GLAD TIDINGS!

October 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

There Our Hearts Will Be

Dear Friends,
Stories have always been at the heart of our faith.

Scripture is filled with stories of God's people learning to trust, serve, persevere, and hope. Through these stories, we discover who God is and how God continues to work in the world. Our own lives tell stories as well. Stories of joy and sorrow. Stories of growth and change. Stories of faithfulness and grace.

This fall, as we begin our 2027 stewardship campaign, I find myself reflecting on the story we have been living together as a congregation.

When the tornado struck our community on July 27, none of us could have imagined what the weeks that followed would bring. Yet through uncertainty and disruption, we witnessed something remarkable. We saw neighbors helping neighbors. We watched volunteers step forward. We experienced the care, compassion, and resilience of this congregation in countless ways.

Most importantly, we were reminded that the church is far more than a building.

The church is a community of people who gather to worship, pray, learn, serve, and care for one another. The church is present whenever God's love is shared. Even during challenging moments, the ministries of Congregational United Church of Christ Neenah Menasha continued. Worship continued. Faith formation continued. Outreach continued. Relationships were strengthened. Lives were touched.

The storm changed our landscape, but it did not change who we are.

In many ways, it reminded us of who we are.

We are people of faith, hope, and service.

And we are people who believe God is still writing new chapters in our story.

Over the coming weeks, you will hear more about our stewardship theme for 2027:
"There Our Hearts Will Be."

These familiar words from Jesus invite us to reflect on what we value most and where we are investing our lives. Stewardship is about much more than finances. It is about the ways we dedicate our time, share our gifts, offer our talents, and invest our resources in the work God has entrusted to us.

Every act of stewardship tells a story.

One of my favorite stewardship stories isn't about a single gift. It's about the countless faithful gifts that often go unnoticed.

Continued on next page

It is the member who faithfully places an offering in the plate every Sunday, even when finances are tight. **It is the retiree** who includes the church in their monthly budget because they believe in its mission. **It is the family** making their first pledge as they put down roots in our congregation. **It is the volunteer** who gives hours of their time preparing meals, teaching children, serving on a committee, or caring for a neighbor in need.

Taken individually, these acts of generosity may seem small. Yet together they create something extraordinary.

The ministries we cherish happen because generations of faithful people have quietly and consistently invested in this congregation. Worship is offered, children are nurtured in faith, neighbors are served, and lives are touched because ordinary people choose year after year, to share what God has entrusted to them.

Faithful stewardship is rarely about a single grand gesture. More often, it is about countless acts of generosity woven together into a story of love, commitment, and hope. It is the story of a congregation that believes God's work matters and chooses to support that work together.

Whether we volunteer, serve, pray, teach, sing, care for a neighbor, or make a financial pledge, we tell a story about faith, commitment, gratitude, and hope.

Each year, our congregation's commitments make possible the ministries that define us as the Church by the Lake. Together, we support worship and music ministries, faith formation opportunities for all ages, pastoral care, local outreach, partnerships with organizations like Community Table and Scouting America, and the many ways we extend God's love beyond the walls of our church.

As we look toward 2027, we do so with confidence and gratitude. We know that challenges remain before us, but we also know that God has been faithful throughout every chapter of our congregation's history. The same spirit of generosity, resilience, and hope that carried us through the past year continues to guide us forward.

As we begin this stewardship journey together**, I encourage you to take three simple steps.** First, *spend time in prayer,* giving thanks for the blessings God has entrusted to you and asking how God might be calling you to respond. Second, *reflect on the ways this congregation has shaped your faith, supported your family, or provided opportunities to serve others.* Finally, *consider how your gifts of time, talent, and financial support can help ensure that our ministry continues to flourish for years to come.* Every commitment, regardless of size, is an act of faith and an investment in the story God is writing through Congregational United Church of Christ Neenah Menasha.

Your commitment helps ensure that future generations will find a spiritual home here, experience God's love, and discover opportunities to grow, serve, and belong.

On **Commitment Sunday, November 8, 2026**, we will have the opportunity to dedicate our pledges and celebrate the ministry we make possible together. I hope you will join us for this important day in the life of our congregation.

