

umstead park

UNITED CHURCH of CHRIST
a thoughtful and progressive community of faith

April 2019

8208 Brownleigh Drive

Raleigh, NC 27617

www.upucc.org

FAITH IN ACTION

Focusing on Our Future - Living into Our Vision

[For several years our congregation has considered the timing and scope of a financial push to address needed as well as desired projects to move us forward. Our diligent Stewardship and Finance Committee offer this summary to enable a discussion/decision at our Congregational Meeting following worship on April 28.]

Plans under consideration:

- Start working on the garden/outdoor space immediately
- Fix the roof & HVAC and supplement with solar panels
- Some improvements to the Youth Dungeon
- Refinance or pay down the mortgage to increase cash flow



A portion of our congregation met March 10 after worship to further define the implementation of our long range vision for the church. Keeping the conversation founded in our shared beliefs, this was a good conversation where we discussed how much we should try to tackle now and what should remain part of our longer term vision. We continue to work towards a proposal for our April 28 Congregational Meeting, but here are some of the ideas that are surfacing:

- Let's get started with our garden projects. This will help to ensure a vibrant congregation and a welcoming environment for our guests, especially those with children. We have \$35,000 in hand dedicated to this project and an enthusiastic congregation willing to engage in some sweat equity. So let's not wait any longer, let's get rolling and see what we can accomplish with some play space and garden spaces.
- A fundraising campaign on the order of \$175,000 seems like the right size for us at this time. This will both sustain the health of our building and our planet. We would establish specific targets along the way for raising this money. The first \$90,000 goes to fix the roof. The next \$30,000 goes to fixing the HVAC, and then the next \$50,000 would go toward putting solar panels on the roof. After a discussion with the Coordinating Council, we would propose to run a special pledge campaign this summer with a goal of raising the money by the end of 2020.
- We would like to do something to improve the condition of the youth Dungeon, possibly the addition of HVAC to keep the temperature comfortable.
- The mortgage. There is still some work to figure out here. We need to decide if we are going to continue with our same mortgage payments or refinance to extend the mortgage longer. Refinancing to a new 20-year mortgage would reduce our annual expenses, but could add as much as \$160,000 to our total interest payments over the life of the loan. Should we continue on our current payment plan? We are seven years in on our current 20-year mortgage and have made good progress paying off the balance, reducing it from over 1 million dollars to \$810,000 by February of 2020. We could consider paying off some of the principal, but that would require a commitment from the congregation to raise more money. Other options could include refinancing over a longer term but making a sincere effort to pay off the mortgage faster.

So that is where we are. Stay tuned for more opportunities to talk about the mortgage as we prepare for a vote at the Congregational Meeting about implementing our vision for the future. A team is looking closely at the opportunities for solar that are on the table. If anyone has ideas that they want to share regarding the implementation of the vision, please send an email to Mark Stevens markstevensrtp@gmail.com

We look forward to seeing you on April 28th!



***This* Season of Lent**

“Ashes to ashes, dust to dust.” Remember, you are mortal.

So begins the Lenten season. This is not a morbid exercise, however, but an intentional offering, a gift, to gain perspective.

Honestly, I’ve had about all the perspective I care to handle this Lenten season... and then some. The sudden death of Gary Welsh coupled with some anticipated, yet still unwelcomed, deaths of friends and family beyond the UPUCC community in the past couple of weeks has left me pondering mortality at a constant clip. I know I am not alone in this ‘endeavor of the spirit.’

... Yet, I ask myself anew, is this not what the season of Lent, at its heart, is about? Jesus turns his face toward Jerusalem... facing his own death.

How does he prepare?

How do we prepare?

Sooner or later, we have to get a handle on the inevitability for ourselves. As much as we’d like to avoid the subject, we will not escape our eventual demise, be it lingering or sudden. For our own spirit’s sake, we need to make peace with death. We seek perspective.

Herein lies the gift of this ‘Lent.’

In a more candid than normal manner, and with Marcia’s permission, I want to offer some valuable lessons I learned or was reminded of in Gary’s death. (Gary would actually be *delighted* to continue to offer us insights!)

