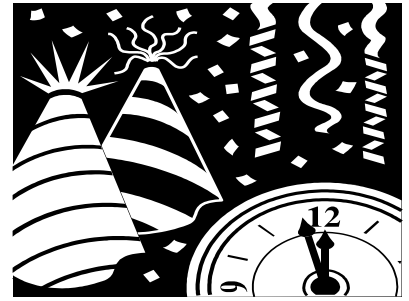


January 2026



The
Messenger

The Newsletter of First Congregational United Church of Christ
132 N. Main Street, PO Box 231
Angola, NY 14006

Phone 716-549-2115 E-mail ucc_angola@verizon.net
Website : www.christchurchangola.com

Happy New Year's!

**Epiphany
Tuesday, January 6, 2026**



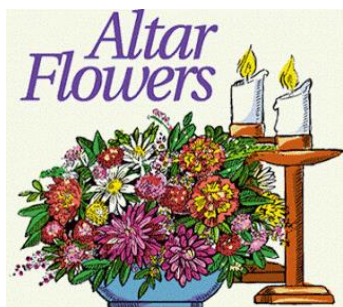
Scheduled to Serve in January

Head Usher—Michelle Becker

| | <u>Ushers</u> | <u>Greeter</u> | <u>Reader</u> |
|-------|---|-----------------|----------------|
| 01/04 | JonnyAnn Roach, Carol Ann Obrochta, Eric Marcynski, Carrie & Joe | Gayl Weinheimer | Jessica Ludwig |
| 01/11 | Joan Blais, Emerson & Eric Marcynski | Dale Ketterer | Carrie & Joe |
| 01/18 | Kathy Bienias, Dale Ketterer | Sally Needham | Eric Marcynski |
| 01/25 | Gayl Weinheimer, Carrie & Joe | Rob Ingrassia | JonnyAnn Roach |
| | <u>Counters</u> | | |
| 01/04 | Michelle Becker, JonnyAnn Roach | | |
| 01/11 | Marcia Whittemore, John MacPherson | | |
| 01/18 | Darlene DePasquale, Judy Strade | | |
| 01/25 | Sue Weinheimer, Annette Reynolds | | |

ALTAR FLOWERS

We would like to thank December Altar Flower Dedicators:



Marjorie McCarthy

Ronda Marvel

Poinsettia Dedications

If you are interested in dedicating Altar Flowers, the cost is \$20.00, please see the sign-up in the Narthex or call Michelle in the office 716-549-2115.

We would like to thank November Bulletin Dedication:



JonnyAnn Roach and Michelle Becker gave this month's bulletins to the Glory of God and In Honor of this Advent Season, the birth of Jesus and Christmas with family & friends.

If you are interested in dedicating Bulletins, the cost is \$50.00, please see the sign-up in the Narthex or call Michelle in the office 716-549-2115.

From the Pastor:

I'm not sure how we got here so quickly, but it's already the end of December, right before Christmas. Maybe like me, you are finishing up last-minute Christmas shopping, or still trying to get the decorations on the tree "just right." Maybe you're getting the house ready for holiday guests or heading out for holiday travel. No matter what you're doing, you are probably preparing, in some way, for Christmas. We go through most of these preparations every year with the goal of experiencing a nice Christmas with our family and friends.

Once the Christmas holiday is over (don't forget—it lasts for 12 days!) we dive into the new year, most likely with a list of resolutions, including ones we made last year but weren't successful with. And the cycle continues, even as the calendar moves from 2025 to 2026.

As I go through the motions of shopping, decorating, preparing for Christmas Eve, choosing new year's resolutions, I sometimes wonder if things have become just a bit rote; a repeat year after year of the same things I've done before. There is certainly nothing wrong with enjoying traditions, but Christmas does not always give me the same experience of wonder that it did when I was a kid. Staying up until midnight to yell "Happy New Year" does not carry the same thrill as it did when I was younger. There is a newness to these experiences as a kid that just don't seem to be there some thirty to forty years later. And it's not just Christmas. There are many things, many experiences in life that become habit and lose the excitement they once carried. How do we look for newness in what we do? How do we experience new life, rather than just repeating the same thing over and over again?

