



DEC. 2023
EDITION

The Chimes

SHARING STORIES AND NEWS FROM
UNIVERSITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CHAPEL HILL



ADVENT & CHRISTMAS AT UPC

Join us for worship, fellowship,
and more! | p. 3-4

2024 OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT

Grief Group, Women's Retreat,
and trips | p. 9

UPCOMING ADULT ED. CLASSES IN 2024

Mark your calendar now for
Katelyn Scheiss on Jan. 7 | p. 11

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@upc_chapelhill

Our Staff

Meg Peery McLaughlin, Co-Pastor

Jarrett McLaughlin, Co-Pastor

Ryan Byrnes, Director of Operations

Johnny Clay, Sexton

Erin Collier, Dir. of Communications & Stewardship

Peter Costa, Financial Manager

Dennis Dallke, Operations Assistant

Bob Dunham, Pastor Emeritus

Joey Fala, Director of Music Ministry

Berry French, Associate Pastor for Campus Ministry

Hadley Kifner, Pastor for Spiritual Nurture

Nancy Myer, Associate Pastor for Family Ministry

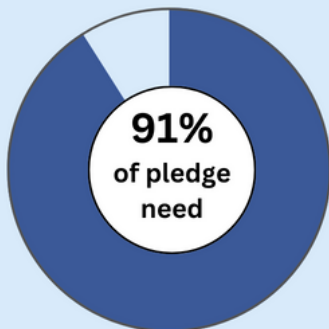
Ellen Parker, Director, UPPS

Sara Richard, Office Administrator

Tristan Wall, Director of Youth Ministry

Melani Willhite, Financial Assistant

2024 PLEDGE UPDATE



**Total Amount Pledged
(as of Nov. 27):
\$1,806,444**

**Number of Pledges:
318**

**Average Amount Pledged:
\$5,681**

We are so grateful for the generous response thus far to our 2024 Stewardship Campaign! Thank you to everyone who has pledged their financial support so far.

Our total need is \$1.98 million, and it's not too late to pledge! Pledging before the end of the calendar year will help us as we plan and prepare the budget for next year. If you haven't yet pledged, please prayerfully consider how you can support UPC in 2024. You can pledge online (upcch.org/stewardship) or pick up a pledge card in the narthex.

Pictures from Nancy's Ordination



Dear UPC family,
"Thank you" doesn't cover it, and yet it will have to do! Thank you for your encouragement and support over the last 9+ years, and thank you for showing up in so many ways on November 12! The service of ordination and installation to my new role at UPC was such a gift, and the joy you carried with you that day and since was and is palpable. Thank you for the stole you commissioned for me and for allowing me the privilege of continuing to serve at UPC as one of your pastors. In this season of Thanksgiving, I am forever grateful.
Grace and peace,
Nancy

Celebrate Advent & Christmas at UPC!

Chrismon Guild

Mondays during Advent

Would you like to learn about monograms that tell the story of Christ? Do you like to craft? Join the Chrismon Guild! This small group will meet on Mondays, 1-2:30 pm in Room 214 during this Advent season (Dec 4, Dec 11, and Dec 18). All are welcome! Come one time, or come every time! Contact Kathy Culley with interest: scott_culley@comcast.net



Advent 1 (Dec. 3)

8:30 am & 11:00 am: Advent 1 Worship

Worship will include the sacrament of communion.

9:45 am: Advent Craft Festival

Join us in the UPC Fellowship Hall for the annual Advent Craft Festival! There will be crafts for children (and children at heart) to make in preparation for Advent. We will have plenty of greenery, candles, and supplies for you to make an Advent wreath to use at home. Children are encouraged to “dress down” or wear an old t-shirt or smock that can get messy.



Advent 2 (Dec. 10)

8:30 am & 11:00 am: A Service of Lessons & Carols

Lessons and Carols is a beloved UPC tradition and a highlight of our worship year for many! This choral service will feature musical offerings by all four of our choirs—the Alleluia Choir, Choristers, Youth Choir, and Chancel Choirs will come together to tell the story of God's love for humanity, from Adam's fall through the birth of Jesus.



