday Supper

at GATHERING PLACE WEBSTER

December 14

Lasagna, Tossed Salad, Garlic Bread & Chocolate Chip Cookies

**Inside Webster UCC
570 Klem Rd
Webster NY 14580**

**second Sunday
of each month
4:30-5:30 pm**

**gluten free and vegetarian
options available**

**for more information
gatheringplacwebster@gmail.com
585-667-0411**



Advent at Webster UCC

November 30

Paper Chain Challenge @10:00

December 7

Breakfast in Bethlehem

Community Event @11:00

breakfast, crafts, live music, live animals, community service project

December 14

Christmas Auditions - A Christmas Play
by the Rebel Beat Youth & Children @10:00

Comfort & Joy Cookie Sale @11:00

December 20

Blue Christmas Service @ 7:00 pm

December 21

Christmas Cantata @ 10:00

"Let The Whole World Sing"
composed by Joel Raney.

December 24

Family Service @ 5:00

Candlelight Service @ 7:00



Be A Light Shine TOGETHER Challenge- 25 Sparks of Advent Kindness

Every spark—whether it's a donation, a note, a text,
or shoveling a driveway—
is a “light” that shines into the world.

This Advent be a light.....

...at Home

...in our Community

...for Strangers

...of Christ

smile

be a
friend

be thoughtful

rake leaves
shovel the sidewalk
check on a neighbor
text a friend
write a note

donate food to an outdoor pantry

be creative

make a card
crochet a prayer shawl
bake cookies
tell a story
go caroling

Collections at Church...

Wrap a child in warmth-
hats/mittens/gloves for kids
at Family Promise

Cover a neighbor in love-
coats, hats, gloves, socks,
underwear for guests at Baber

Give the gift of play & creativity-
legos and art kits for Rochester
Advocates for Children

Help the mission team
adopt a family from Family Promise-
details coming soon

Hang a star in the narthex during Advent
to celebrate our sparks as we shine together!

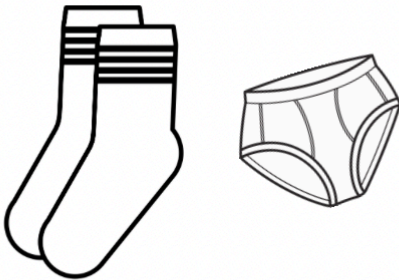
Christmas Outreach



**angel tree gifts for
Rochester Advocates for Children**
art kits, legos, stuffed animals , \$15 gift cards from walmart
DUE December 14th
unwrapped in gift bag



**Gifts for the Adopted Family from
Family Promise of Greater Rochester**
due November 30th
wrapped with descriptive tag



**socks and underwear for the
guests at Baber Hit Lunch**



fill the free outdoor pantry anytime !!



**crochet or knit prayer shawls
and dish clothes**

**Carrying on
Jesus'
Mission
of Love
Peace
& Justice**

**REBEL BEAT
YOUTH GROUP**
Connecting Serving Learning Leading

an inclusive space
where young
people can
connect, explore
their faith, and
serve together

The Rebel Beat — Carrying On Jesus' Mission of Love, Peace, and Justice brings kids and youth from ages 3 to grade 12 together in a shared Sunday school experience. The Rebel Beat offers a rich and meaningful opportunity to build connection, deepen faith, and embody the mission of Jesus in powerful, age-bridging ways.

the Current

youth led worship experience

faith in motion  **love in action**

The next Current is **Sunday January 25th at 10:00 in the green community room. Everyone is welcome.**

Seeds in the Snow
The Parable
of the
Mustard Seed
(Mark 4:30-32)



January can feel cold, slow, or "blah," like nothing is growing. But Jesus reminds us that God does some of the most important work when no one can see it yet.

Winter is not wasted time—
it's underground time,
root time,
quiet growth time,
seed time.

Just like the mustard seed is tiny but mighty, so are the small acts of hope, kindness, and courage we plant every day.

Seeds don't look powerful. But they change everything.

