

# Pentecost 2024

Volume 15, Issue 3

Our worship services are livestreamed on our YouTube channel: [upcbgm.org/youtube](https://upcbgm.org/youtube)

## Worship Themes for Summer: Revisiting the Old, Old Stories

The Bible is full of stories about our ancestors in faith. Some of the stories are “Just So Stories”, explaining why things are the way they are. Some are origin stories, telling about how the God of the Bible called particular people and communities to worship and follow. Some seem to just be great stories that remind God’s people of their faith and God’s place as the creator, liberator, and source of their life.

This summer we are going to revisit some of the old stories, to retell them and to think about what they might mean for us as participants in God’s continuing story.



**May 26 – The Tower of Babel and Human Culture: A “Just-So” Story**  
Focus text: Genesis 11:1-11

Once upon a time, there was one language and one culture for the whole world. And the people wanted to build a city that would reach the

*“Building of the Tower of Babel”, Bedford Hours, 1414–23. Dedicated to the Public Domain by the British Library. From Wikimedia Commons, commons [.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Building\\_of\\_the\\_Tower\\_of\\_Babel - Bedford Hours %281414-1423%29, f.17v - BL Add MS 18850.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Building_of_the_Tower_of_Babel_-_Bedford_Hours_%281414-1423%29,_f.17v_-_BL_Add_MS_18850.jpg).*

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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**



heavens, so they could be like God. God responded by scattering people all over the earth and confusing their language, “Therefore the tower is called Babel”. The story explains the confusion of languages, and takes sly aim at Babylon, the empire in Mesopotamia that was an early source of confusion to the Hebrew people. There is an ancient ziggurat built around 2000 BCE that is believed to be the tower that inspired the story, but it is more likely that the story was created to explain the existence of the ancient tower than that it was rooted in history. The story still rings true, because we still prefer to stay where we are, and let the world adapt to us, instead of following God’s call to transform the whole world, following in the footsteps of Jesus.

### June 2 – *Jacob’s Ladder (Dreams of Greatness)*

Focus text: *Genesis 28:10–22*



In the Hebrew Bible there are many stories of God speaking to people in dreams, for warnings or reassurance or instruction about God’s purposes. The dream of Jacob’s Ladder has captured the imaginations of people of faith for generations, because it carries the promise of God’s blessing and of God’s messengers moving easily between heaven and earth. Jacob is on a journey between the land of his birth and the land where he is to seek his fortune; God’s promise of blessing gives Jacob a new vision and a new sense of purpose, so he creates a memorial stone and promises to be faithful to God, since God has promised faithfulness to him.

“*Jacob’s Dream*”, William Blake, ca. 1805. Public Domain. From Wikimedia Commons, [commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Blake\\_jacobsladder.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Blake_jacobsladder.jpg).

### June 9 – *Interlude: The Great VINES adventure with Amelia LoDolce*

Focus text: *Psalms 46*

In the beginning, there was a group of dedicated volunteers who began to create urban gardens. In 2010, VINES became a fully-fledged 501c(3) organization with a simple purpose: *growing food, growing community*. As their vision expanded and their organization grew, they needed office space and a place to hold workshops, organize events, and gather the community that they were building... so they became a building partner with us in 2015. They have continued to grow and to build the vision, and now they are moving to their own dedicated building, itself an architectural and engineering feat, built at 157 Susquehanna Street. Today we are celebrating the time they have spent in our building and hearing about what else is in store for this terrific group that is making such a difference in downtown Binghamton.



### June 16 – *The Great Flood and Noah’s Ark*

Focus text: *Genesis 6–9 (selected verses)*

The human race is corrupt and violent, and God has had enough! God decides to blot out the living world and start over again, saving only enough animals to repopulate the world and the family of Noah, who

Vector Illustration of Noah's Ark, After Forty Days Dove Brings Olive Bow Biblical Story, Wannapik Studio, [wannapik.com](http://wannapik.com)

believes God and responds faithfully to God’s instructions. After days of rain and storm, and many days of being tossed about on the floodwaters, the Ark lands safely and a new world begins. God places a rainbow in the heavens as a sign of the promise that God will never again destroy the earth by flooding.

The story of the flood appears in other cultures in the Ancient Near East, so it seems likely that there was some kind of catastrophic event that was remembered widely and retold with different meanings for different people. Today we’ll look at the story for what it tells us about God’s faithfulness, about care for creation, and about starting over again after catastrophe.

**June 23 – Interlude: The UP-Center and our ACBC Building Partner**

*Focus text: Luke 7:18–23*

Jeff Pryor, the director of the Addiction Center of Broome County’s UP-Center, will be with us to tell us about the work of the UP-Center, how it has developed since it opened in 2023, and what his hopes are for the future. We’ll hear stories and have the opportunity to ask questions about the program and our partnership. Jeff is the first guest in a series of conversations we’ll be having with ministry partners that share our space and that we support with our time, talent, and treasure.



**June 30 – Feed My Sheep**

*Focus text: John 21:15–19*



It is the last conversation recorded between Peter and Jesus; it is framed as a post-resurrection encounter. Peter, weary from the events of recent days, announces to the gathered companions that he’s going fishing; they decide to join him and the story is set. When they return to shore, Jesus cooks breakfast for them, and then turns to Peter and asks, “Do you love me?” and when Peter responds, “yes Lord, you know that I love you,” Jesus says, “Feed my sheep.” This is repeated 3 times; apparently Jesus really wants Peter to get the message – if you love Jesus, feed the people that Jesus came to serve. It’s a challenge that we continue to reckon with even now: commitment of our minds and our hearts has to be matched by our commitment to the work that Jesus calls us to do.

