



EPIPHANY 2024
EDITION

The Chimes

SHARING STORIES AND NEWS FROM
UNIVERSITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CHAPEL HILL



PICTURES FROM ADVENT 2023

Advent Craft Festival, Lessons &
Carols, and more! | p. 3-5

GUEST SPEAKER KATELYN SCHIESS

Author of *The Ballot* and *The Bible*, here on Jan. 7 | p. 9

AN UPDATE FROM THE RACIAL EQUITY TEAM

Striving for inclusion, justice,
and equity | p. 11

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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

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Ellen Parker, Director, UPPS

Sara Richard, Office Administrator

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Melani Willhite, Financial Assistant

The next edition of *The Chimes* will be published on Feb. 6, 2024. Submission deadline is January 23.
Contact: Erin Collier (communications@upcch.org)

2024 PLEDGE UPDATE



Total Amount Pledged (as of Dec. 25):
\$1,984,084

Number of Pledges: 360

Average Amount Pledged: \$5,511

NEW STRETCH GOAL: \$2.05M

Stewardship 2024: New Goal Alert!

We have officially surpassed our goal of \$1.98M! Amazing! And you might be thinking, *"UPC has already hit the publicized goal. Is my pledge really needed now?"*

The answer is an emphatic **YES!** Every pledge is gratefully received and wisely stewarded to contribute to our wider mission and outreach. We have officially hit our initial goal, but that goal was set before we had a clear picture of our 2024 expenses. **There is a gap between our pledge goal and our hoped-for budget. So, we're setting a stretch goal of \$2.05M (\$70K more) to help strengthen our budget to support all that we're planning for 2024.**

Visit upcch.org/stewardship to learn how to pledge.

Pastor's Message



Jarrett McLaughlin
Co-Pastor

The timer on the bell in our steeple has been a little bit off recently. In addition to chiming the bell manually to signal the beginning of a worship service, it is also programmed to automatically chime the noon hour each day. Lately, however, it has taken to ringing whenever it pleases (I blame Artificial Intelligence). A few weeks back I heard the bell ringing out in the cool morning air and was grateful to know that it was 8:06 am. I believe 12:43 pm was another time deemed significant by this rogue steeple bell.

I've decided to lean into it – assume it's a reminder that every moment can be sacred, filled with holy purpose and promise. It also strikes me as a harbinger of some changes we are introducing to one of our main vehicles for communication – *The Chimes*. Yep, the document that you are reading right now! For as long as almost all of us can remember, *The Chimes* has been published on or close to the first day of each month – some might say like clockwork.

While this issue is arriving in your inbox around the first of January, from here on out *The Chimes* will be following a different schedule – one shaped more by the contours of the church year. It has long been the case that an edition of *The Chimes* would come out right in the middle of a liturgical or programmatic season, which made for some awkward situations from time to time. Now, we will have an edition that covers the new year and another for the season of Lent. One *Chimes* will carry us from Easter to Pentecost and then two editions to cover the summer season. Another couple will ready us for everything that the Fall brings and a final edition will tell us everything we need to know about Advent. In all we will switch to publishing *The Chimes* eight times per year.

This does mean that we will need to be a bit more disciplined in getting information included in each edition that covers a longer period of time. Fear not, though, our Director of Communications and Stewardship Erin Collier will make the new deadlines as plain as can be to all the usual committees and ministries that are featured in the newsletter.

It is also my conviction that a church newsletter ought to be about more than sharing information. Newsletters are also tools for formation; a means for deepening our connections to one another. It is our hope that future editions of *The Chimes* will also include story-telling about our members and the ministry we share together. So as we turn the page to 2024, I invite you to lean into this new schedule and the emerging content of our newsletter and see if we can't discover the sacred promise and purpose of every moment and every person together.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jarrett", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the left.

