



(Photo is from the recent PCM retreat at Camp New Hope. Photo Credit: Hank Snyder)

## The Chimes- April 2021

## Pastor's Message

A year ago, there was decision fatigue:

how to connect, communicate, care, clean, concentrate, complete tasks, carry out our mission, and how to do all of that safely.

Well, friends, we are there again.

This time, it is how to return, regather, rebuild, reimagine, and reconcile all this year's grief and change into a resumed life.

I wish I had all the answers; but, alas, I take this opportunity to tell you about our process.

At our April Session meeting, I expect that your elders will commission a team to guide us in all these decisions. Before I write a word more, I must pause and say thank you to UPC's COVID Taskforce: Claire Curran, Jeff Howard and Eric Munson, who faithfully and safely guided us this year.

I do not yet know what we'll call the new team—*Come Back Committee? New Normal Nerds? Transition Team? Liminality Leaders?* We know their work will be discerning the pace and shape of our life together, clearly communicating *the why* of those decisions, naming what has been changed in our culture, helping us grieve what has been lost, and celebrate what resurrection has happened in our midst. This team will work in concert with all the Session Committees who are already at work doing things like prepping the building for people and outfitting the sanctuary for live-streamed worship. I imagine they will want to talk with you about what we learned about ourselves in this pandemic and how God might use that to form us as the body of Christ in our next chapter of ministry.

My *guess* is that we will be ramping up to worship in person by fall, but there are a lot of unknowns. Good thing we walk by faith and not by sight. But we *do* know that our summer trips are cancelled, VBS will be in person at Camp New Hope, and our Congregational Retreat will be shifted to a day time, outdoor retreat (instead of traveling to Montreat). We do know that many of our small groups are continuing to meet past Easter (our original "end" date) because that holy space of spiritual growth and sacred friendship has become vital. We do know that we are going to have to figure out a way to keep seeing Joey play the organ in his socks. We do have a plan for honoring the week-in-week-out *volunteer* video editing work of John Wilson. We do plan to circle a date on the calendar when this team will share their roadmap, so that we can manage our expectations of how long we have to live with the things we don't yet know.

There is a lot we do not know, and thus I offer you this (adapted) prayer from Rev. Nadia Bolz-Weber, one that I found helpful in this particular moment in our faith journey:

*Dear God,*

*I don't know how to do this part.*

*I don't know how to stop that embarrassing, "but when is it MY turn?" thought when I see others getting their vaccination. I don't know how to wait well. I don't know how to not have it all feel like those last 5 minutes before the recess bell – when I can't sit still and behave anymore.*

*God, I also don't know how to do the next part. How will I stop fearing that our human bodies are a danger to each other? How will I find the energy to show up again? How will I ever small talk again?*



*Gently remind me that a year ago I didn't know how to live through the evaporation of all my plans, and the death of those I loved, and social turmoil, and an isolation I thought I surely could not bear... I did not know how I was going to live without travel and sacraments and movie theaters and hugging my parents and yet ... **somehow**, I did.*

*Help me remember that we **somehow** got through this year without first knowing how we would do it and that you have been in every moment already, and you will be in every moment to come. So, I thank you that **you are my somehow**, that your sweet Holy Spirit has accompanied me, equipped me, and comforted me – even when I failed to notice it, feel it, believe it, or be grateful for it.*

*Amen.*

Friends, thank you for continuing to be the church in these days. And thank you for trusting yourselves to the one who indeed holds all our days.

Peace,

Meg

## Our Church Family

### We grieve with

- The family and friends of Jude Exantus
- Rob Kurtz, UPC's Sexton, upon the death of his father Phil
- Sharon Edmiston, upon the death of her mother, Sandra

### We pray for

- Janet Anderson, recovering from a stroke
- John Mount Shoop, battling cancer
- Dianne Frazier, battling cancer
- Chelsea McElwee Wommack, recovering from surgery
- Shipley Jenkins, recovering from hip surgery
- Connie Eby, recovering from hip surgery
- Betty Anne Cook, recovering from a broken arm
- Owen Hyland, recovering from a broken arm
- Emily Davisson, recovering from a broken arm
- Rev. Paul Ransford, home after a three week hospitalization

### We celebrate with

- Alan and Patty Baum Haydon, upon the birth of their daughter, Charlotte Nancy Haydon, born March 15 at 8 lbs, 14 oz.



