

# *The Network... a Publication of University Presbyterian Church*



## *December 2021*



### Message from our Pastor

Bodies matter. One of the greatest sources of distress during the pandemic was the separation of our bodies from one another. Certainly technology has been a tremendous blessing during the pandemic, enabling us to stay connected to loved ones and friends and to carry out necessary business. And yet, the technology can never be a substitute for the presence of bodies being physically present with one another. Clearly there are tangible benefits we gain from being in-person with others, yet there are also less tangible but equally important elements. We feel less isolated, receive a sense of community, and develop a feeling of connection when our bodies share the same space with others.

Christianity upholds the value that bodies matter. This very notion informs the Christian belief in the *incarnation* which we celebrate at Christmas—the affirmation that God became human in the person of Jesus Christ. God did not stand at a distance and instruct us how to live. Or using an illustration from our world today, God did not summon us to a Zoom meeting to give us directions and commandments. Instead, God came *in person* and took on human flesh. God's body joined our bodies in this beautiful and often hard world.

Your body matters to University Presbyterian Church. We want your body to be healthy and safe and so we certainly urge our members to take Covid precautions. And yet, we also miss the bodies of many of our members on Sunday mornings. It was so gratifying to see and enjoy the presence of so many of our members at our 100th Anniversary service in November. Each person's presence strengthens our faith in tangible and intangible ways. Each person, individually and collectively, becomes, in his and her unique way, the presence of Christ to us.

Certainly, Covid remains a concern. UPC continues to follow Covid precautions during worship. But if Covid is no longer keeping you isolated at home, please consider gifting UPC with the gift of your presence.

Shalom,

Tracy

**HOWARD HENRY DELIVERS UPC DONATIONS FOR AFGHAN EVACUEES TO GLORIA HUERTA OF THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE.**

Per Howard, “Gloria told me how excited she is that donations are coming in from the entire faith community so that she can pass that on to the recipients and particularly let Muslim clients know that all faiths are welcoming them.”



## Worship Column

### **Sunday, December 5**

2nd Sunday of Advent

Mal. 3:1-4 and Luke 1:68-79;

Phil. 1:3-11; Luke 3:1-6

### **Sunday, December 12**

3rd Sunday of Advent

Zeph. 3:14-20 and Isa. 12:2-6;

Phil. 4:4-7; Luke 3:7-18

### **Sunday, December 19**

4th Sunday of Advent

Micah 5:2-5a and Luke 1:47-55

Or Ps. 80:1-7; Heb. 10:5-10;

Luke 1:39-45 (46-55)

### **Friday, December 24**

*Christmas Eve*

Isa. 9:2-7 and Ps. 96;

Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14 (15-20)



### **Saturday, December 25**

*Nativity of the Lord/Christmas Day*

Dawn: Isa. 62:6-12 and Ps. 97; Titus 3:4-7; Luke 2: (1-7) 8-10

Day: Isa. 52:7-10 and Ps. 98; Heb. 1:1-4 (5-12); John 1:1-14

## **Christmas Eve at UPC:**

The UPC service for Christmas Eve will be in-person this year! Join us at 7 p.m. for our traditional service of Carols, Candles, and Communion.

Note that the church office will be closed on December 24th and reopen on December 27th.

The church office will close for New Years on Friday, December 31st and January 1st and will reopen on January 3rd.



*December birthday wishes go out to...*



- 6 Jim Moran
- 9 Bob Dewitz
- 9 Dannish Patel
- 12 Eric Moodie
- 15 Bonnie Dahl
- 19 Elizabeth Ball
- 20 John Maddock
- 25 Nikki Malkowski
- 26 Arjun Singh
- 28 Ajay Singh
- 30 Abigail Wadkins-Daub
- 31 Tiffany Whitefield

**“Longing for the Light:  
An Advent Taize Service for Healing and Hope”**

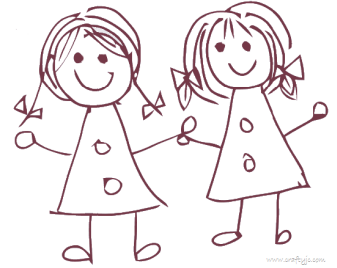
Friday, December 3, 5:30 p.m.

