OCTOBER 2025





Brian Dixon 10/1 Heather Sharpton 10/6 Donita Lawhead 10/18 Grayson Sharpton 10/18

If your Birthday or Anniversary is missing, incorrect, or if you do not wish to have it posted in the



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UCPC Community Care Line

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

A Note from the Pastor

Ottilie is afraid of the dark and she is terrified to be alone in it, even with night lights in outlets all over the house. But she loves Jesus! She talks about how he tells her things like "Jesus told me today's a black shirt day, Mommy. So we all need to wear black shirts," or "Mama, Jesus told me I can eat three candies for breakfast." And she regularly plans parties that are for "a celebration of me being Jesus' best friend!" So, yeah, she loves Jesus.

Therefore, when I saw a Jesus nightlight online, I decided to lean into her love of Jesus and get one, thinking this may help her be less afraid if she can snuggle up with a glowing Jesus or carry him around with her to light up the darkness.

We've had this thing for less than two weeks. It's cool...but people! Until now, I've always struggled to empathize with the religious authorities in Jesus' day who wanted to get rid of him, even if it was by crucifixion. But now, here I am, next to a silent but very bright Jesus, and I've wanted to turn him off countless times. He won't stop spreading light! He makes it difficult to sleep or rest because he's so bright. He constantly illuminates the room. And yet, to tell Ottilie: "turn Jesus off, he's too bright!" feels icky – like standing in the square outside Pilot's palace and shouting "crucify him" along with the amped-up crowd. So instead I simply sit, silently grumpy about Jesus shedding so much light and illuminating things so well and wishing he could just be covered up, turned off, batteries removed, etc. because he's just too much. And I ponder how much worse it must have been for the religious authorities of Jesus' day to be in the company of a real-life Jesus who not only illuminated the imperfections of the religious institution and the growth spots of the religious people but talked about it constantly and couldn't be silenced, shut down, or disappeared.

Real-life Jesus was much more intense than this soft, silicone Jesus night-light. But in my grumpiness, I realize that real-life Jesus is still intense. He still illuminates imperfections, growth spots, and injustices. Real-life Jesus is still active in the world calling us and forcing us to see things we'd rather cover up and hide away in the shadows of our collective consciousness. Real-life Jesus may not be corporeal in the same way he was 2,000 years ago, but he is still at work illuminating the path towards a closer relationship with God and a better world for all. When I'm tucking Ottilie in and my frustration with Jesus rises, I really should pause and thank God for his illumination. ...but that's a work in progress.

There's a lot of agony in the world these days, a lot of things to be afraid of, and a lot of places in which we may be afraid to be alone. But the Gospel – the Good News of Jesus Christ – is that those who are suffering are not alone. As annoying as it may be for those who would rather not see the suffering in the

world, Jesus is there with the suffering and is illuminating their lives so we *cannot not* see it; so we *cannot* look away without being implicit in aiding their suffering; and so we *cannot not* step up as the hands and feet of Christ to act on the need, address the imperfection of the world or institution, or tend to the growth spot that Christ is shedding a light on.

So if you – or anyone else you know – feels afraid, whether it's of the dark or of the IRS, ICE, retirement savings not being where they ought to be, school assignments or tests, the house being foreclosed, friends in need, winter, death or a diagnosis, the rapture, an upcoming surgery, nuclear war, or anything else, I pray that you know that Christ is with you. And like an annoyingly bright Jesus nightlight, God won't stop showering you in His light.

Grace and PEACE to you all!

Pastor Erika

WINTER IS COMING.

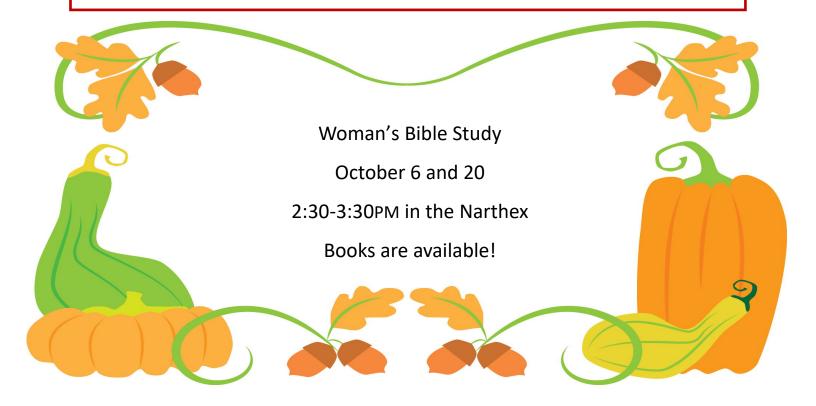
Time to sign up for snow shoveling duty!

