

United
Presbyterian
Church
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The Chimes

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CHRISTMAS AT UPC

A Place to Worship, A Place to Serve, A Place to Belong

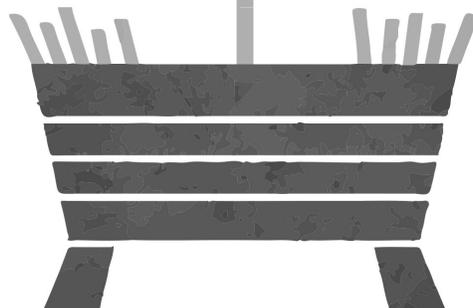
**A Christmas Celebration:
An Afternoon of Theater and Music**
Saturday, December 3rd 2:00pm

Family Christmas Shop
Saturday, December 10th 4:00-6:00pm

Service of Light and Hope
Tuesday, December 20th 6:00pm

Family Christmas Eve Worship
Saturday, December 24th 4:00pm

**Lessons and Carols Candlelight
Christmas Eve Worship**
Saturday, December 24th 7:00pm



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*In Our Prayers*

Gladys Abraham
Eunice Andrews
Jack Bensing
Bryce Brand
Leonard Brown
Bill Bunker
Dan Dickerson
Bob & Carolyn Gnepper
Bill Hall
Pam Harrison
Midge Hillard
Margaret Hochstrasser
Loretta Horst
Mary Johnson
Dwight & Corda Jones
Mike Kelley
Maureen Leuba
John & Karen Mason
Ethel Moore
Diane Morrill
Stephanie Murray
Henry Noetzel
Steve Nordvall
Nathan Pennington
Eddie Sandlin
Sherry Shedenhelm
Deb Sullivan
Jude Thom
Jack & Marilyn Umdenstock
Dale Warren
Steve Wrigley



Pray for the Holy Spirit to empower the church.



Interested in joining United Presbyterian Church?
Contact a pastor or visit our website at: www.unitedpc.org.

God Breaks In

Growing up, I believed that the opposite of fear was love. But as the years have gone on, as I have gone to seminary, read the Bible a little more closely, I have begun to see that there are lots of opposites of fear.

In fact, the entire season of Advent is themed with opposites of fear. Hope, love, peace and joy are all opposites of fear. It is difficult to be joyful while you are fearful. It is difficult to be at peace when you are experiencing fear. It is difficult to love that which you fear. When fear has a strangle hold on your life, it would seem that all hope is lost.

Biblically then, it is no surprise that angels greet us saying, "Be not afraid." We seem to have a disposition and disposition for living in fearfulness, for being motivated out of fear, for finding fear even in that which was intended for hope, love, peace and joy.

For the Christian world, Advent is the beginning of our liturgical year. It's the four weeks leading up to the day we celebrate the birth of Jesus. In modern times, we have a tendency to jump right from Thanksgiving to Christmas (for that matters it seems most stores jump from Halloween to Christmas). Skipping Advent robs us of an opportunity to have a deeper understanding and experience of what the coming of Jesus means.

Advent is a time of waiting. A time of waiting and anticipating what the arrival of this baby means. In part, it is the absence of Jesus during Advent that helps us understand how celebratory the arrival of the child born in a manger is. It is in the waiting for Hope to come down that we begin to understand hopefulness.

Let's not rush into Christmas, and try to sing all the carols right away, but rather bask in the anticipation of that which has both happened and is yet to come. You see, in waiting for Hope to come down for the first time, we begin to understand why there is hope in the second appearing of Christ, when God will break into our world yet again. The apocalypse is not the fearful thing we (with the help of Hollywood) have made it out to be.

The promise of a second appearing of Jesus is not to be feared. Much like Christmas, the first appearing, it is something we should wait for in hopeful anticipation, not fearful dreading. We should hopefully (not fearfully) wait for the second coming of Christ, if for no other reason than the knowledge of how the world changed for the better on the first appearing when Hope came down. To jump straight to Christmas, without Advent, is to miss out on the message of hope that the coming of a Savior brings.