In the hospital, when Marcia was faced with a decision about whether to keep Gary on life support, with a clear mind, if not clear eyes, she instructed the physician of Gary’s ‘Advance Directive.’ Hearing that Gary had left such instructions, the countenance of the physician changed immediately. The look of relief for him and compassion toward Marcia was palpable. The physician was freed from all manner of restraints and could help Marcia allow Gary to die peacefully.

On Sunday, April 14th, Palm/Passion Sunday, I will offer a reflection in worship on Jesus intentionally turning his face to Jerusalem, and thereby knowingly confronting his death. Our normal Second Sunday Forum will follow as we reflect on the reality of our own death AND with retired geriatrician Neil Hall offering his considerable expertise on the importance, and mechanics, of Advance Directives.

In addition to the directive, Gary, always the pragmatist, also desired his body be used for organ donation or to further medical science. His designated option did not need his body and so the excellent nursing staff matched Marcia with an organization out of Maryland: Anatomy Gifts Registry.

See Anatomygifts.org (We’ll discuss that at the April 14th forum as well.)

In closing this missive, a small group of us are discussing “The Book of Joy” at four Monday lunches during Lent. The book chronicles the week long meeting of Desmond Tutu and the Dalai Lama three years ago on the occasion of the Dalai Lama’s 80th birthday. The book, and the conversation of these two marvelous wisdom figures of our day, focuses on this question: How can we possibly live with joy in a world filled with so much suffering?

After our first book session, I received this message from Marcia:

“There is something awfully poignant about meeting today and discussing joy, and finding joy even in difficult situations, and then getting home and finding a lovely letter from ‘Miracles in Sight’, giving thanks for Gary’s gift as ‘Miracles in Sight’ continues in their ‘mission to facilitate the gift of sight to those suffering from corneal disease and blindness.”

Not in a morbid manner, but an uplifting and positive one, I look forward to honestly mining this Lenten season in all its depth with you... and more so, I look forward to the message beyond, now newly summed up in the vision the life of Gary Welsh afforded us all.

P.S. I greatly appreciate that David Wiltshire will lead worship on April 7. Please see page five for further information.

youth

Youth Group April Schedule

April 7 11:30a-1:30p Youth Group (prep for Youth Sunday)

April 14-21 Spring Break! (No Youth Group)

April 28: *9:00a-10:15a Youth Sunday rehearsal

10:30-11:30a Youth Sunday!

**Please arrive in the worship space by 9am to rehearse and help with set-up.*

children

April Highlights

Children will have the opportunity to distribute palms to the congregation on Palm Sunday, April 14.

On Easter Sunday, April 21, an 'Earth Day Easter Egg Hunt' will be held immediately after worship on the UPUCC grounds (weather permitting). All are encouraged to bring their own gathering containers. All eggs will be recycled for continued use!

Looking Ahead

Children's Church Camp - Love of Creation

Friday, May 31, 5:30-8 pm, June 1, 9 am-noon, Sunday, June 2 Worship

With the help of adults and youth, our Children's Church Camp will kick off the summer season this year, celebrating our love of creation and our dreams for our church environs. Also, in partnership with Faith In Action Committee, our summer service project will be collecting school supplies for Church World Service.

May 31- Friday night will be a time for the entire family, offering a delicious meal catered by Carroll's Kitchen (a nonprofit social enterprise restaurant group providing healthy employment for women leaving crisis at two locations in downtown Raleigh). Greg Whitt of Drum for Change will lead activities following the meal.

June 1- Saturday morning- the children grouped by ages will create their own stories, build mosaics for our outdoor space, stretch their bodies with a yoga session, and have some interaction with wildlife!

June 2- Worship an opportunity for children to share their weekend experience with the congregation.

Children are welcome to invite their friends!

Registration is required to provide accurate counts for food and supplies.

Sign up and more details will be provided soon!

faith in action

from the Creativity Group



Hippity, Hoppity!

Get your cards while they're hot and fresh! The Creativity Group will have Easter and other greeting cards displayed on April 7, 14, and, for those last-minute folks, again on April 21. Any donations of forever stamps or money to purchase stamps would be greatly appreciated—our supply has almost run out.

from the UPUCC Advocacy Task Force - Lobby Day Coming!

