

UMSTEAD PARK UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

NEWSLETTER

January 2024



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NOTES FROM THE WATCH



Rev. Mary Elizabeth Hanchey

Many poets – and many of the rest of us – have searched for language that captures the way that time can be both eternal and fleeting all at the same time.

When my son was born someone gave me a piece of artwork that said "when you have children, the nights last forever and the years fly by in moments." I can certainly attest to some long nights and some fleeting years.

I love the way this idea is captured in a beloved hymn, "O God, Our Help In Ages Past." I invite you to rest in these (only slightly updated) lines with me:

"A thousand ages, in thy sight, are like an evening gone; short as the watch that ends the night before the rising sun. Time, like an everflowing stream, soon bears us all away; we fly forgotten, as a dream dies at the opening day." (Isaac Watts, 1719).

I wonder how time has felt for you in the last months and weeks and days? I wonder especially about how you are thinking back over time as it relates to this congregation, and your place among it.

Today I am hearing the idea of "the opening day" as a cheerful invitation to what comes next. To the beginning of a season. To the opening pitch, or the opening curtain.



And I am thinking a lot about that watch that ends the night. I wonder how many of you have kept watch in the wee hours of the morning. You know the relief as the the sun rises – as the light comes.

We are at an important part of our time – and whether these days and weeks and months feel eternal or fleeting may depend on the moment! But I invite you to position yourself in the fleeting hours as we wait for the light. I invite you into this work of watch-keeping:

BE READY TO FOLLOW THE LIGHT

On January 7, our congregation will observe Epiphany together. In both worship, and in the congregational gathering after the service, we will use the theme of following the star which guided the wise ones to inspire our own attention to following the light.

- I hope that you can be present with us in worship.
- I hope that you can be present with us for the meal and program after worship (and use [the Sign-Up prepared by our fellowship committee](#) to help us plan).

And I hope that as we begin our Epiphany journey, you will be nudged by something of the light.

BE READY TO DO WHAT IS NEEDED

We keep watch to make sure that all is well. To be ready, and not found asleep when time for action is needed. We have an ask of you in these days. We need 75 pledging units to make two commitments.

- We need 75 giving units to give \$200-500 more this month.
- We need 75 giving units to pledge \$500-\$700 more next year.

With this action, we can close our budget deficit and begin our Epiphany journey more fully resourced, with a more clearly defined path ahead. If you are ready to take that next step, you can click on the sunlight in the picture to the left to make a pledge.

I look forward to ministering among you.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "ME Hanchey".

Mary Elizabeth

STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS



As many of you may know, I am retiring from my position at UPUCC as Financial Administrator at the end of January. During the past seven years, I have had the pleasure of working with an amazing staff and a supportive congregation. I've been both blessed and inspired by your kindness, wisdom, and generosity.

I am happy to announce that Gwen Vass has been offered and has accepted the Financial Administrator job, effective February 1st. During the month of January, we will begin the transition for a smooth hand-off.

While I am retiring from my position as Financial Administrator, I am not retiring from UPUCC and so, I look forward to getting more involved in other church activities – maybe something other than Finance?

Much Love,
Vickie

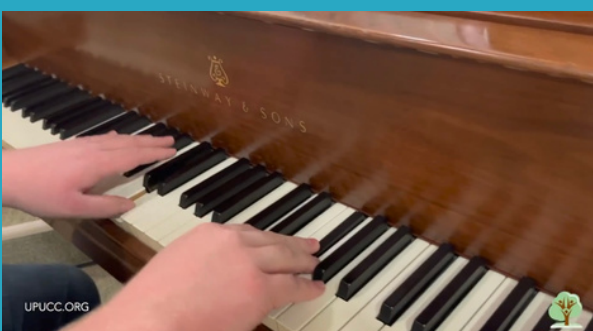
"If you're brave enough to say goodbye, life
will reward you with a new hello."
– Paulo Coelho



