



"Living Our Faith in Jesus Christ  
Through Acceptance, Service, and Love."

# Celebrating the Journey

## December 2025 *Newsflash*

Sunday Worship weekly at 10:00 a.m.

Services are livestreamed and can be accessed on  
YouTube, Facebook, and [www.algonquinucc.org](http://www.algonquinucc.org)

### WORDS FROM WANG

*"Are You Ready for an Advent-ure?"*

The word *advent* comes from the Latin term, *adventus*, meaning "pending arrival" or "coming," particularly the coming of something having great importance. Advent as a season is both a time of joy-filled, anticipatory celebration of the arrival of Jesus Christ but actually includes the practices of repentance, meditation, and penance. Some call it a "mini-Lent," just without the fasting. Quite the opposite, as a matter of fact, right? Add one letter to fast and it's a feast. But I digress. So many of us look forward, with great anticipation, to those wonderful gatherings of feasting and merriment in what many have dubbed "the most wonderful time of the year."

But wait...there's more. The operative word here being "wait." "Why wait," says our counter culture that has been playing Christmas music since the day after Halloween and has had those giant inflatables in their yards before even removing the fallen leaves. Again, the operative word is "wait."

Merriam-Webster defines the word *wait* as: *to stay in place in expectation of; to delay serving, as in a meal* (why, there's even a "wait" staff at restaurants). *It also means to remain stationary in readiness or expectation; to look forward to and hold back expectantly.* All of this is saying that celebrating the birth of Christ is not something intended to happen quickly. Nor is it designed to be an extension of the Thanksgiving holiday (thanks to the retail world's invention of Black Friday).

To be blunt, it took hundreds of years for the long-awaited Messiah to appear to those who longed for the event to occur, so the least we can do is to honor our forebears by "waiting" for the Christmas holiday to begin. Countless biblical writers in the Old Testament share the stories of those who sacrificed so much and who committed their faithful living to prepare for the new day that we associate with the birth of Christ. They waited for a very, very long time. *The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.* (Jeremiah 33:14-15)

So, you see, waiting is part of the plan, and it can truly enhance our spiritual growth and development as Christians. And waiting can truly expand our understanding of God's will for us - and should therefore be reflected in the ways that we *prepare the way*. So, do yourselves a favor. Don't rush Christmas. Take the time necessary to prepare your bodies, your minds, and your spirits. It's worth the wait, and yes, the long journey is all part of the ancient customs passed down to us. Are you ready for the "Advent-ure"??

See ya' in church.

Pastor Bob

## THE FINAL WORDS FROM WANG

### *On Saying Goodbye...Again*

It was Labor Day weekend 1993 that I took my leave after serving four years as the Associate Pastor of the Congregational Church of Algonquin; my first official call to a local church. It was a joy-filled day of sentimental remembrances and genuine words of gratitude combined with the excitement of my beginning the next chapter of a very storied ministerial career that ironically has brought me back to Algonquin where I will preach my final sermon before I officially retire from ministry.

Who would have ever imagined that this would be the path; that my professional journey would begin and end in the same faith community? Clearly, it was on the mind of God and I truly want to thank God for the people and the place that helped to nurture and shape me into the pastor that I am - but to then bring it back home and to allow me the opportunity to preach and lead as a veteran minister in the prime of his life (so to speak).

It has been a privilege and pleasure to serve among you these past fifteen months as your interim pastor. I have enjoyed making new acquaintances and learning from so many of you. But I must confess that what has made our time together so much more meaningful is having been able to reconnect and get reacquainted with some of the most loving and faithful people that I have ever had the opportunity to know. It reminds me of the cute little camp song that we used to sing: *make new friends and keep the old; one is silver and the other gold.*

I still remember a sermon that the Rev. Gary Miller preached when he and I served together. He stood in the middle of the aisle and asked, “if these walls could speak, what might they be saying?” And he proceeded to name some of the saints of old that had worshipped and served in this church; the ones whose shoulders so many others had stood on as they carried the torch of discipleship. In the 30+ years since then, that great cloud of witnesses has grown, some of whom I actually remember having known and whom I most certainly admired. And now, so many of you have honored their legacies by sustaining the ministries of this church. But coming back here and being able to witness your actions as you have followed in their footsteps has truly been a blessing.