Anticipated 2024 Chimes Schedule:

Jan. 2 - Epiphany/Winter

Feb. 6 - Lent

March 19 - Eastertide

May 7 - Summertime

July TBD - Summertime, part II

Aug. 27 - New Program Year

Oct. 15 - Mid-Fall

Nov. 19 - Advent/Christmas

Pictures from the Advent Craft Festival



Pictures from Lessons and Carols



More Pictures from Advent 2023



Star Words: An Epiphany Tradition

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you. – Isaiah 60:1

"Epiphany is a day in the liturgical calendar when we celebrate the magi's arrival to Jesus. The magi, a noble group of people, studied stars and knew when a new one appeared. The star guided them to the place of Jesus' birth. There, they presented the young Jesus with gifts fit for a king, recognizing and honoring him." - from Illustrated Ministry

Like the ancient magi, faithful people in all generations continue to look for the light of God along the journey.

Again this year, UPC will celebrate the season of Epiphany through the sacred and creative practice of receiving "star words." In worship on Sunday, Dec. 31, we invited everyone to come forward and receive at random, a small paper star with one word written on it.

That word is a "star word" and serves as an invitation for you to reflect on how that one word relates to your life and how you relate to it in the coming year. You may find that your star word is inspiring or confusing, challenging or perplexing; how it invites you into blessing.

Did you receive a star word on Sunday? We invite you to place it somewhere that you will see it on a regular basis, and then pay attention for ways in which that word shows up in your life (and how God shows up through that word).

Missed worship on Sunday and want a star word? Come by the church office during the week, or look for Hadley on Sunday morning.



The New UPC Chrismon Tree



You may have noticed a new addition to our decor during Advent - a Chrismon tree! Our newly formed Chrismon guild gathered during Advent learning how to make beaded Chrismons ("Christ monograms").

Here's what these Chrismons mean:

- Cross - symbolic of Jesus' death on the cross
- Fish - the Greek word for fish is IXOYE, which is also the acrostic for the Greek words meaning "Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior." Early Christians used this symbol as a sign to find each other in times of persecution.
- Angel - angels announced both the birth and the resurrection of Christ
- Crown - symbolizes the kingship of Christ

Many thanks to our guild members who helped create these beautiful Chrismons - we look forward to seeing this tradition continue and what you will add to the tree next year!

What to Expect on Sundays

Sunday Schedules Resuming in January

Sunday Schedule Resuming on Jan. 7:

- 8:30 am - Worship
- 9:45 am - Sunday School for all ages
- 11:00 am - Worship
- 6:00 pm - Youth Group (6th-12th grade)

Choirs Resuming on Jan. 14:

- 4:30-5:00 pm - Alleluia Choir (pre-K-5th grade)
- 4:30-5:15 pm - Choristers (3rd-5th grade)
- 5:15-6:00 pm - Youth Choir (6th-12th grade)

January Sermon Series: Everyone's Favorite Heresies

Epiphany isn't until January 6, but I am guessing you've put the tree by the curb. I hope your Star Word (details on p. 6) is on your bathroom mirror, guiding you in this New Year. Even though you've likely packed away the nativities, the impact of this baby continues.

The church has had a lot to say about this Christ child. And as we begin a new year of our resolution to follow in his way, we are kicking off 2024 with a special sermon series called "Everyone's Favorite Heresies." The word heresy comes from a Greek word meaning "choice" or "thing chosen," meaning a heretic was someone who made a theological choice that the wider church decided was invalid. As we start this series, we want to be clear about a few things:



- First, to be labeled a heretic, you have to be within the tradition itself. If you don't consider yourself a Christian, you aren't a heretic: you just aren't a Christian. A heretic is someone who is a Christian, but who then makes some sort of errant theological choice, and either defends a falsehood or denies a truth of the church universal. So to be clear: our Jewish, Hindu, Islamic, or even atheist siblings are not heretics.
- Second, virtually all of the people history regards as heretics were, by and large, really faithful, thoughtful people who had an idea that initiated important discussion—but who, in the end, came down in a different place than the rest of the church. Most heretics were genuinely seeking to help the church discover more about what it means to follow this person named Jesus.

