

Announcements

January 5, 2025

THIS WEEK AT UPC:

[1/5] **Coffee hour in Fellowship Hall, 11:15am-12:15pm**

United Ringers rehearsal, 11:35am-12:35pm

[1/6] **Bible Study – Mondays, 1-2pm** on Zoom or in the Upper Lounge. 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. Our general format is to read the introductory material for each section, then read through the Biblical texts and talk about what it meant for early Christians and what it might mean for us today.

To join UPC's "Zoom Room" online: upcbgm.org/zoom

To dial as a phone call:

(+1) 646-558-8656

Meeting ID: 865 274 8433

[1/7] **Deadline for Family & Friends Directory updates to the office** – Everyone is encouraged to give us any changes to your addresses, phone numbers, and emails, and to provide a new photo. (It doesn't need to be a formal portrait – candid and selfies are fine too!) Email office@upcbgm.org, or you can text a photo to **607-218-4636**. We also like to celebrate birthdays, and encourage you to tell us at least the month and day [birth year is optional, but helpful for our Clerk of Session to have for our annual statistical reports to the PC(USA)]. *New directories will be distributed at or after the congregational meeting on February 2.*

[1/8] **Sewing Group – Wednesdays, 10am-1pm.** The Sewing Group meets at the church each week to craft quilts, mittens, hats, scarves, pillows, and more. At noon, those who can't come in person are welcome to "Zoom in" for their lunchtime social hour. All are welcome; bring a lunch and enjoy the company.

UPC Choir rehearsal, 6:30-7:30pm

[1/10] **Zoom Happy hour, 5-6:30pm.** Our "socially distanced" social gathering is still going strong after more than 4 years of Zooming together! Bring your own beverage and join the fun as we catch up on the events of the week and share how we're doing.

LOOKING AHEAD:

[1/12] **Worship, 10am** *"Words for the Beginning: Do the Good That Is Yours to Do"*

Coffee hour in Fellowship Hall, 11:15am-12:15pm

United Ringers rehearsal, 11:35am-12:35pm

[1/13] **Bible Study, 1-2pm**

Session meeting, 6:30pm

Post-Election Immigration Concerns and Sanctuary Congregations

Tuesday, January 7, 11am-12:30pm – a webinar from the Synod of the Northeast

From Rev. Dr. SanDawna Gaulman Ashley, Transitional Leader, Synod of the Northeast:

As immigration enforcement concerns remain a pressing reality, it is vital that we come together to support vulnerable individuals, families, and communities. We invite you to join Amanda Craft, Manager of Immigration Advocacy for the PC(USA), for two essential gatherings addressing post-election immigration concerns and sanctuary congregations.

This will be a compassionate space for expressing concerns, sharing experiences, and building resilience.

Amanda trains leaders in immigration-advocacy policy efforts tailored to their unique contexts. Her work is guided by immigrant-led organizations and interfaith coalitions, ensuring that advocacy remains rooted in lived experiences. Amanda's dedication to this mission is informed by her time living and serving in Central America and along the U.S.–Mexico border. Currently based in Kentucky with her husband and two sons, Amanda is also pursuing a Doctor of Ministry at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary.

January 7 Webinar Highlights

- Identifying and addressing the unique needs of your community.
- Advocacy actions and organizing for care and support.
- Developing actionable rapid response and care plans.
- Exploring ways the General Assembly-level Office of Immigration Issues can assist.

Who should attend?

- Individuals directly affected by immigration enforcement and their families.
- Pastors and leaders with members who may be impacted.
- All who are ready to stand in solidarity with immigrants in your congregations, mid councils, or communities

These conversations are pivotal to organizing, advocating, and providing care for those most at risk. Together, we can take actionable steps to ensure our congregations and communities are sanctuaries of support and hope. We look forward to standing in solidarity with you as we care for the most vulnerable among us.

For more information, please contact Rev. Ashley at sandawna.ashley@synodne.org.

