



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.

Alfred Lord Tennyson, 1809 - 1892

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Calendar for January 2017

*In Our Prayers*

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
 Alex Scranton
 Sherry Shedenhelm
 Deb Sullivan
 Jude Thom
 Jack & Marilyn Umdenstock
 Dale Warren
 Bev West
 Jim Weinkauff
 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.

An Opportunity for Grace

You know the feeling. The sour taste in your mouth. The heavy feeling in your heart. That unpleasant aura of conflict that everything in you wants to avoid. Hard conversations lead to conflict. Tough decisions lead to conflict. Discerning future paths leads to conflict. There will always be disagreements, as we realize when we are suddenly thrown together with extended family, old friends, and work colleagues in the holiday season following an election year.

We're quick to believe the lie that if we just avoid the conflict, or at least minimize it, then it will diminish over time and eventually go away. We often hope relationships will heal on their own or financial challenges will work themselves out if we just wait and see. But wisdom speaks a different word. Conflict doesn't go away with inattention. It festers. It deepens. It curdles.

Relational conflict is not something that should surprise us as Christians. We need not be ashamed that it exists and that we're involved. We should expect it. The world is complicated and fallen, and we are complicated creatures, and fallen. Conflicts will come. They are unavoidable.

And yes, conflict is inevitable in the church as well. Christians often have conflict with each other — true, genuine, faithful Christians. Painful decisions inevitably bring conflict. The question is not whether conflicts will come, but how we will handle them.

In the healthiest churches, the leadership doesn't announce, "There will be no conflicts here; that's not how we do things." Rather, the message is that when conflicts do arise, we won't run from them. We will address them head-on. We can't afford not to.

One reason that avoiding conflict is a problem is precisely because it worsens with negligence. It doesn't just go away. But another reason is that it cuts us off from the most significant opportunities for grace. This is the way God does God's deepest work in a world like ours. Not when things are sunshine, lollipops, and rainbows, not when all seems right with the world, not when times are easy. It's in the toughest times, the hardest conversations, the most painful relational tensions, when the light of his grace shines brightest, and transforms us most into Christ's likeness.

The highpoints of the history of God's people are accounts not of fleeing conflict, but moving toward it in hope, believing God will be at work in the tension, pain, and mess.

In Christ, we have a model of not shying away from conflict, but turning to take it head on, as the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame (Hebrews 12:2).

The trajectory of Jesus's life was toward need, and inevitably toward conflict, not away. He set his face like flint to go to Jerusalem, to the great conflict at Calvary, to rescue us from our greatest conflict, eternal separation from God because of the rebellion of our sin against God.

We are Christ's followers, so we learn increasingly to follow in his steps, empowered by his Spirit, to move toward conflict, toward need, toward pain, toward tension, looking past the imposing awkwardness and difficulty that lies before us to the promise of joy on the other side.

That doesn't mean we become bull-headed and pugnacious and develop a taste for a good fight. Rather, our gospel-thickened skin frees us to lean in — with kindness, patience, and gentleness — to the cauldrons of conflict that would otherwise send us running. We take on the heart and posture of "the Lord's servant" who "must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness" (2 Timothy 2:24–25).

We listen to others not to respond but to understand. We love through disagreement. We offer grace when hurt. We create space for the hurting. We pray for one another. We don't step back and walk away, but we renew our commitment to use our gifts for the glory of God, trusting God will use what we have and make it enough.

By ourselves, we are unable to address conflict with intentionality and kindness. So we pray for God's strength. And we move forward in faith, knowing that if tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, and sword cannot separate us from the love of Christ (Romans 8:35), then neither can conflict. No matter how tense. No matter how intimidating.

For the Christian, conflict is not something to avoid or ignore. It is an opportunity for the triumph of grace. We are the church of Jesus Christ. We have gone through transitions, challenges, loss, pain, anger, and fear before, but none of those things define us. We are defined by the love and grace of Christ.

As our church moves forward through the difficult season of changing our staffing model and revising our financial policies to fit new, and nationwide, economic realities, may we remember what defines us. May we remember that times of conflict and challenge are opportunities for grace to be shared and received. And may we remember that we are UNITED.

In common calling,
Pastor Stephen

News and Notes

HR Congratulates Pastor Stephen 40 LEADERS UNDER 40

Only the second pastor honored in the 23 year history, Pastor Stephen received the iBi 40 Leaders Under 40 award on November 3, 2016. This award recognizes those who excel in their chosen fields, as well as service to the Peoria community. He has demonstrated selfless service while creating opportunities for others to do good. Members of the HR committee and staff were pleased to witness this presentation.

