

Fall 2025

Volume 16, Issue 3

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

Congregational Activities for 2025–2026

Pastors Kimberly and Becky have been planning activities for the church program year since the summer. Some are educational, some are to build fellowship, and we hope all will be fun. We hope you will put these on your calendars and join us!

September – November

Sunday September 14th: 2nd Graders Bible Presentation

Monday September 29th: Dora Rodriguez guest speaker (see Programs & Events section)

Sunday October 12th: Becky and Ken Mebert send-off in worship (see Musician Musings section)

Saturday October 18th: Corn Maze at Apple Hills (see Programs & Events section)

Sunday November 2nd: All Saints potluck after worship — Come and remember those from our congregation that we love and miss.

Sunday November 16th: Advent Banner Making — Join us after worship to make banners to decorate our sanctuary for Advent.

Advent, Christmas, & Epiphany

Friday December 5th, 5:30–7pm (date/time tentative, might change): Christmas Carol Sing!



The 2nd graders were presented with their own copies of the Deep Blue Kids Bible (CEB translation).

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We are a place where everyone is welcome as we support one another to act justly, practice kindness, and walk humbly with God.



UNITED PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF BINGHAMTON



Sunday December 14th after worship: Christmas ornament making for our Community Meal guests

Saturday December 20th, 7pm: Messiah concert presented by the Downtown Singers

January: Bible Verse Challenge all month!

Saturday January 10th (time TBD): Board Games — We will play board games together. Bring your favorite or learn a new favorite!

Sunday February 1st after worship: Making soup for the Souper Bowl of Caring

Sunday February 8th: Souper Bowl of Caring collection (during worship) and tour of Pantry (after)



Lent & Eastertide

There will be some weekly Lenten programming from **February 18th** through **March 29th**.

Palm Sunday March 29th: Palm Parade, and Easter egg decorating after worship

Maundy Thursday April 2nd: Dinner and worship service

Easter Sunday April 5th: Egg Hunt after worship

Saturday April 25th (time TBD): Edwards Petting Farm

Saturday May 2nd (time TBD): Hike at Chenango Valley State Park

Pentecost Sunday May 31st: Pentecost paper airplane-flying contest from balcony

Pastors' Ponderings



Kimberly P Chastain,
Pastor

For me, the high point of the “No Kings” rally was meeting Miss Clarine, a 96-year-old Black woman who marched in the 1963 March on Washington and has continued to participate in political resistance ever since. We spoke together about the challenge of keeping hope when it seems that the same challenges and the same fights have to be faced every few years. We prayed together for new vision and for our community to find connection in a system that seems designed to set people against each other.



Miss Clarine told me stories of how, back in the day, every Black person went into the demonstrations and marches knowing that violence was likely, and that all of them were vulnerable. Trainings were held about how to protect the young and the old, and how to refuse violence without responding to it. No one in the 1960s suggested or believed that cooperating with or involving the National Guard or the police was going to keep the demonstrators safe.

Miss Clarine wondered if the safe atmosphere at this demonstration was related to the fact that most of the people present were white.

That remark has been haunting me ever since. Our “whiteness” has always been a shield, and so far, most of us white folks have not had that shield eroded or taken away when we exercise our right to assemble and protest. If our whiteness is a shield, can we use it to protect Black and Brown people? Can we take risks for those who are more vulnerable than we are? Can we begin to speak to white people about the serious imbalance in arrest rates, about the unequal distribution of resources, about the targeting of specific populations? Can we even enter awkward conversations with people who are different from us, to find out how they think about and experience the world we take for granted?

I expressed (then and in the blessing I offered from the podium) my sadness that the organizers’ emphasis on cooperating with police meant few Black and Brown people felt welcome to attend. I asked everyone to join me in singing “Lift Every Voice” and was saddened when a crowd that sang “The Star Spangle Banner” did not seem to know the James Weldon Johnson anthem. If unity is to come, perhaps it’s time for us to catch up to the people who have been living with and learning to resist oppression since the first colonizers arrived in this land: to learn from them, and to begin the hard work recognizing that “justice” is for more than “just us.”

Let’s work together to keep learning, to keep building, to keep finding ways to restore healing and hope to our badly fractured community and country. Let’s face our fears and enter awkward conversations, and commit ourselves to moving ever closer to God’s reign on earth, where

“they shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain,
and the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of God
as the waters cover the sea.” (Isaiah 11:9)

Blessings,
Pastor Kimberly

Dear friends,

Fall is underway and with it activities are starting up again. Pastor Kimberly and I took some time this summer to plan out Church Activities this program year. Spending time together as a church family can be a great way to build relationships, strengthen your faith, and balance out some of the negative things that are happening in our world today, and give you the knowledge that you are not alone and we can work together to make a difference in this world. The list of events each month are in this newsletter and we hope that you will join us!

There are other activities that we are thinking about, so these aren’t the only ones we will have this year. And we are always open to hearing your ideas that you would like to participate in or even lead. Self-care and soul care are important, especially now, so we would love to hear what you are doing that is helpful or practices you might need.



*Becky Kindig,
Associate Pastor*



I have had the opportunity this fall to offer some soul care events on campus with the Binghamton University Interfaith Council. We have done gratitude journaling, meditation, and forest-bathing (*pictured*), and will do prayer/meditation/intention bead-making later this fall. Taking these moments to center, breathe, connect, and feel gratitude are helpful practices in many faiths and for mental and physical health as well.