Throughout his ministry, Christ offered us many hints and glimpses of newness. We become new ourselves as we "die" to the old through baptism and are reborn into a new life in Christ, sharing in his resurrection and life eternal. Newness comes to us when we give up

those things that get in the way of deepening our relationships with Jesus, and with each other.

The apostle Paul writes extensively in his letters about the newness that is offered through Jesus. Jesus also talks about the coming of the Kingdom of God into our world. How, as disciples of Jesus, do we look for the new in the world instead of just doing the same old thing?

I don't think this is a question that is asked enough. Tradition and familiarity are comfortable. If one is doing well, who wants things to be new, to change? I do think, however, if we take the time to look at the world around us, and really look, the Holy Spirit inspires us to see not only the new possibilities in the world, but to be agents of bringing forth these Kingdom visions, this life changing newness, into the world.

As we celebrate the New Year, let us also celebrate our calling to make things new, to have the courage to do so, and be part of the body of Christ working to create a new and blessed world for us all.

Wishing you a very Happy New Year filled with God's blessings!

Peace,
Pastor Jen



Year in Review for Community Outreach and Missions

Friends of the Village – monthly meetings

Sub Sales in February, April, October and November

Spaghetti Dinner to benefit VBS and Christian Ed.in February

Dinner and Bible Study in April for Lent, and December for Advent

Historical Society Dinner in March

LSACC Clergy (monthly), LSACC Quarterly Meetings, LSACC Lenten Bible Study & Luncheon (hosted April 9th), LSACC Community Evening of Prayer – June 19th, LSACC Community Thanksgiving Service-Nov. 30th at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, LSACC Thanksgiving Dinner-Nov. 27th at MPB

St. Patrick’s Day Parade, milkshakes, cookies and bake sale – March 8th

Ham & Scalloped Potato Dinner & Bake Sale - March 9th

Supper Club at Rust Belt Restaurant Sept. 11th and Ilio DiPaolo’s Nov. 13th

Maundy Thursday

Hospice Bouquets

Chicken BBQ in May and September

Hot Dog and Yard Sale - June 7th

Strawberry Social in June

VBS “Road Trip” - July 28th - 31st

Church Picnic on August 17th

Rally Day & Backpack Blessing – September 14th

2nd Soulshine Revival September 20th

Halloween Happenings at Dunkirk Conference Center

Fall Bazaar in October with pre-sale pie pick-up in November

Advent Workshop in December “Mystery Bingo” with Baked Potato Bar

Angel Fund - 7 families

Salvation Army Bell Ringing in December

Christmas in the Village hosted Breakfast with Santa, Craft Vendors, Christmas ornament handout for the children to take home & “Gang of Scoundrels” singing Christmas songs.

Evangola Community Theater presented “Here We Sit” and “Christmas Castaways” by Steve Brachmann

OGN donations-Birthday kits, cereal, etc.

Special Envelop Offerings: Angel Fund, Music Ministry, Capital Campaign and Discretionary

Special Offerings: One Great Hour of Sharing in March

Strengthen the Church in May

Neighbors in Need in October

Christmas Fund (VOC) in December

Current of OCWM for year so we are 5 for 5 in 2025

Exercise Classes – Chair Yoga on Tuesdays & Thursdays from 11:15am-12:15pm, The “Love” Movement on Wednesdays at 9:30am-10:30am and Cardio Drumming on Tuesdays from 5:30pm-6:30pm and Thursdays from 6:30pm – 7:30pm

