

As I was working on a sermon talking about ‘changing a habit,’ I was determined to write it last Monday. Monday has been my off day, when I clean the house and get chores done. Occasionally, there are extra meetings. But I’ve never written my sermon script that early in the week. As I looked out at my backyard covered with snow, I patiently started on reading and writing. I love watching barren trees. This winter has been a bit much, though. Up-and-down temperatures and shoveling snow many times this month. I got tired of the season.

Just as I was about to lose focus and get distracted, I received a text message from a church family. When I saw the picture of her young adult child protesting in Minneapolis on sub-zero temperatures, I burst into tears - tears of lament for a brutal world and tears of gratitude for all who are on the street resisting systemic evil and fighting on our behalf. And all of a sudden, I heard a bird chirping. ‘Really? On a cold January day? Who are you? What are you singing?’ Soon, I saw two birds flying and playing in my backyard. In the thick of winter, they became a gift to me. The courageous people and vibrant birds reminded me of spring, a life thriving amid icy days in the Midwest and the bitter reality of our time. They gave me the strength to complete writing my sermon, to pursue it with a steady and attentive heart.

Reflecting on this year’s theme, “Practicing Hope,” given by Bishop Schwerin for our conference, these words of Debra Rienstra intrigued me, prompting me to think about what active hope would look like. This is a part of her conversation on the podcast, *The Climate Changed* (Season 2, Episode 5):

“I’ve been playing around with this concept of *refugia*, which is a biological concept. It’s essentially where life endures in times of big disturbance in the living world, refugia are places where biodiversity can retreat to persist in and potentially expand from in the midst of extreme disturbance. When I came across this idea, it immediately struck me as not only a powerful witness to how the natural world survives in a crisis, but a kind of metaphor that we could all think about, especially as people of faith ... What would it mean to imagine ourselves as people of faith as the people of refugium? What if we were to think that our job is to find and nurture refugia not only in the natural world, but in our human organizations, in our churches and mosques and synagogues, in all of our human social aspects as well.”

I invite us to ponder what it means to be a person of faith in a tumultuous time and practice hope as people of refugium this month. Let us not lose hope but continue to pray and pursue justice with steady and attentive hearts and actions.

Blessings & Peace,



Pastor Mi-Sook

February 2026 Newsletter



February 1
Communion Sunday
“Walk on the Creator’s
Good Road”

February 8
“Be Salty. Stay Lit.”

* **Youth Group**
Sub Sandwich Fundraiser

February 15
Transfiguration Sunday
“Glory Revealed”

***Summed 2 Serve @ MCC**

February 18
Ash Wednesday
Imposition of Ashes at noon
Service at 7 p.m.

February 22
First Sunday in Lent
‘It Catches Us by Surprise’

***Warm Your Hearts**
Bake Sale by Missions Team



February Birthdays

Mike Kefauver 2/3
Phil Stallone 2/3
Joyce Smith 2/9
Mi-Sook Yoo 2/13
Caitlin Agabin 2/14
Alison Blackmore 2/14
Terry Burke 2/14
Joe Greenwood 2/16
Maylo Hranac 2/16
Judith A Brooke 2/17
Cathy Blackmore 2/18
Everett Gustafson 2/18
Moose Larocco 2/20
Jean Jaderborg 2/22
Sue Pedersen 2/27
Karen Sersen 2/27

February Anniversaries

Richard & Judith
Brooke 2/12
Hanh & Katherine
Le 2/14

If you are celebrating your birthday and/or anniversary this month, but do not see your name, please call the office and let us know.

ADULT FAITH FORMATION

SMALL GROUP GATHERINGS

Contact each group leader or call/email the church office to join the conversation. Check the weekly e-news or your leader's email for their in-person and zoom meetings.

Spirituality Group, Wednesdays at 9 a.m. Studying UMC Social Principles

Linda Mullen mullen520@comcast.net

Women's Bible Study, Thursdays at 10 a.m.