So, to my “new” friends, I will now say “goodbye” and thank you for the new memories. But (and this is the hard part) to my “golden” friends, it’s time to “goodbye again.” What else can I say? Well, I could say thank you for loving me and supporting me in the beginning; but then, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to do it all over again; and to rekindle those eternal bonds of friendship, to care and to share again, and to walk together in this crazy path of living by faith. And now, with a grateful heart, I bid you adieu. And may God’s richest blessings be upon each and every one of you this day and forevermore. PBob

## SEARCH COMMITTEE CORNER



**Dear CCA Family,**

The Search Committee has been continuing to build our Church Profile. We will be meeting regularly and as often as we possibly can, to assure everyone that we are moving forward at a comfortable speed. Keep us in your prayers as we move forward.

**Yours in prayer,**

Liz Albandia, Heather Wilson, Michelle Tarosas, Bill Hellyer, Dennis Kneip

## 175TH CELEBRATION COMMITTEE

As we reflect on this past year during the upcoming holiday season, I would like to personally thank everyone who helped with planning, organizing, setup/ takedown, clean-up, and the numerous volunteers at one of our many events celebrating our 175th year as the Congregational Church of Algonquin. A special thanks to Greg and Bev Tipps for providing their musical talents and securing additional musicians when needed.

I would also like to thank the following 175th Committee members for all their hard work and efforts to make this celebration a success:

Bob & Anna Benjamin

Karen Guenther

Bill Hellyer

Jeff Jolitz

Pat Maggio

Kris Panzloff

Michelle Tarosas

We wish you love and light as we continue to celebrate this holiday season with our many Christmas services and Cantata and cheers to looking ahead to our 176th year!

God Bless,

Constance Wodziak

175th Celebration Committee Chair

SAVE THE DATE




CONGREGATIONAL  
*Meeting*  
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7<sup>TH</sup> | AFTER WORSHIP

This card features a dark blue background with white decorative corner elements. The word "CONGREGATIONAL" is in a white serif font, "Meeting" is in a gold cursive font, and the date and time are in a white serif font.



Annual Holiday  
Cookie Sale  
SPONSORED BY: WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP  
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14<sup>TH</sup>  
AFTER WORSHIP  
Boxes will be supplied for you to choose your favorite cookies!  
\$5 per box  
All proceeds will go to "Home of the Sparrow"

This card has a light beige background with a festive border of gingerbread cookies and snowflakes. The title is in a red cursive font, the sponsor is in a small red sans-serif font, the date is in a green bold sans-serif font, and the price and proceeds information are in a green cursive font.



YOU ARE INVITED TO A  
*Retirement*  
RECEPTION  
HONORING  
*Reverend Robert Wang*  
Sunday | December 28, 2025 | After Worship  
THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF ALGONQUIN  
109 WASHINGTON STREET  
ALGONQUIN, IL  
If you'd like to contribute toward a gift  
for Pastor Bob, please contact the  
church office or Michelle Tarosas.

This card features a light beige background with a floral border of orange and yellow flowers. The text is a mix of gold serif, gold cursive, and black sans-serif fonts.



## SAVE THE DATE & WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

### SAVE THE DATE

\*Please see our online calendar for the most up-to-date information

#### DECEMBER 1ST

Memorial Committee 6:30 PM  
Ministry of Christian Ed (Zoom) 7:00 PM

#### DECEMBER 3RD

Senior Choir Rehearsal 7 :00 PM

#### DECEMBER 4TH

Bibles & Brew (Port Edward) 6:00 PM\*

#### DECEMBER 7TH

First Sunday—Food Pantry Offering  
Congregational Meeting 11:00 AM

#### DECEMBER 8TH

Ministry of Finance Meeting (Zoom) 6:30 PM

#### DECEMBER 9TH

Social Justice Advocates (Zoom) 7:00 PM

#### DECEMBER 10TH

Senior Choir Rehearsal 7 :00 PM

#### DECEMBER 12TH

Women's Bunco 6:00 PM

#### DECEMBER 13TH

Men's Fellowship 9:00 AM

#### DECEMBER 14TH

Cantata Sunday  
Fair Trade Sunday  
Ministry of Trustees Meeting 8:30 AM  
Ministry of Missions Meeting 9:00 AM  
Women's Fellowship Cookie Sale 11:00 AM  
Ministry of Deacons Meeting 11:15 AM