Thank you for all the ways you support Congregational United Church of Christ Neenah Menasha through your prayers, service, leadership, and generosity. Thank you for the story we are writing together. And thank you for helping ensure that future generations will continue to experience this community of faith, hope, and love.

May God continue to guide us as together we discover where our hearts truly are and where God is calling us next.

Amen and Alleluia,  Pastor Rob



Pastor Rob will be on vacation October 7th – 14th. If you are in need of pastoral assistance please contact Melanie in the church office.

Alanna Smith will be out of town October 2nd– October 9th.



NURSERY

We're are excited to reopen our nursery. Join our two trained volunteers during worship. Parents can drop off their children in **Room 2** of the Education Wing and enjoy a worry-free worship experience. We need people to sign up volunteer on Sundays. Nursery is for infant to 3 years olds.

PLEASE SIGN UP TO BE A VOLUNTEER SO THAT WE CAN OFFER THIS TO OUR YOUNG KIDS.

Sign Up for nursery volunteers:
https://signup.com/go/rxeDLJV



COMMUNITY TABLE OCTOBER 20th

We will be hosting the Community table on Tuesday October 20th at St. Paul's Lutheran Church. We are in need of cooks, donation and workers. The sign up sheet is in the hallway. Please sign up to help if you are able.
Questions….contact Gay Dickson at Dickson.anne5@gmail.com



October 31st

Set your clocks back!



10/02 Kathy Mahoney
10/04 Abigail Borgen
10/05 Amy Boehnlein
10/06 Mary Liesch
10/06 Steph Kellnhauser
10/10 Terri Flesburg
10/12 Cassandra S.
10/14 Noah Jones
10/15 Jenny Blankenfeld
10/21 Ana G.
10/25 Wendy Remmel
Drew Benthein
10/27 Erv Wegner
10/28 Claudia A.
10/30 Pat Katzman
10/31 Rob Van Ess

October Wedding Anniversaries

October 3rd
Dean and Pat Katzman
October 9th
Mike and Steph Vrabec
October 16th
Nicky Banks & Rob Van Ess
October 19th
Amy and Steve Boehnlein
October 20th
Jerry Hupe and Karen Behle
October 28th
Josh and Stephanie Groom

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:

Ongoing Prayers: Tiffany Williams, Gay Dickson, Gary Joosten, Laverne Franke, Crystal and Carissa Lingenhag, Larry Olson, Shirl Alix, Dar Schuff, Jerry Hupe.

HOMEBOUND:

Judy Doornbos in California, and Carol Wilcox.



OCTOBER SUNDAY SCHOOL SCHEDULE

3K-9th Grade: 10:30-11:15 a.m.
High School: Three faith-focused field trips throughout the year.

Children and youth will begin worship with their families and be dismissed following The Way (Children's Message).

CLASSES:

- **3K-2nd Grade:** Room 6
- **3rd-5th Grade:** Room 5
- **6th-8th Grade- PB & J (Pat, Bryan & Jesus):** Room 7
- **9th-12th Grade:** Special field-trip program

WHAT'S THE SCOOP?

The first Sunday of every month, all youth (**3K-12th grade**) will gather together in **Fellowship Hall** for a one-room Sunday

NEW HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM

After listening to youth feedback, the Ministry of Faith Development is introducing a new high school program centered around meaningful experiences and faith exploration.

Planned Events:

January 15-17:
Winter Soulstice Retreat

April 18:
Trinity UCC Chicago Field Trip



FAITH FORMATION CLASS

Our 2026-2027 Faith Formation Class is underway with 10 youth beginning their faith journey. Please keep them in your prayers as they grow in faith and understanding throughout the year. Annabeth H, Carter A, Chloe R, Christopher S, Claudia A, Henry L, Lena H, Matthew K, Devin M, and William E

October class:

- **Sat. Oct 17 –Congregation B'Nai Israel reform synagogue in Oshkosh 9AM-1PM** (Faith Formation Youth Mentors are invited to join us)
- **Oct 27** – 6:30-8:00PM (Faith Formation Youth only)

YOUTH GROUP



Youth in grades 6-12 are invited for snacks, fellowship, games, and a discussion about learning from other religions.

Friday, October 2nd
6:00-9:00 p.m.