The message of Advent is that God breaks in. God breaks into our world not to punish us, but to save us. Throughout the Bible, there are stories of how God acts directly in people's lives for salvation. Sometimes we long for those grand gestures like the Exodus through the Red Sea or an angel shutting the mouths of lions, but the promise of Advent is that God still breaks in. We need to know that Hope is with us and can still break into our lives.

That's why Advent is important. In anticipating the arrival of the baby who will be born in a manger, it teaches us to hope in the face of fears and continue to look for the ways God breaks into our lives.

In common calling,
Pastor Stephen

Every Valley

Advent, the time of year when I pull out my favorite Advent/Christmas music, Handel's Messiah. I know I am not alone in the love of this amazing and inspiring music. Messiah does not skip over the condition of deep longing, and desire and expectancy, and hope that resided among Israel at that time. It gives voice to our deep longing, and desire and expectancy, and hope that resides within many among us today.

The musical selection reminds us of the journey of comfort that "every valley shall be exalted" be lifted up, be filled in, be raised up, as the various translations of Isaiah 40:4 speak to us. "Gods will is comfort and consolation to those very depths of despair and depends on human as well as divine agency to bring that message from God's royal realm" (*Every Valley* by Albert L. Blackwell). Incarnate Jesus, fully human and fully God is how God meets this deep longing, deep desire and deep need.

And so, we will be listening to the music, examining the lyrics and the musical composition, and looking into the Scriptures which inspired this amazing Advent, Christmas, and Easter masterpiece during Connecting Point this month. Join me on Wednesdays at 6:15pm after our Connecting Point meal.

Also, we are hosting a 3rd Annual Service of Light and Hope. It is a service designed to comfort, and to raise us up during the darkest season of the year (literally). A time when sadness and loneliness, grief and loss, what feels like a valley, can seem like it doesn't belong in the midst of all the festivity and gaiety of Christmas preparations and gatherings. God cares for the valleys in our lives. We need to know that, and this service brings it into the light. You will be lighting candles for the things that feel like valleys in your life.

God cares for every valley! That is the message of Advent, which leads to how God in fact does raise up, exalt, and lift up those valleys. May the blessings of Advent, and the lifting up of your valleys be real and evident for you this season.

Patricia

Prayer Circle

We pray for the healing hand of God be upon our friends in need of healing: Betty Swartz, Bev West, Betty Keller, Steve Wrigley, Eunice Andrews, Rennie Rhoades, Janet McGee, Jacquie Spaulding, Margaret Hochstrasser, Duane Mach, Marilyn Umdenstock, Audrey Nielsen, Nathan Pennington. And may our compassionate God grant comfort and strength to: Corda Jones who is on Hospice Care. And may the Lord of Life and Love comfort and strengthen the family and friends who are grieving for: Jack Dixon, Margaret Greiner, Cliff Hanson, Jackie Fulton, Karen Wasserburger (Pastor Patricia's aunt), and Dorothy Barberie (Kathy Hasselberg's mother). We thank you for the gift of their lives.

Stewardship & Finance

2017 Pledge Campaign

As of November 21st, we have received 147 pledges totaling \$427,535.00. Our goal that would allow us to meet a balanced ministry budget was \$535,000. That budget did not include Principal on the mortgage, so even with \$535,000 in pledges, we would have a negative cash flow budget. A team of the leaders of the Human Resources Committee, Stewardship and Finance Committee, and the Foundation are meeting to talk about strategic budget planning for 2017 and into the future. We want to find sustainable ways to meet our ministry goals, pay off our mortgage, and be faithful stewards of what we have been entrusted with. If we do not come closer to reaching our \$535,000 goal, we'll have to make some significant changes to our 2017 budget and spending. If you have not turned in a pledge for 2017, please do so as soon as possible. You can get an extra pledge card from the church office or Welcome Center, or contact the church financial secretary, Sabrina McGrath.

Season Greetings from the Finance office

Thank you for your continued support of UPC & our ministries. As we quickly near the end of 2016 I wanted to make you aware that any donations to be applied to 2016 must be in the church office no later than **10 am on Friday, December 30th 2016**. This will allow us to have them to the bank prior to closing for the holiday. Thank you. I hope you have a safe & happy holiday season.

Connecting Point

Wednesday Night Connecting Point

Come join us on Wednesday nights and get connected. We have something for all ages.

