



United
Presbyterian
Church
of Peoria, Illinois

The Chimes

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In Memoriam, New Year Bells

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light:
The year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind
For those that here we see no more;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times;
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite;
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

Lord Alfred Tennyson, 1809 - 1892

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Ray Long

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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.

P is For Paradigm Shift

Paradigm. It's a big word. It's a scary word. It's an important word. A paradigm is a typical pattern or example of something. For instance, we have many paradigms at UPC. How we do worship is one paradigm. We have a certain model we typically follow that is outlined in the bulletin. There are many smaller paradigms within UPC, but the church itself follows a larger paradigm, and it may just be time for a paradigm shift.

UPC has changed a lot over the last five to six years. On February 28th, you'll have the opportunity to attend a special event in which we'll talk about all the change over the years, what changes have been a blessing, what changes we're still being challenged by, and what these changes may mean for the future. The demographics of our congregation have changed, our programs, our worship, our staff, and our members. It may be time to create a new model for ministry a United Presbyterian Church that helps us to best live into our mission to grow and nurture followers of Christ in a welcoming community. The church will need your help to make this happen effectively and positively. You are the ones who create the paradigm; not the pastors or even the Session.

We'll talk more about Paradigm Shifts in the future and the possible need for one at UPC, but first it may be helpful to explore what a paradigm shift entails.

So let's talk about casseroles. Congregations have organized the sharing of consecrated casseroles for decades. If you have a new baby, if you are recovering from surgery, if you are new neighbor – and you are part of a church community – chances are that somebody will bring you a casserole. Which isn't exactly good news for me because honestly I don't like casseroles!

But people bring more than casseroles these days. It could be a pizza from a local restaurant or it could even be a gift card to Panera. But the casserole is classic.

Jan Edmiston, the Associate Presbyterian of the Presbytery of Chicago recently wrote about a church she knew that found itself in a paradigm shift over casseroles and it went like this:

- The older ladies wanted to take casseroles to moms with new babies in their congregation.
- The new moms were grateful for the gesture.
- The older ladies baked those casseroles (and side dishes) using their best heirloom china because that's how their generation expressed lavish hospitality. You serve your best recipes in your best dishes.
- The new moms were extremely anxious that 1) they'd break the heirloom china and 2) they'd have to wash the serving pieces and then pack up the baby with the heirloom china and then return the heirlooms to the donor. Imagine the added anxiety if mom had given birth to twins and there were two babies to get into car seats. With heirloom china.
- The older ladies believed that the new moms felt isolated and so they often stayed for an hour or so, during which they offered tips to the new moms on how to clean their houses and take care of themselves and the baby.
- The new moms felt too tired for a long visit. And housekeeping/self-care/baby-care tips made them feel judged.

An intervention was required.

After some friction between the heirloom china ladies and the new moms, someone approached a church leader to ask if the new moms might come up with a list of helpful suggestions for anyone volunteering to provide a meal for future new moms or families in need. "*Great idea!*" said the church leader. And so they did:

Please call before dropping by.

Please ask about allergies or food restrictions.

Please bring meals in disposable containers.

Some of the older ladies felt hurt and angry.

They dropped off meals when they were out running errands and they didn't know exactly when they'd be stopping by.

They don't understand what's up with all these peanut allergies and "nursing mothers should be eating meat."

They thought disposable containers were tacky.

This is perhaps an extreme example of generational changes in assumptions that require honest conversation and grace. When the culture shifts, it doesn't mean that the old ways were bad; it's just that things have changed in terms of convenience and norms.

And the point of sharing meals with those in need is that it's about those in need, right? It might make us feel good to offer this service, but it's not about us. Sometimes that's a paradigm shift that has to happen in every church. The church does not just exist for "us," it exists for a world in need.

We make cultural changes not for the sake of making changes. We make cultural changes and paradigm shifts for the sake of others: the ones not yet with us, the ones with the most pressing needs, the ones who are new/hurt/on the fringe.