We are making Tye blankets for Community Table Christmas Dinner

HALLOWEEN PARTY

Our annual Halloween party will be Sunday, October 18th from 11:30-1:30 in Fellowship Hall.



- All Are Welcome!
- Come dressed in your Halloween costume
- Enjoy a pizza lunch

⇒ A free-will donation will be collected to help offset the cost of dinner; any additional funds will be donated to the Scholarship Fund

Dinner will be followed by Halloween games, crafts, and a costume contest.

****Please RSVP to the church office by Sunday, October 11th**

Looking for a fun and adventurous event for this fall? Look no further!

Why the Change in High School Sunday School?
A Fresh New Look for High School Sunday School!

As our youth grow and change, we want our faith formation opportunities to grow with them. Last year, the Ministry of Faith Development noticed a decline in attendance in our High School Sunday School program and asked our youth what they would like to see in the future.

Based on their feedback, we are introducing a new High School program focused on meaningful experiences, faith exploration, and relationship-building through three special events during the school year:

- **January 15-17:** Winter Soulstice Retreat at Daycholah Center
- **April 18:** Trinity UCC Chicago Field Trip

In addition to the High School field trip program, **9th grade youth** are welcome to join the **PB & J class** during worship throughout the year.

Like previous changes to our Sunday School program, this will be an experimental year. We will listen closely to participant feedback and evaluate how the program meets the needs and interests of our youth. As new students enter high school and others graduate, we expect the program to continue evolving.
We know this is a significant change, and we thank you for your support, flexibility, and prayers as we begin this new adventure together.

OCTOBER FUNDRAISER

Wednesday, October 7
|5:00-8:00 p.m.
Culver's

Join the youth at Neenah's Culver's from 5:00-8:00 p.m.

Enjoy a delicious dinner and dessert, while supporting the Scholarship Fund.

Teenagers will serve you your meal- ask them about their experiences of summer camps, youth mission trip, & retreats.

10% of all sales & 100% of tips goes toward the Scholarship Fund- sending youth, adults, & families to camps, retreats, and youth mission trips!

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE IN WORSHIP

Youth are invited to participate in worship as:
Singing Bowl Ringer (any age) https://signup.com/go/QXVgeKF
Ring the singing bowl three times at 10:15 a.m., calling everyone to worship.
Training will be Sunday, September 27th after worship

Acolyte (2nd-12th grade) https://signup.com/go/BVGOGBX
Light the candles during the first hymn and extinguish them during the final hymn. Acolytes bring in the Light of Jesus at the beginning of worship and carry the Light of Jesus out into the world at the end of worship.
Training will be Sunday, September 27th after worship

Liturgist (2nd–12th) https://signup.com/go/txZweZJ
Reads the opening liturgy and other designated portions of worship.

Communion Shepherd (2nd–12th) https://signup.com/go/tiyfgwz Assists Pastor Rob by handing the communion plates to the ushers.

Musician or Vocalist (any age) https://signup.com/go/eNLSCBZ
Youth may share their musical talents with the congregation, either individually or as part of a group.



YOUTH RETREATS

November 6-8: **Faith Formation Retreat** (Faith Formation class)

November 20-22: **Knock Knock Retreat** (Middle School youth)

January 15-17: **Winter Soulstice Retreat** (High School, College youth, & Faith Formation class)

Let Alanna know if your youth would like to attend either retreat.



CHRISTMAS PROGRAM
Sunday, December 13

Rehearsals:

December 5, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
December 12, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
December 13, 9:00-10:00 a.m.

Spoken and non-spoken roles are available. Contact Alanna if your child would like to participate. ce@cuccnm.org



LOCAL MISSIONS

MISSION TRIP NEWS
HOMETOWN MISSION TRIP

Coming June 2027 and open to all ages.
More details will be announced in the coming months.





VETERAN'S DAY IS TUESDAY NOV. 11TH.

A Veterans tree will be set up in the Narthex starting Oct 25th Blank ornaments will be available to write the pertinent information about the veterans in your life on an ornament and hang it on the tree. It's a great way to remember our veterans.

HIP HIP HURRAY!! HABITAT HOUSE 401!! WE GOT IT DONE!!