CPR/AED Certifications and Hands Only Class

Easter Bonnet Workshop

Cub & Boy Scouts on Monday and Wednesday from 6:30-7:30pm

“Gang of Scoundrels” played at Fire House Church in August

132 North in September and December

Crochet Workshop

Fall Foliage train ride at NY & Erie Railroad on October 19th

Free Community Dinner on November 14th

Advent Prayer Vigil-December 1st

Choir participated in Christmas Caroling at Evans Senior Center-Dec. 3rd

Bethlehem Prayer Walk in Updyke Hall-Dec.17th-19th

Why UCC Angola Matters to Me — Not Just at Christmas, but All Year Long

There's something special about stepping through the doors of UCC Angola. It isn't just the sparkle of Christmas lights in December or the familiar carols that warm our hearts — it's the feeling of belonging that lingers long after the season ends. Christmas reminds us of the beauty of coming together, but what keeps me grateful is that the love, connection, and purpose found in our church family are here *every single Sunday*, and every single day.

Attending UCC Angola is important to me because this church isn't just a place — it's a home. It's where I feel grounded when life becomes overwhelming. It's where faith becomes more than a word, where prayer becomes shared, where laughter fills the fellowship hall, and where quiet moments can heal the soul. It's where people check on each other, listen to each other, celebrate blessings, and carry one another through loss. Being part of this community reminds me that God's love isn't seasonal — it's year-round, living and breathing through us.

And part of living that love is sharing it. Every event, every Sunday worship, every potluck, craft night, Bible study, or outreach project is an open invitation — not just to attend, but to belong. When we invite someone to join us, we're not just extending a hand, we're opening a door. One invitation could lead to a new friendship, a renewed faith, or someone finding the peace they've been quietly searching for. Growing our church family starts with something simple: a "Come sit with me this Sunday," or "We'd love to see you at this event."

This past year, we all had moments that felt heavy. We said *goodbye* to people we love — some who moved on to new chapters (including ourselves), and some who gained their place in God's eternal home. Those goodbyes were tough, and they reminded us of the preciousness of time and connection. But now, a new year stands before us. With open hearts, we have the chance to say *hello*.

Hello to new faces, Hello to new opportunities, Hello to rebuilding, growing, and continuing God's work together.

UCC Angola is important to me because it's a reminder that faith isn't meant to be lived alone. We are a church family — and families grow, heal, learn, and love side by side. My hope is that we continue to show up, not just on special holidays, but in ordinary moments too. Because those moments matter just as much.

Here's to showing up, Here's to inviting others to join us, Here's to the year ahead — to new beginnings, new friendships, and new reasons to give thanks.

Let's keep the spirit of connection alive all year long, Let's say goodbye to what has passed with gratitude...and say **hello** to everything God has in store for us next.

Wishing you a blessed holiday season,

Carrie Marcynski



Kurt in a Cubby!

**Thank You to all who helped make this a joyous
and beautiful Christmas season at First Congregational UCC**



ANGEL FUND

The locally sponsored “Angel Fund” has again anonymously benefited several families in need at Christmas time. All who supported this effort are sincerely thanked for their help. We were able to help 7 local families this year with the generosity of all who donated.

GIVING ENVELOPES

The recently received first quarter set of yellow Giving Envelopes for the beginning of 2025 contained a single white envelope that is to be used for the support of the envelope system. It is suggested that \$24 yearly be donated to cover a portion of the cost of the envelopes. This is not the \$10 per member Covenantal Share or “dues” to the Larger UCC organization and Per Capita to New York Conference UCC. An envelope for the Covenantal Share will be distributed later with your annual giving statement that you will need for income tax purposes in the mail.



Sunday School News!

The holiday season is underway and the kiddos couldn't be more excited. We have plans for our Sunday School Christmas party on 12/21- crafts, snacks and games for all our friends who come to visit that Sunday. Another fun event planned for Tuesday 12/30 at 5:30pm is our pre-New Year's Eve party with Pastor Jen! Please let Tiffany or Pastor Jen know if your kiddos plan on attending.

