



January 2026

THE ROCKTONIAN

Welcoming all in Jesus' name
as we Grow Together in Faith, Service, and Love
Sunday Worship at 9:30 a.m.

Sisters in Christ Outing

For our next adventure, Sisters in Christ will go on our annual day trip to the Sauk City area. Activities will be eagle viewing on the Wisconsin River, lunch at the original Culvers in Sauk City, stopping by Wollersheim Winery, Shoe Box in Black Earth, and Duluth Trading Outlet Store in Belleville. There is a signup sheet at both church entrances. We will need a driver for every four participants. Sisters in Christ will pay for the drivers' lunches. If there is even a hint of snow on January 24, we will delay the trip to January 31. This is an all day event and lots of fun and fellowship. Don't let the cold deter you—we don't spend a lot of time outdoors and it is mostly in cars and indoors.



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Grateful for 2025, Hopeful for 2026

A new year invites reflection, and January 2026 feels like the right moment to pause and give thanks. It has now been a little over six months since my family and I arrived in Rockton, and when I look back, I see a season shaped by welcome, learning, and shared life. What began last June with an interview conversation with the SPRC has grown into a ministry formed through real relationships and God's faithfulness among us.

Feeling welcomed began even before my first Sunday in worship. When we moved into the parsonage, it was immediately clear that this was more than a place prepared out of responsibility. It was a home prepared with care. Your generosity showed not only in the many items that filled the house, but in the thought behind them. You had clearly put yourselves in our place, thinking about our family, our children, and what a new beginning might feel like. That sense of being considered met us right away, and it shaped how we settled into this community.

Being entrusted with leadership became tangible on my first Sunday. At the end of that service, our SPRC chair handed me a baton. It was a simple gesture, yet it carried deep meaning. It spoke of trust, continuity, and shared responsibility. In that moment, I understood more clearly that I was not stepping into ministry alone, but joining a story already in motion. That baton has stayed with me as a reminder that ministry here is something we carry together.

Getting to know one another happened through listening and conversation. In those early months, we gathered for listening tours and small group meetings where stories were shared, questions were asked, and trust began to grow. Sitting together and hearing hopes, concerns, and memories of this church helped me learn not only about Rockton UMC, but about the people who make it what it is. Those conversations laid an important foundation for our life together.

Learning the heart of this congregation also happened through pastoral moments. My first memorial service reminded me how sacred it is to stand with families holding both grief and hope. My first home visits taught me again that ministry often unfolds through listening and presence. One visit that remains especially meaningful was my time with Bob Lawhorn, now 101 years old. Sitting together and hearing stories shaped by a long life was a gift that deepened my sense of what it means to serve this community.

Living out our faith together became especially visible through mission and outreach. From serving at the soup kitchen, to welcoming families during Trunk-or-Treat, to opening our doors during the Christmas Walk, I saw a church that shows up for its neighbors. These were not simply activities on a calendar. They were expressions of care, generosity, and a desire to be present in the life of this town.

Sharing life across generations came into focus as Advent approached. Christmas music practices gathered Sunday school children and congregants of all ages. Watching children learn hand chimes, hearing voices blend, and seeing adults encourage one another offered a beautiful picture of who we are as the Church. These gatherings were not only about preparing for Christmas Eve. They were about connection, patience, and joy.

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What's Up with the Building?

by John Carleton, Trustee Chair



What's Up with the Building for January 2026?

Welcome to a new year and here's hoping it will be a good year for RUMC and its buildings and grounds. Here's hoping it will also be a better year for weather as it was pretty rough on our snow removal folks as the big snows at the end of November and early December all came on Saturdays. Thanks to those who had to shovel and salt at the last minute before services!!! Besides that, our snow blower decided not to work and had to go in the shop. It's fixed now that the weather has turned warmer (isn't that always the way...) but I'm guessing most of us by now are missing that brief warm spell.

After a busy summer that brought new gardens, new roofs, and tuck-pointing, the Trustees will be discussing this month what needs to be done around the church in 2026. It's a good time of year (if there is one) to talk about such things as insurance and other policies. If there are any projects, large or small, that you would like to see the Trustees consider, please let us know in the next week or two. Some have already suggested that the south west entrance needs a new door.

In closing, as always, if you're able, please consider volunteering to help with snow removal or lawn mowing. Best wishes for the New Year!

From the Pastor’s Desk cont.

Celebrating Christ together reached a peak on Christmas Eve. The sanctuary was full, the music rich, and the sense of wonder unmistakable. Looking out and seeing so many faces gathered to sing and pray filled me with gratitude. God was present, and so were you. The photo we took after the service captures more than a large crowd. It holds a moment of shared joy, faith, and belonging.

Closing the year together offered a different kind of grace. Our final Sunday service of 2025 was smaller than Christmas Eve, yet deeply meaningful. It gave us room to reflect, to give thanks, and to look ahead with hope.

Gratitude is what stays with me most as we begin this new year. Through every step of these past six months, God has been with me and my family. Just as importantly, you, the people of God in Rockton, have been present with us. Your thoughtfulness, generosity, love, and grace have been a true gift. Thank you for welcoming us so fully and for continuing this journey together.

Happy New Year!

Pastor Seong





Thank you for reading!

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JANUARY 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 New Year's Day (office closed)	2	3
4 9:30am Worship 10:30am 	5 Korean Clergy New Year	6	7	8	9	10
11 9:30am Worship Girl Scouts 1:30-3:00pm	12	13	14	15	16	17
18 9:30am Worship	19 4pm Trustees 5pm Finance	20  Newsletter articles due 4:30 pm Ad Council	21	22	23	24 Sisters in Christ Outing
25 Food on the 4th	26	27	28	29	30	31 Sisters in Christ Outing (snow date)

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