In late July, The fundraising effort for the Habitat For Humanity 401 House surpassed the $100,000 goal. Donations and pledges keep trickling in, but at this time we will no longer be actively seeking donations for the 401 House. Habitat for Humanity greatly appreciates the efforts we have made and joins in celebrating our success in meeting our fundraising goal.

Also in late July, a class EF3 tornado swept through our community and destroyed and damaged homes and devastated properties. This event has added significant numbers to Habitat's home build and home repair list. They are, however committed to those previously on the list for homes and will follow through with completing those homes in a timely process. Because of the added need, they are adding staff and resource teams to build new homes at the faster rate. They appreciate all of the support for all of their home builds, especially in this time of great need. An update regarding the timeline for 401 house will hopefully be available soon. We will keep you posted and



CONGRATULATIONS! Job well done!

CROP WALK OCTOBER 4TH



We'll have a special walk in the neighborhood to raise money for Church World Service's disaster work, hunger assistance, and grass-roots development aid - both overseas and in the USA. (CROP stands for "Communities Responding to Overcome Poverty.") Ukraine; Gaza; and fires, floods, hurricanes and tornados in the USA will certainly be featured. CWS also returns a portion to local food pantries here in the Fox Cities.



⇒ Dogs Welcome

⇒ Short walk: Lopas St and Willow then return to church

- Lunch after we return to church



⇒ Money goes to Church World Service and to local food pantries.

Sign up and pledge our walkers .

Dear Congregational UCC Neenah/Menasha Family,

It was an honor to be in community with you as you returned to your beloved sanctuary this week. Please know that UCC churches all across the country are praying for and praying with you. If you feel called to share your story, either about what you experienced during the storm, or the ways you have felt God move through your life since the storm, I encourage you to share your story using this link:

http://NMUCC.memfox.io/uccwisctornado. As the national media's attention starts to shift, we acknowledge that your community has been changed forever, and we will continue to support you, as you navigate these changes as a beloved community together.

God Bless,

Katie Howe, Minister for Disaster Response and Recovery, National Ministries, UCC

Stewardship is moving through the steps of recovery following the tornado. There is a recovery team working under the guidance of Building & Grounds (Kevin Shumann) and Insurance (Sue Dolhopf). Pastor Rob has been involved with the coordination and guidance of the entire process. These three have spent tireless hours preparing for the future of our entire campus; and a simple thank you is not near enough for all their work.

We have received around $53,000 in contributions for Tornado Relief. Some of this is restricted to the building and grounds repairs, but most of it is unrestricted funds. Once we have determined how much insurance will pay we will have dialogue on how to appropriate these funds.

When we review our current financial picture you will see that our income is lagging, but our expenses have not been as high as budgeted, therefore we are in the black. It should be noted, however, that $92,757 has been pulled from our Forever Facilities Fund to offset large expenditures that were not anticipated (i.e. new flooring).

Our Fall Stewardship Campaign will begin September 27 and we will hear from those among us how generosity changes lives and why it's important to give as we are able. Our ministries will be putting together their plans for 2027 and we continue to look forward to sharing our message of faith and hope for the future. "**There Our Hearts Will Be" is** the theme and we look forward to sharing more of the campaign through October and November.

Marilyn Kostrzak, Treasurer
Ministry of Stewardship

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

Tornado Relief Donations

Our congregation has been blessed with donations from across the country. Some donors have requested that their funds be used strictly for building and grounds recovery. Others have given permission to use their gifts wherever the need is greatest.

If you are donating to our Tornado Relief fund, please specify how you would like your gift directed:

Restricted: To be used specifically for rebuilding our church facilities and grounds.
Unrestricted: To be used flexibly, including direct assistance to storm victims.