The other thing that I have been doing on campus is a new program called “Dinner with Jesus”. I am partnering with some Lutherans to bring a progressive mainline protestant service on campus for Presbyterian, Methodist, Lutheran, UCC, and other students, that is LGBTQIA-celebrating — which hasn’t been an option on campus before. We have dinner, read scripture, and have a discussion about what it means. It has been 6 weeks and we have 1–9 students every week. Thank you

for your support of this ministry on campus that is able to give some support to students.

As we move through the rest of the fall, I hope you all are finding ways to enjoy the colors, the crisp air, and cozy blankets. And I hope that you are finding ways to take care of yourselves and others.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Becky

Musician Musings

The fall choir season has been off to a wonderful start this year at United Presbyterian Church. We’ve explored different styles and genres of music, so far ranging from anthems written by Bach (composed before 1750) through music written by living composers. We’re always welcoming new members, and we’d love to have you with us! Choir rehearses on Wednesday nights from 6:30 to 7:30, and sings in worship on Sunday mornings on an almost weekly basis. Our handbell choir is also starting off strong, welcoming two brand new members to its ranks. The United Ringers rehearse in the sanctuary most Sundays after worship, and new members are always welcome. Even if you’ve never played an instrument or don’t know a flat symbol from an eighth rest, you can come give it a try. If you can count to 4, you can learn to play!

This season, we’ve also prepared to say goodbye to Becky and Ken Mebert, who have been an integral part of UPC’s music team for more than a decade and part of our ancestor congregations (West and First) for more than 40 years. They are moving to the Denver area to be closer to their family, and our UPC family will miss them very much. Becky has provided worship accompaniment and music coordinating, and Ken has sung in the bass section of the



choir and also sung solos and in small groups. On October 1, the choir gathered at Judy Westcott's house for a going-away party for Becky and Ken, where we enjoyed great food, wonderful fellowship, and of course, singing.

On Sunday, October 12, Becky and Ken celebrated their final Sunday in worship with us at UPC, where we said "thank you" for all their contributions with a musical celebration. Bell choir presented the theme from the TV series *The Golden Girls* ("Thank You for Being a Friend!"); vocal choir sang Denis Agay's "Old Irish Blessing"; and the sending music was a rousing rendition of "Go Tell It on the Mountain", one of our favorite traditions from Christmas Eve. This song was especially fitting not just because it's one of our favorites, but also because Becky and Ken are moving to the mountains! The instrumentalists helped make a joyful noise to bless the Meberts on their way: Aimée Backus (flute); Cathy Ciganek (flute); Sara Liebermann (trumpet); Becky Mebert (organ); Ethan Nyamuame (alto sax); Elikem and Ellis Nyamuame (percussion); Nate Raboy (trombone); Austin Shadduck (shakuhachi); Phil Westcott (tenor sax).



And of course, no send-off would be complete without some farewell gifts, which Becky said were "wrapped in love and a sense of humor": a toy tool kit for Ken, in case any of his tools get misplaced in the move; a set of Matchbox sports cars to help them choose a replacement for their Miata (which they sold because they couldn't drive three cars across the country); a decorative angel, creatively made from an old copy of the 1955 Hymnbook; and T-shirts with the PC(USA) slogan of "energy, imagination, intelligence, and love".



A Big Thank You and Note of Gratitude

Ken and I are closing off this part of our life journey here in the Triple Cities area completing 50+ years, most of which has included this church and our journey together. We were married in this sanctuary (before the platform was added). We were a part of the choirs and music programs as participants and leaders several times. Our son Mark was baptized here. We have lots of memories of many people and several music leaders and pastors in First and West and then United Presbyterian Church.

Last Sunday [October 12] was a beautifully orchestrated worship service that was inclusive of favorite music, joyful noise (Go Tell It on the Mountain), wonderful creative reception (hosted by Cindy and Andy Chadwick), a choir blessing, and lots of conversations, stories, hugs, and tears, and Kimberly-inspired send-off gifts wrapped in love and a sense of humor. We will have the symbolic toys in Nana and Bampa's new house for grandchildren and guests with children visits! My hymnbook created angel will be perched on my piano making me smile as I practice to give me sanity and peace!



The Tiffany mosaic of the Christian Soldier at the back of the sanctuary that the choir looks at every Sunday was created into a canvas reproduction and given to us at the choir party. It will be placed in our stairwell below the window so we will see it every evening as we go upstairs to bed.

These are the tangible gifts we carry with us. The intangible gift of many relationships, friendships, pastoral leaders, and volunteers who have made the church come alive for us will be the content of heart and mind that I, personally, will draw from as we grieve the loss of being with you all physically. Ken will refocus his buildings and grounds repair, analysis, and mentoring of building staff as to how to clean, repair, do yardwork and plumbing, to help our son with his yard and getting our new house set up... first time Ken has a 2-car garage!

Thank you to the congregation and staff! We will miss you. Our home is open as always (a little notice ahead will make sure we are home!): 8045 Butte Creek St, Sterling Ranch, CO 80125-9172.

Becky and Ken Mebert

Our Church Family

In Memoriam



James D. Spencer, 79, died peacefully in his home June 29, 2025. He was predeceased by his parents, Frederick Spencer and Margaret Spencer. He is survived by his brother, Frederick Spencer, Jr., five nephews and nieces, nine grand-nephews and nieces, and three great-grandnephews. Jim graduated from RIT and retired from Link Aviation as a Software Engineer. He was a member of West Presbyterian Church and enjoyed bowling, golf, watching TV, and anything electronic. Jim would like to thank Paul and Michelle for their neighborly care and compassion. Please remember Jim with a donation to the Southern Tier Food Bank or Chenango Ambulance Services.