Stephen's innovations and additions to the church and the Presbytery are widely known and appreciated at UPC and Great Rivers. Faith in Action, Foster Parent Celebrations, Family Christmas, Snack Pack, Syrian Refugee support, Fantasy Football, 11 Minute Lessons, Local Lunch, "Hamilton" analysis, Deacon and Elder training are just a few examples. Recently serving as Gap General Presbyter took up his "spare time".

While award winning preaching may be his most visible asset, Stephen serves the greater community in his role as coordinator for Peace of Peoria, promoting discussion and understanding between races, cultures, and religions. His role as lead faith partner in the "No Joke Project" has resulted in a book, tour, and documentary, detailing the friendship of a local imam, rabbi, and minister. His new podcast, "Talking in Church" continues and expands this dialogue. Stephen is also volunteer chaplain for the Peoria Composite Squadron of the Civil Air Patrol, USA Air Force Auxiliary and a Goodwill Guide for local junior high school students.

His many interests and talents amaze and amuse us. United Presbyterian Church is blessed to have Stephen McKinney-Whitaker as our pastor! Congratulations! May you continue to be blessed and bring blessing to us and the Peoria community.

“Goodbyes are one of the hardest things about life. One way or another people were always leaving... Always moving on.” — Karen Kingsbury

By now most of you have heard that my time serving among the saints of UPC is drawing to a close. I fully understand that the nature of my recommended departure is economic and I respect the difficulty of this recommendation by your Session. And I accept it as necessary. It is necessary for you to be the important ministry and voice of the love and grace, and the welcoming nature of our God that you are. I accept this decision even though it is very difficult to leave you. I accept it, and ask you to accept it and respect that it was not a decision that came quickly, or without anguish on the part of your leaders. And now we all share the pain of separation that is upon us.

With it, we share the feelings of grief and loss, fear of the uncertain times ahead, feelings of regret or guilt, things we wish we had done differently, and perhaps even looking for someone or something to blame. Such feelings are part and parcel of times like this. It is my prayer that the listening times scheduled will help answer some of the questions and concerns that you have.

I want you to know that saying good-bye to you all is one of the hardest things I have ever done. You are my first call, and thus will forever have a special place in my heart. Yet it has become clear to me that our path is to separate. During my daily Bible reading plan, the Lord has been meeting me with Scriptures of guidance and direction, comfort, and affirmation of God's presence before every difficult meeting as this unfolded. Through the Word, living and active, God has blessed me that peace that surpasses all understanding which Paul speaks of in Philippians 4:6-7 “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

The Lord knows we need guarding. Because hurt people hurt people. And we are hurting, so we are at risk. But it need not be so. We can also be instruments of God's grace and peace, by making conscious choices about what to do with our hurt. It can be more like a river that passes through us if we choose to let it. I love you, and the last thing I would want to do is hurt you with my pain. And so I choose the option of the river. Rather than be transmitters of pain, we can choose with God's grace to allow the pain to be transmuted within us. And see what God has for each of us, as God works his redeeming and healing light within us.

It is my hope that we can spend the next couple of weeks saying our good-byes. It was my experience as a hospice chaplain that the time for saying good-byes, and to celebrate together joys, express appreciation, and to enjoy their loved one for as long as they can, eases some of the pain of separation. I believe this would be an appropriate amount of time for those good-byes without taxing us further with the pain of our separation.

It is my hope and prayer that the Lord will keep me strong so that I can lead my regular classes and attend usual meetings and be with you in Sunday worship through January 15. Sunday, January 15, anticipating your affirmative vote to my necessary departure, I will be delivering my final Spirit inspired sermon. On January 17 at 6pm, I invite you to join me for Celtic Communion Service, *Be Thou My Vision*. It is something that we all need from God as we go forward from this moment. Communion, because of what it signifies, that we are forever united together through Christ. Let us celebrate that union, and the Christ who brought us together for these 3 blessed years.

I thank God for each and every one of you. I shall miss you. And I shall continue my prayers for you. Now continue the good work of the gospel, until you are a finished work in Christ, on the day of his return. May the Grace and Peace of Christ be with you always.

With gratitude, with sadness, and with enduring affection,
Patricia

Health & Wellness

SHHHHHH.... It's A Secret

Many of us are faced with things we keep secret from one another. Perhaps someone tells you something in confidence until they are ready to share more or maybe some of you pinky swore as children and plan to take secrets of your youth to the grave. I have recently learned there is a secret at UPC but I want to change that. I want everyone to know! THE SECRET IS: The health and wellness ministry stores medical equipment at UPC to loan out to members of the congregation. There are a large number of items both large and small available for you or a loved one to borrow in the case of a surgical recovery or a change in health.