*“Feed My Sheep”, sculpture in Tagbha, Israel, outside the Church of the Primacy of St. Peter. Photograph by Zvi Tiberiu Keller from Wikimedia Commons, [commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:PikiWiki\\_Israel\\_50200\\_statue.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:PikiWiki_Israel_50200_statue.jpg). [creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/)*

**July 7 – Eutychus**

*Focus text: Acts 20:7–12*

The Apostle Paul is on one of his missionary journeys, and stops for a week in Troas. The last evening, he is teaching in an upstairs room

*“At Troas, Eutychus falls asleep and falls out the window” by Frank Zimmerman on [flickr.com](https://www.flickr.com/photos/frankzimmerman/). Public Domain.*



until midnight; a young man named Eutychus, sitting in the window, falls asleep and out of the window; he is instantly killed. Paul picks him up, restores him to life, then returns to the room on the third floor and continues to preach until dawn.

### Pastors' Ponderings



*Kimberly P Chastain,  
Pastor*

One of the happiest moments of my life was the morning I got a phone call from my son to tell me that my first grandchild, Evelyn Elise, was born. Like the Grinch, I felt my heart grow six sizes that day. She will turn 4 in June, and has been a joy, companion, friend and teacher from the moment she came into my life.

So it was that my heart broke one morning in April, when my son called again to tell me that Evie has been diagnosed with a rare genetic condition called MED13L, which will limit her growth and the possibilities for her future. We have known since early days that she had some challenges, and her parents have been actively pursuing therapies and opportunities for her – but there's something about receiving a diagnosis, a label, that makes the hopes and fears collide into something larger than grief and more overwhelming than anger. Ben put it like this: "It's really hard to prepare for a world where Evie will still need love and care and we may not be around to provide it."



Little is known about the condition; it has only been identified in the medical literature since 2019. It includes small size, cognitive impairment, limited ability to speak, and a bunch of other stuff that Evie seems to have escaped so far. We don't know for sure what the future will hold for her, only that it will not look like we thought it would when we dreamed a "normal" path for her life.

In some ways, I suppose that this is the journey every family takes with each of their children – we all have expectations and dreams that we must give up if we are to see our loved ones as they are, and to accept that, in the words of Khalil Gibran, "they dwell in the house of tomorrow." Hardest of all is the helplessness that comes with knowing that we can't protect them from what lies ahead, only love them and be with them on the way.

Evie is still the same person – joyous, loving, curious, generous – and I am grateful for the beauty she has already brought to the world, even as I rage against the tiny break in a single gene that means it will be harder than I want it to be.

The Indigo Girls sing a song called "Keeper of My Heart" that pretty well describes my journey in recent weeks, and I expect it will resonate for a long time. They sing: "Oh, you



precious kid — I have emotion and it's just for you. I see a warrior, barefoot and dancing, with tears of pain and beauty and all of this is true for you," and then:

*Lift me through my love and anger... my arms are burning, but they're open wide!*

Amen.

Grace and peace,  
Pastor Kimberly



Becky Kindig,  
Associate Pastor

Greetings friends!

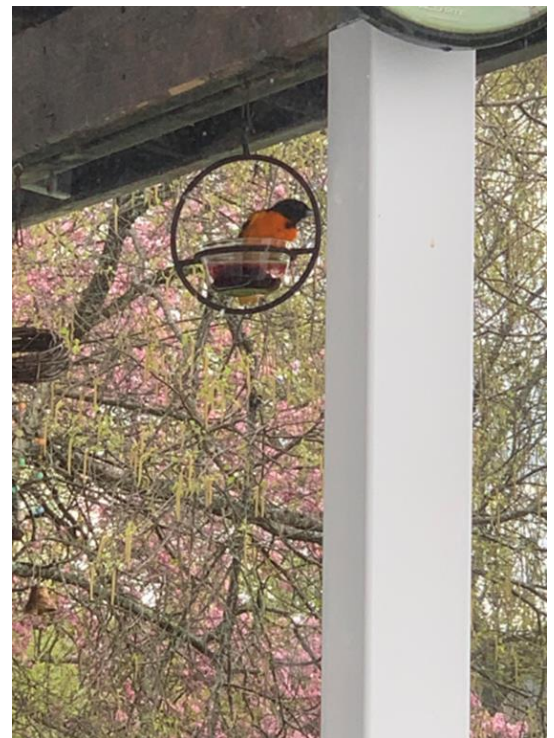
I love the springtime. It is my favorite time of the year. The sunlight stays longer, the flowers start to bloom, the trees leaf out, and the creatures come back from hibernation or from their winter migration spots. It's like the whole world comes to life. And while not everyone enjoys insects or snakes, they are God's creatures and important parts of the ecosystem of our planet we are called to share with them.

Several years ago for Earth Day I heard about a movement called No-Mow May. It is a way to cut down on using gas to mow your yard, it leaves the first blooming flowers for the insects that are just waking up, and entices birds into the area to eat the bugs. A big win in my book. So we started letting the backyard just grow during May and not worrying about getting the grass cut. Our backyard is at the bottom of a big hill and often very swampy, so it is difficult to try to cut the grass anyway. I was amazed at the flowers that sprang up that year and that have continued to spread ever since. And since we had success with that, we decided to leave a whole large area of the backyard unmowed the last two years all summer to see what would come. And with that change, the orioles that come to my jelly feeder in May now stay all summer since there are plenty of insects to eat. We also have lots of other birds and butterflies, frogs and snakes, and come summer, we have so many fireflies! It turns out that mowing the yard and keeping it "neat" takes away the places for them to live.

