

MID-FALL 2024
EDITION



The Chimes

SHARING STORIES AND NEWS FROM
UNIVERSITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CHAPEL HILL



2025 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

Dedication Sunday is
Oct. 27 | p. 10

SUMMER 2025 REGISTRATIONS

Sign up for VBS and trips for
children and youth | p. 11-12

PREPARING FOR ADVENT 2024

Save the dates for these
opportunities | p. 13-14

In this Edition...

Pastor's Message..... 2

Sunday Morning Fire Alarm: An Update..... 3

Rise Against Hunger Pictures..... 4

Congregational Retreat Pictures..... 5-6

Opportunities for Worship..... 7

Opportunities to Learn..... 8

Opportunities to Connect..... 9

Opportunities to Give..... 10

Summer 2025 Registrations..... 11-12

Preparing for Advent..... 13-14

Meet Our New Members..... 15

PCM Report: Fall Retreat..... 16

Children's Ministry News..... 17

NexTrex Challenge - What Not to Include..... 18

Women's Retreat 2025..... 19

Session Report..... 19

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 [@upc_chapelhill](https://instagram.com/upc_chapelhill)

The next edition of *The Chimes* will be published on Nov. 19. Submission deadline is Nov. 4. Contact: Erin Collier (communications@upcch.org)

A Prayer for after a Hurricane

adapted from Psalm 121 and the Rev. Shawna Bowman

We lift our eyes to the hills,
and know that our help comes from you;
you keep all of life and hear every prayer.

Make pathways through muddy water, O God,
for help to come and neighbors to care.
Shed light in the dark spaces of fallen structures,
collapsing rooftops, and whole communities underwater.
Comfort those still waiting for word or rescue,
and do not leave them until they are found.

As the waters recede and the days pass,
do not let us forget that the work repair will have only just begun.
Remind us that healing hearts and land and homes take time.

For those of us in drier and safer places,
crack open our hands and hearts as we continue to share our
money, energy, care, imagination, and stubborn, stubborn hope.

Wake us up each day to the miracle of the connectional,
collective church, and remind us again and again, O God,
that we are not alone. Amen.

Pastor's Message



Jarrett McLaughlin
Co-Pastor

"I stopped teaching Sunday School for a few years, but one year, it got to me - I saw a class of Confirmation students stand up on the steps, and I didn't know them, so I had to go back to teaching."

Shannon Pace is a deeply committed Sunday School teacher currently working with the 3rd and 4th grade class. I recently saw her in the hallway on a Monday morning getting prepared for the next Sunday's class...let me repeat that. I saw her preparing for Sunday School ON A MONDAY MORNING. Our publication schedule requires that the preacher-of-the-week submit a worship bulletin by Tuesday. I haven't even begun to think about it yet, and Shannon has already planned and prepped for her 8 and 9-year-old pupils.

I was filled with gratitude for Shannon and so many others who commit themselves to the ministry of faith formation. The joy she takes in welcoming a new batch of children is equal to the pride she felt in worship as a class of 8th-grade Confirmation students were commissioned for their year of exploration. "I taught so many of them," she said with a huge smile on her face.

It was a brief interaction in the hallway, but it initiated something of a stream-of-consciousness prayer of gratitude within me. I got to thinking about our childcare workers - some who are seasonal college students, others who have been with us for years - and I gave thanks for how they are among the first to create a soothing space of welcome (even through tears and separation anxiety) for our littlest ones.

I gave thanks for those who sing with preschoolers and creatively tell Bible stories, which then made me think about our Godly Play volunteers who greet our 4 and 5-year-olds with a blessing and share a story told with the contents of a box decorated to remind us how precious Scripture can be for helping us understand ourselves and God.

I gave thanks for middle school teachers who discuss the Bible over bagels or donuts and high school teachers who wander down to Suttons for the same with our older students. I pictured the Confirmation team who faithfully organize a series of lessons that walk our 8th graders through the basics of what it means to be a Christian and a Presbyterian so they might make a decision at the end of the year to confirm that faith. I thought about Brian Meacham who painstakingly selects theme music for each lesson so the youth get to guess what they'll be exploring that day.