Lisa Greenwood lisajoegreenwood@yahoo.com

Amy Doyle amybryandoyle@aim.com

Men's Group, Saturdays at 7:30 a.m.

Bryan Doyle amybryandoyle@aim.com

M&M Mid Winter Party ♥ Sunday, Feb 1 ♥ 4-9 p.m.

We invite anyone over 50 to attend the M&M Mid Winter Party at Janet Graf's house on Sunday, Feb 1, 4-9 p.m. Please bring hors d'oeuvres and snacks to share. RSVP with Janet Graf.

Ladies Afternoon Movie Hangout ♥ Saturday, Feb 7 ♥ 1:30 - 4 p.m.

Join us for an afternoon of watching a movie together at the Sunderraj house. Bring a snack and drink to share. Please RSVP with Elantine Brighten.

Praying Stitchers Ministry ♥ Monday, Feb 9 ♥ 1 p.m.

Praying Stitchers invites all who know how to or are willing to learn to sew, knit or crochet! Can't make a daytime meeting? You can still participate! Sew a pillow case (we have an easy pattern). Knit or crochet a 12x12 square (or several) and one of our ladies will put them together making lovely prayer shawls. For more details, see Cheryl Fournier. Our next meeting is at church on Monday, Feb 9.

Summoned to Serve ♥ Sunday, Feb 15 ♥ 9-11:45 a.m. ♥ MCC

Come be part of the fun at the annual meal-packing event with Kids Around The World! Together, we'll pack an incredible 80,000 meals to send to children in need. Grab a spot at a packing table for you and your family by clicking the link in the weekly enews to signup. Please be sure to scroll to the bottom to sign up on **tables 21-23**, which have been assigned to our church. Childcare will be available.

Warm Your Heart Bake Sale ♥ Sunday, Feb 22 ♥ Following Service

Attention, rev up your ovens and dust off your soup pot, the 3rd annual Warm Your Heart and Soul Bake Sale is getting closer! Sunday, February 22nd is the date. Tired of baking? How about donating a meal basket? For example, a jar of pasta sauce, box of pasta and rolls or bread sticks in a basket for a meal? Previously, we have had dried, canned and frozen soups, bread, corn bread muffins and much more. Also baskets of chili, chicken casserole and pasta meal ingredients. Let's get creative! We also will take traditional baked goods - cookies, brownies, cupcakes, etc.

February Collection



You can drop off gently used clothes & shoes in the bin.

Reach Everyone
with Acts of kindness & build Communities of Hope

Christ United Methodist Church

9009 W. Algonquin Rd.
Algonquin, IL 60102
* Located at the corner of Algonquin & Square Barn Rd.

847-669-9009
christumcalgonquin@gmail.com
www.gocumc.org

Rev. Mi-Sook Yoo, Pastor
Nisha Waters,
Administrative Assistant

LET US GIVE

Greetings from the Mission Team!

In February, the food and monetary donations collected will be donated to the Crystal Lake Food Pantry.



Make sure to sign up for the MCC Packing event on Sunday 15th . Watch for our monthly “Mission Focus” which highlights one of the charities that the Mission Team supports. This month will be the MCC Packing team at Kids Around the World.

Coming up on February 22nd is our 3rd Annual Warm Your Hearts Bake Sale following worship. Remember there will be more than just cookies, many people bring breads and soups (frozen, dried, or ready to heat and serve). Also some people bring meal baskets (for example, pasta sauce, pasta, breadsticks) in a basket to make a yummy meal! So don't forget to start making your soups, breads, and meals to sell. Any questions, ask Michele Linner.



If you have questions or want to contribute to the food pantries in any way (donating food, delivering food, monetary donation), please contact Michele Linner. Her contact info is: 815-861-6890 (cell) or email her at mllinner@sbcglobal.net.

We need your help to help others!!

Thank you for being a partner of Christ's ministry through your generous gifts!



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