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WWW.HOPELC.ORG

We are a community empowered by the Holy Spirit, called to bring God's comfort, to work for God's justice, and to share the hope and love of Jesus with all.

# February 2026 Newsletter

JOIN US FOR  
ASH WEDNESDAY  
SERVICE  
~ See times on pg. 7

JOIN US FOR  
LENTEN SOUP SUPPER  
~ See info. on pg. 8

## Our Core Values



faith  
acceptance  
compassion  
gratitude  
love

## *A Message from Our Pastor*

Happy Valentine's Day!

Doesn't sound very religious, does it? But what if I told you the foundation on which this holiday is based is quite religious.

It turns out that Saint Valentine was an actual person. Saint Valentine of Rome, as he was officially known, was a third-century Roman priest. Today he is celebrated as a Roman Saint on February 14<sup>th</sup> and is commonly associated with "courtly love." His story is an interesting one. It begins in 265 A.D. The Roman Emperor Claudius had made a law that young men were not to marry. Claudius believed that without the encumbrance of a wife or family, his young soldiers would fight with more abandon, as they then had nothing to lose or worry about. There are several stories related to Saint Valentine (we're not going to list all the stories told here). However, it seems the most important story told is that St. Valentine was a Roman priest imprisoned for marrying Christian couples and aiding Christians being persecuted by Claudius in Rome—both seen as serious crimes against Rome. When Valentine tried to talk to Emperor Claudius about becoming a Christian, Claudius ordered the priest to be put to death. Valentine was arrested and dragged before the prefect of Rome, who condemned him to be beaten to death with clubs and to have his head cut off.

*It's said that before he died, he sent letters out to his friends, many of which he had the chance to secretly marry, and asked them to pray for him and all the Christians in Rome. He urged them to keep their marriages sacred and focused on Christ. He closed each letter with these words, "Remember Your Valentine."*

Saint Valentine today is recognized as a Christian martyr of the faith. Today Saint Valentine's Day is known as the day of flowers, kisses and love. But for Saint Valentine it was always about being steeped in the love of Christ.

Happy Valentine's Day!  
Pastor Pamela



## **The Surprising Path to My New Friend!**

### **A new podcast episode!**

Welcome!

Below you will find the episode summary for “The Surprising Path to My New Friend!” This summary is meant to give you a look inside the episode to see if it may be of interest to you.\*

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Episode summary:

Have you been wanting a new friend but are not sure where to begin? Welcome to this fun and inspiring episode of “hello community®” where host Catherine Jura and Autumn Welch-Degaske share the amazing story of how an unexpected friendship began between them—two women separated by nearly 40 years in age, yet connected in many surprising ways.

In this episode:

- Discover how a chance meeting at a community co-op sparked an intergenerational friendship
- Learn how courage and curiosity can support a new friendship
- Come to understand why “dual commitment to trying” is important
- Learn why navigating boundaries and “oops and ouch” moments require mutual respect
- Explore how finding a community may be the first step to a new friendship

This conversation is an invitation to step beyond your comfort zone and say yes to connection. A new friendship may be a single brave moment away.

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Here is the link that will take you to this episode on all the platforms (YouTube, Spotify, and Apple) as well as a link to our Facebook Page.

<https://lnk.bio/hellocommunity>

If you enjoy this episode, please share it on your social media or send it to someone who you might know that is experiencing loneliness. So together, we can create a world where everyone has the connection and community they need and want.

\* Depending on the platform you are on, the show notes are under the video (YouTube) or next to the episode graphic (picture of guest and Catherine) on Spotify and Apple.

Till next time,

Catherine



January 5, 2026

Dear Friends at Hope Lutheran Church,

On behalf of St. Paul's Center, we want to extend our deepest gratitude to you for participating in this year's Adopt a Family Program. Your generosity is the very reason this program exists and continues to grow. Without your willingness to step forward and support families in need, none of this would be possible.

Because of your kindness, we were able to help 37 families this holiday season, families who might otherwise have faced these months with worry instead of warmth. Your gifts brought joy, dignity, and relief to parents and children who felt seen, supported, and cared for during a time that can be especially difficult.

