

Congregational Meeting – Sunday, January 31



An intentionally blurred screen grab of some of the 70 participants as we opened our Congregational Meeting. The conversation was much more focused than the clarity of this photo!

Hot off the keyboard, here's a look at brief notes (These are not the official minutes) from our UPUCC Winter Congregational Meeting that followed worship on January 31 -

Moderator extraordinaire, Edward McFarland, began by thanking our Staff, accompanied by a love offering, for their great work during trying times. (Of special note, Christy ~~Wilson~~ Tucker was included as a Love Offering recipient, recognizing her invaluable contribution as behind-the-scenes-Zoom-worship-Goddess.) Edward and Team then *virtually* presented a number of updates and issues including (with the briefest of summaries):

-Covid-19 Response Task Force- We will continue to meet virtually for the foreseeable future, eventually moving to small groups of gatherings outside when it's safe to do so according to established benchmarks and the will of the congregation. Specific requests for in-person meetings on UPUCC property need prior approval from the task force. Contact Edward McFarland at mcfarlandedward66@gmail.com

-Sanctuary- (Gary Sanders reporting) Eliseo, upon his lawyer's advice, waits for further clarification from DHS before making a decision about leaving Sanctuary. We celebrated with Gabriela that, with assistance from many generous donors, she was able to buy more reliable transportation *and* begin her DACA application. Meanwhile, Allison (she just turned 9) is receiving good medical care as her epileptic seizures are both managed and better diagnosed.

-Youth Director Search- (Kathy Dobbs reporting) See Doug's article page 3 and the Youth listing on page 4. We are delighted to hire Jonathan McLean as Interim Youth Leader. The original position will remain open until filled. Information is posted on the church website. If you have questions you may contact Kathy Dobbs at kdobbs001@nc.rr.com.

-Audio-Visual Planning- Peter van Dorsten walked us through a multitude of decisions to be made as we move toward live-streaming from UPUCC. For more info or questions, *or to join the working group(!)*, contact Peter at pv2049@gmail.com.

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-Creation Care- Again, Peter van Dorsten summarized the impressive work that a national Growing Together group has invited us into. The information presented included ways we can consider reducing our carbon footprint individually and as a community. Look forward to a (some) potential Sunday forum(s) to better understand this work. Better yet, join the monthly meetings. Contact Peter at pv2049@gmail.com. PS Peter happily informed us that the UPUCC Garden construction will start in Feb.

-Racial Justice Work(ing) Group- (Renate Andrews reporting) This group is an extension of the 6-month Sunday morning study of Layla Saad's "Me and White Supremacy."

Join us now on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays at 7pm. Next steps are to:

- Continue educating ourselves and the congregation on racial justice issues
- Provide specific anti-racist actions for individuals and the congregation that will further racial justice
- Provide support and accountability as we journey more fully into racial justice actions
- Establish relationships with the Black community based on trust discerning how we can best be allies in dismantling structural racism.

-Count on Me Campaign Final Update- What a celebration, led by Mark Stevens! The Count on Me Campaign was wildly successful as we over-subscribed our goal by 5%. We now have a new roof... WITH solar panels, an HVAC update in process for the worship space, and money "in the bank" and reserved for youth room upgrades, LED lighting, and mortgage reduction.

-Stewardship and Finance- (Christy Tucker reporting.) See page 7-8 for a copy of the budget. The Committee proposed passing a 'pandemic budget' that is not yet fully balanced. They suggest closing the \$12K deficit with one-time donations or increased pledges. Christy recommends revisiting expenses later in the year to assess. The proposed budget was adopted with no dissent.

-In closing, Doug Long reminded us of the positive 'plethora' of Zoom meetings that are not only holding us together but launching us forward. See the Google calendar on our UPUCC website <https://www.upucc.org/newsalendar/calendar> to stay abreast of the activities and links.

Also, be on alert for updates on Eliseo's status as well as more information to be determined regarding upcoming Zoom sessions with Duke's Dr. Joel Marcus (Professor Emeritus in NT) and Executive Director, Dawn Blagrove of Emancipate NC.

UPDATE... Dr. Marcus will definitely be scheduled in March. Get a head start, if you'd like, by reading his recent book, John the Baptist in History and Theology. Here's what Bart Ehrman has to say about it: "No one can understand the historical Jesus without first coming to grips with John the Baptist. In a study that is massively researched, brimming with insights, and engagingly written, Joel Marcus has provided a compelling account that should be the definitive statement of our generation."

