

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

July, 2024



Message from our Interim Pastor...

Dear Friends,

First, I want to thank all of you who were so supportive and offered prayers for my sister and our family when I was in Virginia in mid-June and Diane unexpectedly succumbed to a degenerative nerve disorder. Your support in the midst of that abrupt loss, along with prayers and well wishes from extended family and friends was like a life boat on a stormy sea. My sister's husband's funeral service was held in February and we will be returning to the same church for her June 29 funeral and celebration of life. It is in such times of loss and grief that being a member of a Christian community provides the strength to get through.

Your support for Barbara Lyons' family and many UPC volunteers being there to help her memorial service and reception run smoothly is one of the signature traits of this congregation. You have created and sustain a strong community of congregational care and outreach/mission—something your next permanent pastor will inherit from generations of University Church members and pastors. I have said to friends who ask what kind of church UPC is that it is made up of people who know what a church is about and have chosen to belong to this church.

After starting as your interim pastor on January 1, I can say at the half year mark that we have made significant progress toward the top priority of calling a permanent pastor. As Marietta Bratton's report in this newsletter describes, we have completed three congregational meetings to assess UPC's past, present and future and elected a PNC committee. Many thanks to the Interim Team who planned those meetings and distilled all the information—stories, visions, challenges, victories—for the PNC to use to complete UPC's profile that will be posted on the national clergy search website.

We have also celebrated the excellent service of UPC custodian Dave Winiarski who retired at the end of May, hired a new facilities team under the direction of Aaron Vivian and WNY Facilities Solutions, and hosted a well-attended presbytery meeting and outstanding dinner at which Jim Smyton was elected Moderator of the Western New York Presbytery.

The Ministry in Community Committee has continued to strengthen UPC's relationship with Calvary Baptist Church by hosting the second annual Maundy Thursday dinner/communion and by completing postponed (due to inclement weather) plans for MLK Day serving lunch at Vive La Casa (Buffalo's immigrant/refugee shelter) and celebrating the teachers at Charles Drew Elementary School 59 as well as continuing to supply students there with school supplies.

In addition, we are well on our way to completing staff evaluations, standardizing position descriptions, and convening some new committees to address projects and upgrades that will help to prepare for a new permanent pastor. The Tech Team has installed a mesh network that has made WiFi available anywhere in the building. Their next project is to consider creating a new website and perhaps a new logo. There are other issues/concerns/projects on the agenda. It has been a busy year and will continue to be through the fall and winter. In the meantime, my hope is for a playful, restful summer for each of you. See you in worship!

In Christ's service,

Tom, Interim Pastor

Our Interim Team

To prepare for the future of our UPC church family, we recently held three well-attended congregational meetings focused on remembering our past, examining our present ministry, and discerning what God is calling us to be in the future. We laughed as we shared memories, smiled at poignant stories, and visualized our dreams for tomorrow.

At our first meeting April 21 we created four charts filled with colorful post-its of our cherished memories in Christian Education, Mission and Service, Worship and Music, and Fellowship. Remember: *Shepherding children during Christmas pageants, adult bible studies, Habitat for Humanity, Lancaster High School Steel Band performance for a fundraiser, Taizé, singing Christmas carols outside during Covid, Camp Duffield retreats, potluck dinners, Friendship Bread...*

Our second meeting May 5 examined our Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (**SWOT**). **S:** *A strong sense of community within our church family, our mission work, worship and music.* **W:** *Small, aging congregation, budget constraints, few young members and programs for families.* **O:** *Collaboration with students, neighborhood, and other groups, reignite a welcome program for new attendees, increase media presence.* **T:** *Budget constraints, limited staff, nationwide decline of mainstream churches.*

Our third meeting June 2 looked at ways to engage with our community and neighbors. We have hope that our new pastor will make our church family feel spiritually alive, attract young families, respect a range of viewpoints, and work to continue the mission of UPC.

Our work from these three meetings will now assist the Pastoral Nominating Committee to complete the Church Information Form that will be posted nationally to attract candidates for UPC's next pastor.

We thank each of you who participated and shared your ideas.

Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC)

The University Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) was officially elected at our last congregational meeting. Our next step will be to meet with a representative from the Presbytery's Committee on Ministry (COM) to talk through the process. Our COM representative is Jamie Owens. He is currently serving as pastor at Lafayette Presbyterian Church. Once we meet with him, the next task of the PNC will be to complete the Ministry Discernment Profile (MDP). Throughout the process the PNC will be meeting regularly and continue to report our progress to the members of UPC.

Worship Column



Sunday, July 7

7th Sunday after Pentecost

2 Samuel 5:1-5, 9-10; Psalm 48; or Ezekiel 2:1-5;
Psalm 123; 2 Corinthians 12:2-10; Mark 6:1-13

Sunday, July 14

8th Sunday after Pentecost

1 Samuel 6:1-5, 12b-19; Psalm 24; or Amos 7:7-15;
Psalm 85:8-13; Ephesians 1:13-14; Mark 6:14-29

Sunday, July 21

9th Sunday after Pentecost

2 Samuel 7:1-14a; Psalm 89:20-37; or Jeremiah 23:1-6;
Psalm 23; Ephesians 2:11-22; Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

Sunday, July 28

10th Sunday after Pentecost

2 Samuel 11:1-15; Psalm 14 or 2 Kings 4:42-44;
Psalm 145:10-18; Ephesians 3:14-21; John 6:1-21

Happy July Birthday wishes to....

- 2 Emily Smith
- 2 Elissa Diaz
- 4 Willie Fisher
- 9 Sophie Smith
- 10 Nancy Chia
- 13 Thelma Monteith
- 16 Hilde Smith
- 31 Henry Safulko



What's Happening in July ...

July 2	Tuesday	12:00 pm	Food Pantry Open
July 4	Thursday	<i>Holiday</i>	<i>Church Office Closed</i>
July 6	Saturday	10:00 am	Breakfast with Friends
July 7	Sunday	10:30 am	Worship Service
July 9	Tuesday	12:00 pm	Food Pantry Open
July 11	Thursday	12:00 pm	Food Pantry Open
July 14	Sunday	10:30 am	Worship Service
July 15	Tuesday	12:00 pm 6:30 pm	Food Pantry Open Zoom Mtg. with Calvary Baptist Church
July 16	Wednesday	7:00 pm	Technology Team
July 18	Thursday	12:00 pm	Food Pantry Open
July 20	Saturday	7:00 pm	BPO Concert @ Niawanda Park
July 21	Sunday	10:30 am	Worship Service
July 23	Tuesday	12:00 pm	Food Pantry Open
July 25	Thursday	12:00 pm	Food Pantry Open
July 28	Sunday	10:30 am 11:30 am	Worship Service Fellowship Time & Birthday celebration
July 30	Tuesday	12:00 pm	Food Pantry Open



Do you want some fun over the summer? Want to have fellowship with your UPC family and friends? Here are two opportunities for which you can sign up on the bulletin board in the church narthex:

BPO Concert at Niawanda Park—7:00 pm on July 20th

Bison's Baseball Game—Sometime in September

Bring a friend!

Pride Parade: Sunday, June 2, 2024



Year after year, the Gay Pride parade is the most joyful parade in which I participate. The overwhelming happiness begins with the highschoolers in the Gay-Straight Alliances (GSA) who start us off to the henna-haired grandmothers with their homemade signs [Grandmas for Equality] who steal the show at the end. I believe we have suffered too long from the mislabeled term 'homosexuality'; the core of love and attraction is in reality 'homoSPIRITUALITY.'

Marching in a Gay Pride parade is much more Joyful than being in many church services. And why is that? In this parade, no one is hiding—from themselves, from their neighbors or from God. I believe that the Holy One must look upon this assemblage of people and say, 'You are my beloved, created in my Divine Image—as are ALL of my humans. Rejoice! This is the day that I, the Lord, have made and you shall rejoice and be glad in it!

University Presbyterian Church, Buffalo was there (we had four walkers), as were five other churches that I counted. I think I missed noting at least two more who were present. As usual, church signs get an extra burst of applause from the crowds, and the marchers get hugs. Thanks to the Rev. Micah Nutter Dowling, members of Westminster Presbyterian Church, University Presbyterian Church, Amherst Community Church and a passerby from Kenilworth UCC partook of Holy Communion. Lutherans and Unitarian Universalists were also in attendance.