## Holy Week & Easter Opportunities (At a Glance)

We hope you will join us for one or more of the opportunities we have this week to reflect, remember, and worship. For more detailed information about our Holy Week and Easter schedule, visit [upcch.org/holy-week](http://upcch.org/holy-week)

### All Holy Week, through Saturday:

- Stop by the front steps of the church to contribute to our communal prayer experience using the loom, 9 am-8 pm.

### Maundy Thursday, April 1:

- Virtual worship available, beginning at 6 am.
- Drive-thru communion, 5:30-6:30 pm.

### Good Friday, April 2:

- Virtual worship available, beginning at 6 am.
- Outdoor Tenebrae service at 7:30 pm (sign-ups required).

### Easter Sunday, April 4:

- Virtual worship available, beginning at 6 am.
- Socially distanced outdoor worship in the morning (all services at capacity).
- Bring flowers to help us decorate our cross! If you are unable to attend worship in the morning, please bring your flowers in the afternoon.



## Rediscovering the Joy of Making Music...Together!

With warmer weather upon us, the choir has begun rehearsing and recording outdoors, and as you may have noticed in some of the recent Holy Week musical offerings, we've been occupying a different venue--the parking garage across the street! We've learned through our virtual projects that there simply is no substitute for singing together in-person, and at our first out-door gathering in March there was a shared realization of just how much we have missed the joy and beauty of making music together in shared space and time.

In this season of rebuilding our musical skills and vocal stamina, know that *all* are welcome and encouraged to join the choir. We aim to create a space of community and fellowship, building up musicians or aspiring musicians of all skill levels. The choir is not exclusively for seasoned singers, but a place for all who have an interest in worshiping through song. We are all constantly learning from each other in order to grow our skills and confidence as musicians. If you are interested in learning more or attending a rehearsal, please contact the Director of Music, Joey Fala, at [fala@upcch.org](mailto:fala@upcch.org).



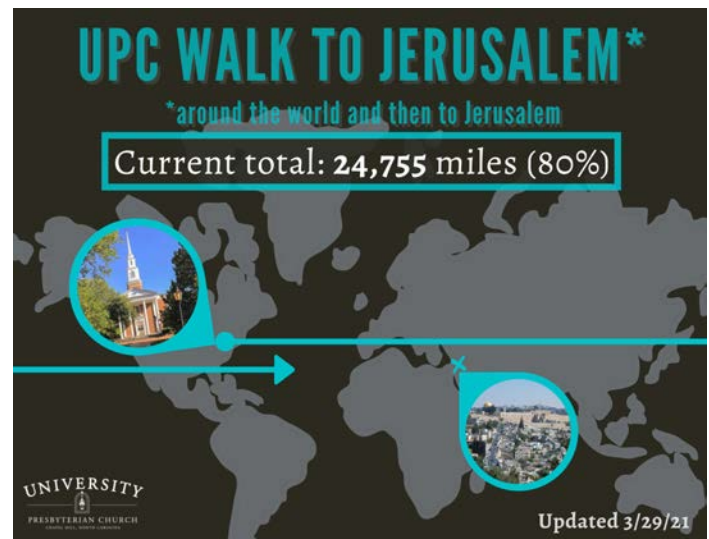
## Walk to Jerusalem Update

For Lent this year, we issued a challenge: can you track your physical, spiritual, and volunteer activities this season (20 minutes = 1 mile) and help us take an imaginary journey to Jerusalem? Over 230 people signed up to participate, and by the twelfth day in Lent, we had surpassed our goal of 6,112 miles.

So, we set an even higher goal: can we travel around the world and then to Jerusalem, for a total of 31,013 miles? We still have a few days left in Lent, but as of our publishing date, we have traveled 24,755 miles together and hope to reach our new goal by Easter.

It has been exciting to see so many of our UPC family take part in this journey together, but even more so, it has been a joy to hear the stories of how that time was spent: family walks, playing outside, gardening, home projects, prayer, worship, small groups, choir rehearsals, and vaccine appointments, just to name a few. It has been a positive experience for us to be consciously aware of the ways in which we spend our time and take care of ourselves and others. And, we are particularly grateful for our devotional writers who have offered thoughtful reflections each week on our journey.

Thank you for joining us on our imagined walk to Jerusalem!