Ash Wednesday Observance

Wednesday, February 17 - 7 pm

Our normal mid-week gathering will be preempted by a 7pm Ash Wednesday Service on February 17 (7pm). Bring elements of your choice (bread and wine, crackers and juice, etc.) as we begin the season of Lent with this Ash Wednesday remembrance.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89180866728?pwd=cEQyWmxXaEFybhVDdHZrZlc1Sm9kQT09>

Meeting ID: 891 8086 6728

Password: 178470

Dial in: 929 436 2866



Let's Celebrate some cool Youth Leadership!

I kid Jonathan McLean about first attempting to contact him (and Katelyn Shultz, his wife) after they visited UPUCC a few times a year and a half ago. Jonathan filled out one of our information sheets but the email address, the only contact info given, was not clearly legible. (It's not the first or last time this will happen. I've looked at some of my own handwriting and realized no one but myself could often interpret it as well!) Peg and I, along with Michele van Note who happened to be hosting Eliseo at the time, did some guessing and sleuthing and finally came up with a handful of possibilities... so I emailed them all.

Hi Jonathan (and Katelyn),

When I spoke briefly with you guys yesterday after church and asked if you had filled out a visitors' sheet, and you said you had, it occurred to me later that you might be the form from several weeks back that somehow ended up with a blurred email address. I'm going to send this note to my best guesses, hoping I get lucky and happen upon the right combination.

Let me know if you get this!!

Thanks, Doug

One of the top guesses hit the jack pot... and what a jack pot it has turned out to be!

Jonathan and Katelyn continued attending and then last summer took the plunge into membership.

...and I am delighted to announce, though many of you know this already, that **Jonathan has accepted the invitation from our youth search task force to provide interim leadership for our youth programming while we continue to look for a permanent person.** (... That's another story unto itself. Essentially, the present quarter-time position we are publicizing, coupled with the temporary virtual world we all live in, has stymied our search for qualified candidates. Not to be denied, the youth search task force is elated that Jonathan will be coordinating a menagerie of programs for our youth. The puzzle is under construction but see page 4 for the latest update.)



Jonathan McLean pictured with his wife, Katelyn Shultz.

Jonathan and Katelyn both grew up in Raleigh and met in High School. They have been married for 3 years in May and live off Six Forks not too far from North Hills. Jonathan has worked for the YMCA for a total of 9 years, and is passionate about the YMCA's outreach work, as well as helping the children he works with grow in their social and emotional learning. Fun facts are that he loves watching football (Go Cowboys) and anime, plays trumpet in a Triangle orchestra (watch out Peter!), and loves traveling and binge watching tv shows with Katelyn.

I join the youth and youth search task force in their excitement of Jonathan's energy and leadership (and maybe a little of Katelyn's, too!)-

Go team!

youth

Youth News!!

Well- Doug has already spilled the beans regarding the BIG news... (See page 3 of this newsletter) but the general idea is that Jonathan will be the glue holding the youth together, with great assistance from the Youth Committee in general and Heather Frink, Mary Nations and Scott Andrews in particular.

A typical month (is anything typical anymore?) will include three Sunday afternoon meetings:

- a session led by Jonathan,
- a session in conjunction with the youth group of Community UCC (and their leader, Santi Matthews)
- and a 5pm last Sunday of the month session with a conglomeration of other UCC youth groups (orchestrated by the United Church of Chapel Hill).

All of this is developing quickly, but what we know so far about the month of February is (according to Youth Committee Chair, Heather Frink):

Sunday, Feb. 7th at 2pm our UPUCC youth will meet over Zoom for more fun and fellowship and to talk about their thoughts on the previous week's presentation (with United Church of Chapel Hill).

Sunday, Feb. 14th, also at 2pm, will bring another new opportunity we have been working on with Community UCC here in Raleigh. Some of our youth know some of theirs, and our two churches are similar in size and beliefs. The youth committee has been meeting with their youth director, Santi (pronounced Shan'tee) Matthews, and has decided to explore ways our two youth groups can partner once a month in cross-congregational activities. Well kick that off on Valentine's Day with an online "Share the Love" meetup together.

(The last Sunday at 5pm meeting will happen, but the topic has yet to be confirmed.)

Also, parents, please let Heather know if your youth isn't receiving any UPUCC emails and would like to be included in future ones. Thank you to all of you for being patient with us throughout this crazy time! We hope your youth will join in on some of these events and we look forward to seeing many of them online in the coming weeks. Fingers crossed for falling case numbers coinciding with warmer weather so that we can find some outdoor activities before too long! Stay healthy and well.

children



Children's Church Gatherings, More Activity Bags in Process!

