

Reaching UP

United Presbyterian
Church

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2022 UPC Annual Congregational Meeting

UPC's Annual Congregational Meeting and Election of 2022 Officers, Elders and Deacons will be held at the end of the Sunday, January 30 worship service in person and via Zoom. It's an opportunity to celebrate the UPC accomplishments of 2021 and focus upon the mission and ministry of the year ahead. Attending the Annual Meeting will also help UPC friends and members in assessing how their own talents may be utilized to help the church. The meeting will be no longer than a half hour and you'll find it to be time well spent. To speed up the meeting, the 2022 Annual Report covering the year 2021 will be distributed to all the week before for perusal. We've come through nearly two years of difficult times and UPC has survived because of teamwork and an overall spirit of togetherness. Please continue to exhibit this by attending this most important Annual Meeting.



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Annual Reports Covering 2021 for 2022 Annual Report are Due!

Church leaders, please get your annual report for the year 2021 in to the office by Thursday, January 20 so that Allen can get them formatted and printed out the Sunday before the Annual Meeting. They may be dropped off in the church office or emailed to upcbloomington@gmail.com. It is very helpful if reports are prepared in Times New Roman, 12 point. Feel free to contact Allen in the church office with questions, comments or suggestions.

Installation & Ordination of 2022 Officers, Elders and Deacons



As noted above, UPC's election of officers, elders and deacons will take place at the January 30 Annual Congregational Meeting. On Sunday, February 6, during morning worship service, Reverend Napoli will preside over the ceremonies of Ordination and Installation of the 2022 Officers, Elders and Deacons. Clerk of Session Don Root will be assisting.



To the United Presbyterian Church faith community,

The year 2021 has been one for the books. As a church, we've been continually adjusting to life during a pandemic. It's hard to express in words how proud I am of the flexibility of this congregation. I know that life with COVID-19 hasn't been an easy task to endure. Time and time again, the community of faith that is United Presbyterian Church has stepped up to meet the numerous challenges that we've faced. As I write this letter I'm once again asking this church to rise up to another financial challenge.

Unfortunately, we find ourselves in financial need...on two fronts. The first front is financial giving. This year's giving has been lower than expected...causing us to dip into our savings. If this trend continues, we'll end 2021 in the red. Any money given to the church this month is greatly appreciated.

The second front is the replacement of investment funds for our new roof. In June, our building suffered water damage during a flashflood. Under inspection we were informed that the damage was due to our roof's condition. We've since replaced the flat portion of our roof. The cost for the flat roof was close to \$38,000. We had to go into our savings and investments to fund the new roof project; as you all know, these savings and investments help protect and fund our church. The Session and I would like to ask all who love and care for our church to prayerfully consider helping replenish these funds, ensuring that they will be there in the future to help us remain a vital member of the community. Thank you for your time and prayerful consideration.
Peace and Grace,

Reverend John Napoli
The Session of United Presbyterian Church

How to Get Involved



Reaching UP

If you are interested in contributing articles or helping to put together the Reaching UP newsletter, please contact Andy Hill at andy@andyhill.us

Treasurer Assistant

If you are interested in helping count and process donations and other treasurer duties, please contact Andy Hill at andy@andyhill.us

Zoom Meetings

Contact the church at upcbloomington@gmail.com to get signed up to receive email invites for Sunday worship, Tuesday Bible study, Thursday prayer meeting, and more!