I have also started to plant native species in



*Cuckoo flower and buttercups in my backyard*



*Baltimore Oriole at my jelly feeder*



*Tiny garter snake by my front porch*

my flower gardens to help the insects that feed off of them even more. It has been a delight to see monarch caterpillars crawling on my milkweed and goldfinches feasting off the dried-up heads on my joe pye weed. I have lots of different kinds of tiny wasps that eat the pests of my tomato plants. Giving nature what it needs has also benefited me.

This year I have heard some push-back to the No-Mow May movement that has made me think. The month that people don't mow gives nesting sites for creatures like bunnies and some ground nesting birds. When we leave that space for the month, then mow it, it destroys the home for those creatures and often ends up hurting the babies that were there. That is the opposite of what people wanted to do. So this year we mowed the areas close to the house early that we knew we wanted mowed later to help defray some of that danger. We will walk the area before we mow it to look for rabbit nests or snakes. And we may decide to mow some of it sooner than the end of May. But we also will probably leave a little bit more land wild to share with the creatures we co-exist with. It's good practice in thinking

empathetically. We need practice thinking about the needs of others and the earth around us instead of just about ourselves. And I think that lesson stretches further than my backyard. Happy spring everyone!

*Pastor Becky*

## Music Notes

### Music at UPC

Music is an important part of our coming together at United Presbyterian Church. We are excited to make music with every resource that we have, and to use a variety of styles – not all at once, but intermingled. What emerges is a vibrant worship service with music that includes everyone who wishes to participate.

We had great fun at the beginning of our Palm Sunday service this year, when choir sang the Moravian Hosanna. Then our brass band led the congregation in the first Palm Parade around the sanctuary since 2019. Musicians included Adrian Finney (tuba), Sara Liebermann (trumpet), Zeke Merelis (cello), Elikem Nyamuame (kpanlogo drums), Nate Raboy (trombone), and Phil Westcott (tenor saxophone). They played a New Orleans Jazz rendition of *When the Saints Go Marching In*, and we sang "When the Lord Came Riding In" to commemorate Jesus's triumphant ride into Jerusalem.



Phil also played guitar and sang Woodie Guthrie's *Jesus Christ*, Starletta Noll-Long sang *Were You There* from the organ loft, and Robbie Manners closed the service by singing *How Long, O Lord* and was accompanied by Becky Mebert on piano and Zeke Merelis on cello.



On Maundy Thursday, Margaret Davis (violin), Lana Ogden (recorder), and Claude Cornwall (piano) provided special music for the service, which was held in the Upper Lounge. The striking timbre of the recorder and violin combination perfectly set the tone for this service.



Our Easter celebration was filled with lots of joyful music. Bell choir opened the service with *Hymn to Joy*, a rendition of *Ode to Joy*; the ensemble included Ethan and Ellis Nyamuame. This was their first time performing with bell choir – well done!



Communion music was provided by Aimée Backus (flute), Austin Shadduck (shakuhachi), and Arianna Windsong (flute). They played an arrangement of the Faure Pavane.



The UPC Choir sang *Christ is Risen Today*, accompanied by Phil Westcott on the tenor saxophone. Because of our YouTube livestream, a complimentary message came to us from the composers of the song, Don Besig and Nancy Price!



Don Besig commented on your video



UPC's Easter Sunday worship,  
3/31/2024



**Don Besig**

I watched this video today and it made me smile! Not only did I enjoy listening to your joyful, spirited singing - but it brought back happy memories of growing up in Binghamton during the 50's! Best wishes to all of you as you continue your ministry through music. Blessings, Don (and Nancy)



Brass musicians Riya Bolander (tuba), Sara Liebermann (trumpet), Nate Raboy (trombone), and Phil Westcott (tenor saxophone) played along with all the hymns, which were accompanied marvelously at the organ by Becky Mebert.



This spring we've enjoyed a great deal of beautiful music from our music community: Victoria Barics and Riya Bolander sang a delightful array of duets the Sunday after Easter; David Berti sang a beautiful arrangement of *Be Thou My Vision* with Becky Mebert at the piano on April 14; on April 21, our worship began with Austin Shadduck playing *Tabibito No Uta* ("The traveler's song") on shakuhachi, and closed with Ken Mebert singing *Thou Wilt Keep Him in Perfect Peace* at the organ, accompanied by Becky Mebert; and Starletta Noll-Long sang a stunning *Let Us Break Bread Together* for our communion music on May 5.



Choir has been enjoying some of our most favorite songs, including *The Lone Wild Bird*, *Offertory* (Micah 6:6-8 text), the "Sabbath Prayer" (from *Fiddler on the Roof*), *With a Voice of Singing*, and "All Good Gifts" (from *Godspell*). Bell choir has also lifted our spirits with their performance of "Litany".

We are blessed to have such musical offerings to enhance our worship services, and we are grateful for everyone who participates in our music program.

With summertime fast approaching, the choirs will take a break from mid-June until after Labor Day. We 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](mailto:music@upcbgm.org), or speak with them in person after worship.

