



EASTER 2025
EDITION

The Chimes

SHARING STORIES AND NEWS FROM
UNIVERSITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CHAPEL HILL



HOLY WEEK & EASTER AT UPC

What to expect during this holy
season | p. 5-6

WESTERN NC: AN UPDATE & AN OPPORTUNITY

Help rebuild a home for a
family in Old Fort | p. 8

UPCOMING RECITALS THIS SPRING

Come support these young
musicians! | p. 9

In this Edition...

Pastor’s Message..... 2

Pictures from Youth Sunday..... 3

Pictures from Music Sunday..... 4

Holy Week at UPC..... 5

Celebrating Easter at UPC..... 6

What to Expect: Sundays after Easter.....7

Western NC: An Update & An Opportunity..... 8

Upcoming Recitals at UPC..... 9

Vacation Bible School 2025.....10

Register for the Congregational Retreat..... 11-12

From the Earth Care Team..... 13

Stephen Ministry: The After People.....14

From the Racial Equity Team.....14

UPPS.....15

Session Report..... 15

Our Staff

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- Jarrett McLaughlin**, Co-Pastor
- Dallin Baldwin**, Director of Music
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- Erin Collier**, Dir. of Communications & Stewardship
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- Bob Dunham**, Pastor Emeritus
- Berry French**, Associate Pastor for Campus Ministry
- Hadley Kifner**, Associate Pastor for Spiritual Nurture
- Nancy Myer**, Associate Pastor for Family Ministry
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 [@upc_chapelhill](https://instagram.com/upc_chapelhill)

Volunteer at Emanuel Food Pantry

Friday, April 18, 1:00-3:00 pm

We have an opportunity on Good Friday (a school holiday for CHCCS) to pack rice and beans for the weekly food distribution at Emanuel Food Pantry in Durham. The preferred age for volunteers is 8 and up, but the task is doable for children of almost all ages. Visit upcch.org/emanuel-food-pantry to sign up, and we will be in touch with final details closer to the date. Space is limited.



The next edition of *The Chimes* will be published on June 3
Submission deadline is May 20.
Contact: Erin Collier
(communications@upcch.org)



Dear Friends,

This is a note of gratitude to you, the University Presbyterian Church family, for participating in our feasibility study. University Presbyterian Church is made up of approximately 612 households, and 247 of them provided input to our campaign consultants, who aggregated the data to help us discern the size and scope of a possible campaign. That's an outstanding response—41%, compared to the typical 30% for churches! **Well done!**

Over the winter, the consultants engaged with 290 members of all ages through: 16 member interviews, 12 focus groups, 2 town halls, 4 staff interviews, and 1 staff focus group. We want to say **thank you** for giving your time, asking your questions, sharing your ideas, naming your hopes, and considering your own investment in what all this may mean.

Based on your spoken priorities and conservative math, the Campaign Readiness Team will bring a recommendation to Session in April. They may choose to reflect on it until May, but I would expect you to hear news of your elders' decision this spring.

What I can tell you now is that the consultants found great vibrancy and health in their work with us.

Here are a few things that stood out in their report (which we can happily share with you after the Session has had a chance to digest it first):

- **There is a high degree of trust in the congregation.** You have confidence in our strong committee structure and our processes. You can depend on the leadership.
- **There is financial health.** Our giving has increased 25% since 2020 (defying national trends), we have no debt, we have a strong administration committee, an established endowment, and an effective online giving platform.
- While our membership numbers remain steady (about 1,200), we have welcomed an average of 63 new members each year over the past three years, and we maintain very clean membership rolls. **There is high engagement of the congregation** in our common ministry.

If you were at the family meeting in worship a few weeks ago, you may recall my joke that our consultants were shocked at the number of in-depth questions they received. Typically, a "Frequently Asked Questions" document isn't added to the draft case for campaign support until later, once the scope and size of a campaign have been determined. But you, dear ones, are not a typical congregation. You are the kind of congregation that is going to kick every tire! You care deeply and invest fully. And I love you for it.

Please continue to keep the church in prayer as the Session discerns our next steps. And receive our heartfelt thanksgiving for your participation and for being who you are.