It is no secret that medical costs are always on the rise, including the cost of medical equipment. Often times medical equipment is purchased but only needed for a short while and then requires storage. UPC would love to help you out. The following is a list of items available to you to borrow for as long as you need it. If you are in need of medical equipment, contact Kirsten the Parish Nurse, one of the pastors or Trish in the office. There is no cost for this ministry. Borrow what you need and return it when you no longer need it.

Help us spread the word and take this from a secret to something everyone at UPC knows about.

Walkers	- Commodes
Shower Chairs	- Wheelchairs
Stocking/Sock Assist Devices	- Toilet Seat Risers
Toilet Seat Handles/Bars	- Handheld Grabbers
Long Handled Shoe Horns	-Knee Scooter
Canes- Single and Quad	- Bed Rails
Electric Scooter	-Crutches

Blood Pressure Screening

Blood pressure screenings will move to the second Sunday, January 8th, due to New Year's Day.

Stewardship and Finance

2016 Giving

Thank you to everyone who gave financially to UPC in 2016. Your gifts enable us to have and use our beautiful building and grounds, have a highly skilled staff, participate in mission projects, and offer programming that grows and nurtures followers of Christ. We thank you for all of your gifts. Even though giving has been down over the past few years, which has caused us to have to make some very difficult decisions, your gifts are how and why UPC is a place to worship, a place to serve, and a place to belong. We are thankful for every gift that is given, and the church does its best to maximize those gifts and be faithful stewards of every gift entrusted to the church so that we share God's grace and love with each other and the community around us.

Towards the end of the month, you will receive your year-end giving statement and a confirmation of your 2017 pledge if you made one. If you have any questions about your 2016 or 2017 giving, please call the church office and ask to speak to Sabrina, our Financial Secretary. Thank you for your past, present, and future gifts to the work of Christ through United Presbyterian Church.

Human Resources

The HR Committee would like to thank the church staff and congregational members who wrote staff evaluations. We realize our method wasn't fool-proof and will work to make it more "user friendly"! Your time and effort was appreciated.

~The HR Committee

Worship & the Arts

What Makes Our Liturgy Divine?

Written by Aaron Schultz

I often wonder what makes the liturgy we enact on Sunday mornings sacred. Is it the sacred ancient and contemporary texts that we proclaim, or the sacred songs we adore God with, or the sacred disposition in which we perform the liturgy? Is the content itself sacred, or is the way in which we worship through the content sacred?

This may seem like a futile distinction, but I think it is very important. I want to compare some Presbyterian and Catholic views on worship in order to touch on this question.

The sacred text coming out of Vatican II of the Catholic Church (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*) describes the nature of the liturgy in this way: "From this it follows that every liturgical celebration, because it is an action of Christ the priest and of His Body which is the Church, is a sacred action surpassing all others; no other action of the Church can equal its efficacy by the same title and to the same degree." This text highlights a few things. First, the liturgy (its contents and its rubrics) are in and of themselves sacred because Jesus Christ is the one performing the liturgy. Catholics believe that Christ is the primary participant in the Eucharist and Christ is the Priest who is performing the liturgy. As participants in the liturgy we are participating in the eternal realm of worship, and as participants in Communion we are sharing Christ in a very real way. Long story short, the words of the liturgy, in the Catholic understanding, are sacred because they originate from God, are revealed through God, and are mediated through the real presence of Christ.

Presbyterian theology looks at the nature of the liturgy differently. This quote is taken from the PC(USA) Directory for Worship: "Christian worship joyfully ascribes all praise and honor, glory and power to the triune God. In worship the people of God acknowledge God present in the world and in their lives. As they respond to God's claim and redemptive action in Jesus Christ, believers are transformed and renewed. In worship the faithful offer themselves to God and are equipped for God's service in the world."

What do you notice about this definition compared to that of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*? There are two main differences that I see. First, the Presbyterian understanding of the liturgy emphasizes the importance of human participation in worship. Second, this understanding looks for Christ's presence in the world (i.e. culturally and experientially mediated) to inform our understanding of Christ in the liturgy. The sacrality of the liturgy does not reside in the ancient texts or performance of the liturgy; instead the liturgy becomes sacred as we participate in it, are transformed into the image of Christ by it, and live out the transformative power of Christ into the world.

We are entrusted with a very important task on Sunday mornings. Through our worship, Christ becomes revealed to us and revealed to the world by the way in which we are transformed by Christ. Worship isn't automatically sacred by how it is constructed, written, or displayed. It becomes sacred when the liturgy becomes embodied by the faithful and is in turn extended to the world by us being the hands and feet of Christ.

Star Gifts

This year we continue our tradition of Star Gifts on January 1st. 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 the Sunday before Epiphany 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 1st 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.