Looking back to the Fall Bazaar, our kids table made enough profits to donate \$50 to IGY6, who was also at our Fall Bazaar; their mission is to stand with our nation's heroes, turning awareness into action against veteran suicide through the sale of hand-poured candles and purposeful merchandise.

We were also able to purchase THREE flocks of chicks through Heifer International for a family in need.

We want to thank our congregation for their donations of supplies to our Sunday school. We have STOCKED our supply closet! We will send out a PSA next time we are in need of odds and ends to keep our kiddos busy.

Grace & Peace,

Tiffany Hurd



DE-HANGING OF THE GREENS

On Sunday, January 4th, after worship, we will be taking down all the Christmas decorations. Please join us in celebrating Epiphany Sunday and help de-hang the decorations that made our sanctuary beautiful. At this time, all the Poinsettia plants can be taken home. Once again, thank you for purchasing them to help decorate the sanctuary for the Christmas season.

Annual Congregational Meeting: January 18, 2026

Committee Reports were due to Michelle by January 1st, if you have not handed yours in please do so ASAP.

PLEDGE CARDS

Everyone has received his or her pledge cards. Please take time to fill them out and send them into the office if you haven't already. Additional pledge cards are available in the back of the Sanctuary.

Thank You...Thank You... Thank You...

Dear Board of Trustees and Church Family,


Thank you for the thoughtful gift, it is very much appreciated. Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! ~Michelle Becker

Dear Board of Trustees and Church Family,

I am truly grateful for your generous Christmas gift, thank you from the bottom of my heart. Love & God bless ~ JonnyAnn Roach

Dear Board of Trustees and Congregation,

Thank you very much for the generous gift. It will come in handy, especially this time of year. ~ Charles Walker

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to my church family in New York.; I miss you all and my church all the time. I am so thankful for the services on YouTube, I watch every Sunday. I will be up in February to see you all. May God bless you all and bring you glad tidings. Always, Ronda Marvel 

MEMORIALS

Donations to Memorial can be made any time during the year – not just upon a memorial for a death. A memorial plate will be purchased and placed on Memorial Boards in parlor. Some of our wish lists for this year are an additional liquid candle and base, one more set of banners, etc.

TRUSTEES REPORT

Trustee meeting was held on December 9th from 4-6:30pm. Wow it's almost Christmas, where did the year go? But just reflect back on all the events of 2025! We are busy, vibrant, thriving church!

We opened with prayer and round table discussion. Usual business conducted, financial reports reviewed, bills to be paid approved and committee reports heard. Pledge cards received to date are 93%.

Future events: Advent activities, generator start-up phase, bible studies and past Christmas, Congregational meeting and “Kids Sunday” service on January 18, 2026.

The Angel Fund was divided among 7 families; a grant gift from Joe Dotterweich of \$500 was received to use toward missions 2026.

Your board wishes everyone a safe Merry Christmas and New Year's!

“My idea of Christmas whether old fashioned or modern is very simple: Loving others. Come to think of it, why do we have to wait for Christmas to do that?”

~Peace, Jean Galfo

SUNDAY COUNTER VOLUNTEERS

It's that time of year when we will be working on scheduling our Sunday Counter Volunteers for 2026. We are in need of some new volunteers if you are interested in becoming one or have questions please see JonnyAnn Roach or Michelle Becker. This is a great way to meet members of the congregation. We would like to thank all of our counters past and present. We greatly appreciate all of your dedication to our church. There is no prior experience needed. There is a sign-up sheet in Updyke Hall.



MEMORIAL PLANTS

The Poinsettias which grace the sanctuary, are dedicated to the glory of God
IN LOVING MEMORY OF the following...