My mind then settled on where Shannon left me - with the Confirmation students standing on the steps yesterday receiving the congregation's blessing, but ALSO the mentors who stood behind them. Some of those pairs have known each other for years. Others will just be getting to know one another in the coming weeks. ALL of them have an opportunity to be a crucial part of their mentee's faith journey, and so I said "thank you" for those who have ever said yes to that calling and who are saying it now.

During their commissioning in worship, Tristan Wall used a line that is worth repeating. He said: "This year is not about conforming your faith to a pre-determined mold. This is about confirming your faith as your own." I recognized some variation of the line from when we interviewed him not even 18 months ago. It struck me then and strikes me now that all of our faith-formation ministry is in service to that goal. In the end, we do not seek to create automatons with rote answers to every question about God. We seek to empower disciples of Jesus Christ to take up a living, active faith filled with struggle and grace and redemption.

With the recent storms and the unfolding scope of the damage right in our backyard, Lord knows we have had occasion for some serious questions about the nature of God. What a gift it is to have a community where we can wrestle with those questions together. If you are now or have ever participated in any of our spiritual growth offerings - whether as a student or teacher - I give thanks for you. May we always be on the way to confirming a faith that is never conformed to the world as it is but always in search of God's promised day where all that is wrong is made right.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jarrett", written in a cursive style.

Sunday Morning Fire Alarm: An Update

If you were in worship on Sept. 15, you left without a benediction; instead, we had an emergency evacuation. The strobes and sounds of the fire alarm were jarring, and we want to acknowledge, especially in this nation where we live, that such experiences are scary. Our minds race to the worst possible scenario.

First and foremost, we are grateful that no one was hurt and that no damage was done to our church home.

We are thankful:

- for systems that alert us when something is wrong;
- for Martha, the nursery worker who pulled the alarm;
- for the Chapel Hill Fire Department, who responded immediately;
- for the Godly play volunteers and other childcare staff who moved our children swiftly to safety;
- for you, the congregation, for your calm exit from the building.

We are also grateful for the opportunity to learn from this experience. It's not often you "get" to practice a full-scale fire drill on a Sunday morning. We're grateful for those who are helping us review our policies and for a thoughtful process to ensure that those policies are well communicated.

We are grateful for the leadership of this church, who, over the past year, have been thinking about the very boring but absolutely necessary work needed for this physical plant, this building, which is our launching pad for ministry.

Recently, the Session approved hiring a consulting firm (Armstrong McGuire) to help us with a feasibility study to determine the capacity of what this congregation can tackle- a full decade after the end of our last campaign.

On the potential list of projects is an overhaul of our HVAC system, including the air handling units. This was the source of the fire: a decades-old condensation pump burned up. Our staff is carefully eyeing the other pumps, and there is NO reason to fear, but we would be remiss not to proactively act as good stewards of this space.

We are grateful for the utter privilege of being able to look back and laugh at a sermon about a burning bush, followed by a FIRE alarm, but we are mostly grateful for the encounters we have with Almighty God, which remind us we are indeed on holy ground.



Pictures from Rise Against Hunger

We packed 20,000 meals for our Kickoff event on Sept. 15! These meals will be heading to South Africa, where they will provide a full year's worth of school lunches for 93 children. Many thanks to all who helped (and wore hairnets) to make that possible.



Congregational Retreat 2024

In early September, we had a wonderful weekend together in Montreat as together we “pressed pause” and enjoyed fun, fellowship, and beautiful weather!





Opportunities for Worship

Children's Sabbath & Dedication Sunday (Sun., Oct. 27)

Join us on Sunday, Oct. 27 as our children lead us in worship! At both services, our children will lead us through liturgy, scripture, prayers, and song.

This will also be our Stewardship Dedication Sunday, when all will be invited to bring forward 2025 pledge cards. Visit upcch.org/stewardship to learn more about this year's campaign.



All Saints' Sunday (Sun., Nov. 3)

We will be observing All Saints' Day in worship on Sun., Nov. 3 by reading the names of all UPC members who died this past year. In addition to all UPC members' names, if someone special in your life has died this past year and you would like us to include their name, please email Sara (admin@upcch.org) by Friday, October 25. All are welcome to attend this service and/or add a name to the list of those that will be read aloud.