Little Red Wagon

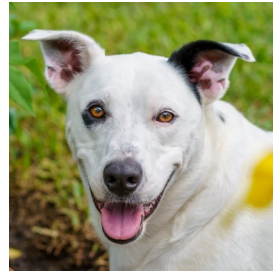
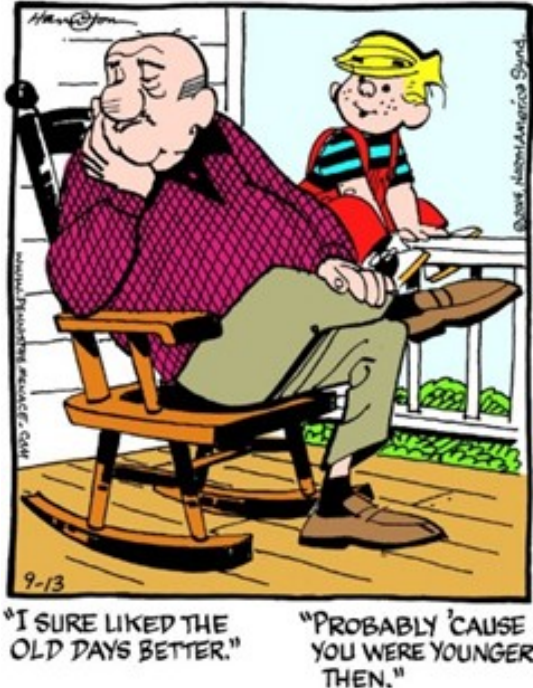
The little red wagon is waiting to be filled with canned goods and hygiene products for Monroe County United Ministries. For more information ask one of our Deacons.

UPC Scrip Program Discontinued. Final Donation Announced.

December 2021 was the last month for the UPC Scrip Program after more than a decade. The Worship Team voted to discontinue the fund raising project due to lack of participation combined with the many volunteer hours needed to keep it operational.

On Sunday, January 2, 2022, Worship Team Chair Allen Pease reported that the final annual donation from the Scrip Program to UPC was \$1,315.50. The Worship Team was happy to be able to make this final donation.

The Worship Team thanks those who supported the program.



*Strive to be . . .
the person that . . .
your dog thinks you are!*

January Birthdays and Anniversaries



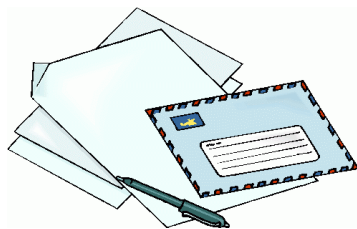
Jan 3	Liz Root	Jan 19	Christabel Nyarko
Jan 5	John Swanson	Jan 23	Karen Like
Jan 11	Stephanie Haddad	Jan 25	Virginia McCartney



NOVEMBER FINANCIAL REPORT

November financials were very disappointing. November income was only \$5,511 and expenses were \$13,129, giving us a net income of negative \$7,618 for the month of November, and negative \$11,783 for the year to date. We need a really good month in December to avoid a large year end deficit.

Don Root



We Get Letters

Let us hear from you. Drop your letter off at the church during office hours
Or
Email it to: upcbloomington@gmail.com — Reaching UP on subject line.

We hope United Presbyterian Church enjoyed a merry, merry Christmas and a happy new year.

Wheeler Mission—Bloomington has reached a decision that unfortunately, due to the uptick in COVID cases and the presence of the Omicron variant spreading, we need to postpone Rummage for Refuge (that was originally scheduled at The Warehouse later this month) until this Spring. Say sometime the first half of April.

We're very sorry, but want to do everything we can to protect event attendees and event volunteers.

Meanwhile, we continue to need volunteers to presort donations within our Center for Women basement on an ongoing basis. Could you pass along Wheeler Mission—Bloomington's presorting need for volunteers? Interested individuals/families/small groups can contact me at either 812.219.2939 or at cmmorrison@wheelermission.org.

Thanks for your help, and stay safe and well.

Chris-Michael G. Morrison
Director of Advancement—Bloomington Area
Wheeler Mission
812.219.2939
215 S. Westplex Ave • BLOOMINGTON, IN 47404
812.333.1905 OFFICE • WheelerMission.org

Take a moment . . .

. . . out of your busy day to write a note of encouragement or send a nice “thinking of you” card to a friend. Especially to friends who can no longer get around as freely as we do. It will be so appreciated.

Two great candidates for sending your best regards are longtime, active participants at United Presbyterian: Mary Lou Rhoades and Betty (Chipman) Thacker.