#### DECEMBER 17TH

Senior Choir Rehearsal 7 :00 PM

#### DECEMBER 19TH

Newsletter Deadline

#### DECEMBER 21ST

Children/TFIA Christmas Service 10:00 AM

#### DECEMBER 23RD

Social Justice Advocates (Zoom) 7:00 PM

#### DECEMBER 24TH

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service 10:00 PM

#### DECEMBER 25TH

Christmas Day—Office Closed

#### DECEMBER 28TH

Retirement Reception for Pastor Bob 11:00 AM

### DECEMBER WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

December 7<sup>th</sup>: The 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent

**Scripture:** Isaiah 11:1-10

**Sermon Theme:** *A Signal to the People*

Note: The Sacrament of Holy Communion will be served.

December 14<sup>th</sup>: The 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent

**The 2025 Choir Cantata: A Son! A Savior!**

December 21<sup>st</sup>: The 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent

**The 2025 Children's Christmas Presentation**

December 24<sup>th</sup>: Christmas Eve (10:00 PM)

A service of lessons and carols to usher in the Christmas season.

**Scripture:** Isaiah 9:2, 6-7, Luke 2:1-20

**Sermon Theme:** *Awe and Wonder*

December 28<sup>th</sup>: The 1st Sunday after

Christmas

**Scripture:** Matthew 3: 13-17

**Sermon Theme:** *Separation Anxiety*

#### December 7th

**Liturgist:** Betty Paldauf

**Ushers:** Dave Carris

Dick Elke

Pat Maggio

Nidia Kulack

Barb Weitz

#### December 21st

**Liturgist:** Bill Hellyer

**Ushers:** Dave Carris

Dick Elke

Tina Ash

Nidia Kulack

Barb Weitz

#### December 28th

**Liturgist:** Jen Jazwinski

**Ushers:** Dave Carris

Dick Elke

Lori Martens

Pat Maggio

Pat Thime

#### December 14th

**Liturgist:** Michelle Tarosas

**Ushers:** Dave Carris

Dick Elke

Lori Martens

Nidia Kulack

Tina Ash

Marcie Nordlund

## CHRISTMAS SERVICES



# CHRISTMAS

## *Cantata*

*A Son! A Savior!*

*December 14th | 10:00 AM*



Join Us For A Children's

# Christmas

WORSHIP SERVICE

DEC | **21** | 10 AM

Celebrate Jesus's birthday with us!  
All are welcome!



# Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Join Us In Celebration!

WEDNESDAY  
DECEMBER **24** AT 10 PM



## FELLOWSHIP!

### LOVE FELLOWSHIP? LOVE COFFEE?

Volunteers are  
needed to serve  
during Fellowship  
Hour!



*Sign-up in the Narthex or contact the Church Office*

**Coffee Hour** is so much fun, don't you agree! We have several openings to serve in December and in 2026; please sign-up!

Pick a date that is a special occasion for you, birthday, anniversary, birth of a child, etc., we want to celebrate with you!

## GROUPS & STUDIES



### WOMEN'S BUNCO NIGHT

Friday, December 12th at  
6:00 p.m. - \$5.00 entry fee

Join us for a fun-filled, competitive evening of playing Bunco while enjoying wonderful food and benefitting a good cause.



### WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

The Cookie Sale on December 14th will be our meeting for the month of December. Starting in

January and through the 1st week of March, we will be meeting on the 1st and 3rd Sunday of each month after worship to accommodate those that find it easier to travel during the winter months in the day light.



### MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Meetings are held the 2nd Saturday of each month at 9:00 am in Fellowship Hall. Saturday, December 13th will be our next Men's Fellowship Breakfast.



### SENIOR AFTERNOON OF GAMES

Senior Afternoon of Games has been cancelled for December. We will see you in the new year!

We will be starting "In Her Shoes" by Helen Steinkamp. This five-week study leading up to Easter gives us a fresh perspective as we trace the last days of Jesus' life through the eyes of four of his closest women followers and friends: Mary and Martha of Bethany, Jesus' mother Mary, and Mary Magdalene. By following their experiences through Jesus' life, death and resurrection, you will learn more about Jesus and more about his presence and purpose for your life. Contact Anna Benjamin for the reading material.