Ann Marie Cobb, 97, passed away peacefully on Thursday, July 31, 2025. Born to Paul and Nellie Traub, Ann was a lifelong resident of Binghamton, NY. After graduating from Binghamton Central High School, she married John C. Cobb, Jr. She was a loving wife, devoted mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother. Ann was predeceased by her husband John, her daughter Linda, her son Timothy, and her grandsons John Cobb IV and Steven Rexroth. Ann is survived by children John (Cheryl) Cobb (Charlotte, NC), Denise Landis (Clearwater, FL), and Melissa (Ron) Rexroth (Haworth, NJ). She is survived by grandchildren Jacqueline Ortiz, Nicklaus Cobb, John Paul LeBrun, Christian LeBrun, Ryan LeBrun, Justin LeBrun, Brandon Cobb, Samantha Dugan, Sean Rexroth, Jack Rexroth, and Neil Rexroth, as well as many great-grandchildren.

After her children were grown, Ann worked as a secretary at West Presbyterian Church, Binghamton, NY. She devoted her life to serving others — first her family, and then many volunteer groups. She was a long-time member of West Presbyterian Church and later the United Presbyterian Church of Binghamton. She served on numerous committees and was a dedicated volunteer of the Sewing Group for more than fifty years, making quilts and other hand-sewn items. For more than 30 years, Ann volunteered at Good Shepherd Fairview Home. She served as Director of the Auxiliary and continued as a volunteer well into her nineties. Through her warmth, kindness and optimistic spirit, she touched many lives and she will be greatly missed.

Ann's Celebration of Life service was held at UPC on September 20. The video can be found on our YouTube channel at <https://youtu.be/G6GlvxX8j-o>.

Kristie L. Palmer, 60, passed away on September 23, 2025. She is survived by her siblings Dr. Timothy Palmer, Jeffrey Palmer, and foster sister Faith Stouffer, as well as her family Jake and Katie Simon and their two children.

Her niece Kat Palmer shared this remembrance on Facebook:



On September 23, 2025, Kristie L. Palmer, my Godmother, (AK) passed away. She was compassionate, funny and damn smart — a licensed social worker turned personal home health nurse. Would have been 61 this month, but I guess she wanted to celebrate by waterskiing around heaven's version of Heart Lake, with Grandpa driving his boat and Grandma with her camera in hand surrounded by all AK's dogs on the dock.

As far as I can tell, she is the one who nudged me towards my love for dogs (and all animals) — going to AK's for a week in the summer meant dodging the rooster in the rocky drive, a trip to the mall to go get a band t-shirt (specifically Good Charlotte) at Hot Topic, adventuring in the woods, movie

watching, crafting and lots of fetch with the 1 to 3 dogs that were always around. The farm was one place that I could tolerate being an outdoorsy person. :-)

I remember the sound the screen door made when it'd open and close, dogs barking and puppy kisses, shoes lined up on the blue painted stairwell and her bedroom tucked around the corner on the main floor — the room probably filled with medical supplies but that's not something I recall because it was "normal." If [cousin] Jake was home that meant wandering around the property with him and my brother, cautiously jumping on the trampoline and visiting the neighbor with the crazy rooster to go see other farm animals.

Aunt Kristie wasn't dealt a great hand of cards when it came to her body/life after 30 — Mito/muscular dystrophy may have literally slowed her down — but that didn't stop her from living her best life. A lot to say and still so little I may know, but we all miss her. At least the last time I was with her we laughed a whole bunch, because she had a great laugh.

Her memorial service will be held at a later date at the convenience of the family. In lieu of flowers, friends wishing to may contribute to the Mitochondrial Disease Foundation in her honor.

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 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 each week, or it can be mailed to you upon request if downloading & printing is not an option.

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 a nursery for infants through age four staffed with two nursery attendants, if that is a better choice for your family. The nursery is at the end of the hall past the bathrooms. Nursery staff are on duty from 9:00am to 12:00pm. Parents are welcome to stay in the room and listen to the service over the speaker, or to return to the sanctuary to worship. Please let us know if you have questions.

Welcome to our new Nursery Attendant



Starting August 24, we welcomed another new face to the nursery — Kaylin Camacho is now working with us as a Nursery Attendant, joining Zoe Dong who started at the beginning of the summer. Kaylin is a student at Binghamton University majoring in Psychology with a minor in Education. Please give Kaylin a warm welcome when you see her!

Kaylin joins Zoe who started with us in June. Emmanuel, who was with us for most of the summer, will still be working with us from time to time when needed as a substitute.

To join the Zoom room online, go to 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.

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.



The UPC Choir rehearses in the Music Room on Wednesdays, 6:30–7:30pm. The vocal choir provides music for worship most every Sunday. We welcome new members at any time, and we would love to have your participation. It would be good to have you with us!

The United Ringers rehearse in the sanctuary after worship on Sundays, 11:30am–12:30pm. Our handbell choir plays 2–4 octaves of Malmark handbells and handchimes, providing music for worship once or twice a month. If you're interested in learning how to play handbells, please inquire. No previous experience needed. If you can count to 4, you can learn to play!



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, or speak with them in person after worship.

Worship Schedule through Reign of Christ Sunday

October 26 — Micaiah ben-Imlah and the death of Ahab, *1 Kings 22:1–40*

King Ahab of Israel and King Jehoshaphat of Judah join forces to do battle against a common foe. Their prophets all predict great victory for their armies, except for one. Micaiah ben-Imlah, a prophet in Samaria, tells the king that the One God will bring disaster on Israel if they participate in this attack, and the argument between Micaiah and the other prophets becomes dramatic, ending with Micaiah's imprisonment as the armies go forth into battle. Disaster ensues, and King Ahab is killed in the retreat.