There is so much we can learn about our own faith today by examining these "favorite" heresies of our church history. I hope you'll join us in the new year as we consider these questions:

- January 7: Was Jesus really a human? (Docetism)
- January 14: Do Christians really need the God of the Old Testament? (Marcionism)
- January 21: Can't we just earn our way into heaven? (Pelagianism)
- January 28: Don't Christians need to be perfect? Pastors at least? (Donatism)

Officer Installation (Jan. 14)

Join us for worship on Jan. 14 as we ordain and install our new Deacons and Elders, blessing them as they begin their terms as elected officers who lead and care for our congregation. Those to be ordained/installed are:

Elders:			Deacons:		
Martha Aldridge	Beth Keith	Donna Van Engen	Vicky Burriss	Nancy Jennings	Janet McDowell
Jessica Beardsley	Brian Meacham	Helen Warner	Beth Furr	Lew Lampiris	Donald McMillan
Scott Culley	Colin Minton		Lauren Garber	Jon Leggette	Marianne Ratcliffe
Liam Drake	Sally Osmer				



Second Sunday Lunch (Jan. 14 & Feb. 11)

Join us for a potluck fellowship lunch in the Fellowship Hall on the second Sunday of the month! Please bring a side dish, salad, or dessert for approximately 12 people. Please be generous! 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!

Congregational Meeting (Jan. 28)

The Session has called a Congregational Meeting on Sunday, January 28, after the 11:00 am worship service to receive the 2023 Annual Report to the Congregation, to hear a report on the State of the Church, and to act on proposed changes in the installed pastors’ terms of call. The Annual Report will be distributed electronically prior to the meeting.



Guest Preacher Rev. Paul Roberts (Feb. 11)

We are delighted to welcome the Reverend Paul Timothy Roberts, Sr., to the UPC pulpit on Sunday, Feb. 11. A graduate of Princeton University (BA in Architecture and African American Studies) and the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta (M.Div. with a concentration in New Testament studies), Rev. Roberts worked in both the business sector and as a pastor before becoming the President of Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary in Atlanta in 2010. Under the leadership of Rev. Roberts, JCSTS has redefined itself—and is helping redefine theological education and expanding social justice understanding in the process.

In addition to preaching at both services, Rev. Roberts will also lead the final week of our Racial Equity class (see p. 10), discussing how our Christian faith can inform our efforts to make amends for past wrongs of racial discrimination.

Opportunities to Learn

Guest Speaker Katelyn Schiess (Jan. 7, 9:45 am)

Duke Divinity PhD student Katelyn Schiess, author of *The Liturgy of Politics* (2020) will discuss her new book *The Ballot and the Bible* (2023) at UPC on Sunday Jan 7 at 9:45 am in the Fellowship Hall. All are welcome!

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."

This class will also be recorded and uploaded to the UPC podcast (rss.com/podcasts/upcch)



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).



Spiritual Growth Group Opportunities

Presbyterian Women

PW Circles gather monthly for fellowship and Bible study. Contact Hadley Kifner (hadley@upcch.org) to connect with a circle. All women are welcome!

Men's Breakfast

Our Men's Breakfast offers a time of fellowship and conversation on first and third Monday mornings. Email Dan Redwine (danredwine@gmail.com) to be added to the email list.

Young Adults

Young adults gather for Bible study every other Wednesday evening. Contact Berry French (berry@upcch.org) to learn more.

Small Groups

Small groups gather on a weekly or bi-weekly basis for conversation structured around that week's sermon. Email Meg Peery McLaughlin (meg@upcch.org) to join a small group.

