

ENGLISH CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
301 RHODES—PO BOX 156
BIG ROCK IL 60511



**John Omerod,
Pastor**

**“Seeking justice,
loving kindness, and
walking humbly with
our God.”**

Our Vision Statement

Need To Contact Us?

Church Office:
630.556.3986

Pastor’s Cell Phone:
815.761.3910

Pastor’s email:
jckburbnk@yahoo.com

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BigRockECUCC

The Parish Visitor

VOLUME 13, ISSUE 1

JANUARY, 2024

From the desk of Pastor John -



Pictured above is a 6th century mosaic in a Baptistry in Ravenna, Italy (artist unknown). John the Baptizer is baptizing Jesus in the Jordan River. There are a number of other such extraordinary representations available online. Jesus instituted the act of baptism, and so, Protestants today follow traditions that have been handed down for centuries. There are three methods of baptism as well as beliefs regarding baptism for infants and adults.

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One method of baptism is *total or partial immersion*, often in a river, or in colder months, a large indoor tub. A Southern Baptist church in Sycamore, a few blocks from our house, conducts immersion by tub that is located behind the pulpit, covered from view by a curtain when no baptisms are given.

A second method is called *affusion*, the pouring of water, baptism practiced today mostly by Quakers and Mennonites. The third method is known as *aspersion*, the sprinkling of water. How the water is sprinkled is another matter. Some pastors simply dip their fingers into the baptismal font and sprinkle water on the head of the child or adult, a method I've seen most often used, while other pastors may use a small seashell. James was said to have used a seashell when baptizing converts in Spain.

Some Christian denominations believe that both *affusion* and *aspersion* are invalid. This is offset by other denominations that believe the act to be symbolic, and that sprinkling or pouring are acceptable means.

Nearly all of the baptisms I have witnessed over the decades have been performed on infants, often just a few weeks old. Mainline Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Lutherans, Methodists, and others prefer this method.

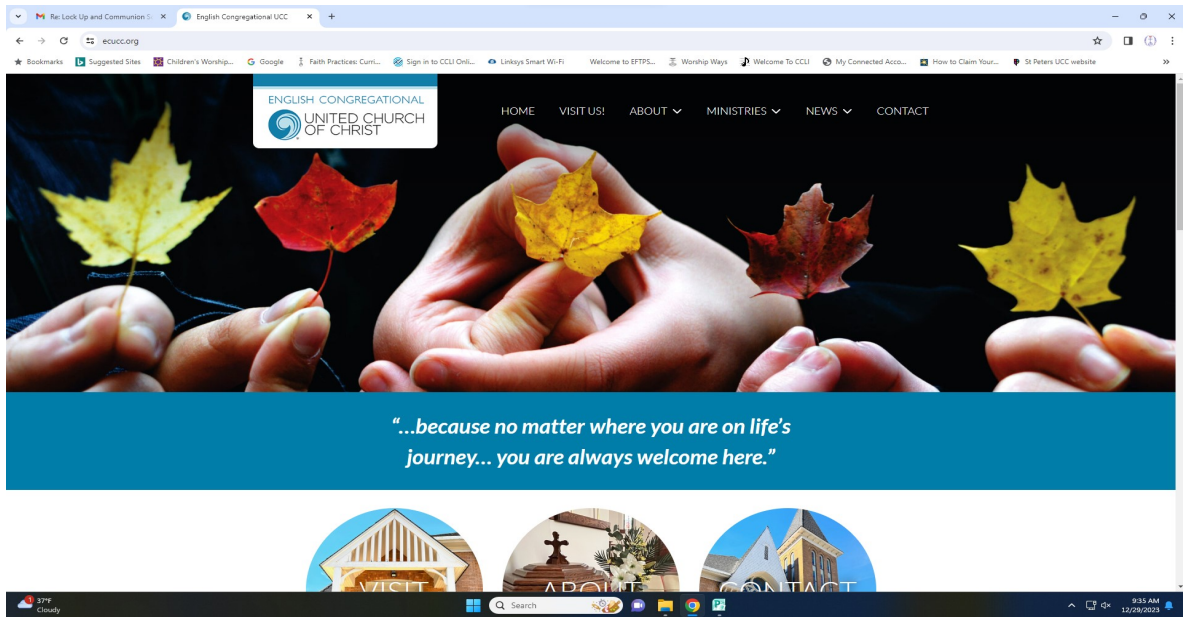
Some Christians question infant baptism: they ask how a tiny baby can be aware of a commitment to a church community. They say, baptism should be saved for a later age when teens or adults are more able to comprehend the meaning of baptism, a rite of passage to welcome new life into the church community. However, other Christians bypass this issue. They say that although infants cannot make such decisions on their own, they are presented at the Font by their parents and families, who will guide the baby toward growth in the faith.