We'll spend a lot of time talking this year about how we can best be the church God has called us to be in order to grow and nurture followers of Christ in welcoming community. 21st Century Church leaders, and that's all of us, can not focus on the ABCs (attendance, building, and cash.) We focus on the NOPs (the neighbors, organizational structure, and paradigm shifts.) What attitudes, organizational structures, and traditions do we need to have honest conversations about so that we can move forward in mission? How can we best use all our assets (personal, organizational, relational, physical) to serve Christ?

I hope you'll join me in these conversations all year and hold your elected Elders and Deacons in prayer as they consider these issues and God's call for this church.

In common calling,
Pastor Stephen

News and Notes

Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation of United Presbyterian Church will be Sunday, January 24th at 11:00am following worship. The purpose of the meeting is to receive the Annual Report, vote on terms of call for the pastors, and thank those who have finished terms of service on the Session, Board of Deacons, Foundation, and Nominating Committee. Please plan to attend this special meeting.

Annual Reports

Annual Reports to be included in the compiled report for the Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 24th are due by Friday, January 8th. Please send them electronically to the office in 12pt Calibri font to upc@unitedpc.org. You can of course send them in earlier!

Pastor Stephen Serving as Gap Presbyter

For the next few months, I will be serving as the Gap Presbyter for the Presbytery of Great Rivers while the Presbytery searches for a new full-time General Presbyter. This is an opportunity to serve our Presbytery that has recently done so much to support our ministry through grants, mission-matching, and more. I will continue with my regular duties at UPC, but I'll be spending time doing Presbytery work during my day off on Friday and some evenings. It is a chance for me to learn more and create new relationships in our Presbytery with other churches. Thank you for your support.

The Remedy

Are you one of the many Americans who are overscheduled, tense, frantic, preoccupied, fatigued and starved for time? A common thing that I hear is that others, just like me are so busy. How do we do another thing? And yet another thing is what we have to do, somehow. How many times I have read about the need for rest and to re-charge the batteries, and then comes the day off and again there are so many things needing attention, that even a day off can be exhausting. The dilemma becomes that over-productivity becomes counterproductive.

Our Western culture which values achievement, and immediate access and attention, is quickly growing us into a culture addicted to work. We have become so accustomed to work and busyness that when we are not busy, we often feel guilty that we are wasting time. God has offered us a remedy; refreshment in an age old practice that is a gift to us for better loving and better living. God spoke this wisdom to us through Moses as recorded in Exodus 20. God says we are to remember and keep holy the Sabbath. God even goes on in great length to describe what that means.

Remember the Sabbath day, and keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God; you shall not do any work -- you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and consecrated it. (Exodus 20:8-11)

God worked, we work. God rested, and we who are made God's image, likewise live fullest when we rest. Are we greater than God? The very word "Sabbath" means "to cease, to stop working." Holy means separate, set aside. God gave this "command" first to the Israelites, slaves that had to work every day! As now free people it was a gift to them. God desires to give it to us as well. In the age old tradition of Sabbath, many of us grew up in a time when stores were not open, and really nothing happened other than church and pro-football on Sunday. I grew up spending Sunday afternoons with my family playing games or watching football. Now days, even my parents spend much of their Sunday scurrying from here to there. And taking little time to rest until exhausted, or worse yet, ill. What ever happened to Sabbath?

I studied the spiritual practice of Sabbath while in seminary (Is it so forgotten that we now must be educated about it? It appears so). I tried Sabbath awhile, but found that there was no time for 24 hours of rest from the busyness of studies and work, so I abandoned even the notion of it, settling instead for a few hours here or there.

What are we to do? We need to relearn how to rest, to "Abide in my love" as we are told in John 15; to grow in understanding that we are deeply loved by God for who we are, not simply for what we do. A wise mentor of mine told me that when I started my pastoral work that I would need a Sabbath day. Not just a day off to catch up on my personal life management and chores, but a day to rest and refresh. He described Sabbath as "do nothing related to the bottom line," another friend says Sabbath "activity" "does not get you ahead."

What I know it that it's time for me to reclaim Sabbath. Mondays typically will be my day to unplug and rest from my work since I work on Sundays. I plan to journal my experience and frustrations as I commit to learn this new, and much needed discipline. Perhaps you will join me in 2016 in relearning the practice of Sabbath. I would love to know who my fellow sojourners are on this path of reclaiming the rhythms of life which God so lovingly intended.