New Adult Classes Beginning Jan. 14

Dunham Hall Class: Racial Equity

Please join the Racial Equity Team for a five-week study on the topic of the racial wealth gap, its causes, and potential solutions. To guide our discussions we will use the book, *From Here to Equality* by William Darity and Kirsten Mullen and an accompanying podcast episode from the Duke University Series: "The Arc of Justice."

Reverend Paul Timothy Roberts, Sr., the President of Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary in Atlanta, will join us for our final session on Feb. 11 to discuss how our Christian faith can inform our efforts to make amends for past wrongs of racial discrimination. Rev. Roberts will also preach that Sunday; see p. 8 to learn more.

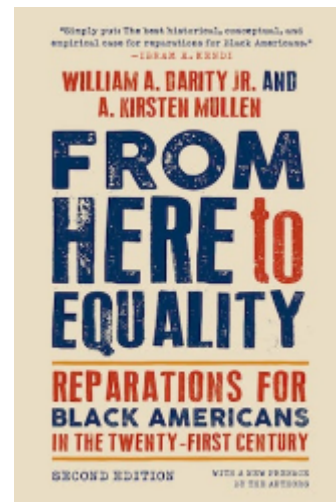
Reading the book is not a requirement for participation. Listening to the podcast, "The Arc of Justice" is recommended.

(sanford.duke.edu/story/podcast-series-arc-justice/)

If you wish to purchase the book, *From Here to Equality*, copies are available through the church at a discounted price. Contact the church office (admin@upcch.org) if you are interested in purchasing a copy. You can also order the book through Flyleaf Books (flyleafbooks.com) or Amazon.

For more information about these classes, contact: Chris Bevin (bevin.chris@gmail.com), Pat Morgan (judgepatmorgan@gmail.com), or Vann Joines (vjoines@seinstitute.com)

More information about the Racial Equity Team can be found on p. 11.



Vance Barron Hall Class: Confirmation 2.0

At UPC, we offer a Confirmation class for 8th graders as a time to explore the Church's faith and decide if they wish to claim it as their own. If they choose to do so, they confirm the vows spoken at their baptism as infants. But why should the 14-year-olds have all the fun?

Beginning on January 14, UPC is offering adults of all ages a small taste of Confirmation. Come if you are learning for the first time what it means to be a Presbyterian or come if you would like a reminder about what makes us unique among the many different kinds of churches. Together, we'll have conversations about theology, scripture, worship, sacraments, polity, and mission. Bring your questions!



From the Racial Equity Team

*He has told you, O mortal, what is good, and what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God? -Micah 6:8*

The Holy Spirit pushes the Church to be fully inclusive. The UPC Racial Equity Team (RET) exists because we are called to know and trust the work of the Holy Spirit, to uphold God's work in our church, and to be a witness of justice and equity in the community at-large.

The RET first formed in 2020 with a mandate from the Session. The team consisted of a number of church members from different walks of life who felt called to shepherd UPC through these important conversations. The team spent the better part of its first year building relationships with one another, sharing our own stories that have informed how we think and feel about race. This team prayed, studied and worked to discern a pathway for UPC to become an anti-racist church and congregation.

Since that point in time the RET has offered members of our church and the community at-large several opportunities to engage in book studies, seminars, movie viewing/discussion and community activities centered around the issues of racism.

In 2023 the RET:

- Read and discussed the book, *Wait, Is this Racist?*
- Attended a viewing and discussion of the movie, *Five Little Girls*, co-hosted by Binkley Baptist Church and the Orange County Community Remembrance Coalition (OCCRC),
- Offered our own fall film series on two evenings consisting of dinner, movie and discussion for two films— *Lowndes County* and *I'm Smart, Too*.
- Participated in an ecumenical reading of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Letter from Birmingham Jail as this important document marked its 60th anniversary.
- The RET, the church staff, officers and other interested church members all received anti-racism training.

In 2024, the RET is leading a 5-week class on Sunday mornings based on the book *From Here to Equality* (details on p. 10).