We cannot overstate how grateful we are, both as an organization and on behalf of the families we serve. The impact of your compassion reaches far beyond the holidays. It strengthens our community, uplifts those facing hardship, and reminds every family that they are not alone.

Thank you for making a meaningful difference. Thank you for choosing to give. And thank you for being the heart of this program.

With sincere appreciation,

Sincerely,  
Jason Chaplin  
Sr. Housing Stability Advocate  
St. Paul's Center, Inc.  
PO Box 589  
Rensselaer, NY 12144  
Office: 518-434-2910  
Fax: 518-689-2083  
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# PRAYER CALENDAR

## February 2026

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
						1 Ken Newberry
2 Greg Whitney's Birthday	3 Charlie Huff	4 Zina Huff	5 Pam Dodson's Birthday	6 Tonya Humphrey	7 Shane Pucci	8 Mateo Dooley
9 Victoria Dooley	10 Richard Dooley	11 Susan Radzyninski	12 Kathy Zorian	13 Lisa Rogers	14 St. Valentine's Day	15 Cydney Rogers
16 President's Day	17 Jim Freehart	18 Ash Wednesday	19 Marion Daus' Birthday	20 Jake Freehart	21 Bodie Rogers	22 Denise Rogers
23 Bill Cosgrove	24 Judy Cosgrove	25 Edith Easterling	26 Dr. Becca Ehrlich - Dean	27 Will Platnick	28 Theo Ehrlich - Platnick	



**EACH MONTH WE LIST NAMES FOR YOUR DAILY PRAYERS. EVERYONE IN OUR COMMUNITY BRINGS UNIQUE GIFTS FOR OUR MISSIONARY JOURNEY. OUR PRAYERS SUPPORT THEM IN THEIR DAILY LIVES. (A REMINDER...THESE ARE NOT PRAYERS FOR HEALING.)**



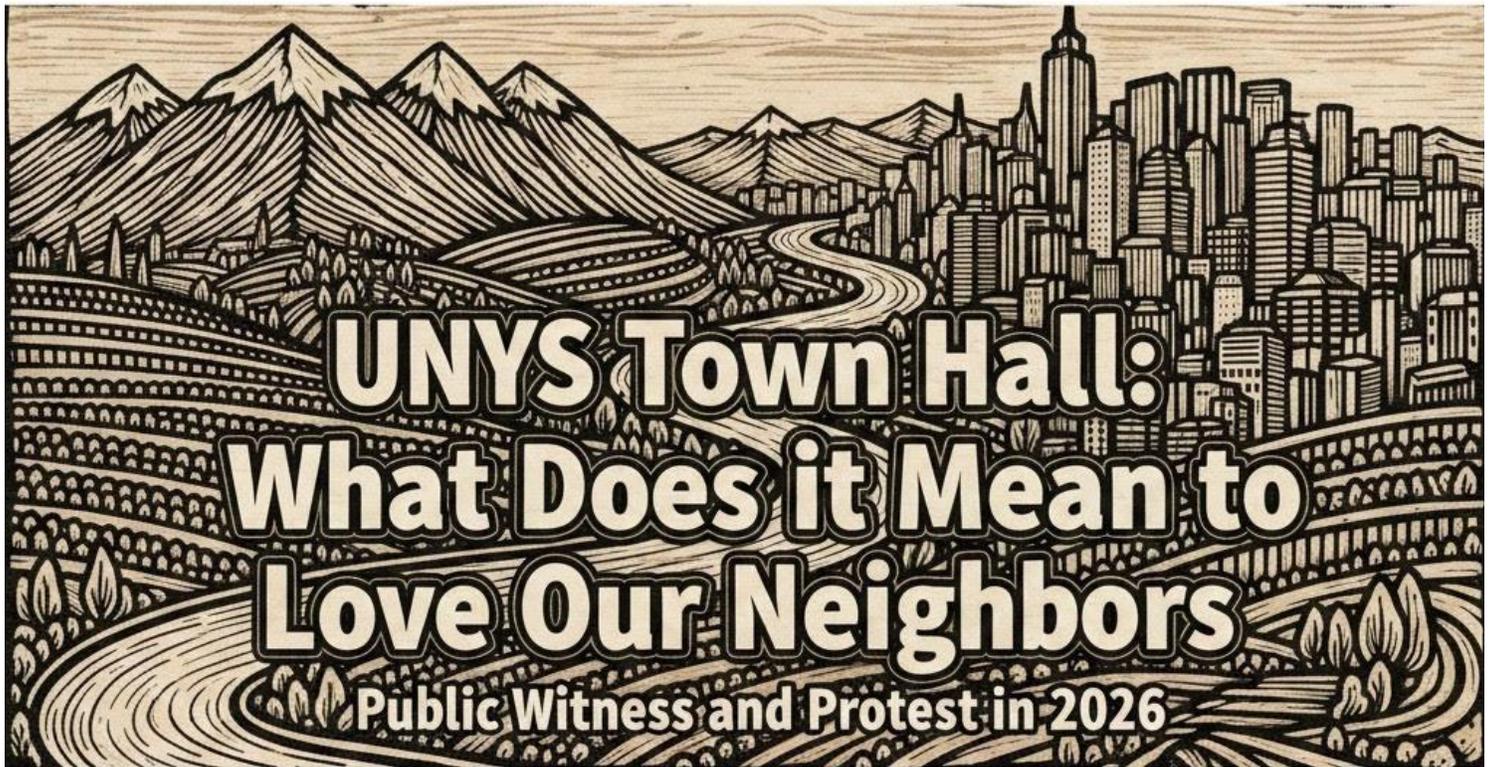
*We wish you a very Happy and Blessed Birthday ...*