Please join us next year. All you need is joy in your heart. If you don't have it at the beginning, rest assured that it WILL be there at the end. Amen.

Howard Henry
University Presbyterian Church
Buffalo, New York

Samuel P. Capen Garden Walk

Mark your calendars for this annual event!
July 13 and 14, 2024 10am-4pm / Capen by Night July 13,
8pm-10pm

You can pick up maps at UB Anderson Gallery, 1 Martha Jackson Pl. Buffalo, NY 14214
Free self-guided tour of private and public gardens hugging UB Main St. campus.
Website: <https://ourheights.org/gardenwalk/>

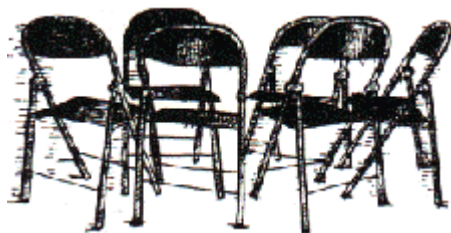
Facebook: Capen Garden Walk
Email: capengardenwalk@gmail.com



Come Join Us for Shakespeare in the Park



We have an opportunity to see Pat Cookfair-Casseri's daughter, Heather in the play *Comedy of Errors* by William Shakespeare. We will go as a group from our church if you're interested in joining us. It's free but it would be appreciated if you contribute to a free will offer during intermission when they pass the hat. If you've never attended one of these, it's a magical approach to the drama and wit of Shakespeare. You bring your chair, and any other lawn furniture you might like to use, as well as snacks and a beverage of your choice. The production begins at 7 pm and they advise arriving a half hour prior to starting time. I've attended this event before and you might like to make it earlier to get a good seat. The date for this is August 6, Tuesday, with a rain date of August 8. So, join us for an evening of theater in Delaware Park. For more information you can call Amy Erickson at (716) 480 4591, email amyhoechst@yahoo.com.



UPC Chair Sale!

Have you ever sat around a table in the Fellowship Room and thought "These folding chairs are really uncomfortable?" Well, here's your chance...we are having a You Buy One/UPC Buys One Sale! The comfy chairs that have been selected are just \$30 apiece. Our aim is to purchase at least 100 chairs. You can pay by cash or check. Checks should be made payable to UPC, with the word "Chair" in the note section. Put either cash or checks in an envelope marked Chair on the outside. Be sure to include your name if you are paying by cash. You can hand it in at the church office, or put in the offering plate on Sunday morning.



Call for Sunday Morning Offering Counters

One of the many roles Barbara Lyons (of blessed memory) took on here at UPC was counting the Sunday morning offering. Since her recent passing the Session is putting out a call for volunteers to take her place. Because Barbara was Barbara, she was our primary counter. Replacing her will not be easy, it will take teams of church members who will count the offering no more than once a month, perhaps less frequently depending on how many teams we recruit. While it is likely that most teams will choose to count immediately after Sunday worship, there is flexibility on when a team may choose to fulfill their duty.

Janet Mazzaroppi, Sandy Robertson and Sandy Boag are currently serving as counters and will continue to do so. They are also the recruiting and training team for those who step forward for this critical task in the life of the church. A new manual is being prepared to explain the procedure for counting. The introduction to the manual includes this important statement:

Weekly counting of monies that come into the church is an extremely important Ministry. It is an unsung, invisible position that requires accuracy, dedication And confidentiality.

Counters work mindfully, with care and attention to detail. If you would like to volunteer or learn more about what being a counter entails please contact Janet or either of the Sandy's. Thank you!

ROSWELL PARK COMPREHENSIVE CANCER CENTER
SPIRITUAL CARE DEPARTMENT

— invites you to the —

Community Wide
Grief Support Day 2024

Engagement, Support, Education
& Resources Will Be Provided

Tuesday, July 2nd, 2024
11 AM — 1 PM

Community Outreach & Engagement Center
907 Michigan Avenue, Buffalo NY, 14204

RSVP by: June 24th by calling Rev. Dr. Melody Rutherford | 716-845-1300 ext. 1839