9:45 am: Advent Brunch

Join us for a potluck brunch on Lessons & Carols Sunday (in lieu of Sunday School). Beverages will be provided; please make or buy a breakfast dish to share (quiche, muffins, fruit, etc.). Savory breakfast dishes are greatly appreciated. Please remember to label your dishes and serving spoons with your name if you'd like to have them back, and pick them up following the brunch. If your contribution contains allergens or is suitable for those with special dietary needs, please add labels such as “gluten free,” “contains peanuts/tree nuts,” or “vegetarian.”

Are you a student, visitor, or living with a disability? No need to bring anything — just join us for the food and fellowship!





Advent 3 (Dec. 17)

8:30 am & 11:00 am: Advent 3 Worship

9:45 am: Faith & the Arts

All adults are invited to this class where we will study Auden's "For the Time Being: A Christmas Oratorio" (with a separate combined activity for children in the Youth Center). This will be the only week of Sunday School during Advent.



Longest Night (Dec. 19)

7:30 pm: Longest Night Service

While things may be merry and bright for some during the holiday season, others may feel sadness and pain. For some, this time of year can be the loneliest of all times. The Longest Night is a service to acknowledge such feelings. Gather with us for words of comfort, prayers for hope, candles, gentle music, and silence.



Advent 4 & Christmas Eve (Dec. 24)

10:00 am: Advent 4 worship

Please note the time change for this one morning service! Worship will include communion.

5:00 pm: Family Christmas Eve service

A worship experience intended especially for children and their families, giving us the opportunity to watch the nativity story unfold before our very eyes and ring jingle bells in celebration. The Alleluia Choir and Choristers will sing, and we'll have both regular and battery-operated candles available. This service will also be available via livestream.



8:00 pm: Candlelight Christmas Eve service

A traditional and festive time of worship, with music led by the Youth Choir and Chancel Choir. This service will also be available via livestream.

First Sunday of Christmas (Dec. 31)

10:00 am: Worship

Please note the time change for this one morning service!

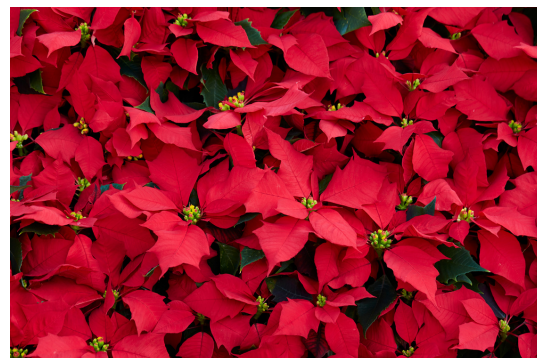
Opportunities to Give

Gifts of Beauty and Bounty

Honor and remember your loved ones through Christmas Gifts of Beauty and Bounty. Your gift can be used to purchase a poinsettia which will be placed in the chancel, or as a contribution to the Inter-Faith Council for Social Services to support our neighbors in need. (You can also choose to do both with your gift!) The names of those honored and remembered with these gifts will be in the Sunday Worship Bulletin on December 10.

Visit upcch.org/poinsettias to fill out our online form or to download one.

All forms must be received by Dec. 1.



Alternative Gift Market

Are you feeling a little overwhelmed by the prospect of shopping for Christmas this year? Not sure what to get that friend or family member who has everything? Let us help! At the UPC Alternative Gift Market, you can make donations in honor of your loved ones that will help support our partners around the world who are working to serve and support those in need - no gift wrap required. The online market is now open (upcch.org/agm), and we will also have a physical table in the narthex.

