

Fall 2023

Volume 14, Issue 5

View more photos from church events via our website: upcbgm.org/programs-and-events/photo-gallery

Our worship services are livestreamed on our YouTube channel: upcbgm.org/youtube

Advent is coming!

This Year's Theme is "Hope for a Weary World"

This year, we will be looking at the nativity stories from the gospel according to Luke, adapting worship materials created by Sanctified Art. (There are two versions of Jesus's ancestry and birth in the New Testament, and they are told in Matthew and in Luke. Last year we heard the story as it is told in Matthew...) Each week the theme offers a different answer to the question "How does a weary world rejoice?" There is a daily devotional Advent calendar included with this newsletter.

Our Advent craft will be ornaments that can be given to our guests at the community meal, pantry, and UPCenter.

December 3, 1st Sunday in Advent: *We acknowledge our weariness*

Luke 1:1-23 (Zechariah & Elizabeth are promised a child); Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

As Advent begins, we start by acknowledging the weariness, grief, rage, and hopelessness we carry — and we also affirm that we are made for joy. We start the season with Zechariah and Elizabeth; they have battled infertility and have lived many years. Perhaps they feel the weight of hopes and dreams unattained. The angel comes to Zechariah with a promise of good news, but Zechariah can't fully receive it. Sometimes weariness can harden us and



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Our mission is to follow Jesus Christ by doing justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly with God.

Everyone is welcome here



UNITED PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF BINGHAMTON



prevent us from living fully. Let us acknowledge the ways we, too, are hardened by disbelief. Like the psalmist, let us ask, “how long?” and plead for restoration.

We will celebrate the Lord’s Supper.

If you are able, please join us after worship to begin decorating in the sanctuary.

December 10, 2nd Sunday in Advent: We find joy in connection

Luke 1:24–45 (Gabriel visits Mary; Mary goes to Elizabeth); Isaiah 40:1–11

In community, our joy expands. When we can’t rejoice, we can carry each other’s joy. That is what Elizabeth and Mary do for each other. The good news begins to take shape in Elizabeth’s womb, but scripture tells us that she stays secluded, hiding her pregnancy from others — that is, until Mary arrives at her door, also pregnant. Perhaps Mary’s arrival is the inbreaking that changes everything for Elizabeth, for in that moment, her child leaps in her womb and she is filled with the Spirit. She can’t help but to rejoice. Her joy is contagious and wraps around Mary like a hug. Through the prophet Isaiah, we hear God speak tender words of comfort; this is the comfort we can give to and receive from each other during this season.

December 17, 3rd Sunday in Advent: We allow ourselves to be amazed

Luke 1:57–66 (The birth of John); Psalm 126

After Elizabeth gives birth, her neighbors and family celebrate with her. When it comes time to name the child, Zechariah affirms the name given by the angel and by Elizabeth. In that moment of affirming the promise, Zechariah’s speech is restored. Everyone is filled with awe. How often do you allow yourself to be amazed? Wonder is all around us — can we recognize it? As we learn how to rejoice in a weary world, can we live in a way that allows amazement and wonder to surprise us often? In Psalm 126, those who expect to reap tears are granted a surprise: shouts of joy. Amazement is a balm for the weary.

Cookie Sunday! Plan to bring your favorite Christmas cookie to share. We won’t have a formal swap, but we hope to give everyone a chance to taste some wonderful traditions.

December 24 10:00am, Fourth Sunday in Advent: We sing stories of hope

Luke 1:46–55 (Magnificat); Luke 2:1–20 (Nativity story)

After Elizabeth exclaims blessings upon Mary, Mary sings: “My soul magnifies God; my spirit rejoices in God.” Mary sings about a God of liberation who pulls the powerful from their thrones and lifts up the lowly. Mary sings a story of hope, one in which justice and joy are interwoven.

In this Sunday morning service, we will retell the story of Jesus’ birth by inviting the whole congregation to participate in a “No Rehearsal Christmas Pageant”. When you come into the sanctuary, you will choose which role you want to play in the pageant, and simple costumes and props will be supplied (it will be okay if we have lots of Marys or only a couple of shepherds). Narrators will invite the players to come forward when it’s time. We’ll sing lots of carols, and have a joyful, informal service of celebration as we wait for the coming of the Lord.

December 24 4:30pm, Candlelight Communion Service: We make room

Luke 2:1–20 (Nativity story)

Luke’s Gospel tells us that when Mary gives birth to Jesus, she lays him in a manger, for there was no place for them in the guest room. Scholars argue about where, exactly, the birth occurs — and why. Was it in an inn or the living room of a simple peasant home? Was Bethlehem teeming with visitors who were also there to be counted in the census? Was Joseph’s family inhospitable because they disapproved of his marital situation? Regardless of where the birth occurs, we know that Christ is

born in a crowded, unlikely place. And yet, God makes a place here anyway. God draws the circle wider as shepherds and unexpected guests arrive. This Christmas, let us also make room — for strangers and neighbors alike. For this is good news of great joy for all people.

We will celebrate Emmanuel, God-With-Us as we join together in the Lord's Supper, and at the close of the service we will dim the lights for our traditional candle-lit singing of "Joy to the World".

It would be good to have you with us.

Pastors' Ponderings



Kimberly P
Chastain,
Pastor

Harvest Home

The month of November always brings three things: the feast of All Saints, when we remember the "great cloud of witnesses" who have shaped our lives and our history; Veterans Day, originally named Armistice Day, when we remember the catastrophic wars of the 20th century that have shaped world politics ever since; and the great American holiday we call Thanksgiving.