With gratitude and affection,

Meg



Pictures from Youth Sunday (March 2)



Pictures from Music Sunday (March 23)

On March 23, the Chancel Choir shared selections from Handel's *Messiah*.

To watch the recording of this service (or any other worship service), visit vimeo.com/upcch



Thank you to Eric Munson for these beautiful photos!

Holy Week at UPC



Palm Sunday (*April 13, 8:30 & 11:00 am*)

On Palm Sunday, we remember the story of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, as the crowd waved palm branches and cried out "Hosanna!" In worship on this day, you'll have the opportunity to wave your own palm branch.



Holy Week Labyrinth (*April 14-18*)

Mon.-Thurs., 9:30 am-3:30 pm

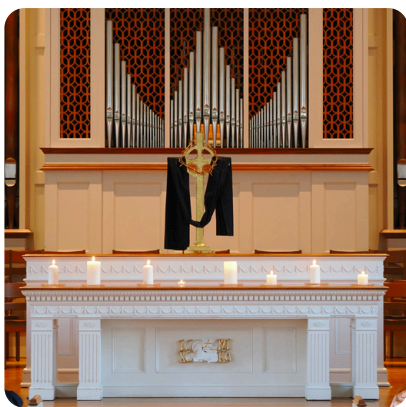
Fri., 9:30 am-12:00 pm

There will be a labyrinth available in Vance Barron Hall during Holy Week week for you to walk and pray. Instructions will be available for this self-guided practice; we advise planning to spend about 30 minutes walking and praying. Please park on the street or in the parking deck, and enter via Henderson St.



Maundy Thursday (*April 17, 7:30 pm*)

Maundy Thursday is the day during Holy Week that commemorates Jesus' last meal with his disciples, when he washed their feet and gave them the commandment (mandate, where we get the word Maundy) to love one another. Join us in the Sanctuary for a contemplative service, including a meditation from Hadley Kifner, handwashing, and Holy Communion, to reflect on how Jesus proclaimed the gospel through service and love.



Good Friday (*April 18, 7:30 pm*)

On the Friday of Holy Week, we will worship together in a Service of Tenebrae. Tenebrae is the Latin word meaning darkness. Sometimes we learn things in the dark, in the shadows, that we could have never learned or appreciated in the bright light of day. On Good Friday, we will read the story of Jesus' passion (his suffering and death) and extinguish lights until we leave the sanctuary in complete darkness, awaiting the glorious light of Easter morning. Jarrett McLaughlin will offer the meditation.

Celebrating Easter at UPC (April 20)

Easter Sunday Worship - 8:30 & 11:00 am

We'll worship together at 8:30 and 11:00 am on Easter Sunday. Both services will be in the Sanctuary; only the 11:00 service will be livestreamed. Instead of Sunday School on that day, we will have a potluck brunch.

Potluck Easter Brunch - 9:45 am

Join us for a potluck Easter Brunch at 9:45 am in the Fellowship Hall! Beverages will be provided; please bring 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."

Egg Hunt - 10:15 am

Children (walkers-3rd grade) are invited to join us at 10:15 am for an Easter Egg hunt. Don't forget to bring a basket to collect your eggs!



Flowering the Cross

Our cross will already have flowers on it and be outside all morning (great for your Easter Sunday family photos). If you'd like to bring more flowers from home to add to it, please do! We will not have extra flowers available.

Easter Offering

It is our tradition for Easter to collect an offering for One Great Hour of Sharing, which supports several PCUSA initiatives to help our neighbors in need. To give, visit upcch.org/give and select "One Great Hour of Sharing," or write a check to UPC with "One Great Hour of Sharing" in the memo line.

Easter Gifts of Beauty and Bounty

Purchase a lily or give to the Inter-Faith Council for Social Service in honor or memory of your loved ones! Visit upcch.org/lilies to learn more, or pick up a paper form in the narthex. The deadline to give is Friday, April 11. The names of those honored and remembered will be in the Easter bulletin on April 20.