Whether you come for the meal and fellowship, come for the adult class, parent group, Tai Chi, music rehearsals, or for the children's activities, it is a great time to Come and Get Connected!

Weekly Schedule

5:30 Meal / Handbell Choir
 6:00 Tai Chi / Games (game night only)
 6:15 Worship Band
 6:15 Adult Class / Parent Group / Youth Room open / Activities for children (4th Wednesday is Family Game night)
 7:15 Chancel Choir

No Connecting Point on December 21 & 28.

Family Game Night will return in January.

Connecting Point Adult Class at 6:15pm

Advent with Handel's Messiah.

Handel's Messiah is one of the most famous compositions in the whole of Western music. Handel's *Messiah* is "a commentary on [Jesus Christ's] Nativity, Passion, Resurrection and Ascension", beginning with God's promises as spoken by the prophets and ending with Christ's glorification in heaven. In other words, the fullness of the Christ story which begins with Advent. The composition is truly a masterpiece. Pastor Patricia will lead us in listening to music selections, as well as examining its musical composition, its lyrics, and the Biblical texts of Advent and Christmas from which the music tells the story. Come and enter into the beauty and artistry, and wonderful truths of this amazing work of art.



Worship & the Arts

Christmas Celebration:

An Afternoon of Theater and Music

On Saturday, December 3rd at 2:00pm the drama team and music ministry will be offering a presentation called "**Christmas Celebration: an Afternoon of Theater and Music**". It will consist of three different plays, sing-along Christmas Carols, and music from the preschool children, Chancel Choir, Worship Band, and Celtic Ensemble. It is a free event with a light reception to follow. Childcare will be provided.

Christmas Poinsettias on Sale

From now until December 11th, Christmas Poinsettias are on sale. The cost is only \$5 and can be made in Honor/Memory of. There will be a table in the fellowship hall following worship services on Sundays to place your order. You can pick them up any time after the Christmas Day worship service on December 25th.

When God Breaks In

Our Advent sermon series this year is "When God Breaks In." We'll look at times when God breaks into our world in Scripture and into our lives right now. God breaks into our stories, into our lives, and breaks us out of our sin and the clutches of death. At Christmas, we celebrate God breaking into our lives by becoming incarnate among us as a baby. God is still breaking into our lives in powerful ways. Join us as well celebrate *When God Breaks In*.



New Advent Wreath

This year, we get to mark the Sundays of Advent as we approach Christmas with a new Advent wreath and stand. Jim Pugh designed and built the beautiful stand/wreath to match our sanctuary. Please thank Jim for sharing his time and talent with the church, and let him know how much you appreciate the new Advent wreath.

Christmas Eve Worship Services

At 4:00pm, join us for an all ages youth/child led Service of Lessons and Carols. Journey through the Christmas story with stories, music and characters. Join us after for hot cocoa and cookies in the Fellowship Hall.

At 7:00pm, we will have a worship service with Christmas Readings, Drama, a Christmas meditation from Pastor Stephen, and music from the Bell Choir, Chancel Choir, and Worship Band, along with the traditional candle-light service. Childcare will be provided.

Christmas Worship

We will have worship on Christmas morning, December 25th, at 10:00am. It is a great opportunity to give praise to God as we celebrate God coming to us and living among us. We will not have education hour or fellowship after the service. Children are invited to worship with us on the 25th, so we can celebrate Christmas as one church family. We'll sing many of our favorite Christmas Carols that we didn't get to sing at other times during the Christmas season.

Sunday Worship

December 4th: Genesis 7: 11,17-24 and 9:11-13
"God Breaks Into the Story" Pastor Stephen

December 11th: Exodus 6:1-7
"God Breaks Us Out" Pastor Stephen

December 18th : John 1:10-14, 3:16
"God Breaks Into Our Lives" Pastor Stephen

December 25th: Matthew 1:18-25 Pastor Patricia

The Room 100/Chapel is open for prayer on Sunday mornings before and after worship.

Weekday worship

Tuesday December 13th and 27th (Communion) at 10am in the 3rd Floor Activity Room at Independence Village. UPC members are welcome to join together with the residents at Independence Village as we sing hymns and hear a message from Pastor Patricia. We are the church without walls.

