

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

Celebrating the Journey

January 2026 Newsflash

Sunday Worship weekly at 10:00 a.m.

**Services are livestreamed and can be accessed on
YouTube, Facebook, and www.algonquinucc.org**

FROM PASTOR JIM

My time with you as your Bridge Pastor begins January 1st. I look forward to acquainting/reacquainting myself with all of you.

It was brought to my attention that the scripture reading for each Sunday was provided ahead of time in the newsletter. I am a lectionary preacher so weekly reading(s) will be chosen from the selection given in the newsletter. You are invited to read them each week and see how the spirit speaks to you before Sunday. I look forward to our time together.

See you Sunday, January 4th.

Pastor Jim



WELCOME PASTOR JIM BENZING

Welcoming a Servant Leader: The Ministry of Pastor James Benzing

We are blessed to introduce Pastor James Benzing, a man whose life and ministry are defined by a simple, powerful guiding principle: *"We must pray as if it all depends upon God and act as if it all depends upon us."*

A Foundation of Faith and Service

A native of Wapakoneta, Ohio, James's journey began at St. John United Church of Christ. From his early days in Sunday School to earning the rank of **Eagle Scout** in Troop 131, James developed a heart for "servant leadership." This calling led him to **Heidelberg University** and later to **Eden Theological Seminary**, where he was ordained in 1987.

For Pastor James, the ministry isn't just the job of one person at the pulpit—it is the calling of the entire congregation. He views his role as an "enabler," helping every member discover their own unique call to serve God's world.

A Legacy of Care

Throughout his career, James has served numerous communities across Illinois, including:

- **St. John's UCC** (Granite City), where he met his wife of 35 years, Deborah.
- **Christ Memorial Church** (Blue Island), where they welcomed their daughter, Rachel.
- **Congregational Church of Algonquin**, **Immanuel UCC of Bartlett**, and **First Congregational Church of Carpentersville**.

Beyond the church walls, James has served as an on-call chaplain at **Advocate Sherman Hospital**, providing comfort to those in their most vulnerable moments.

An Active Retirement

Though he "officially" retired in 2015, James remains a vital force in the Chicagoland area. He is a highly sought-after supply preacher and a beloved substitute teacher in local schools. Whether he is guiding a congregation through a transition or helping a student in the classroom, his charismatic energy and "contagious" kindness are always on display.

When he isn't serving the community, you can find James rooting for the **St. Louis Cardinals**, lost in a good book, or enjoying time with his family and dogs.



SAVE THE DATE & WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

SAVE THE DATE

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

JANUARY 1ST

New Years Day—*Office Closed*

JANUARY 2ND

Office Closed

JANUARY 4TH

First Sunday—Food Pantry Offering

Women's Fellowship 11:00 AM

JANUARY 5TH

Ministry of Christian Ed (Zoom) 7:00 PM

JANUARY 7TH

Senior Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM

JANUARY 8TH

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

JANUARY 9TH

Women's Bunco 6:00 PM

JANUARY 10TH

Men's Fellowship 9:00 AM

JANUARY 11TH

Taking Down the Greens

Fair Trade Sunday

Ministry of Trustees Meeting 8:30 AM

Ministry of Missions Meeting 9:00 AM

Ministry of Deacons Meeting 11:15 AM

JANUARY 12TH

Ministry of Finance Meeting (Zoom) 6:30 PM

JANUARY 13TH

Social Justice Advocates (Zoom) 7:00 PM

JANUARY 14TH

Senior Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM

JANUARY 18TH

Women's Fellowship 11:00 AM

JANUARY 19TH

Newsletter Deadline

JANUARY 21ST

Senior Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM

JANUARY 27TH

Social Justice Advocates (Zoom) 7:00 PM

JANUARY 28TH

Senior Game Afternoon 12:30 PM

Senior Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM

JANUARY WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

January 4th: The 2nd Sunday after Christmas

Scripture: Jer 31:7-14 or Sirach 24:1-12

Ps 147:12-20 or Wisd of Sol 10:15-21

Eph 1:3-14

John 1:(1-9), 10-18

Note: The Sacrament of Holy Communion will be served.

