

THE AGAWAM ARROW

January 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

Church Sexton: Dave Christian

Deacon of the Month: Cindy Sanford

Website: www.agawamcongregationalchurch.com

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

From the Pastor's Desk

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Hello my dear church family,

This New Year I have so much to look forward to. We're going to do great things as a church together, I know. We've got a Christian Magician coming soon, as well as a car show, a motorcycle blessing, a writer's conference, and, hopefully, a church talent show – to name just a few of the things we've looking forward to in 2026.

Furthermore, my wife is starting a therapeutic massage business in town to help heal our bodies (I know I'LL be a consistent client – hopefully with a pastor's discount LOL), and I've been asked to pray at the swearing in of our local elected officials on Monday, January 5th at 6:30 at the Senior Center, and will also be launching a 5-column series on healing our nation's political divide in *The Republican* newspaper starting Thursday, January 8th – something that will raise our church's profile even more!

And while I may be repeating some of the things I'm going to talk about in my sermon this coming Sunday as well as in our annual report, I'd like to thank you all for being the best congregation a pastor could ever have. In fact, I wake up each morning pinching myself for the blessing God has given me in you.

My first blessing was a mixed one. Linda Gagne's passing took me by surprise, as I had just spent several days with her and she was looking stronger and vowing to fight her liver cancer. Apparently she had a heart attack. And while I am indeed so sad to see her go, I am grateful God gave me the opportunity to get to know this sweet, gentle woman of God! Truly she will be missed!

My other blessings come from finally getting over the stomach bug that took me out for over a week. There was one moment where I thought I literally might die that lasted about half an hour – I'll share more about that in my sermon Sunday – but it's always so wonderful to feel "resurrected" and be healthy again – especially when that comes on the heels of the church praying for me yesterday! Thank you all, especially Steve Paul, for his prayers from the pulpit (I was watching from home).

So now while I'm naming names, let me remind all of you that I have something for everyone for Christmas. So If you haven't gotten anything I have something for YOU personally, in my office for you to come by and pick up at your leisure.

As I look forward to the new year, I'd like to look back and personally thank the deacons, the trustees and everyone on the Executive Board. And while I'll risk leaving someone out who deserves mention, I'd like to particularly thank those I've worked closest with, with a "shout out" to Office Administrator Donna Decoteau, Moderator Dave Bertagnolli, Head Deacon Deb Pond, Sexton Dave Christian (who, among other things, leads the Loaves and Fishes along with Nancy Mitchell and snowbirds Gail and Tom Mathes), Head Trustee Dale Melanson, Director of Music Ann Tapply, my sick and shut in partner in crime Marylin Alexander and a special thanks to those who came out in the cold to Christmas Carol and our bus driver and bus donator Dennis King. For truly he was doing ministry that day as he drove the bus but did not get to see the faces of those we sang for – folks who were in dreary circumstances and whose faces lit up when we sang.

Funny story – At one of the places we went to carol a woman asked for a Hanukah song. Everyone looked at me – the only one with Jewish ancestry. And then out of my mouth came the Dreidel song I'd sung in my youth. "Dreidel, dreidel, dreidel, I made it out of clay and when it's dry and ready, oh dreidel I will play." It wasn't Pavarotti, but it made the woman's day and everyone got a good laugh out of it!

Next, a shout out to Myron Rust and Neal Ellsworth, the two "prayer warriors" who have consistently come out for prayer service when no one else has, and to Neal's son Andrew who faithfully streams our services.

And let me not forget our wonderful choir, our wonderful secretary Dawn Stevens and Christine's close friends Fay Borgatti and Deseree Blair who occasionally light up our house with their laughter.

Also, Don Cook and the guys who made our lovely Nativity scene and the wonderful choir, and my good friend Warren Tapply who I enjoy sharing the occasional meal with.

Finally, I'd like to thank the new members who have given us so much hope for the future. For Michelle Noel, Bob Eades, Marvin Blakley, Lorraine and Patrick Dowd and Fabio and Christina DeSousa and their lovely children Julio and Alina. (As well as Dee Cyr who invited most of them).

And last and definitely NOT least, I'd like to thank my better half, the Sunday School teacher and chef extraordinaire Christine Cohen, without whom I wouldn't have the same smile on my face. As well as the two munchkins, Miracle and Serenity.

Undoubtedly I've missed many, but I wanted to mention those who I've worked with most closely. I love you ALL. Trust me. And forgive me if you were not mentioned by name.

Looking forward to a wonderful New Year!!!

Much love,
Pastor Dan

ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting is scheduled for Sunday, Feb. 8th. If you submit a report, please email it to the office **by January 16th**.

MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Men's fellowship will meet on Saturday, **January 10th** at 7:30 am at **Bobbie J'z**

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Women's fellowship will be Saturday, **January 10th** at the **Buccaneer at 12:30pm**. Please let Sharon Christian know if you're going.

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 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 contact Dick (413.786.2430) or 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 3rd 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!

MEMORIAL DONATIONS

Donations were made to the church in memory of Linda Gagne

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.