Worship & the Arts Continued

A Reflection on our Hymns and Hops

I love beer and I love singing hymns, so the recent gathering at Hymns and Hops is literally a match made in heaven for me. For those of you who don't know about this event, let me briefly clue you in on it.

United Presbyterian Church and Imago Dei Church in Peoria have teamed up to meet on the 4th Sunday of the month at 7:00pm to drink beer (or any beverage you prefer) and sing hymns at the Fox Pub. The last two times we have offered this event, people from many other churches have shown up with the common desire to sing these songs of faith together.

There is this romanticized image in my head about group singing in a pub setting thanks to the cinema. The scene of Casablanca comes to mind when the nationalist songs of France and Germany are sung in competition of one another, and participants are singing these songs with such vivacity as if their lives were dependent upon it (as in this case, some of their lives were on the line).

Maybe the singing at Hymns and Hops isn't as high-spirited as that iconic scene, but there is a unique atmosphere created when we sing hymns together outside of the church building. When we proclaim our allegiance to Christ in the sanctuary, it is safe, expected, and assumed. But when we proclaim our allegiance to Christ in a public place like a pub, I have found it forces me to look at the words differently; almost as if I'm more conscientious of what I am proclaiming. The ease of singing in a sanctuary is temporarily stripped away, and the words and melodies come to life in different and unexpected ways.

The people who have gathered at these hymn-sings have greatly contributed to the experience as well. Just last time, there were Presbyterians, Methodists, Catholics, Anglicans, and Non-Denominational Christians represented; all of them eager to be unified together under the force of these hymns. People were genuinely joyful to be together in spite of our differences in theology to be community with one another. By nature of our participation, we all affirmed the praise of God is more important than the disagreements we have with one another. The owners of the pub, Matt and Courtney, shared with me that opening up their bar for Hymns and Hops is a public offering to their church of Imago Dei because as restaurant owners, it is very difficult to get to church on a regular basis. For them, this Sunday evening gathering is a special form of church.

If you have not yet attended one of these gatherings, I strongly encourage you to do so. If you have, I hope to see you at the next one! As a creation defined by our worship and a people called to continual praise of God, this gathering allows for a beautiful expression of our faith through the unifying songs of the Church.

Advent Devotionals

Our Advent gift to you: An Advent Devotional booklet containing Advent Devotionals written by the staff, session, and members of UPC for you. There is a copy for every family who would like one. We also have a copy for each youth (4th grade and up). You may pick up your copy after worship, or stop by the office. If you would like additional copies, we ask for a donation of \$1 per copy.

Thank you to the UPC staff and members who volunteered to write devotionals, and to the Worship and Arts committee, and UPC staff and volunteers for compiling them into booklets.

Mid-Month Communion: A Special Service of Worship

3rd Annual Service of Light and of Hope December 20 at 6:00pm

As we near the longest night of the year, and spend more hours of the day in darkness, we long for light. As we draw near to the Christmas holiday, some of us are feeling blue. Perhaps it is because it our first Christmas without our loved one, or perhaps it is the 25th. Some of us carry sadness for any number of reasons; illness, loneliness in a season when the festivities and laughter may leave us feeling forgotten and alone.

In this candlelight service we will be inviting the light of Christ and the Hope in Christ to lead us and guide us through the season of darkness.

Christian Education



Eleven Minute Lessons
Eleven Minute Lessons continues each Sunday at 11:11am in room 107 with

an in-depth study of Genesis. When we read Genesis as an ancient story, written at a particular time to a particular people, it opens up possibilities and worlds we don't encounter in our limited existence. When we stop using Genesis as an argument, a textbook, or a code of conduct, and begin to see it as an ancient story— with memorable characters, twists and turns, ups and downs, accomplishments and mistakes— we find it fresh, deep, and more true and relevant than we might expect. Join us for Eleven-Minute Lessons as we learn the nature of God, Scripture, and humanity through the Book of Genesis.

adult Classes

Sunday 9:00am Education Hour

All classes welcome newcomers at any time.