January 11th: The Baptism of Christ

Scripture: Isa 42:1-9

Ps 29

Acts 10:34-43

Matt 3:13-17

January 18th: The 2nd Sunday after the Epiphany

Scripture: Isa 49:1-9

Ps 40:1-11

1 Cor 1:1-9

John 1:29-42

January 25th: The 3rd Sunday after the Epiphany

Scripture: Isa 9:1-4

Ps 27:1, 4-9

1 Cor 1:10-18

Matt 4:12-23

January 4th

Liturgist: Jen Jazwinski

Ushers: Dave Carris

Tina Ash

Lori Martens

Marcie Nordlund

Barb Weitz

January 18th

Liturgist: Betty Paldauf

Ushers: Dave Carris

Tina Ash

Nidia Kulack

Lori Martens

Marcie Nordlund

January 11th

Liturgist: Bill Hellyer

Ushers: Dave Carris

Nidia Kulack

Barb Weitz

Pat Maggio

January 25th

Liturgist: Barb Weitz

Ushers: Dave Carris

Pat Maggio

Nidia Kulack

SAVE THE DATE



THANK YOU!

Junior Girl Scout Troop 425 would like to extend a warm **thank you** to the ladies of the church for donating the yarn used to make scarves for those in need. We also want to thank Miss Anna and Miss Jo for their patience and kindness in teaching us how to crochet! To date, we have completed three scarves, which were donated to the Ministry of Missions Winter Outerwear Accessory Collection. Thank you for supporting our troop and helping us serve the community!



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 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, January 9th 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

From now through the first week of March, we will meet on the 1st and 3rd Sunday of each month immediately following worship. This shift to daytime meetings will make travel easier and safer during the winter months.

MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Meetings are held the 2nd Saturday of each month at 9:00 am in Fellowship Hall. Saturday, January 10th will be our next Men's Fellowship Breakfast.



Join us for good food and fellowship!

SENIOR AFTERNOON OF GAMES

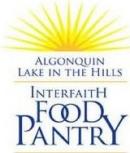
Senior Afternoon of Games will be held on Wednesday, January 28th. Dessert will be served; feel free to bring a snack for yourself!



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. Reading material is available in the Church Office.

MISSION EVENTS & NEWS!

1st Sunday Collection - Special Offering for the ALITH Food Pantry Sunday, January 4th "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.

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

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the winter outerwear collection.



ALITH FOOD PANTRY

The Algonquin Lake in the Hills Interfaith Food Pantry relies entirely on the generosity of our community. The Pantry welcomes donations of food, personal hygiene products, and financial contributions. Monetary gifts are especially impactful, allowing them to purchase essential perishables—such as eggs, butter, cheese, and milk—as well as high-demand nonperishable items.

A list of current needs is posted in the Narthex. Or you may visit their website for a current list or to make an electronic monetary donation:

As a registered participant of the Northern Illinois Food Bank, the Pantry is able to purchase name brand, healthy non-perishable food at an extreme discount! \$2 buys 8 boxes of name brand cereal. \$10 buys a box of meat such as hamburger, chicken, etc.

**FAIR TRADE****Fair Trade Sunday, January 11th**

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.

In the month of December, the Heavenly Attic board directed \$500 to Gigi's Playhouse. Headquartered in Hoffman Estates, GiGi's Playhouse provides free therapeutic, educational, and research-driven programs for individuals with Down syndrome through its 40 locations across the U.S. and Mexico.

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.



