

Reaching UP

United Presbyterian Church

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Ash Wednesday–February 10, 2016

Ash Wednesday begins the season of Lent with a public act of confession and contrition. Acknowledging that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, we stand



in solidarity as fellow creatures before our Creator, acutely aware of our mortality. In the face of our transience, we pledge ourselves anew to live unto God's Word in Jesus Christ, the eternal Word that remains forever.

Historically, Ash Wednesday was a time when penitents were presented for church discipline during Lent, culminating in reconciliation on Maundy Thursday. Ash Wednesday is also the occasion when would-be disciples of Christ known as catechumens were enrolled in the catechumenate, a special time of learning the basics of the faith in preparation for baptism on Easter Sunday or during the Easter Vigil. In some traditions, Ash Wednesday is a fast day, beginning the Lenten time of fasting and preparation for the Great Three Days that culminate in Easter

(<http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/worship/ash-wednesday/>)

Change in Fellowship Hour

Fellowship hour is being handled a little differently this year. We will have a committee but Judie won't be overseeing it every Sunday. Previously fellowship had been under Sessions guidance, but with our new tasks teams, this has changed! The Deacons will take the lead and continue to do the first Sunday of every month but they **will need everyone's help** for the other Sundays. What does it mean to volunteer to host Fellowship? We ask that you take the lead or form a team by bringing one snack or a couple of snacks, set up and make the coffee (from supplies at UPC), and clean-up. **BUT** if you can't or don't want to do that, you can arrange with others to do just one task. You could be the next guru of cleanup and let someone else bring the snack. Please talk to Lou or one of the Deacons to find a way for your talents to be used. Lou is always willing to make the coffee and set up, etc. **But, most importantly** we would like volunteers to "host" the fellowship by visiting with our congregation and bringing ideas to the Deacons about ways to keep Fellowship one of the ways we as a congregation CONNECTS. There is a sign-up sheet in Fellowship Hall.





Disclaimer!!! My article this month is not about any particular political candidate. My article reflects a deep concern for today's church. Dr. King shared a similar concern as well...

It was 1963 and Dr. King sat in a Birmingham jail. He was shown a newspaper article written by eight, white clergymen critical of Dr. King and his non-violent methods played out in the streets rather than seeing them solved by the courts. Dr. King admitted in his response that he was disappointed in the laxity of the religious community in supporting the civil rights movement. He said, *"I have traveled the length and breadth of Alabama, Mississippi and all the other southern states. On sweltering summer days and crisp autumn mornings I have looked at the South's beautiful churches with their lofty spires pointing heavenward. I have beheld the impressive outlines of her massive religious education buildings. Over and over I have found myself asking: 'What kind of people worship here? Who is their God? Where were their voices of support when bruised and weary Negro men and women decided to rise from the dark dungeons of complacency to the bright hills of creative protest?' Yes, these questions are still in my mind. In deep disappointment I have wept over the laxity of the church."*

Dr. King continued, *"There was a time when the church was very powerful—in the time when the early Christians rejoiced at being deemed worthy to suffer for what they believed. In those days the church was not merely a thermometer that recorded the ideas and principles of popular opinion; it was a thermostat that transformed the mores of society."*

Dr. King's critique is well-timed even for our culture, as we witness the confusion of the church over our role in society. Increasingly ministers are becoming lured by the political spotlight and succumbing to the crafty words of the politician. In a recent New York Times feature story, Ted Cruz's Diligent Courting of Evangelicals Pays Off in Iowa said, DES MOINES — "On Sunday, Pastor Bradley Cranston stood at his pulpit in Burlington, Iowa, and, citing Exodus 18:21 ("select out of all the people able men who fear God ... as leaders"), endorsed Senator Cruz of Texas, urging his parishioners to also consider voting for him. One pastor supporting Mr. Cruz, Darran Whiting of Liberty Baptist Church in Marion, said he had made more than 150 phone calls to other pastors. He has made announcements about the caucuses during Sunday services since early last month, he said. "Find your polling place and get there," he tells parishioners.

