

# THE AGAWAM ARROW

March 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:** Betty Burrage

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

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

## *From the Pastor's Desk*

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Pastor's  
Desk*



Series Title: **Depolarizing America: One Happier, Humbl**

The following is a column that ran in The Republican newspaper in Springfield and on MassLive last January.

Column 2 Step 2: Recognizing that a healthy nation needs both a strong left and a strong right  
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 the first step toward lowering the political tension in America is loosening our labels — that is, identifying ourselves as human beings first, Americans second and placing our party affiliation third -- the second step is recognizing that we need each other to form the “more perfect union” our founding fathers spoke of in the Constitution. That Democrats need Republicans — and Republicans need Democrats — the way two spouses need one another to form a marriage. My wife and I are VERY different people. She gets up early. I sleep late. She's a nurse and a gardener who loves working with her hands, a home economics major who can sew dresses and reupholster furniture and leap tall buildings with a single bound. I have no “spacial intelligence” whatsoever (translation: when I need to change a tire, I call AAA). As a pastor and psychotherapist, I do all my heavy lifting with my heart and my head.

Adding a little spice to the mix, Christine grew up in a Jamaican Christian family, I an American Jewish one.

You might think “How on Earth do these people ever get along?”

Well, first of all, we love each other. We love the life we've built together and the children and grandchildren that make our lives so special. They say “opposites attract” and, to some extent, that is true. However, to make a marriage work you have to have underlying commonalities as well.

We both have a strong work ethic. We both value family. We both try to be nice to one another. Traits, by the way, that most of us Americans, be we Democrats or Republicans, tend to enjoy as well.

But as a psychotherapist I can tell you that no marriage is easy. And there are special challenges that come with an interracial marriage.

So when Israel got attacked by Hamas in October of 2023 and then responded with what some called excessive force in Gaza, it created some tension.

Are you seeing how an interracial marriage and the marriage between Democrats and Republicans can share a lot of similarities?

And yet, what made our marriage get over this little bump in the road is that we talked about it. Honestly. Not easily.

I think we Americans have more in common than we think. Yes, we have differences of opinion – in particular those regarding our love/hate affair with our current President -- but we almost all agree on the following:

We all like to be listened to more than we like being told how to think or what to do.

We all want America to be a strong, healthy nation.

We all want to be respected and treated nicely.

We all want to see our friends and family treated well.

So while Conservatives remind us of the enduring value of tradition, responsibility, faith, and community, and progressives call us toward reform, justice, and inclusion, these two forces are not enemies; they are partners in the ongoing work of democracy — more like a husband and wife than sworn foes.

No, coming together will not be easy. No worthwhile marriage ever is. In the heat of battle, it is easy to think of the other side as the obstacle to progress or a threat to survival. But when we look more closely, we can see how both sides hold truths the other side needs. The push and pull between them — the tension itself — is necessary to prevent us from sliding into extremes. This is where humility comes in. Not the kind of humility that erases conviction, but the humility that admits: “My side doesn’t hold the whole truth.” That’s a lesson my wife likes to teach me daily (that was a “dad joke”).

Marriage itself is humbling. It means compromising and cleaning up after yourself when you’d rather be watching the Patriot’s game. And while some call it a “four-letter word”, studies show married partners live happier, healthier lives than those who go it alone.

Because when it comes right down to it, marriage is a blessing that forces one to be humble — “humility” being another word for “being unselfish.” And we all want to be around people who care about us as much as they care about their own needs -- the opposite of which, in today’s terms, are “narcissists” – a psychological diagnosis we confer on others (and almost never ourselves), which, essentially, means “selfish people.”

We Democrats and Republicans are living in increasingly different worlds. Whether you think it’s because we’re being manipulated like puppets by a media controlled by the super-wealthy or by our own choice to live around politically like-minded individuals, we need to stop and take a breath. To look at each other as the complex individuals we are, and not the two-dimensional fools the other side portrays us to be – this will be the focus of next week’s column.