Taizé Worship (Tues., Nov. 19, 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.



Opportunities to Learn

Adult Sunday School Classes (Sundays, 9:45 am)

Global Outreach Series (Dunham Hall)

Oct. 20-Nov. 10

Join us for a four-week series as we hear more about the work of our Global Outreach partners!

- Oct. 20 - Leslie May with an update on UPC's work with Afghan Refugees
- Oct. 27 - Sally Harwood with Ministry of Hope, Lesotho
- Nov. 3 - Emily Everett from Hearts with Haiti
- Nov. 10 - Nuhad Tomeh, former PCUSA mission coworker serving with partners in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and the Persian Gulf States

Pocket Parables (Vance Barron Hall)

Oct. 20-Nov. 10

led by Jarrett & Meg Peery McLaughlin

Jesus spent his time doing many things, but one thing he always made time for was teaching. Instead of lecturing, however, he used parables - short stories that draw on familiar character-types and situations to spark thoughtfulness about the nature of God. In the coming weeks, we will look at a different parable each week and consider how we might tuck it in our pocket and carry its lesson with us.

My Favorite Funerals, Including My Own

Nov. 17

led by Cliff Butler

Memorial services and funerals are most often associated with heartache and loss. And yet sometimes, even in the midst of grief, these special services can leave us feeling uplifted, comforted, inspired, and grateful, too. Join us for a conversation with UPC member Cliff Butler as he shares significant moments from funerals he has attended over the years and thoughts he has when he thinks about his own. With both respect and playfulness, Cliff will guide a discussion around what it means to live well, die well, and be remembered well.

Racial Equity Documentary Viewing (Nov. 12)

The RET invites you to a viewing of the documentary *Acts of Reparation*, the second in our Fall Film Series, on November 12, 2024, at UPC. All are welcome to attend and to bring friends!

From the film's website: *Two friends—one Black, one white—travel South to their ancestral lands to explore what reparations means to them. From kitchen tables to porches, lost cemeteries to discovered diaries, their journeys lead to unexpected opportunities that transform their friendship, families and communities. Together they reclaim and reckon with their roots.*

When: November 12, 2024

Time: 5:45 pm

What: Dinner, film, discussion

Watch the bulletins and emails for more details about this event.



Opportunities to Connect

Chrismon Guild (beginning Oct. 28)

Chrismon (“Christ monogram”) ornaments are handcrafted creations made of white and gold beads strung on simple wire in a pattern. Each ornament depicts a Christian symbol or Greek word that tells the story of Jesus’ life and ministry.

The Chrismon Guild will start back on Monday, Oct. 28, meeting weekly (2-3:30 pm in Dunham Hall) for 5 consecutive weeks, crafting a new Chrismon ornament each time. If you were part of the Guild last year, we will be making different ornaments this year. If this will be your first year, no experience needed. At the end of the 5 weeks, we will have a decorating party and place all the ornaments on a tree somewhere in the church building. Dates are:

- Oct. 28: Latin Cross with Alpha and Omega
- Nov. 4: Anchor
- Nov. 11: Resurrection Cross
- Nov. 18: Chi Rho
- Nov. 25: Beaded Cross
- Dec. 2: Chrismon Tree decorating party

Registration is required; visit upcch.org/chrismon-guild to sign up.



Second Sunday Lunch (Nov. 10)

Join us after 11:00 worship on Nov. 10 for a potluck lunch! Details are:

- The church will provide a main dish and beverages. Those who attend are asked to make or buy a side dish, salad, or dessert for approximately 12 people. Please be generous!
- Drop off your food in the Fellowship Hall prior to 11:00 am worship.
- Please remember to label your dishes and serving spoons with your name if you’d like to have them back, and pick them up at the end of lunch.
- 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!

Other 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 lunch twice a month after 11:00 worship. Contact Berry French (berry@upcch.org) to learn more.

Knitting Group

Knitters of all experience levels are invited to join this group every Wednesday at 2 pm in Dunham Hall. Email Marsha Krzyzewski: marshakrzyzewski@yahoo.com

Opportunities to Give

2025 Stewardship Campaign

For generations, UPC has been there—a steady presence—in this community proclaiming and living out God's love in Christ. Even when the world around us is topsy-turvy and much of our culture is bent on division, UPC equips us to stay rooted in the gospel. When we are grounded in the grace of God, we are called to respond with our gratitude—gratitude that takes the form of stewardship.