Children's Committee continues to plan for that time when we can begin to enjoy some activities safely together. In the meanwhile, we will offer our Children's Moments, after church Children's Gatherings (including games and sharing time), as well as activity bags (free delivery included!) to our families. Watch for opportunities to sign up and join in.

faith in action

An Invitation to Join a 'Road Trip' for Racial Justice

Get ready for a road trip for racial justice on Saturday, February 6. We would like as many people from UPUCC as we can get! If you want to participate, please do this:



1. Register your car: <https://naacpnc.org/hkonj-motorcade/>
2. Decorate your car showing your support. Suggestions include signs that highlight any of the People's Coalition 14 points, this year's March theme (Hope in Action), or the NAACP theme "We are done dying." Other ideas include displaying names of people who have been killed, such as George Floyd, or slogans like Black Lives Matter.
3. The motorcade will follow the usual march route and will be led by a hearse. Your headlights will be on, this is a funeral cortege.
4. Drive to downtown Raleigh, to the parking lots across from Memorial Auditorium (between Lenoir and South) at 7AM on Saturday Feb. 6. Cars will assemble and get into the queue. The motorcade will proceed from there to the Capitol.
5. Share the motorcade event on social media if you are so inclined.
6. **(This just in!)**
*If you'd like to proceed to the site with the rest of the UPUCC group, meet 7 am sharp in the parking lot at 303 S. Dawson (on the left, just past Nash Square and intersection with Morgan St. ...across from Parkside Restaurant).
...and it would be helpful if you let Peter know you're coming. (pv2049@gmail.com)*

The City of Raleigh has opened the march route between the hours of 7AM and 10AM.

UPUCC is a coalition partner for the Historic Thousands on Jones Street People's Assembly, and this year the Mass Moral March on Raleigh will have two components. Last week we told you about the Zoom event that will be held on Feb. 13th. This week we learned that the city of Raleigh has granted permission for a motorcade procession to be held on Feb. 6th. Video from the motorcade will be featured in the Zoom event on the 13th. If you would like to supplement the FIA funds UPUCC will donate for HKonJ, you can do that through the UPUCC.org website [here](#).
-Peter van Dorsten, FIA

NC Legislative Preview with Common Cause

With the NC General Assembly beginning a pivotal new session, join Bob Phillips of Common Cause NC and NC House Minority Leader Robert Reives, for an inside look at key issues at the legislature and how they will impact you and the Triangle area. Get your questions answered on protecting voting rights, ending gerrymandering, and more.

The online webinar will take place **February 9** from 5-6 pm. [Register via this link here](#). (First event listed: 2021 NC Legislative Preview-Triangle).

Creativity Group Custom Cards

Thanks to your generous support, over \$300 was given to each of our designated fall recipients (Eliseo and Family, Urban Ministries, and the local Food Bank). For the upcoming months, donations will benefit Eliseo and his family and our local Food Bank.



For detailed card ordering information, click this link [here](#).



adult education

Forum Sundays 9 am

Join us during the month of February as our Sunday Forums focus on stirring up one's creativity. If you've thought of putting pen to paper, picking up a paintbrush, or are intrigued by those who already do, join us on Zoom Sunday mornings at 9 am.

February 7 - Creativity and Inspiration - led by Brian Spears.

February 14 - Creativity: Focus on Writing (songs, poetry, fiction, and more) - led by Brian Spears

February 21 - Creating and Living out a Christian Life - led by Stan Yancey

February 28 - Creativity: Focus on Arts and Crafts (painting, quilting, card making, etc.) - led by Brian Spears.

Reading Between the Lines- Progressive Bible Study

Monday 7 pm - led by Anthony Neff

February 8th - Sickness and healing take the forefront as we discuss the healings of Jesus from Mark 1:29-39. We will also consider readings from Henry David Thoreau, Kathie Collins and John Dominic Crossan, as well as poems from Rumi and David Whyte.

February 15th - Our text, from 2 Kings (2:1-12), contains references to Elijah, Elisha, chariots of fire, and parting of the waters. We'll tie this text into article readings about the CrossFit movement, "prayer shaming," and Lady Gaga. We'll also review thoughts on a beautiful stained-glass window from Saint Mary's Church in Lubeck, Germany.

February 22nd- We'll return to Mark chapter 1 (verses 9-15), where we read about the baptism of Jesus by John. We'll also discuss readings from Joseph Campbell and Marcus Borg, along with poetry from Michael Blumenthal, Tony Hoagland and Alicia Suskin Ostriker.