Few may enjoy politics or lobbying, but it IS how important things get done. Your UPUCC Advocacy Task Force has done its homework; and we will be part of Common Cause Lobby Day. If you can swing it, please mark Lobby Day on your calendar, Tuesday, May 7, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. **Here's why. You can talk directly to your legislator** to promote justice and good government in North Carolina. By asking them to support bills that affect you, our children, and other North Carolinians.

Number One on our list is the need to eliminate gerrymandering. Other states employ ways of drawing districts that **promote fairness and don't disenfranchise people. We are recommending a Non-Partisan Redistricting Commission** and have two bills with 65 sponsors. To ensure you have sufficient information and a good sense of how to be successful with legislators your UPUCC Advisory Task Force is conducting an information session on May 5 immediately after the worship service. You will walk away with a packet that provides useful tips and the information you need to discuss the issue with your legislator. This is a first step in the process.

Next, there will be an Adult Education Forum on May 19 **to hear people's stories from Lobby Day. Please come** and share your experiences! We will then identify lessons learned and next steps.

⇒ *Those who cannot make the May 7 Lobby Day session can still help!*

Please call your NC Representative and NC Senator and ask them to support HB 69 and HB 140.

Legislators can be located at <https://www.ncleg.gov/RnR/Representation>. Click NC House Rep or NC Senator then type in your address. Click on each legislator to obtain their contact information.

Descriptions of each house bill can be found at:

<https://openstates.org/nc/bills/2019/HB69/> and <https://www.ncleg.gov/BillLookUp/2019/H140>

We are proud to BE THE CHURCH, a thoughtful and progressive community committed to Faith In Action. Please join the effort to ensure that political action in our state promotes good government and a just world for all.

Looking Ahead

In May, the FIA Committee will be sponsoring a clothing drive for our ladies at Healing Transitions.

More information will be available later, but save those gently used t shirts and jeans, as well as new underwear and socks.

adult education

April Forums

April 7 - 9:30 a.m. A Fresh Look at the Gospel of Mark with author Alexander Shia, who considers Mark the second path of four that he speaks about in his book *Heart & Mind*. During these political times we can feel very similar to the disciples when they were in the boat out in the stormy sea-exhausted, fragile and scared. We wonder if help is coming, and is God asleep in the boat while the winds and waves are lashing around us? Join Gina Kentopp in the library at 9:30 a.m. in the library, for a short video of Alexander Shia with discussion afterward, Gina Kentopp facilitating. Childcare is provided in the nursery.

April 14 - Following worship with Doug's sermon in mind, "And Jesus Turned His Face Toward ... Death," we will reflect on the reality of our own death AND with retired geriatrician Neil Hall offering his considerable expertise on the importance, and mechanics, of Advance Directives, in the library.

worship & music

Sunday, April 7 - Did you know...

...that our own David Wiltshire has a PhD in Latin and Greek from UNC-Chapel Hill and a M.Div. from Princeton Theological Seminary? This Sunday, April 7th, David will preach on how the Greek text of the New Testament can be read in many ways, and how editorial choices made hundreds of years ago can make it difficult for us to believe in the beauty of our gifts and our participation in the story of redemption.

Maundy Thursday Service in the Library

Please join us Maundy Thursday, April 18, 6 to 7 p.m. for a service of remembrance of Jesus' last supper with his apostles. This service, hosted by Jane Weidig and Bill Coye, will include readings, prayers and a soup supper of homemade chicken matzoh ball soup. If you have any questions please contact Bill at wcoye1@gmail.com

stewardship & finance

UPUCC Financial Update

	February	YTD as of February 28.
Income:	\$42,251	\$70,798
Expenses:	\$27,193	\$54,200
Net:	\$15,058	\$16,598

