GLAD TIDINGS!

January 2026

Gathered by the lake,
we are
Embraced by God
to **grow**
Empowered by Christ
to **care,**
Enriched by the Holy Spirit
to **celebrate**



Congregational United Church of Christ Neenah / Menasha

Hello Church!
Happy New Year! January gives us something special—a season of quiet. After the rush of the holidays, winter invites us to slow down, breathe, and reconnect—not just with ourselves, but with God and one another. In that stillness, we remember that life isn't a race toward perfection; it's a journey of grace.

This year feels especially meaningful for us at the church by the lake. In February, we'll celebrate our 175th anniversary—a milestone that reminds us of the faithfulness of those who came before us and the enduring presence of God in our midst. What a joy to honor that legacy!

At the same time, we're looking ahead. Our visioning process continues as we imagine what it means to be a community of Christ's love in the years to come. Our next vision meeting is January 31, and we'd love for you to join us as we dream together. We will share a special conversation leading up to this Saturday retreat the last 3 Sundays in January during worship where we will share our dreams for the church as we consider God's dream for us: *"Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."*

But here's the thing: looking back and looking forward are important, yet they're not the main event. The heart of our faith is about living in the now—with gratitude for what we have and joy in the grace God freely gives. That grace calls us to forgive, to love, and to embrace life as it is—imperfect yet beautiful. Faith isn't about perfection; it's about presence. Not someday, but today. Living in the now can take many forms. For me, it means stepping away from the noise for a bit. From January 16–18, I'll be chaperoning our youth and young adults on a Winter Solstice Retreat at Camp Daycholah. This retreat is a chance to disconnect from technology and the busyness of life and reconnect with ourselves, God, and one another in authentic and meaningful ways. Please keep all of us in your prayers as we share this time of renewal.
Another way we live in the now is by caring for those in need. Our January Special Offering supports the Samaritan Center, a nonprofit mental health agency that integrates faith and spirituality into therapy. They provide counseling for individuals, couples, and families, offer substance abuse treatment, and even train in suicide prevention—all while serving the uninsured and underinsured.

Your gift makes a difference. By giving generously, you help ensure that people receive holistic,

Continued on next page

faith-informed care for mind, body, and spirit. You can give during worship or online in addition to your regular tithe, pledge, or offering—thank you for supporting this vital ministry!
May this season of quiet bring you peace. May God's grace fill your heart with hope and keep your snow shovel ever-light, and may love guide your steps each day. Here's to a year of presence, joy, and deep connection—with God, with one another, and with the world around us.

Amen and alleluia!



Pastor Rob

SIGN UP FOR THE
THE NEXT APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY SESSIONS

SATURDAY JAN 31ST 12PM-4PM

If you need help signing up please contact the Church office

Sign up Sheet in Narthex or use the QR Code

01/02 Sue Knuth
01/03 Alan Gear
01/04 Diana Hintz
01/04 Don Kloepfel
01/10 Teagan Janness-Jording
01/13 Mike Jahnke
01/15 Liz MacKelvie
Molly Britten-Campbell
01/15 Ethan Meylink
01/18 Tim Kellnhauser
01/19 Dean Katzman
01/24 Kay Roberts
01/24 Wayne Gibson
01/26 Becky Nichols
01/28 Abram E.



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Wedding Anniversaries

No January Wedding Anniversaries

We would like to wish all a happy birthday or anniversary. If your birthday or anniversary was omitted , or you would rather not have it published, please contact church office.



Please keep the following in your thoughts and prayers:

Ongoing Prayers:

Patty Hoehne, Adam Anderson, Pam Klockzien, Dave Zernicke, Crystal Lingenhag, Ann Luebke, Larry Olson, Shirl Alix, Tiffany Williams, Dar Schuff, Jerry Hupe.

Homebound:

Judy Doornbos in California, and Carol Wilcox.

Annual Meeting



February 1st

After worship

Stay tuned for more information.

Budget Hearing

BUDGET HEARING
January 18th & 25th after worship.

Come and look at 2026 Budget and ask questions before our Annual meeting on Feb 1st .



Looking for a fun way to kick off your weekend? Join us for Fun with Friends Game Night Friday the 16th! Whether you're a board game pro or just looking for a good laugh, there's a seat at the table for you.

- When: Friday, Jan 16th
- Time: 6:30 PM – 8:30/9:00 PM
- Snacks: Provided!



THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO WORKED AND DONATED TO THIS YEARS COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS DINNER!