The immersion of churches and ministers into the political process should cause us all great concern. As President Jimmy Carter said in his book *Our Endangered Values: America's Moral Crisis*, "Most Americans have considered it proper for private citizens to influence public policy, but not for a religious group to attempt to control the process of a democratic government or for public officials to interfere in religious affairs or use laws or tax revenues to favor certain religious institutions. The government and the church are two different realms of service, and those in political office have to face a subtle but important difference between the implementation of the high ideals of religious faith and public duty." Amen and well said, President Carter! The blurring of the lines between the role of religion in politics becomes more and more murky as more and more religious leaders "test the waters" behind the bully pulpit as opposed to the gospel pulpit. Near the end of Dr. King's Letter from a Birmingham Jail, he spoke from his heart, *"But the judgment of God is upon the church as never before. If the church of today does not recapture the sacrificial spirit of the early church, it will lose its authentic ring, forfeit the loyalty of millions, and be dismissed as an irrelevant social club with no meaning for the twentieth century."* The church must not be seduced into living out the gospel through legislation and manipulation. The United States Constitution calls for the separation of church and state. The courts have interpreted this to mean that religious organizations are exempt from paying federal income taxes as long as they don't try to influence legislation or intervene in political campaigns. The involvement of many clergy and religious groups in government issues is prompting calls to rescind their nonprofit status. We are on shaky ground and it is up to the church to police the church. It is up to the church to return to the job description left clearly by Jesus. I am quite certain that it did not include hosting a political rally within the building. Think on these things!

Love to All. Mitch

Meet Our New Bookkeeper!!! Welcome Donna Smith, CPA

Donna Smith is our new Bookkeeper at UPC and brings a wealth of skills to our financial process. Donna is a Certified CPA. She has been Bookkeeper at **Renaissance Rentals Co.**, Bloomington since May 2006, and at **Lutheran Campus Ministry at Indiana University** since June 2013.

Donna has a degree in accounting from Franklin College and has served as Bookkeeper of First United Church, Bloomington since June 2012, Treasurer of First United from 2009 to 2012 and prior to that, Assistant Treasurer from 2008 to 2009. In her spare time, she served as Treasurer of Cub Scout Pack 332, Bedford, IN, from 2008 to 2012.

At UPC, we have converted our financial system to Quick Books (which Donna has taught at Kelly School of Business) and she is quite adept at our previous accounting system, Power Church, which will still be used by our Treasurer, Bob Lorimer to record contributions. Donna is responsible for our financial statements, billing and payments, payroll, and the accounting related to the Scrip program. Donna has already been influential in helping streamline our accounting system and is helping us establish new, healthy benchmarks within our financial process.

Our Treasurer, Bob Lorimer will be responsible for the Counting Teams that will count, record and deposit our Sunday contributions. He will also record all contributions made by individuals and mail annual contribution statements and will also still sign the checks that Donna produces.

UPC has long needed to tighten our reporting procedures, broaden the number of persons who touch, record, process and account for the monetary needs of our congregation. With Donna on board, we are now moving in a positive direction.

We also are working to form a Business Administration and Finance Team that will bring insight and wisdom to our finance program. Donna has a mailbox in the Office into which communication and/or statements should be placed.

Financial Report

At the end of November, we had a shortfall for the year to date in the order of \$16,000. In December, our income exceeded expenses by \$5,446.78. While this was a good month, we still ended the year with a shortfall of \$10,527.54. This was due, in part to the loss of several long-time members. Obviously we cannot continue running large deficits. We can make some cuts to the budget, but the real answer is to build our membership back up. This is something we all need to work on going forward.

On the brighter side, the Christmas Joy Offering brought in \$998.00. These funds will provide assistance to retired ministers and to enhance racial/ethnic education in Presbyterian Colleges.

Don Root, Stewardship chair

February Birthdays and Anniversaries



3 Nancy Truelove
8 Joe Stubenrauch
9 Reem Deeb
10 C. Allen Colwell

19 John Spir
23 Jeremiah Hubbard
23 Rohan Joseph

If you would like to make additions to the birthday and anniversary calendar please email:
upcbloomington@gmail.com.

Lent at United Presbyterian

A Season of examination and penitence begins on
Ash Wednesday, Feb 10 at 7:00 PM with a brief meditation and the imposition of ashes.

Lenten Themes: As Lent is about allowing God to shine a mirror into our lives and reveal the sin that is there. So... The Sundays of Lent and the Lenten Devotionals on Wednesday will include:

What Jesus Said and Did About The Seven Deadly Sins

Lust

Greed

Wrath

Gluttony

Laziness

Envy

Pride

Plus 3 of your choosing...