Sundays After Easter

April 27 & May 4: Combined Adult Ed. Class (9:45 am)

Come join us as we step into two post-resurrection encounters—Thomas longing for proof and the disciples sharing breakfast with Jesus on the shore. In this Bible study and discussion, we'll wrestle with doubt, recognize grace, and wonder together about how Christ still shows up in our lives. Bring your questions and open heart; we'll meet in Vance Barron Hall. Rev. Meg Peery McLaughlin will lead as we read John 20 on April 27, and Elder Robert Owen will lead as we read John 21 on May 4.



May 4: Confirmation Sunday

Confirmation Sunday is always a special day in the life of the church when we welcome a new class of Confirmands who have spent a year unpacking and learning about their faith and the smaller and larger structures of the church.

This day will also be the last week of Sunday School for the program year; classes will resume in September.



May 11: Summer Schedule Begins (1 service at 10:00 am)

Beginning on May 11, we will move to our summer schedule! We will have one service at 10:00 am, which will also be livestreamed. Sunday School and Godly Play will not meet during the summer.

May 18: Summer Potluck (11:00 am)

On May 18, join us after worship for a potluck! A main dish (BBQ) will be provided; please make or buy a dish to share (salads, casseroles, sides, desserts). We depend on your joyful and generous contribution, and your presence is appreciated, regardless. 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 potluck. 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."



June 1: Punch on the Porch returns

A time of fellowship and light refreshments after worship! Signups to help will be available later this spring.

Western NC: An Update & An Opportunity

In the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Helene's destruction, everyone wanted to know what UPC was going to do. At the time, what we kept hearing from partners was "wait." "Gather financial contributions – there will definitely be a need for them – but right now just hold it."

Today I am happy to report that we have a plan. In addition to \$25,000 that was shared with Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church to bolster their crucial rent assistance program, we now have an opportunity to help rebuild a home for one extremely worthy couple. Meet Ryan and Deena Edwards.

Ryan is a long-time staff person at Camp Grier, a Presbyterian camp nestled in the valley of Old Fort, NC. During the storm, Ryan and Deena lost everything. Their entire home was lifted off its foundation – a total loss. And yet that didn't stop Ryan from showing up to work at Camp Grier, which suddenly became an emergency resource center, offering housing, meals, and showers to displaced persons.



One thing I love about being Presbyterian is that – at our best – we are a connectional Church. Our church here in Chapel Hill shares fellowship with Camp Grier because of that connectional spirit, and that, in turn, connected us to First Presbyterian Church of Charlottesville, Virginia, which is faithfully spearheading a movement to rebuild a home for the Edwards. Leveraging the talents of their own members, First Pres. Charlottesville has designed a 24x40, 960 sq.ft. home to meet the needs of this couple with a budget not to exceed \$250,000. The Edwards are pre-qualified for a loan, but our hope is that between FEMA grants (should they materialize), other local relief agencies, and the generosity of our combined congregations, they will not need to carry a mortgage on the property. This would return them to the modest financial stability they enjoyed prior to Helene.

It gets better! One way this partnership can control costs is through volunteer labor. Ryan's brother is a General Contractor in McDowell County and will head up the project at a much-reduced rate. He will sub-contract the septic systems, foundation, and sub-flooring, but everything else from the floor up could very well be volunteer-driven, and thanks to this connectional Presbyterian church in which we live, UPC has been invited to take part in that aspect of the partnership. As of now, the plan is for groups to work on the site the weeks of May 18-23 and May 25-30. If you would like to participate in constructing Ryan and Deena's home, please be in touch with me (jarrett@upcch.org). There will likely be some expenses but do not let that get in the way of you participating. We have funds to help subsidize church members who wish to volunteer.

Most likely, volunteers will enjoy the hospitality of Camp Grier for room and board and spend the days working on this home, or perhaps other projects in the surrounding area if there are more volunteers than will fit on that work site. All volunteers will have an opportunity to work on the home so that all can share in the experience of giving this deserving couple a home to call their own.

As always, none of this would be possible without the overwhelming generosity that poured out of this congregation in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene. On behalf of the Edwards and countless others benefiting from that generosity in Western North Carolina, thank you – thank you – thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jarrett".



Upcoming Recitals at UPC



Saturday, April 26 - Two student recitals!