### Upcoming Community Performances

**EMBELLISHED  
AND  
REFRESHED**

**Sunday June 2  
4:00pm**

a concert co-sponsored by  
**THE AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS BINGHAMTON CHAPTER**  
and  
**THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF BINGHAMTON**

**The United Presbyterian Church of Binghamton**  
42 Chenango Street  
Binghamton, NY 13901  
607-722-4219

*This concert is free and  
open to the public*

### **“Embellished and Refreshed”: American Guild of Organists Concert Sunday, June 2, 4pm at United Presbyterian Church of Binghamton**

The sanctuary space in our church has many voices in the line of “if only walls could talk” spirit. Our sacred space has been the stage for concerts of many genres including, organ, flute, Madrigal, Philharmonic, Opera, and senior recitals (voice and instrumentals), to name a few. The sanctuary organ was rebuilt and enriched in the 1970s under the guidance of Binghamton University’s Jonathan Biggers (then Head of the Organ Department and world-renowned concert organist) and Robin Lostetter (organist and choir director at the time). It has featured many recitals by students and accomplished organists, including local organist Jean Henssler, and recently Joseph Ossei Little from Ghana, a graduate student at Syracuse University.

The United Presbyterian organ is a masterful example of what is referred to as the “King of the Instruments”, since the many voices created by wood and metal pipes can sound like an entire orchestra or a solo flute, or a string ensemble to accompany voice and other instruments, concerts, or accompany uplifting hymns and anthems done on Sundays to lead worship.

On Sunday, June 2 at 4:00pm, musicians including organists from the local American Guild of Organists chapter, many of whom play and lead worship at churches in the greater Binghamton area or who have substituted as our worship musician, will play our sanctuary organ for any who wish to attend. There will be a variety of styles and genres, with some instrumentals included. We invite all to attend, including, especially, children and youth. Sit in the balcony and allow them to watch and observe this incredibly interesting and flexible King of the Instruments. Planting the seed of possibility begins sometimes with a new experience. We hope you will step out and come to hear the King of the Instruments!

*This concert is free and open to the public.*

### **“Love and Remembrance”: An Evening with Brio vocal ensemble and Friends**

**Sunday, June 2, 7pm at Endwell United Methodist Church, 3301 Watson Boulevard, Endwell, NY 13760**

“Love and Remembrance” offers music to soothe and uplift the spirit with joy and gratitude. Gospel pieces, sacred classics and spirituals, plus instrumental works by our guest musicians!

Featured artists: *Will Hayes*, cello • *Cathy Lyon*, vocalist • *Burt Mueller*, guitar • *Wendy Stafford*, flute • *The Vivace Recorder Ensemble*

*Craig Johnson*, founder and director

*Carolyn Corse*, accompanist

This concert is open to the public. A free will offering will be collected.

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## **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](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpCbGm), our Zoom room [upcbgm.org/zoom](https://www.upcbgm.org/zoom), and our website [upcbgm.org](https://www.upcbgm.org), 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:

- Air filtration units are deployed throughout the sanctuary to enhance your safety. 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 invited and welcome to use our online giving portal [upcbgm.org/give](https://upcbgm.org/give) 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 other parts of the service such as the sermon and the Prayers of the People. If you watch on a small screen and need the printed version of the worship guide, it is available for download from our website [upcbgm.org](https://upcbgm.org) each week, or it can be mailed to you upon request if downloading & printing is not an option.

To join the Zoom room online, go to [upcbgm.org/zoom](https://upcbgm.org/zoom)

To call in: Dial **1-646-558-8656**, then enter Meeting ID: **865 274 8433 #**

It would be good to have you with us.



**Children in Worship** *“Let the little children come to me...”* – Matthew 19:14

We are glad to have children and families in the congregation, and we welcome and encourage them to be in worship with us. We truly believe that a community of faith is made up of people of ALL ages. There is a PrayGround space with coloring sheets and quiet toys in the front of the sanctuary, which can be used there or taken to another pew if that is more suitable to the family’s needs. Sunday school materials are mailed to our families once a month to do together at home.



There is also a nursery space at the end of the hall at the front of the sanctuary that is open for use with a parent or guardian. It has a changing table, a rocking chair, and some toys appropriate for children ages two and under. There is a speaker in the room so you can listen to the service. Please let us know if you have questions.

## Sermon transcripts

*Transcripts of each week's sermon are available upon request, and are usually ready by the Tuesday following the service. So if you miss worship, or you hear a sermon that really spoke to you and you'd like to read again later, you're invited to contact the office and request the transcript. We can send it via email or snail mail; just let us know which format you'd like to receive.*

## One Great Hour of Sharing Fish Boxes

Thanks to all the youth who participated in our OGHS Fish Box collection this year. We loved seeing all the different ways you colored your fish boxes. **This year you raised \$58.30!** This was mostly in mostly in coins and was a lot of rolls. Your donations have been sent in with other donations from churches all across the United States and will be used to help the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Program. PDA helps people all over the world when there is a disaster like a flood, tornado, or hurricane. These donations help to show God's love to others when they need it. Well done UPC kids!

## Easter Egg Hunt

Despite a chilly, windy Easter day, 18 children eagerly joined this year's Easter egg hunt on the front lawn of the church. It didn't take long for more than 200 eggs to be spotted and collected (perhaps moving quickly helped the participants stay warm)!



The eggs were returned for reuse next year in exchange for goodie bags filled with Easter-themed activity books, crayons, puzzles, stickers, Play-Doh, and bubbles. We're happy that our egg hunt tradition could take place as it was a fun time for all involved.

## Prayers for the People

Do you have a favorite morning prayer, table grace, or evening prayer? We'd like to put a booklet together of prayers for personal use. Pastor Kimberly spoke about two of her favorite prayers in worship on May 12; they are printed below. And if there are others that you'd like to share, please send them to her ([pastor@upcbgm.org](mailto:pastor@upcbgm.org)) or the church office ([office@upcbgm.org](mailto:office@upcbgm.org)).