The sign up sheet is on the

Garage Guys table in the Narthex.



The return of cold weather affects the office, too—as of September 29, Melissa has returned to regular office hours, 9AM to 1PM, Monday through Friday. Pastor Erika's hours remain Monday, Wednesday and Thursday from 10AM to 2PM.



Following are the draft minutes of the September 18, 2025, Session meeting. The various committee reports will be emailed to all on the newsletter email list. If you'd like a print copy, please contact the church office.

From 5:30 to 7:00 pm, session members participated in a webinar put on by the A.C.L.U. of Alaska called *Immigration - Know Your Responsibilities Training for Places of Worship in Alaska* and partook of food provided by various session members.

7:00 pm Opening prayer — Pastor Erika opened in prayer at 7:02 p.m.

Scripture and Devotion — Doreen McNeill presented a devotional.

A quorum was declared.

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

Absent: Paula Long, Pat Babcock **Guest:** Deacon Sarah Lanstra

Adoption of Consent Agenda, consisting of:

- Docket
- Approve the Minutes of the August 21, 2025 meeting of the Session, as corrected.
- Acknowledge receipt of Written Reports (if received):
 - ♦ Deacons
 - ♦ Clerk of Session
 - ♦ Building Stewards
 - ♦ Elder Commissioner Report
 - ♦ Faith Development
 - ♦ Finance & Stewardship
 - ♦ Hospitality, Fellowship & Membership

Orders of the Day (7 p.m.)

- Deacons' report. Sarah gave the deacons' report. Deacons were thanked for their good work and service.
- Comments from the Congregation were noted and discussed.
- Clerk's Report. Doreen directed the session's attention to the written report.

New Business:

- Discussion of the Finance committee report: Clarification was sought regarding wording in the report and corrections were made to clarify the intent. Finance Committee requests that session members peruse the budget and provide feedback/input before the Finance Committee does a draft 2026 budget for annual meeting. Session members reviewed the budget, asked questions, and will come back at the October meeting with suggestions.
- The finance committee moved to offset the building loan payoff date change by increasing the number of regular loan payments each year from 12 to the equivalent dollar amount of 13 payments per year. The loan interest rate was reduced from 4% to 1% interest during the pandemic, but has reverted back to 4%, moving the projected payoff date to 2040. Paying an extra amount will decrease the loan amount more rapidly, leading to payoff in 2035 instead of 2040. This has no tax advantage, but will greatly impact UCPC's ability to do mission work after payoff. It was moved and

seconded to amend the motion to read as follows: **to pay an extra amount on the loan principle in an amount at least equivalent to one extra payment per year.** Amendment was approved by a vote of 5 to 0. Final motion was **APPROVED** by a vote of 5 to 0. This is an increase of at least \$3105.00 per year.

- Motion from Finance Committee: The committee moves to **designate Sarah Lanstra as the Employer Representative with Board of Pensions.** Motion was **APPROVED** by a vote of 5 to 0.
- Session supports the Mission Committee's plan to do a 4-part book study of the Presbyterian Outlook
 issue on nonviolence on Monday nights at 7:00 starting on October 6. This corresponds with October
 as Peace and Global Witness month.
- It was moved and seconded to set the date of Sunday, November 9th for the Annual Meeting. Motion was APPROVED by a vote of 5 to 0.
- It was moved and seconded to approve the Pastoral Transition Report of the Session. Motion was AP-PROVED by a vote of 5 to 0. Jim will put a few finishing touches on the report. Jim was approved to sign the transmittal letter requesting authority for UCPC to form a Pastor Nominating Committee at the November 9 Congregational Meeting. Jim will send the report and letter to the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Yukon to present to the Ministry Commission so that it is on the docket of their October 2 meeting.