*Notes: \$5,000 anonymous undesignated gift received in February applied towards the Operating Fund.
\$13,580 stock sale proceeds, covering the majority of one Covenant Partner's 2019 pledge.*

we love our volunteers

April 7

Altar Prep: Eleanor Smith
Communion Prep: Elaina Richardson
Coffee Set-Up: Elaina & Robert Richardson
Greeters: Ashley and Vanessa Montague
Ushers: Jayme & Chris Abram
Sound System: Chris Abram
Auditor: **TBD**
Assistant Treasurer: Sue Hathaway
Clean-Team: Edward McFarland, Mark & Melanie Stevens,
Linda Hébert, Jessica & Shawn Holmes

April 14- Palm Sunday

Altar Prep: Leslie Heavey
Coffee Set-Up: Elaina & Robert Richardson
Greeters: **TBD**
Ushers: Gail & Jeff Holden
Sound System: **TBD**
Auditor: **TBD**
Assistant Treasurer: Lee Harrison
Clean-Team: Mary Pat Peters, Eliseo Jimenez, Vickie Teal,
Elaina & Robert Richardson

April 21- Easter Sunday

Altar Prep: Eleanor Smith
Coffee Set-Up: Lori Del Negro & Roger Sommer
Greeters: **TBD**
Ushers: Sue Hathaway & Laura Duval
Sound System: Peter van Dorsten
Auditor: Leslie Heavey
Assistant Treasurer: Sue Hathaway
Clean-Team: Tim Champion & Dan Harrell,
Chris Ousley, Ada & Colin McKerrell

April 28

Altar Prep: Michael Lester
Coffee Set-Up: **TBD**
Greeters: **TBD**
Ushers: Jeff & Gail Holden
Sound System: Peter van Dorsten
Auditor: Tim Champion
Assistant Treasurer: Dan Harrell
Clean-Team: Nevin & Carol Fouts, Scott Pope,
Doug Long & Janice Odom

Always on the lookout
for volunteers!
Link to sign up [here](#).

all in the family

Photos from last month's Fat Tuesday celebration



our wider community

Guatemala Trip- Meeting Sunday, April 7

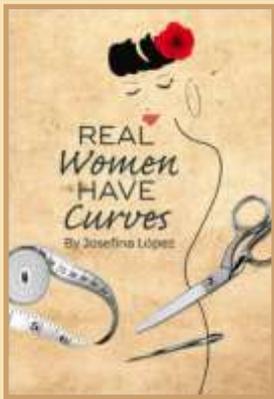
In 2016, a group of UPUCC members traveled to a maternal health clinic in Guatemala, where they assisted in the clinic, doing construction and going out into the community to assist with well baby/child medical checkups.

This August, a UPUCC group will join again with Curamericas in this endeavor!

- Meeting - Sunday, April 7 following worship
- Travel Dates - August 3-13, 2019



Contact for more information: Paul Foglia phf@nc.rr.com
Jane Thibodeau jthibodeau@curamericas.org <https://www.curamericas.org/>



Real Women Have Curves

April 5-7, April 14, Advanced Staged Reading of
Real Women Have Curves by Josefina Lopez
Umstead Park United Church of Christ, April 5, 6 and 7
Herb Young Community Center, Cary. April 14 at 6:30 pm.
www.TheJusticeTheaterProject.org

Set in a tiny sewing factory in East L.A., the outrageously funny story of five full-figured Mexican-American women who are trying to keep their tiny factory from going under. And while they work, and hide from immigration authorities, they talk... about their husbands and lovers, their children, their dreams for the future. This microcosm of the Latina immigrant experience celebrates real women's bodies, and the incredible bond that happens when women work together.

EVENTS during *Real Women Have Curves*

Location: Umstead Park United Church of Christ

- ⇒ Friday, April 5, 7:30 p.m. show "Meet the Director" 6:30 p.m. pre-show reception *Non-profit advocate spotlight:* El Pueblo
- ⇒ Saturday, April 6, 2:00 p.m. show 1:00 p.m. Discussion: "You are amazing! Women and Body Image" Maria Elena De Leon Angel Williams, humanitarian, fitness instructor. *Non-profit advocate spotlight:* Hispanic Family Center
- ⇒ Saturday, April 6, 7:30 p.m. show 6:30 p.m. discussion "The Changing World of Immigration Rights" Umstead Park United Church of Christ sanctuary resident Eliseo Jimenez and attorney, Bridget Blinn Spears discuss their work for his freedom. *Non-profit advocate spotlight:* Latino Credit Union
- ⇒ Sunday, April 7th 3:30 p.m. show 2:30 p.m. panel discussion "Taking Care of Business. Latina Business Owners" FREE childcare during this matinee. (Children must be potty trained, pre-registration required.) FREE audio description for visually impaired. *Non-profit advocate spotlight:* El Centro Hispano