Register for the webinar at bit.ly/49VtaJd

Practical Resources for Churches (prcli.org) offers resources on a wide variety of topics including caring ministries, spiritual practices, small church life, social justice, and environmental stewardship. Check out all they have to offer and take advantage of the abundance of programs and information. Webinars are recorded and can be watched later on PRC's website. Upcoming topics:



- **Appreciative Inquiry: Finding your church's positive core** – *Tues. Jan. 14, 2-3pm*. Appreciative Inquiry, a strengths-based philosophy and framework for creating positive organizational change, builds from our positive core of spiritual faith. It believes that when you seek evidence of positive, life-affirming human activity, you will find it; humanity has the opportunity to create the reality we seek through meaningful interaction with others. bit.ly/4iIIRMx
- **Reaching New People in New Ways in a Traditional Established Church** – *Thurs. Jan. 23, 2-3pm*. New offerings such as Messy Church, Dinner Church, Single Parents, and Recovery offer traditional established churches the opportunity to reach new people in new ways without blowing up what we already love. At first though, these can be perceived as a threat to the way we've always done things. Thus, starting and sustaining new offerings requires a grace-filled approach. bit.ly/4gOrxzn
- **Funding Fresh Ministry Initiatives** – *Thurs. Feb. 6, 2-3pm*. God has put a big dream on your heart to reach new people in new ways. Sadly, that fire is quickly doused when you think about paying for it. This workshop will equip you with tools and confidence to pursue your God-given vision without limitations. bit.ly/3VPGYPs

Other resources from PRC include:

- **What's Next:** A biweekly sharing of timely resources and upcoming webinars. The most recent (12/17/2024) letter is at conta.cc/3VHgRKI
- **Just One More Page:** A monthly book review blog. prcli.org/prc-book-review-blog
- **Cultivate: Growing in Faith:** Christian ed and faith formation resources, ideas, and anecdotes for all ages of adults and children. January's letter: bit.ly/4a7c5MG

A Stirring in Our Souls: Wrestling with God and Church Toward a More Beloved Community – *APCE Annual event, January 29 - February 1*

Join Christian formation leaders, pastors, and youth workers in Memphis, Tennessee, January 29 through February 1, for the Association of Partners in Christian Education Annual Event. Or join online in Spanish or English! Engage in meaningful plenary and worship and attend practical workshops. Register before January 5th to receive a price break. Learn more and register: apcenet.org/2025-annual-event

Our Presbytery offers a scholarship that will pay up to 75% of the registration cost for church members to attend educational events like this one. Find out more about it and apply at: susvalpresby.org/cclef-scholarship

**Connecting the Dots between the Waste Crisis and
the Climate Crisis – Saturday, January 11, 11am**
a Presbyterians for Earth Care webinar



Our own Elder Chris Burger will lead this program exploring how addressing the waste crisis helps in addressing the climate crisis. The program will also present implications for individuals and families.

Having worked in both the energy field as well as the field of recycling and zero waste, Chris is well-positioned to talk about the interconnections between the two. He established a Community Recycling Center in 1973. In 1977, he developed the first Weatherization program in the United States. In 1985, he developed our County-wide recycling program. He has co-founded and/or led a number of organizations focused on sustainability, including a Cornell University think-tank on sustainability (Eco-Justice Project) and the New York Sustainable Business Council. He is a member of Rotary International's Environmental Sustainability Rotary Action Group (ESRAG). He also walks the talk: he and his family have lived as a zero-waste household since 1992, and he designed and built a home that has been fossil-fuel-free since 1998. Known worldwide, he gives talks and workshops on both zero waste and how to wean ourselves off fossil fuels. Chris currently serves as Co-Stated Clerk for the Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley.

To join the Zoom meeting online, go to: bit.ly/4j3atY5

To join via phone call, dial (+1) 646-558-8656, Meeting ID: 817 689 1196, Passcode: FPUC

For more information, contact Chris at cwburger@frontiernet.net or **607-692-3442**.

From the Justice in Mission and Ministry Team: Israel, Palestine, and the PC(USA)

As we move into the seasons of Advent & Christmas and are once again drawn to the story of events in Bethlehem over 2,000 years ago, we might also spare a moment to consider what is happening there today. Born under the Roman occupation, Jesus would recognize the fears and anxieties of his Palestinian followers today. Palestinian Christians who have been witnessing to Jesus's life, teachings, and resurrection for more than 2,000 years feel abandoned by the world, and especially by the United States which continues to provide military aid for the war that is terrorizing them.

Continue reading the article from the Presbyterian News Service: bit.ly/4gqvgDd

Pick up the PC(USA) resource in the narthex or at the main sanctuary entrance, or read it online at pcusa.org/resource/israel-palestine-and-church-usa.

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