

# WAKONDA NEWS

## *From the Pastor's Desk*

What a year we had! 2025 brought a tremendous amount of change to our building and congregation. We sorted, moved, cleaned, moved again, cleaned again, and waited. Oh did we wait for the construction to begin. No one likes the "hurry up ... and wait game," but we are called to do it often.

So what do we do in the waiting? The mess starts to get to you. I know walking past the empty Narthex filled me with excited anticipation, which was only squashed when I turned the corner to see the Education Hallway crammed with everything just waiting for the Narthex to finish.

On my best day, I can hold the hopes and itchy, uncomfortable anxiety in two hands. But if we're honest, we're not always at our best. There were times when the waiting was trying. And we're still in the midst of finishing up and finalizing the bathroom and kitchenette. Then we get to live into the change.

Every year brings us new adventures, along with new opportunities to practice prayer and patience (those opportunities are not the ones we sign up for). As we turn the corner into another year, I know I'll always hold the joyous moments alongside these challenging moments.

- Having the largest Wakonda presence at Family Camp. We saw so many of our youngest kids discover the wonder and joy of Church camp for the first time; or our big kids showing their friends the place they already claim as their own.

- Our youth diving into the mission trip with enthusiasm and excitement; only to bring the mission back home. They shared their experiences and invited the congregation to help us Green the church's ministries.
- The joy of our hallways filled with volunteers throughout the week of the big move. So many people stepped up to transfer books, move furniture, and laugh at the silly items we've been holding onto for so long.
- The eager anticipation as so many folks came to mop the new floor, pull all the items out of the Education Hallway and stand before the puzzle of "now how did this fit here before?"
- Seeing our sanctuary packed on our Anniversary Celebration, with our Founding Members proudly sitting in the front row. I will forever have tears in my eyes as four generations of Wakonda Members lit the Advent candle, we blessed the youngest members of this family, and then we walked into a warmly packed and newly refurbished Narthex.

Friends, as poet Mary Oliver says: *Most things that are important, have you noticed, lack a certain neatness.* I am deeply grateful for the important and messy parts of 2025 and wishing us an equally important (and messy) 2026. This is how the love and welcome of Wakonda gets shared widely.

Happy New Year,  
Pastor Robyn



Wakonda Christian Church  
3938 Fleur Drive DSM IA  
50321  
515-285-8394  
Office Hours  
10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
Sr. Pastor Robyn Bles

### *Small Group Link*

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4598748094>

January 2026  
Volume 70 Issue 1  
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## 2026 Baptism Class

If you, or a young person in your life, wants to learn more about baptism and membership, please see Pastor Robyn. We're beginning to put together our Pastor's class for baptisms in May.

## January Birthdays

**6** Randy Haberthur, Marlene Rivas

**11** Carol Thomason, Josh Patty

**26** Don Shreffler

## Music Note...

Happy New Year, Wakonda!

I hope you enjoyed your Christmas, and I look forward to many lovely musical moments in 2026!

Sincerely,  
Seth

## Our Whole Lives Class

Wakonda has been working in partnership with the Region and three other congregations for a faith-based health and wholeness class for 3-6 graders. This 10-week course hosts students from Wakonda, New Beginnings CC, Downtown Disciples, and Urbandale UCC. This course will be taught by Pastor Robyn, Joanna Winston, and Kim Gunnes, a trained OWL educator. We're excited to help our students understand their growing bodies, how to best in relationship with one another, and to understand how their faith is part of their growing process. We'll also provide support and information for parents in their role of lovingly supporting their children into the years of puberty, complex friendship and relationship dynamics, along with the ways to continue to live our faith through these growing years. This course runs throughout February-April. If you have a young person interested in joining this course, please contact Pastor Robyn. We're also excited that this partnership of congregation is also working on a shared youth mission trip this summer. Collaboration in ministry is truly a gift.

## Angel Tree note of thanks

I want to thank the congregation so much for the gifts for the kids! They were all happy with what they received. Cristal especially loved the sweatshirt that had a place for her thumb. Jordanna was so tickled with a hairbrush that would work with her curly hair. Jazmin immediately went and put her comfy pants on. Aiden was surprised he was included since he turned 18. His gift was perfect; he needed tools he could use for his car. I've been sick so much this year missing lots of work so things have been extra tight. Aiden told me not to worry about him for a gift. He thought I should focus on the girls! I hope each of you had a blessed Christmas. I know Christmas isn't about gifts, but they are important to the kids. Thank you so much!