Worship & Arts Cont'd

Sunday Worship

January 1st: John 1:1-14 "Let There Be Light"

Pastor Patricia

January 8th: Matthew 2:1-12 "Hopes and Fears"

Pastor Stephen

January 15th : Acts 20:18-38 "Fare Thee Well"

Pastor Patricia

January 22nd: Genesis 32:22-32 "Before the Dust Settles" Pastor Stephen

January 29th: Philippians 1:21-30 "While The Pastor is in Prison" Pastor Stephen

Ordination and Installation

We will ordain and install our new Elders and Deacons on January 8th during worship. Please plan to attend this special service as we celebrate God's call to our new officers and spiritual leaders for the church.

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

Weekday worship

Tuesday January 10th and 24th at 10:00am 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 the pastor. We are the church without walls.

MID-MONTH COMMUNION:

A Special Service of Worship

**Be Thou My Vision---Celtic Worship on
Tuesday January 17th at 6:00pm**

January 17th will be our final mid-month worship service with Pastor Patricia and as you may know, Celtic services are one of her favorites. It will be particularly meaningful to her if you could join her one more time for communion and Celtic worship. Communion, because the sacrament awakens us, helps us remember our union with Christ, and with the body of Christ (all of us). Let us remember and celebrate that we are forever united with Christ. And we will all need guidance through the days of adjustment ahead, and so we will be celebrating with Celtic liturgy "Be Thou My Vision" that Patricia wrote for us in 2015. This service will mark the end of Pastor Patricia's active service with us. She hopes that many of you will come, celebrate communion and worship our Lord with her.

Hospitality & Growth Team

Greeters Needed

The Hospitality & Growth Team here at UPC invites you to be a Greeter during 2017. Our plan is to have enough of our attendees (you don't have to be a member) volunteer that they would only need to serve no more than 4 times throughout the year. We are striving to have 2 people staff each of the two entrances each Sunday. Your family can serve as a team. Husband and wife can serve together. Recruit a friend to serve with you. Make a new friend when paired with another volunteer. There are many options! Be sure that your friendly face is one of the first that we see as we enter United Presbyterian Church. Call Linda Kelley at 694-4968, Theresa Bender at 361-1985, or Trish Deppermann at 693-2002. Please call today.

News and Notes

Annual Reports

Annual Reports for the Annual Congregational meeting need to be in the office no later than January 13th. It would be preferred they be emailed to the church office as an attachment. Please use Calibri font, 12pt. Thank you for your help in getting these done.

Thanks

Dear UPC Friends,

Thank you so much for the devotional. I read it every morning. Thank you Ann Gropp for bringing it to me. Thank you also for the very pretty Christmas ornament. You are all so thoughtful in remembering me. Thank you Linda Kelley for the wonderful visit. I enjoyed visiting with you.

Happy Holidays, Bertha Mueller

Thanks for all the cards, call, prayers and other acts of kindness shown to our family during Audrey's surgery & recovery.

Audrey & Mike Nielsen

Rina & Ralph Krall

Thanks so much for the darling door hanger for my room. I am so blessed to have such a wonderful church family. I sure miss seeing all of you.

Thank you so much. Loretta Horst

Thank you for the \$928.00 donation collected by the United Presbyterian Church's Peacemaking Offering. We appreciate your friendship.

The Center for Prevention of Abuse

Children and Youth

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

SPECIAL NOTE: There will be no classes Christmas Day or January 1st.

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.

NEW! 2nd - 4th Grade Fellowship Group

Sunday, January 22

2:30 – 3:30pm

Fellowship Hall

To create fellowship and bonds before entering youth group, we are creating a social group for our 2nd - 4th graders. This will be our first meeting where we will play games and have a snack. After the first meeting, we will decide how to continue on for the rest of winter and spring. Contact Karen Miller for more information.

Youth Groups

QUEST & RUSH 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 Freshman 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.

Tentative Event:

Skiing or Tubing at SnowStar

Monday, January 16

Currently working out the details. More will be sent via email.

R.U.S.H. (Rising up to Serve Him)

Middle/Early High School Youth

Sunday, January 8 & 22

3:30 – 5:00pm

Regular meeting with devotion and games.

QUEST

Older High School Youth

Sundays, January 8 & 22

5:00 – 6:30pm

We will continue discussion and documentary series with some games as well.

Christian Education



Eleven-Minute Lessons

Eleven Minute Lessons continues each Sunday at 11:11am in room 107 with an in-depth study of Genesis. We'll start again on January 22nd with the story of Cain and Abel. Studying Genesis is a great way to learn how to interpret the Bible. Genesis is the foundational book for understanding how the people of Israel understood themselves and their God.