Our 2025 pledge goal is \$2.15 million, a 6% increase from 2024. This increase accounts for inflation and modest building/programmatic increases, while also maintaining our commitment to staff and outreach.

Stewardship packets are being mailed and contain information about this year's campaign as well as a pledge card. Will you prayerfully consider what pledge you can make to our ministry and mission? Pledging a gift for 2025 both provides you an opportunity to intentionally consider how you may give and helps us plan for our budget in the coming year.

Our Dedication Sunday is Oct. 27, and we invite you to bring your completed pledge card with you on that Sunday (although online pledging is available as well!). Visit upcch.org/stewardship to learn more about this year's campaign.

Responding to the impact of Hurricane Helene in NC

It was not long ago that this church stood in the waters of Flat Creek, which flows into the Swannanoa River, winding through Buncombe County. We stood there, ankle deep, to baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Water reminds us of the promise that we belong to God, in life and in death.

When that same water rages, floods and destroys, our hearts break. This natural disaster hits close to home. We love Montreat and many of us have dear ones who call WNC home.

Your staff has been discerning how to balance the help we want to offer with the help that is wanted on the ground right now. The last thing we want to do is place additional burdens on an already taxed relief effort. The consistent word from our connections is to not come yet, but to send financial support and to stand at the ready; thus we commend the following to you as a way to respond:

Give: The Presbyterian Church is connectional. UPC has trusted relationships in the area that need support now and in the long haul. Gifts to the UPC "WNC Disaster Relief" fund will be pooled and then disbursed to vetted organizations on the ground offering relief. You can give online or via check (be sure to designate your gift to the "WNC Disaster Relief" fund).

Stand by to go: Several of our members have been in conversation about organizing a trip to offer practical, physical help. The timing of that trip may be weeks or months from now, depending on how long it takes for basic infrastructure to be repaired. If you are interested in participating in a future trip, visit upcch.org/disaster-relief to share your interest, and we will be in touch once plans start to form.

Pray: Please continue to hold this region in your prayers in the days and weeks and months to come.

Summer 2025 Registrations are Now Open!

Summer 2025 registrations open on October 15!
Mark your calendars now,
and register ASAP to guarantee your spot!

To register, visit:
VBS: upcch.org/vbs
Trips: upcch.org/trips



Vacation Bible School

June 16-19, 2025 at New Hope Presbyterian Church

For age 4 (as of 9/1/25) through rising 5th grade (fall 2025)

At our "Waves of Wonder" VBS, we'll be learning Bible stories that feature water, helping us to deepen our understanding of the importance of water and to join God in caring for this precious natural resource. Children age 4 (as of 9/1/2025) through rising 5th graders (in fall 2025) are welcome to join us. All children must be potty-trained. Registration is now open for UPC and UPPS families, as well as New Hope Presbyterian families. Visit upcch.org/vbs to learn more and register!

Cost: \$65

Contact: Nancy Myer (nancy@upcch.org)

We also need volunteers to help make VBS happen! Visit upcch.org/vbs-volunteers to learn more and sign up. Youth are invited to help, too.



Montreat Worship & Music Conference

June 22-28, 2025 at Montreat, NC

For completed 3rd graders-adults

All completed 3rd graders through adults are welcome for this time of relaxation, music, and fellowship. Housing is limited and will be filled on a first come, first served basis, so early registration is recommended!

- For Children (completed 3rd-5th), Middlers (completed 6th-8th), and Youth (completed 9th-12th), the cost of attendance includes all classes - art, handbells, drama, choir, etc. - plus housing and food. Scholarships are available.
- We need all hands on deck to make the magic happen, so please contact Dallin Baldwin (dallin@upcch.org) if you are interested in being a Chaperone or Cook. Housing and food is also included for these volunteers, and you will love spending a week in beautiful Montreat.
- For adults who wish to attend and participate (open to all adults, not just the choir!), please contact Dallin Baldwin (dallin@upcch.org) for more information.