Greetings! My name is Gwen Vass and I've been an active member of UPUCC for over 12 years. My husband, Lee Harrison, is also a proud member. Being a part of the UPUCC family brings us immense joy. As a Certified Public Accountant (CPA), I dedicated four decades to a fulfilling career in public accounting, primarily working with various not-for-profit organizations. Three years ago, I embarked on a rewarding journey into retirement. I am thrilled about the prospect of contributing my financial expertise as the Financial Administrator

at UPUCC. Beyond my professional pursuits, I find joy in traveling, hiking, and continuously expanding my knowledge. Looking ahead to 2024, I am eager to rejuvenate my square dancing skills and delve into learning new line dancing steps. I am excited about the opportunities for growth and connection within the UPUCC community. – Gwen

Piano Lessons with David



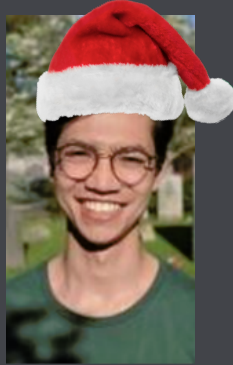
If you have been wanting to learn to play the piano, David Wilson has space available for new students! David frequently hears people express regret around not having learned an instrument when they were younger, or because they stopped their lessons. He strongly believes that it is never too late to learn to play the piano, or to pick up where you left off! To find out more information about availability and cost, contact David via email (david@upucc.org).

CHILDREN & YOUTH

Dear friends,

Happy New Year! December was a flurry of activity, with a lot of significant moments.

- Our children presented the Christmas pageant and shared the comfort of the Christmas stories with us in worship.
- The youth enjoyed a Christmas party with our friends from Pilgrim UCC.
- I led a Longest Night service, which provides an important space in the Christmas season for all who are grieving, lonely, down, or blue.



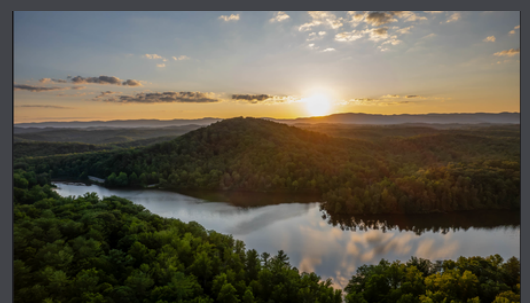
In addition to these things, did you notice anything different in the worship space? We have been trying out a new Family Space towards the front by the cards, featuring seating and activities for our children. Why are we doing this? So much of our faith and traditions are 'caught not taught'. It's important for our children to hear and absorb our spiritual rhythms, because that's how kids tend to learn. Creating a space for them to be and enjoy our worship services is an important part of their spiritual development! Additionally, having a dedicated space helps them know and feel welcome at our church. If you have questions or ways that we can improve this space, please don't hesitate to reach out to me!

This month holds a number of highlights, including a youth retreat up to Fairy Stone State Park with Pilgrim UCC January 19-21! The cost for this is expected to be \$65. I'm excited for all that is to come.

And one final note of gratitude. It took a lot of hands and hearts coming together to make our Advent and Christmas services come together, and you all have my deepest thanks. It is a wonderful thing to see people come together to care for each other, and that quality of our community has shone through these past two months. I am grateful for you all!

In peace,

Tyler



OWL sessions in January are

- Jan 14 (MLK Weekend)
- Jan 28



ADULT EDUCATION

January
7th

There will not be a morning forum on this day. Please plan on joining us for the **Epiphany Celebration** after worship (and to eat lots of delicious chili)!



Introduction to the Enneagram



The Enneagram is a system of personality typing that describes patterns in how people interpret the world and manage their emotions.

There are nine Enneagram Personality

Types, each of which has their own key motivations and fears that guide their actions and decisions. Understanding your primary type can be a powerful tool for self knowledge and in your relationships with others. This forum will provide a brief introduction to this fascinating tool.