Renee Vuper – caregiver to 4 children

## Youth Happenings...

THANK YOU! The youth and children did a fantastic job with the Christmas program on the 14th! Special thanks to Laura Lane for helping and always doing something to help, Randy Lane and Randy Haberthur for being flexible with the kiddos, and Robyn and Adam for serving around the youth pieces and little changes that happened. Thank you parents for helping them read through lines and supporting us!

The Blank Park Zoo is coming to Wakonda! We will have some animal friends from the zoo join us on February 1 at 4pm to have a visit with a few animals! Maybe a giraffe will visit us! Or maybe a sea lion! Okay, probably not, but I'm excited to see what comes to visit and see what we can learn!



# The Zoo is coming to Wakonda!

Sunday February 1st at 4pm

Kids of all ages are welcome!

**CAMP and RETREATS!** Registration is open for retreats at the Christian Conference Center, and you can also see the camp dates to help plan ahead.



# WINTER YOUTH RETREATS!

**REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!**

CHI RHO (GRADES 6-8) JAN 23-25  
CYF (GRADES 9-12) JAN 23-25  
JR (GRADES 3-5) FEB 20-22

SCAN ME



REGISTRATION FEE IS \$130  
AFTER JANUARY 16 CHI RHO/CYF IS \$150  
AFTER FEBRUARY 13 JR. IS \$150

<https://www.uppermidwestcc.org/mid-year-retreats>

# SUMMER 2026 CAMP DATES

<b>FAMILY CAMP</b>	<b>JUNE 5-7</b>
<b>GRAND 1</b>	<b>JUNE 13-14</b>
<b>JR 1</b>	<b>JUNE 14-19</b>
<b>CHI NON-RUSTIC</b>	<b>JUNE 14-19</b>
<b>CHI RHO 1</b>	<b>JUNE 21-26</b>
<b>CYF 1</b>	<b>JUNE 21-26</b>
<b>BEGINNER</b>	<b>JUNE 29-JULY 1</b>
<b>JR 2</b>	<b>JULY 5- 10</b>
<b>GRAND 2</b>	<b>JULY 11-12</b>
<b>CHI RHO 2</b>	<b>JULY 12-17</b>
<b>CYF 2</b>	<b>JULY 12-17</b>
<b>ADAM</b>	<b>JULY 19-24</b>
<b>ADVENTURE</b>	<b>JULY 26-31</b>
<b>JR 3</b>	<b>AUGUST 2-7</b>

Registration Opens  
November 1, 2025

Watch for more  
information and the  
registration link!



2026 Camp Sessions will begin on  
Sundays with 4pm drop-off and  
conclude on Friday with a 2pm pick-up

# What's Happening at Wakonda

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
4 <b>8:45 a.m.</b> Sunday School For All <b>10:00 a.m.</b> Worship	5 <b>6:30 p.m.</b> Literacy Center	6 <b>10:00 a.m.</b> Chit Chats	7 <b>10:30 a.m.</b> Bible Study via ZOOM <b>6:00 p.m.</b> W@W	8 <b>11:30 a.m.</b> W.O.W.	9	10 <b>8:00 a.m.</b> B.O.B.
11 <b>8:45 a.m.</b> Sunday School For All <b>10:00 a.m.</b> Worship	12 <b>6:30 p.m.</b> Literacy Center	13 <b>10:00 a.m.</b> Chit Chats	14 <b>10:30 a.m.</b> Bible Study via ZOOM <b>6:00 p.m.</b> W@W	15	16	17
18 <b>8:45 a.m.</b> Sunday School For All <b>10:00 a.m.</b> Worship	19 <b>NO</b> Literacy Center	20 <b>10:00 a.m.</b> Chit Chats	21 <b>10:30 a.m.</b> Bible Study via ZOOM <b>6:00 p.m.</b> W@W <b>7:30 p.m.</b> Board Meeting	22 <b>12:00 p.m.</b> Sack Lunch <b>1:00 p.m.</b> Coloring Group	23	24
25 <b>8:45 a.m.</b> Sunday School For All <b>10:00 a.m.</b> Worship	26 <b>6:30 p.m.</b> Literacy Center	27 <b>10:00 a.m.</b> Chit Chats	28 <b>10:30 a.m.</b> Bible Study via ZOOM <b>6:00 p.m.</b> W@W	29	30	31
February 1 <b>8:45 a.m.</b> Sunday School For All <b>10:00 a.m.</b> Worship <b>4:00 p.m.</b> Zoo	2 <b>6:30 p.m.</b> Literacy Center	3 <b>10:00 a.m.</b> Chit Chats	4 <b>10:30 a.m.</b> Bible Study via ZOOM <b>6:00 p.m.</b> W@W	5 <b>11:30 a.m.</b> W.O.W.	6	7 <b>8:00 a.m.</b> B.O.B.