Old Business

- October 8 Co-moderators'* visit to UCPC. Marji updated the session on the following: The whole congregation is invited to participate in the co-moderator's visit to UCPC; to tell them about us and faith life in Fairbanks, fellowship & share a meal, join in their presentation and ask questions. UCPC is hosting a dinner, which will include members of Fairbanks Korean and New Hope Presbyterian churches.
 - The UCPC portion of their trip to Fairbanks is as follows:
 - 3:45 UCPC visit
 - 5:00 Dinner at UCPC with co-moderators, New Hope and Fairbanks Korean
 - 5:30 Co-Moderator Presentation and Question/Response Session
 - 7:00 Go to FAI for flight to Anchorage

*What's a co-moderator? Pastor Erika is the moderator of UCPC's session. She herds cats, making sure the business of UCPC is run decently and in order. Pastors CeCe and Tony are co-moderators of the highest council (General Assembly) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) They herd many cats. Among their duties is to visit as many Presbyteries as possible during their 2-year tenure.

- ♦ The session will ask our admin assistant to provide us, before October 8, with a list of groups that meet at UCPC regularly, how often they meet, and an approximation of their group sizes.
- ♦ Sarah will work with the Fellowship committee to plan a meal.
- Session discussed and supports the Mission Committee's Plan for using up items in the personal needs closet and thanks them for the thought they put into this and for taking on this task. Those items are no longer distributed by Helping Alaska/Love I.N.C., as that organization has closed. Once the closet is emptied, session will revisit its best use. If the smell needs to be removed, Marji will bring an ozone generator when the Mission committee will let her know the room is ready.
- Pastor and People, Making Mutual Ministry Work. Pat passed her book on to Marji, who is ½ way through it. Roger and Doreen are almost finished.
- Bulletin board. It was moved and seconded to change the location of the proposed bulletin board

from the exterior wall by the coffee urns to the interior wall between the side door and the men's bathroom. This will ensure that the exterior vapor barrier is not compromised. Motion was AP-PROVED by a vote of 5 to 0. Matthew will install the bulletin board so that deacons can use it. He will also move the map of the Presbytery of Yukon to another location.

Meeting Schedule Next meetings:

October 2 at 5:15 pm, Deacons meeting: Matthew Bierer

October 8 from 3:45 to 7 pm, co-moderators' visit

October 20 at 6 to 7pm, Quarterly Session and Deacons Planning meeting

October 16, at 6:30 pm, Regular Session Meeting

November 6 at 5:15 pm, Deacons meeting: Doreen McNeill

November 9 after worship, Annual Congregational Meeting

October Devotional and Elder of the Month: Matthew Bierer

It was moved and seconded to **ADJOURN.** The meeting adjourned at 9:08 pm with Pastor Erika leading the closing prayer.



Building and Grounds Update

Once again, water issues have dominated the month. An outside faucet was left running and a toilet malfunctioned, resulting in continuous water flow. The outdoor faucets have now been shut off for the winter and the toilet was repaired. These events will result in a considerably larger water bill.

The new water meter, recently installed, has a monitoring feature that alerts the utilities managers to continuous flow situations. It was a message from them that allowed us to locate and stop the toilet flow problem after just one day of continuous flow.

It has been discovered that one of the lift station pumps is not functioning properly. The secondary pump should be able to handle the needs until the primary pump is repaired.

The fire alarm service contract has been renewed. The new contract comes with a slightly, but not unreasonably, increased price for the services.

~ Matthew Bierer



In Romans 14:9, Paul calls us to know our neighbors, both around the corner and around the world, not as "them," but "us," friends and siblings in Christ. Pursuing peace is central to the gospel and the mission of the church.

Examples of how this money has been spent include Chester Presbyterian Church's "Backpacks Buddies" program which has partnered with an elementary school to provide backpacks with food for children to take home over the weekend. Another example is in Louisville, Kentucky where at Grace Hope Presbyterian in one week, four congregants were affected by gun violence. It was time for a change, so Pastor Angela Johnson connected with the local nonprofit of Guns to Gardens. This group consisted of people from many denominations who take unwanted or decommissioned firearms and turn them into things such as garden tools, art, or jewelry. They nurture peace and growth instead of violence. This offering also allowed Adriana Soto Acevedo from Puerto Rico to attend a UN Commission of the status of women. By attending this event, she learned many things to help others as a "hope-bringer" for many who find peace hard to grasp. "In this often hope-less world, our job is to crack little rays of hope by connecting with one another, by learning of the struggles we each go through, and by being there for one another. By bringing hope, I want to pursue what makes for peace."