November 2 — The Feast of All Saints: Bouquet of Remembrance

One of our cherished traditions at United Pres is the Bouquet of Remembrance, which we will build together this morning to remember and honor the cloud of witnesses that surrounds us in the communion of saints. Pastor Becky will place a flower in the bowl for each of the people in our community who have died since the Feast of All Saints last year, as Pastor Kimberly says their names aloud. When we celebrate the Lord's Supper, you are invited to place a flower for loved ones from years past before you pick up the communion elements.

November 9 — Elijah fights with fire, 2 Kings 1:1–18

After Ahab's death, his son Ahaziah takes the throne, and continues his father's policies of aggression and idolatry. He is gravely injured in a fall and sends messengers to the local temple of Baal-Zebub, asking for a prediction about whether he will recover. The messengers are intercepted by Elijah, who sends them back with a savage message that because he has turned away from the One God, he will not recover. King Ahaziah sends three cohorts of fifty soldiers each to attempt to arrest Elijah and bring him under control. The first two cohorts are destroyed by fire, and the commander of the third kneels in front of Elijah and asks for mercy. Elijah agrees to meet with Ahaziah and repeats his condemnation; Ahaziah dies in bed and another new king ascends the throne.

November 16 — Elijah ascends to heaven; Elisha assumes the mantel, 2 Kings 2:1–25

This is the last story about Elijah in the Bible, although it begins a cycle of miraculous stories that circulate in the Hebrew tradition for centuries, including the prediction that he will return to bring the Messiah for the redemption of his people. Elijah is taken up into heaven in a windstorm from Bethel; before he ascends he gives Elisha his mantel. Through a series of miracles, Elisha is shown growing into prophetic power as the story moves from the mysterious back to the ordinary, reaffirming that it is the power of the One God, the "God of Elijah", who makes things happen.

November 23 — Reign of Christ Sunday, *Philippians* 1:27–30, 2:1–11

As followers of Jesus, we are always living between what God has already done for all of creation and what has not yet been completed in our broken and fragile world. Today is the last Sunday of the Christian year; next week we will start a new year, telling the story of our hope for a new world and the coming of Jesus as God's response. So today we will look at one of the earliest Christian hymns, embedded in one of Paul's letters, as he reminds them to remain faithful to God's promises even as God has remained faithful to them.

Session Highlights

by Andy Chadwick, Clerk of Session

At the Congregational meeting on June 29, Andrew Chadwick rotated off Session and the Congregation elected four members to the Session class of 2027:

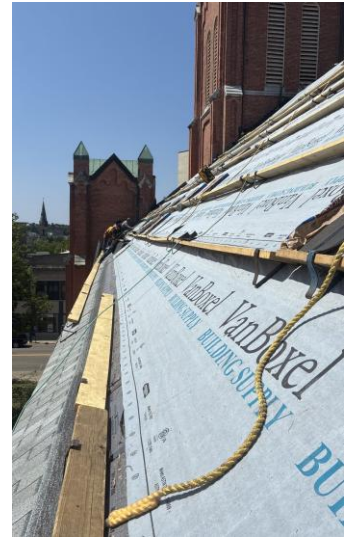
- Margaret Davis (reelection)
- Sally Hunt (reelection)
- Matt Johnson (reelection)
- Lou McKeage (election)

12 ≡ UP-Beat Newsletter

The following members were elected to serve on the 2025–26 Nominating Committee:

- Marilyn Guinane
- Shawn Landon
- Suzie Northrop Raboy

Session will designate two members to also serve on the committee.



We had learned in the summer of 2024 that there were many missing or broken roof tiles on the south-facing roof of the sanctuary. So this summer we got a contractor in. The sanctuary roof is very high up! This was a big expense, but was planned for in our 2025 budget. It was great to have Ken Mebert's knowledge and energy to help steer us through one last major building project before his move to Colorado in October.

Our church has been blessed with a generous endowment fund. However, our current level of congregational giving does not cover all our costs, and the income from building use and returns on our investments are not enough to make up the difference. UPC has reached the point where we need to access the principal of some of our endowment to cover our current and future expenses. It is expected that we will need to make about \$100,000 available as soon as we can. Stay tuned for further discussions on finances.

Please join us in welcoming the Binghamton Downtown Singers as our newest partner in the building. They were previously based at Sarah Jane Johnson Memorial United Methodist Church



which has closed, and had also outgrown the sanctuary in that building and were searching for a larger venue. We are delighted to be partnering with them!

As always, please don't hesitate to talk to any member of Session if you have questions or would like further information about any of our activities!

Did Someone Say "Cake"?

Good food and fellowship are common themes at UPC. And what better way to blend the two while also celebrating our church family and friends than with monthly "Birthday Sundays"?

This summer, we commemorated June, July, August, and September birthdays, with fall birthdays in the planning stages. Each month, we offer an assortment of cake, muffins, cupcakes, cookies, brownies, cheese & crackers, and/or other goodies to tempt our taste buds and have the opportunity to honor those around us. We typically include gluten-free options.

In July, Sherry Conklin's "Dirt and Worms" delicacy received rave reviews. Pudding, topped with cookie crumb "dirt," was enhanced with a colorful gummy worm. Nothing says summer like dirt and worms!



We're never short on goodies for Birthday Sunday celebrations.