I loved Thanksgiving when I was a child. My first and only worthwhile painting, a watercolor I made in 2nd grade, was of the Mayflower. My parents framed it and it hung in their house until it was so faded as to be unrecognizable. Because my father was a serving officer in the Army until I was sixteen, it was not a gathering of generations for us, but a chance to go to the Officer's Club for a fancy and sumptuous family feast. Before the big meal, though, there was a service of Thanksgiving in the chapel wherever we were posted. And every year, we sang the old hymn, "Come, Ye Thankful People, Come" with its refrain, "raise the glorious harvest home". The hymn has gone out of fashion over the years, with its archaic words, but one line continues to repeat itself in my heart each year:

All are safely gathered in, ere the winter storms begin.

Those words feel especially poignant this year, as we try to find our feet in the aftermath of a global pandemic, in the midst of a series of regional wars that threaten to become global, and climate-change related storms that bring floods, fire, and drought in unexpected ways. They carry me back to the time when the story of the Pilgrims celebrating their own survival was untainted by the knowledge of colonialism and genocide. I loved it when community and sharing in times of hardship was all there was to the story. And when I was a child, I didn't really understand the part about hardship and suffering — the early colonizers faced disease, starvation, and great losses before they came together to celebrate. I have been spared so many of these great catastrophes, yet I have experienced the same sense that God has brought me safely through.

These days, I find myself praying the prayer that orthodox Jews repeat eight times every day, called the Shehecheyanu:

Blessed are you, Eternal One, our God, Ruler of the Universe,
who has kept us alive, sustained us, and brought us to this moment.

When it feels like so many things are acting to pull our world apart, and so many negative stories fill our world and make it harder to feel thankful, it is good to remember that our times are in God's hands, and that we are gathered in God's love. No one is forgotten, no one is alone, because the Creator of all worlds is also as close as our breath.

4 ≡ UP-Beat Newsletter

There's a story I've told so many times I can no longer remember when or where it happened, of a little girl dancing in her first dance recital (I wore pink bunny pajamas and had a headband with pink ears affixed) who fell down in the middle of her part. When her mom came over, prepared to comfort the child in disaster, she was surprised to see her daughter glowing in triumph, saying, "Did you see, Mommy? I got up!"

Whether you are traveling in this holiday season, or staying home, worrying about loved ones far away or close at hand, whether you are rejoicing in prosperity or finding meaning in the struggle, take the time to remember the One who has kept us alive, sustained us, and brought us to this moment. Remember to be grateful for God's glorious harvest, that love that goes with us and finally brings us home.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Kimberly



Greetings friends!

This month I get to celebrate my 10-year anniversary of being ordained! November 17th, 2013, I stood before colleagues in ministry, friends, family, and God and promised (among other things) to serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love. Every time we have an ordination of elders here at UPC, and we read those promises again, I think back to when I made those same ones. I really like that in the PC(USA), all the leaders make the same promises. No one is above the other, we just all have different ways we serve.

I also am celebrating that I get to celebrate this 10 year "ordiversary" with the congregation that called me. Not many pastors starting out get to say that they are still with the church that called them for ordination 10 years later. All of my friends from seminary are on their 2nd or 3rd call. And the average call in the PC(USA) is 5-7 years. So I thank God that my gifts and skills are still a match with what God is calling this congregation to do and be here in our corner of the world.

I have learned so much and have been honored to share so much in ministry with you. Thank you for all the ways we have worked together, supported each other, and had fun together these last 10 years!



*Becky Kindig,
Associate Pastor*



This month we get to look at how we at UPC can serve God here in Binghamton for the next 10 years. It is good to take some dedicated time every once in a while to pray, to evaluate, and to plan. The Session has invited Rev. Dr. Rose Niles from the Presbyterian Foundation to come and walk us through some strategic planning in a program called Project Regeneration. While we can never really anticipate what God has in store for us, we can make plans for how we are equipping members and taking stock of our resources so we will be ready when God calls us to our next ministry. We need to evaluate if we are caring for each other, being open to being cared for, listening to the needs of those in our community who are on the margins, and making sure we are nurturing our faith and our imagination.

It's always a great idea to have someone from outside an organization to look at it with fresh eyes and give their perspective as a newcomer. But Rev. Niles also has years of experience both with serving congregations as a pastor, but also at the denominational level helping all kinds of churches figure out how to re-energize for what is next. I hope that you will join us in this time of prayer and exploration with curiosity and excitement. Join us after worship on November 12 to learn more!

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Becky

Music Notes

We've been making many joyful noises so far this season in UPC's music program, and we'd like to invite you to join us! Vocal choir meets on Wednesday nights from 6:30 to 7:30 in the music room, and bell choir meets after the Sunday service from 11:30 to 12:30. No previous experience necessary!



Vocal choir began our season enjoying a potluck dinner together at the Backus's house in mid-September. We enjoyed delicious food, great company, and conversation, helped celebrate Austin and Jeffri's recent nuptials, and had a great time singing together. At the end of that rehearsal, Aoife Backus led us in a rousing chorus of "Jingle Bells" and let us know how excited she already is for the Christmas season.

And if you're interested in participating in music for Christmas this year, it's not too early to get in touch with us! We've been having a blast singing music from many different styles this season, from Renaissance music to gospel. We also enjoyed hosting Michael Timson, Marian's son, who shared his trumpet talents with us in October.

Bell choir performed Waldrop's "Water Music" and Ingram's "Echoes" in October, and now has enough members that we are able to perform music with three octaves regularly. This translates sonically into richer sounds and more varied and interesting textures. We have enough bells available that we could play up to four octaves, and we would love to have you join us to help make that a possibility!

We also invite instrumentalists and vocalists who'd like to share their gifts to talk with any of our music leaders about providing special music for worship — you can call the church office, email music@upcbgm.org, or speak with them in person after worship.