1:00 pm - UPC Choral Scholar Victoria Song will present a degree recital featuring works by Rossini, Bellini, Faure, and Price. Reception to follow.

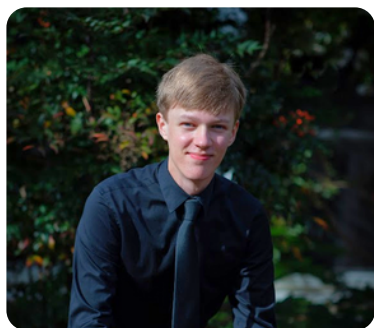


4:00 pm - Organ Scholar Hania Kantzer will give an organ recital featuring works by Johann Sebastian Bach, César Franck, Olivier Messiaen, and Gustavo Delgado Parra. Reception to follow.



Saturday, May 31, 3:00 pm - *Tom Brown Recital Series Presents:* Dogwood Piano Trio

Liam Drake's Dogwood Piano Trio, a leadership ensemble of the NC Chamber Music Institute, presents their final group recital, featuring breathtaking chamber and solo selections from classic Bach and Beethoven to rousing Americana.



Saturday, June 7, 3:00 pm - *Tom Brown Recital Series Presents:* Liam Drake, pianist

Join UPC senior Liam Drake for his last recital as a high schooler, featuring composers' most emotional farewells to the piano literature: Schubert's aching Fantasia for four hands, Brahms' tranquil lullabies, Beethoven's profound final sonata, and more.



Friday, June 13, 7:00 pm - Visiting Youth Choir

IMPACT Youth Choir from Burke Presbyterian Church present a choral concert as part of their summer tour. Burke Presbyterian is in Northern Virginia, and is the congregation that Meg and Jarrett served before being called to UPC.

Vacation Bible School 2025

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 to all. Visit upcch.org/vbs to learn more and register!

Cost: \$65

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.

WAVES OF WONDER



Reminder: Nancy Myer is on Sabbatical through May 26, allowing her to be back and fully present for summer VBS and trips. We're grateful for the Children's Committee members who are helping coordinate things while she is away. During her sabbatical, any family ministry questions should be directed to Jarrett McLaughlin (jarrett@upcch.org) or John "Spencer" Spencer.

Please pray for Nancy during this time of rest and renewal. We look forward to hearing stories of her adventures when she returns!

Why register for the Congregational Retreat?

***Make plans now to join us
Sept. 5-7 in Montreat, NC,
for a weekend away for all
ages and stages of life!***



At the UPC retreat, you'll have:

Time away from the hustle and bustle of life

Time in the mountains at beautiful Montreat

Time with your UPC family, strengthening old friendships and building new ones

What can I expect at the retreat?

Keynote addresses as we learn and laugh and sing together



Workshops including pottery, games, prayer, and more



Small group conversations with chatter groups



Free time to hike, explore Black Mountain, or even take a nap



Campfire and **barn dancing**



Workshop Options

Pottery: Whether you are a beginner or have frequently worked with clay, you can create a wonderful keepsake of the weekend working with clay.

Fused Glass: Make either an ornament or a sun catcher.

Scavenger Hunt: Have fun with your church family while testing your knowledge of key places around the heart of Montreat!

Gate Trail Walk: Take an easy walk from the lake to the gate along Flat Creek.

Yoga: All levels welcome. Bring a yoga mat or towel.

Group Games & Team Building: Learn new games to play as a group, engage in team building, and just have plain old fun together!

Creek Exploration: Explore nature and wade in the creek (and maybe even try fishing!).

Sacred Songs, Sacred Stories: Join our Keynoter, Mary D. Williams, for a workshop on song and story.

Collage Quilting: No sewing necessary! Create a collage quilt together to reflect our retreat theme.

The Bible from the Underside: Consider a handful of Bible stories while asking, “how does this text proclaim liberation for God’s most vulnerable children?”