Diaper Drive for the Refugee Support Center

Presbyterian Women (PW) requests your support for their annual fund drive to provide diapers for the Refugee Support Center (RSC). Last year, we donated 3,600 diapers to the Center. Please make checks payable to University Presbyterian Church, noting "PW Diaper Drive" in the memo line. Checks can be placed in the offering plate or mailed to University Presbyterian Church, PO Box 509, Chapel Hill, NC 27514. If giving online, please select "PW Diaper Drive" as the fund.



Christmas Joy Offering

This special offering of the PC(USA) provides the opportunity for future leaders of the church to pursue and fulfill their dreams through Presbyterian-related education. The offering also helps families of active and retired church workers meet unexpected needs through the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions. We will collect this offering in mid-December.

December Opportunities to Connect

PYPs Movie Night

Fri., Dec. 8, 6:30 pm

Calling all families with children (birth-5th grade)! Join us on Friday evening, December 8, at 6:30 pm in the UPC parking lot for a holiday movie! Wear your pajamas if you want, bundle up, and bring a chair and a blanket. We'll provide the hot cocoa and snacks!



Youth Caroling

Sun., Dec. 17

Youth Christmas Caroling is on Dec. 17! We'll meet at church at 4:30 pm for hot chocolate & food, and depart for caroling around 5:00 pm. We will be finished by 7:00 pm. Please let us know if you plan on coming or if you are able to bring hot chocolate, food, or drive us from house to house (tinyurl.com/youth-caroling).

We're excited for a fun night together! Like Buddy the Elf said, "The best way to spread Christmas Cheer is singing loud for all to hear!"

Presbyterian Women Circles

All women are invited to Presbyterian Women circles! If you're interested in connecting with a PW circle, please contact Hadley Kifner (hadley@upcch.org or 919-929-2102).

Circle 1: Wed., Dec. 6 at 10:00 am at Nora Holley's home

Circle 2: Mon., Dec. 11 at 10:00 am in the Carolina Meadows Game Room

Circle 3: Tues., Dec. 5 at 10:30 am at Marian Johnson's home

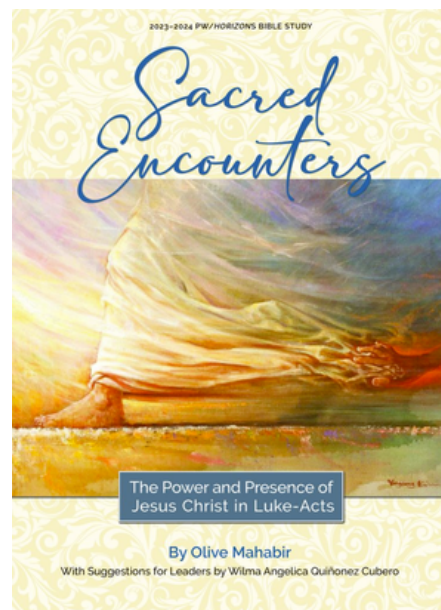
Circle 4: Tues., Dec. 5 at 3:15 pm at Chapel in the Pines or by Zoom

Circle 5: Wed., Dec. 6 at 7:00 pm at Kathy Culley's home

Circle 6: Thurs., Dec. 21 at 10:00 am in the Heron Room at Carol Woods

Circle 7: Mon., Dec. 18 at 7:00 pm in Vance Barron Hall

Circle 8: Tues., Dec. 12 at 7:00 pm in Vance Barron Hall



An Earth Care Christmas

Here are some tips from the Earth Care Team about how to be mindful of our commitment to caring for God's Earth during the holidays:

Sustainable Holiday Tips:

From DIY wrapping paper to LED Christmas lights, here are some of the environmental group One Tree Planted's "favorite eco-friendly holiday tips to help you stress less about your Christmas footprint and focus on the important stuff, like making memories with your loved ones!"