Young Artist Series Organ Recital

Saturday, November 11, 2pm at UPC



The American Guild of Organists Binghamton chapter and UPC are pleased to welcome Joseph Maxwell Ossei-Little as this year's Young Artist. A reception and conversation with Joseph in the sanctuary will immediately follow the 2pm concert, which features music by Haywood, Thalben-Ball, Bach, Buxtehude, Mendelssohn, Price, Vierne, Coleridge-Taylor, and Scott.

The following is an excerpt from an [article](#) from Syracuse University's Hendricks Chapel:

The music scene in Ghana is often nothing less than vibrant: songs of hope, love and joy fill the streets, vocalized by community choirs and church groups. Music weaves itself into everyday routines of Ghanaian communities, creating a melodic home for many. From this musical environment, Syracuse University organ faculty member Dr. Anne Laver invited Joseph Maxwell Ossei-Little to enroll in the master's degree program in Organ Performance as the inaugural Hendricks Chapel Organ Scholar. Joseph, a newlywed with a newborn son, made a solo journey from Ghana to Syracuse in August of 2022 following several pandemic and visa tribulations.

As the son of a Methodist minister, Joseph often changed schools, friends, and houses because of frequent family relocations. Through these disruptions, Joseph discovered his deep connection to music. When his school entered a regional music competition, they needed a sight-reader (a person who plays a piece at first sight) to represent them. Joseph's older brother had been chosen but was unable to compete. So, as a last resort, the church organist offered Joseph two quick organ lessons and sent him to participate. Out of 16 candidates, Joseph placed fourth. Given his impressive musical ability after just two lessons, he decided to keep practicing. As he continued moving to new locations, music remained a constant in his life. His practice sessions kept him connected to his passion for music despite his ever-changing surroundings.

While Joseph certainly had a passion for music, he also had another love — the sciences. Originally, he graduated with his bachelor's degree in pharmaceutical studies. "I really didn't have a

social life because pharmacy was really packed,” said Joseph. “So right after lectures I would rush over to the music department to play the organ!”

After graduation, he decided to become certified as a professional musician. He completed exams to attend the Royal College of Music in London. The Royal College of Music annually sends examiners to Ghana to hear performances. Through this process, Joseph met Samuel Kuffuor-Afriyie, then a Syracuse student, who had organized a musicians’ workshop in Ghana taught by Syracuse University faculty. At the workshop Joseph met Dr. Laver and Dr. Peppie Calvar, Associate Director of Choral Activities at Syracuse University. With the encouragement of Kuffuor-Afriyie, Laver, Calvar, and members of the Ossei-Little family, Joseph decided to pursue a master’s degree in organ performance at Syracuse University. But getting to the United States proved to be an almost insurmountable challenge.

As many international students are aware, the visa process can be difficult to navigate. Joseph applied for his visa in February 2020, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic which brought travel to a stop in March 2020, his educational process was quickly halted. After applying twice for a visa, Joseph finally received approval in August 2022.

After finishing his studies, he hopes to pioneer the first program for organ music in Ghana. “One of my biggest dreams is to create a program for organ music in Ghana. It’s really been my passion to get a program started in Ghana when I go back. I know there’s a lot of talent in Ghana.” Joseph has already co-founded a new association for organists in Ghana with another Syracuse alumnus, Augustine Sobeng, and he hopes to work with universities in Ghana to create undergraduate programs for students in organ performance. While he hasn’t worked out all the details, he explains, “The primary aim is to be able to impart all that I’ve learned at Syracuse University and inspire the next generation.”

(Source: chapel.syracuse.edu/bringing-joy-from-ghana-joseph-maxwell-ossei-little-has-big-plans-as-inaugural-hendricks-chapel-organ-scholar)

You can watch Joseph’s joy-filled playing on YouTube (youtu.be/kx9M2i3O7ng), and please join us for the concert on Saturday, November 11, at 2pm. This concert is free and open to the public.

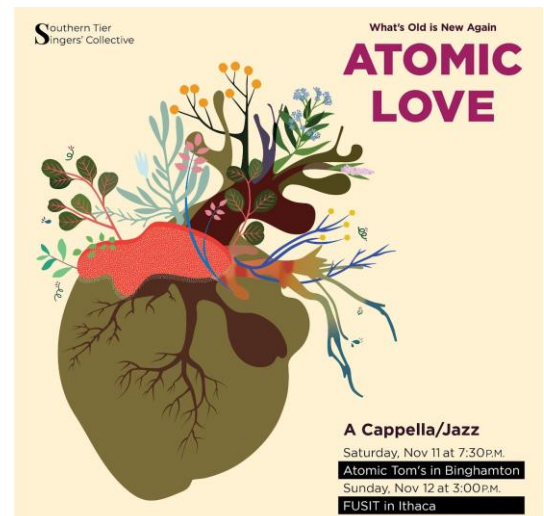
Upcoming Community Performances

Southern Tier Singers’ Collective presents “Atomic Love”
Saturday, November 11, 7:30pm at Atomic Tom’s, 196 State St., Binghamton

STSC will present free performances of contemporary jazz and a cappella music by Queen, the Beatles, Whitney Houston, Mumford & Sons, and more! The concert will be directed by STSC member and Vestal teacher Austin Kiley. Vestal High School’s Bear Necessities will open the program.

Jazz Vespers with the Empire Saxophone Quartet
Sunday, November 12, 5pm at First Congregational Church, 30 Main St., Binghamton

All are invited to First Con’s monthly Jazz Vespers. It’s music mixed with prayer, scripture, and other readings. There’s also time for a meditation by clergy before the hour wraps up. This free ecumenical



program is for “anyone of any faith or no faith at all.” The Empire Saxophone Quartet features April Lucas (tenor sax), Dab Miller (soprano sax), Crystal Fisher (alto sax), Nicole Mushalla (baritone sax), and Joel Smales (percussion).