CAFE' for a CAUSE

January 25th
11:00

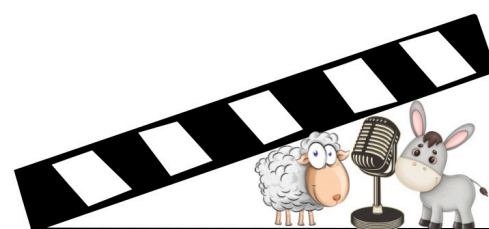


hosted by youth & kids
to raise funds to
support outreach
projects that
serve kids in need



**Sundays in Advent
at 10:00**

**Nov. 30, Dec. 7,
Dec. 14, Dec. 21**



**CHRISTMAS
AUDITIONS**

A CHRISTMAS PLAY

PRESENTED BY THE REBEL BEAT
YOUTH & KIDS AT WEBSTER UCC
DECEMBER 14 TH

We utilize a "learning & action" model to equip children & youth to first understand and then identify opportunities to live the values of Jesus through involvement in community service.

email wlesko88@gmail.com to receive Wendy's weekly email including all the outreach and leadership opportunities for youth, kids & families

Dear Child of God,

God blessed me with an amazing Christmas present back in August when I was given the opportunity to speak with the Personnel Team here at Webster UCC. I had recently retired. I was facing knee replacement surgery in a couple of days. I wasn't looking for a position and yet, there we were - having a wonderful conversation! God knew that a few months of us walking this faith journey together would be a profound gift for me and I pray, for many of you. It has been my honor and my joy! Thank you from the bottom of my heart. As Paul writes so often, "I thank God for you!" And I truly do.

Now we walk the road of Advent with eyes toward Christmas. One of the most retold Christmas stories of all times is "A Christmas Carol" by Charles Dickens. There is even a Donald Duck version!! The theme is one of redemption and love of neighbor. One of the most popular Christmas movies of all times is "It's a Wonderful Life." This story, too, touches the themes of redemption and love of neighbor - and also love of self.

In Dickens story, a man with a broken heart spends years chasing his own miserly fortune, somehow believing in the value of treasure as opposed to the value of human connection and love of neighbor. It takes some serious reflection offered by ghosts of Christmas past, present and future to show Scrooge how he had missed the mark and how he had lost what is truly of value.

In the "Wonderful Life" movie, George Bailey, played by Jimmy Stewart, became quite unhappy with his life through a series of challenging events he encountered. While he had hopes and dreams of his own, due to the death of his father, he felt "stuck" in his hometown as he took leadership of the Savings and Loan, a business with more heart than concern for any bottom line. When it appeared that everything had been lost due to the wrong actions of Mr. Potter, George was moved to the edge of despair. He wondered aloud whether the town - or the world! - would have been better off if he had not been born.

As Christians, we can recognize God-winks throughout these two stories because we know the greatest story ever told: the story of a baby born in Bethlehem. As God's creatures, we were created to love God, love others and love ourselves. It took the birth of a baby Messiah, born under both cultural shadow and celestial presence to show us something crucial: we matter. We matter to God! And what we do for our neighbor matters! Again, this is one of the many things that I love about Webster UCC: your call to social justice and benevolent activism is astounding! Acts of generosity surround us. If you are part of these endeavors, good on you! If you aren't, it's not too late. Get involved! Mission work IS what gives church meaning. Church without mission is simply not Christ-like. You can join in any one of many acts of generous sharing. It's not about money! We see that truth in the Dickens' story and in George Bailey's life! It's about compassion and kindness and giving what you can.

I sang with a chorus in NH called the Songweavers. The songs we have sung and the joy of singing together were so meaningful to me. I would like to leave you with a song that I thought of this past Sunday. Wendy reminded us that having Jesus in our hearts is like having a flashlight there - a flashlight that is ALWAYS turned on. Jesus told us that we are the light of the world. I pray that you will consider these words as amotivation and perhaps a challenge to embrace who you are as a child of God:

"What light do you shine in the world?
What gift do you give every day?
What comes from your heart,
And becomes your life's art?
What light do you shine in the world?

Shine your light, child of God! Shine like never before! You are a gift to this world. Blessings upon you!

In hope, peace, joy and love, Pastor Deborah



WELCOMING INCLUSIVE SUPPORTIVE ENGAGED for mental health



On November 23, Sharon Mathiason read from her memoir *Finding Moonshadow*, which offered a profoundly moving glimpse into their family's journey through the long and often hidden struggle of their daughter Jennifer's eating disorder. By weaving together her own narrative with Jennifer's journal entries - read by Jennifer's friend Sarah along with her children - the presentation revealed the painful contrasts between what parents are aware of and what a child silently endures. The format allowed attendees to feel the fragility of family life under the weight of an illness that is often unseen and misunderstood, a truth that resonated deeply with many in the audience. As one participant observed, the experience heightened awareness of the immense pressures young people face and the devastating toll such disorders can take. We are grateful to Sharon for sharing her work with us, giving us a greater glimpse into Jennifer's talents, strength and compassion, and reminding us all of the need for empathy, understanding, and greater openness around mental health.