Followers Book Discussion with Pastor Patricia (Room 105) *Leap Over a Wall* by Eugene Peterson. Come and join us for the discussion. We have a book copy for sharing with newcomers. This rendition of the story of David is so vivid that we can see our own story in David's story. This month we are looking at how God's purposes are being worked out in the ordinary things of **Boneheads, Growth, and Religion**. The short chapters read much like an inspiring devotional.

Journey through the Bible: Isaiah

with Don Baker (Room 107) This Bible Study group is dedicated to growing in knowledge of God through what is revealed in the Bible. We interpret the stories for their relevance then, and seek to understand their relevance for today. Each participant receives a workbook. Bring your Bible, or use one of ours.

Animate Faith Class

Pastor Stephen leads a class for all ages at 9:00am on Sunday using a short DVD curriculum that features popular pastors and scholars. We have open discussion after the we watch the morning's lesson together. We are finishing our series on "The Bible" this month.

Room 100/Chapel is set aside for those who would like a quiet place to pray.

Waking Up White Book Discussion Group

This year, our synod of Lincoln Trails has chosen the book *Waking up White* by Debby Irving as a "One Book, One Synod" project, following a call by our G.A. co-moderators to read this memoir as a way of opening up dialogue on racism within our communities. Members of UPC have expressed an interest in adding their voices to this conversation and so we welcome all to join us in as we read *Waking Up White* together and work towards a broader understanding of racial justice.

In *Waking Up White*, Debby Irving shares her sometimes cringe-worthy struggle to understand racism and racial tensions. In this memoir, she offers a fresh perspective on bias, stereotypes, manners, and tolerance. As Irving unpacks her own long-held beliefs about colorblindness, being a good person, and wanting to help people of color, she reveals how each of these well-intentioned mindsets actually perpetuated her ill-conceived ideas about race. She also explains why and how she's changed the way she talks about racism, works in racially mixed groups, and understands the antiracism movement as a whole. The book was designed for groups, and we will read it together one section at a time.

We began the study on Nov. 27th by discussing the first section of the book titled "Childhood in White." We'll continue to meet after 11-Minute lessons from 11:30 am- 12:30 pm each Sunday through Advent. Childcare is available.

Thursday Mornings at 10:00am

Jesus' teachings and parables in Luke chapters 13-14 with Pastor Patricia; this month including the Parables of The Barren Fig Tree, The Mustard Seeds and Yeast, the Narrow Door and The Great Dinner. No class on December 29.

Children and Youth

Family Christmas Eve Service Rehearsals Rehearsals begin Sunday, November 27, but you can join us December 4

Any children and youth wanting to be a part of the Family Christmas Eve service are invited to our rehearsals. This will be a simple service of lessons and carols read by older youth and acted out by younger with some well-known carols in between. Contact Karen Miller if you have any questions.

Children's Education Hour – 9:00am

Children will be hearing the Bible stories through a very special "Brick Bible" and encouraged to recreate the stories themselves with our huge stash of Legos. It is a fun and creative way to hear the stories again and solidify them.

Children's Sunday School Hour

NOTE: There will be no classes on Christmas Day.

Holy Moly

Ages 3 – 3rd grade

Children will be escorted from worship after the Time for Young Disciples upstairs to the Sunday school rooms for Holy Moly. Holy Moly follows a four-part sequence: Discover, Relate, Connect, and Create. Each week, kids will watch an animated Bible story video, talk about the story, read their Bible, and will be encouraged to journal their observations. It is a wonderful curriculum that you are welcome to observe anytime!

Connect

4th Grade - 6th Grade

We will be continuing "CONNECT" and going deeper into the Bible stories we have been told repeatedly as children. **NOTE:** On 1st Sundays, this class will remain in worship.

Confirmation Class

We started a new confirmation class for those entering 7th grade and up. This class will meet every Sunday (except 1st Sundays where they will experience worship with their class) until May. If you are interested in the class and have not already been in contact with Karen Miller, please email at karen@unitedpc.org for more information. It is not too late to join us.

NEW! 2nd - 4th grade Fellowship Group

Starting in the new year, we will gather 2nd-4th graders once a month on a Sunday afternoon for fun, games and snacks. Consider it a mini-youth group! If your child is interested, please send Karen Miller an email to get your child on the email list.