## Thank you, Youth!

March brought with it UPC's second online Youth Sunday. One year ago, we asked John Wilson to film our youth Sunday "rehearsal" in order to provide worship for UPC during the first week of the pandemic. After a year of recording confessions, sermons, and prayers, we have learned a little more about what our cell phone cameras are capable of and a lot more about how the Holy Spirit can work through all sorts of human confinements. This year, our youth delivered moving sermons that reminded us of God's presence and provision during difficult days and presented a litany acknowledging the pain of this last year while pointing us toward hope for the future. Thanks be to God for the gifts of the internet and young people who are ready and willing to profess their faith, even to a cell phone camera in an empty sanctuary.







## Vacation Bible School 2021

Plans are underway for our 2021 Vacation Bible School! VBS will be June 28-July 1, and at this point we have every intention of being *in person* at Camp New Hope! Our theme "Hero Central" will help us explore some Bible heroes and ways that we, too, can be heroic with God's help!

Some things will look different this year. All activities will be outside only, and we will be masked at all times. In order for us to keep manageable numbers so we can implement appropriate precautions, we will be limiting groups to 10 children each, and registration will only be open to those who are members/visitors of UPC or New Hope Presbyterian Church. Registration opens on April 1, and you can find more information, for both participants and volunteers, on the VBS website: [upcch.org/vbs](http://upcch.org/vbs). We hope you'll join us in June!



## PCM Retreat Reflections

(Photo Credit: Hank Snyder)





*On March 20, our Presbyterian Campus ministry gathered for an outdoor retreat at Camp New Hope. It was a day full of challenging conversations, creative projects, fellowship, and kickball! Some of the PCM students have shared their reflections on the day and what it meant to them:*



As a first-year and newcomer to Presbyterian Campus Ministry, I had the privilege of attending Camp New Hope for the retreat. Before the retreat, I was unaware of the spiritual connectedness I would feel afterward, as a result of my growing relationships with other members of PCM. The retreat was centered around the heavy topic of racism and how we are called, as brothers and sisters in Christ, to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly. One of the things that stood out the most during my time at Camp New Hope was the deep level of discussion within my small group. We tackled difficult

issues and challenged each other to envision what justice looks like in our everyday lives. Listening to others and their concerns brought a collective sense of validation and comfort. Everyone's presence felt intentional, which made the entire experience THAT much better. It was truly a blessing to have gone on this retreat, and I look forward to having more of those difficult conversations to be vessels of Christ.

*-Millie Pulliam, first-year*



If you've been to UPC drive-through communion, then you're familiar with the little plastic cups of grape juice with a wafer wrapped in the lid, which are the best we can do during a global pandemic. PCM students shared these prudent containers with the bread of life and the cup of salvation on our retreat this past weekend at Camp New Hope. The makeshift holy sacrament reminded me that Jesus will meet us where we are no matter the circumstances. He will find a way to mask-up, get His COVID vaccine jab, and make the trek to a socially distanced retreat in order to prepare a table for us.

As a college student, the unconditional love of Jesus is a reassuring idea that has guided my faith journey. I am often questioning my beliefs, relationships, and future in this pivotal period where adulthood begins. Knowing that Jesus will prepare a welcoming table for me on my worst and most wavering days keeps me coming back. Everyone in PCM is at a different place in their spiritual path—some students are bound for seminary while others are just dipping their toes in the water. Regardless of where I stand on that spectrum, I know that I will never be judged by my peers, pastors, or God for my position. In a strange way, the COVID-friendly plastic receptacles served as a reminder of the Presbyterian faith's loving commitment to meet me wherever I am offering bread and wine to fulfill me.

*-Jamie Cummings, junior*



I love PCM because it is an incredible, faith-based community on campus. It's not like one of those organizations that meets once a week and then everyone heads their separate ways. Instead, PCM is an inclusive community where everyone knows and cares for one another. In addition to holding weekly religious programs, there are so many other ways to continue building relationships both formally and informally. From small groups and service events to painting and intramural sports teams, there are always weekly opportunities to stay involved and connected with everyone. The retreat is just another example of how PCM effectively brings us together to discuss important topics while also providing great food and fun at the same time.

When I first came to PCM as a first-year, I didn't know anyone except for my friend Ben. However, everyone there was so welcoming that I immediately felt right at home. What really blew me away was that after I attended my first program, I had already been invited to hang out with some of the other guys. This cycle only continued to the point where I was seeing them weekly, and they became my closest friends. From that point on, I knew PCM was the right place for me. Since then, I have continued to develop relationships with others and have stayed involved with the various events at PCM, but I am always most fond of how welcome and at home I felt from the very first program.