It was a great success with 377 meals being served. People who were not able to attend because of the cold received meals delivered to their group homes and many people braved the cold to attend! Everyone enjoyed a delicious meal, festive music and a gift bag full of useful items. Thank you for helping to make all of this possible!



THANK YOU

To everyone who helped with Community Table on December 16th. We served 95 meals plus there were gifts and non perishable food for the guests to take. **We serve again on February 17th.** Watch for sign up in mid January!



CHOIR PRACTICE

Choir practices are held on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 pm, This is a great time to join the choir. We have a lot of fun! Please reach out to Jill at jellenrosen@gmail.com if you have any questions.

FOOD ALLERGEN STATEMENT

Ministry of Faith Development, together with the Ministry Council, has created a Food Allergen Statement as part of our commitment to being a supportive, welcoming, and hospitable faith community. Our goal is to increase understanding and awareness of the needs of those who live with food allergies and to provide the opportunity for our shared meals to reflect our church's vision, "No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here."

Our Food Allergen Statement: As a church family, we want our shared meals and fellowship times to be welcoming. While we do not have a formal food allergen policy, we ask that you please consider intentionally avoiding nuts, nut products, and shellfish when preparing food for church events.

While not a rule or guarantee for people living with food allergies, the statement is an opportunity for our church to be welcoming, inclusive and thoughtful toward those in our church family who live with food allergies. Intentionally avoiding nuts, nut products, and shellfish when preparing food sends a message of love and tells those around us, "You matter and you are valued." Our Food Allergen Statement applies to all church meals such as potlucks, after-worship coffee hours, youth group, Lenten Dinners, and when requested. It does not apply to outside groups or fundraisers (such as Cookie Walk, craft fair, rummage sale weekend, pizza sales, weddings or funerals, etc.), unless otherwise communicated by the hosts or organizers.

Ministry of Faith Development will feature "speak-outs" – mission moment inspired times during worship – where individuals affected by food allergies will share how this statement and their allergies impact their lives and the lives of those they love. Our hope is that these stories will deepen our understanding and commitment to hospitality.

Thank you for helping us create a truly welcoming table!



2026 OFFERING ENVELOPES are ready. If you would like envelopes, please let the church office know. They will be located on the welcome table.

DIFFERENT WAYS TO GIVE TO CUCCNM

1. Cash or check in the offering plate or by mailing it to the church.

2. Have your bank send an electronic check. (Bill Pay)

3. Use our QR Code that is linked to our website. Your giving will be taken through Pay Pal were you will use your credit card. *This option charges a fee to the church.*

If you have any questions, please contact Melanie in the church office. office@cuccnm.org or 920-725-4873

Church Information
1511 Nicolet Blvd.
Neenah Wi 54956
920-725-4873

Website: www.cuccnm.org

Pastor
pastor@cuccnm.org

Church Office
office@cuccnm.org

Christian Education Director
ce@cuccnm.org

Wider Church Contacts:

www.ucc.org
(United Church of Christ)

www.wcucc.org
Wisconsin Conference



Happy New Year & New Opportunities!

Happy New Year! I hope your holiday season was filled with joy, rest, and time spent with loved ones. As we turn the page to January and settle into the rhythm of a new year, I want to wish you all health and happiness for the months ahead.

As we look toward the future of our church, I know many of you have thought about getting more involved but might be hesitant to add "one more thing" to a busy schedule. If you have ever wanted to just "dabble" in volunteering without a heavy burden, we have two perfect behind-the-scenes opportunities for you.

We are looking for help in the following areas:

- **Personnel Committee:** This is a very small-time commitment. The role primarily involves assisting with yearly performance evaluations, an annual review of the employee handbook, and addressing other employee-related items only as they arise.

Social Media & Communications: If you have an interest in marketing or simply understand how social media works, we would love your help! This is a flexible role where you can help us share our church's message and events with the community.
We are hoping to welcome new faces to these roles within the **first quarter of 2026**.

It takes a lot of hands to help run a church, and your help—no matter how big or small—makes a difference. If you are interested in learning more (with no pressure attached!), please reach out to me or the Pastor.

Thank you for your consideration and for all you do for our church family

Signa Meyers

BEARING FRUITS OF COMPASSION IN 2026



As a new year begins, I am grateful for the long partnership between UCC Neenah-Menasha and Samaritan. Your January offering helps ensure that children, adults, families, and faith leaders continue to have access to compassionate mental health care when they need it most.