March 1 - The transfiguration as described in Mark 9:2-9 will be our text this week. We'll also discuss readings from Steve Martin, Ched Myers and a New Yorker article on perceptions by Atul Gawande.

UPDATE... *Dr. Marcus will definitely be scheduled in March. Get a head start, if you'd like, by reading his recent book, [John the Baptist in History and Theology](#). Here's what Bart Ehrman has to say about it: "No one can understand the historical Jesus without first coming to grips with John the Baptist. In a study that is massively researched, brimming with insights, and engagingly written, Joel Marcus has provided a compelling account that should be the definitive statement of our generation."*

Book Group Tuesday 6 pm

...meets via Zoom. For more information contact Kathy Dobbs at kdobbs001@nc.rr.com.

Brew Theology (second & fourth Thursdays of each month) 7:30 pm

Building community while sitting at table, drinking craft beverages, having conversations-virtually, for now. Come hang out! Email: raleighdurhambrewtheology@email.com for details on joining. Facilitated by Brian Spears.

stewardship & finance

UPUCC 2021 Approved Budget with comments,
providing additional context (continued on page 8).

	2020 Final Budget	2021 Final Budget	
Income			
Operating Income			
General Offerings	339,700	312,378	Pledged: \$246,114 Sustainers w/o pledge: \$48,582 Pledge + sustainer: \$294,696 Unpledged 6%: \$17,682
Interest Income	70	70	
Miscellaneous Income	7,000	6,000	
NC Sales Tax Refunds	0	0	
Total Operating Income	346,770	318,448	
Total Income	346,770	318,448	
Gross Profit	346,770	318,448	
Expense			
Total Building Debt Service	82,129	79,512	
Committees			
Adult Education	200	200	
Congregational Care	300	300	
Buildings and Grounds			
BDCA Condo Dues	10,200	10,200	
General Maintenance	8,000	8,000	
Future Maintenance (savings)	0	0	
HVAC Contract	1,500	1,500	
Utilities	15,000	8,250	This includes reductions for lower utilities due to lower building use plus additional savings from the solar panels. 2020 actual utilities: \$9243
Total Buildings and Grounds	34,700	27,950	
Total Children	2,150	2,150	
Total Faith in Action	4,000	4,000	
Fellowship	700	700	
Membership & Publicity	575	575	
Stewardship & Finance			
Property Insurance	5,200	5,200	
Pledge Campaign Expenses			
Vanco/Giving Fees	2,700	2,700	
Total Stewardship & Finance	7,900	7,900	
Worship & Music			
Honoraria (Pulpit Supply)	500	500	
W & M Other	2,500	2,500	
W & M one-time virtual service allotment		0	
Total Worship & Music	3,000	3,000	
Youth	2,000	2,000	
Total Committees	55,525	48,775	
Insurance			
Worker's Comp Insurance	1,379	1,379	
Total Insurance	1,379	1,379	
Office Expenses			
Bank Fees	132	132	
Equipment Mtn/Lease	3,600	3,600	
Office Equipment	600	600	
Software	2,500	2,500	
Payroll Expenses	650	650	
Postage	125	125	
Supplies	1,100	1,100	
Telephone/Networking	1,450	1,450	
Website Fees	555	555	
Total Office Expenses	10,712	10,712	
Professional Expenses			
Youth Director	500	500	
Children's Director	500	500	
Associate Pastor			

stewardship & finance

...2021 budget continued from page 7.

	Pastor	2,000	2,000	
		3,000	3,000	
	Salary Expenses			
	Other Taxable Income			
	Payroll Taxes	6,800	6,800	
	Salaries			
	Pastor			
	Housing Allowance	24,000	24,000	
	Other Taxable Income	4,800	4,800	
	Pension	10,125	10,125	
	Salary	50,739	50,739	
	Total Pastor	89,664	89,664	
	Associate Pastor			
	Housing Allowance			
	Other Taxable Income			
	Pension			
	Salary			
	Total Associate Pastor			
	Administrative Assistant/Child Dir			
	Other Taxable Income	4,800	4,800	
	Salary	43,055	43,055	
	Total Administrative Assistant	47,855	47,855	
	Total Choir Director	7,150	7,150	
	Total Accompanist	7,150	7,150	
	Total Nursery Director	3,675	3,675	
	Youth Director	15,750	15,000	
	Financial Administrator	10,500	10,500	
	Total Salaries	181,744	180,994	
	Total Salary Expenses	188,544	187,794	
	Transfer to Operating Fund			
	Total Expense	341,289	331,172	
	Net Income	5,481	-12,724	

This will likely end up lower because we aren't paying the salary the full year.