Current members of the RET are:

Mellicient Blythe (Co-Chair), Christie Osborne (Co-Chair), Chris Bevin, May Bryan, Vann Joines, Linda Kopel, Pat Morgan, Karen Vandersea, and staff liaison Jarrett McLaughlin

All members of the UPC RET are volunteers. Together we make no claim to have all the answers to the issues involved in anti-racism work. We claim no special expertise on this issue. However, we do have lots of questions and a desire to do better in this arena. We are open to comments and suggestions. We see our work as a journey, and all are welcome to join us.

For more information on the RET, please contact Jarrett McLaughlin (jarrett@upcch.org).

PS - Our presence on the church's website will soon be updated. Stay tuned!

Opportunities For Music & Worship

New Singers Welcome! Chancel Choir Welcome Dinner and Rehearsal (Jan. 17)

All interested singers are invited to come to a dinner and open rehearsal on Wednesday, January 17 at 6:15 pm, in Dunham Hall. The UPC Chancel Choir rehearses on Wednesdays from 7-8:30 pm during the academic year and typically sings in the 11 am worship service on Sundays. All are welcome!



Home Communion (Feb. 4)

On Sunday, Feb. 4, UPC Deacons will be visiting members of the church at home to share the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper together. If you or someone you know would like to be visited on that day to receive communion, please contact Meg Peery McLaughlin (meg@upcch.org) by January 14.

Taizé (Feb. 6, 7:30 pm)

Lasting about 30 mins, a Taizé service includes chant-like simple songs sung repeatedly, surrounded by brief periods of silence, Scripture, and prayer. We invite you to come as you are and invite anyone else who may desire a simple evening of singing, praying, and sacred reflection. This service will take place in the UPC Sanctuary.



Ash Wednesday (Feb. 14)

The first day of Lent is Ash Wednesday, which falls on Feb. 14 this year. During worship on this day, ashes are used to mark a cross on the forehead or hand of each worshiper as a reminder of our humanity and mortality. We will offer the imposition of ashes in two ways that day:

- Drive-thru/walk-up imposition of ashes from 12:30-1:30 pm (please enter via Franklin St.)
- Worship in the Sanctuary at 7:30 pm

All are welcome to join us for Ash Wednesday worship.

Meet Our New Members



Claire & Bill Abbotts (Charlie)

Claire is a network television writer and Bill is a producer at the advertising agency McKinney in Durham. They both grew up in the Triangle and recently moved back to the area with their 10-month-old son, Charlie, after living in Los Angeles for years.



Frances Campbell

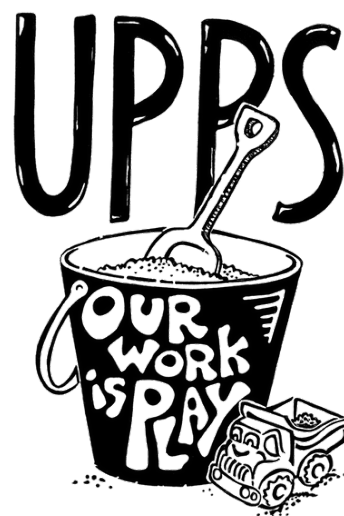
Frances is a native North Carolinian, a retired teacher, and long time member of First Presbyterian in Charlotte. She moved to Chapel Hill (Cedars of Chapel Hill) to be near her daughter and her family.

Interested in joining UPC?

Our next new member lunch will be Sunday, Jan. 21 at 12:00 pm. Want to learn more about membership? Contact Meg Peery McLaughlin (meg@upcch.org).

Priority Registration for UPPS

Priority registration for University Presbyterian Preschool runs through January 21. If you are a UPC member, please make sure to submit an application for your child ages 2-5 before the 21st to take advantage of your priority status. Applications and more information can be found online at upps-ch.com or by contacting the director, Ellen Parker, at preschool@upcch.org. UPPS has been nurturing preschool-aged members of our community for over 50 years. We are a half-day program in session from September to May.



