

*The Network... a Publication of  
University Presbyterian Church  
August 2020*



Message from our Pastor

There is a heaviness in the air these summer days that has nothing to do with the humidity. Rather, it is the heaviness brought on by tragedy and suffering and hardship. The coronavirus lingers in our lives. We have all been touched by it in some life-altering way. And we all wonder when our lives might return to “normal.”

The Session of UPC continues to wrestle with this matter on behalf of our congregation. In order to monitor the curve of the virus, the Session is waiting to resume in-person worship services for the moment. As observed in other states, re-opening churches and community events too quickly has caused the infection rates to spike. We at UPC want to proceed with care and caution.

Please know that this matter is carefully discussed at every Session meeting even as we take steps to prepare for the day when we can resume some form of in-person worship.

This pandemic has really made the statement “the church is not a building” very apparent. Even as we cannot gather in our building, the ministry continues. We still worship, albeit in our own homes using our computer screens. The Food Pantry continues to play a vital role to the community. Our committees still conduct the business of the church. Members are reaching out to one another with pastoral care and friendship. Our congregation is still engaged in community and social concerns.

These activities are not in the form we might prefer for conducting our church’s life. But we can see that God still finds a way to be present despite the challenges and obstacles.

Blessings to all!

Tracy

## I Have A Dream

Fifty-seven years ago, on August 28, 1963, at the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, standing in front of the Lincoln Memorial, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. offered his “dream” for America. Seven times he said, “I have a dream...,” a dream that “one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: ‘We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.’” Seven times Dr. King quoted “I have a dream...” a dream of freedom for all, of sisterhood and brotherhood, a dream in which “one day...all of God’s children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual: “Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!”

Members of University Presbyterian Church had asked Session to print Dr. King’s address in the Network. However, the speech is copyrighted and therefore cannot be printed by UPC without permission. No response has been received to a request from the Session to print the speech. Instead, the congregation is encouraged to go to the electronic link below and read the speech online from The Martin Luther King, Jr Research and Education Institute housed at Stanford University. Alternatively, entering “I Have A Dream” in your preferred internet search engine should provide a link to the speech.

In sharing his dream with America, Dr. King reminded the nation of “the fierce urgency of now” as the time for action, avoiding the “tranquilizing drug of gradualism,” saying that “Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God’s children,” adding that “We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality.”

Twenty-three-old John Lewis, already a veteran of the Civil Rights movement and already a victim of police brutality, also strode to the microphone that day, preaching to the crowd “We do not want our freedom gradually; we want it now.”

Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated on April 4, 1968. The Civil Rights Act of 1968 was enacted on April 11, 1968, one week after Dr. King’s death, but it is evident that even today, in 2020, Dr. King’s dream is not yet fulfilled.

Congressman John Lewis died on July 17, 2020 of pancreatic cancer, but not before offering this following quote about injustice: "When you see something that is not right, not fair, not just, you have to speak up. You have to say something; you have to do something."

Fifty-seven years after Dr. King shared his dream with America—twenty-thousand, eight hundred and nineteen days after his call for the “urgency of now”—we are still called upon to take urgent action to make that dream a reality, no longer waiting for a “some day” in the future, but instead today.

<https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/king-papers/documents/i-have-dream-address-delivered-march-washington-jobs-and-freedom>

<https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/john-lewis-quotes/>

Howard Henry (on behalf of the Session)

## Worship Column

August 2, 2020

*9th Sunday after Pentecost*

Gen. 32:22-31; Ps. 17:1-7, 15; Rom. 9:1-5;

Matt. 14:31-21

August 9, 2020

*10th Sunday after Pentecost*

Gen. 37:1-4, 12-28; Ps. 105:1-6, 16-22, 45b;

Rom. 10:5-15; Matt. 14:22-33

August 16, 2020

*11th Sunday after Pentecost*

Gen. 45:1-15; Ps. 133; Rom. 11:1-2a, 29-32;

Matt. 15:(10-20) 21-28

August 23, 2020

*12th Sunday after Pentecost*

Exod. 1:8-2:10; Ps. 124; Rom. 12:1-8;

Matt. 16:13-20

August 30, 2020

*13th Sunday after Pentecost*

Exod. 3:1-15; Ps. 105:1-6, 23-26, 45c;

Rom. 12:9-21; Matt. 16:21-28





# BIRTHDAYS THIS MONTH

- 1 Tina Burker
- 2 Addie Fisher
- 3 John Swaine
- 4 Matt Smith
- 10 Nadeem Patel
- 12 Vicki Moorhouse
- 13 Val Macer
- 14 Amy Erickson
- 14 Sharon Melius
- 16 Emery Morrissey
- 18 Barbara Kraemer
- 19 Priscilla Maddock
- 27 Brendan Omicioli
- 30 Bina Patel



The following two pages come from the Presbyterian Church USA to help congregations and members during times of disagreement. They serve as helpful guidelines whenever disagreements arise and can be useful in any community.