"Dirt" cups, complete with worms, were a hit on Birthday Sunday in July.

In August, the Hospitality Team prepared Fellowship Hall for a luncheon reception following a memorial service for Thomas Olevano, a friend of the church who worshiped with us at times. Serving approximately 50 guests, the family was most appreciative of UPC's warmth and care.



Above: Andy Chadwick, Suzie Northrop Raboy, Bill Sands, David Sands, and Margaret Sands prepare for a memorial service lunch.

If you'd like to serve on the Hospitality Committee, or be available on an "ad hoc" basis for specific events, please contact the church office or one of the committee members (Cindy Chadwick, Sherry Conklin, Sally Hunt, Suzie Northrop Raboy, and Margaret Sands). We welcome bakers or buyers for birthdays, and help with a variety of tasks for other events (setting up tables and chairs, setting tables, clearing tables, serving food, washing dishes, etc.). There may even be an extra cupcake or two in it for you!

News from the Kitchen

by Sherry Conklin,
Community Kitchen Coordinator

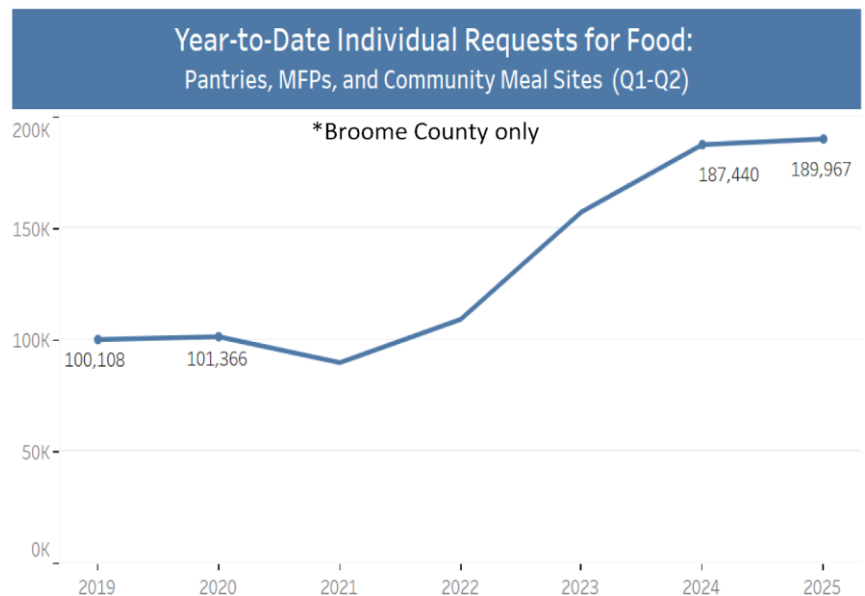
This summer brought us an increase in people attending our Tuesday meal and our Wednesday pantry. The statistics from the Food Bank of the Southern Tier show a large increase of food-insecure people in Broome County. Unfortunately, the increases are happening as financial help is decreasing. This graph from the Food Bank shows that county-wide, the number of people requesting assistance at community meals and food pantries has increased by 87% since 2020, the year we opened our Community Pantry.

I am looking hard at the amount of food that we supply. We are serving as many as 87 families. The same families may and do come every week. In addition to all our regular clients, we see about seven new families every week. I noticed that we are giving out much more than is required by Food Bank of Southern Tier and Feeding America. I'm beginning to think this will not be sustainable and may need to be adjusted. I would love to have some suggestions on how to adjust our pantry supplies. This should be a group effort, and I will print out the limits, amount allowed, and suggested amounts from the Food Bank for any person that would like to help me brainstorm ideas. I have some ideas such as having the pantry open every other week, being open every week but limiting guests to every other week or allowing staples every week but having extra food available on rotation in different weeks. I welcome any ideas.



VINES has been donating produce from their gardens every Wednesday for distribution in our pantry. We continue to get donations of bread products from Panera Bread in Johnson City, although these donations have become smaller. I continue to order donated food from CHOW on Thursdays, and place orders with the Food Bank about twice a month.

Jeff Rake is a volunteer that comes every week and does most of the main meal cooking. He also does minor plumbing work in the kitchen and other repairs which save a lot on the budget. He and I



spent one morning doing a deep cleaning of the ovens and the hood, and of the dishwasher. Light bulbs were changed, and light covers were cleaned as well as the filters in the hood. Everything is so shiny and clean. A big thank you to Jeff for all he does. Of course, a big thank you to all the volunteers in the kitchen and pantry. These programs are not possible without volunteers. New volunteers are always welcome.



Take the Donohue Challenge!

Joyce and Bill Donohue are celebrating many anniversaries this year, and want to show their gratitude to God for bringing them safely through by challenging the congregation to help them fill the pantry this fall!

Their combined anniversaries, including 64 years of marriage, 25 years since Bill survived cancer, his 87th birthday, and others (ask them) add up to about 250 altogether. Between now and Christ the King Sunday (11/23), they are challenging the congregation to help them bring in pantry supplies or hygiene products (or both) — let's see how much we can prepare for the coming winter by stocking up on needed items!

- Every time you sit down to a meal prepared at home, put a pantry item in a basket to bring on Sundays.
- Every time you go out for a meal (or order in), make a contribution to the hygiene program.

The pantry provides about 1,000 pounds of food at the wholesale price of \$1.00/pound each week — and last week served 101 families.