Samaritan
HEALING MIND, BODY, SPIRIT

At Samaritan, our hope for 2026 is that compassion continues to bear real fruit in the lives of the people we serve. Jesus reminds us, *"You will know them by their fruits"* (Matthew 7:16). Because of your generosity, someone finds a counselor in a moment of overwhelm, a student is screened before crisis deepens, and a pastor receives support to navigate the weight of ministry.

This year's theme, *Bearing Fruits of Compassion*, reflects what we see in you. Your gifts are not only financial support; they are **seeds of hope planted in the lives of people who might otherwise feel alone**. They echo the Spirit's fruit described in Galatians: *"love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control"* (Galatians 5:22–23).

Thank you for helping our community thrive in mind, body, and spirit. May compassion take deeper root in all of us—and bear abundant fruit for those who need it most.

Rosangela Berbert
Executive Director
Samaritan, Inc.



Sunday School during January

3k-8th grade attend Sunday School from 10:30am-11:15am, while 9th-12th grade will attend Sunday School from 11:30am-12:15pm. Youth in 3K-8th grade will start the morning off in church with their parents and will be excused to class with their teachers following The Way (the children's message). Youth ages 3K-5th grade need to be picked up in their classroom (room 4 & 6) by their guardian. Older youth will be excused to the lounge after class. To register for Sunday School, email Alanna at ce@cuccnm.org

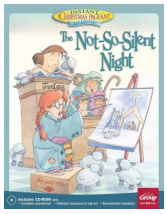
The 1st Sunday of every month will be What's the Scoop? A one-room classroom for youth 3K-12th grade, in Fellowship Hall. Youth will return to worship for Communion.

Classrooms will be divided as follows:

3K-2nd grade- in room 4, taught by high school youth, during worship
3rd-5th grade- in room 6, taught by a rotation of adults, during worship
6th-8th grade- in room 7, taught by 2 adults, during worship
9th-12th grade- in room 7, taught by a rotation of adults, AFTER worship

- 1st Sunday- What's the Scoop? AGES 3K-12th Grade
- 2nd Sunday- 3K-8th Grade: during worship. 9th-12th Grade: Gospel Project
- 3rd Sunday- No Sunday School- Martin Luther King weekend
- 4th Sunday- 3K-8th Grade: during worship. 9th-12th Grade: Crosswalk

NO Sunday School January 18th



CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PLAY

What an awesome 10th! They were all Fabulous Thank you to all the youth and their families, Sherri Jischke for directing the play, Jill Rosenthal for playing piano, Kevin Shumann and Jeff Nichols for helping with video and audio, Diana Hintz, and Kara Homan as assistant directors, Shanna Krueger and Denise Stewart for helping with the costumes, Sue Knuth for crowd control, Max Armador, Shane Smith, and Pat Mahoney for taking pictures. Without everyone the play would not have been such a success!



COOKIE WALK

We hosted our second annual Cookie Walk after the Children's Program, with a special visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus- thank you both for making the trip! We made over $500! This fundraiser goes directly to our scholarship fund, helping send youth, adults, and families to camp, retreats and youth mission trips. Thank you very much to all who baked for this event and to all who purchased

YOUTH MUSICAL TALENTS

Does your youth have a musical talent that they would be willing to share with the congregation? We would love for them to share it, either as an individual or as a group. Please contact Alanna or Jill at jellenrosen@gmail.com or sign up here to set up a time to share their talent in worship.

MISSION TRIP



The Mission Trip youth will be meeting **Sunday, January 11th at 11:30-12:30pm** to discuss the Mission Trip for June 2026. We will be heading to Colorado Springs, CO this summer. If your High School student would like to attend, please contact Alanna at ce@cuccnm.org.



SUMMER CAMP

Speaking of camp… the summer camp schedule will be out in early January on the website! **https://ucci.org/** Go visit the site and see what camp your kiddo, you or your family may want to attend this year. Camp is not just for the kids… there are adult camps and "& Me" camps (kids ages 4- 2nd grade and an adult) and family camps. Last year we had 14 kids and 3 adults go to camp, let's see if we can beat that this summer! Camp is a great way to learn while having fun, so much fun that you don't even know you're learning! Meet new friends, have new adventures and try new (very tasty) food. Here at CUCCNM we feel camp is so important that we will give up to a 50% scholarship to members and friends of the church who apply. (apply by emailing your camp receipt to Alanna at ce@cuccnm.org).

