

# THE AGAWAM ARROW

April 2026



## AGAWAM CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

United Church of Christ, 745 Main Street, Agawam, MA 01001

A church where the Holy Spirit is alive, uniting people with Christ through:  
Transforming ministries, vibrant worship, diligent study, and warm fellowship.

“A place to call home – A people to call family”.

*We are gathering together to worship on Sunday morning. Please join us  
in person or livestream on Facebook through our website, YouTube @Agawam  
Congregational Church, MA or Ch. 15(the following week at 1pm)*

### Church Staff:

**Pastor:** Reverend Daniel Cohen

**Organist/ Choir Director:** Ann Tapply

**Administrative Assistant:** Dawn Stevens [office@agawamcong.com](mailto:office@agawamcong.com)

**Church Sexton:** Dave Christian

**Deacon of the Month:** Donna Tapply

**Website:** [www.agawamcongregationalchurch.com](http://www.agawamcongregationalchurch.com)

**Office phone:** 413-786-7111 **Office hours:** Mon-Fri 8am-12pm



## From the Pastor's Desk

Series Title: **Depolarizing America: One Happier, Humbler Soul at a Time**

**As a pastor and psychotherapist here in Agawam, I've learned that humility isn't weakness — it's strength under control. It's what allows people, and even political parties, to stay in relationship when they don't see eye to eye. In this ongoing series, I'm exploring how humility can help depolarize us by reminding us that we are humans first, Americans second, and *Democrats and Republicans* a distant third.**

If step one toward becoming a humbler, happier nation was loosening our grip on political labels, and step two was recognizing that a healthy society needs both a “right” and a “left” to function, step three is this: stop seeing one another in black and white.

I'm not talking about race here. But I am talking about a habit of mind that affects us all—and fuels many of our divisions, including racial ones.

I'm talking about *binary thinking*: the tendency to see people (or ourselves) as either all good or all bad at any given moment.

Have you ever noticed that when you're in a rift with a close friend or family member, you suddenly remember every bad thing they've ever done? In your mind, they become a “nogoodnik”—or something more colorful.

In fact, don't we even do this to ourselves sometimes? When we're feeling good about ourselves, we think of all our good qualities and actions—and conversely, when we're feeling bad, we focus on how sinful we are.

This is not your fault. It's how the brain simplifies a complex world. Binary thinking helps us make quick judgments—but it also prevents us from seeing people as the complicated human beings they are.

You see, my friends, our brains find it much easier to see things as “all good” or “all bad,” depending on our mood or how we're feeling about a particular person at a particular moment in time.

In fact, our minds like binary thinking so much that, if someone you don't like does something nice, your mind instantly summons “the little lawyer in your head” to their defense and, *voila*, a split-second later you're remembering every nice thing they ever did to you and, get this, forgetting all of your negative interactions!

As strange as this sounds, it points to something hopeful: our reactions to people we disagree with politically can change once we know them as human beings.

I'm not suggesting we adopt their worldview. I am suggesting we resist reducing the people in our lives to caricatures.

That's difficult today, because that little lawyer in our head has been fed a steady stream of evidence about how awful “those people” on the other side supposedly are. Many of us live in political echo chambers—whether through cable news, social media, or online influencers—that reinforce tribal identities and turn fellow citizens into enemies.

But the truth is that the world — and each of us — is far more gray than black or white. At times we're generous and humble; at other times selfish and self-absorbed. The best among us

are simply those who have learned, usually through trial and error (and often through the humbling Institute of Marriage), that the best way to help ourselves is to bless others. So, no one is perfect, just a lighter or darker shade of gray.

People are not binary. Like relationships and life itself, they fluctuate between good and bad. But the states we operate from often are binary: fear or faith, humility or pride, good intentions or harmful ones. The more we are guided by fear, the harder it becomes to see one another clearly.

And while I'm definitely not suggesting that your fears are unjustified, the more faith we can muster in these difficult times, the easier our lives will be – and the easier we will be to live with.

For the more faith you have that the world is not going to fall to pieces and that everything will turn out as God intends it to, the better you will be able to accept your counterparts as people and stop looking at them as threats. For it's when we look at each other as threats to our very existence – and that is, let's face it, what's happening now – we tend to dehumanize those who we fear.

Faith does not mean turning a blind eye. I am not asking anyone to stop protesting or advocating passionately for what they believe, so long as it doesn't harm others. I am asking us to concede that those people on the other side are complex human beings—not two-dimensional villains.

Yes, they may be mistaken. And yes, you may be right. But meaningful change rarely comes from demonization. It comes from relationship—and from the willingness to examine our own beliefs along the way.

So, I'll leave you with two hard questions.

**For Democrats:** Are you noticing whether fear of authoritarianism is turning fellow citizens into enemies in your mind?

**For Republicans:** Are you noticing whether fear of cultural or economic loss is making it harder to see immigrants as individual human beings rather than symbols?

We may never agree politically. But if we can soften the black-and-white stories we tell ourselves about one another, we just might rediscover the humanity that makes disagreement survivable—and democracy possible.