Karen@unitedpc.org

News and Notes

Parent's Night Out

December 2 (1st Friday of each month)

6:00 – 8:30pm

Cost is \$10 for the first child, \$5 for each additional.

Need a night out without the kids? Let our experienced nursery staff give you that break you deserve. They will entertain the kids with play in the nursery, movies, playground, gym and more depending on ages and numbers. It is a guaranteed good time for them while you enjoy some on your own. This is a service we provide to members of UPC and is on a first come first serve basis. For planning purposes, please reserve your spot by the Wednesday before PNO. Email Karen Miller at Karen@unitedpc.org to reserve today.

Sunday Morning Office Volunteers Needed

Looking for:

- Office Duty Volunteers
- No experience needed
- Training available
- Sunday Morning 9:45 am – 10:00 am
- To volunteer please call Ann Gropp 309 339-3239
- Volunteer now for 2017



QUEST Youth Groups

QUEST Youth Groups

We currently have two youth groups, one for a group of High School Sophomores and up and a group of 6th graders through High School Freshmen who stay together as a group. Soon a new group of 3rd - 5th graders will begin to meet a couple of times this school year to get them connecting outside of worship/Sunday school. Keep checking The Chimes for updates on this.

Youth groups usually meet 2nd and 4th Sundays, but to get the most up-to-date information, email Karen Miller at Karen@unitepc.org to get on the youth updates email list.

Family Christmas Shop Kid's Store Set-Up Sunday, December 4

4:00-5:30pm

We will set the youth room up for the store and do any shopping if needed.

Family Christmas Shop Kid's Store Saturday, December 10

3:30pm

Youth will be running their annual Kid's Store. We will take groups of kids shopping in the youth room for gifts to give this Christmas. It is an important youth ministry as well as a big project, hope you all can make it.

R.U.S.H. (Rising up to Serve Him) Middle/Early High School Youth Sunday, December 11

3:30 – 5:00pm

Join us for our annual Christmas party! We will have dinner, play games, and a white elephant gift exchange.

QUEST Older High School Youth Sundays, December 11

5:00 – 6:30pm

Annual Christmas party complete with dinner, games, and Secret Santa.

Mission

Family Christmas Shop

This year, the Family Christmas Shop will be on Saturday, December 10th at 4:00pm. We still need lots of people to sign up to make this year's event a success. Please sign up to help at the bulletin board by the welcome Center. We also need many more gifts.

Needs:

Sports equipment

Coats

Arts and crafts

Dolls and action figures

Legos and Other Building or Science Toys

Gifts for children under 2

Other popular toys.

We do not need any wrapping paper this year.

Christmas Joy Offering

We will receive the Christmas Joy offering on December 11th and 18th. The Christmas Joy offering envelopes will be in your bulletins and

100% of the proceeds will be used to help children in our community through some of the local missions we support and projects we undertake like "Look! It's My Book," Snack Packs, Common Place, Foster Family Outreach, and Westminster Infant Care Center.



News and Notes

Thank-You

Thank You! A huge thanks to everyone who came out to the Youth Group Craft and Vendor Fair. It was a success and we have added to our fund for our 2017 trip. An even bigger thanks to our youth group and parents who worked so hard getting it ready. It went so smoothly and it is all thanks to them.

To All Our UPC Family,

Dan and I would like to thank all who sent cards and thought of us when my mother, Clar B. Cluck, passed away. I wish to thank Pastor Patricia for her visit to the hospital and her blessings for mom. Her passing on Sept.12th was a very difficult time for the family and continues to be. Thank you again to all our UPC family.

Love, Dan and Rose Dickerson

Church Life

Bus Trip to the Festival of Lights

The East Peoria Festival of Lights is one of the largest lighted, nighttime festivals in the Midwest. Celebrate the holidays with a million sparkles of excitement as we take the UPC bus through the 32nd Annual East Peoria Festival of Lights on **Sunday December 11**. We will depart at 4:30pm drive through the lights and return after dinner at Avanti's. Sign up in Church office. Cost for transportation is \$5.

UPC Christmas Cookie Exchange

UPC Fellowship Hall

Saturday, Dec. 17 10:00am until cookies are gone
Bake once, yet have a variety of Christmas cookies for your families and guests!