Binghamton Philharmonic Orchestra presents “Faces of Joy”

Saturday, November 18, 7:30pm at the Forum Theatre, 236 Washington St., Binghamton

Daniel Hege, conductor



Wang Jie: *Five Faces of Joy*

Sergei Prokofiev: *Classical Symphony*

Ludwig van Beethoven: *Piano Concerto #5, “Emperor”* with pianist Andrew Russo

Kids 17 and under get in for free, courtesy of M&T Bank, BPO’s Symphonic Series Sponsor. Call the Box Office to request free kids’ tickets: 607-723-3931.

Pre-Concert Chat, 6:30pm, Recital Hall: Julia Grella O’Connell, D.M.A.

(Binghamton Philharmonic Director of Education and Community Engagement)

For more information, visit binghamtonphilharmonic.org or email info@binghamtonphilharmonic.org

Box office: **607-723-3931** ext. 1, Monday – Friday, 10am–4pm

Soprano Robin Johannsen & Pianist Tomoko Kanamaru

Sunday, December 3, 3pm at Phelps Mansion Museum,
191 Court St., Binghamton

A program of art songs and lieder by women composers, including Pauline Viardot, Cecile Chaminade, Clara Schumann, and Florence Price. Presented as part of the Binghamton Philharmonic Orchestra’s Garufi Law P.C. Phelps Mansion Museum Series.

For more information, visit binghamtonphilharmonic.org or email info@binghamtonphilharmonic.org

Box office: **607-723-3931** ext. 1, Monday – Friday, 10am–4pm



The Binghamton Downtown Singers present Handel’s “Messiah”

Saturday, December 9, 7:30pm at Sarah Jane Johnson Memorial United Methodist Church, 308 Main St., Johnson City

For more than 40 years, the Downtown Singers have presented Handel’s “Messiah” each year with soloists and full orchestra. This year’s performance will debut their new interim Artistic Director (and UPC’s bass section leader!), Robert J. Manners. Rekindle the true holiday spirit with this classic Binghamton tradition.

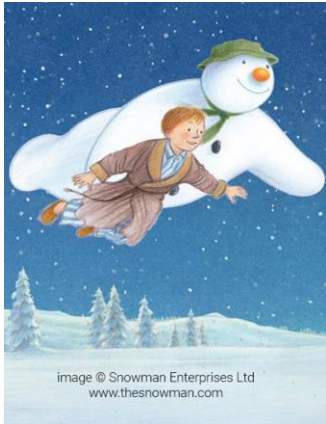
Tickets are \$20 General Admission. One free student admission is allowed with each purchase of a full-price General Admission ticket.

For tickets, visit downtownsingers.org/tickets, email tickets@downtownsingers.org, or call 607-205-8741.



Binghamton Philharmonic Orchestra presents "Winter Wonderland"

Saturday, December 16, 3pm at the Forum Theatre, 236 Washington St., Binghamton



It's the most wonderful time of the year! So grab your Santa hat and head out to a holiday gathering that will fill you with cheer from ear to ear!

Williams: *Merry Christmas* from *Home Alone 2*

Mason: *Christmas Eve Festivities*

Holcombe: *'Twas the Night Before Christmas* — narrated by NewsChannel 34's Jim Ehmke

Tchaikovsky: *Nutcracker Suite* — Waltz and Trepak

Anderson: *Sleigh Ride*

Blake: *The Snowman*

Strauss: *Radetsky March*

Finnegan: *Christmas Singalong*

Kids 17 and under get in for free, courtesy of Visions Federal Credit Union, BPO's Pops Series Sponsor. Call the Box Office to request free kids' tickets: 607-723-3931.

For more info, visit binghamtonphilharmonic.org or email info@binghamtonphilharmonic.org

Box office: 607-723-3931 ext. 1, Monday – Friday, 10am–4pm

The Tri-Cities Opera presents "All Is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914"

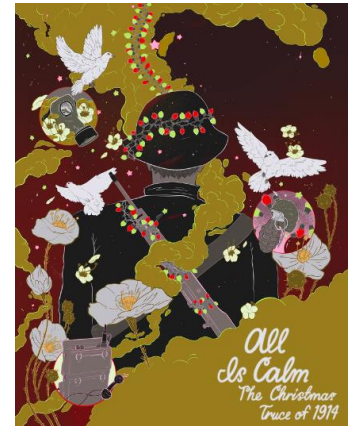
Sunday, December 17, 3pm at the Tri-Cities Opera Center, 315 Clinton St., Binghamton

The Western Front: Christmas 1914. Out of the violence of World War I, a silence, then a song. A German soldier steps into No Man's Land singing "Stille Nacht." Thus begins an extraordinary night of camaraderie, music, and peace.

"All Is Calm" is a remarkable true story in the words and songs of the men who lived it. The opera will be performed in English, French, & German, with English supertitles. Join the TCO as they present this beautiful, holiday story written by Peter Rothstein. Run time: Approximately 80 minutes, with no intermission.

For more information, visit tricitieopera.com/alliscalm or email tickets@tricitieopera.org

Box office: 607-772-0400, Monday – Friday, 12pm–5pm



Our Church Family

**Join Us for Worship —
in person, online, or over the phone**

We worship together on Sundays at 10:00am, both in person in the sanctuary and online. The service is livestreamed on our public YouTube Channel upcbgm.org/youtube, our Zoom room upcbgm.org/zoom, and our website, and is also accessible on YouTube any time. Those who can't access the worship videos



online can call in on the phone to listen live on Sunday mornings, using the Zoom information listed below. So if you are not ready or able to come “in person”, you are welcome to participate as you are able.

Everyone is invited to join us as we pray, hear God’s word read and proclaimed, share our joys and concerns, and experience worshipful music.