Waking Up White Book Discussion Group

The *Waking Up White* book club would like to open an invitation to any who might still be interested in joining our discussion and analysis of racism and whiteness in Debby Irving's memoir.

In our lively discussions, we have learned that racism is not simply prejudice towards people of a different skin color, but is actually a systematic dynamic in which prejudice is backed by political, economic, and institutional power. We have also explored the ways in which institutional acts like redlining and the G.I. Bill have reinforced racial alienation in the US.

We have been meeting after 11-Minute Lessons on Sundays, as well as having conversations throughout the week on our Facebook group. If you would like to be a part of the book club, but aren't able to attend after church on Sundays, please let Alexis Maloof know (alexispmaloof@gmail.com). We will have a "re-launch" and summary of the first three sections (chapters 1-16, pages 1-91) of the book, and some new helpful material, on Sunday, January 8th at 11:30am and at 4:00pm; all are welcome to attend. We will pick back up with our regular discussions of sections on January 22nd at 11:30am.

Sunday 9:00am Education Hour

No Classes on January 1, 2017

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 **Religion, Sovereign Love, Grace, and Sin**. 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 Class

The intergenerational class led by Pastor Stephen will start the third theme in the Animate video curriculum. Starting on January 8th, we'll begin a new series that focuses on the central practices of the Christian faith. Each week we'll watch a short video featuring a leading Christian thinker and then have discussion. All are welcome to join us in the library at 9:00am

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

Thursday Mornings at 10:00am

Join us after last month's detour for some Advent Scriptures and discussion. This month we will resume Jesus' teachings and parables in Luke chapter 13 with Pastor Patricia; including the Parables of The Barren Fig Tree, The Mustard Seeds and Yeast, the Narrow Door and The Great Dinner, on Jan 5th and 12th.

Session Notes

Session Notes

The Session met for its regular meeting on Tuesday, December 20th. The Session welcomed Steve and Barb Wolter as new members of UPC. The Session also approved the wedding of Jennifer Jordan and Michael Kull and the baptism of Owen Michael, Katelyn Michael and Mason Hagerman.

The Session examined all the newly Elected Elders and Deacons and approved them for ordination and installation, as required by the Book of Order, on January 8th. The Session received feedback on our new Elder and Deacon training, another requirement of the Book of Order, to learn how it could be approved for next year.

At the end of the meeting, the Session welcomed two guests from the Presbytery of Great Rivers, Rev. Andy Gifford and Elder Kent Wurmnest. The Session heard the report from the Budget Task Force which is comprised of the Church Treasurer, and leaders from the UPC Foundation, Human Resource Committee, and Stewardship and Finance Committee. After explaining the task force's process, presented the recommendation to eliminate the Associate Pastor Position at UPC. In order to do that, the current call with our Associate Pastor, Rev. Patricia Stetson-Warning, has to be dissolved. Therefore, the HR Committee submitted the following motion:

"To dissolve the pastoral call between United Presbyterian Church of Peoria and Rev. Patricia Stetson-Warning effective January 31, 2017 with a three (3) month's salary severance, and to eliminate the Associate Pastor (AP) position at UPC effective January 31, 2017."

The entire Session, including newly elected Elders, the pastors, and the Presbytery guests discussed the motion, asked questions, and shared concerns. The motion was then voted on and passed. This motion will be presented for a congregational vote at a specially called congregational meeting on January 15th following the worship service.

At the conclusion of the vote, everyone gathered around Patricia, laid hands on her, and prayed over her. There was time and space for everyone to offer their own prayer of thanksgiving and blessing over Patricia.

The Session concluded the discussion by establishing some times of listening and information for the congregation to ask questions, share concerns, and hear about the process of this decision and the factors that led to it. The first gathering will be Wednesday, December 28th at 6:00pm in the Fellowship Hall. The second gathering will be Sunday, January 1st after worship in the Fellowship Hall in place of our regular fellowship time. The third gathering will be Sunday, January 8th after worship in Room 100.

The Session also agreed a time of celebration and thanksgiving for Pastor Patricia's ministry would be needed if the congregation approves Session's motion. The Session will make plans for this contingent on the outcome of the congregational meeting on the 15th.

The meeting was concluded with prayer.

Listening and Information Gatherings

The Session invites you to attend one of three listening and information gatherings about the recent decision by the Session to recommend the dissolution of the pastoral call with Rev. Patricia Stetson-Warning and eliminate the Associate Pastor position. The Session wants to listen to you and share as much information with you as possible. Representatives from the Human Resources Committee, the budget task force, and the Session will share about the process, the factors that went into the decision, and why this particular decision was recommended. Pastor Patricia will also share her thoughts. You will have an opportunity to share questions and concerns with the Session. At the gathering you may also write down questions that an Elder will ask on your behalf. You'll also have a chance to talk to one another as your process this recommendation, and be in prayer for Pastor Patricia, the Session, and the church. The three opportunities to participate in one of the gathers are:

Wednesday, December 28th at 6:00pm in the Fellowship Hall
 Sunday, January 1st at 11:15am in the Fellowship Hall
 Sunday, January 8th at 11:15am in room 100.