Bring your cookies in packages of 6, along with the recipe, and exchange your bags of 6 for other bags of 6. The more you bring, the more you get to take home! Watch the Church Life bulletin board for more details

NO Bunco and Hand and Foot in December. All back in January. Merry Christmas!

Eating Together

Men's Breakfast: Dec. 8th at 9:00am at Le Peep.

Thursday Lunch Bunch: Dec. 8th, at 11:30am at UPC. Potluck meal in Fellowship Hall

Ladies Night Out: December 8th at 6:00pm Steak n Shake in East Peoria. This is a white elephant gift exchange. RSVP: Eunice @ 688-8458 or Betty @822-8500.

Local Lunch: Dec. 19th at 12:00pm at Donnelly's Irish Pub on Rockwood Drive.

Ruth Circle: Dec. 12th at 12:30pm. Bring a sandwich to divide and share. Note: This will be the last Ruth Circle meeting as they have decided to disband.

I am deeply grateful to have had the honor of leading Ruth Circle for several years, and for my membership in such a loving and caring group of ladies for 10 years. We feel that we have done our very best to honor our church, and its congregation.

God Bless You,

Sara Stotts and the Ruth Circle

News and Notes

Congregational Meeting

There will be a congregational meeting for the purpose of electing new church officers and other elected positions on December 4th after worship. We will also vote on a motion to move the Annual Meeting to the 5th Sunday of January so there is time to put all the financial information into the Annual Report.

Session Class of 2019:

Charlotte Cronin, Mary Jo Mays, Alicia McKeighan, Megan McKeighan, Kathy Nordvall

Deacons Class of 2019:

Theresa Bender, Ken Krancher, Sue McGill, Mike Murphy, Lilli Nettell, Deb Paul, Nancy Pogue, Myrna Schwarz

Nominating Committee Class of 2019:

Aaryn Jennings, Kirsten Hall, Pauline Harris, Dwight Jones, Kim Murray

Foundation Class of 2019:

Rick Kern, Ellen Ruppert

Quilt Results

The "Dazzling Diamonds" Quilt went home with happy Don Towery, whose name was drawn at the Tea Party on October 8th. Congratulations to him and a big thank you to all who participated in this project. Proceeds were divided among the local missions listed below. Again, thank you from the quilters.

Friendship House	\$100.00
Southside Mission	\$100.00
Neighborhood House	\$100.00
MAP	\$300.00
Center for Prevention of Abuse	\$ 75.00
Common Place	\$ 75.00
Gen. Wayne A. Downing Veterans Home	\$ 75.00

Health & Wellness

Healthy Holiday Eating

During the holiday season, it's hard to pass up all those tasty treats. We are constantly tempted by unhealthy food at parties and other get-togethers. Try using these quick, easy tips and ideas for a healthier holiday season:

- **Eat a snack before going to parties.** Try eating a protein-rich snack like low-fat yogurt, cottage cheese, or a handful of nuts. It will help you eat less at the party.
- **Choose your drinks wisely.** Punches, eggnog, and alcohol are loaded with calories. Limit alcohol to 1-2 drinks. Stick to water with a twist of lemon or lime.
- **Bring a healthy dish to pass.** That way you know there is at least one dish you can eat without having to worry.
- **Be active.** Try walking, dancing, sledding, ice skating, or building a snowman. Aim for at least 30 minutes of physical activity per day. It can help you get rid of stress and burn those extra calories from eating holiday foods.

• **Make time to relax.** Read a book, take a bath, go for a walk, or get your nails done. The holidays can be really stressful, and we tend to overeat when we are stressed.

Quick Holiday Nog

4 medium bananas, peeled
1 ½ cups skim milk or soy milk
1 ½ cups nonfat yogurt
1 tsp rum extract
¼ tsp ground nutmeg

Directions:

1. Place bananas, milk, yogurt, and rum extract in a blender.
2. Puree until smooth.
3. Pour into 5 glasses.
4. Top with nutmeg and enjoy!

References:

American Dietetic Association: www.eatright.org

WebMD: www.webmd.com

Here's to a happy and healthy Christmas!