If you’re joining us in person, here’s what you need to know:

- Masks are optional while our community’s reported Covid rates remain low. Air filtration units are deployed throughout the sanctuary to enhance your safety, and doors are open to the outside (weather permitting).
- We will continue to have masks available, and if you have any symptoms of a potentially contagious illness, we ask that you put on a mask to protect those in our congregation who have compromised immune systems.
- Printed worship guides are placed by each door for you to pick up on the way in, and the hymns are printed in the worship guide.
- Offering plates are placed by the doors of the sanctuary, but we do not pass them during the offertory. You are still invited and welcome to use our online giving portal upcbgm.org/giving/donate or to mail a check to the church.

If you’re worshipping with us online, all of the hymn music and prayer words are shown on the screen, and live captioning is used for unscripted parts of the service such as the sermon and the sharing of joys and concerns. If you watch on a small screen and need the printed version of the worship guide, it is available for download from our website each week, or it can be mailed to you upon request if downloading & printing is not an option.

It would be good to have you with us.

To call in to the Zoom room on your phone: Dial (+1) 646-558-8656, then enter Meeting ID 865 274 8433.

A Conversation with Ramona Auchinachie

by Pastor Kimberly Chastain



In 2019, after her beloved husband Bob had died, long-time member Ramona Auchinachie moved to Midlothian, VA, to be closer to her children and grandchildren. She has found a church home at the Brandermill Church, and called to explore how she could stay connected both to her new church family and to our congregation, and after a long conversation we decided that she will move her membership to the place where she now lives and worships, and remain on the rolls at United as an affiliate member.

As we talked, I started making notes about Ramona’s journey of faith with First Presbyterian Church and United Presbyterian Church. She joined First in 1947 by profession of faith, was married here in 1958, had both of her children baptized into the First congregation, and celebrated the lives of both of her parents in the sanctuary. Her son was married in First Presbyterian Church, and her daughter was married at West Presbyterian Church.

Ramona also served: as a nursery helper, Sunday school teacher, girls’ basketball coach, youth fellowship leader, Vacation Bible School director, Stephen minister and leader, and men’s softball scorekeeper. She has been ordained as both a deacon and a ruling elder, serving on the session for 18 years including working as a substitute clerk and chairing the Nominating, Personnel, and Finance

Committees. She served on two Pulpit Nominating Committees and was the organizer of the church Rummage sale for 15 years.

In the days when women's circles were active, she was a member of the Tappan circle and in that role, she organized food for church and presbytery gatherings, organized the Christmas decorations for many years, and was the chief cook (with Bob) for a pancake breakfast on Palm Sunday for many years.

She was active in the presbytery (regional church council), serving on the Committee on Ministry and the presbytery Personnel committee. She was invited to serve as moderator (but had to decline), worked at Conklin Presbyterian on flood relief in 2011, and served on the Committee on Consolidation that helped to bring about the merger of the First and West congregations.

She continues to be a joyous, active, engaged member of her local faith community, and we are grateful that she has found a new church home, and that she wants to stay connected to our congregation even while she is living 400 miles away!

Snail Mail Still in Fashion

The Card Committee continues its mission to acknowledge events, milestones, joys, and concerns within our church family with special greetings. This includes births, baptisms, birthdays, deaths, illness and injuries, surgeries, challenges, travels, graduations, new jobs, retirements, holidays, thank yous, moves, anniversaries, and other occasions and situations.



Members and friends of our congregation are encouraged to provide the church office with birth dates (if not already on file) so that we can be sure folks receive celebration greetings from our church family. No need to provide us with the year if you'd rather keep that to yourself!

We encourage you to let us know of any occasions to recognize, or if you know of someone who might simply enjoy receiving a special card from the church "just because."

The committee welcomes additional "card senders" and encourages anyone wishing to join the group to contact the church office or one of the members (Cindy Chadwick, Margaret Davis, Jenni McKeage, Lana Ogden, Suzie Northrop Raboy).

Caring for Creation

Chris Burger was recently a guest on the Broome County Council of Churches' "Encounter" program. He spoke on behalf of the Presbyterians for Earth Care. You can view the episode at youtu.be/QNSjygAGufI

For information about the Presbyterians for Earth Care, visit presbyearthcare.org.



NaloxBox

One of the serious problems in Broome County and in the country in general is heroin addiction, and in recent years people with addictions have faced additional danger when heroin has been cut with fentanyl. The "cut" heroin has caused overdose deaths to skyrocket. Everyone on the staff and many



of our members at United Presbyterian Church have been trained in the administration of Naloxone, a medication that arrests the effects of overdose and allows the person affected to recover.

We now have a “NaloxBox” in our lobby, on the bulletin board near the doors to the deck. It contains doses of Naloxone which can be taken from the box and easily administered in case of need. It has been several years since a guest in our building has needed the help, but we are grateful that the medication is available and we are able to serve as a distribution point, through our partnerships with ACBC and TruthPharm.

If you are interested in learning more, speak to one of the pastors.

Supporting Our Mission and Ministry

We are able to receive tax-deductible contributions online through our website (upcbgm.org/giving/donate). Contributions can be made by E-check or credit card, and can also be set up as a recurring gift.

We encourage you to lift up in prayer how God will use you to bless UPC in fulfilling our mission to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God.

Get Involved!

Our church teams are always welcoming new team members. If you'd like to help with or learn more about the workings of the church, talk to one of the pastors or the elders on Session: **Card Committee:** Margaret Davis; **Finance,** Lou McKeage or Andy Chadwick; **Personnel,** Marilynn Guinane; **Worship & Music,** Andy Chadwick.

Nominations for the Work of the Presbytery

The Presbyterian Church is a connectional system. We are able to do God's work in the world better when we work together. Our Presbytery is made up of volunteers from many congregations who use their gifts and skills to help us all. Ruling Elders and Teaching Elders come together and serve on committees, share their experiences, and serve our congregations, pastors, and communities.