We hope you can attend one of these gatherings. This recommendation to eliminate the Associate Pastor position is ultimately yours, so the Session wants you to have an opportunity to gather information, ask questions, share concerns, and support one another.

Connecting Point

Wednesday Night 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!

NO Connecting Point Meal or Classes on January 4th.
There are music rehearsals.

Weekly Schedule (Resuming January 11)

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

Connecting Point Adult Class at 6:15pm

"Lord, help us to live healthy lives! Equip us with knowledge and skills to do so."

January 11 class features Guest Speaker Dr. Sheena Joseph.

Did you know that hidden food allergies could be making you sick? Come learn more about how to detect those allergies so that you can be healthy.

Do you know how to detoxify your body? Hidden toxins could be at work making you ill.

Dr. Sheena has been leading many people in the Peoria area to be free from allergens and toxins with amazing results.

Dr. Sheena is an expert in functional nutrition specializing in the use of amino acids, enzymes, herbs, and probiotics. Her understanding of nutrition has helped many clients with their digestive problems such as: heartburn, indigestion, irritable bowel syndrome, and leaky gut syndrome. Additional offerings include blood testing and protocols for food allergies/sensitivities, weight-loss/wellness programs, and detoxification protocols. Dr. Sheena also provides non-invasive testing and treatment for mood disorders including: depression, anxiety, insomnia, and ADHD/ADD.

For more information about Dr. Sheena:

<http://apeoriachiropractor.com/>

January 18

Learning about how to care for the body, mind and spirit with Tai Chi or Yoga. The health benefits of Tai Chi and Yoga are well documented.

Tai Chi:

- Relieves physical effects of stress.
- Promotes deep breathing.
- Reduces bone loss in menopausal women.
- Improves lower body and leg strength.
- Helps with arthritis pain.
- Reduces blood pressure.
- Requires mind and body integration through mental imagery.

Yoga has been shown to:

- Improve sleep quality and improve depression.
- Reduce stress.
- Help control blood sugar in people with diabetes.
- Enhance respiratory function.
- Help alleviate arthritis pain.
- Increase bone density and prevent osteoporosis.
- Improve balance.
- Moderate chronic pain.

Tai Chi will be in Room 100, and Yoga in Room 107. Observe, or experience your choice of the two or both.

Family Game Night is January 28th.

Mission

Snack Packs

We will fill Snack Packs on January 8th after worship in the Sewing Room since we could not fill them at the end of December.

Funeral Expenses for Deven Lee

Last month, we were able to help a family with the costs of a funeral for a son. You may have seen the news or read the paper to learn about the tragic death of Deven Lee. Deven was an 18 year old senior in high school who was murdered alongside a friend. Deven went to school and worked two jobs to try and support his one year old daughter. His family lives right up the road from the church.

His mother, Angela, asked if we could help cover the last bit of the funeral expenses that they couldn't cover. A friend of mine had already offered his church, Glen Oak Christian, and his services to do the funeral.

UPC agreed to cover the last \$2500 of funeral costs for Deven's service. Deven's mother, Angela, was so thankful. She hadn't had time to properly grieve because she was so worried about how to pay for her son's funeral and how to help take care of the

Good Neighbor Team Update

We continue to be in prayer for our refugee family and refugees across the world as we watch the escalation of situations in Aleppo and many other countries. Our team has been busy collecting the remainder of items needed for our family and are starting to identify possible housing options. Our partners at World Relief continue to look for a match for a family to settle in our community and we will have a quick turnaround of a few weeks once one has been selected.

How will our family be identified?

- Refugees go through a rigorous process consisting of multiple security checks, interviews, biometrics and medical checks with many government intelligence groups including the FBI, Department of Homeland Security, and State Department in order to be approved to enter the United States.

- World Relief is one of the approved organizations who works with the U.S. Department of State in resettling refugees who have been approved to enter the United States. They attend a weekly meeting in D.C. to identify which of the approved refugees they can assist.
- From this list World Relief will select an area for this family to live. Many factors are taken to ensure a match that will empower the family in their journey to self-sufficient and U.S. citizenship including: existing family connections, cultural community members and amenities (groceries, places of worship, translators), and opportunities for employment.