Life of the Church Youth Opportunities

Acolyte Sign Up (3rd grade & up): https://signup.com/go/BmsHdox

Singing Bowl Sign Up (any age): https://signup.com/go/ouBnEQZ

Read in church (4th grade & up): https://signup.com/go/MerrYVS

Communion Shepard (any age): https://signup.com/go/bwYDRnu

Musical Talent (any age): https://signup.com/go/eNLSCBZ

PIZZA RANCH-OSHKOSH

Monday, January 12th the youth will be serving pizza and bussing tables at Pizza Ranch in Oshkosh from 4-8pm. Come and enjoy

CELEBRATING EXTRAORDINARY GENEROSITY IN 2025

As we reflect on the past year, our faith community has much to celebrate. In 2025, the people of Congregational UCC Neenah Menasha once again demonstrated what it means to live out Christ's call to love our neighbors with compassion and generosity.

Together, through our **special offerings**, our congregation raised an outstanding **$29,220.74** in support of our selected charities!

This remarkable total represents the combined benevolence of two powerful expressions of our shared mission:

	Special Offering Giving	Good Samaritan 50% match
Samaritan	$ 745.00	$ 142.50
Habitat for Humanity	$ 825.00	$ 195.00
OGHS	$ 2,856.00	$ 315.00
LEAVEN	$ 2,123.51	$ 537.50
Sleep in Heavenly Peace	$ 551.00	$ 200.50
World Relief	$ 2,570.00	$ 997.50
KID'S KART	$ 4,647.00	$ 2,171.00
CROP	$ 2,669.99	$ 1,260.00
UNICEF	$ 355.20	$ 56.10
Community Table	$ 2,668.82	$ 818.29
Church World Service	$ 227.22	$ 113.61
Christmas Fund	$ 1,310.00	$ 655.00
Disaster Relief	$ 140.00	$ 70.00
	$ 21,688.74	$ 7,532.00

The charitable giving of our members, offered faithfully and joyfully throughout the year.

Our Good Samaritan Fund, which provides a match of up to 50% of charitable giving from our endowment.

Each dollar given reflects a story of hope, healing, and love extended into our community and beyond. These gifts strengthen organizations doing transformative work, provide care to those in crisis, and remind us that our church's reach extends far past our walls.

Thank you to every person who contributed, prayed, served, or championed our mission. Your generosity is a living testimony to the heart of our congregation—grounded in faith, committed to justice, and inspired by love.

May the spirit of giving continue to guide us into the year ahead!

All About Special Offerings

- Special Offerings are a means for church members and friends to make an impact on the world around us -- locally, nationally, and globally via non-profit organizations supported by the church.
- Each month a different non-profit is highlighted in a church service by a congregation member, guest speaker from the non-profit, or video produced by the non-profit.
- Donations to any of the non-profit organizations can be made in the month they are highlighted or anytime throughout the current year. This can be done either by writing a check made out to the church and putting the name of the non-profit in the memo line or donating using the green envelopes in the pews and putting a check mark next to the name of the non-profit (s) you wish to donate to.
- The church's Good Samaritan Fund, one of the church's financial accounts, matches all donations at 50%.
- The non-profit organizations may change year-to-year, and the list is typically decided on by the church's Ministry of Service members by December of each year. The members will consider suggestions of other non-profit organizations to support. Please see a Ministry of Service member for more information.

VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

Upon receiving the schedule, please review it to ensure you are available when scheduled. If you are unavailable, please use the contact information to find a replacement for yourself. Please notify the church office **office@cuccnm.org** with the schedule change. Thanks to all for your continued support and service as volunteers! **If you would like to be added to the schedule please contact the church office. We are always looking for substitutes !**

Task	1-4-2026	1-11-2026	1-18-2026	1-25-2026
Liturgist	Arthya Puguh	Mary Janness	Carol Tschudy	Mary Liesch
Head Usher	Connie Regazzi	Sherri Jischke	Sue Dollhopf	Terri Flesburg
Usher 4	Mary Janness	Darrell Parsons	Mary Liesch	Debi Brandenburg
Usher 2	Wendy Remmel		Wendy Remmel	Laura Kleist
Usher 3	Gary Joosten	Signa Meyers	Chris Parsons	Alan Gear
Refreshments	Jack Fry	Mary Janness	Sue Dollhopf	John LaPrairie
Acolyte	Carl N.	Christopher S.	Sophie R.	Cece L
Singing Bowl	Matthew K.	Colin S.	Evie J.	Callie P.
Youth Reader	Claudia A.	TBA	Chloe R.	TBA
Communion	Matthew K.			
Communion Prep	Teri Flesburg			



YOU CAN HELP SERVE!