January
14th

January
21st

Join us as we welcome Partners for Environmental Justice (PEJ) Executive Director George Jones (and board member Frank McKay) who will share about PEJs work advocating for the human and natural community in southeast Raleigh for almost three decades. The presentation will include a brief history of how PEJ began with members of St. Ambrose Episcopal Church who were concerned about environmental issues and neglect in their community, and grew into an organization that now advocates for



PEJ

Partners For Environmental Justice

green infrastructure & community enhancements that are aligned with the federal Justice40 initiative. The discussion will also include an overview of Raleigh's continued rapid growth and ways we need to work together to ensure this growth takes environmental justice into account.

January
28th

There will not be a morning forum on this day. Please plan on joining us for our **Congregational Meeting** following worship on January 28th.



Join forums
in person or
on Zoom!



FAITH IN ACTION

Save the Date! Interfaith Creation Care of the Triangle (ICCT) is ready to kick off 2024 – perhaps the most pivotal year in decades for Creation care! We hope you'll join us for the Action Traction Convention on Saturday, January 27. If you came to the 2023 Imagination Convention in February, you know "the goose was loose" and we were inspired by spirit to forge a path that led us to a very fruitful year.

The goose will be loose again at the 2024 Convention! We'll feed you lunch and hope to feed your spirit as we dig into amazing options to encourage your congregation's participation in Creation care during this crucial year.

2024 ICCT Action Traction Convention

Date:

Saturday, Jan. 27th

Time:

9:30am -3:30pm

9:00am sign-in

Location:

Greystone Baptist Church
7509 Lead Mine Rd, Raleigh

*Complimentary
Lunch*



REGISTER



The Wild Goose -
Celtic symbol of
the Holy Spirit
and Emblem for
ICCT Conventions

*Save the Date
The Goose Is Loose Again!*



continued next page...

Here's how the Convention sessions will help us *gain action traction* in 2024:

1. Kick off ICCT's Campaign: Get Out the Vote for Mother Earth
2. Rise to the challenge of engaging youth
3. Examine ways to inspire awe and wonder
4. Interact with a panel of ICCT Liaisons about what works and what doesn't work for them as they connect their congregations to ICCT.
5. Delve into how ICCT is collaborating with faith-based *ONE Wake* to advance environmental justice for low-income residents with steeply rising energy utility bills and disproportionately high energy cost burdens.
6. Network over lunch at specified tables with members of congregations experienced with sustainability practices of interest to you and your congregation.
7. Unveil ICCT's new online networking tool designed to connect you to experienced congregations.
8. Locate financial resources and information for congregations and individuals to make these improvements more affordable.

See you there!

Raleigh *can have a **heart** too*



Raleigh is considering the establishment of Community Response Teams comprising Social Workers, EMS personnel, and Peer Support Specialists to handle 911 calls where a targeted, empathetic, and non-law enforcement response would help community members in need.

[Click Here](#)
to provide input to the city.

Durham already has a program called HEART, which you can learn more about on the next page.



HOLISTIC EMPATHETIC ASSISTANCE RESPONSE TEAM

On June 27th, 2022, Durham Community Safety Department launched 3 new crisis response units that aim to connect people experiencing non-violent mental health crises or quality of life concerns with the right care by sending new responses that better match residents' needs. A fourth unit launched at the end of September 2022. Our goal with these approaches is to connect our Durham neighbors to the right care — starting from the point at which someone calls 9-1-1, to the warm handoff to those prepared to help meet the needs of our neighbors in crisis.

These first response teams operate under the name of "HEART" (Holistic Empathetic Assistance Response Teams).

HEART's 4 crisis response units are:

1. Crisis Call Diversion (CCD): CCD embeds mental health clinicians in Durham's 9-1-1 call center.

2. Community Response Teams (CRT): CRT dispatches unarmed 3-person teams as first responders to non-violent behavioral health and quality of life calls for service.