About our Keynote Speaker, Mary D. Williams

Mary D. Williams is a gospel singer, historian, and educator who grew up in nearby Garner, NC. With a powerful voice that instantly commands your attention, she takes you on a journey through time and the trials of black Americans using the vessel of music. With a blend of traditional gospel songs, slave spirituals, and social-change anthems, she demonstrates how music sustained slaves, empowered those who sought freedom, and energized the Civil Rights Movement. Drawing on the story of Exodus from Scripture, she will lead us as we explore what it means to “Be Bold” – leaving behind the familiar in search of something more faithful.



To learn more and register, visit upcch.org/retreat
Space is filling up - register by June 6 to guarantee housing!

From the Earth Care Team

While Tuesday, April 22, is officially Earth Day, UPC is encouraging Earth Care action during the entire month of April, and every month! Below are ideas from UPC's Earth Care Team for how to better steward God's Creation:



- **Check out EarthDay.org's 2025 Earth Action Day resources**, encouraging us to take action, educate, advocate and mobilize with this year's theme, "Our Power, Our Planet." earthday.org
- **Participate in a local Earth Day/Month event** like these:
 - **Down to Earth | Earth Day Celebration!** is Saturday, April 26, from 6-8:30pm at the ArtsCenter in Carrboro (400 Roberson St.). Sponsored by NC Solar Now and hosted by the Orange County Office of Sustainability and the ArtsCenter. Artists have submitted works of art made from recycled, natural or sustainable materials, or art themed around the environment, earth, climate change, sustainability and the impact of humanity on the environment. Conservation groups will discuss their important work in the county and beyond. artscenterlive.org/down-to-earth
 - **Durham's Earth Day Festival** is Sunday, April 27, from 12-5pm at Durham Central Park (501 Foster St.). Celebrate Earth Day 2025 as we unite to honor and protect the planet. This year's theme, "Our Power, Our Planet," highlights the incredible potential everyone has to drive positive change for the environment. We all hold the power to create a sustainable future. dprplaymore.org/299/Earth-Day-Festival
 - 2025 Earth Month Events from Sustainable Carolina: sustainable.unc.edu/events/earth-day-2025/
 - More Earth Day/Month celebrations in the Triangle at triangleonthecheap.com/earth-day-triangle-nc
- **Sign up for an outdoor work shift** with a group like Rewild Earth, which equips and leads volunteers removing invasive plants from Triangle-area greenways, nature preserves, etc. rewildearth.net
- **Use your voice to Take Action** through organizations like the NC Conservation Network, including over 60 environmental, community and environmental justice organizations protecting North Carolina's environment and public health. ncconservationnetwork.org
- **Join a local land trust** such as Triangle Land Conservancy, which will help you find great places to walk, hike, bike, boat, fish or bird, as well as learn how to advocate for and conserve land you care about. landtrustalliance.org/land-trusts
- **Compost on your own or with UPC.** Remember that you can no longer put green, compostable bags in UPC's CompostNow carts even if they say "BPI-certified compostable." Please empty the acceptable contents from your compostable bags into our CompostNow carts and throw the bag into the landfill dumpster.
- **Recycle your soft plastic bags and film in UPC's "NexTrex Challenge" bins.** We're over 2/3 of the way to our 1,000-pound goal, which will win the church a Trex® composite bench made of recycled plastic! Make sure what you include is on NexTrex's "acceptable" list and is clean and dry.
- **Download Creation Justice Ministries' 2025 annual resource**, "Power of God: From Extractive Theology to Transformative Faith," which equips people of faith with theological grounding and practical action steps and helps churches engage in faithful conversations about power, justice, and renewal. creationjustice.org/powerofgod.html
- **Download Creation Justice Ministries 2025 Lenten Devotional**, which emphasizes Creation Care from Ash Wednesday to Easter through Scripture, short reflection, and prayer. creationjustice.org/lent

Stephen Ministry

People often ask, "What exactly is a Stephen Minister?" One way to put it is that Stephen Ministers are the *After People*.

Stephen Ministers are there:

...*after* the phone call you hoped you'd never get.

...*after* the divorce papers are served and the bottom falls out of your life.

...*after* the funeral, when everyone has left and the emotions you've held at bay come crashing in on you.

...*after* the doctor says, "I'm sorry, but there's nothing more we can do."