**Greg Whitney ~ February 2<sup>nd</sup>**

**Pam Dodson ~ February 5<sup>th</sup>**

**Marion Daus ~ February 19<sup>th</sup>**





In the parable of the Good Samaritan Jesus invites us to see each person as God has created them, in the Imago Dei, the Image of the Divine's own loving kindness. Jesus shares the story as a response to one who asks the question, "who is my neighbor." Jesus makes it clear that a neighbor is one who sees brokenness. Who acts to bring healing and wholeness. Who shelters and shows mercy and kindness to another whether they are like us or unlike.

How are you practicing the love for our neighbors who are immigrants, asylum seekers, new Americans, members of the LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC communities and are being dehumanized, threatened, terrorized, incarcerated, and killed in the name of good order? This is not a partisan question, but a public question and a question for the body of Christ.

What is our Public Witness? How does Love Activate us for Justice and Joy?

Everyone is invited to join members of the synod staff for a time to pray, lament, process, and reflect on what is happening in our own communities and share ways that we are caring for our neighbors. Receive information and connections to resources for additional training, advocacy, and community organizing opportunities. Come and share in community and to be encouraged that we are not alone; you are not alone.

**Thursday, February 12, 2026 at 6:00 PM**

**Zoom Link:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82150297563>



**Join Us for Service  
In-Person or Online on:  
Wednesday, February 18<sup>th</sup>  
at 12 PM or 6 PM  
in Reflection of**



**ASH WEDNESDAY**

*470 Winter Street Ext. in Troy or [www.HOPELC.ORG](http://www.HOPELC.ORG)*



## Walk with *Jesus*

Our church family will have the opportunity to gather on Wednesday evenings during Lent to share a simple soup and bread supper as we walk with Jesus on his journey to the cross.

Supper will begin at 6:30 PM with devotions/worship at approximately 7:00 PM.

If you are able to provide soup and/or bread for the suppers, it would be most appreciated. Marion will need 3 people each week to make their favorite soup and 2 people each week to bring bread to share. Please email Marion Daus at [mkaus21@icloud.com](mailto:mkaus21@icloud.com) to sign up for soup/bread and let her know which date and what kind of soup you will do, or use the sign-up sheets on the table in the Narthex. Soup should arrive hot at about 6 PM so we can sit down promptly at 6:30 PM.

