

# The Community Messenger February 2026

## *Erica Extemporaneous*

A friend recently shared an insight with me gleaned from her personal Bible study. It occurred to her that “the God who took care of the two to three million people in the desert for forty years is the same God who takes care of me, and your mom, and you, and all of us.” She marveled that she had never quite thought of things that way. That kind of constancy, that steadfast faith, that longevity... It is hard to comprehend. It is all at once the most basic and simple premise and an unfathomable mystery.

The same God who breathed life into all of creation, naming and claiming each one of us, is the God who lingers at the bedside as one’s final breath is drawn. It is the God who weeps as entire species of animals face extinction, as the climate itself shifts and strains.

The same God who parted the Red Sea, quite literally making a way where there was no way, is the God who guards and guides our discernment process when we are faced with impossible choices. It is the God who grants us the courage to take that first fateful step, not altogether sure where it might take us.

The same God who sent his only child into a world gone awry, a world that would reject and ridicule him, criticize and crucify him, is the God who sends us into a world weary, nearly bereft, but holding out hope. It is the God who gives us a voice, who gives us the courage to speak.

The same God... and we, who know God, who are known by God, who strive to share the love, the compassion God has given, will never be the same.



Take good care,

*Erica*



## Greetings from Gabby!

John Howland and I are looking forward to making paper hearts to share with our friends on Valentines Day. We have a lot of friends living in Pastor Erica's office. It might take a while. That's okay. We have time! We haven't been exploring too much. It is too snowy! It is too cold! Would you like to be our Valentine?

Your friends~ Gabby  
and John Howland

## News from the Official Board

***The decision to cancel our worship service on January 25 was made after an online discussion by board members. It was noted that most of the parking lot was ice-covered, and the service that plows for us had no salt to spread (this is an ongoing problem in our area). In light of these facts, the extremely low temperatures, and the expected snowfall, it was decided to cancel the service for the safety of our staff and our congregation. Any questions or concerns about this decision can be addressed to myself or any member of the Board.***

-Alan Purdum

### From the Open and Affirming Committee

Members of the congregation enjoyed Brandy Pauline's presentation entitled "An Unconventional Path to God". If you missed it, it will be available on the church's website and on our Facebook page. Brandy has also posted it on Facebook.

Our next event will be Rev. Erica Brown discussing "Sin, Sexuality, and Scripture". This will take place in the Chapel after worship on February 15<sup>th</sup>.

-Alan Purdum

### Operating Fund

	December Activity	YTD Balance	Budget YTD
Income	\$27,143.26	\$289,986.48	\$272,114.00
Expenses	\$20,476.60	\$260,741.91	\$272,114.00
Difference	\$6,666.66	\$29,244.57	\$0.00

# Diaconate and Elders' Schedules – February 2026

Date	Elder	Diaconate Sanctuary (All Month)	Diaconate Kitchen (All Month)
February 1	Tom Hitmar	Anna Marie Ottney – Captain	Sanctuary Dawn Adgate
February 8	Brooke Schubert	Emma Adgate	
February 15	Bim Turner	Haylee Adgate	JHR Dawn Adgate
February 22	Katy Kell	John Layfield	

## Lectionary for February 2026

### February 1, 2026

Micah 6:1-8

Psalm 15

1 Corinthians 1:18-31

Matthew 5:1-12

### February 8, 2026

Isaiah 58:1-9a, (9b-12)

Psalm 112:1-9, (10)

1 Corinthians 2:1-12, (13-16)

Matthew 5:13-20

### February 15, 2026

Exodus 24:12-18

Psalm 99

2 Peter 1:16-21

Matthew 17:1-9

### February 22, 2026

Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7

Psalm 32

Romans 5:12-19

Matthew 4:1-11

## CLIENT CHOICE FOOD PANTRY



Just a reminder that the February Food Pantry is scheduled for Friday, February 20th between 3-5 pm. We will be picking up an order of food from Second Harvest on Thursday morning, the 19th, and then unloading and stocking the shelves. Volunteers are always welcome! ~Linda Hitmar

## STILL TIME TO LEARN ALL ABOUT US!

Would you like to learn more about Howland Community Church? We are affiliated with three denominations – the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the United Church of Christ, and the International Council of Community Churches. The three-week study was to begin on Tuesday, January 20. However, due to the severe weather, the first two sessions were postponed.

If you are still interested, the studies are now scheduled for Tuesdays - February 3, 10, and 17 at 1:00 pm and/or 7:00 pm.