Hear about the sin that plagues so many and also...

"What did Jesus say or do about that particular sin that will provide help/ hope for anyone who struggles in the same way?"

Lent Will Also Highlight

- Ash Wednesday and the imposition of Ashes, Wednesday, February 10
- Lenten Devotional with Rev. Susan McGhee, Wednesday, March 2 "*Envy*"
- Lenten Devotional with Rev. Sarah Cochran, Wednesday, March 9 "*Greed*"

Special Music During Lent:

- Yung-Yu Lin, violin: Sunday, February 21 – 10 a.m. – 2nd Sunday in Lent
- Cean Robinson, trumpet March 20 – 10 a.m. – Palm Sunday
- Kylee O'Donnell, flute - March 24 – 7 p.m. – Maundy ThursdayTenebrae
- Marce Chastain, vocalist, March 25 – Noon – Good Friday
- Cean Robinson, trumpet, March 27 – 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. – Easter Sunrise Service and Easter Worship Service

Letters to the Church

To the UPC family,

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! May your holiday season and new year be filled with love, faith, hope, joy and grace.

The Kang Family—Pilssoo, KyungAe and Samuel

(our current address) 34 Harvard St., #1; Natick, MA 01760

Dear Pastor Coggin, Pastor Lorimer and staff,

Thank you so much for allowing me to be able to park at the church parking lot! May the Lord bless you and your families. Merry Christmas to you and your families! O Come let us adore him now and forevermore!

In the love of Jesus Christ, Hae Sook

UPC,

Love, laughter and joy. Happy holidays and season's greetings from paradise! Our new address is: 1996 Silver Palm Road; North Port, Florida 34288.

Fred & Marsha Jones

Chocolate Lovers Sunday!



February 14, Valentine's Day

We haven't done this for a long time! Because it was always so much fun, the Fellowship Committee is bringing back Chocolate Lovers Sunday Fellowship Hour. It's a fun way to help celebrate Valentine's Day! This special Fellowship Hour will feature serving chocolate treats as valentines. It's a fun and unique way to exchange Valentines and a great way to share and to fellowship with your UPC friends. If you have a favorite Valentine chocolate treat you'd like to share, please sign up in the narthex. There's also a sign-up sheet in the narthex for those who'd like to attend this event.

A cherished family recipe for brownies you'd like to whip up would be great! How about chocolate cake or chocolate pudding or chocolate cookies! Unique chocolate concoctions are welcome! Other suggestions are handmade chocolates or even a box of store bought chocolates! Chocolate cream pie sounds good too! Chocolate Lovers Sunday will be a time of sharing Valentines from the heart!



Whether you bring a treat made from a treasured family recipe or from a great recipe you've recently discovered, you're encouraged to add to the fun by sharing that recipe. Bring your recipe to Allen Pease in the church office. He and Lou Malcomb will make up [a Valentine half sheet of the recipes that can be inserted in our cookbooks at home.](#) Please plan on being a part of the fun on Valentine's Day immediately after morning worship,

Sunday, February 14. Everybody is welcome to attend!

Youth News

Youth in Action (and everyone is invited to join)

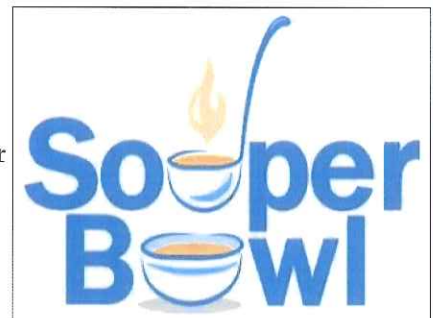
Fun

February 21, from 3-5p, join the youth for ice skating at Frank Southern Ice Arena. If it is your first time, you haven't skated in years, want to go this year before the rink closes,... now is the time. Skating is always more fun with friends so the more the merrier. Sign up in the narthex or let Karen know how many may be coming so we can decide if we have enough for a group rate. The general admission is \$6 with \$3 skate rental. We will follow this activity with a trip down the road to Pizza Hut for dinner.

Service

February 7 will be the annual Souper Bowl collection. This initiative is to use the energy of the Super Bowl to mobilize youth in a united national effort to care for people in their local communities who are hungry and those in need. Our youth have chosen to help the Monroe County United Ministries again this year.