Part of this offering includes 25% that UCPC gets to choose how it is spent. This year, we have decided to give that portion of the offering to Literacy Council of Alaska's English Language Learners program. This program not only helps non-English speakers learn the language, but provides community outreach programs to help people to adjust to life in Fairbanks, and offers citizenship preparation classes.

Please prayerfully consider contributing to this special offering.

Pursue what makes for peace.

-Romans 14:19





October 2025



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
7:00am - 2:00pm Grace Church (K) set up 9:30am - 10:15am Adult Bible Study (FH) 10:30am - 11:30am Service (S) 2:00pm - 9:00pm Grace Church (FH & K) 2:00pm - 4:00pm Grace Church (S) 6:00pm - 7:00pm 12 Step (MR)	Long (HS) 12:00pm - 8:00pm Cello Charly (MR) 6:00pm - 9:30pm Grace	Bible Study (N) 8:30am - 1:30pm PHH (FH) 12:00pm - 8:00pm Cello Charly (MR) 6:30pm - 8:00pm Boy Scouts (CE) 6:30pm - 9:00pm Great Land Sounds (MR)	1 8:30am - 1:30pm PHH (FH) 11:00am - 5:00pm Laurie Long (HS) 12:00pm - 8:00pm Cello Charly (MR) 5:30pm - 6:45pm Choir Practice (MR) 6:00pm - 7:00pm Girl Scouts (L) 6:00pm - 9:00pm Red Hackle Pipe Band (CE)	8:30am - 1:30pm PHH (FH) 12:00pm - 6:00pm Cello Charly (MR) 5:15pm - 7:00pm Deacons Meeting (CR) 5:30pm - 6:30pm 12 Step (HS) 6:00pm - 9:30pm Grace Church (MR & FH Classrooms) 6:30pm - 9:00pm Sweet Adelines (CE Basement)	3 8:30am - 1:30pm PHH (FH) 6:30pm - 9:30pm Grace Church (MR) 8:00pm - 10:00pm 12 Step NA (L)	4 10:00am - 2:00pm Sweet Adeliines (CE)
World Communion Sunday 9:30am - 10:15am Adult Bible Study (FH) 10:30am - 11:30am Worship Service (S) 11:45-12:45 Adult Bible Study (SL) 11:45-12:45 Children's Sunday School (S) 2:00pm - 4:00pm Grace Church (S) 6:00pm - 7:00pm 12 Step (MR)	Charly (MR) 2:30-3:30 Women's Bi ble Study (N) 5:15pm - 6:00pm Sound Team (S)	7 6:30am - 7:30am Men's Bible Study (N) 12:00pm - 8:00pm 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)	8 10:00am - 11:00am Mission & Outreach 11:00am - 5:00pm Laurie Long (HS) 12:00pm - 8:00pm Cello Charly (MR) 3:45-7pm Co-Moderator Visit (FH) 4:00pm - 5:30pm Worship Committee (CR) 5:30pm - 6:45pm Choir Practice (MR) 6:00pm - 7:00pm Girl Scouts (L) 6:00pm - 9:00pm Red Hackle Pipe Band (CE)	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)	10 6:30pm - 9:30pm Grace Church (MR) 8:00pm - 10:00pm 12 Step NA (L)	11
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26 Reformation Sunday 9:30am - 10:15am Adult Bible Study (FH) 10:30am - 11:30am Worship Service (S) 2:00pm - 4:00pm Grace Church (S) 6:00pm - 7:00pm 12 Step (MR)	Charly (MR) 6:00pm - 9:30pm Grace Church (HS)	28 6:30am - 7:30am Men's Bible Study (N) 12:00pm - 8:00pm Cello Charly (MR) 12:00pm - 4:00pm Cyberlynx (FH) 6:30pm - 8:00pm Boy Scouts (CE) 6:30pm - 9:00pm Great Land Sounds (MR) 8:00pm - 10:00pm 12 Step AA (L)	29 11:00am - 5:00pm Laurie Long (HS) 12:00pm - 8:00pm Cello Charly (MR) 5:30pm - 6:45pm Choir Practice (MR) 6:00pm - 7:00pm Girl Scouts (L) 6:00pm - 9:00pm Red Hackle Pipe Band (CE)	30 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)	31 6:30pm - 9:30pm Grace Church (MR) 8:00pm - 10:00pm 12 Step NA (L)	1 All Saints Day 10:00am - 2:00pm Sweet Adelines (CE)

upcoming Events

October 5—World Communion Sunday

October 6-Mission Committee Non-Violence Book Study begins

October 8-PCUSA Co-Moderators visiting

October 9-11—Presbytery (Pr. Erika in Anchorage)