## ***Seeking to be Faithful Together:*** **Guidelines for Presbyterians During Times of Disagreement**

In a spirit of trust and love, we promise we will...

<p><b>G</b>ive them a hearing... listen before we answer</p> <p><i>John 7:51 and Proverbs 18:13</i></p>	<p><b>1 Treat each other respectfully so as to build trust, believing that we all desire to be faithful to Jesus the Christ;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– we will keep our conversations and communications open for candid and forthright exchange,</li> <li>– we will not ask questions or make statements in a way which will intimidate or judge others.</li> </ul> <p><b>2 Learn about various positions on the topic of disagreement.</b></p> <p><b>3 State what we think we heard and ask for clarification before responding, in an effort to be sure we understand each other.</b></p>
<p><b>S</b>peak the truth in love</p> <p><i>Ephesians 4:15</i></p>	<p><b>4 Share our concerns directly with individuals or groups with whom we have disagreements in a spirit of love and respect in keeping with Jesus' teachings.</b></p> <p><b>5 Focus on ideas and suggestions instead of questioning people's motives, intelligence or integrity;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– we will not engage in name-calling or labelling of others prior to, during, or following the discussion.</li> </ul> <p><b>6 Share our personal experiences about the subject of disagreement so that others may more fully understand our concerns.</b></p>
<p><b>M</b>aintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace</p> <p><i>Ephesians 4:3</i></p>	<p><b>7 Indicate where we agree with those of other viewpoints as well as where we disagree.</b></p> <p><b>8 Seek to stay in community with each other though the discussion may be vigorous and full of tension;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– we will be ready to forgive and be forgiven.</li> </ul> <p><b>9 Follow these additional guidelines when we meet in decision-making bodies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– urge persons of various points of view to speak and promise to listen to these positions seriously;</li> <li>– seek conclusions informed by our points of agreement;</li> <li>– be sensitive to the feelings and concerns of those who do not agree with the majority and respect their rights of conscience;</li> <li>– abide by the decision of the majority, and if we disagree with it and wish to change it, work for that change in ways which are consistent with these Guidelines.</li> </ul> <p><b>10 Include our disagreement in our prayers, not praying for the triumph of our viewpoints, but seeking God's grace to listen attentively, to speak clearly, and to remain open to the vision God holds for us all.</b></p>

**A**s Presbyterians, we are called to work for the “peace, unity and purity of the Church” (Book of Order) as we seek to be faithful to God’s work in the world. However, disagreements and conflicts are inevitable in the life of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as we try to be faithful. They exist within committees, congregations, presbyteries, synods, at General Assemblies and in the national life of the denomination.

Conflicts are inevitable in all of life and certainly in the church. The history of the church is filled with conflicts and disagreements. Several of Paul’s letters address the conflicts which were common in the early church. There have been and are going to be disagreements as Christians attempt to discern God’s work in the world and as we interpret scripture.

Conflicts can be harmful and even destructive. They can cause individuals a great deal of pain and the community of faith immeasurable damage. Congregations have been divided; denominations have experienced schisms.

At the same time, conflicts can be an opportunity for new insights, learning, and individual and corporate growth. Disagreements can illuminate a topic in helpful ways and can present solutions to problems which previously had not been seen. The successful resolution of conflict can also bind people together in a powerful way.

The Bible contains many stories of conflict and disagreement and much advice about how they can be addressed. As those stories indicate, God is already present wherever there is brokenness, granting wholeness and peace. God promises to be with us in times of disagreement and calls us to reconciliation, trust, love and forgiveness.

We realize that our perspectives are limited, so to help us affirm each other, enhance our community, stay open to the viewpoints of others and be sensitive to cultural diversity, we commit ourselves to the Guidelines in a spirit of prayer, trust, and love, seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

*Adopted by the 204<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (1992) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*

**NYS Office of Mental Health offers Coping Circles—an initiative providing free 6 week support and resilience group therapy sessions for people impacted by the COVID-19 health crisis.**

Coping Circles are available to all New Yorkers, aged 18 and older, and are available in different languages.

1. Sessions for Coping Circles will be held by video or phone and facilitated by licensed health professionals.
2. Participation encouraged from healthcare workers, first responders, COVID-19 survivors, those who have lost loved ones to COVID-19, and those who have experienced COVID-19 job loss (specialized Coping Circles for these groups will be created pending demand and availability).
3. Coping Circles will be available through the end of August 2020.
4. New Yorkers interested in joining Coping Circles can register at [NY.Gov/CopingCircles](https://www.ny.gov/coping-circles), a secure and HIPAA compliant web platform.

If you have any questions about Coping Circles, please feel free to reach out to [CopingCircles@omh.ny.gov](mailto:CopingCircles@omh.ny.gov).