1. Use sustainable holiday gift wrap.
2. Prepare an eco-friendly feast.
3. Get a real tree.
4. Switch to LED holiday lights.
5. Give sustainable Christmas gifts.
6. Make sustainable Christmas decorations.
7. Send a card that plants trees.
8. Gift an experience they can look forward to.
9. Handcraft some awesome DIY gifts.
10. Donate to charity.
11. Do a gift swap.
12. Recycle your Christmas tree.
13. Ditch the cheap stocking stuffers.
14. Adjust your thermostat.
15. Enjoy an eco-friendly nightcap.



ONETREEPLANTED

For details on each, visit onetreepanted.org/blogs/stories/sustainable-holiday-ideas. One Tree Planted is a nonprofit organization focused on global reforestation. It wants to make it simple for anyone to help the environment by planting trees to restore forests, create habitat for biodiversity, and make a positive social impact around the world.

Presbyterians for Earth Care's Advent Daily Devotional

Presbyterians for Earth Care (PEC)'s 2023 Advent Daily Devotional contains daily meditations, prayers and calls to action as we consider the blessing of life on our planet during this holy season of anticipation of the birth of Christ. To download your free copy, visit presbyearthcare.org/devotional-and-worship-aids.

Founded in 1995, PEC invites individuals and congregations to participate in the growing Earth Care movement within the PC(USA) and beyond. PEC is a national eco-justice network that cares for God's creation by connecting, equipping, and inspiring Presbyterians to make creation care a central concern of the church.



PYC at the UNC Challenge Course

On November 5, our youth visited the UNC Challenge Course for an afternoon of team-building fun!



Opportunities to Connect in 2024

2024 Grief Group

If you have lost a loved one recently, or are experiencing loss of any kind, consider joining our grief support group. This grief support group is a gentle time of reflecting, learning, and healing with others on a similar journey. We will meet each Wednesday for 7 weeks, January 3 through February 14 (specific time TBD, based on participants' schedules). Attendance at each group for the entire 7 weeks is the only requirement for participation. Open to all. Contact Hadley (hadley@upcch.org) with questions or interest.



Women's Retreat (Feb. 23-25)

When Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her, "Woman, you have been set free...!" – Luke 13:12

Come! Join us for a weekend at Ocean Isle Beach where Rev. Meg Peery McLaughlin will lead us in exploring this text and the rich themes within it. During our time together, our collective aim will be to grow closer to God, ourselves, and each other. We will engage in small group conversations, creative activities, holy happy hours, walks on the beach, spiritual reflection, naps, singing, praying, and laughing. Registration is limited and filling up fast! For more information and to register, visit upcch.org/womens-retreat.

Savannah Bananas Game (April 12)

The Savannah Bananas are a circus/show-type of baseball team, and they are coming to Durham on April 12, 2024! We have reserved 100 tickets for UPC members; email Nancy Myer (nancy@upcch.org) or Tristan Wall (tristan@upcch.org) for details and to receive the link to purchase tickets. All ages are invited!



Spring & Summer Trips

Registrations are open for spring and summer trips! Visit upcch.org/trips for details and registration links. Sign up early to guarantee your spot!

An Update from PCM



Paul Burgess
PCM Pastoral Resident

I remember crying more than once in my first year as a junior high teacher. There was plenty that was exciting about the new opportunity, and I had the boundless energy and optimism of a twenty-five year old who just graduated and is launching into the world for the first time. At the same time, though, I was overwhelmed and undersupported and exhausted and learning for myself that having a degree isn't the same as being able to do the job...and so, there were tears, too.

What a different experience my first few months at PCM have been, in all the most wonderful ways!

Specifically, I'm thinking of the difference in support: my co-laborers Berry and Margie, the UPC staff, and the church body at large (that's you) have been wonderful resources, of course, but the most important system supporting the work of PCM is the students themselves. For several weeks running now, we (members of staff) have found ourselves with very little to do on program nights besides watch students spring into their practiced rhythms. Food is prepared and blessed, newcomers are welcomed, announcements are made, dishes are cleaned, worship is led, the week's program is presented...all with very little contribution or direction from the non-students in the room. It's a beautiful illustration of the Presbyterian principle that the people as a whole, rather than designated leaders, are the ones who ultimately guide the beloved community of the "capital C" Church as it follows Christ. It just happens to be a happy coincidence that it also allows Margie, Berry, and myself to spend more time in pastoral fellowship with students who need it, and results in me crying less frequently.