## **Moderator's Note**

Many churches mark each of the seven days before Easter Sunday with names like Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. These names keep me mindful of Jesus's betrayal, suffering and sacrifice. And He bore all that out of love for me. I am comforted to know that whatever I am struggling with I can cast my burdens on Him and find peace. I hope you find His Peace during this Easter season and remember His words:

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." John 13:34-35 NKJV

At our March meeting the Executive Board reviewed reports by the Trustees regarding church finances, activities of the Property Committee, and plans for an evacuation drill being organized by the Safety Committee. The Deacons report included plans for the Maundy Thursday service and the Pastor's vacation April 13-19. We also learned about the many activities being planned by the Fundraising and Events Committee. I hope you all have a blessed Easter and look forward to seeing you in Church.

Yours in Christ,

David Bertagnolli, Moderator



**Deacon of the Month : Donna Tapply**

I love you for who you are, not for what you do. Many voices vie for control of your mind, especially when you sit in silence. You need to learn to discern what is My voice and what is not. Ask my spirit to give you this discernment. Many of My children run around in circles, trying to obey the various voices directing their lives. This results in fragmented, frustrated patterns of living. Do not fall into this trap. Walk closely with Me each moment, listening for My directives and enjoying My companionship. Refuse to let other voices tie you up in knots. *My sheep know my voice and follow Me wherever I lead.*

From Sarah Young – “Jesus Calling” Daily Devotions

Ephesians 4:1-6; John 10:4

**FLOWERS**

**April 5th** – Easter (assorted plants)

**April 12<sup>th</sup>** – Loving MEMORY of JOSIE BORGATTI, granddaughter of FAY BORGATTI

**April 19** – Loving MEMORY of SUE PECKHAM, mother, from DALE MELSONSON

**April 26<sup>th</sup>** - loving MEMORY of NANCY KING, mother of DENNIS & THOMAS, from DENNIS & DEBBIE and THOMAS & BECKI KING

(2) Lilac bouquet in loving MEMORY of ALICE MOORE, from the FLOWER COMMITTEE



### MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Men's fellowship will meet on Saturday,  
**April 11<sup>th</sup>** at 7:30 am at  
**Bobbie J'z**

### WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Women's fellowship will meet on Saturday, **April 8<sup>th</sup>**  
at **The Buccaneer Lounge**. Please let Sharon know if  
you are planning to attend.  
413-210-4438  
Csharon63@yahoo.com

**Thank you, Marilyn Alexander, for sending  
cards and bulletins to the shut-ins. It makes  
a difference in people's lives knowing that  
they are missed and thought of often as they  
so truly are. Any and all donated cards  
are welcome!!**

### UpperRoom and Our Daily Bread booklets

are available in the the church office. Feel free  
to stop by and pick one up and allow the Lord  
to refresh your soul as you read the word of  
God on a daily basis.

### CHURCH LIGHTING

This is a wonderful way to honor a loved one, a  
birthday, an anniversary, or any event in your life.  
Your generous contribution is used to light  
the lower spotlights in the front of the church.  
Suggested Donations:  
One week: -\$20.00 & One Month: -\$75.00

### Parish Cupboard

**All types of nonperishable food items.**  
**Please be sure that items are within "best if  
used by date".**

### JUNK FOR JESUS

We are now collecting scrap metal to raise funds  
for the church. Please call Dave (413.854.8416)

***Want to earn Free \$\$ for the church?? Bring your used  
INK CARTRIDGES to the church and we recycle them for  
money! Leave ink cartridges by the office door. In the  
past few months, we have earned 50.00 in free \$\$! This  
has helped pay for color ink. Thanks to Dave  
Bertagnolli for heading this project up.***

### Lending Cupboard Ministry:

We have medical equipment for those in need; please  
call the office for more info. We are accepting  
donations to this ministry as well. Thank you in  
advance for your generosity.

### LOAVES & FISHES

We meet every 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month at 4:00 p.m.  
Sauce and **ELBOW** macaroni are always  
appreciated! We are looking for volunteers to be  
available if needed. Please see Dave Christian or  
Lesley Young if you are interested in volunteering.  
Thank you for your support in this outreach ministry!

### PROPERTY COMMITTEE

All property related concerns should be addressed  
to the Property Committee first please, not the  
Executive Board. Tom Mathes is our Property  
Committee chair and  
is available to speak with anyone.

### MEMORIAL DONATIONS

No Memorial donations were made in  
February.

