

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



**John Omerod,  
Pastor**

**“A family of believers,  
a community of  
service.”**

**Our Vision Statement**

**Need To Contact Us?**

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630.556.3986

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815.761.3910

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jckburbnk@yahoo.com

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# The Parish Visitor

VOLUME 15, ISSUE 1

JANUARY 2026

**What are your hopes for 2026? At the end of the year, we shift our thinking to all the things that we have done and all the things that we had left undone. We dote on comparisons between 2024 and 2025--what could have worked and what didn't. We think back on the wonderful memories and things we did really well, and learn from the things we did not do well. Then, we look to this new year and how we might do things differently. We set goals and want to accomplish certain tasks with specific time frames for improvement, crossing our fingers that success will take hold.**

**What if we took a different approach toward this new year? As one writer suggests, “What if we started with God and worked our way from there?” This January, we'll focus on what it looks like to live a selfless life, which is different than the ways of the world... a life shaped not by the ways of the world, but by the call of Christ. We begin the year by laying aside our own agendas and choosing to place Christ-like love first.” From that vantage point, we are reminded of our identity—named, claimed, and loved by God who gave us a more full life. In order to grow in that identity, we are called to go beyond our limits, to widen our friendship circle, volunteer to be a liturgist (a frightening thought for some), call on people you rarely talk to, add a responsibility to your schedule you would have never considered, think politically and act locally, learn to play a musical instrument (even if only a drum or tambourine). This is a call for the love of life and the escape from routine. These things are all part of that call: to be and do, act and pray. This new year need not be a carbon copy of 2025. Grow. Be transformed! Live a fuller life together in community, one marked by humility, generosity, and love for one another.**

**Corner me sometime after Valentine’s Day and let me know how it’s going. You have nothing to lose but your repetition.**

**Happy New Year!!**

**Shalom,**

**Pastor John**

## MATCHING GIFT UPDATE -

### THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT ALL YEAR!

*With the start of 2026 in just a couple days, 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. 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 11th

Since the Epiphany falls on Tuesday, January 6th, the Worship Ministry Group has planned to take down and put away the Christmas decorations after the Worship Service on Sunday, January 11th.

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





*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.*



## 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.

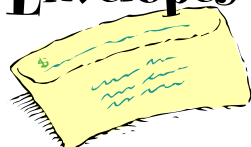
They love receiving a note or being visited to learn what is happening here at their church. It will make them feel good but you will be the one reaping the rewards!!!



## January Birthdays

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

## Offering Envelopes



There are still a few 2026 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 2026

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

|  |  |    |    |   |  |    |
|--|--|----|----|---|--|----|
|  |  |    |    | 1<br> | 2<br>Worship<br>Ministry -9:30am<br><br>Pizza Night at<br>LifeSpring at<br>6pm | 3  |
| 4<br>Worship 10:15am<br>Communion<br>Change Up | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8   | 9  | 10 |
| 11<br>Sunday School<br>9am<br>Worship 10:15am  | 12   | 13 | 14 | 15  | 16   | 17 |
| 18<br>Sunday School<br>9am<br>Worship 10:15am  | 19<br>Executive<br>Council Meeting -<br>6:30pm | 20 | 21 | 22  | 23   | 24 |
| 25<br>Sunday School<br>9am<br>Worship 10:15am  | 26   | 27 | 28 | 29  | 30<br>Worship<br>Ministry -9:30am  | 31 |

# VOLUNTEERS FOR JANUARY

Roger Hatfield, Liturgist

**Sunday, January 4. 2026**  
Worship 10:15 am  
Communion  
Change-Up Sundae

**Ushers:** The Ashby and Peters Families  
**Coffee:** Pastor John  
**Servers:** Operations, Nurture, Teaching and Learning  
**Lock Up:** Worship

**Sunday, January 11. 2026**  
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 18. 2026**  
Sunday School 9am  
Worship 10:15 am

**Ushers:** The Ashby and Peters Families  
**Coffee:** Brian and Sharon Wolbers  
**Lock Up:** Moderator

**Sunday, January 25. 2026**  
Sunday School 9am  
Worship 10:15 am

**Ushers:** The Ashby and Peters Families  
**Coffee:** Gloria Goodin and Mary Dalton  
**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 2026 will be on January 2nd 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 January 11th, and beyond. The sign up sheet is on the counter in the Fellowship Hall.

Please help if you can.

Thank you!



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