God Bless you,
Pastor Patricia

Youth Christian Education

Children's Education Hour

Holy Moly!

Main Sunday School Room

Children will experience the Bible through HOLY MOLY! Holy Moly follows a four-part sequence: Discover, Relate, Connect, and Create. Each week, kids will watch and animated Bible story video, talk about the story, read their Bible, and try a creative activity. We are so excited to begin this new journey in our faith!

Middle & High School Education Hour

Harry Potter Discussion Class

Youth Room

We will be studying Harry Potter books and movies and their connection to our faith.

Children's Sunday School

Living Inside Out

Ages 3 – 3rd grade

Children will be escorted from worship after the Time for Young Disciples upstairs to the Sunday school rooms where they will learn how to live their faith inside out! With a monthly theme, the children will experience the Bible through fun, high-energy learning experiences that will be memorable. The excitement will begin with a fun large group time and then take the lesson deeper with small group time by age.

4th Grade and Up Sunday School

Youth Room after the Time for Young Disciples

We will be beginning a new curriculum called "CONNECT" that uses technology and Bible study to take the middle school youth through the Bible in a fun and memorable way.

Quest

Quest Middle School Gatherings

Sunday, January 10 & 24

3:30 – 5:30 p.m.

Activities to be determined.

Quest High School Gatherings

Sunday, January 10 & 24

4:30 – 6:30 p.m.

Activities to be determined.

Thanks

Dear UPC Families,

Thank-you so much for all your prayers, phone calls, condolences and cards regarding the recent death of my Brother. I feel blessed to have such a loving and caring church family. My family and I truly appreciate your thoughtfulness.

All my love and prayers,
Shirley Poshard and Family

Thank-you for your donation of \$73.12 from your pet blessings. It is greatly appreciated. We hope you have a wonderful holiday.

Holly Crotty, Executive Director

Thank-you so much for your church's recent contributions to the center. While we always are grateful for such generosity, it is even more appreciated this year during the difficult times we are seeing due to the disarray in Springfield. We are very thankful for your support of the center.

For the Board of Directors,

Sandy Andrews, Center for the Prevention of Abuse

Thank-you for your prayers, calls & cards during my mother's (Maxine Martin) illness and following her death. Your love and support were deeply felt and so appreciated.

Joyce & Steve Quinn

Dear Friends at United Presbyterian Church,

You are always so accommodating for our homeowners meeting. Thank-you once again for letting us have our meeting in October.

Most Sincerely,

Kathey Freyman, Treas.

Richwoods/Northmoor Homeowners, Assoc.

A big thank-you for sending me the Advent devotion. It was so interesting. I didn't want it to end and also the Chimes each month. It keeps me up on what is going on at church. I was so happy to have Mark & Debbie Hanson, my deacon, to pay us a visit and bring us goodies. Also, the new picture book you sent me. I never get tired of looking at that. We have a wonderful congregation. Thanks to all you wonderful church folks.

Cyrene Eberle

Christian Education

Adult Classes

9AM SUNDAY MORNING ADULT EDUCATION HOUR

LYF Class (Living Your Faith)

Led by Pastor Stephen in Room 107.

Special Class Opportunity on Understanding Our Muslim Neighbors

UPC will host a special class on Sunday mornings at 9:00am in the Heritage Room (room 107) from January 10-31st on how we can understand, work with, and support our Muslim neighbors. We will learn the history and beliefs of Islam, how it intersects and differs with the Christian faith, and some of the current realities for Muslims in America and around the world. We will also have the opportunity to welcome in guests from the Peoria Muslim community who will share with us and answer questions. We hope this can be a foundation of partnering together to make Peoria and the world a better place through dialogue and partnership. Christianity and Islam are very different, but in their purest forms: the love of God and each other is at their very centers. The common word between us is love. We hope you will take advantage of this opportunity to learn more about Islam so that understanding can be fostered, relationships can be formed, and partnerships can be forged.

The Journey and Wired Word and Followers

All classes will meet on Jan. 3 with regular studies. We will then join the Interfaith Class Jan 10-31. The joint class will meet in Room 107.

