

AUGUST 2025



UCPC Community Care Line

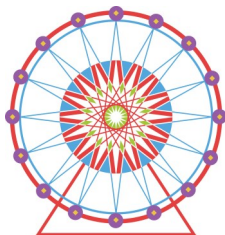
“Alive in Christ, we invite all to faith in Jesus Christ and growth in Discipleship through Word, Prayer, and Service.”



Diana Solie 8/5
Curtis McNeill 8/20
Larry Peterson 8/25
Doreen McNeill 8/31

Flora and Milt 8/21
Carol and Hans 8/24
Kathy and David D. 8/24

If your Birthday or Anniversary is missing, incorrect, or if you do not wish to have it posted in the Newsletter please contact the UCPC Office.



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6. Calendar
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8. Upcoming events; Note from Kathy; Shout out
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A Note from the Pastor

Last month, at the Golden Days Street Fair, Otilie completely fell apart. We're talking yelling and sobbing and attempts to run away. It was hot, she was hungry, it was nap time, it made sense. So my response to the meltdown was basically just "be present" (except to try and keep her near me and not out of my sight, as well as get her into the shade). Other adults were looking between me and her and their eyes were bugging out of their heads, clearly holding back the desire to call out "What?? You're *just* doing nothing???"

Doing "nothing" — a classic interpretation.

However, I was doing the complete opposite of "nothing." I was using a meltdown response strategy I learned from a parenting course I'm taking. The "do nothing" strategy *does* look like I'm doing nothing from the outside, but really, I'm doing so much work on the inside — staying calm and regulating my emotions so my kid can feed off of me, assessing safety, remaining sturdy for them to wait against, etc.

In comparison, the classic parenting strategy of responding in a multitude of ways (involving external words or actions by the parent), *usually* means that absolutely no work is being done on the inside of the parent and because of that, the external actions and words by the parent *usually* aren't very effective.

As I've been practicing the "do nothing" strategy, I've been pondering what it might look like if applied to our faith lives, particularly in light of the story of Mary and Martha from Luke 10. If we replace the external event of a child's meltdown with the external event of Jesus entering into their home, then Martha took a classic path of serving Jesus and seeking to support, help, and host him well. That is a holy and required path to take. But in this metaphor, if she is doing all these external actions, is anything happening on the inside — in her faith life? Or was nothing happening? Was she able to be fully present with Christ? I suspect not.

I imagine it might be like if I try to listen to a podcast while doing the dishes. In this scenario, I'm not fully present with either activity. So while the podcast may have *technically* been listened to to completion, will I have retained anything from it? Probably not. And while the dishes may have *technically* been done, did I get to thank God again for the food we ate as I scrape and wash remnants off of the plates? Probably not. Perhaps you are different, but for me, what I am learning is that when too much is happening externally, *likely* nothing is happening internally.

And perhaps, the same can be true for our faith too. If we're so busy serving God externally, we may completely forget about or even make the decision to forgo chances to do the internal work of being fully present with God. Mary can inspire us though. In the story in Luke 10, she chose the "do nothing" strategy in the face of an external event (the appearance of Jesus in her home).

In her decision to let the world or her sister get mad at her for doing “nothing,” she chose to prioritize her own need for internal growth as Christ’s follower. She chose to do nothing on the outside so she could be doing everything on the inside to be fully present in that external event.

We can look at Martha’s decision to use a classic strategy of external service to God in response to the external event of Christ showing up in her home. And we can look at Mary’s decision to use the “do nothing” response to that same external event of Christ appearing in her life. Both responses are good and necessary. But my prayer is, that Mary’s “do nothing” approach, can inspire us to carve out time to “do nothing” as well and “*just*” sit at the feet of Jesus. The world or our family may see us doing “nothing” and get mad at us, but *we* will know, that really, we are doing so much work on the inside, connecting with God, talking with God, listening to God, learning from God, and therefore growing with God.

And ultimately, growing with God is what we need the most. So that *when* we are called upon in service to God, we will have a strong, sturdy foundational relationship with God to draw from and our attempts to serve Him *will* bear fruit.

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Erika



Following are the draft minutes of the July 17, 2025, Session meeting. The various committee reports will be emailed to all on the newsletter email list (along with the May minutes). If you'd like a print copy, please contact the church office.

6:30PM Opening prayer—Rev. Erika Bergh opened the meeting with prayer at 6:30PM.

Scripture and Devotion—Roger Smith presented a devotion based on John 4:1-26 and the 8 principles of witnessing that Jesus demonstrated in this story.