It'll just take a few moments to jot down a few lines or select a fitting card letting them know that you're thinking of them and that you care.



Pick up your pen now!

Mary Lou Rhoades
Bell Trace
800 N. Bell Trace Circle, #154
Bloomington, IN 47408

Betty Thacker, Room 305
Stonecroft Health Campus
363 S. Fieldstone Blvd.
Bloomington, IN 47403



Reflections for Members and Friends of the Presbytery of Ohio Valley
The Rev. Susan C. McGhee, Executive Presbyter

Christmas Eve: December 24, 2021

They were far away from home. The journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem is 90 miles over hilly country. The normal person could hike about twenty miles per day. A woman well into her pregnancy couldn't have covered even *half* that much distance. This means that the trip would have taken at *least* nine days. They were far away from home, and they were poor, which undoubtably made their journey seem longer still. They were far away from home, and Mary was expecting her child any day now.

In some ways, they were as far away from home as any two people could be. Yet I suspect that it was on this journey that they began to learn a deep truth: that even when we're far away from home we can bring with us who we most deeply are, and in so doing, we can discover who we most deeply are. Poor as they were, they came with everything they needed. They brought with them a deep faith in Yahweh, a devoted love for one another, and, of course, the promise of the ages, for to them and to us was born that night a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

What I want most of all to tell you tonight is that even when we're far away from home we can bring with us who we most deeply are, and in so doing, we can discover who we most deeply are.

I remember my first Christmas far away from home. I was 24 years old, serving as the pastor of five little churches in the eastern panhandle of West Virginia, some seven hours away from my hometown. Christmas was on a Sunday that year, and while I would travel to visit some friends later on that day, I was faced with the very first time in which I would wake up in a house alone on Christmas morning.

I woke up early, made a pot of coffee and my favorite breakfast, put my favorite carols on the stereo, and sat down by the tree to open my gifts. I did so slowly, and took time to enjoy each one, and to think of the giver of each gift. I discovered that I wasn't alone after all; and that home is wherever I am. It is a discovery that lives with me even to this day.

For when we're far away from home we can bring with us who we most deeply are, and in so doing, we can discover who we most deeply are.

My mother used to read to me a story by Norman Vincent Peale. It was the story of Ursula, who was far away from home. She was from Switzerland, but had come to live with an American family in New York City. During her time there she did various jobs for her hosts. One of her tasks at Christmastime was to keep track of all the gifts that arrived so that they could be acknowledged. As she saw all the lavish gifts given to people who already had everything, she began to feel more and more like an outsider, more and more like a stranger, and farther and farther away from home.

She wanted to give her hosts a special Christmas gift, but she wondered what would compare with all these fabulous gifts that they had already received. One morning an idea came to her, in the form of a voice. *It's true that many people in this city have much more than you do. But surely there are many who*

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Reflections — continued from page 5

have less. If you think about this, you may find a solution to what's troubling you. Ursula thought about the voice, and on Christmas Eve she knew what she wanted to do.

She stopped in a large department store, and searched the aisles until she saw the perfect gift. She bought it and asked the clerk to wrap it in festive paper. Then she went outside in the early evening looking around. She saw a man in a Santa suit ringing a bell by a small pot.



“Sir, can you help me? I’m looking for a poor baby. I have a present I want to give to a baby who doesn’t have much of anything. Do you know of a poor baby?”

“Oh, yes —“ he said. “More than one, I’m afraid.”

Ursula asked, “Is it far away? Can you show me?”

The Salvation Army volunteer told her that when his shift was over he would take her to a family in a nearby neighborhood who needed just about everything.

When the next bell ringer came, Ursula and her new friend got in a taxi, and she told them about herself and what she was trying to do. The Salvation Army volunteer directed the taxi to an apartment building. When they reached their destination the driver told them to take their time.

“They live on the 3rd floor,” Ursula’s companion said, “Shall we go up?”

She shook her head. “No, they would want to thank me, but this is not from me. Please take it to them, and say it is from a family who has everything.”