## MISSION EVENTS & NEWS!

### 1st Sunday Collection - Special Offering for the ALITH Food Pantry

Sunday, December 7th

"Be a Neighbor, Feed a Neighbor"



Food Donations: There continues to be a great need in our community for donations of non perishable food. Food donations can be left in the shopping cart by the elevator or dropped off at the pantry at 1113 Pyott Road, Lake in the Hills. A current needs list can be found in the Narthex. The food pantry will also take plastic grocery bags to be used by pantry clients.

### SPECIAL SUNDAY COLLECTION— CHRISTMAS FUND

Sunday, December 21st



The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years. The fund provides emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities, and health premiums.

### FOOD PANTRY SPECIAL COLLECTION



Reverse Advent calendar- Food items are collected throughout December and given to Algonquin Lake in the Hills Food Pantry. This may be a fun project for a family or a group. A list of suggested items for each day can be found in the Narthex or click [here](#) to view the list.

### SALLY NORRIS COPE FUND



Donations have been made to the following organizations, each for \$500.00. February-Turning Point; April-Save the Children; May- Feed My Starving Children; June-Home of the Sparrow; September NICWA (National Indian Child Welfare Association), November—Kids in Need, McHenry County, December - The Night Ministry.

### WINTER OUTERWEAR ACCESSORY COLLECTION



Extended through December — we will have the collection tree for cold weather accessories for all ages—mittens, gloves, and scarves. Children's items will go to Kids in Need. The tree and collection box will be in the south church entry; an additional collection box will be in the coat room.

### HYGIENE KITS

Thanks to all who donated items for the hygiene kits. 39 kits were assembled and donated to the Algonquin Lake in the Hills Foods Pantry for distribution to clients.

### KEEPING FAMILIES COVERED



The Algonquin Police Department is sponsoring a donation program; items being collected are diapers, incontinence products, and period supplies. Items can be taken directly to the Algonquin Police Dept. 2200 Harnish Dr., Algonquin.



**Fair Trade**  
USA™

### **FAIR TRADE**

**Sunday, December 14th**

When you purchase products that meet Fair Trade standards, not only are you supporting and compensating workers with fair wages for their talents and labor, you're also contributing to protecting the planet. Visit our Fair Trade table in Fellowship Hall, where you can browse and purchase quality Fair Trade products like coffee and tea. Visit our website or contact Nancy Kneip for more information.



**THE HEAVENLY ATTIC - Open  
Friday and Saturday from  
10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**

December is a busy time for all of us, but especially the volunteers at the Heavenly Attic. We have so many Christmas-related donations that they have spilled over into the church fellowship hall. The Cope family nativity collection is on display there. Donations are being accepted for the Sally Norris Cope Foundation for these unique nativity sets. In addition, lots more holiday items will be available for purchase at the shop. We have Christmas linens, dishes, wrapping paper, ribbon, wreaths, ornaments, and stuffed animals. In addition to our normal store hours of 10 to 4 on Fridays and Saturdays, we will be open during the Miracle on Main community event on Saturday, December 6th, from 10-7. Finally, the Heavenly Attic has made a donation of \$500 to the Lake in the Hills Food Pantry for the month of December.



*McHenry County*  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

### **VOLUNTEER ON THE PRAIRIE TRAIL!**

The last 2025 clean-up will be Saturday, December 13 from 9:00- 11:00am. Join the McHenry County Conservation Foundation to help maintain a small segment of our extensive county trail system! As part of the District's Adopt-A-Trail program, once a month from April through December, McHenry County Conservation Foundation volunteers and staff will meet at the Mitchard Way (formerly Meyer Rd) parking lot in Algonquin to help keep a one-mile stretch of the trail free of debris and litter. Take a morning stroll down the Prairie Trail, meet new people, and help beautify the area. Dress for the weather. Gloves and hand sanitizer are encouraged. Long-handled trash pickers provided. The minimum age to volunteer independently is 18, but those under 18 can sign up with adult supervision.



### **MINISTRY OF MISSIONS PROJECT IDEAS**

The Ministry of Missions appreciates ideas for mission projects. Please share ideas with any Missions member (Barb Erion, Peg Nesser, Wynn Ann Roggeveen, Alice Woertendyke, Paula Evans, Kris Panzloff), or by putting a note in the container in the Narthex.