...*after* the retirement community director shakes your hand and says, "Welcome to your new home."

...*after* the last child honks the horn, waves, and drives away - and the house suddenly seems empty.

...*after* the gavel goes down, the handcuffs go on, and your loved one is led away.

...*after* the baby arrives, demanding more of you than you ever dreamed possible.

...*after* you find a pink slip with your final paycheck.

...*after* your family and friends have heard your story one too many times, but you still need to talk it out.

Stephen Ministers are the "After People." They are ready to come alongside you - or your friends, neighbors, coworkers, or relatives - and provide comfort and support for as long after as needed.

If you would be interested in connecting with a Stephen Minister, contact Hadley Kifner (hadley@upcch.org). To learn more about Stephen Ministry, visit upcch.org/stephen-ministry.

From the Racial Equity Team

Your Racial Equity Team(RET) has been busy!

LEARNING

Several RET members attended a day-long convening entitled "Legacies of Lynching" on March 1, 2025. The event was dedicated to documenting racial violence in our state, and was attended in partnership with UPC partner organization, the Orange County Community Remembrance Coalition(OCCRC). Speakers, panelists, and participants discussed racial violence in North Carolina and America-both past and present with a focus on how to prevent such violence in the future.

More details here: nchumanities.org/event/legacies-of-lynching-an-inaugural-gathering

VISITING

UPC, Binkley Baptist Church and the OCCRC are working in partnership to offer a trip to the Equal Justice Initiative Legacy sites in Montgomery, Alabama in early October 2025. The trip will include stops in Birmingham, Selma, and Atlanta. Please stay tuned for more details coming soon. To learn about the Equal Justice Initiative, visit eji.org

WAIT! WHAT IS RET?

Stop by our table at Punch on the Porch this coming June to find out. Members of the RET will be more than happy to answer your questions about the team, its mission and goals, planned events, and how to participate in our RET work. We look forward to seeing you!

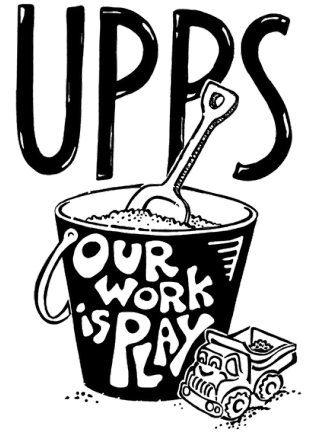
God is love—and so is UPPS (University Presbyterian Pre-School).

It's not just one person who loves the children at our preschool; it's all of the UPPS staff who lovingly care for every child in the program. UPPS generates a culture of nurturing and acceptance and is a safe space, and our scholarship fund makes the program accessible for all children.

One child has been in the program for three years. When they arrived from another country as a two-year-old, they were overwhelmed by the new environment and new people and spoke very few words. By the second year, they became more comfortable within this safe and loving environment, but they still didn't speak much. The student is now in a four-year-old class and speaks confidently with teachers and new friends in the classroom, knowing they're accepted and loved. If you could see this young child eagerly waving goodbye from the car window every day after school, you would know that UPPS has made such a difference in their life, thanks to the loving care from teachers.

Please make a donation to UPPS's Scholarship Fund so we can continue to reach additional children that need the opportunity to grow and develop in the caring and nurturing environment at UPPS.

-Winnie Morgan, UPPS Committee Member



Session Report

In February/March, the UPC Session:

- Approved the signing of University Presbyterian Church as a sponsor of the letter organized by World Relief in support of resuming refugee services.
- Approved 7 baptisms and baptized Jake Keller and Corwin Kross in an intimate service in the choir loft
- Approved the adjustment of the 2025 budget after 10k more in pledges were received
- Approved the 2024 Statistical Report
- Approved the collection of donations for the Ronald McDonald House sponsored by Youth Ministry
- Approved the revised Safe Sanctuary Policy
- Approved the hiring of 2 new teachers for UPPS
- Approved the authorization of an Elder to lead the High School retreat attendees in the Sacrament of Communion
- Heard reports from the Local Outreach and Membership Committees on their work and needs



A PC(U.S.A.) Congregation

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