Exercise: If you lean left, watch some Fox News. If you lean right, watch some MS NOW. Then think about the fact that those on the other side of aisle are getting their news from such sources.

Question to respond to: “For those of you who’ve ever been in a relationship, how easy have you found it to make the other person see things *your way*?”

Daniel Aaron Cohen

<https://danielaaroncohen.com/>

I've just published a print version of my book on Amazon. For the audio book and more information about me, please see this [page](#).



### Deacon of the Month of February: Betty Burrage

One of my daily joys is watching through my kitchen window the wonderful variety of birds that visit my bird feeders while I go about washing my dishes. On one occasion, this led me to have an amazing interaction with some sparrows which I attribute to Divine intervention.

In my backyard, I keep a large plastic trash barrel positioned underneath the gutters where two roof lines meet in order to catch any overflow from heavy rains. On this occasion, from my kitchen window, I noticed a sparrow sitting on the rim of the barrel which I had never seen a bird do before. He stayed there quite awhile before flying away. Suddenly, a thought came to me that there might be a bird trapped in the barrel. I went outside and looking into the barrel, I saw a small, frightened sparrow in the bottom looking up at me.

I slowly laid the barrel on its side and went back inside to discreetly keep watch to hopefully see the little one emerge. About 5 minutes passed and the sparrow flew to perch on the gutter a while then went back to the branch and eventually landed in front of the barrel. He made several flights back and forth between the branches and the barrel until another sparrow joined him in front of the barrel. Finally, a fluffed-up little bird emerged from the barrel and after a few minutes he flew away, followed by the other two birds.

I was reminded that in the Bible, Jesus says that God sees and cares for all creatures in creation - even the sparrows. I felt that God put a chain of events in place to rescue this little sparrow. From the sparrow sentinel who drew my attention to the barrel to the thought sent to me to look for a bird in the barrel.

Matthew 10:29-31 "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows."

It is a comforting thought to know that He is always with us.

Blessings to all,

Betty Burrage, Deacon

## FLOWERS

**March. 1st** – In MEMORY of JANELLE CHRISTIAN, daughter of DAVE CHRISTIAN

**March 8<sup>th</sup>** – In loving MEMORY of LORI, daughter of JOAN & JOAN HAUSER

**March 15<sup>th</sup>** – In loving MEMORY of Mom, FREIDA BASSETT from DICK & CAROLINE BASSETT

**March 22<sup>nd</sup>** - in loving MEMORY of LOVED ONES, from DIANE JESERSKI

**March 29<sup>th</sup>** - OPEN



### MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Men's fellowship will meet on Saturday,  
**March 14<sup>th</sup>** at 7:30 am at  
**Bobbie J'z**

### WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Women's fellowship will meet on Wednesday,  
March 11<sup>th</sup> at 12:30 at EBs

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".**

### MEMORIAL DONATIONS

No Memorial donations were made in February.

### 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 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.

# Spring forward

Don't forget to set  
clocks ahead

one hour  
at 2 a.m.  
Sunday.



**AP**

## Financial update from the Treasurer – Donna Decoteau

Category	Jan	Total Actual	2026 Budget	Actual vs. Budget %
Income from Pledges	15,592	15,592	134,900	12%
Bank Balance 12/31/2025	(3,440)	-	-	0%
Other Income (rent, fundraising, Groups, etc.)	1,293	1,293	27,000	5%
Income from Invested Funds	10,000	10,000	51,510	19%
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>23,445</b>	<b>26,885</b>	<b>213,410</b>	<b>13%</b>
Pastor's Expenses	6,930	6,930	91,828	8%
Other Personnel Salaries	4,504	4,504	56,151	8%
Other Operational Expenses	6,083	6,083	65,431	9%
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>17,517</b>	<b>17,517</b>	<b>213,410</b>	<b>8%</b>