A quorum was declared.

Present: Rev. Erika Bergh, Doreen McNeill, Jim Durst, Roger Smith, Pat Babcock, Marji Illingworth, Matthew Bierer

Absent: Paula Long

Guests: Deacon Carol Nielsen, Robert Gagner, Jennifer Nun~ez

It was moved and seconded to **approve the Consent Agenda, consisting of:**

Adoption of Consent Agenda, consisting of:

Docket, as amended

- Approve the Minutes of the June 19, 2025 meeting of the Session as amended.
- Acknowledge receipt of Written Reports (if received):
 - * Deacons
 - * Clerk of Session
 - * Building Stewards
 - * Elder Commissioner Report
 - * Faith Development
 - * Finance and Stewardship
 - * Hospitality, Fellowship and Membership
 - * Mission and Outreach
 - * Personnel
 - * Nominating
 - * Worship

Order of the Day (8PM)

- The session examined prospective new members, Jennifer Nunez and Robert Gagner. Both would be joining the church by affirmation of baptism. After examination, the two were excused. It was moved and seconded to **approve Jennifer Nunez and Robert Gagner as new members of UCPC**. Motion was **APPROVED** by a vote of 6:0. Pastor Erika will work with them to find a suitable date to join the church.

New Business:

- Further discussion of committee reports:
 - Faith Development: Milt will do a Bible study before church in the fall, based on the book of Hebrews.
 - PC(USA) co-moderators' trip to Fairbanks, October 8 (see Clerk's report). It was moved and seconded to **invite the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) coo-moderators to UCPC on October 8 to help them understand Alaska's uniqueness**. Motion was **APPROVED** by a vote of 6:0.
 - **Motion from Worship Committee:** To approve guest preachers Rev. Bobby Lewis (July 27) and Rev. Curt Karns (August 3). Motion was **APPROVED** by a vote of 6:0.
 - **New/Prospective Member Information Form.** A new form to gather information from prospective new members was reviewed and suggestions were made.

Old Business

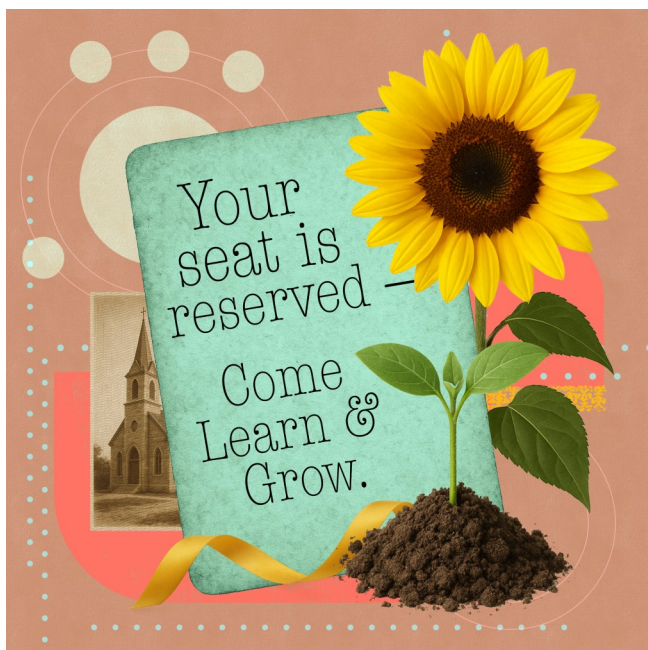
- Approval of admin assistant and organist pay (per hour) - Tabled to the August 21 meeting. **Roger** will learn the exact pay rate for these two positions and report to session. Doreen will forward the finance

committee a Presbytery of Yukon letter that might be helpful in understanding sick-leave requirements.