FROM THE FINANCE TEAM

	Income	Expense
October	\$11,312	\$19,392
Year To Date	\$204,372	\$204,231
Investments	Balance	% change from 1/1/2025
Endowment	\$697,597	14.8%
*Other Funds	\$210,123	7.6%
Total	\$907,720	13.0%

* Cell phone proceeds, 2025 transfers and stock gifts

From the Mission Team

As a Strive For 5 church for several years, we donate to OCWM (Our Church's Wider Mission) through the church budget and have 4 special offerings throughout the year. The 3rd was in Oct. Thanks to your generosity, \$1,045 was sent to Neighbors In Need. Thank you!! The 4th offering, The Christmas Fund, will be received in Dec. This provides financial support to those who serve/served UCC churches and are facing financial difficulties. Donations may be placed in an offering plate, made online, or mailed to the church. Payment is to UCC Congregational with Christmas Fund in memo. Thank you for sharing with others.

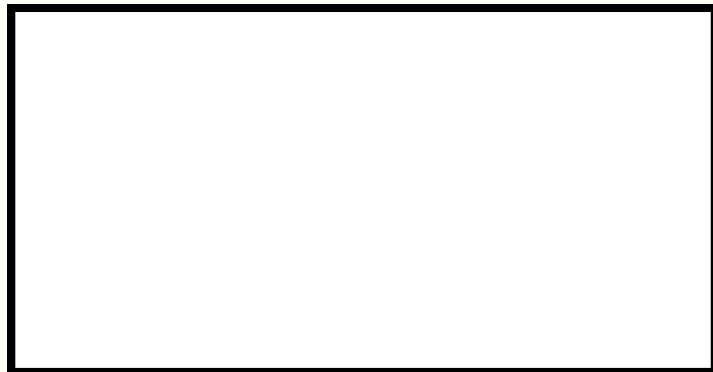
December Birthdays

Justin Alvito 12/01
Willard Scott 12/02
Mike Gerard 12/05
Katy Rose Maccagnini 12/07
William Spencer 12/14
Catalino Mateo 12/16
Julia Boland 12/18
Dave Kohler 12/20
Charlotte Casselbury 12/21
Ted Higgs 12/27
Eloise Casselbury 12/28

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
30	1	2	3	4	5	6
REBEL BE Worship S	Lounge Re	Lounge Re Sibling Cir Girl Scout HOT TOPIC	Lounge Re Wednesda scouts in C	Rockers at Thursday Classroom Drop-in Co	communit	Woodside Communit Make lasa set up for
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
REBEL BE Worship S Breakfast	Lounge Re Webelos in	Lounge Re	Lounge Re Wednesda scouts in C	Thursday Drop-in Co	event setu	christmas bag lunch
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
CHRISTM Worship S Comfort a Nurture T Free Com	Lounge Re scout pac	Lounge Re lunch bun GS Troop C Girl Scout HOT TOPIC	Lounge Re Lunch Bur Wednesda scouts in C	Rockers at Classroom Thursday Drop-in Co Leadershi		Blue Chris
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
REBEL BE Worship S	Lounge Re	Lounge Re	Lounge Re Wednesda scouts in C	Thursday		
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
REBEL BE Worship S	Lounge Re	Lounge Re	Lounge Re Wednesda scouts in C	Rockers at Thursday		

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Sunday Schedule

10:00 am

Worship Service

(also live stream on Facebook & YouTube)
Rebel Beat
(a.k.a. Youth & kids program)

*The United Church of Christ,
Congregational of Webster is an
Open and Affirming community of
faith. We welcome and affirm God's
people of every sexual orientation,
gender identity, gender expression,
race, ethnicity, marital status,
mental ability, physical ability,
economic circumstance, and
spiritual tradition to fully
participate in the life and ministry
of our church family.*

Webster UCC Staff

Rev. Dr. Deborah Roof
Bridge Pastor

Beth Royer, Office Manager

Wendy Lesko, Director of Family
Programming & Community Outreach

Ronald Milliman, Music Director

Oleksandra Yurchenko, Accompanist

Webster UCC Leadership Council

Lisa Izzo, Moderator

Richard Kendrick, Vice Moderator

Wendi Latko, Immediate Past Moderator

Konrad Emmert, Stewardship

Heather Himes, Worship

Linda Ims, Mission

Ken Mihalyov, Personnel

Pete Sollame, Building & Grounds

Mindy Spencer, Outreach & Family Programming

Heidi Zastowny, Congregational Life

Judy Short, Finance

Marcia Kendrick, Memorials & Special Gifts