*-Edward Shutt, junior*



I love PCM because it provides a space for me to reflect on my identity, commitment, and faith with my peers. PCM has helped me identify what I value most, understand myself deeper, and guided me in finding what meaning I'm seeking in my life. I enjoyed our retreat because it challenged me to consider how race and my faith are intertwined. I think discussion like we had at the retreat are essential for growing my faith, and for the world of faith in general to make our spaces more welcoming to everyone.

*-Reed Spencer, junior*

## An Update From the Racial Equity Team

The Racial Equity Team is pleased that the Session of UPC affirmed our mission statement at their last meeting:

*As members of University Presbyterian Church, we trust the word of God will guide us as we grow in relationships with one another and our neighbors. We acknowledge that as siblings in Christ, we have different histories, experiences, and perspectives that inform our views on race and racism. Our diverse experiences will fuel our work together as we seek to understand, identify, and resist racism. As such, we strive to:*

*Trust our sacred obligation to work toward and sustain racial, cultural, and social justice for all of God's creation.*

*Continue to choose welcome, foster inclusion, and challenge inequality in all of its manifestations.*

*Galvanize the church to act on issues of racism, violence, and poverty as prophetic witnesses to Christ's transforming justice.*

We look forward to providing more details about a summer Adult Education series and other projects in the works.

Please let us know if you have thoughts, suggestions, ideas, or would like to become involved with our unfolding work. Any of our committee members would love to hear from you.

Mellicent Blythe

May Bryan

Woody Burns

Lillie Chilton

Megan Crunkleton

Deborah Jones

Erin Kent

Day McLaughlin

Thomas Normand

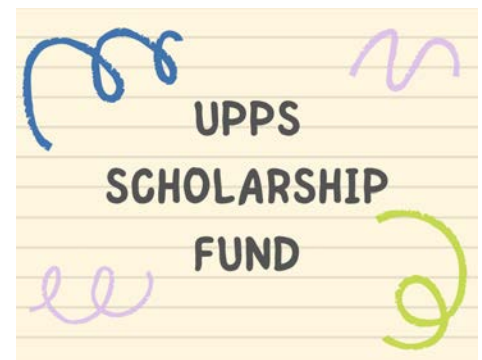
Hank Waters



## Give to the UPPS Scholarship Fund!

University Presbyterian Preschool (UPPS) provides a number of partial and full scholarships each year to assist families with the cost of tuition. Over the last three school years, we have given over \$25,000 in such assistance, which is solicited through donations and fundraisers. UPPS has remained open during the pandemic, but for safety reasons, we are unable to hold our typical in-person fundraisers. Would you be willing to donate and help replenish our fund? Visit [tinyurl.com/UPPS-scholarships](https://tinyurl.com/UPPS-scholarships) to donate online.

Questions? Contact Nancy Myer ([nancy@upcch.org](mailto:nancy@upcch.org)).





## The Men's Breakfast Group - An Update and an Invitation

The UPC Men's Group started about five years ago. We met twice a month, ate breakfast together in the Terrace Room, and had a 30-minute presentation by one of our members each session. When the pandemic struck, we, like most groups, had to adjust to meeting on Zoom. We miss seeing each other in person, but we have enjoyed interacting on Zoom. We all appreciate Pastor Jarrett organizing the Zoom linkages and his helpful clarification of areas we are unclear about.

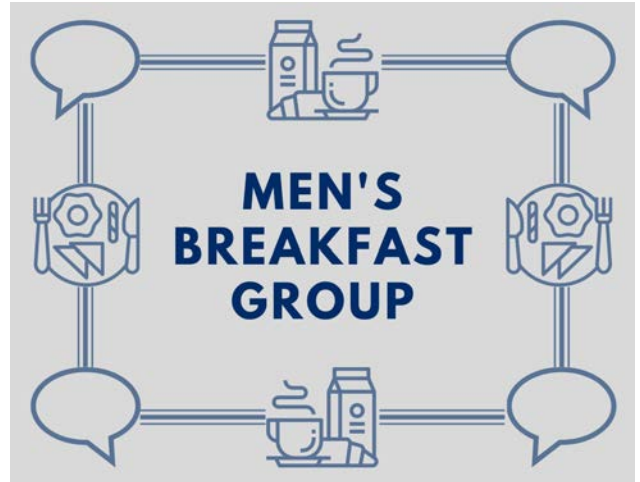
Our group meets the first and third Mondays from 7:30 AM to 8:30 AM. We have a little time to visit, and then the speaker gets the floor. Speakers choose their own topics, which are quite varied from personal faith journeys to poetry. This year we have been treated to Joe Robinson's story of how he and his oboe got to the NY Philharmonic, the history of UPC, a session on "Christianity and Political Engagement," and the story of the renowned chef Jose Andres and his saintly behavior in feeding scores of people for free during the pandemic. Despite the challenges of being on Zoom, we have had lively interactive discussions each session after each talk.