The Presbytery Nominating Committee is looking for people to serve in several areas for 2024. Our Commission on Ministry helps churches and pastors in times of transition or challenge. Our Committee on Christian Leadership Formation helps bring educational workshops for us all to learn from, and supports our lay preachers who provide pulpit supply throughout the Presbytery. Our Cabinet and Vice-Moderator help to administer our organization to keep us heading where God is calling us. Our Committee on Representation helps to ensure all voices from around the Presbytery are heard. We also need commissioners to General Assembly and to the Synod of the Northeast to represent our Presbytery.

Several members of our congregation currently serve on Presbytery committees, including Pastor Kimberly, Pastor Becky, Scott Kindig, Chris and Cindy Burger, and Bill and Joyce Donohue. If you feel the Holy Spirit nudging you to consider serving in any of these ways or others, you can talk to any one of them to learn more, or contact a member of the Presbytery Nominating Committee to talk and discern further. If you know of anyone who you feel would be a great addition to any of these

committees or positions, please reach out as well. When each of us does a little bit, we can accomplish a lot for the Kingdom of God!

Email can be sent to:

JoAnn Aymar jmaymar16@gmail.com
 Linda Breffle paddlerlin@yahoo.com
 John Helgeson revhelgeson@yahoo.com
 Lynn Reeves polygalagay@gmail.com
 Bruce Gillette pastorbrucegillette@gmail.com
 or call the Presbytery office at 607-323-4477.

Programs & Events

Sewing Group Keeps on Stitching; Equipment Gets a Facelift

Wednesdays, 10am-1pm, in the Upper Lounge (and on Zoom at noon for lunch hour)

by Cindy Chadwick

The Wednesday Sewing Group continues its mission of supporting community members in need of warmth and comfort. Each Wednesday, the group gathers to cut fabric and design, sew, and tie quilts to give to others. Group members often work on projects at home throughout the week to keep production going.

Over the past several months, Janet and Len Hoover have led the charge to get all of the church's sewing machines in top-notch working order. They have been diligently coordinating efforts with John Covert, owner of John's Vintage Sewing Machine Service, who is a local master of sewing machine maintenance and repair. Each of the machines used by the Sewing Group has received or is in the process of receiving a total "spa" treatment, including much-needed tune-ups and new parts. Our classic machines are now whirling along in fine shape. We thank Jan & Len for their many visits to the church to work with John on this important project.

On October 18, the Sewing Group was pleased to have the chance to meet John and his mom as they joined the Sewing Group for sewing and lunch. We're in awe and appreciation of John's expert work to revive our vintage machines!



John Covert, owner of John's Vintage Sewing Machine Service, cleaned and repaired all of the Sewing Group's machines.



A full house at Sewing Group on October 18, including our members who Zoom in.



Cindy Burger with three quilts to be donated to Camp Sunshine.

In advance of the Sewing Group's traditional distribution of quilts to community organizations at the holidays, Cindy and Chris Burger will take three quilts to Camp Sunshine in the state of Maine to provide warmth and comfort to children impacted by significant health issues. Cindy and Chris began this tradition several years ago, spreading UPC's mission beyond our immediate community borders.

The fruits of the Sewing Group's labor will be dedicated in worship on Sunday, November 19. UPC's family and friends will be able to see the array of quilts created by the group and the pastors will bless them prior to distribution. Photos will likely follow in upcoming communications, so stay tuned.

As always, the Sewing Group is seeking new members at all skill levels. We can "show you the ropes" if you've never quilted before. Please consider joining us on Wednesdays in the Upper Lounge from 10am until noon for quilting and noon to 1pm for lunch. Bring your lunch; pickles, potato chips, tea, and cookies are provided. We always have healthy discussions and enjoy each other's company.

Supporting Artisans in Sasabe

We have the opportunity to support the Artisan program in Sasabe, Sonora, Mexico. This Salvavision initiative (salvavision.org/artisan-programs) supports women and men returnees as well as the local women who live in the remote town of Sasabe, Sonora, through economic empowerment and art therapy. This program provides a creative outlet and space to connect and build new relationships through shared experiences while creating beautiful merchandise (such as manta blankets, tote bags, and bracelets).

We've been offered the opportunity to provide our own material or articles of clothing and have your own individualized design embroidered on it. Price will depend on complexity and size of design. The cost will typically range between \$15 and \$35. Contact Dave Ruston or Greg Patinka prior to Christmas to make arrangements. Dave and Greg will bring the items with them when they travel to Tucson and Sasabe in early 2024, and the finished items will be brought back in April. (You can contact the church office if you don't have Dave & Greg's contact info from the church directory.)



Seven Steps to Energy Independence

Wednesday, November 15, 7pm at SUNY Broome, Decker Hall, Room 201

Practical steps that individuals can take to help transition away from fossil fuels, presented by someone who powers his home and transportation with renewable energy right here in the Northeast.

- Chris Burger: 7 steps to energy independence
- Adam Flint: Implementing those steps
- Diane Stefani: Funding that implementation
- Closing questions/discussion

Sponsored by SUNY Broome's Civic Engagement Center.

Lament: a conversation

Thursday, November 16, 10am on Zoom or at Faith Presbyterian Church, 3002 N. 2nd St., Emmaus, PA
The Church, with declining membership and prominence. Covid and its ongoing effects. Divisions in American society. Lament in the face of such things is a natural human response. What is the place of lament in the church today? And how can it help heal us? Join us as we are led by Br. Stefan Waligur in this timely discussion.

"Sound is integral to life. Upon our first breath into the world we let out a wail. Like life, lament also starts with a wail," says Br. Stefan Andre Waligur, founder of Community of Peace in Louisa, Virginia. Having studied and researched the practice of lament, he concludes: "We need to wail — just wail when we're in throes of grief."