The UPC Youth will be using the Souper Bowl to kick-off their campaign for the 2016 MCUM Hunger Games. Start collecting your Box Tops, loose change, looking for sales on canned goods, hygiene products and cleaning items. The youth will be working on displays, and defending their Hunger Games Champion title. This year's challenge will run from March 1-April 30.



P.S. According to a little bird there will be soup during fellowship hour for SOUPER-SUNDAY!

In Memory of Laila M Hanania

Laila (Doris) Hanania, age 79, passed away on Saturday, January 2, 2016 in Houston, Texas. She was born on March 23, 1936 in Jerusalem to parents Michael Mouchabeck and Olympia Awad. Doris dedicated herself to keeping everyone around her happy and was an active volunteer member of several charitable organizations. A unique soul, Doris was loved by many, and enjoyed travelling, shopping, reading her bible and playing BINGO. She will be greatly missed. She is survived by her sons: Nicola and Raja, grandchildren: Dana, Fadia, Tala, Alex, Dina, Tareq and Hannah, and her great grandchildren: Faris and Yasmeena. She was preceded in death by her husband, Alexander Hanania; daughter, Lina El-Issa; brothers Simon, George, Fouad, and Elias; and sister Margaret. A visitation/ Prayer of Mercy will be held at 7 PM on Wednesday, January 6 and a funeral service will be held at 11 AM on Thursday, January 7 at St. George Orthodox Christian Church, 5311 Mercer St., Houston, TX 77005. Burial follows at the Forest Park Cemetery, 12800 Westheimer Road, Houston, TX 77000. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Health Outreach to the Middle East (HOME) ministry. (<http://www.homeforhim.org/>).

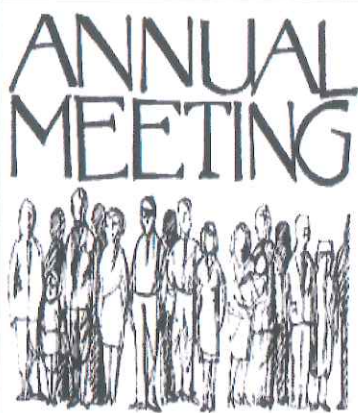


"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing". 2 Timothy 4:7-8

**The Lord is my light and my salvation;
Whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength
Of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?
(Psalm 27:1)**

Remember to bring photos of HOPE, LOVE AND JOY for our bulletin boards or send digital ones to Sarah Cochran.

Congregational Meeting for 2016



UPC's Annual Meeting will be held at 11:45 a.m. on Sunday, January 31 in the sanctuary following the morning worship service and the fellowship hour. It's an opportunity to celebrate the UPC accomplishments of 2015 and focus upon the mission and ministry of the year ahead. It's important to note that attending the Annual Meeting will also help friends and members in assessing how their own talents may be utilized to help the church. We have been stung by the deaths of an astounding eight pillars of our church in the past year alone and we are searching for a new leader. Therefore, UPC needs the support and various talents of its friends and members now more than ever. We need to replenish our numbers and continue to encourage our Pastor Nominating Committee in the wonderful job they are doing in searching for our next pastor. The meeting is usually under

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What's Happening in February?

~ February 2016 ~						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 12:30pm Bible Study 6pm Book Study	3	4	5 11:45am – Men's Lunch	6
7 Communion/ Deacons Sunday 9am Adult Study 10am Worship (Souper Bowl Sunday) 11:15am Fellowship	8	9 12:30pm Bible Study	10 Ash Wednesday 6pm Book Study 7pm Lent Service and ashes	11	12 11:45am – Men's Lunch	13
14 9am Adult Study 10am Worship 11am Fellowship	15	16 12:30pm Bible Study 7pm Session	17 6pm Book Study 7pm Lent Service	18	19 11:45am – Men's Lunch	20
21 9am Adult Study 10am Worship 11am Fellowship 3-5pm Youth Ice Skating	22	23 12:30pm Bible Study	24 6pm Book Study 7pm Lent Service	25	26 11:45am – Men's Lunch	27
28 9am Adult Study 10am Worship 11am Fellowship	29					

Weekly Community Uses of UPC Rooms

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
6pm Overeaters Anonymous	5:15pm Kiwanis (2nd Monday)			6pm Self Realization	5:30pm – Women's Campus Group	11am Overeaters Anonymous
				8pm Campus Group		