Loved Ones

By The Obrochta Family

My Brother

By JonnyAnn Roach

Cecilia & Ed (Top Hat) Bezusko

By Michelle Becker

Loved Ones

By Darlene dePasquale

David Pawlak

By Michelle Becker & Family

Gerecke, Staubitz, Cash & Weglewski Families

By Edward Gerecke Jr. & Dorene Shores

Harry & Bertha Shores

By Edward Gerecke Jr. & Dorene Shores

Parents, Donald & Betty Volker

By David & Nancy Volker

Family

By Marcia Whittemore

Family

By Joan & Jody Blais

Mikey Arakelian

By Sue & Kurt Weinheimer

Loved Ones

By Donna Nagel

Loved Ones

By Sally Needham

Loved Ones Who Have Gone Before

By Kathy & Bob Bienias

Loved Ones

By Paul Becker

Anthony Obrochta

By The Obrochta Family

My Mom & Dad

By JonnyAnn Roach

Loved Ones

By Marjorie McCarthy

Loved Ones

By Darlene DePasquale

Edward & Dorothea Gerecke

By Edward Gerecke Jr. & Dorene Shores

Eleanor Zimmer and Florence Karczewski

By Michelle Becker & Family

Loved Ones

By Gayl Weinheimer

Brother, Leigh Volker

By David & Nancy Volker

Cyndee Rizzuto

By Fran Downey

Family

By: Joan & Jody Blais

Kate Heyden

By Sue & Kurt Weinheimer

Loved Ones

By Donna Nagel

Loved Ones

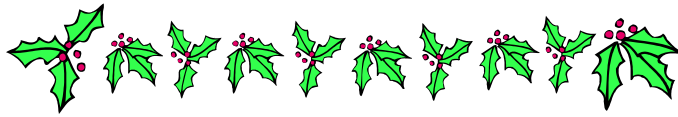
By Sally Needham

Lehning and Galfo Loved Ones

By Jean & Tony Galfo

Loved Ones

By Anne Becker



MEMORIAL PLANTS

The Poinsettias which grace the sanctuary, are dedicated to the glory of God
IN LOVING MEMORY OF the following...

Loved Ones
By Greg Clark

Loved Ones
By Greg Clark

Loved Ones
By Ludwig Family

Loved Ones
By Dale Ketterer



MEMORIAL PLANTS

The Poinsettias which grace the sanctuary, are dedicated to the glory of God
IN LOVING HONOR OF the following...

Children & Grandchildren
By Donna & David Donner

Blessings Received
By Donner & Mazur Families

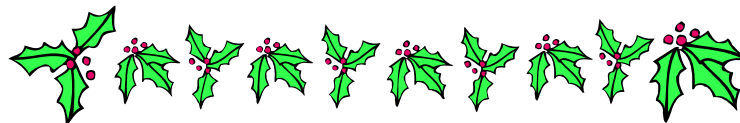
Sylvia
By Miriam & Tony Oster

Gunny & Tobias
By Cherryl Vincent-Becker

P. Simmon & Allie
By Cherryl Vincent-Becker

Theodore & Lucy
By Cherryl Vincent-Becker

Michael & Kristeen
By JonnyAnn Roach



MEMORIAL PLANTS

The Poinsettias which grace the sanctuary, are dedicated to the glory of God
IN CELEBRATION OF the following...

**The Lives of William & Lillian Andrews
and Hazel & Henry Donner**
By Donna & David Donner

First Congregational
United Church of Christ
132 North Main Street
P O Box 231
Angola, New York 14006-0231

Address Service Requested

TIME VALUE MAIL
Mailed on December 26, 2025
Please deliver promptly.

Sunday Worship- 10:00 AM

Sunday School – 10:00 AM

OFFICE HOURS: MON., TUES., THURS., FRI., 9:00am-1:00pm

For **Emergency Pastoral Services**, please call
Pastor Jen Mazur at 716-264-7026 or Michelle in the Church Office
716-549-2115 or 716-262-6171.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of this church shall be to bring together followers of Jesus Christ,
to live and preach His gospel, to celebrate the sacraments
and to be a beacon and model of faith for all.

- **The Next Newsletter deadline is January 14, 2026**
- **There is PLENTY of room for your article!!!**