The changes in federal funding and SNAP/EBT programs mean that we are seeing a particular need for sources of protein (we offer 1 pound of protein or 6 eggs to each client). Sherry suggests:

- 1-lb. packs of chicken
- 1 small box of frozen chicken nuggets
- 1 small box of fish sticks
- 1-lb. packs of ground beef
- 1-lb. packs of plant-based meat or cheese substitutes — *much-appreciated by our vegan and vegetarian clients*

Appreciated hygiene products include small packages of laundry detergent, deodorant, sanitizing wipes, and feminine products, as well as small bottles of shampoo and body wash or soap.

You can also contribute actual cash (we'll add it to the total) if that's easiest for you.

We'll have baskets in the sanctuary and we'll keep track of how much we are collecting in the coming weeks.

Supporting Our Mission and Ministry

Online Giving: We are able to receive tax-deductible contributions online through our website (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.

Planned Giving: Making a planned gift is not just for those who have wealth or special financial expertise but for anyone with a generous spirit who wants to designate their gifts while they are living. Whether it is a bequest through your will, naming the church as a beneficiary of a life insurance policy, a life income gift through a trust, or a designation of a portion of your retirement savings assets, your legacy gift can help ensure the continued vitality of UPC from one generation to the next. While a planned gift brings a sense of fulfillment to our own lives, it may also provide financial benefits to the donor, including tax savings, reduced capital gains and estate taxes, and release from financial management.

More information about planned giving, including sample bequest language for a will, can be found on our website at upcbgm.org/giving.

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 200 meals 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

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

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: Campus Ministry, Pastor Becky bkindig@upcbgm.org; Card Committee, Margaret Davis mdavis.margaret@gmail.com; Community Outreach, Pastor Kimberly pastor@upcbgm.org or Sherry Conklin meal@upcbgm.org; Finance, Lou McKeage lmckeage@upcbgm.org

stny.rr.com; Hospitality, Sally Hunt shunt1@stny.rr.com or Sherry Conklin meal@upcbgm.org; Personnel, Cindy Burger csburger@frontiernet.net; Property, Pastor Becky bkindig@upcbgm.org; Sewing Group, Cindy Burger csburger@frontiernet.net; Worship & Music, Margaret Davis mdavis.margaret@gmail.com.

Programs & Events

A visit from Dora Rodriguez

On September 28 & 29, we welcomed our mission partner Dora Rodriguez, who was visiting us from Tucson, Arizona. Dora works with Salvavision, a mission supported by our congregation, to provide aid and support to migrants seeking asylum in the U.S.

On Sunday evening, we gathered at Little Venice Restaurant with Dora. Then on Monday, David Ruston and Greg Patinka hosted a picnic at their cottage in Harpursville. It was a beautiful day in the woods and there was plenty of good food to eat.



On Monday evening, David interviewed Dora in our sanctuary. David talked with Dora about her memoir, “Dora: A Daughter of Unforgiving Terrain”, and her current work with Salvavision in Tucson. The recorded interview is on our YouTube channel at youtu.be/283uAHiKXjU.



“No Kings” Rally in Binghamton

Saturday, October 18, 2pm at the Broome County Courthouse

Binghamton United had a pretty strong turnout for the “No Kings” rally on October 18! About a dozen of us gathered at the church and walked down to the courthouse with our signs, and we met others as we walked along.



Reports on the size of the crowd vary from 2,500 to 4,000. There were a lot of people and a holiday atmosphere — people in costumes, carrying flowers and signs, celebrating connection and refusing to give into the fear and anger that cling so close in these times.

The question we have to consider now is how do we use the energy and sense of community to build momentum? With Congress in a stalemate and federal assistance expiring on November 1st, how do we address all of the issues that led to this rally in ways that protect the people who are most in harm's way?

Be sure to get to the polls next week and vote for local people that are working for the unhoused, the undernourished, and the underemployed in our community. Take the Donohue challenge and help support our food relief efforts. Start carrying the "Know Your Rights" cards (available in the sanctuary and the church office) and pay attention when you see people being stopped or questioned by ICE or by police. Educate yourself — watch for opportunities in our weekly booklet and in our newsletter. Let's make this movement about Justice for all, not "just us".



Corn Maze Fun!

Saturday, October 18, 2:30pm at Apple Hills, 131 Brooks Rd., Binghamton

In October, we went to Apple Hills to experience their corn maze. It was a lovely sunny day but only a small turnout, with the No Kings rally happening in downtown Binghamton at the same time. So Pastor Becky and Scott braved the 2.5-mile maze on their own, finding their way to all 6 checkpoints along the way, collecting clues to solve the Mystery at the Farm, and earning the

“golden doughnut” for which they each got a free, fresh doughnut at the snack shack. Other activities available were wagon rides, rubber duck races, and prospecting for fossils and gems.

More information about the activities at Apple Hills can be found on their website applehills.com/farm-fun and Facebook facebook.com/HowDoYouLikeThemAppleHills.

Author Talk — Sarah Towle: How Immigration Was Weaponized to Drive U.S. Democracy into Crisis

Wednesday, November 5, 6:30–8pm at UPC

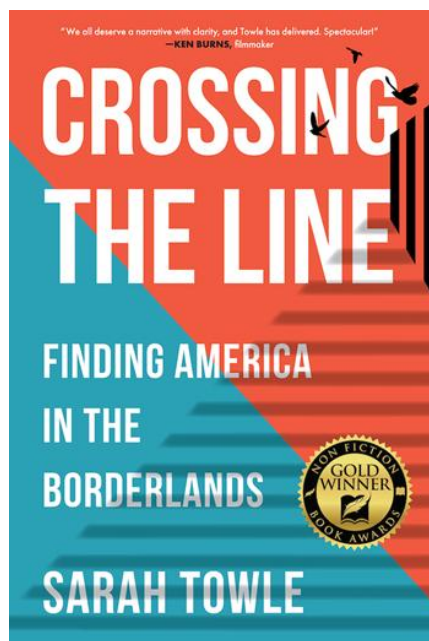
We’re invited to join in welcoming the acclaimed author, Sarah Towle as she continues her journey from the Borderlands. She is not only an educator and a researcher, but also a human rights defender, nature lover and choral soprano. Her latest book, “Crossing the Line: Finding

America in the Borderlands,” will be the highlight of the tour, at Binghamton United Presbyterian Church, November 5th at 6:30pm.