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



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 !**

OCTOBER VOLUNTEERS

	10-4-2026	10-11-2026	10-18-2026	10-25-2026
Liturgist	Mary Janness	Sherri Jischke	Mary Liesch	Anthony Britten– Campbell
Head Usher	John La Prairie	Connie Regazzi	Sherri Jischke	Cindy Anderson
Usher 4	Signa Meyers	Byron Burrier	Wayne Dickson	Marcia Fry
Usher 2	Marcia Fry	Cindy Anderson	Bonnie Pozolinski	Mary Janness
Usher 3	Laura Kleist	Sue Knuth	Jack Fry	Alan Gear
Refreshments	Mary Janness	John LaPrairie	Connie Regazzi	Molly Britten– Campbell
Acolyte	Carter A.	Evie J.	Christopher S.	Christopher S.
Singing Bowl	Colin S.	Sophie R.	Colin S.	TBA
Reader	Colin S.	Chloe R.	Colin S.	TBA
Music				
Communion Shepherd	Camryn R.			
Communion Prep	Connie Regazzi			
Projection	Jeff Nichols	Marilyn Kostrzak	Kevin Shumann	Art Puguh
Audio	Kevin Shumann	Art Puguh	Jeff Nichols	Darrell Parson
Nursery	Colin S.	Larue Kleist	Colin S.	

OCTOBER

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 **6:30 pm** Ministry Council	**2** **6-9:00 pm** **Youth Group**	**3**
4 **CROP WALK** **10:15 am** Worship **What's the Scoop**	**5**	**6** **8:30 am** Discussion Group **11:00 am** Bible Study	**7** **5-8pm** **Culvers Fundraiser** **6:30 pm** Adult Choir	**8**	**9**	**10**
11 **10:15 am** Worship **10:15- 11:15am** S.S. 3K- 8th	**12**	**13** **8:30 am** Discussion Group	**14** **6:30 pm** Adult Choir	**15** **12:00pm** Bags 2 Benches	**16** **1:00 pm** Needlers	**17** **9:00–1:00pm** **Faith Formation Field Trip**
18 **10:15 am** Worship **10:15- 11:15am** S.S. 3K- 8th **11:30- 1:30pm** **Halloween Party**	**19**	**20** **8:30 am** Discussion Group **10:30 am** **Community Table**	**21** **6:30 pm** Adult Choir	**22**	**23**	**24**
25 **10:15 am** Worship **10:15- 11:15am** S.S. 3K- 8th **11:30 am** Min of Service Meeting	**26**	**27** **8:30 am** Discussion Group **11:00 am** Bible Study **6:00pm** Ministry of Stewardship **7:00-8:15 pm** **Faith Formation**	**28** **6:30 pm** Adult Choir	**29**	**30**	**31**



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!

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.



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

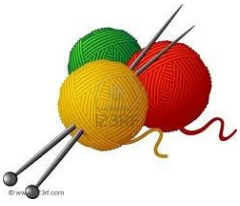
Want to be a part of our recycling program and have fun at the same time? Come and fellowship while we sort plastic bags for our next bench. Questions contact Alanna at ce@cuccnm.org



DONATION OF STOCKS TO CUCCNM



If you choose to give stocks to CUCCNM as a part of your donation please make sure that your let the church office know of your donation. I can give you the information that you will need. Melanie Nault office@cuccnm.org



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.
October 16th



Ministry Council

Moderator:
Signa Meyers

Vice Moderator:
Sue Knuth

Secretary:
Chris Parson

Ministry of Faith Development
Interim: Denise Stewart/
Byran Englehart

Ministry of Service:
Mary Janness

Ministry of Spiritual Life
Sherri Jischke

Ministry of Stewardship
Marilyn Kostrzak

At Large:
Connie Regazzi
Sherri Jischke
Chuck Luebke

Church Historian:
Mowry Smith

Communication Coordinator
Marilyn Kostrzak

Time and Talent Coordinator:

Personnel Committee
Dan Jischke, Chuck Luebke,
John Crispin

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

Congregational United Church of Christ
of Neenah / Menasha
1511 Nicolet Blvd.
Neenah, Wi 54956
920-725-4873
www.cuccnm.org
office@cuccnm.org



OCTOBER 2ND : YOUTH GROUP

OCTOBER 4TH: CROP WALK

OCTOBER 7TH : CULVERS FUNDRAISER

OCTOBER 15TH : BAGS TO BENCHES

OCTOBER 16TH : NEEDLERS

OCTOBER 18TH : HALLOWEEN PARTY

OCTOBER 20TH : COMMUNITY TABLE

MORE INFORMATION INSIDE