3. Care Navigation (CN): Care Navigators follow up with people after meeting with one of our first responders to help connect to the community-based care they need and want.

4. Co-Response (CoR): CoR pairs clinicians with Durham police officers to respond to certain calls for service that pose a greater potential safety risk.*

*Source:<https://www.durhamnc.gov/4576/Community-Safety>

READ MORE >>

JANUARY 7TH - EPIPHANY CELEBRATION



SIGN UP



We hope everyone can attend the Epiphany Celebration January 7th after church! We are planning a lunch of Soups, chili or stew with bread and desserts. We need your help in preparing so please go to the attached sign-up genius and sign up. Please note if your dish is vegetarian or vegan! Fellowship, as always, appreciates any help with set-up and clean-up. It should be a fun event for all!!

JANUARY 20TH - GAME NIGHT



POLL

Join us in the UPUCC Library 3:30-5:30pm for our January game night! We always have a wide variety of games, and snacks. Feel free to bring a beverage of your choice as well!

We would also love for you to complete this VERY brief survey to figure out what time would work best on the 3rd Saturday of each month. We want to include as many people as possible in the fun!



Ahoy!
I'm Captain Carole -
chair of the Fellowship
Committee!



FELLOWSHIP

Closing the Gap for our 2024 Budget

Thank you to everyone who has already pledged for 2024! We celebrate how much progress we have already made toward having a balanced budget in 2024. Unfortunately, as of right now, we haven't quite reached our goal. Most of our budget is fixed costs like the mortgage, insurance, and utilities.

That means to balance the budget, we would need to cut our committee budgets. If our committees are fully funded for 2024, they'll have the opportunity to use that money for a variety of purposes.

Here are some examples of what our committees hope to do with their portion of the budget:

- **Adult Ed:** Purchase study materials (books, videos), honorarium for speakers
- **Congregational Care:** Stamps for mailing cards (the Creativity Group provides the cards), meals for delivery by members of the Congregational Care team
- **Music & Worship:** Zoom, piano tuning, candles, choir music, honoraria, communion supplies
- **Youth:** Help make youth retreats and trips affordable to all, food (which makes a big difference in attendance), collaborative youth gatherings with other local progressive churches

Each of our committees has similar kinds of expenses related to their mission and responsibilities. We want all of our committees to be able to do their best work to live into our vision for next year, but they need their modest budgets to do so.

The good news is that we're really close to meeting that goal! All we need is for 75 families to increase their pledge by \$500. If you can help close the gap, [update your pledge online](#), submit a paper pledge card (found in the back of the worship space), or email Vickie at vickie@upucc.org. Please update your pledge soon so we can avoid budget cuts for 2024.

A \$500 annual
pledge is actually
\$7500 in dog
years

Click to Pledge



WORSHIP AND MUSIC

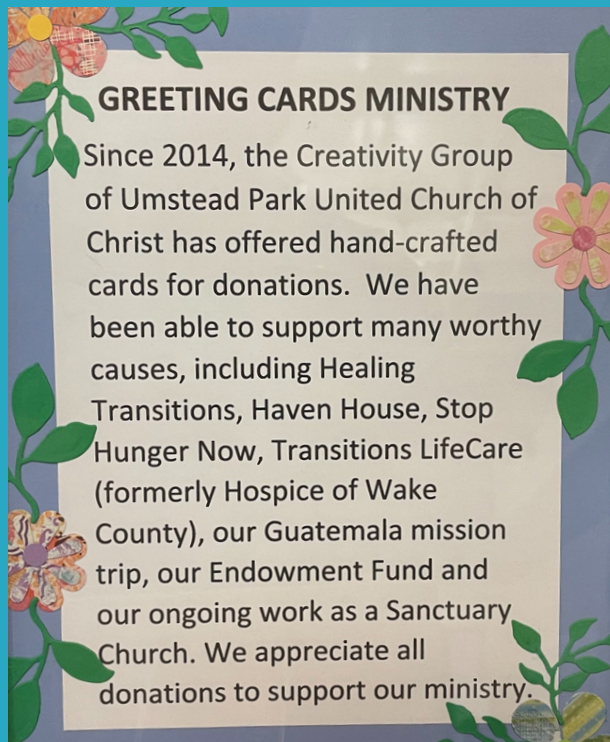
January 7th – On this Sunday after Epiphany, we would love for you to please stay after the worship service to help take down the Christmas decorations, if you are able. Many hands make light work!