Followers

Followers have been discussing the award winning book [What's So Amazing About Grace? by Philip Yancey](#). Most recently we read chapters about the widespread racism that exists in the world, and historically even in the church, a practice of ungrace. The parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10 calls us to live differently and to ask the question "are you my neighbor?" It is surely God's timing for us to join the Interfaith Class January 10-21. We hope to see many of you there.

10AM Thursday Morning Bible Study with Pastor Patricia

The Gospel of Luke: It is an orderly account that has been investigated thoroughly. Luke contains many stories and parables not recorded in the other gospels. Stories to strengthen our faith, grow us in our love for God, and to amaze us with the actions of God. Come and join us!

Connecting Point

CONNECTING POINT HAS SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE.

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!

5:30pm Meal / Handbell Choir

6:15pm Activities for children / Worship Band

6:30pm Adult Classes

7:15pm Chancel Choir

Connecting Point Adult Class

Last year Chip Roland did a connecting point series on the pastoral care of those grieving. Time ran out for the study of the book of Job and the lessons it might teach us about sorrow, death and dying and what it means to be present for others. So, this January, Chip will be leading a Bible study of Job for our Wednesday night classes. You are encourage you to do some reading in the book first so you can come with your observations and questions for the group, but you're welcome either way! We hope to see you there!

Connecting Point Kids!

Children are welcome upstairs for Faith 5, prayer, games, crafts and gym time.

Youth room open for middle school and up!

The youth room will be open during Connecting Point for 5th graders and up only. Bring your homework, a book or game and make yourself some hot chocolate. Make sure to clean up after yourself!

Parent's Gathering

Parents will meet after dinner until 7:15pm in the Library. We will gather, parents of all ages and stages, to discuss current parenting topics and issues. We will also spend time exploring how we can bring faith home through seasonal traditions. We are just starting up and you can join us whenever you like!

Spiritual Book Club

The Spiritual Book Club will meet January 27 @ 7:00pm. We will discuss *Peace Like a River* by Lief Enger.

Worship & Arts

Sermon Series: Good News of Great Joy

Join us in worship throughout the month of January as we explore the "Good News of Great Joy" promised in the Gospel of Jesus Christ that the angels declared to the shepherds. Come and hear the good news each Sunday.

Sunday Worship in January

January 3: Matthew 2:1-12 "Your Light Has Come"

Pastor Patricia

January 10: John 15:9-17 "He Has Called Us Friend"

Pastor Stephen

January 17: 2 Peter 1:3-4 "The Power of the Promises"

Pastor Stephen

January 24: Ephesians 1:7-12 "All Things part 1"

Pastor Stephen

January 31: 1 Corinthians 3:21-23 "All Things part 2"

Pastor Stephen

Ordination and Installation

We will ordain and install our new Elders and Deacons on January 10th during worship. Please plan to attend this special service.

Mid-Month Communion: A Special Service of Worship

A Celtic Pilgrimage

January 19 at 6pm

Our Celtic musicians will be gathered once again to lead us in lively Celtic song as we pray Celtic prayers on the theme of journeying; a good theme as we begin a new year and anticipate the things we hope to do, places we hope to go, and people we hope to laugh with this year.

Concert January 16th

We will be hosting a piano recital on Saturday January 16 at 4:00pm. Pianist Lucia de Benito y Sanchez and other students from Richwoods High School will be performing classical works (including Beethoven's "Appassionata" Op. 57 No. 23 (3rd Movement) and Vieuxtemps' Concerto No. 4) and other modern pieces. Tickets are \$5 at the door for those who are 10 and over. All proceeds from the concert will go to benefiting the American Cancer Society. Contact Aaron Schultz (aschultz@unitedpc.org) for more information.

Help Needed-Computer and Video team!

The worship ministry is looking for volunteers to assist in Sunday morning worship by running the computer (which controls the images seen in worship on the screens) and by videotaping the service. Both of these require little training and can be done by anyone with an interest in technology. If you have any questions contact Aaron Schultz (aschultz@unitedpc.org).