Cost: \$600

Contact: Dallin Baldwin (dallin@upcch.org)



Appalachia Service Project

July 6-12, 2025 in rural Appalachia

For completed 8th grade-adults

Appalachia Service Project endeavors to make homes warmer, safer, and drier in rural Appalachia. No construction experience is needed - just a heart for serving others and a desire to learn. We are divided into work crews of 5-6 people and travel in vans to our ASP center. We'll make our home for the week on air mattresses in gyms, schools, or community centers. Each day, each work crew will head out for their home where they will serve for the week. You'll do home repair but more importantly, you'll get to know the homeowners, their stories, and make a real connection as you share God's love. Adults are welcome and encouraged to attend to make this trip work for our young people.

Cost: \$500; registration deadline: Jan. 30

Contact: Tristan Wall (tristan@upcch.org)



Massanetta Springs Middle School Conference

July 10-13, 2025 at Massanetta Springs, VA

For completed 6th-8th graders

Massanetta's Middle School Conference (completed 6th – 8th grade) transforms the faith journey of hundreds of middle schoolers from all around the country every summer. Every aspect of this conference is crafted with middle schoolers in mind. Conference activities like keynote, recreation, encounter groups, and workshops are centered on the theme of the summer. It will be one of the best things your youth does all year! Children who have completed 5th grade are eligible to join as well, please reach out to Tristan if you have a current 5th grader who is interested in attending.

Cost: \$500; registration deadline: Feb. 28**

****Early Bird cost, if you register by Dec. 31: \$450**

Contact: Tristan Wall (tristan@upcch.org)



Montreat Youth Conference

July 20-26, 2025 at Montreat, NC

For completed 8th-12th graders

Montreat Youth Conference is designed for high school youth who desire to come together for fellowship, fun, and faith formation. We'll spend a week in the mountains living together in a house. Our days will be filled with keynote, energizers, singing, small groups, recreation, and worship. We'll enjoy meals with our UPC family and enjoy a day out on the town mid-way through the week! This week will leave you with new perspectives on faith, and will create bonds with your church family that will last for years.

Cost: \$550; registration deadline: Feb. 28**

****Early Bird cost if you register by Dec. 31: \$450**

Contact: Tristan Wall (tristan@upcch.org)

Preparing for Advent

Alternative Gift Market

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 will open on Nov. 17, and there will be a table at the Advent Craft Festival.



Advent Craft Festival (Nov. 24)

Join us in the UPC Fellowship Hall on Sunday, Nov. 24, at 9:45 am 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 Taizé Retreat (Dec. 4-6)

Begin the season of Advent and prepare for the coming of Christ with quiet reflection and sacred music. In the beautiful natural setting of the St. Francis Springs Prayer Center, this retreat invites you to breathe with God, pray with others, and rest in stillness. It will be two days of personal retreat with one evening of a special worship service in the Taizé tradition. Rev. Hadley Kifner will lead one small group reflection session each day and a simple closing prayer service in the all-glass chapel in the woods.

This retreat costs \$260 and includes:

- lodging at the retreat center for two nights (Dec. 4 and Dec. 5)
- all meals while there (dinner on Dec 4, all meals on Dec. 5, and breakfast on Dec. 6)
- admission ticket to the afternoon of Taizé program (Dec. 4)
- access to the retreat grounds (meditation room, library, indoor chapel, outdoor chapel, labyrinth, walking trail in woods, Stations of the Cross, and Celestial Waterfall Gardens)
- two group spiritual direction activities

Space is limited, so please register early. Registration will close on November 1.

Visit upcch.org/taize-retreat for details and to register.



Christmas Gifts of Beauty & Bounty

It is the UPC tradition during Advent to honor and remember the people in our lives 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 Dec. 8.

Visit upcch.org/poinsettias to fill out our online form or to download one. Printed forms will also be available in the narthex. All forms must be received by Dec. 1.