### Evening Prayer *(From the New Zealand Book of Common Prayer)*

Lord, it is night.

The night is for stillness. Let us be still in the presence of God.

It is night after a long day. What has been done has been done;

what has not been done has not been done;

let it be.

The night is dark.

Let our fears of the darkness of the world and of our own lives rest in you.

The night is quiet.

Let the quietness of your peace enfold us, all dear to us, and all who have no peace.

The night heralds the dawn.

Let us look expectantly to a new day, new joys, new possibilities.

In your name we pray. Amen!

### Morning Prayer *(by the Rt. Rev. Steve Charleston)*

Thank you, Spirit, thank you for another day.

Thank you for letting me wake up to life and all it brings me. The beauty of the world, the presence of my family and friends, the small joys sprinkled around me like wildflowers.

Thank you for the chance to make things better, even for just one day.

Thank you for the opportunity to do some good, help someone in need, embrace love with all I can give.

Thank you for another day to reach for wisdom, to stretch my soul once again to discover the meaning of it all.

And if this is my last day, let it be my song of thanksgiving for all the days you have given me: the gift of life that goes on forever.

Amen!

### Impact Stories from the Tucson Samaritans

Through our members Dave Ruston and Greg Patinka, we continue to support the work of the Tucson Samaritans at the Mexico-US border. Dave shared this message from them:

On behalf of all of us at the Tucson Samaritans, I extend our heartfelt gratitude for your ongoing support of our mission. Your generosity enables us to continue providing crucial assistance to those in need along the border in Southern Arizona. With every contribution, you are helping us save lives and relieve suffering in the desert.



### Summer = Water



Summer is rapidly approaching, bringing triple-digit temperatures, relentless sun, and scant shade during the day. The intense heat makes the perilous journey through the desert even more dangerous as travelers confront life-threatening dehydration and heat exhaustion. Samaritans are seeing an increase in the amount of water used at various drop locations in the desert, and in response, we are increasing the frequency of our visits to aid drops while continuing with our efforts to keep asylum seekers safe while they await la migra along the border wall. Our friends at Humane Borders ([humaneborders.org](http://humaneborders.org)) also recently added two water stations along a 10-mile stretch of border wall east of Sasabe, which will make a world of difference.

Now through the end of September, water is the most important thing we can offer to travelers. Just one gallon can save a life. You can help by making a donation at [tucsonssamaritans.org/take-action](http://tucsonssamaritans.org/take-action).

### Samaritans' impact

*(Please note that we prioritize privacy and safety and remove any identifying information about locations and individuals when sharing these stories)*

During a routine trip to the border wall, a couple of our Samaritans encountered approximately 30 asylum seekers walking along the road. Recognizing the vulnerability of the situation, we guided the travelers towards the migrant aid camp where Border Patrol takes them into custody.

While most of the group arrived safely at the camp, one young woman, accompanied by her three small children and a few fellow travelers, fell and seriously injured her ankle. Despite the language barriers and challenges, our team coordinated efforts to ensure she received care.

After several attempts to contact Border Patrol, agents finally arrived with multiple vans and trucks to assist the group. Their EMT provided medical attention to the young woman with respect and care, while other individuals, including a nurse among the travelers, offered assistance and support. The solidarity and compassion demonstrated by everyone involved exemplify the collective effort to uphold human dignity and provide aid to those in need.

Thank you once again for your unwavering support. Together, we are making a difference in the lives of vulnerable individuals and families along the border.

### **In case you missed it**

Tucson Samaritans was featured in a profoundly moving article by Eli Saslow in the *New York Times*. The article encapsulates the humanity at the core of the border crisis through diverse perspectives and narratives. It sheds light on the critical work being done by organizations like ours and emphasizes the importance of compassion and solidarity in addressing this humanitarian crisis. You can read the full article at <https://bit.ly/3yrq9Ss>.

With gratitude,  
Channing (on behalf of Tucson Samaritans)

### **Special Day Coming Your Way?**

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!

Please let us know of any other special occasions, and also about difficult times and prayer needs where a card or supportive message may be appreciated.

You may contact the church office or a member of the Card Committee (Margaret Davis, Suzie Northrop Raboy, Jenni McKeage, Lana Ogden, Margaret Sands, and Cindy Chadwick).

### **Supporting Our Mission and Ministry**

**Online Giving:** We are able to receive tax-deductible contributions online through our website ([upcbgm.org/give](http://upcbgm.org/give)). 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!** Without any doubt, the ministry of our congregation depends largely on the dedication and selfless contributions of volunteers – the incredible individuals who give generously of their time, energy, and unique talents. Here are some ways you can help us do Christ's work in our community:

**Community Meal & Pantry:** Each Tuesday at 5pm, we offer a sit-down meal that is free for anybody, serving about 120 people a week. Volunteers are needed during the day on Monday and

Tuesday to help with food preparation, and on Tuesday evening to serve the meal and clean up afterwards.

On Wednesdays from noon to 5pm, we run a free food pantry that also offers personal care & hygiene items when they're available. Volunteers help staff the pantry, and donations of non-perishable food and personal care items are always welcome.

Contact Kitchen Coordinator Sherry Conklin for more info: [meal@upcbgm.org](mailto:meal@upcbgm.org)

**Worship services:** You may not have noticed how many people are involved in our Sunday morning worship services, but most weeks there are at least a dozen of us, and often there are more than 20: folks who read prayers and scripture, greet visitors, share musical talents, operate technology, set up refreshments, help serve communion, or contribute their ideas and support behind the scenes. If you'd like to take part, contact Worship Team chair Suzie Raboy or the church office: [office@upcbgm.org](mailto:office@upcbgm.org)

**Other ministry teams:** 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; **Mission**, Pastor Kimberly; **Personnel**, Marilynn Guinane; **Property**, Pastor Becky.