Star Gifts: Words to Ponder All Year Long

This year on Epiphany Sunday (January 3rd) we continue our tradition of Star Gifts. A star gift is simply a star-shaped piece of brightly colored paper with a word printed on it. Every person who comes to church on Epiphany Sunday receives a Star Gift and is asked to reflect on that word for the coming year. You are invited to ponder what significance this word might have in your lives, and how God might be speaking to you through that simple message.

The star gifts will be passed around during worship on January 3rd using the same offering plates that we use later on in worship to receive your offerings. In this moment, you are not asked to give; you are invited to receive. It reminds us that this is always the order of things in God's realm-God always gives first, and then we are invited to respond with our gifts and ourselves.

Everyone who receives a star gift is encouraged to take it home and hang it where they are sure to see it every day. Throughout the year, you will be encouraged to share some thoughts, either briefly or at length, about your Star Gift in Sunday School, small groups, and even next year's Advent devotion.

Like any other gift, Star Gifts can either be received with joy or discarded and forgotten. We hope you will consider your Star Gift word to be an opportunity-a chance to reflect on how God speaks to God's people. What might we learn from one word? What new ideas might evolve, what treasured wisdom might resurface? Epiphany is the celebration of God's presence breaking through to shine as a light in the darkness. With this tradition our congregation can rejoice in the reminder of our generous, giving God-one star gift at a time.

Music Rehearsals

We are always looking for more people to be involved in the music ministry. If you have any interest in joining one of our ensembles, I invite you to attend one of the rehearsals to see if it would be something you enjoy. Music rehearsals will resume on Wednesday January 13th, 2016. Here are a list of our three main ensembles and rehearsal times:

Handbell Choir-	5:30-6:15pm
Worship Band-	6:15-7:15pm
Chancel Choir-	7:15-8:30pm

Worship & Arts Cont'd

2016: A Year of Possibility

2015 was my first full year at United Presbyterian Church. It is hard to believe so much time has gone by! In typical New Year's fashion, I thought it would be appropriate to communicate the exciting possibilities I see happening in 2016 based on the wonderful work that has been done this past year.

One of my goals in working in music ministry is to never be fully comfortable with how things are. I believe there needs to be a healthy balance between being assured by the traditions of old to give us firm footing in our faith and being challenged by the continual movement of innovation. Innovation is never stationary and always leads to unpredicted places. Too much innovation leads us bewildered and disconnected from our own liturgical history. But too little innovation invites complacency and eventual decay and disconnect from contemporary society.

At United Presbyterian Church, I see a community who is proud of their heritage and their traditions but who are also willing to try new things in order to be fully rooted in the world we live in. In my opinion, this is the perfect place to be in as a church because it means we can be fully ready to respond to the call of the Holy Spirit in our individual lives and in the life of this community at large. As leaders of the church, we are attempting to hold tradition in balance with the ever-changing world we live in while taking into consideration the ever-changing community we have at UPC.

Every Sunday I look out into the congregation and am encouraged by the people I see. We have every age of life represented at UPC. But just having people from multiple generations in the same building on a Sunday morning is not enough. I believe we have an incredible opportunity to have people from all ages learn from each other, teach one another, and be in true ongoing fellowship with one another in the context of Christian community.

I see this in worship services where children are leading liturgical elements, during the service when older folks are shaking hands and engaging with the Sunday School kids, liturgical art projects where people from all ages are folding origami birds and writing prayer requests, and parents who are being challenged in their faith while seeing the Gospel of Jesus Christ being nurtured in their children's lives. This is such an incredible opportunity for future growth!

Lastly, I see a community that is attempting to be truly welcoming to the stranger. We are lying to ourselves if we think we are a completely inclusive community. Gossip still runs wild, people still feel isolation and loneliness, and division still occurs. However, I firmly believe we are a community that is continually repenting of our pride and continually learning how to welcome in those who don't think, act, or look like ourselves. Friends, this is one of the most difficult tasks of all, but I believe UPC is a beacon of hope in Peoria because of this reason. We are learning how to become a refuge for those in need of shelter, how to clothe those who are vulnerable and exposed, and how to feed our neighbors who are hungry. We are the hands and feet of Christ in this community, and I am so excited to see what God has in store for us in 2016!