Save the Dates for these Advent/Christmas Services



Lessons & Carols (and Advent Brunch)

Sunday, Dec. 8, 8:30 & 11:00 am



Longest Night Service

Tuesday, Dec. 17, 7:30 pm



Family Christmas Eve Service

Tuesday, Dec. 24, 5:00 pm



Candlelight Christmas Eve Service

Tuesday, Dec. 24, 8:00 pm

Meet Our New Members



Rae & Josie Buckley

Rae works for the Town of Chapel Hill, and Josie is a sophomore in high school. They're excited that Rae's mother, Lew, will also be joining UPC next month.



Stephanie & Chris Johnson (Graham, Emily)

Stephanie was a UPC member while at UNC, and she and Chris were married here in 2015. They recently moved to Chapel Hill from Clearwater, FL and are parents to Graham (3) and Emily (1).



Grace & Matt Powell (Kessler, Winston)

The Powell family has felt at home from their very first visit to UPC. Each time they attend UPC, they always leave feeling replenished and can't wait to come back the next Sunday.



Allison & Brent Smith

After several years away, the Smith family is delighted to return to UPC. Allison and Brent taught Sunday School here, and their children were confirmed here. They look forward to being involved once again!



Elizabeth & Charlie Vail (Bo)

Elizabeth was a teacher at Northside Elementary for 10 years before working at Lincoln Center in the Equity and Engagement Office for the past two years. Charlie is a worker's comp attorney in Raleigh. They love living in Chapel Hill with their son Bo and dog Poppy.



Bryan Wagoner (Hannah, Sophia)

Bryan, along with his daughters, Hannah and Sophia, have been regular attendees since moving here from West Virginia. He is a former philosophy and religion professor. Bryan's wife Laura is an ordained PCUSA minister serving a dual call in Cedar Grove, North Carolina.

PCM Fall Retreat Report



Paul Burgess
PCM Pastoral Resident

Beach retreat, which is always our first major PCM event of the academic year, is an exciting time. We load 38(!) students into a bunch of cars and take over three houses in Ocean Isle for a weekend– there’s time in the surf and sand (beach kickball was a highlight for me), good food and conversation shared over crowded tables, and plenty of laughter. We take the time to be together in worship, too, and to appreciate the ways that God is moving in nature and the relationships we share.

As a staff member, it’s always an exciting opportunity to sit back and watch the students interact, to watch the acts of generosity and hospitality and love that have become a hallmark of this ministry. For example, five students led the charge to make sure everyone was fed. One student took charge of programming, provoking periods of contemplation and worship. So many students showed up with vulnerability and courage to “brieology,” the tradition of gathering around baked brie and wrestling with difficult theological questions together. The weekend was brimming with countless casual moments of caring and community in the walks on the beach, in the late-night games, in things as simple as an invitation to sit with a group of friends...moments that redouble my gratitude to God for all that PCM is and is becoming.



The thing most precious to me, though, is getting to see PCM decide who it wants to be for the year. Watching students gel, seeing the bond between them form and solidify, looking on as returning students set a tone and a culture that borrows generously from both their own holy imaginations and the loving examples of students who have graduated, bearing witness to new students seeing for the first time the magic that I get a front row seat to every week...it’s such an incredible gift, to see the Spirit moving in real time. And moving, she was– and she has not stopped since.

I’ll tell anyone who cares to listen: the ministry of PCM is an incredible gift to so many folks. That happy fact doesn’t happen by accident– it happens because of thoughtful collaboration with partners like University Presbyterian Church, students who are dedicated to pursuing God’s will through beloved community, and moments like beach retreat, where we are afforded the opportunity to step out of the relentless current of everyday life and make space for something holy to spark.

As always, thank you for being a part of it.



Children's Ministry

Families with children - mark your calendars now for these upcoming dates!



PYPs Biscuits on the Bricks

UPC front lawn + Vance Barron Hall

Sun., November 17, 12:15 pm



PYPs Outdoor Movie night

UPC parking lot

Fri., December 13, 6:00 pm

Children's Sunday School is off to a great start! Here are some glimpses of what we've been up to in our classes:



NexTrex Challenge - What Not to Include

We are grateful for all who are helping care for God's creation by participating in UPC's NexTrex Plastic Bag and Film Recycling Challenge! The ability to recycle rather than send to the landfill these ubiquitous soft plastics that have become a huge environmental problem feels like a God-send.