Kirsten Tharp RN, BSN

Parish Nurse

News and Notes

Tai Chi Open House

You are invited to join The Taoist Tai Chi Society of the USA on Wednesday evening January 18 from 6:15-7:30 pm for an open house in room 100. We will have demonstrations of the tai chi set and serve tea. Come check out this graceful and gentle form of exercise with its series of slow movements.

Tai chi has many health benefits-mind, body and spirit. The benefits include decreased stress and anxiety, improvement of energy and stamina, flexibility, balance and strength, concentration, circulation, posture, the central and nervous systems of the body, rhythm of movement, quality of sleep, and joint pain. It is low impact and appropriate for any age and fitness level.

TTCS is a non profit charitable organization. Guests are always welcome to observe classes held on Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons in the atrium from 1:30-2:30pm, or on Monday and Wednesday evenings in room 100 from 6:00-7:30pm.

Continuing UPC participants are Deb and Monica Paul and Kathy Hasselberg. The instructors are Atsuko Cummins 309-691-7118, peoria.il@taoist.org, Deb Paul and Monica Paul. Please feel free to speak with them if you have any questions.

Nature Connections

The Nature Connections committee will be hosting some nature activities in the next few months for children, families and whoever else would like to participate. Listed below are the dates and activities.

December 4: Christmas Tree for the Birds

January 22: Winter Walk

May 1: Spring Fling

Mark your calendars today!

Foundation, Stewardship & Finance

Some have understandably asked why Foundation doesn't pay off the mortgage. Let me try to answer with a discussion of what Foundation is and has done.

Session created the "United Presbyterian Church of Peoria Illinois Foundation" on June 15, 2004, this subsequently being ratified by the congregation in Article X of the church By-Laws. Foundation combined the endowment assets of the merged Arcadia Avenue PC and First PC. The purpose of Foundation is to "receive and manage" special gifts intended to be "Christian stewardship beyond one's lifetime" and "become a living memorial and a perpetual source of financial support to benefit the Church." The quotes are from Article X.

To accomplish this purpose, Foundation stresses retention of invested principal and use of the income. This is similar to how an individual should manage retirement savings once retired: grow the invested amount through market price increases to produce increasing income. To this end, Article X limits the amount of unrestricted funds withdrawn in any year to 8% of their value. Only with approval of two-thirds of both Session and the congregation can that percent can be exceeded.

Foundation assets are allocated among many "named funds." These named funds are of two types—restricted and unrestricted. When a gift is made, the donor may stipulate (restrict) how the money is to be used and how much of the principal cannot be used. There are 17 restricted named funds, all different, containing 25% of Foundation assets. The remaining assets are unrestricted; they were given with no specific direction on use.

Foundation reports monthly to Session the amount of income and principal available for use. For restricted funds and where appropriate within restrictions, committees are encouraged to create ways to use available income, and principal only when necessary. Foundation also encourages use of income from unrestricted assets, although such encouragement has been unnecessary for some time.

For many years, the church has relied on Foundation to balance the budget. This year Foundation will provide \$113,000, close to the allowed limit. The same amount is planned for 2017, yet the budget has a significant deficit. Since 2010, Foundation has matched \$283,090 in MAP pledges and provided \$848,786 in direct budget support, effectively making over 80% of the mortgage payments. Nearly 65% of this money came from principal, forever reducing future income. Future withdrawals will rely ever more heavily on principal. Despite some good market gain years and significant new gifts, the value of affected funds has declined nearly \$300,000 since 2010.

There is another concern. With insufficient pledge income, the mortgage obligation undermines our ministry. Continued Foundation withdrawals to bridge the gap increasingly bring into question how well Foundation is accomplishing its purpose and keeping covenant with donors.

Foundation exists so that "faithful stewards" (Article X, again.) can support their church in perpetuity. The responsibility of those elected by the congregation to manage Foundation is to fulfill that purpose. Foundation members must take the long view. Continuous withdrawal of principal is not sustainable and is fundamentally damaging. Hopefully I've answered some questions. If you have others, please ask. You may inspire a follow-up article. Foundation wants to be understood.

Thanks for reading this.

Fred Roland

Foundation, Stewardship & Finance