Location: Herb Young Community Center, Cary:

- ⇒ Sunday, April 14, 6:30 p.m. show 101 Wilkinson Ave., Cary. Meet members of Diamante Arts and Culture Center and learn about their work in the community.

For tickets: 919-264-7089 or thejusticetheaterproject@gmail.com.

upucc april calendar

Mon.	April 1	11:30 a.m.	Book Discussion of <i>Book of Joy</i> in the library.
Tues.	April 2	9:30 a.m.	Creativity Group meets in the library.
Wed.	April 3	2:30 p.m.	Creativity Group to Healing Transitions.
		6:15 p.m.	Music Literacy Group meets in the library.
		7:00 p.m.	UPUCC Choir rehearsal in the worship space.
Fri.	April 5	7:30 p.m.	JTP presents Real Women Have Curves in the worship space.
Sat.	April 6	9:30 a.m.	Yoga with Ellen Beidler in the worship space.
		2:00 p.m.	JTP presents Real Women Have Curves in the worship space.
		7:30 p.m.	JTP presents Real Women Have Curves in the worship space.
Sun.	April 7	9:30 p.m.	Forum: Alexander Shia on the Gospel of Mark. See page five.
		10:30 a.m.	Worship & Communion: "Given," David Wiltshire preaching. See page five.
		Following worship	Newcomers & Inquirers Session held in the library.
			UPUCC Advocacy Task Force meets in the large atrium conference room.
			Curamericas Meeting held in the small atrium conference room.
			Youth meet to prep for Youth Sunday (April 28).
		3:30 p.m.	JTP presents Real Women Have Curves in the worship space.
Mon.	April 8	11:30 a.m.	Book Discussion of <i>Book of Joy</i> in the library.
Wed.	April 10	6:15 p.m.	Music Literacy Group meets in the library.
		7:00 p.m.	UPUCC Choir rehearsal in the worship space.
Sat.	April 13	9:30 a.m.	Meditation Group meets in the library.
		2:00 p.m.	Memorial Service in the worship space.
Sun.	April 14	9:30 a.m.	Committee Meeting Time. Childcare provided in the nursery.
		10:30 a.m.	Palm Sunday Worship: "And Jesus Turned His Face Toward ...Death," Doug Long preaching.
		Following worship	Forum: Sermon Talk-Back and Discussion on Advanced Directives. See page five.
Mon.	April 15	11:30 a.m.	Book Discussion of <i>Book of Joy</i> in the library.
Tues.	April 16	9:30 a.m.	Creativity Group meets in the library.
Wed.	April 17	6:15 p.m.	Music Literacy Group meets in the library.
		7:00 p.m.	UPUCC Choir rehearsal in the worship space.
Thurs.	April 18	6:00 p.m.	Maundy Thursday Service in the library. See page five.
		7:00 p.m.	Coordinating Council meets in the library.
		Midnight	Deadline for items to be included in the UPUCC May Newsletter.
Sat.	April 20	9:30 a.m.	Yoga with Ellen Beidler in the worship space.
Sun.	April 21	10:30 a.m.	Easter Sunday Worship: "Now the Green Blade Rises," Doug Long preaching.
		Following worship	Easter/Earth Day Egg Hunt for children.
Wed.	April 24	6:15 p.m.	Music Literacy Group meets in the library.
		7:00 p.m.	UPUCC Choir rehearsal in the worship space.
Sun.	April 28	9:00 a.m.	Youth rehearse for Youth Sunday Worship.
		10:30 a.m.	Youth Sunday. New members joining.
		Following worship	UPUCC Congregational Meeting & Potluck.
Mon.	April 29	7:00 p.m.	UPUCC Men's Group meets. Contact reedaltman@gmail.com for details.