Lamentation is an expression of grief, sadness, or pain. It's "crying with words." This entails plentiful wet tears and intense sound to unleash what's inside of you. "The entire repertoire of the heart needs to be released," emphasizes Waligur. "It's passionate and poetic."

As an ancient tradition led by women, lament expressed the despair of entire communities and families. Men would step back and give the women space to enact the custom. "Lamenting helped to sustain the community," Waligur says. "It was a powerful healing experience."

Women cried out and wept, carrying and tending to the sorrow of a culture. As funeral keeners, they would yell and bellow, yank at their clothes, and fall onto the ground in fits of fierce sobbing, exteriorizing the grief of everyone.

"Lamenting is really about opening your heart," he explains. Whatever comes up, let it arise. "Letting it out is the way." (from: spiritualityhealth.com/5-ways-to-lament-and-acknowledge-grief)

Br. Stefan is a contemplative, a musician/composer, and founder of Community of Peace in Louisa, VA, an ecumenical community inspired by the Taizé Community in France. He recently defended his dissertation at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, CA. The title is "Howling at the Moon: A Transformative Spirituality of the Irish Lament."

We will meet on Thursday, November 16 at 10am at Faith Presbyterian Church in Emmaus, PA, or by Zoom (link will be shared with all registrants). Ample parking is available. To register and get the advanced reading: forms.office.com/r/EL5EuxD6HF.

This event is supported by the ministries of Faith Presbyterian Church in Emmaus PA, Immanuel United Church of Christ in Shillington PA, and anonymous supporters. For questions, please contact FPC at awshussett@gmail.com.

Fresh Expressions for Small Rural Congregations

Thursday, November 16, 7-8:30pm at UPC or on Zoom

Want to hear another way the Church can do its ministry? Come and hear about Fresh Expressions. A fresh expression is, in its simplest form, a pattern for believers to share their faith in their everyday

lives, by asking the simple question, “How can I help my friends connect with God?” Fresh expressions form where mutual interests meet hearts open to opportunities to connect on faith matters.



In this hybrid workshop, Rev. Shannon Kiser will share specific examples of how Fresh Expressions can work in rural settings. Rev. Kiser will join us via Zoom with a 60-minute presentation followed by a Q & A and a small-group discussion period. You’re invited to attend on Zoom or to join our “watch party” here at UPC.

Please register at susvalpresby.org/small-register

To attend via Zoom: bit.ly/3Zc9GuG or call in: (+1) 646-558-8656

Meeting ID: 815 1743 2360 Passcode: 371227

Questions? Email cclefchair@susvalpresby.org or call 607-323-4477.

Rev. Shannon Kiser is the director of Training and Coaching for Fresh Expressions. She is also a PC(USA) pastor on the staff of Riverside Church in Sterling, VA.

Finding Common Ground: an interfaith conversation

with Binghamton University Interfaith Council

Monday, November 20, 7:30pm in University Union West room 324

We’re invited to join Pastor Becky and the Binghamton University Interfaith Council for their monthly Common Ground conversations. Although specific doctrines may differ, many common themes run through our religious and spiritual beliefs. Gather with BUIC and campus community members as we explore common ground together — no expertise needed.



The theme for this month’s conversation is Sacred Stories. Many religions have texts like the Quran, Hebrew Scriptures, or the Bible, but some people find spiritual meaning in poetry or other stories. Come and share what sacred stories from your life or tradition are special for you and listen to others as they share theirs. All are welcome!

The Common Ground conversation series meets on the third Monday each month (but will not meet in December). Upcoming conversations:

- January 22: Clothing
- February 19: Music with show & tell
- March 18: Rituals
- April 15: Food

If you anticipate a need for disability-related accommodations or auxiliary aids to attend or participate, please contact buic@binghamton.edu or call 607-777-3010. We ask that you provide us with at least 3–5 days of advance notice regarding your equal access needs.

Fall Family Forums: LGBTQ+ Experiences of Intimate Relationships

presented by Pride and Joy Families at Binghamton University

Sunday, December 3, 1pm at the University Downtown Center

Join Pride and Joy Families for a cozy fall Sunday discussing LGBTQ+ experiences within different intimate relationships.



Dr. Christina Balderrama-Durbin will share insight from her research with queer couples.



Dr. Sean Massey will discuss public perceptions of queer parents.



Adam Zhao will offer clinical wisdom about experiences of family acceptance and rejection for queer youth.

Through Fall Family Forums, community members will have the opportunity to learn from and ask questions of local scholars engaging in transformative work with the LGBTQ+ community while sharing their experiences to better understand how this collective knowledge can impact their daily lives. Food and refreshments will be provided as well as time to socialize with other community members.

Learn more and RSVP at smore.com/9adz3c-pride-and-joy-families.

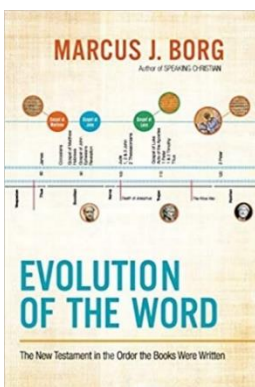
UPC's "Zoom room"

Modern technology is marvelous! Thanks to the Zoom meetings system, we can gather virtually even though we can't be together in person. We've used our "Zoom room" for worship but also for prayer groups, book studies, hymn sings, and social times.

You can join our meetings and worship services online via your computer, tablet, or mobile device by going to upcbgm.org/zoom. If you've never used Zoom before, you'll be prompted to download the Zoom meetings app, which will ask for permission to use your microphone and your camera. We use our "Personal Meeting ID" for worship and most of our programs, so they're always in the same familiar place.

You can also call in over the phone, if you don't have a microphone on your device or you can't join online. To join as a phone call, dial **1-646-558-8656**, then enter our Meeting ID: **865 274 8433 #**

If you have questions or need help using Zoom, feel free to call the church office for assistance.