# December

## Anniversaries

12/1 Lauren & Stephen Sweet  
 12/7 Howard & Kathleen Dittmann  
 12/19 Barb & Robert Weitz  
 12/27 Rick & Judy Stauffer  
 12/27 Brad & Carol Haug  
 12/31 Tony & Tangerine Tirado

If we missed your birthday or anniversary,  
 please notify the Church Office.

## Birthdays

12/2 Kathy Hadler  
 12/4 Wyatt Pelletreau  
 12/5 AJ Albandia  
 12/6 Brad Haug  
 12/7 Gary Parker  
 12/7 Sebastian Tipps  
 12/11 Donna Church  
 12/12 Tina Ash  
 12/12 Ann Venzon  
 12/16 Carol Briggs  
 12/17 Bill Hellyer  
 12/17 Janet Kelley  
 12/17 Connie Wodziak  
 12/22 Lauren Sweet  
 12/25 Fred Ekstrom  
 12/25 Eugenia Szekely  
 12/26 George Roby  
 12/28 Matt Elliott  
 12/28 Sue Kreibich

### MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Thank you to the following for  
 their memorial contributions.

#### **Honoring Pat Kramer**

Wendy McCarthy  
 Lauren Aggen  
 David Aggen  
 Lori Martens  
 Kathy Kistler  
 Judy & George Chinn  
 Troy & Susan Lantz  
 Kenneth & Joyce Lange  
 Mary Cox  
 Joan Ryckman



### OUR HOMEBOUND MEMBERS

Carol Briggs  
 Lynne Carlson  
 Fred Ekstrom  
 Nancy Ekstrom  
 Gary Gray  
 Pat Hemmingsen  
 Janet Kelley  
 Dick Roggeveen  
 Sue Kreibich  
 Elsie Fry

Loving and gracious God, we praise and adore you for your glorious presence in our lives. We thank you for all your blessings and for your lifegiving spirit in each and every one of us. We thank you for the joys we have experienced this year, as well as helping us overcome the difficult challenges we have faced. We ask for your forgiveness for our shortcomings, and pray that you may help us to learn from our mistakes, and turn away from our sins.

As we welcome this Advent Season, please help us to prepare ourselves to celebrate the Good News of your birth into our world. We pray for healing in our mind, body, and spirit. We pray for all who are struggling with mental illness during this Holiday Season, that they may find healing and support in caring communities, through your loving presence. We pray for courage to face the challenges ahead of us, and strength to help others in need. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. Amen.

### *A Prayer for the Christmas Season*

Heavenly Father, we thank You for the gift of Your Son, Jesus Christ, and the salvation He brings. On this special Christmas season, we pray for peace in our homes, our communities, and our world. Help us to remember the true meaning of Christmas and to share Your love and grace with others through our words and actions.

Guide us to be generous, kind, and forgiving, just as You have been with us. May we focus on what truly matters and not get lost in the hustle and bustle of the season. Fill us with Your joy and Your peace, and help us to reflect the light of Christ to everyone we meet. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.



*Use these prayers for each week of Advent as we prepare and look forward to the celebration of Christmas:*

*1st Week of Advent*

*Prayer for Hope: Almighty God, grant us the grace to hope in you with unwavering trust. As we begin this season of Advent, may our hearts be filled with the hope that comes from knowing your promises are true. Amen.*

*2nd Week of Advent*

*Prayer for Peace: Prince of Peace, in a world filled with turmoil, grant us the tranquility that only your peace can bring. Help us to be instruments of reconciliation and harmony in our relationships and communities. Amen.*

*3rd Week of Advent*

*Prayer for Joy: Heavenly Father, fill our hearts with the joy that comes from knowing your love. May we rejoice in the good news of salvation and share that joy with others during this season of Advent. Amen.*

*4th Week of Advent*

*Prayer for Love: God of love, as we approach the celebration of the birth of your Son, help us to embody the love that He brought into the world. Teach us to love one another as you have loved us. Amen.*

**CCA STAFF AND LEADERSHIP**

**Interim Pastor:** Rev. Bob Wang

**Office Manager:** Ashley Hrynko

**Moderator:** Dan Reebel

**Vice Moderator:** Nancy Kneip

**Past Moderator:** Bill Hellyer

**Ministers of Music:** Bev & Greg Tipps



**Please submit January  
Newsletter Articles by  
December 19th**

**The Congregational Church of Algonquin**

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**Office hours:** Monday — Friday 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.