Aaron Schultz

Thanks

Dear Friends,
Many thanks to all of you who sent cards and well-wishes after my recent surgery. The red rose was beautiful and graced my window at the hospital and home for a long time. Thanks you Kirsten for your call call. You are a great family. Christmas blessings to all of you. Thanks also, for your prayers!
Sincerely, Audrey Beeney

The Hultgren family would like to extend its sincere appreciation for the outpouring of support and sympathy during the illness and passing of our friend, husband, and father, Allan. We are grateful that Al had such wonderful and caring friends in the church, and the love you shared with him in his final weeks gave him the best transition to his real life in Heaven that we could hope for. We would like to give special thanks to the pastors, musicians, and bereavement committee who all helped make the celebration of Al's life a wonderful day.

Dear Thursday Morning Bible Study and UPC Staff,
Thank you so much for inviting the extended care members to a very delicious Thanksgiving dinner. We appreciated the fellowship and the meal so much!
In Christ's Love,
Jack & Pat Bensing

Health & Wellness

Organize Your Health Information

Have you ever been at the doctor's office filling out long health-history forms? Do you remember what year that procedure was? What is the medication dosage of that night time pill? What was the name of that surgeon?

Keeping an organized record of your health is not only important, but essential for healthcare to be prompt and accurate. It is easy to assume your primary care physician has all the information on file, or has forwarded all necessary information to the specialist. Even though information can be produced in little time on a computer screen in most doctor's offices, NEVER assume! When I go to the doctor, I make sure my INFORMATION SHEET (which I carry in my wallet) is up-to-date and accurate. I also have one for each member of my family. This makes my time spent with the doctor more efficient as well as more complete. You need the following pieces of information when you go:

- o Name, date of birth, address, phone number, medical insurance information, and emergency contact information
- o Allergies and their symptoms
- o Immunization record
- o Medications -- both prescribed and over-the-counter (including dosage and times taken)
- o Chronic conditions
- o Major surgeries (with dates)
- o Contact information for your primary care physician (if seeing a specialist)
- o Date when this information was updated

Organized information can also be really helpful if you are the primary caregiver for someone else such as a child or even an aging parent.

There is a great medication chart website found at www.mymedschedule.com which allows you to type in the medication name. It gives options for dosage amount and times, and automatically fills in for what medication is taken. When completed, you can print out the full page and/or a wallet-size card to carry with you. This same site is also available as an app for both android and apple devices. Never leave home without all your information again!

Check out the Parish Nurse bulletin board in the fellowship hall for blank copies you can use to create a record of your health. Making organizing your health a priority in the New Year!

Health Team

Do you keep current on the latest health news? Is living well important to you? Are you currently or have you been a health care professional?

If you answered yes to ANY of the above, then we need you! The Health and Wellness Team is looking for additional individuals to strengthen our team. The time commitment is minimal and there is something for everyone!

Please contact Kirsten Tharp, Parish Nurse or Cheryl Harkness for more information.

January Mall-Walking

Beat the post-holiday blahs by walking! Lace up your tennis shoes and join your UPC family for mall-walking at Northwoods Mall. Meet at the lower level main entrance at 10am each Monday in January. The pace will be up to you so come and walk a little, or a lot- but come out and walk!

Questions- Contact Kirsten Tharp.

News and Notes

Check Your Leather Jacket!

Do you own a black leather jacket with brown accents at the collar and on the pockets, and women's gloves in the pocket? If so, you may want to check your closet. On Sunday, December 6th, after Fellowship, this jacket was left on the coat rack and a men's black leather bomber style jacket was missing. If you accidentally took the wrong jacket home, please return it to the coat rack. Yours' is still hanging there. Thank you for checking.

Financial Information

Contributions must be received in the church office by 9 am on Thursday, December 31st 2015. If you are mailing your contribution in please allow enough time for it to be received. **Donations received after the cutoff will be posted to 2016 giving.**

Year end 2015 contribution statements will be mailed out the week of January 25th 2016. If you have questions or concerns please contact the church office.

Please note that envelope numbers have changed as we are using up previously purchased sets. Sabrina McGrath, Finance Secretary

Mission

Lifelines to Syria

We recently received a letter from the UNHCR thanking us for our donation of \$12,500. That was doubled because the Presbytery of Great Rivers matched that gift, plus an additional \$8,500 due to matching gifts from other churches in the Presbytery. In total, over \$41,000 was given to help Syrian refugees by the churches of our Presbytery. Below is the letter we received.