Bible Study

Mondays, 12:30-1:30pm, Chapel or Zoom Room

We're reading from Marcus Borg's *Evolution of the Word: The New Testament in the Order the Books Were Written*, and everyone is welcome to join us in person or on Zoom. Copies of the book are available in the church office.

The general format is to read the introductory material for each section, then to read through the Biblical texts and talk about what it meant for early Christians and what it might mean for us today. We try to discipline ourselves to keeping the conversation to an hour every week.

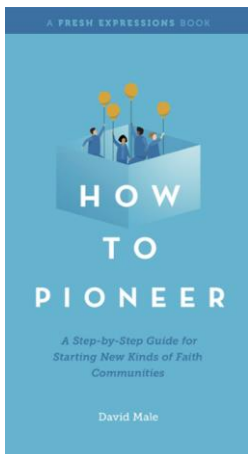
Zoom Happy hour: Friday evenings, 5–6pm

Bring your own beverage, “Zoom in”, and join the fun as we catch up on the events of the week and share how we’re doing. It’s a great way to keep in touch with friends near and far.



Presbytery Book Study “How To Pioneer: A Step-by-Step Guide for Starting New Kinds of Faith Communities”

Tuesdays, Jan. 9 – Feb. 13, 10–11:30am on Zoom, with co-leaders Rev. Greg Garis and Rev. Ernie Varga



Mark your calendars NOW for the next Book Study. The book is *How To Pioneer: A Step-by-Step Guide for Starting New Kinds of Faith Communities* by David Male.

Regarding this book: *Small new Christian communities created by pioneer ministers, both lay and ordained, are popping up everywhere – on housing estates, in community centers, schools, and cafes, among different age groups and in numerous other contexts beyond the local church. This practical book is for all who want to be engaged in this form of ministry, and it begins by identifying some basic principles from a wide variety of creative examples of pioneer ministry.*

Purchase the book at freshexpressions.com/product/how-to-pioneer

All are welcome to attend this book study. Join us on Zoom: bit.ly/3Qx7paD or phone (+1) 646-558-8656, Meeting ID 821 2614 5670, Passcode: PSV

Leading and Thriving in the Church: A Podcast from the Alban Institute at Duke Divinity School

What does it mean to lead now? Doing ministry in the post-pandemic era has unearthed new leadership challenges – and it has led us to pay more attention to the need for thriving ministers and congregations. In this new podcast, our mission is to help you be the leader God has called you to be. The podcast is hosted by Rev. Dr. Prince Rivers, a pastor of 23 years who is passionate about supporting the people who lead congregations. In each episode, Prince sits down with some of the most innovative people he knows – scholars, executives, authors – and explores what it means to lead faithfully, effectively and sustainably in today’s church. You can find it wherever you get your podcasts. The trailer and more information are at bit.ly/40bTKcj

More news from around the presbytery can be found at susvalpresby.org/thursday-thoughts

Joys and Concerns

Preparing to Wed: Keith & Allison; Mary & Kolin; Christina & Evan; Aaron & Steve; Andrew & Margaret

New Beginnings: Christina & Evan; Dave, Chris, Cindy

For Healing: Sr. Kathy; Cindy B.; MacKenzie; Cleo; Dolores; Jerry; Sharon; Dyllan; Mary Jane; Derek; Ed; Holly; Marian; Anna; Dr. P & mother; Pat; Deanna

Grieving – Friends and Family of: Joanne, Bill C.

Living with Cancer: Mary Ann, Molly, Carl, Frank, Leah, Suzy, Joanne

Covid-19: Bill, Joyce, Maida, Maria, Bob

Travel Mercies: Andy & Cindy; Ken & Becky; Lou & Jennie; Dave & Greg; Stefan; Sana



Ongoing: Kristie; Sue; Scott N.; Michael; Natika; Rachmani family; Charisse; Darry; Travis; Jerome; Janai; Melchi; Veah; Curtis & family; Jen; Carlos; Richard C. & Deloris M. & family; Rupee J.; Marian; Jazmine & family

Other Concerns: We pray for

- people with severe mental illness
- people who are housing-insecure
- people struggling with addictions
- gun violence around the country
- Turkey & Syria
- Ukraine & Russia
- Israel/Palestine

Recent & Upcoming Birthdays

November

- 2 Julia Jurena
- 4 Gail Wilson
- 7 Sally Menges, Lana Ogden
- 19 Margaret Sands
- 22 John Wilson
- 25 Elizabeth Boland-Hayes, Fred Russell
- 30 David Sands

December

- 2 Aoife Backus
- 3 Anne Boyer Cotten
- 9 Douglas Hill
- 10 Declan Jones
- 14 Linda Griffin
- 15 Chris Burger
- 17 Jessica Lane-Rwabukwisi
- 19 Lee Day, Andrea Livingston
- 20 Eileen Isla Jones
- 25 Grace Hickey
- 27 Jon Morse
- 30 Nancy Walter
- 31 Peter Griffiths





Everyone is welcome here

UNITED PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF BINGHAMTON



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Project Regeneration — A Congregational Exploration Beginning November 11–12, 2023

It has been over a decade since we at United Presbyterian Church have engaged in an intentional process of strategic planning. The Session has decided that the time is right to begin this process anew, and we are working with the Presbyterian Foundation to adapt their process for our congregation. Over a six- to nine-month period, we will be looking closely at our vision, finances, and resources to develop a congregation-wide understanding of who we are and where we are headed over the next five years.

The first congregational gathering for reflection will be on **November 12, 2023**. Dr. Rose Niles from the Foundation will lead us in a time of conversation and exploration of our values, mission, and core beliefs. We'll begin the conversation during worship, then share Nirchi's pizza (in both regular and gluten-free options) and a time of fellowship as well as conversation in Fellowship Hall.

Everyone is invited and encouraged to join the conversation!