## Financial update from the Treasurer – Donna Decoteau

Category	Jan	Feb	Total Actual	2026 Budget	Actual vs. Budget %
Income from Pledges	15,592	11,912	27,504	134,900	20%
Bank Balance 12/31/2025	(3,440)	-	(3,440)	-	0%
Other Income (rent, fundraising, Groups, etc.)	1,293	1,201	2,494	27,000	9%
Income from Invested Funds	10,000	-	10,000	51,510	19%
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>23,445</b>	<b>13,113</b>	<b>36,558</b>	<b>213,410</b>	<b>17%</b>
Pastor's Expenses	6,930	9,137	16,067	91,828	17%
Other Personnel Salaries	4,504	4,714	9,218	56,151	16%
Other Operational Expenses	6,083	6,004	12,087	65,431	18%
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>17,517</b>	<b>19,855</b>	<b>37,372</b>	<b>213,410</b>	<b>18%</b>

February 2026 represents 2/12 or 17%

On Fri, Mar 20, 2026 at 11:51 AM Agawam Congregational Church <[office@agawamcong.com](mailto:office@agawamcong.com)> wrote:

### **GIRL SCOUTS**

The Cookie Sale has now ended having been extended due to the bad weather. the girls will now be deciding how to use their troop commission they have earned. Some may do an end of year celebration, or a day trip. The older girls may choose to save this year's commission and put it toward a bigger trip next year. It will be the girl's decision. thank you all for your support to the Girl Scouts of Agawam and Feeding Hills.

### **PASTORAL SUPPORT GROUP**

We held a meeting on March 1st and all is going well. It was decided that Pastor Dan will now do visitation on his own and no longer needs to be accompanied by a Deacon to be introduced to the congregation. Even though notices have been put in the newsletters and bulletins informing people that this group has now been formed and who can be contacted should they wish to raise any concerns, we have never addressed it in church. I decided that we will do a presentation with a flyer in the near future of all of the groups giving a brief description of what they do and to give a contact person should they wish to join a group. We shall be holding our next meeting in June; meantime we shall continue to be a bridge to support the Pastor and our congregation.

Members that are on this support group are: Warren Tapply, Steve Paul, Donna DeCoteau, Lesley Young, & Pastor Dan

### **MISSIONARY**

Thanks to our giving congregation we collected 42 packets of Ramen Noodles and 102 cans of soup from our "Souper Bowl Field" which were gratefully received by the West Springfield Parish Cupboard. The items of underwear that have been collected during the month of March and will be donated to the Springfield Rescue Mission. We shall be holding a special collection on April 12th for "One Great Hour of Sharing" and envelopes will be placed in the pews. This is a program supporting causes of hunger, poverty, disasters, climate change, immigration, migration and refugees. Missionary continues to support the Loaves and Fishes program using the monies you kindly donate at our coffee hours.

**SPRING**

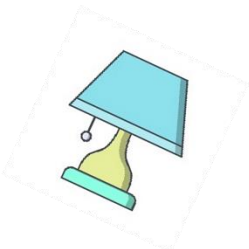
# TAG SALE



**When: Friday, April 10 & Saturday, April 11, 2026**

**9 am—2 pm**

**Where : Agawam Congregational Church  
745 Main Street, Agawam**



**sports cards, clothing and accessories, toys and games,  
books, holiday décor, puzzles, kitchen & other  
household items and MUCH MORE !**

**Limited \$25 Vendor Tables Available**

**Call 413-786-7111 or  
email @ [office@agawamcong.com](mailto:office@agawamcong.com) for more info.**





## UPCOMING EVENTS!

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April 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> – Tag Sale

April 12<sup>th</sup> – Afterlife presentation - after coffee hour local author Angela Grout will be presenting on the following: "Is there something after this life?" The event will take place in Bryan Hall or the Friendship Room depending on the number of folks who want to participate. For more information feel free to contact Pastor Dan.

April 26<sup>th</sup> - Crop Walk 1-4pm.

May 9<sup>th</sup> – Plant Sale Plant Sale 9am-12pm

We will need help with setup at 8:30 to 9:00. If you have any pots, please put them outside up against the brick wall where other plants are dug up. This is the long garden along the South wall. The bulbs will be dug up after or while they are in bloom. The gardens that were once around the church are being eliminated for an easier to maintain landscape.




We are looking to borrow two canopies and need at least 4 tables outside with 4 chairs. Helpers are also welcomed. Pricing will be done with colored popsicles sticks and four price sheets.

We will be concentrating on hanging plants that we received from Granny's as a % of the sale. We will also sell perennials from our garden, houseplants and hupertufa gardens of sedums. I will also have some annuals started and some vegetables. It should be fun. ...and a master gardener will be available to answer questions.



April 2026

Agawam Congregational Church  
745 Main St., Agawam, Ma 01001 Phone: 786-7111

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 11am Prayer 11:30 Bible study	2 7pm Maundy Thursday	3 Good Friday	4
5 10am EASTER Worship 	6 7pm Property	7 6:30pm Missionary	8 11am Prayer 11:30 Bible study 12:30pm Women's fellowship @ The Buccaneer	9 9am Tag Sale Set Up 6:30pm Choir	10 9am Tag Sale	11 9am Tag Sale 7:30am Men's Fellowship@ Bobbie J'z
12 10am Worship 11am Afterlife talk Sandwich in a bag	13	14 	15 11am Prayer 11:30 Bible study	16 6:30pm Choir	17	18
19 10am Worship	20 1pm Trustees 4pm Loaves & Fishes	21 21	22 11am Prayer 11:30 Bible study	23 6:30pm Choir	24	25
26 10am Worship 1pm Crop Walk	27 1pm Exec. Board	28 28	29 11am Prayer 11:30 Bible study	30 6:30pm Choir	