*Dear United Presbyterian Church,
Thank you for your gift of \$12,500. We immediately sent the money on so it would be put to work to help Syrian refugee families.*

I am very grateful that you are standing up again for the world's most vulnerable people- refugees. Your gift is providing emergency needs for families- shelter, food, water, medical assistance - as well as protection of human rights.

These days, everyone is hearing about the conflicts and crises. But you continue to hear cries of desperate refugees and respond with compassion and generosity. I am so very grateful for your humanitarian spirit.

*With my heartfelt appreciation and best wishes,
Anne Marie Grey
Executive Director and CEO*

Snack Pack

We fill Snack Packs on the fourth Sunday of the month in the Sewing Room (103). Everyone is welcome to help us fill these snack packs. We provide 40 students from Northmoor Elementary with Snack Pack bags every week so that they may have nutritious food and snacks over the weekend. We fill a month's worth of bags every fourth Sunday of the month after worship, and we need help. We also need donations of the following items, especially at least 40 of each:

Snack Pack Needs:

100% Juice Boxes
Fruit Cups
Applesauce
Granola or Protein Bars
Beef Sticks
Dehydrated Fruit Snacks
Cheese or Peanut Butter Crackers
Breakfast Cereal Bars

Prayer Corner

Please continue your prayers for our friends in need of healing: Rick Tremper, Debbie Sullivan, Mary Jermac, Sandie Martin, Barb Knoblauch, David McDowell, Henry & Jeannie Noetzel, Keith Livingston, Maureen Leuba, Sara Stotts, Don Serup, Don Paul, and Josh Swank. And we ask the Lord to continue to comfort and strengthen all who mourn, particularly the family of Ellie Brown.

Sharing Our Stories

Dan & Rose Dickerson

With the new year upon us in a few days, Dand I have looked back on the year and have given thanks to so many who have been there for him since June 29th. When he walked into the bank, Leigh had seen what happened and was there to help. The emergency team, the doctors, nurses, therapy groups, in home care and friends and family and neighbors have all been there to help in many, many ways.

When we came to UPC, we knew that family and friends are part of the church. There are so, so many to thank. Pastor Stephen and Pastor Patricia for hospital visits and prayer. Nurse Kirsten for all her hospital visits, information and equipment needed. Trish Deppermann and UPC staff for the card, red rose, plant, thoughts and prayers. Church members who helped keep Dan's grass cutting job going and sending checks. Thank you Pauline Harris for your help. Randy Saxon for prayers and visits and Nick and Sandy Nott for the many cards and prayers. Thanks to Dave and Kathy Nixon, Bill and Nona Huber and Patrick for visits and Ron and Vickie Kirchgessner for putting Dan's progress on facebook.

With all the Al and Lois Hultgren was dealing with, they still kept Dan in thought and prayer and we thank them for that.

Dan knows it is a miracle from God that his is here. We know the gifts from God have been blessings upon blessings. Thank you for all the people of UPC whose faith and prayer have been making it possible for Dan to recover and love the Lord more each day.

God Bless one and all.
In Christ,
Dan and Rose Dickerson

Church Life

Eating Together

Men's Breakfast: January 14, at 9:00pm at Le Peep

Local Lunch: January 18 at 12:00pm at Khoury's Cuisine on University

Ladies Night Out: January 21, at 6:00pm@ Perkin's on War Memorial Drive.

Ruth Circle

No Ruth Circle in January. See you all next month!

Church Life

We are the fun committee! Do you like to have fun? Plan fun? We would love to have you join our committee!

Calling all Card Players!

Do you know how to play Hand and Foot? We are looking for 5 more core players to participate in the first get-together in January. We'll play a couple of games and after that, Church Life will have an every first Friday of the month Hand and Foot Night at UPC. That core group of eight players will teach/guide any and all who wish to play. If you'd like to be one of the core players, please contact Charlotte Cronin, 253-4276 or Pauline Harris, 696-0512.