In winter’s darkness, we can also feel overcome with the darkness of our personal pain and the suffering in the world. During this special Advent Taize service, we give voice to our longing for God’s light. The service will be about 10 minutes longer than our usual 30 minute Taize service and will include scripture readings, lighting of candles, and prayers for healing and hope—plus the beautiful music of Taize. Join us as we enter the season of Advent with longing, honesty, and hope.

## What's Happening in

# DECEMBER

Dec. 2	Thursday	12:00 pm	Food Pantry Open
Dec. 3	Friday	5:30 pm	Taize
Dec. 5	Sunday	9:15 am 10:30 am	Choir Worship Service
Dec. 7	Tuesday	10:00 am 12:00 pm	Youth Support Team Meeting Food Pantry Open
Dec. 9	Wednesday	1:00 pm	Zoom Bible Study
Dec. 10	Thursday	12:00 pm	Food Pantry Open
Dec. 12	Sunday	9:15 am 10:30 am	Choir Worship Service
Dec. 13	Monday	7:00 pm	Zoom Deacons Mtg.
Dec. 14	Tuesday	12:00 pm	Food Pantry Open
Dec. 15	Wednesday	1:00 pm 7:00 pm	Zoom Bible Study Zoom Session
Dec. 16	Thursday	12:00 pm	Food Pantry Open
Dec. 17	Friday	6:30 pm	Youth Group Lasertron
Dec. 19	Sunday	9:15 am 10:30 am	Choir Worship Service
Dec. 21	Tuesday	12:00 pm	Food Pantry Open
Dec. 23	Thursday	12:00 pm	Food Pantry Open
Dec. 24 <i>Closed</i>	Friday	<i>Christmas Eve</i>	<i>Church Office</i> 7:00 pm Christmas Eve Service
Dec. 25	Saturday	<i>Christmas Day</i>	
Dec. 26	Sunday	10:30 am	Worship Service
Dec. 28	Tuesday	12:00 pm	Food Pantry Open





## **Alternative Gift 2021**

The Ministry for Community is again sponsoring the Alternative Gift drive and this year the recipient will be the evacuees of Afghanistan. The refugees face a plight most of us will never experience. I can't even imagine packing up and traveling halfway around the world to set up a new life in a foreign country. They have so much to take care of when they arrive in Buffalo. Western New York Refugee and Asylee Consortium are trying to reach their goal of \$750,000 to assist with housing and basic needs. We can help them attain that goal by making a donation as a gift to someone on your Christmas list.

From November 28<sup>th</sup> through December 19<sup>th</sup>, there will be a table set up in the sanctuary before and after the service to "purchase" your gift. Any amount is welcome, no matter how small or how large.

We will have cards available that you can present to your gift recipient stating the donation is in their honor. You can also make your donation online at our website listed below and print the card at home using a link from that website.

Let's help our new neighbors coming into our community with a generous gift for their new life in Buffalo, the city of good neighbors!

Please make checks payable to *University Presbyterian Church* or give Online <https://upcbuffalo.org/giving> as *Seasonal Giving*. Either method, please include *Memo: Alternative gift*.





*Too many of us lead hectic lives.*

*Our communities are filled with violence and suffering.*

*Our personal pain and struggles can overwhelm us.*

*How do we respond? How can we cope?*

University Presbyterian Church welcomes Christians from all traditions to unite in a special contemplative worship experience as we seek spiritual strength for the living of our days. Based on the style of worship practiced in the Taizé Christian community in France, these services offered on the First Friday of each month provide an oasis at the end of the week for all who are weary, troubled, or rushed. Special music from guest musicians, meditative songs, prayers, candles, and scripture readings allow each of us to find a quiet place of prayer and spiritual centering.

Please join us on Friday, December 3rd, from 5:30 to 6:00 PM.

*A Taizé Service of Prayer, Music, and Meditation*

[www.upcbuffalo.org](http://www.upcbuffalo.org)

(The Taizé' Service in January is scheduled for January 7, 2022)