### News from the Synod of the Northeast

#### Message from the Transitional Synod Leader: It's contagious!

The phrase "That's Awesome" has become a powerful part of our Synod community, resonating in our retreats and staff meetings. It's a simple yet impactful reminder to celebrate every achievement, no matter how small. Each step we take toward our mission is significant and deserves recognition. It's inspiring to witness even the most reserved members of our community initiating moments of affirmation. This positivity is contagious – consider implementing it in your settings and witness the positive ripple effect it can create in your interactions.

In a world where criticism often dominates, the act of celebrating victories shines as a beacon of positivity. It's not just about acknowledging success; it's about cultivating a culture of appreciation, recognition, and continuous improvement within the body. Embracing the simple act of appreciation and rejoicing with others can reshape narratives ... *Read on in the Synod's spring newsletter:*

[bit.ly/3QwfHiF](https://bit.ly/3QwfHiF)

#### Final Report from the Synod's PSV Administrative Commission

At the Synod of the Northeast's Mission and Ministry Commission meeting on Friday, April 26, the Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley Administrative Commission presented their final report ([bit.ly/4bziDDm](https://bit.ly/4bziDDm)) and was dissolved by the Synod with thanks and appreciation. While the PSVAC returned jurisdiction to the Presbytery in January, this action marked the final decision of the Synod and the conclusion of the PSVAC's work.

To summarize the AC's recommendations, we're encouraged to continue to build trust and be open to partnerships; to formulate a new mission and vision for the Presbytery; to be proactive in efforts to improve and advance leadership skills and provide opportunities to others to ensure future leaders are brought up to assume future positions. We're also advised to ensure that our Lead Presbyter for Transformation, Rev. Dr. Greg Garis, is not overextended, and the Presbytery is encouraged to identify opportunities for more funding for this position.



This report communicates to the Presbytery that we are about to take a new step into the future. It is a new beginning where we will have choices and where we will be able to discern what God wants for the Presbytery.

### Indigenous Mission Day – September 28, 2024, 10am–5pm

The Synod of the Northeast is responding to the call of the 225th General Assembly to create stronger relationships with our sibling PC(USA) Indigenous Churches. We are encouraging volunteers from around the Synod to participate in the Mission Day on September 28, 2024. It will be focused on building repairs, relationship building, and a cultural experience. But first, we need your help to fund this new and bold vision of accompaniment.

Brook Presbyterian Church  
116 6th Street, Hillburn, NY 10931

Jimersontown Presbyterian Church  
3602 Center Road, Salamanca, NY 14779

Wright Memorial Presbyterian Church  
12672 Route 438, Irving, NY 14081

Hinnecock Presbyterian Church  
Shinnecock Indian Nation  
100 Church Street, Southampton, NY 11968

**Registration:** <https://synodofthenortheast.wufoo.com/forms/m7dq5dh1a9f7um>

**Donations:** <https://app.moonclerk.com/pay/7em063ejvff0>

**Info on the churches:** <https://bit.ly/4bO1NAr>

## Programs & Events

### News from the Kitchen

*by Sherry Conklin, Kitchen Coordinator*

Nothing happens in the kitchen and pantry mission without all the volunteers that come to help.

On Tuesdays we have two or three cooks for the meal preparation and two or three volunteers to set up the dining room. After 4:00pm we have 8–10 volunteers to plate and serve the meal as well as cleanup. We also need three volunteers throughout the day to wash dishes and put them away.

On Wednesdays we have 5–8 volunteers that help staff the pantry. These volunteers log in the guests, help them shop, and keep the refrigerators and shelves stocked. They also hang up donated clothing and take care of other donations. The volunteers retrieve diapers for the guests when needed.

Thursdays are the delivery and Bounty pick-up from CHOW. Two or three volunteers bring the supplies downstairs and put them away.

Friday is the day for the main delivery from the Food Bank of the Southern Tier. This is usually 1,000–2,000 pounds and needs to be moved downstairs (using the elevator). There are usually five volunteers that help with this, stock the shelves, and break down the boxes.

Panera Bread gives us donations after they close every Monday at 9:00pm. We rotate volunteers on Mondays to pick this up and bring it to the church.

Throughout the week we receive multiple donations of food, clothing, and other things to put away.

## 18 ≡ UP-Beat Newsletter

I am so grateful to all the volunteers that keep these programs running.

Again, my wish list is for hand can openers, reusable bags, and used T-shirts (which we turn into reusable bags).

On Palm Sunday, the congregation was invited to decorate Easter eggs in Fellowship Hall, and it was once again a big hit with young and old. Many people participated in decorating the 200 hard-boiled eggs at several stations our Meal Coordinator Sherry Conklin set up. The stations had regular dip dyeing, an egg spinning machine to make stripes with markers, and a new "science experiment" technique this year where we made unique patterns with baking soda and vinegar in the dye. The colored eggs were then joyfully received by our guests at the meal the following Tuesday. Thank you all for participating in this fun creative event!





## The Buffalo 10 Scholarship

*“To believe is to remember.”* – Rabbi Abraham Heschel

Here in the Southern Tier we remember that two years ago, a young man from our community traveled to Buffalo, and carried out an act of mass murder motivated by racial hatred. We remember the 10 African Americans who were killed. We remember the three individuals who were injured. We remember the communities who struggled with the traumatic after-effects of this hate-fueled violence.