Please let Erica know if you are interested!





# It's Almost Fish Fry Time!!!



Fish Fry season is about to begin. Ash Wednesday is February 18. That means the first Fish Fry will be February 20 from 4:30 - 6:30 pm. Lots of volunteers are needed to make this year a success. Sign-up sheets will be available in the back of the Sanctuary for volunteers.

The dinner includes fried or baked fish, mac-n-cheese or baked potato, green beans, coleslaw, applesauce, bread, dessert, and beverage. The cost is \$16.00 for adults and \$8.00 for children. Take out is available.



AQUARIUS  
CANDLELIGHT  
CARNATION  
CHOCOLATE  
COZY  
CUPID  
FEBRUARY  
FIREPLACE  
FRIENDSHIP  
GROUNDHOG DAY

HEART  
HUG  
KISS  
LEAP YEAR  
LOVE  
MARDI GRAS  
PINK  
PISCES  
PRESIDENTS DAY  
RED  
ROMANCE  
ROSES  
SKIING  
SNOW  
SWEETHEART  
VALENTINE  
WINTER

February



# February 2026 - HCC Calendar



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 10 AM Worship Annual Meeting	2 6 PM Trustees 7 PM Boy Scouts (NH)	3 Affiliations Study (Library) 1 pm &/or 7 pm	4 1 PM Women's Group (JHR)	5 6-8 PM Girl Scouts (NH)	6	7 1 PM NA (NH) 6 PM AA (NH)
8 10 AM Worship Noisy Coin Offering	9 6 PM Open & Affirming Comm. 7 PM Elders 7 PM Boy Scouts (NH)	10 Affiliations Study (Library) 1 pm &/or 7 pm	11 1 PM Women's Group (JHR)	12 7 PM Game Night (JHR)	13	14  1 PM NA (NH) 6 PM AA (NH)
15 10 AM Worship – Mardi Gras Sunday – Celebration Band  Open & Affirming Comm. Meeting – Rev. Brown - after service (Chapel)	16 Presidents' Day 6 PM Finance 7 PM Official Board 7 PM Boy Scouts (NH)	17 Affiliations Study (Library) 1 pm &/or 7 pm	18 Ash Wednesday Services @ noon & 7 pm	19 6-8 PM Girl Scouts (NH)	20 3-5 PM Client Choice Food Pantry  Fish Fry 4:30-6:30 pm	21 1 PM NA (NH) 6 PM AA (NH)
22 10 AM Worship	23 7 PM Boy Scouts (NH)	24	25 1 PM Women's Group (JHR)	26 7 PM Game Night (JHR)	27 Fish Fry 4:30-6:30 pm	28 11 AM – 12:30 PM Free Fellowship Meal (SH)  1 PM NA (NH) 6 PM AA (NH)



<u>February Birthdays &amp; Anniversaries</u>				
Sue Brown	2	Jeanine Abruzzi	12	Billy Gardlock
Bob Holinbaugh	3	Jill Gardlock	12	Jill Lewis
Kelly Ginter	5	Randy Baker	13	Sara Andrews
Diane Andrews	6	Denise Newhouse	13	Tonya Rollison
Betty Arblaster	6	Kenton Thigpen	13	Harmon H Andrews III
Henry Kellerman, Jr	6	John & Rita Bobco	14	Larry & Marilyn Rambo
Bim Turner	6	Jeff & Debbie Brown	14	Becky Vandegrift
Sue Blosser	8	Harmon R Andrews	19	Judith Minogue

Please note: If you fail to see your birthday/anniversary listed, please contact the church office at 330-856-3628 so that we may update our information. Bless you!

**HOWLAND COMMUNITY CHURCH**  
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**WE'RE ON THE WEB:**  
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**ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED**



Reverend Erica L. Brown, Senior Minister  
 Andrew Purdum, Director of Music  
 Rebecca Shelton, Organist  
 Minta Pitts, Custodian  
 Diane Andrews, Office Coordinator  
 Alan Purdum, Chair of the Congregation  
 Sarah Sanders, Vice-Chair of the Congregation

The Community Messenger is the monthly newsletter of the **Howland Community Church** (affiliated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the United Church of Christ, and the International Council of Community Churches). Our church is **“A House of Prayer for All People.”** We offer Sunday School for children and a fellowship gathering after Worship. Communion is served every Sunday.

**Office Hours:**  
**Monday – Thursday**  
**9:00 am – 1:00 pm**