“A powerful exposé of the human costs of America’s immigration policies.”
— Kirkus Reviews

“For anyone who wants to understand the reality of our dysfunctional immigration system beyond slogans, Crossing the Line is an absolute must-read.”
— Scott Allen, former editor of the Boston Globe Spotlight Investigative Team

“Sarah Towle has obliterated today’s dead-end arguments about immigration and transformed them into riveting human stories. We forget that ideas — good and bad — have always crossed our borderlines; only human beings need a piece of paper. We all deserve a narrative with clarity, and Towle has delivered. Spectacular!”
— Ken Burns, filmmaker



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Website: sarahtowle.com

Substack: [TALES OF HUMANITY](https://talesofhumanity.substack.com/)

Podcast: [FROM THE BORDERLANDS](https://fromtheborderlands.com/)



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, 1–2pm, in the Zoom room

We’ve been reading from Marcus Borg’s *Evolution of the Word: The New Testament in the Order the Books Were Written*. Everyone is welcome to join us 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.

UPC Sewing Group

Wednesdays, 10am–1pm in the Upper Lounge, with Zoom lunch hour at 12pm

As many of you know, the Wednesday Sewing Group works throughout the year to create quilts, carry bags for walkers, hats, mittens, and scarves for organizations in our community.



Every Wednesday in the Upper Lounge, the UPC Sewing Group meets to design, cut, sew, tie, and hem quilts, and create carry bags that can be used on walkers. If Wednesdays don’t fit your schedule, projects can also be worked on at home. The group continues to bring much to the mission of UPC by enhancing our internal and external church spirit and providing functional gifts to help others and spread kindness.

Thank you to those who have donated cotton fabric for use in making quilts, worked on items at home for the greater good, or participated on Wednesdays. We welcome new members at any time. Join us on Wednesdays, 10 am to 1 pm. At noon we enjoy lunch together (chips, tea, and cookies are provided); if you can’t be there in person, we have a Zoom option to join us at lunch.

A Fitting Tribute

Change can be heart-breaking. This is especially true for UPC’s Wednesday Sewing Group, recently having to say goodbye to our forever friend, Ann Cobb.

Ann’s participation in and contributions to the Sewing Group spanned more than a half-century. As a charter member of the group at West Presbyterian Church, her long-time devotion spoke to the kind of person Ann was: dedicated, committed, and caring. Beyond her creativity, design talent, and sewing skills, Ann brought so much to the group,



including her warmth, humor, mentorship, kindness, organizational skills, and wise perspectives. Strong, pragmatic, practical, non-judgmental, fiercely independent, and classy are just a few of the words that come to mind when thinking of Ann. We loved her stories, and appreciated the interest she always showed when we shared ours. Her endless energy and positivity were unmatched; her smile and laugh contagious. Ann was an inspiration to all. She will be missed beyond measure.

Our quilting efforts continue, meeting each Wednesday to create quilts for the Greater Binghamton community. We will read our prayer before our shared lunch each week — some of them handwritten by Ann — fondly remembering her, and grateful for her decades of service to others. We'll carry on the legacy, built so many years ago, while hearts continue to mend.

Zoom Happy hour

Friday evenings, 5–6pm

After more than five 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.

Presbytery News

News from the Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley



Our presbytery’s newsletter, “Thursday Thoughts” (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) is a resource that the Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley’s Commission on Christian Leadership Formation 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.



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. Other resources include:

What's Next — A biweekly sharing of timely resources and upcoming webinars. The current (10/14/2025) letter is at conta.cc/4okFPeS

Hands to Work, Heart to God online craft group — 3rd Thursday of the month, 7–8pm: Join us on Zoom as we share our love of crafting and desire to connect with God online. Bring any “lap work” you may have. While we craft, we will listen to and discuss readings from Joyce Rupp’s book, *Constant Hope*. Contact Karen Smith, karen@prcli.org, 631-821-2255.

Cultivate: growing in faith — Christian Education and faith formation resources, ideas, and anecdotes for adults, children, youth, families, and multigenerational ministry. The October 2025 letter is at bit.ly/476NirV

Working toward Presbytery Merger

The Presbyteries of Susquehanna Valley and Cayuga-Syracuse have both voted to pursue a merger, and leaders from the two presbyteries are working together to bring that about. In August, the presbyteries held a joint assembly meeting via Zoom and approved a plan to share our Lead Presbyter for Transformation, Rev. Dr. Greg Garis, and to seek a part-time Assistant to the Lead Presbyter to work alongside him. As of October 1, Greg’s full-time position is now split 50/50 between Cayuga Syracuse and Susquehanna Valley. The presbyteries’ joint Human Resources/Personnel Team has been receiving applications and conducting interviews for the assistant position.

Focus and Coordination Team Update

Your F&C Team has been meeting regularly. Originally called the Vision Committee, we renamed ourselves as we believe the way forward is to focus on what the myriad needs are as we seek to merge our two presbyteries but just as importantly to coordinate with and seek the wisdom of the body.