We remember, and we also believe in the power of love to bring healing, conviction, and a renewed intention to work together for healthy relationships. The Binghamton Children of Abraham, an interfaith community dedicated to works of justice and compassion, would like to extend an invitation to residents of the Southern Tier to remember with us those who were killed, injured, or otherwise impacted by the violence that occurred on May 14, 2022. Join us in making a contribution to the Buffalo 10 Scholarship: [anyumc.org/resources/buffalo-10-scholarship](https://anyumc.org/resources/buffalo-10-scholarship).

It is our hope that our donations will have both symbolic and practical meaning. Our giving can be a symbol for our continued focus on efforts to confront the culture of racism that led one of our young people into such evil. Our contributions can also be a practical help to those in Buffalo struggling not only against the devastating effects of specific racial violence but also nurturing young leaders who bring caring and vision to a community that has endured other harms of racism.

We remember, and we work toward collective action to make sure it will never happen again. Adding our energy to efforts for healing and leadership development in the neighborhoods one of ours harmed is a first step in our work. Please join the Children of Abraham in giving to the Buffalo 10 Scholarship.

## UPC's "Zoom room"

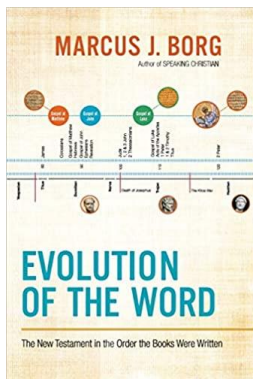
Modern technology is marvelous! Thanks to the Zoom meetings system, we can gather virtually even when it's difficult to be together in person. We've used our "Zoom room" for worship but also for prayer groups, book studies, hymn sings, and social times.

You can join our meetings and worship services online via your computer, tablet, or mobile device by going to <https://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, 1-2pm, in the Pastor’s Office or the 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.

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.

### **Sewing Group Keeps on Stitching!**

**Wednesdays, 10am-1pm (with Zoom lunch hour, 12pm-1pm)**

*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. Gathering each week to craft crib- and lap-sized quilts for the community, the group also makes “carry bags” for use on walkers, mittens, hats, scarves, pillows, and more.

The group’s creations are donated to the following charities and care facilities:

- Willow Point Rehabilitation and Nursing Center
- Hilltop
- Elizabeth Church Manor
- Good Shepherd Fairview Home
- YWCA
- Bridgewater Center for Rehabilitation and Nursing
- Ideal Senior Living Center



*Lots of colorful quilts ready for distribution!*

- NoMa (North of Main)
- Camp Sunshine (for families affected by life-threatening childhood illness)

Quilts are also given to newborns and other special people in our congregation. Hats and mittens are provided to our Food Pantry and Community Meal guests as needed.

Want to help spread warmth and hope? Join the Sewing Group on Wednesdays from 10am to 1pm in UPC's Upper Lounge. No extensive sewing experience is necessary. Projects can be worked on at home if you're unable to attend on Wednesdays. (You'll miss the cookies, chips, pickles and tea, though!) No special sewing skills are needed for cutting squares, design layout, pinning, tying, setting the table for lunch, or heating water for tea. Sewing machine and hand hemming skills are a plus.

Even if sewing isn't your thing, everybody is invited to join us at noon for our social lunch hour. Those who can't come to the church in person can join us in the Zoom room. Bring your own lunch and enjoy the company!

Sincere in its mission to provide warmth, comfort, and care to others, Sewing Group members gain much in return. As aptly said by Ann Cobb, a 50-plus-year member of the Sewing Group, "Where there is love, there is hope, and we love what we do." Pardon the puns, but the cohesiveness of this group mends their souls and keeps them in stitches as they work to help others. Please join! Reach out to the church office if you'd like more information.

## Zoom Happy hour

### Friday evenings, 5-6pm

After nearly four years of "Zooming" together, our weekly social-distance gathering is still going strong. 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.

## News from the Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley

Our presbytery's newsletter, "Thursday Thoughts" ([susvalpresby.org/thursday-thoughts](https://susvalpresby.org/thursday-thoughts)), is published every week and includes announcements from our partner congregations in the region, news from the PC(USA) denomination, and links to webinars & resources available to us through the presbytery.

Thursday Thoughts often announces classes and retreats offered by churches, seminaries, and other agencies, some in person and others online.

We are all invited to expand our understanding of the church and its mission through a broad variety of topics. Check it out, you might find something that sparks your interest.

## Practical Resources for Churches

**Practical Resources for Churches** ([prcli.org](https://prcli.org)) is a resource that the Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley's Commission on Ministry subscribes to so all congregations in our presbytery can access their programs. You're encouraged to check out all they have to offer and take advantage of the abundance

of programs and information. Many of their programs and webinars are available at no charge to you through our paid subscription, and most of their webinars are recorded and available for later viewing if you missed attending it live.

The “Pew to Pulpit” series is for church folks who find themselves leading worship – whether stepping in for a pastor on leave, helping during a transition, or moving to stronger congregational leadership. The series is part practical support, part art, and part encouragement. Recordings of workshops in the series are available on PRC’s website.

They also have links to resources on a wide variety of topics including caring ministries, spiritual practices, small church life, social justice, and environmental stewardship.

Here is a webinar from PRC that is coming up soon:

**Strategies for Reaching and Developing Gen Z – Thursday, May 30, 2-3pm:** How can congregations build meaningful connections with young adults? Brandi Nicole Williams, Director for the African American Church Evangelism Institute, offers practical strategies for bridging the generational gap and fostering relationships with Gen Z to build a more relevant church community. [bit.ly/3wgAZKd](https://bit.ly/3wgAZKd)

### Presbytery Camperships – Apply now through July 31

Every year, the presbytery provides camperships for children and youth up through 12th grade to attend church camp.