January 2026 represents 1/12 or 8%

--  
Donna Decoteau  
Treasurer  
Agawam Congregational Church

### MISSIONARY

Well, the football Souper Bowl table is looking plentiful, and we shall make sure to deliver all donations to the Parish Cupboard as soon as the drive is over on February 28th. **Thank you** to all who donated. We collected 42 packs of Ramen Noodles & 102 cans of soup!! I will let you know the total in our next newsletter. In March we shall be collecting undies & socks for the Springfield Rescue Mission. The collection baskets will be placed in the Narthex near the doors to the Sanctuary. Thank you all once again for your generous support of these programs.

### GIRL SCOUTS

Due to the inclement weather during the last few months the Council has decided to extend the cookie sale season. The new ending date will now be March 29th so keep your eyes open for details of local cookie booths to buy your favorite cookies.

### PASTORAL SUPPORT GROUP

This group will be meeting at 11.30 after coffee hour on Sunday March 1st for our quarterly meeting. If you have any concerns you wish to raise please convey to Pastor Dan, or to one of the following members: Warren Tapply, Marilyn Alexander, Steve Paul, Donna DeCoteau, or Lesley Young.

# Dine and Donate

to support  
**Agawam Congregational Church**  
at **Nicky's pizza**



On Thursday, March 5<sup>th</sup>, from 11am-8pm, Nicky's will generously donate 10% of proceeds to Agawam Congregational Church

**\*\* Nicky's only accepts cash payments**

1000 Main St. in Agawam

**Bring family, friends, and fellow pizza lovers!**





# RAMADAN MUBARAK

## IFTAR DINNER

You're warmly invited to join us!

Saturday, March 7, at 5 PM

Agawam Congregational Church  
745 Main St., Agawam, MA 01001

Come share a delicious meal, connect with friends and neighbors, and celebrate together in a spirit of community and gratitude.

Everyone is welcome!

Please RSVP by March 2 at [info@peacevalleyma.org](mailto:info@peacevalleyma.org)

We look forward to sharing this special evening with you!

PEACE VALLEY  
FOUNDATION

AGAWAM CONGREGATIONAL  
CHURCH



# Magic Show!

For All Ages

**Sat, March 28<sup>th</sup> 3 pm**

**Agawam Congregational Church**

**745 Main St, Agawam**

With Magician

**David Reed-Brown**

Price: **\$5 Adults \$3 Children and Teens**

**FREE popcorn** Call 786-7111 or email

[office@agawamcong.com](mailto:office@agawamcong.com) to let us know if you're coming.



"You leave David's show knowing that life itself is magical and filled with endless possibilities."

David Friedman

**Disney**



March 2026

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

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>1</b> 10am Worship	<b>2</b> 7pm Property	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> 6:30pm Choir 11-8pm Dine & Donate Nicky's Pizza	<b>6</b> 4pm Prayer 4:30pm Bible study	<b>7</b> 5pm Iftar Dinner
<b>8</b> 10am Worship Sandwich in a bag *Daylight Savings begins	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> 12:30pm Women's fellowship EB's 6:30 pm. Deacons	<b>12</b> 6:30pm Choir	<b>13</b> 4pm Prayer 4:30pm Bible study	<b>14</b> 7:30am Men's Fellowship@ Bobbie J'z
<b>15</b> 10am Worship 11:30 Missionary	<b>16</b> 1pm Trustees 4pm Loaves & Fishes	<b>17</b> St. Patrick's Day 	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> 6:30pm Choir	<b>20</b> 4pm Prayer 4:30pm Bible study	<b>21</b> 
<b>22</b> 10am Worship	<b>23</b> 1pm Exec. Board	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> 6:30pm Choir	<b>27</b> 4pm Prayer 4:30pm Bible study	<b>28</b> 3pm Magic Show
<b>29</b> 10am Worship Palm Sunday	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>				