Thank you to all the volunteers who served as ushers in 2023. At least twenty-five persons helped out with this task. It is an easy way to contribute to the functioning of our church. If you would like to usher, please go to the SignUpGenius or contact Marcia Welsh at homeofwelsh@gmail.com

Click here to
sign up as an
Usher!



CREATIVITY GROUP



Thank you for your support!

We're thrilled to have had orders for 297 Limited Edition cards this past year. In early December we were able to donate another \$750 to the UPUCC General Operating Fund and another \$750 to the UCC Emergency Relief Fund for Ukraine. We expect to be able to make another donation in February.

As we go into this New Year, we hope even more of our congregation will take time to look at our Creativity Card Table and take advantage of the opportunity to both support us and send caring thoughts out into the world by sending one of our cards!



Contact Information

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Michele Van Note	mdv31616@gmail.com
Marcia Welsh	homeofwelsh@gmail.com

CALENDAR

Tues.	January 2	5:00pm - Deadline to <u>submit material</u> for This Week communication
Wed.	January 3	5:00pm - Fellowship Committee meets at Gizmo's Brewery 7:00pm - Choir Rehearsal in the Worship Space
Thur.	January 4	7:00pm - Faith in Action committee meets via Zoom (1st Thursdays)
Sun.	January 7	10:30am - Worship in-person and online 11:30am - Epiphany Celebration Potluck, taking down decorations. Our Whole Lives (OWL) following the potluck.
Mon.	January 8	6:00pm - Building and Grounds in Library (2nd Mondays)
Tues.	January 9	5:00pm - Deadline to submit material for This Week communication.
Wed.	January 10	7:00pm - Choir Rehearsal in the Worship Space
Sun.	January 14	9:00am - Adult Forum: Introduction to the Enneagram in-person and <u>online</u> . 9:15am - Stewardship & Finance Committee (large atrium conference room). 10:30am - Worship in-person and online 11:45am - 1:30pm - Our Whole Lives (OWL) 12:00pm -1:00pm Advocacy (2nd Sundays)
Tues.	January 16	9:30am - Creativity group in the library 5:00pm - Deadline to submit material for This Week email communication
Wed.	January 17	7:00pm - Choir Rehearsal in Worship Space
Thur.	January 18	6:30pm - Coordinating Council Meeting in the Library and on Zoom. 11:59pm - Deadline to submit material for February Newsletter
Fri.	January 19	Youth Retreat to Fairy Stone State Park, VA
Sat.	January 20	6:00pm - Game Night in the Library! Youth Retreat to Fairy Stone State Park, VA
Sun.	January 21	9:30am - Adult Forum in-person & <u>online</u> : Partners for Environmental Justice. 10:30am - Worship 12:30pm - Adult Ed Committee meeting via Zoom Youth Retreat to Fairy Stone State Park, VA
Tues.	January 23	5:00pm - Deadline to submit material for This Week email communication
Wed.	January 24	7:00pm - Choir Rehearsal in the Worship Space
Sun.	January 28	10:30am - Worship 11:45am - Cash Bail Bond Reform Team (repeats every 4th Sunday) 11:45am - 1:30pm - Our Whole Lives (OWL) at UPUCC
Tues.	January 30	5:00pm - Deadline to submit material for This Week email communication
Wed.	January 31	7:00pm - Choir Rehearsal in Worship Space