- **Rules for conducting a session vote by e-mail** were reviewed and amended. Motion to approve the amended rules was seconded. Motion was **APPROVED** by a vote of 6:0. The rules are as follows:
 - The Session of UCPC may use e-mail to act on non-controversial or time-critical motions.
 - The moderator shall use discretion when relaying confidential information.
 - Quorum shall be one-half of the Session members.
 - If a member objects to the matter being presented or decided, or wants to discuss the matter in detail a special meeting (with simultaneous aural communication) shall be called to discuss and act on the motion.
 - Voting: A minimum of 3 days shall be permitted to complete voting.
 - Passage of a motion requires a unanimous vote, provided there is a quorum. If the number of members voting does not constitute a quorum, or if the votes on the motion are not unanimous, the motion shall be discussed at a meeting.
 - Any actions taken by this process shall be recorded in the minutes of the next meeting of the Session with a notation that the action was taken by electronic vote.
- **Wedding Policy update.** The Wedding Policy update that Pastor Erika has been working on was reviewed and suggestions were made.
- **Wedding/Marriage Information Form.** A new form that Pastor Erika has been working on was reviewed and suggestions were made.
- **Book: *Pastor and People: Making Mutual Ministry Work***—Tabled to the August 21 meeting. The 4 elders with the book were asked to expedite their reading so the book can be passed on to the other 3 elders.
- **Meeting Schedule:** Next meetings:
 - **August 7** Decons' meeting at 5:15PM, **Marji Illingworth** to represent Session
 - **August 21 at 6:30PM**, Regular Session Meeting
 - **September 3 at 4PM**, **Session Quarterly Planning Meeting**

August Devotional and Elder of the Month: **Marji Illingworth**

ADJOURN at 9:13PM with Rev. Eerika Bergh leading the closing prayer.



Sunday School Opportunities

Seems like summer is speeding along and it is time to plan for fall Faith Developments activities. Of course the Pray Ground will continue Sundays during the sermon. There also seems to be interim resuming the children's Sunday School during fellowship.

The Women's Bible Study will continue and probably the Garage Guys will have activities

Ron Illingworth will offer an adult class after service and has attached a survey of possible topics. (See next page.) You can respond to him at [Lilyvale@awcable .com](mailto:Lilyvale@awcable.com)

Below, are some ideas for our Fall Adult SS offerings. Please indicate any in which you are interested and add any topics you wish to have included.

Developing ideas in Early Christianity

About Jesus

About God, Jesus, and Holy Spirit

About afterlife

What happened to the Apostles

Not just their deaths but what they did and where

What churches developed from them

Coptic

Ethiopian

Roman Catholic

Asian Orthodox

Women in the NT

Who were the ones we remember?

What did they do?

Women in the OT

Who were the ones we remember?

Who were the ones who supported Jesus' ministry?

Who were the ones who supported the apostles' ministry?

Who were the ones who lead their developing community of believers?

How was the NT developed

Problems in the OT

What were the purposes of the stories here

Satan

Time in Egypt & Exodus

12 Tribes

Alternate invasion of the promised land stories and documentation

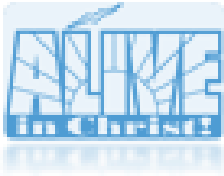
Influence of social and religious groups from the various diasporas on the development of the Jewish belief system

Paul's travels and ministry

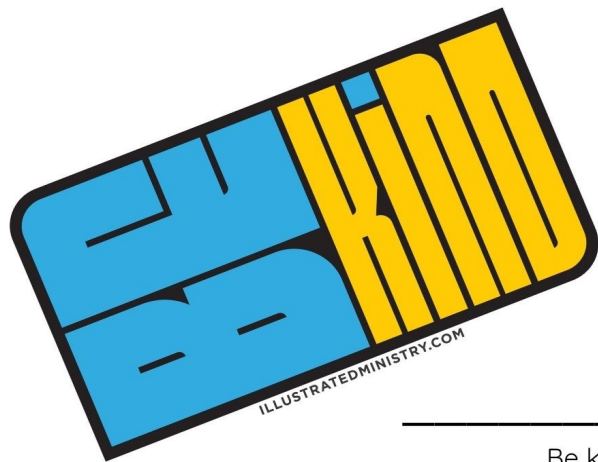
Where did Jesus travel and who supported him in his travels?

What is the Bible, what are the elements that make it up, and how can I read and understand its message to me today?

What other ideas would you like to pursue?