There is still an opportunity to get involved with the Good Neighbor team as a volunteer. We are looking to host another volunteer training with World Relief in early January through a virtual Skype meeting (we will also have a computer available at church for those who would like to gather together). Please reach out to Jenna Hague at jenn.l.hague@gmail.com or 360-386-0245 if you are interested in getting more involved.

Please continue to pray for our team, our partners at World Relief, and for refugees everywhere.

Prayer Circle

We pray for the healing hand of God be upon our friends in need of healing: John Parks, Ron Streib, Betty Swartz, Steve Wrigley, Jacquie Spaulding, Margaret Hochstrasser, Jim Weinkauff, Duane Mach, Marilyn Um-denstock, Audrey Nielsen, Nathan Pennington, Lilly Miller, Veronica Schumaker, Shirley Poshard Jerel Grupe and Penny Brower's father. Any may our compassionate God grant comfort and strength to: Corda Jones and Beve West who are on hospice care. And may the Lord of Life and Love comfort and strengthen the family and friends who are grieving for: Karen Mason and Gladys Abraham. We thank you for the gift of their lives.

Deacon Ministry

Changes in Deacon Ministry

January brings changes to the Deacon Ministry at UPC. It took many months of surveys, brainstorming, discussions and reworking ideas to come up with the following changes.

1. Parishes will no longer have geographic boundaries. Since we have fewer Deacons as we attrition to 27 Deacons (from 39) by 2019, this makes the task of equitable number of parishioners for each Deacon possible.
2. We will now have two types of Deacons.
 - Parish Deacons: every parishioner will be assigned a Parish Deacon who will be contacting their assigned parishioner or family unit to ascertain how they are doing at least four times a year. They will be seeking to ascertain the best way to communicate with you, to know how you are: phone calls, emails, texts, Facebook messages, or visits at church, etc. We want to know whether you are okay, or have needs.
 - Visiting Deacons: each of the seven parishes has a Visiting Deacon. They will be additionally trained for the ministry of visiting. They will be focused toward our shut-ins, and those who have been experiencing illness, or difficult life circumstances.

So the end result is that every parishioner will be assigned both a Parish Deacon, and a Visiting Deacon. Your particular needs for Deacon care will determine which one you interact with the most.

Thank you to the Deacon Task Force, Member Care, Session, Trish Depermann, and the Reorganization Team of Megan Swan, Kathy Nixon, Kay Covey and Kathy Hasselberg for all your hard work and creativity toward planning and implementing this change.

NOTICE: The first **Deacon Quarterly Meeting** of 2017 will be held at 10:00 am, Saturday, January 14th in Fellowship Hall. This meeting will be a training meeting for all Deacons in the Classes of 2017, 2018 and 2019. Please make every effort to attend. If you cannot be present, please contact Kathy Nixon at 431-3951 or knxn@comcast.net.

Family Bowling Night: Our annual bowling night returns on Saturday, January 28th 6:00-8:00pm at the Christian Center. We have the entire bowling facility reserved, so bring your friends and your family for a great night of fun! Cost is \$7 per person, or \$20 per family.

Church Life

Eating Together

Men's Breakfast: January 12th at 9:00am at Le Peep.

Thursday Lunch Bunch: January 12th, at 11:30am at Longhorn Steakhouse.

Ladies Night Out: January 19th at 6:00pm at Perkins on War Memorial Drive.

Local Lunch: Because of the MLK Holiday we'll meet on January 23rd at 12:00pm at the Lariat Steakhouse.

Hand and Foot will resume on Friday, January 6th at 6:30pm. Everyone welcome!

Bunco will resume on Friday, January 13th at 7:00pm. Everyone welcome!

Anna Circle will meet Thursday, January 12th at 6:00pm at WeaverRidge. The lesson will be Chapter 9, Unveiling Mary Magdalene. The mission will be Share the Warmth Blanket Ministry workday on January 28th, at 9:30am.



UPC Discovery

UPC Discovery Teachers & United Presbyterian Church Nature Connections Members Present at the National Level at the NAEYC Conference in Los Angeles!

On Wednesday, November 2, our school closed its doors for three days as the UPC Discovery teachers and members of UPC's Nature Connections committee boarded planes bound for California and the annual NAEYC conference, (National Association for the Education of Young Children). With flip flops and sunscreen packed, (along with ranger hats, documentation boards, and handouts), our teachers and Nature Connection members presented sessions sharing the work of the preschool and church during the three day conference. Judy Helm and Karen Coyle were selected as a *Featured Session* during the conference! They shared recent research in the field of Mind, Brain Education and how it aligns with The Project Approach. Nature Connection members presented a session on how our church and preschool worked together to build and extend the certified Nature Classroom. All of the UPC Discovery teachers presented their project work on the last night of the conference during a two hour session entitled *Project Work: An Evening of Sharing*. It was a tired, but proud group that traveled home Saturday evening. This professional development opportunity was totally funded by the conference *Becoming Young Thinkers Summer Institute!* Great work everyone!