Know that the purpose of immersion or pouring or sprinkling all boils down, not to which wet method is best, but the Light of a welcoming God who opens arms-wide for the next generation, and, as we were welcomed, to share and experience this faith community of all of God's children born into joy, peace, hope, and love.

Our New Website Is Done! Visit our site at **ECUCC.org**

Please take a moment to check out our new website and the information contained within it. I am now in the process of learning all of the different ways to add or update information within the site, so please be patient with me as I “learn the ropes”. You can forward to me any church information that you want to have posted on the site. The “news” tab contains the subheadings of “newsletters” and “calendar” with current information. We hope you like this new, easy to navigate site.

Pam



Are you going through your Christmas Cards?



Remember that you can recycle the fronts of the cards (or any other greeting cards) with us. We will send them to the St. Jude's Ranch for Children where they find new life in projects that support their programs.

MATCHING GIFT UPDATE -

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT ALL YEAR!

With the start of 2024, we continue to get closer to the goal of \$30,000.00 for the Matching Gift challenge. We have never failed to meet this goal in the past, and with everyone's help we hope to be successful once again for 2023.

Contributions can be made until the end of January.

A huge "thank you" goes out to everyone for your contributions throughout the year that keep our church financially stable and secure! We are truly blessed!

De-Greening of the Church after Worship on January 7th

Since the Epiphany falls on Saturday, January 6th, the Worship Ministry Group has planned to take down and put away the Christmas decorations after the Worship Service on Sunday, January 7th.

Please stay a little while to help us if you can. Thank you.





Veterans of the Cross Offering

Thank you to everyone that contributed toward our special 5 for 5 offering to The Christmas Fund in December. We collected \$271 in the offering of 12/24.

This offering provides emergency assistance to retired clergy facing personal and financial troubles.

Thank you again for your support!



Remember Our Homebound Members

A listing of our homebound members and their addresses can be found on the bulletin board. Please consider sending them a card or note.

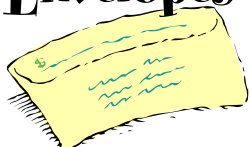
They love receiving a note or being visited to learn what is happening here at their church. It will make them feel good but you will be the one reaping the rewards!!!



January Birthdays

- 3rd—Bob Raymond
- 14th—Wilfredo Rodriguez
- 21st—Nathan Drawz
- 25th—Gloria Goodin

Offering Envelopes



There are still a few 2024 Offering Envelopes on the table in the Fellowship Hall. If you did not see your envelopes there, please contact the office.

Please pick yours up today! Thank you!

January 2024

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

	1 <i>Church Office Closed in Observance of New Year's Day Holiday</i>	2	3	4	5 <i>Worship Ministry -9:30am Pizza Night at LifeSpring at 6pm</i>	6
7 <i>Sunday School 9am Worship 10:15am Communion Change Up</i>	8	9	10	11	12	13
14 <i>Sunday School 9am Worship 10:15am</i>	15 <i>Executive Council Meeting - 6:30pm</i>	16	17	18	19	20
21 <i>Sunday School 9am Worship 10:15am</i>	22	23	24	25	26	27
28 <i>Sunday School 9am Worship 10:15am</i>	29	30	31			

VOLUNTEERS FOR JANUARY

Michelle Drawz, Liturgist

Sunday, January 7. 2024
Sunday School 9am
Worship 10:15 am
Communion
Change-Up Sundae

Ushers: The Ashby and Peters Families
Coffee: VOLUNTEERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO SIGN-UP
Servers: Operations, Nurture, Teaching and Learning
Lock Up: Worship

Sunday, January 14. 2024
Sunday School 9am
Worship 10:15 am

Ushers: The Ashby and Peters Families
Coffee: VOLUNTEERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO SIGN-UP
Lock Up: Youth

Sunday, January 21. 2024
Sunday School 9am
Worship 10:15 am

Ushers: The Ashby and Peters Families
Coffee: VOLUNTEERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO SIGN-UP
Lock Up: Moderator

Sunday, January 28. 2024
Sunday School 9am
Worship 10:15 am

Ushers: The Ashby and Peters Families
Coffee: VOLUNTEERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO SIGN-UP
Lock Up: Vice Moderator



Pizza Night with Lifespring Women's Shelter Continues



Once again, we will be continuing our Pizza Nights at Lifespring in Aurora this year. The first for 2024 will be on January 5th at 6pm. As always, we invite everyone to join the Outreach Ministry Group in this wonderful ministry. Each month we will need donations of salad, drinks and dessert. If you would like to donate items and/or join us for dinner with the folks at Lifespring, please contact Melissa Peters at 815-501-7621.



Coffee Fellowship

Volunteers are needed for Coffee Hour for the month of January and beyond. The sign up sheet is on the counter in the Fellowship Hall.

Please help if you can.

Thank you!



English Congregational United Church of Christ

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Like us on
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