Opportunities to Give

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). 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. Deadline to give is January 15.



Souper Bowl of Caring (Feb. 11)

The Souper Bowl of Caring began over 30 years ago with a simple prayer from a single youth group: "Lord, even as we enjoy the Super Bowl football game, help us be mindful of those without a bowl of soup to eat." On Sunday, February 11, Kirk Club youth will take part in this national effort to love our neighbors. They will hold soup pots at the sanctuary doors following worship to collect money for those who are hungry and hurting. Since 1990, over \$193 million in dollars and food has been generated while benefiting thousands of soup kitchens, food banks, meal programs and other hunger-relief charities in local communities. 100% of the money we collect at UPC will go to TABLE. Look for more details about how to give in February!



Fall Endowment Report

In November 2023, the Endowment Committee recommended and the Session approved the following Endowment disbursements:

- From Global Outreach, a request of **\$10,000 for Haiti Outreach Ministries (HOM)** for clinic improvement to address staffing needs and retaining clinicians. The money will be allocated to the salaries of medical personnel at HOM and it is anticipated that retention will improve, morale will increase, and assuming recruitment will improve, medical outcomes will improve.
- From the PCM of Chapel Hill Board (governing body of PCM) a request for **\$9,000 to continue the PCM Pastoral Resident program**. The Pastoral Resident is split 50:50 with Cary Presbyterian Church. The long-term goal is to be self-sustaining and to not require any Endowment funding in the next 2-3 years.
- From the UPC co-pastors, a request for **\$3,000 to fund a guest preacher in February 2024**. This request will be funded by the Margaret McLaughlin Guest Preacher Fund (a restricted fund in the UPC unrestricted account). The guest preacher will be the Reverend Paul Roberts, Sr., President of Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary in Atlanta, GA.

Call for Officer Nominations

The congregation is invited to nominate members of UPC for the office of Elder and Deacon for the Nominating Committee to consider as they prepare a slate for the next three-year term (2025-2027). You can submit names online (upcch.org/nominating) or contact any member of the committee: Nancy Oates (chair), Emily Damone, Annette Munson, Bill Whisenant, Caroline Jones, Greg Crawford, Steve Kennedy, Elizabeth Moshier, and staff liaison Jarrett McLaughlin. Submissions will be received until Feb. 5, 2024.

Nominating FAQ:

Who may be suggested as a candidate?

All members are eligible for nomination.

Who may recommend a candidate?

Any member of UPC may recommend candidates.

Do I need permission from the candidate before I submit his or her name?

No, the Nominating Committee will verify candidates' willingness to serve before they are nominated. (You need prior permission only if you choose to make a nomination from the floor during a congregational meeting.)

May I submit my own name?

Yes.

Session Report

In December 2023, the UPC Session:

- Approved two baptisms, one marriage, and accepted two families into membership
- Approved the 2024 Benevolence acceptance form for support of Presbytery and Unified Mission
- Examined and welcomed the incoming classes of Elders and Deacons
- Received a report from the Stewardship Committee on the state of the pledge drive
- Approved the UPPS 2024 budget and 2024/25 tuition changes and additions to the Parent's Handbook
- Approved the updated PCM Covenant Agreement and authorized PCM to establish an endowment with the Presbyterian Foundation
- Approved the revised UPC Fundraising Policy
- Granted the Administrative Committee authority to make changes to the church's operating bank accounts with the objective of being able to ensure that all funds are insured or guaranteed by the US government, are reasonably accessible in the event of an emergency, and earn a money market rate of return.
- Received the Treasurer's Report, which was hopeful for a strong December to meet the 2023 budget
- A letter of appreciation was read to the outgoing Elders – Sandy Alexander, Nate Garber, Patty Baum Haydon, Amy McEntee, Anna Rose Medley, Scott Singleton, Scott Smith, and Bob Slater



A PC(U.S.A.) Congregation



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