We have been working on a vision statement while also keeping a keen eye on the strategies we will need to propel us down the road of this process. Our next step is to share our vision statement with the “councils” of both Cayuga-Syracuse and Susquehanna Valley in a joint meeting. Our intent is to then share our work with the two presbyteries, seeking your feedback and counsel as well as hearing your questions and concerns in small group meetings. After this period of information-sharing and relationship-building, we will begin the detailed work of developing a merger proposal for consideration.

We ask that you hold us in your prayers as we continue to meet and strategize our way forward. We are excited and hopeful and it is our prayer that each and every member of our presbyteries will choose to get involved in the coming months. We can all be assured there will be much to do and it is our goal to keep you informed of our progress as well as opportunities for involvement.

DRAFT Vision Statement: “We follow God’s call to be the hands and feet of Jesus. The presbytery will support this vision through dynamic collaboration with and support for our congregations and their leaders, encouraging them to reflect the Spirit’s gifts of love, grace, and justice — in their midst, in their communities, and in the world at large.”

The Focus and Coordination Team welcomes feedback on its work and the Draft Vision Statement under consideration. Thoughts and suggestions may be given to Team member Robbie Jean Rice at Ricerobbiej@gmail.com.

Joys and Concerns

Preparing to Wed: Emma & Jessica

New Beginnings: Sara Manewith & Bernie Citron, married 7/5 (Bernie received a kidney transplant 7/11, doing well); Patrick McKeage & Kayla Bogdanowicz, married 10/18

Welcome to the World!

- Kordelia Bonnie-Barbra Knapik, born 10/20/25 to Shelby Livingston & Keith Knapik. Congratulations to Charlotte and Andrea as well!
- Bremington Rexroth, born 9/3/25 to Jacqueline & Jack Cobb Rexroth (Ann Cobb's great-great-grandchild)

Gratitude: Sara L. has finished her comps & been admitted to Ph.D. candidacy at BU; drop in the national murder rate; Sally's mom's 99th birthday

Praying for Kidney transplant: Tony

For Healing: Nate M, Mary Rose, Vicki, Marianne, Cheryl, Ann, Ethel, Art, Margaret, Robin, Marilynn, Becky, Sally M, Stevo, Frankie, Jean H, Kathy P, Bruce G

Recovering from Surgery: Bob, Hemant, Art

Grieving: Austin, death of his aunt; Greg Garis, death of mother-in-law; Jean H, death of brother; family and friends of Ann Cobb, Becky Smith, Henry Bailey, Walter Brueggemann, Stacey Alexander, Mark

Recent & Upcoming Birthdays

September

2 Josiah Rwabukwisi
4 Ethan Nyamuame
Starletta Noll Long
6 Clyde Jones
7 Sherry Conklin
9 Morgan Chadwick
Julie Njoroge
20 Emma Kindig
28 Brian Morse

October

2 James McKeage
Patrick McKeage

3 Christina Bauman
4 Lauren Hickey
Sam Richardson
5 Oliver Richardson
7 Kathy Preston
11 Philip Hazen
Westcott
15 David Ruston
16 Dean Ogden
25 Marcy DiRosa
27 Shelby Livingston
29 Ken Mebert

30 Kristine Valashinas

31 Andrea Gilebarto

November

4 Gail Wilson
7 Sally Menges
Lana Ogden
19 Margaret Sands
22 John Wilson
25 Elizabeth Boland-Hayes
Fred Russell
26 Charity Outman
30 David Sands



Hazelbaker, Bonnie Shuman, Jim Spencer, Jake Leet, Kristie Palmer, Eva Wu, Norman & Jean Schneider

Living with Cancer: Martha, Molly, Leah, Suzy, Zeke, Pam, Joann, Danny, Charlie, Dave, Maureen, Ellen, Dean, David, Ellen

Ongoing: Bill, Darlene, Adam, Felix, Bob & Esther, George, Kate, Dick, Alice, Jessica

Other Concerns: We pray for

- Christ Episcopal Church and their work with the unhoused
- Gaza, Ukraine, Yemen, Thailand & Cambodia
- people affected by storms & flooding
- people struggling with addictions
- those living in fear
- working class fighting to afford healthcare, retirement, housing
- international students and migrants caught in political tangles





Everyone is welcome here

UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF BINGHAMTON



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☎ 607-722-4219 • ✉ office@upcbgm.org • 📘 UPCBinghamton

Address Service Requested

Sunday, November 2

The Feast of All Saints: The Bouquet of Remembrance

One of our cherished traditions at United Pres is the Bouquet of Remembrance, which we will build together to remember and honor the cloud of witnesses that surround us in the communion of saints. We will place a flower and read the name of each member of our faith community who has died in the past year.

During the celebration of the Lord's Supper, you will have the opportunity to speak their name and place a flower in the bouquet for them, and we will have a slide show featuring our communion of saints. The Bouquet of Remembrance will be the centerpiece of the table on which the elements are consecrated. Everyone is invited to bring flowers to place in the bouquet when we gather at the table for communion. Extra flowers will be available if you are unable to bring your own.

Potluck Feast of All Saints Luncheon — Sunday, November 2 starting at 11:30am

Come to this repast and remember those from our congregation that we love and miss. You're invited to bring a side dish or dessert to share; or just come as you are — there's always plenty of food! The Hospitality Team is providing chicken for everyone as a main dish, and will also provide coffee, tea, juice, water, and place settings.