Typically, between 20-25 men attend our sessions, but we would welcome more men in our group. I originally joined in order to meet more men in the church, and it has worked! I never anticipated that so many men in the group would become my good friends.

This spring, we will meet through the first Monday in June, break for summer, and then restart in September. We would welcome any man interested to join our group by emailing Dan Redwine ([danredwine@gmail.com](mailto:danredwine@gmail.com)) and asking to be added to the list serve. He sends out the Zoom links a day or two prior to each meeting.

We hope that you will consider this invitation, and we look forward to seeing you at our Men's Group meetings!

-Jack Benjamin, Dan Redwine, Jay Williams



## Stephen Ministry- Having Communion with *The Communion*

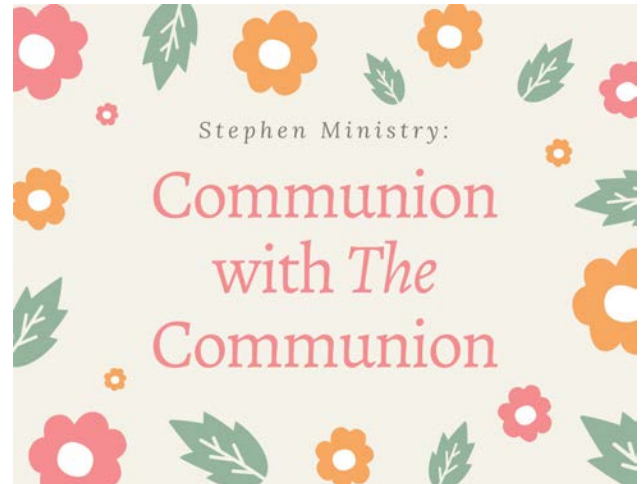
Have you ever had a “God Moment?” Well, I did about a month ago! And, I want to share it with you. While rereading John 12:1-8 recently about Jesus visiting Bethany six days before the Passover, the Holy Spirit had me linger on verse 2: *“Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him.”* (NIV)

This visit followed Jesus calling Lazarus from the dead. Suddenly, I thought, “What did they talk about?” Did Lazarus tell Jesus that he had seen angels or Moses while he was in the tomb for three days? Did Jesus ask him what he thought about heaven, or was there only small talk like, “The weather is extremely hot today; I wonder what Martha is fixing for dinner; where is Mary?” Maybe we will have the opportunity to ask those questions when we go to Life Eternal, or maybe we won’t.

The next thought—the God Moment—was that Lazarus was having communion with ***The Communion***! Christ in the flesh would soon be remembered and received through the elements of His body and blood. Imagine that . . . communing with ***The Communion***.

We, two thousand years later, have the same privilege. Our Stephen Ministry refrain is: Christ caring for people through people. We may not visibly see Him sitting next to us, but we have been promised that He indwells us by the power of the Holy Spirit. Christ, through your Stephen Minister, can comfort, listen, accept, cry with, laugh with, pray with, share your innermost thoughts with, and love you with the same love that Lazarus experienced. We are nearing the end of Lent and will celebrate the Resurrection—a new beginning. You or someone you know may need to start anew. Christ is extending His hand to you. Won’t you extend yours to Him and have communion with ***The Communion***? Contact Meg (919-929-2101) to be matched with a Stephen Minister. Put your hand in ours.

**Adapted from Patty Joyce, FL Stephen Minister Leader**



## Content Submission for Future Publications

UPC members are welcome to submit content for Sunday’s bulletin announcements or for *The Chimes*, UPC’s monthly newsletter.

Please submit content to our Director of Communications and Development, Erin Collier, at [communications@upcch.org](mailto:communications@upcch.org). The deadline for the bulletin announcements is each Wednesday at 2 pm, and the deadline for the May edition of *The Chimes* is Thursday, April 15, at noon.