The Ministry of Spiritual Life would like to continue to offer a time for fellowship and snacks after worship each Sunday, but needs your help. We are asking those with surnames starting with "M through N" to bring in 1 dozen cookies, bars (need not be homemade) or a gallon of juice sometime during the month you are assigned. Label the item "Fellowship" and take to the kitchen freezer/or bring them to the lounge .Your contribution is much appreciated! Watch for your turn to share as your "letter" comes up! Questions contact Terri Flesburg .Here is the schedule:

January: M-N,

February: O-R, **March:** S, **April:** T-V, **May**: W-Z





Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 **Happy New Year**	**2** **Youth Group Lock in**	**3** **6:00pm** AA Meeting
4 **10:15 am** **Worship:** What's the Scoop	**5**	**6** **8:30 am** Discussion Group **11:00 am** Bible Study	**7** **5:00 pm** Habitat 401 Planning Meeting	**8** **6:30pm** Ministry Council	**9**	**10** **6:00pm** AA Meeting
11 **10:15 am** Worship S.S. 3K– 8th **11:30am-12:15pm** H.S. SS Gospel Project **11:30 am** Min Of Spiritual Life Mission Trip Meeting	**12**	**13** **8:30 am** Discussion Group **11:00 am** Bible Study **6:30 pm** Faith Development Mtg	**14** **6:30pm** Adult Choir	**15** **5-8 :00 pm** LE Meal Prep activity	**16** **1:00 pm** Needlers **6:30 -9:00pm** Fun With Friends	**17** **6:00pm** AA Meeting
18 **10:15 am** Worship **No Sunday School** **11:30 am** Budget Hearing	**19**	**20** **8:30 am** Discussion Group **11:00 am** Bible Study	**21** **6:30pm** Adult Choir	**22**	**23** **PACK 3050 LOCK IN** **6:30PM-11:00AM**	**24** **6:00pm** AA Meeting
25 **10:15 am** Worship S.S. 3K– 8th **11:30am-12:15pm** H.S. SS Crosswalk **11:30 am** Budget Hearing	**26**	**27** **8:30 am** Discussion Group **11:00 am** Bible Study **6:30 pm**	**28** **6:30pm** Adult Choir	**29**	**30**	**31** **12-4 pm** **Appreciative Inquiry: Dream** **6:00pm** AA Meeting



DISCUSSION GROUP
Tuesdays at 8:30-9:30 am
We meet at Four Seasons Restaurant in Neenah for breakfast and lively discussion about current events and faith trends
1104 South Commercial Street, Neenah
Everyone is Welcome!

NEEDLERS



Share Fellowship and do Needlework
All who like to do (or learn to do) any type of needlework.

Needlers meet the 3rd Friday of the month.
January 16th at 1:00pm

LIVE

Sunday Worship is in person.
Services will be broadcast **live on FB** every Sunday morning and later put on our website.

Click below to find our FB page
https://facebook.com/CongregationalUCCNeenahMenasha/
It will be posted on the church website later in the day.



Do you have Anniversary or birthday cards laying around?
Dar Schuff who sends out our monthly birthday and anniversary cards is in need of more greeting cards. Please bring them to church office. Thank you!

BAGS FOR BENCHES
3rd Thursday of month
January 15th
12:00-2:00 PM



Want to be a part of our recycling program and have fun at the same time? Come and fellowship while we sort plastic bags for our next bench. Questions contact Alanna at ce@cuccnm.org





Ministry Council

Moderator:
Signa Meyers

Vice Moderator:
Sue Knuth

Secretary:
Chris Parson

Ministry of Faith Development
Becky Nichols

Ministry of Service:
Mary Janness

Ministry of Spiritual Life
Terri Flesburg

Ministry of Stewardship
Jeff Nichols

At Large:
Connie Regazzi
Sherri Jischke
Chuck Luebke

Church Historian:
Mowry Smith

Communication Coordinator
Marilyn Kostrzak

Time and Talent Coordinator:

Personnel Committee
Dan Jischke

Pastoral Relations Committee
Kerry Fox, Patty Hoehne, Bob Nault

Rev. Rob Van Ess Pastor,
pastor@cuccnm.org
Melanie Nault, Admin. Assistant,
office@cuccnm.org
Alanna Smith, Christian Ed. Dir.,
ce@cuccnm.org

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January 12th Pizza Ranch Fundraiser 4:00-8:00

January 16th: Fun with Friends 6:30-9:00 (Board Games)

January 18th : No Sunday School

January 18th & 25th : Budget Hearing after worship

January 31st: 12:00-4:00pm Appreciative Inquiry : Dream

February 1st: CUCCNM Annual Meeting after Worship