The next morning, Ursula's host family awoke and gifts were exchanged. She thanked everyone for all the presents. Then she began to tell them why there was nothing from her beneath the tree. As she finished the story of her adventure the day before, she said, “So you see? I did a kindness in your name. This is my Christmas gift to you.”

As Norman Vincent Peale finishes the story, he says, “How do I know this? Ours was the home where Ursula lived. Ours was the family to whom she offered a gift from her heart – a kindness carried out in our name.”

When we are far away from home, we can bring with us who we most deeply are, and in so doing, we can discover who we most deeply are.

Perhaps no one has ever been farther away from home than the crew of Apollo 8 on Christmas Eve, 1968. That year we witnessed the assassination of Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr. That year we watched in horror as riots broke out and cities burned across the South.

But on Christmas Eve that year we watched as Frank Borman, Jim Lovell, and Bill Anders orbited the moon for the very first time in history. We were moved by their pictures of a distant planet earth rising against a deep black sky over the lunar horizon. We were in awe of the beauty of that planet – our home, our earth. We listened as these three men greeted us from over 240,000 miles away:

To all the people back on earth the crew of Apollo 8 has a message that we would like to send to you: In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, and the earth was a formless void, and darkness covered the face of the deep... And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light, and God saw that the light was good.

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Reflections — continued from page 6

When they arrived back home the astronauts said of their experience: As we gazed upon the moon, we felt like we were looking at the beginning of a planet that hadn't really achieved life and yet here in the background was one that had. We had this enormous feeling that there had to be a power greater than any of us -- that there was a God, that there indeed was a beginning and that maybe even our choosing to read from Genesis was not a haphazard thing, that it had been ordained somehow.

There, in the midst of the sorrow of 1968 came a word of hope as travelers through the heavens proclaimed their faith in God: God, who with a word called the worlds into being. God, who painted the night sky with stars, and cradled out the earth to make a bed for the seas... God, who fashioned every living creature: the elephant with its long trunk and the giraffe with its long neck, you and me, with our long legs and our good minds and our strong hearts — you and me, with our spirits that long to unite with the spirit of this living God.

"You have made us for yourself, O Lord," St. Augustine prayed, "and our hearts are restless until they rest in you."

In a way, each of us is far away from home, you and I. All of us are far away from home, far away from God's deepest and most loving intentions for our lives, far away from the amazing possibilities that God holds in store for us.

That's why God traveled far away from home, far away from the heavenly places to make a home with *us*, far away from the heavenly places to make a home *in us*, so that we can find our home in God.

To a little town on a night long ago God traveled far away from home, bridging the distance between heaven and earth, light and darkness, life and death, hope and fear . . .

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie, above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by — yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light, the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

So let us rejoice, and let our songs ring out loud and clear. Let us rejoice, and let our carols rise like incense to Jesus Christ, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace — Jesus Christ, Bread of heaven, hope of the world, and our hearts' true home.

Your sister and friend,

Susan



The Poinsettia Display is an Advent tradition at UPC

The UPC Worship Team again presented the display in the Sanctuary.

We thank the 2021 Sponsors



Fadi & Aline Haddad in Loving Memory of May Hamati & Fuad Haddad
Souheil & Ale Haddad in Loving Memory of our Grandparents & Fuad Haddad

Bob & Julie Hammel in gratitude of the friendships

with Mary Lou Rhoades & Betty Thacker

James Haverstock in loving memory of Suzann Haverstock

Michelle Heitink – In Loving Memory of Dennis Schuman

Andy Hill

Lance & Karen Like

Virginia McCartney

Bob & Sue Lorimer in loving memory of Mable Mather and Joe & Fran Masters

Allen Pease in loving memory of Raymond & Rose Klucznik

Karim & Eugenia Spir in loving memory of Mario Suarez Melo



"I CAME OVER TO HELP YOU FIND YOUR MARBLES.
DAD SAYS YOU DON'T HAVE 'EM ALL."



...a sleigh ride in holidays.