Total Operating Fund Income		
Income	\$ 19,459.47	YTD \$ 309,337.11
Total Operating Expenses		
Expenses	\$ 24,816.63	YTD \$ 298,391.13
Net	(\$5,357.16)	YTD \$ 10,945.98
Mortgage Balance *		\$ 123,655.29
Checking Account Balance		\$ 22,003.32
OCWM \$250 plus member contribution	\$ 607.00	YTD \$ 8,327.00
Capital Expenditures		
Refer to Capital Fund for details	-	\$ 36,260.00
Memorial Funds		
Income	\$615.00	\$8,185.00
Expenses (Postage)	\$78.00	\$11,035.26
Net	\$537.00	(\$2,850.26)
Control Check	Ok	Ok

As of November 30, 2025

January

Anniversaries

1/17 Dennis & Nancy Kneip
1/18 Liz & Mike Albandia

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

MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Thank you to the following for
their memorial contributions.

Honoring Pat Kramer

June Casterson

Anna & Bob Benjamin

Honoring Don Schmidt

Tina Ash

Gina Orazi

Steve & Karen Guenther

Kathy Jamison

Honoring Mary Westerbeck

David & Kathy Kistler

David Aggen

Mary Whitney Beck

Carol Whitney

Julie Whitney Kewley

Birthdays

1/2 Cherry Knautz
1/5 Madison Thornsberry
1/6 Peg Nesser
1/7 Dick Elke
1/10 Bobbie Reed
1/11 Tony Tarosas
1/13 Jim Erion
1/13 Steve Guenther
1/14 Pam Novak
1/15 Genie McCully
1/25 Cassandra Hertel
1/25 Charlie Tarosas
1/27 Alison Kelley
1/28 Michelle Bockrath
1/29 Kim Carney

OUR HOMEBOUND MEMBERS

Carol Briggs

Lynne Carlson

Fred Ekstrom

Nancy Ekstrom

Elsie Fry

Gary Gray

Pat Hemmingsen

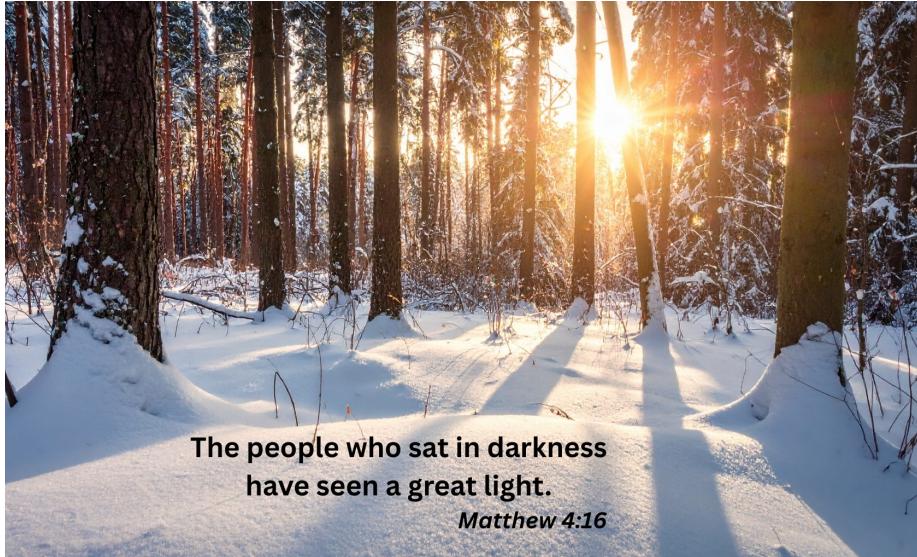
Janet Kelley

Gary Parker

Bobbie Reed

Dick Roggeveen

Sue Kreibich



CCA STAFF AND LEADERSHIP

Interim Bridge Pastor: Rev. Jim Benzing
Office Manager: Ashley Hrynk
Moderator: Dan Reebel
Vice Moderator: Nancy Kneip
Past Moderator: Bill Hellyer
Ministers of Music: Bev & Greg Tipps



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

The Congregational Church of Algonquin

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