Hoping lots of our folks will come out for this time of fellowship and faith. Thanks so much!

Here's the scheduled dates for the Lenten Soup Suppers:

Wednesday	February 25 <sup>th</sup>	6:30 – SOUP SUPPER #1
Wednesday	March 4 <sup>th</sup>	6:30 – SOUP SUPPER #2
Wednesday	March 11 <sup>th</sup>	6:30 – SOUP SUPPER #3
Wednesday	March 18 <sup>th</sup>	6:30 – SOUP SUPPER #4
Wednesday	March 25 <sup>th</sup>	6:30 – SOUP SUPPER #5

The Upstate NY Synod invites you to:

# *UNYS Lutheran Day at the Capitol*

*for fellowship and prayer*

When: Monday, March 9, 2026

Where: First Lutheran, Albany NY

Time: 6PM to 8PM

*for advocacy day*

When: Tuesday, March 10, 2026

Where: Meeting at First Lutheran, Albany NY

Time: 9AM to 5PM



Upstate New York Synod  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

# Worship Volunteer Duties for February 2026

**Please find your own replacement if you cannot be available on date of assignment.**

	1-Feb	8-Feb	15-Feb	22-Feb
	<b>Worship 10:00am</b>	<b>Worship 10:00am</b>	<b>Worship 10:00am</b>	<b>Worship 10:00am</b>
<b>Altar Guild/ Comm. Asst. 2</b>	Marilyn D	Bonny M	Charlie H	Donna S
<b>Greeter</b>	Nancy C	Anna-Lisa H	Nancy D	Elaine B
<b>Usher</b>	Debbie F	Cindy W	Lois B	Mike D
<b>Assisting Minister</b>	Pam D	Athena B	Bonny M	Cindy W
<b>Comm. Assistant</b>	Pam D	Athena B	Bonny M	Chris N
<b>Snack Set-Up</b>	Susan C	Marilyn D	Charlie H	Susan C
<b>Offering Counters</b>	Pam D & Nancy C	Cindy W & Anna-Lisa H	Bonny M & Marilyn D	Marion D & Anna-Lisa H

**ASH WEDNESDAY, FEBRURY 18, ASSISTING MINISTER:**

At Noon: Sandra G. & Bonny M.

At 6 PM: Pam D.



# Upcoming Events for February of 2026

We have 'In-Person' Sunday Worship Services at 10:00 AM.

We also live-stream our services on our website, Facebook and YouTube.

*Sharing the hope and love of Jesus with all*

**1<sup>st</sup>: Prayers of Hope meets in the small classroom following worship service.**

**3<sup>rd</sup>: Beginner Plus Tai Chi with Pam Dodson @ 7 PM in the sanctuary; (every Tues.).**

**4<sup>th</sup> Qigong with Pam Dodson @ 1:30 PM in the sanctuary; (every Wed.).**

**Advanced Tai Chi with Pam Dodson @ 3 PM in the sanctuary; (every Wed.).**

**Worship & Music Committee Meeting @ 6:30 PM in the small classroom.**

**7<sup>th</sup>: Regional Food Bank Packing, 10:30 AM – Noon, Meet at RFB.**

**12<sup>th</sup>: Council Meeting @ 6:30 PM in the large classroom & via Zoom.**

**17<sup>th</sup>: Hope's Hands meets @ 10 AM in the small classroom.**

**18<sup>th</sup>: Ash Wednesday Services @ Noon & 6 PM in the sanctuary.**

**19<sup>th</sup>: Grief Support Group @ 5:30 PM in the large classroom.**

**20<sup>th</sup>: Hope's Dine-Out Dinner – Samurai in Albany; for those who RSVP by Feb. 17<sup>th</sup>.**

**21<sup>st</sup>: Church Council Training Retreat, 9 AM – Noon, in the sanctuary.**

**25<sup>th</sup>: 1<sup>st</sup> Lenten Soup Supper & Devotional @ 6:30 PM in the large classroom.**

**26<sup>th</sup>: Newsletter Articles Due.**