Annual UPC Bowling Night

Peoria Christian Center from 6pm – 8pm in January; date to be announced. ALL are welcome! \$5.00 per person, \$15.00 max per family. Food is available for purchase at the lanes. Watch the Church Life bulletin board in Fellowship Hall for date announcement and sign-up sheets.

BUS TRIPS

Do you have an idea for a 2016 Bus Trips? We would love to hear your ideas? Please contact Pastor Patricia, or Charlotte Cronin.

BUNCO

Bunco starts back up on Jan. 8th @ 7:00pm in the Fellowship Hall. Bring a snack if you want. There is plenty of food and fun. Everyone wins a prize. Call Eunice @ 688-8458 or Betty @ 822-8500 for more info.

Anna Circle

Anna Circle will meet January 14 @ 6:00pm at WeaverRidge. The lesson will be Chapter 6, of Really Bad Girls of the Bible. Our mission will be Share the Warmth Blanket Ministry. Our next work day will be Saturday, January 23 @ 9:30am.

News and Notes

Tai Chi Invitation

You are invited to join The Taoist Tai Chi Society of the USA on Wednesday evening January 20 from 6:30-7:30 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 Monday afternoons in the atrium from 1:30-2:30, or on Monday and Wednesday evenings in room 100 from 6:00-7:30.

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

Tai Chi News of Participation

I am pleased to inform you that Taoist Tai Chi Society of the USA Midwest Branch Peoria Location participants have donated 85 food items at the United Presbyterian Church Food Pantry from August to November 2015. Also we donated 4 gloves and one scarf on the UPC Christmas Tree.

The Taoist Tai Chi Society of the USA, main office in Tallahassee, FL has sent a donation check of \$338.00 to UPC.

We truly appreciate your support and understanding.

Thank you so very much.

Happy Holiday!!

Atsuko Cummins

Thanks

To All Our Friends at UPC! Thank you to Cindy Shipley and her "Share the Warmth" crew for the 50 blankets for these children. And to Trish for her donation for pillows, and others who sent dollars toward beds. You are a congregation filled with "lovingkindness", and because of your generous hearts these children will have a happier, healthier New Year! Merry Christmas, Terry Tayor, Coordinator for the SugarPlum Project



Announcing Registration For the 2016-2017 School Year!

Program Descriptions:

- Four-day preschool sessions: Morning session from 8:30 to 11:30 or afternoon session from 12:30 to 3:30 - Monday through Thursday.
 - Pre-care option for ½ day morning preschool, (7:00 to 8:30)
 - Post-care option for ½ afternoon preschool, (3:30 to 5:30)
 - Full-day preschool sessions: Monday – Friday from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm with pre-care option from 7:00 am to 8:30 am and post-care option from 3:30 pm to 5:30 pm
- Two-day toddler enrichment program: Monday & Tuesday mornings from 8:45 to 11:15 or Wednesday & Thursday mornings from 8:45 to 11:15

Program Highlights include:

- Certified, degreed teaching staff
- Small class sizes and low teacher-child ratios
- Faith based environment with age appropriate Christian experiences
- Intellectually engaging project work
- Environments designed to inspire learning
- Daily physical activities on our playground or gymnasium

Daily nature-based learning experiences in the Nature Classroom

Registration Dates for the 2016-2017 School Year are as follows:

To register for the program, families will need to submit a completed application form for each child along with a check for the registration fee. The 2016-2017 non-refundable registration fee is \$100 per student. Families with more than one child registering pay \$100 for the family.

Current Families: Monday, January 11th until Friday, January 29th

Applications for the 2016-2017 school year will be distributed beginning Monday January 11th in the children's classroom cubby. You may stop by the office to pick-up an extra application if you have an additional sibling in your family to register. The last day to submit an application before community registration is Friday January 29th Any **families not registered by January 29th, will forfeit their enrollment for the next school year.**

Church Member Families: Monday, January 11th until Friday, January 29th

Please print an application from the website and return it to Pam Scranton between the given dates. If you are unable to print an application, please call the office at 693-7296.

Community Families: Friday, February 5th

On Friday, February 5th, community registration will begin. Registration will take place outside the sanctuary at 9:00 a.m. Families will register in order of arrival.