October 10-11—Presbytery meeting in Anchorage

October 20—Quarterly Planning Meeting for Deacons and Session members (6-7:30PM)

October 10/27-11/1—Pr. Erika in Anchorage again (Fall Lutheran Pastors Gathering)

November 9-Annual Meeting

Thank you for your support, both financially and at the Out of Darkness American Foundation for Suicide Prevention walk on Sept. 20th. Your donations make a difference in the fight against death by suicide.

~Kathy Dohner



Marji and Ron, for all the weeks they beautify our Sanctuary with their lovely peonies!



Study on Nonviolence:

Mondays October 6, 13, 20 at 7:00pm

In our world full of violence in many forms, you might want to learn more about what nonviolence means. What are some of the strategies for nonviolence? What does it mean to be actively nonviolent? Learn how movements of nonviolence have changed life for many. *Presbyterian Outlook* published an issue on nonviolence with many articles for thought and discussion.

Articles include ways of looking at nonviolence as practiced by Martin Luther King, Jr., looking at questions involving conscientious objection, and considering Revelation as a resource for active nonviolent resistance. There are extra copies of this magazine available for those who would like to participate in a book study on this topic. We encourage you to join us.

See Muffie Durst or Curt Karns if interested.

OUTDOOR OCTOBER

26 Pick a song that reminds you of the weather and listen to it outside.	19 Collect a soundscape on paper or digitally.	12 Listen to animals.	5 Listen to the sounds around you.	St. Olaf defines Voca This October, we invite purposeful time outside, roots and purpose, and i invite you to share v or sending photos an	Sounds Around SUNDAY
27 On a walk: see 5 things touch 4 things hear 3 things smell 2 things taste 1 thing	20 Choose one color and focus on spotting things of that color on a walk.	13 Do a labyrinth. You can use labyrinthbocator.com to find one near you, or go to worldlabyrinthday.org/resources/finger-labyrinths to find one to trace while sitting outside.	6 Try a breathing exercise outside.	St. Olaf defines Vocation as "Life on purpose for the common good." This October, we invite you to nourish your vocation of well-being though purposeful time outside, giving yourself space to pause, reconnect with your roots and purpose, and reset for the journey at hand. If you feel so called, we invite you to share what you do by posting with #OutdoorOctober, or sending photos and anecdotes to nourishing-vocation@stolaf.edu.	Mindful MONDAY
28 Close your eyes and feel the elements.	21 Hug trees.	14 Make sounds using things outside, like rocks, leaves, or ice.	Perform an object study: hold something and engage with all 5 senses.	the common good." n of well-being though use, reconnect with your . If you feel so called, we #OutdoorOctober, rocation@stolaf.edu.	Touch TUESDAY
29 Take a gratitude walk.	22 Walk in a familiar area and notice new things.	15 Go for a night walk.	8 Walk with a friend or take a walking meeting.	1 Go for a walk and vary your pace.	Walk WEDNESDAY
30 Consider the snow and/or soil.	23 Consider the plants.	16 Consider the animals.	9 Consider the trees.	2 Consider the sky.	Thoughtful THURSDAY
31 Watch a raven interact with the world.	24 Look for animal tracks.	17 Go for a walk with a furry friend.	10 Go outside at different times. What animals are there?	3 Look for evidence of animal's homes.	Fur & Feathers FRIDAY
ST.OLAF THE WHERAN CENTER NOURSELING NOURSELING	25 Brainstorm ways to help your community.	18 Take a walk in an urban area.	11 Notice natural and human-made boundaries.	⁴ Pick up trash in your environment.	Sustainability SATURDAY

University Community Presbyterian Church



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Website: www.ucpcfairbanks.org

Phone: (907) 479-6728

Office Hours

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

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



Contacts

<u>Supply Pastor</u>. 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
1			

Board of Deacons

388-5629 President
388-8154
378-3929
322-9425
687-7148
460-4293

Worship Service Leaders

Video Manager
Organist/Pianist
Sound Manager
Choir Director



And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work.