Deacon of the Month of January: Cindy Sanford

Matthew 7:7-8

7 "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

When did I first believe? My first home was located next to the Burlington Congregational Church in Burlington, CT. My parents bought an old farmhouse with 8 acres of land and spent 7 years renovating it. My sister, Bev and I explored it from top to bottom as soon as I could walk. It had many entry ways.

We were within walking distance of the church where my mother volunteered. She often spoke to us about God and a love for birds. She enrolled us in Sunday school where my older sister and I attended, regularly. During Sunday School, God was introduced as a friend I could always talk to—what some refer to as prayer.

When I was five years old, my family and I took a walk through the wooded section of our property. During this walk, I encountered a unique experience: I observed a red bird—distinct from a cardinal—and a butterfly of the same vivid red hue, which briefly landed on a nearby branch. The moment occurred too quickly to alert my family. This encounter sparked a lifelong curiosity in me. Decades later, I conducted research into the presence of red birds and red butterflies in the Northeastern United States but found no record of either species. This occurrence was meant for me alone and one I will never forget.

When I was seven, we moved to Hebron, CT, where my faith grew. I attended Sunday School until twelve, then began teaching younger children about Jesus. After Sunday School, I would walk home with my sisters; while my parents attended church service, my older sister often played pranks by locking me out. Rather than getting upset, I found peace in the woods behind our home, talking with God and appreciating the quiet.

After my mother died, I was overcome with remorse. I had planted three sunflowers by the shed behind my house on River Road. One morning as I left for work, I noticed three yellow orioles and three yellow butterflies flying around the sunflowers. While these species are common in our area, I had never seen three of each together before. At 47, I felt it was a sign that God heard me. I contacted my two sisters and was less depressed. If you can recognize such signs, you too may believe—seek, and you shall find.

Cindy Sanford, Deacon of the month.

FLOWERS

Jan 4th – memory of Mr. & Mrs. MAX KOZYNOSKI, SR., parents, JOHN KOZYNOSKI, brother of MR. & MRS. MAX KOZYNOSKI

(2) in HONOR of DICK & CAROLINE BASSETT'S 70th anniversary

Jan 11th HONOR of RAY & ALICE ORR's 78th anniversary.

(2) Steeple lighting in Loving Memory of TIM BASSETT

Jan 18th – In loving MEMORY of EDNA BAXTER, mother of DESEREE BLAIR

Jan 25th - Loving MEMORY of LES MELANSON, from his wife DALE MELANSON



Financial update from the Treasurer – Donna Decoteau

| Category | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Oct | Nov | Total Actual | 2025 Budget | Actual vs. Budget % |
|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Income from Pledges | 35,023 | 41,520 | 28,804 | 9,795 | 7,862 | 123,004 | 121,000 | 102% |
| Other Income (rent, fundraising, Groups, etc.) | 13,558 | 9,828 | 2,897 | 3,087 | 4,361 | 33,731 | 30,675 | 110% |
| Income from Invested Funds | 4,000 | 5,000 | 15,000 | - | 11,500 | 35,500 | 55,395 | 64% |
| Total Income | 52,581 | 56,348 | 46,701 | 12,882 | 23,723 | 192,235 | 207,070 | 93% |
| Pastor's Expenses | 15,505 | 26,371 | 22,031 | 6,772 | 10,888 | 81,567 | 90,942 | 90% |
| Other Personnel Salaries | 13,576 | 13,499 | 13,546 | 4,451 | 4,504 | 49,576 | 55,848 | 89% |
| Other Operational Expenses | 15,199 | 13,206 | 14,827 | 2,591 | 9,421 | 55,244 | 60,280 | 92% |
| Total Expenses | 44,280 | 53,076 | 50,404 | 13,814 | 24,813 | 186,387 | 207,070 | 90% |

November represents 11/12 or 92%

MISSIONARY

We would like to thank all people who have contributed to the Mitten Tree donating gloves, hats, mittens and scarves during December. We shall have no Mission during January, however we shall be doing our "Souper Bowl" collection of soup during February so keep your eyes peeled for those special offers during January.

Lesley Young, Chairperson

GIRL SCOUTS

The Girl Scout cookie sale will start on January 16th, 2026, and run through March 15th, so please try and support this worthy cause that provides funds that support all Girl Scout run programs.

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

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|--------------|--------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------|---|----------|
| | | | | | | 3 |
| 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 10am Worship | 7pm Property | 6:30pm Missionary | 11:30am Bible study | 6:30pm Choir | 7:30am Men's Fellowship@ Bobbie J's 10am Deacons | |
| | | | | | | |
| 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| 10am Worship | | | 11:30am Bible study | 6:30pm Choir | | |
| | | | | | | |
| 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 10am Worship | | | 11:30am Bible study | 6:30pm Choir | | |
| | | | | | | |
| 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 31 | |
| 10am Worship | | 1pm Executive Board | 11:30am Bible study | 6:30pm Choir | | |
| | | | | | | |