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27 9:30am - 10:15am Adult Bible Study (FH) <u>10:30am - 11:30am Worship Service (S)</u> 2:00pm - 4:00pm Grace Church (S) 6:00pm - 7:00pm 12 Step (MR)	28 11:00am - 5:00pm Laurie Long (HS) 12:00pm - 6:00pm Cello Charly (MR) 6:00pm - 9:30pm Grace Church (HS)	29 6:30am - 7:30am Men's Bible Study (N) 12:00pm - 6:00pm Cello Charly (MR) 6:30pm - 8:00pm Boy Scouts (CE) 6:30pm - 9:00pm Great Land Sounds (MR) 8:00pm - 10:00pm 12 Step AA (L)	30 11:00am - 5:00pm Laurie Long (HS) 12:00pm - 6:00pm Cello Charly (MR) 6:00pm - 7:00pm Girl Scouts (L) 6:00pm - 9:00pm Red Hackle Pipe Band (CE)	31 12:00pm - 6:00pm Cello Charly (MR) 5:30pm - 6:30pm 12 Step (HS) 6:00pm - 9:30pm Grace Church (MR & FH Classrooms) 6:30pm - 9:00pm Sweet Adelines (CE Basement)	1 Office Closed 2:00pm - 4:00pm Four Winds (MR) 6:30pm - 9:30pm Grace Church (MR) 8:00pm - 10:00pm 12 Step NA (L)	2 1:00pm - 4:00pm D & D (FH Classroom)
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**On August 17th,
bring your bags or backpacks
and receive a blessing!
We're helping kick off the school year
with another bag tag blessing Sunday.
Everyone is welcome to receive a
blessing and tag – but especially our
kiddos, teachers, and school staff.**

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another,
as God in Christ has forgiven you.
- Ephesians 4:32

God of compassion and kindness,
help me witness the world through your perspective of love.
Help me to step back and make space for fresh points of view,
to step in with brave words and actions when unkindness creeps in,
and to show compassion and empathy,
even when I'm embarrassed or afraid.
Help me to remember
that because you have shown kindness to all of creation,
I can do this too.
Amen.



**University Community
Presbyterian Church**
FAIRBANKS, ALASKA



Since there's no SNOW (for a few more
weeks, anyway), it's time to MOW!

If you'd like to volunteer to mow, the
weekly sign up sheet is in the Narthex, on
the Garage Guys table.

Building and Grounds Update

This month all the fire extinguishers in the church and C.E. building have been inspected and either recertified or deemed too costly to fix (there are 4 of these that have been taken out of service). The Stewards will evaluate the effect the absence of the unfixable extinguishers on UCPC's fire safety coverage.

The sprinkler system has also been inspected, and a leak in the system was discovered and repaired.

Respectfully Submitted,

Matthew Bierer

Upcoming Events

August 17—Back to School Blessing

August 17—Special Congregational Meeting

August 19—First day of FNSBSD school year

August 21—Session Meeting

August 22—Newsletter content deadline!!

August 27—Quarterly Planning Meeting

September TBD—Women's Bible Study, Adult Sunday School and Choir begin

September 1—Labor Day. Office closed.

September 18—Session

September 19—Newsletter content deadline!!

October 10-11—Presbytery meeting in Anchorage

November 3 or 9—Annual Meeting

The American Foundation For Suicide Prevention Out of Darkness Walk will happen Sept. 20, 2025, instead of during June. Think about joining me then to support Suicide Prevention education and research.

Thank you,
Kathy Dohner



During the summer, Melissa will be in the office from 8-1, Monday—Thursday, except for July 28-August 15 (Vacation!!).

The office will be closed Fridays throughout the summer.

Shout out to

The Swansons



For all they've done for our community over the years and, really, just for being lovely people and wonderful examples of what it looks like to walk with Christ.

WE'LL MISS YOU!!!



University Community Presbyterian Church



3510 College Road, Fairbanks, AK 99709

Website: www.ucpcfairbanks.org

Phone: (907) 479-6728

Office Hours

9:00AM to 1:00PM, Monday - Thursday

Pastor Erika is in the office MWR from 10-2.



Contacts

Supply Pastor . Rev. Erika Bergh (907) 717-5015 Email: rev.erikabergh@gmail.com

Admin Assistant: Melissa Bierer (907) 479-6728 Email: admin@ucpcfairbanks.org

Session Elders and Committee Leaders

Doreen McNeill ('27)	388-0544	Clerk of Session
Pat Babcock ('25)	978-7187	Hospitality, Fellowship and Membership
Matthew Bierer ('25)	474-0106	Building Stewards; Mission and Outreach
Jim Durst ('26)	590-9024	Worship
Paula Long ('26)	687-7444	Personnel
Roger Smith ('26)	322-2595	Finance; Nominating
Marji Illingworth ('27)	378-2138	Faith Development

Board of Deacons

Judy Fowler-Morris ('26)	388-5629	President
Carol Nielsen ('25)	388-8154	
Sarah Lanstra ('25)	378-3929	
Marijo Larson ('26)	322-9425	
Janet Johnson ('27)	687-7148	
Lynn Krizek ('27)	460-4293	

Worship Service Leaders

Matthew Bierer	Video Manager
Kathy Dohner	Organist/Pianist
Curtis McNeill	Sound Manager
Theresa Reed	Choir Director