We do this not only to help with the cost of summer camp, but because we believe that the experiences young people have at church camp are meaningful and significant to their Christian faith journeys. Since our presbytery doesn’t operate a church camp of our own, we instead provide funds to encourage kids to go to a church camp operated by another presbytery or another Christian denomination.

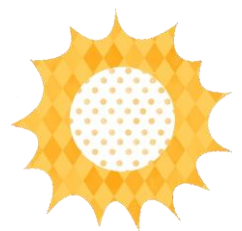
Campership funds can be used for programs of any length up to one week. These may be overnight/residential programs, day camps, or virtual programs. Camperships may also be available for adults with special needs.

The presbytery’s camperships are not allocated based on financial need; they are available to everybody regardless of family income. The presbytery will pay three-fourths of the cost at any Presbyterian PC(USA) camp, up to \$575, or two-thirds of the cost at a camp operated by the American Baptist Church, the Reformed Church of America, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, or any of our fellow “Churches Uniting in Christ”, up to \$500. Other Christian camps must be approved by the Christian Nurture Team; those that are approved will be funded at half the cost, up to \$375. A list of nearby qualifying camps can be found on the presbytery’s website at [susvalpresby.org/Camp-List](https://susvalpresby.org/Camp-List).



Apply now through July 31 on the presbytery’s website at [susvalpresby.org/Camperships](https://susvalpresby.org/Camperships)

Let’s work together to encourage our children and youth to grow in God’s love!



## Joys and Concerns

**Graduates:** Kayla Pelton, Victoria Barics, Riya Bolander

**Preparing to Wed:** Keith & Allison; Andrew & Margaret; Sarah & Chris; Emma & Jessica

**Newlywed:** Liane Aharony & Asaf Karaso; Aaron & Steve

**New Home:** Charity and Megan

**Welcome to the World:** Bennett Matthew Lieberman, born April 17 to Jason & Danielle

**Expecting a Baby:** Tom & Brittney

**Traveling Mercies:** Riya, Nancy

**For Healing:** Eugene, Robyn, Bernie, Tony, Marilyn, Carol, Elikem's dad, Dave J, Jack, Anthony, Bruce, Holly

**Grieving – Friends & Family of:** Kitty Walker, Angel, Lindsey, Dale, Charlie, Gina Livingston, Franklin Taylor; Natika, death of her sister; Anthony & family, death of daughter Julia, complications of childbirth; Eugene and James, death of cousin; Joyce Donohue, death of sister

**Living with Cancer:** Mary Ann, Molly, Carl, Leah, Suzy, Zeke, Pam, Joann



**Ongoing:** Evelyn, Felix, MacMyne family, Jean, Jimmy, Kristie, Scott N., Michael, Natika, Rachmani family, Jen, Carlos, Richard C. & Deloris M. & family, Maida, Rupee J., Jazmine & family, Sister Kathy

**Other Concerns:** We pray for

- people with severe mental illness
- people who are housing-insecure
- people struggling with addictions
- those affected by gun violence around the country
- those affected by cartel violence in and around Sasabe, Mexico
- Turkey & Syria
- Ukraine & Russia
- Israel/Palestine

## Recent & Upcoming Birthdays

### May

7 Adana Brauer, Norma Stehli

13 Ellis Nyamuame

15 Eugene Favor

16 Matthew Johnson

17 Shawn Landon,  
Betty Wambui

19 Nate Raboy

23 Barbara Geiser

27 Felix Rwabukwisi

28 Ernest Backus, David Berti

31 Cindy Chadwick

### June

5 Alex Westcott

12 Sydney Brauer, Jean Hill,  
Sally Hunt, Darlene Ward

13 Madelyn Parsons

14 Taylor Chadwick, Jazmine Meade

20 Sharon Landon, Lou McKeage

21 Victoria Barics, Marilyn Guinane

22 Eleanor Hough, Dylan Pelton

23 Sara Lieberman, Austin Shaddock

25 Lucien Westcott

26 Bill Donohue

27 Jackie Westcott

### July

1 Linda McDevitt

9 Ramona Auchinachie

11 Evan Kindig

14 Sarah Willis

19 George Cummings,  
Joyce Donohue

21 Doug Jones, Kayla Pelton

22 Ann Garcia

28 Bobbie Hickling,  
Cleo Pelton





*Everyone is welcome here*

**UNITED PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH OF BINGHAMTON**



42 Chenango Street • Binghamton, NY 13901 • [www.upcbgm.org](http://www.upcbgm.org)  
☎ 607-722-4219 • ✉ [office@upcbgm.org](mailto:office@upcbgm.org) • 📘 UPCBinghamton

*Address Service Requested*

## **Annual Congregational Meeting**

**Sunday, June 16, after worship, in person or on Zoom**

Our annual Congregational and Corporate Meeting (Part 2) will be on Sunday, June 16, immediately following the worship service. We will gather on this Sunday to conduct the ongoing business of the church for this year, knowing that the Lord of love and light goes with us every step of the way! We will elect the Session class of 2026 and the Nominating Committee for 2024–2025, and receive the team and project reports for the program year.

This meeting will be hybrid, immediately following the worship service, in the sanctuary and in the Zoom room [upcbgm.org/zoom](http://upcbgm.org/zoom), or via phone call (+1) 646-558-8656, Meeting ID 865 274 8433.

It would be good to have you with us, either in person or online.