It's not just that there are defined jobs that students have learned to fill by rote, either. The programs that have been led have creatively encouraged us to consider how we move through the world as theologically-thoughtful followers of Jesus from a number of angles. We've engaged how the norms of our culture have led us to construct ideas of faith in a certain way. We've discussed the implications of certain personality types have for how we relate to the divine. We've shared the prophetic voices in our lives and how they have equipped us to spread the influence of the Holy Spirit. We've explored how God speaks through the beauty and breadth of queer art and experience. We've been freed to contemplate the rhythms of our own lives through the lens of a faith journey. We've listened to the ways musicals can crystallize elements of what it means to be human within creation.

We've even thought about how the safety, freedom, and distraction-free nature of a shower can let God work in discernible ways. That's without mentioning the backpacking trip a number of students went on over fall break, or the Thanksgiving meal we enjoyed with the Board (see picture).

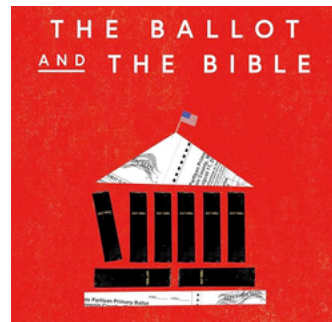
It has been breathtaking to be led on this journey with these incredible students— as a pastoral resident, as a follower of Jesus Christ, as a human. I can't wait to share more of it with you.



Opportunities to Learn in 2024

Guest Speaker Katelyn Scheiss (Jan. 7)

Duke Divinity student Katelyn Scheiss, author of "The Liturgy of Politics" (2020) will discuss her new book "The Ballot and the Bible" (2023) at UPC on Sunday Jan 7th at 9:45 am. From the description on Amazon: "Schiess combines American political history and biblical interpretation to help readers faithfully read Scripture, talk with others about it, and apply it to contemporary political issues--and to their lives. Rather than prescribing what readers should think about specific hot-button issues, Schiess outlines core biblical themes around power, allegiance, national identity, and more."



Faith in Plain Sight: Call for Storytellers

God is often at work through ordinary people and ordinary lives. Let's talk about it! For the second year in a row, we will gather during Lent (Feb. 18-March 24) to hear about how God's extraordinary grace is at work in quiet but significant ways among us. Can you think of someone at UPC whose story you'd like to hear? Or someone whose faith or life story you would like to learn more about? Send any and all recommendations to Hadley (hadley@upcch.org).



2024 Holy Land Trip: An Update

With heavy hearts, we notified participants last week that we have cancelled our 2024 Holy Land Trip. This decision is as a result of consultation with support staff on the ground in the Middle East; quite a bit of research on the impact the Israel-Hamas war is having locally, regionally, and internationally; and discernment regarding what it means at present for us as a community of faith to respond to the loss and suffering being experienced by those who live where we had hoped to visit. Even if the tragic violence were to come to a complete halt immediately, which we all pray it may, the different societies of the region will not be in any position in the spring of 2024 to take up normal patterns of day-to-day living. We will continue to pay close attention to what the future brings in terms of any possibility of a future journey.

Session Report

At their November meeting, the UPC Session:

- Approved two baptisms and the Confirmation Class mentors
- Approved the fall Endowment disbursements recommended by the Endowment Committee
- Approved the use of the front lawn on Sat., Dec. 9 for a food drive for TABLE/meet and greet with the UNC football players
- Received the Treasurer's Report
- Approved the Session meeting calendar and Communion Schedule for 2024



A PC(U.S.A.) Congregation



209 East Franklin Street
Chapel Hill, NC 27514
(919) 929-2102
upcch.org