However, far too many items that NexTrex will NOT accept are being put into UPC's three NexTrex bins. Of the first 60 pounds UPC collected, over 10 pounds had to be removed by hand and thrown away. Included were several of nearly every item on NexTrex's "DO NOT INCLUDE" list (below and on each collection bin), as well as many items failing the "stretch" and "shiny/crinkly/crunchy" tests. Please carefully review NexTrex's instructions for what it can and cannot recycle.



What NOT to include:

Any plastic bag that you cannot stretch or push your thumbs through should NOT be put into the NexTrex bins. This includes frozen food bags, and other thick, non-stretchable plastic bags and pouches containing cheese, meat, nuts, granola, pre-washed salads, other vegetables and fruit, etc.

Other items that had to be separated out and discarded:

- rigid plastic clamshells, food trays, plates, cups, cup lids, and straws
- bird and grass seed bags
- soil and fertilizer bags
- bread, cereal, and sandwich bags, and other bags still containing food. (*Turn inside out and shake food into your compost bin or trash.*)
- wet items (*esp. ice and sandwich bags. Turn inside out and let dry completely*)
- dirty or greasy items
- paper, cardboard, receipts, bakery bags, etc.
- prescription pill bottles
- medical waste "biohazard" bags
- metal clamps, such as on ice bags
- compostable bags, cups, etc.
- Mylar balloons

Do NOT include these items in the NexTrex® Recycling Box:



FROZEN FOOD BAGS



CANDY BAR WRAPPERS



CHIP BAGS



NET OR MESH PRODUCE BAGS



PET FOOD BAGS

Or these:

✗ Degradable/compostable bags or film packaging

✗ Pre-washed salad mix bags

✗ Hot dog or meat wrap packaging

✗ Six-pack rings

✗ PPE- Gloves, masks, or protective wear

✗ Pool covers

✗ Lamination film

✗ Silage and hay bags

✗ Vinyl shower curtains or tablecloths

✗ Bedding or linen packaging

✗ Shiny, crinkly films like floral wrap

✗ Backyard ice rinks

Please note that any dirty, wet or food-containing items not only must be separated and thrown away, but also may contaminate otherwise acceptable items in collection bins that must then also be thrown away.



What you CAN include:

- grocery and shopping bags (*clean, dry, and empty*)
- bread, sandwich, and cereal bags (*clean with no food or organic residue/crumbs*)
- dry cleaning bags, newspaper sleeves, ice bags (*clean and dry*)
- bubble wrap and plastic shipping envelopes (*cut off any labels or metallic Mylar strips*)
- plastic case overwrap around paper towels, bottled water, etc.

For more information, please visit upcch.org/nextrex-challenge.

Not sure if your plastic qualifies?

Try these two tests:

Does it **stretch** when you pull it? If yes, it can be included. If it tears like paper, then please don't put in the bin.

Is the package **shiny** or does it make a **crinkly/crunchy** sound in your hand? If yes, do NOT recycle in the NexTrex bin.

Women's Retreat 2025

**Save the Date for our 2025
Women's Retreat!**

**Feb. 14-16, 2025
Ocean Isle Beach**

Registration will open soon!



Session Report

At their meetings in August and September, the UPC Session:

- Approved 1 wedding
- Approved 4 baptisms
- Welcomed 12 new members
- Heard a report on the 122nd Gathering of New Hope Presbytery
- Approved the hiring of two new teachers for UPPS
- Approved the endorsement of TABLE's application for a New Hope Presbytery Hunger Grant
- Approved the endorsement of PCM's application for the Presbytery Hunger Grant for \$2,000 for 2024 to help offset annual costs associated with feeding PCM students on Thursday evenings during the academic year
- Approved the slate of Sunday School teachers, Godly Play teachers, and youth advisors for the year.
- Discussed changes in the PC(USA) benefits (medical) through Board of Pensions
- Discussed the sponsorship of the *Bad Faith* screening at Binkley Baptist in August
- Heard a report on the upcoming Stewardship drive
- Were informed that the Pastor's Discretionary Fund has been spent out for the year
- Discussed the increase in unsheltered population in the area and how to best treat them with dignity and respect when we encounter them on the church premises



A PC(U.S.A.) Congregation

UNIVERSITY

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