Nature Connections

Nature Connections News

January is a great time to connect with nature. Animals leave tracks in the snow and are easier to see. Birds come close to feeders. Getting outside, even for 15 minutes a day in winter, is good for your mood, memory, and immune system. Remember our Nature Photo Contest is continuing in January. Pick up a brochure at the welcome table. On January 22, after church, come dressed to take a Winter Walk with the Nature Rangers! All ages welcome!

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 Communion 8:30 Chapel Open 9:00 Adult Ed 10:00 Worship 10:00 Sunday School	2 Office Closed	3 No Preschool 9:00 Quilters 9:30 PASG Gen Meeting 1:30 Tai Chi 3:00 Bereavement	4 No Connecting Point 5:30 Bells 6:00 Tai Chi 6:15 Worship Band 7:15 Choir	5 8:30 Exercise 10:00 Adult Bible Study 6:00 Bereavement	6 NO Parent's Night Out 6:30 Hand and Foot	7
8 8:30 Chapel Open 9:00 Adult Ed 10:00 Worship Installation/Ordination of Elders & Deacons 10:00 Sunday School Blood Pressure Screenings 3:30 RUSH 4:00 Sports Event 5:00 QUEST	9 8:30 Exercise 5:30 Member Care 6:00 Foundation 6:30 Church Life 7:00 Boy Scouts	10 9:00 Quilters 9:00 PASG Board 10:00 Independence Village Worship 1:30 Tai Chi 3:00 Bereavement 6:00 Worship & Arts 6:30 Christian Ed/Stewardship/HR 6:30 Den #233/Families Anonymous 7:30 Mission	11 11:30 PEO BX 5:30 Connecting Point () 5:30 Bells 6:00 Tai Chi 6:00 Nature Connections 6:15 Adult/Parent/Youth Classes 6:15 Worship Band 7:00 Preschool 7:15 Choir	12 8:30 Exercise 9:00 Men's Breakfast at LePeep 10:00 Adult Bible Study 11:30 PASGDTs 11:30 Lunch Bunch at Longhorn 6:00 Bereavement 6:00 Anna Circle	13 Annual Reports Due in Office 7:00 BUNCO	14 10:00 Deacon Quarterly Meeting
15 8:30 Chapel Open 9:00 Adult Ed 10:00 Worship 11:00 Congregational Meeting 4:00 Sports Event	16 No Preschool 8:30 Exercise 12:00 Local Lunch 6:00 Tai Chi 7:00 Troop #333	17 9:00 Quilters 1:30 Tai Chi 3:00 Bereavement 6:00 Celtic Worship 6:30 Den #233/Families Anonymous 7:00 Session	18 10:00 ANG 5:30 Connecting Point () 5:30 Bells 6:00 Tai Chi 6:15 Adult/Parent/Youth Classes 6:15 Worship Band 7:15 Choir	19 8:30 Exercise 10:00 Adult Bible Study 6:00 Bereavement 6:00 Ladies Night Out	20 8:00 Men's Breakfast 5:30 Pinewood Derby Set-Up	21 8:00 Pinewood Derby
22 8:30 Chapel Open 9:00 Adult Ed 10:00 Worship 11:00 Winter Walk 11:11 11-Minute Lesson 2:30 2-4 Grade Fellowship 3:30 RUSH 4:00 Sports Event 5:00 QUEST 7:00 Hymns & Hops	23 8:30 Exercise 6:00 Tai Chi 7:00 Troop #333	24 9:00 Quilters 10:00 Independence Village Worship 11:30 PASGNP 1:30 Tai Chi 3:00 Bereavement 6:30 Den#233/Families Anonymous	25 9:30 PASGSS 5:30 Connecting Point () 5:30 Bells 6:00 Tai Chi 6:15 Adult/Parent/Youth Classes 6:15 Worship Band 7:15 Choir	26 8:30 Exercise 10:00 Adult Bible Study 11:30 PASGK 6:00 Bereavement	27 8:00 Men's Breakfast	28 9:00 Beekeeping Meeting 9:30 Share the Warmth
29 8:30 Chapel Open 9:00 Adult Ed 10:00 Worship 11:00 Annual Congregational Meeting 4:00 Sports Event	30 8:30 Exercise 6:00 Tai Chi 7:00 Troop #333	31 9:00 Quilters 1:30 Tai Chi 3:00 Bereavement 6:30 Den #233/Families Anonymous 7:30 Pack #233	<div>January 2017</div>			