- Invite all to participate in the choices which shape us, sharing decisions equally and responsibly, and, in so doing, reclaim the constructive use of power;
- Embrace our common life, overflowing with compassion and liberal in love;
- Call forth and nurture our individual and collective creative gifts;
- Delight in humor and, through joyous celebration, savor the goodness of life.

upucc committee information

At UPUCC, most of our volunteer efforts are channeled through our committees. The UPUCC Nominating Committee invites Covenant Partners to consider serving on one of the following committees:

Adult Education: coordinates Sunday forums, book studies, evening discussion groups, and other activities that enhance educational opportunities for our adult members. In conjunction with the Fellowship Committee and other groups, they sponsor film outings and retreats, and publicize opportunities offered in the wider community.

Building & Grounds: plans for maintenance and use of our building, grounds and furnishings. Upcoming planned projects include an outdoor gathering space with deck and garden, and future playground.

Children's Committee: organizes educational and social opportunities for infants through fifth graders. Working closely with the **Children's Director**, this committee assists with the Children's Church program, teacher training and scheduling of teachers and nursery volunteers. Special events for children also fall under this committee.

Congregational Care: offers congregational care and spiritual support by focusing on individual needs and caring for personal relationships. They prepare the weekly e-prayer list, send birthday cards and notes of encouragement to members and friends, coordinate meals for those with special circumstances, coordinate the church's Care Teams and provide assistance and compassion in a variety of ways.

Faith in Action: encourages members to be actively involved in social justice issues. Through the leadership of this committee, UPUCC supports national and international organizations like Heifer International, UCC special offerings, and also commits support to local initiatives such as Oxford House and Urban Ministries. UPUCC Advocacy Task Force, Creativity Group, and Sanctuary Task Force are part of our Faith in Action.

Fellowship: provides opportunities for UPUCCers to know each other better through special events such as Feast of Friends, barbecue luncheons, Fat Tuesday and Christmas Caroling, (just to name a few!) Besides coordinating Sunday morning coffee and goodies, this committee also plans various meals on a regular basis.

Membership & Publicity: publicizes the UPUCC community through print and internet advertising, website, promotional items, brochures and other media. They provide welcome packets and help new Covenant Partners make connections with each other. They are responsible for the Sunday morning welcome table setup, name badges and recruiting greeters and provide the monthly Newcomers & Inquirers sessions.

Stewardship & Finance: is responsible for the supervision of the finances of the church. As part of this, the committee plans and implements the annual pledge campaign and works with other committees in the Church to formulate a proposed annual budget. Those recommendations are then presented to the Coordinating Council and Congregation. They also manage many other financial-related tasks including: insurance programs, weekly contribution deposits, financial reports, and analyzing contribution data.

Worship & Music: is in charge of the music program of the church including supporting the choir director and pianist, selection, acquisition and maintenance of musical instruments and materials. They are responsible for volunteers for communion preparation, ushering and sound system set up. They also coordinate with the pastor in planning worship services.

Youth: works with the Youth Director to provide middle and high school students the opportunity to establish and nurture a relationship with God, themselves and with their community. Special ministries throughout the year are designed to be fun and promote spiritual growth. Retreats, summer camp outs, lock-ins, local service projects, mission trips, special fellowships, fund raisers and worship are all part of the mix. Youth Committee also assists with selection of curricula, coordinating programs, identifying program leaders and leader training.

Personnel: responsible for personnel policies, including salary recommendations and benefits. This committee maintains written job descriptions for all paid positions. It also provides both accountability and support to paid staff by working with staff to create goals for the year. The committee screens applicants for employment with the church.

Nominating Committee (Year-Round): to be in charge of preparing a slate of candidates for all outgoing officers and committee chairs, as well as populating committees throughout the year.

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Officers and committees are elected at our Spring Congregational Meeting at the end of April, and terms begin in May. Many committees meet the second Sunday of each month. For further information, please contact Moderator-Elect, Bonnie Shook-Sa at Bonnie.Shook@yahoo.com

membership & publicity

Covenant Partner Directory

We are still eager for Covenant Partner updates to our password protected Pictorial Directory on upucc.org.

To update photos and/or contact information, follow this link: <http://bit.ly/UPUCCPictDirUpdate>

our wider community

For those who shop on amazon...

Here is an easy way to give a bit extra to UPUCC.

Bookmark the following link for your amazon purchases, and UPUCC will receive a percent of every eligible purchase (Thus far, UPUCC has received hundreds of dollars from this designation- and it costs the buyer nothing!).

Follow this link for complete instructions: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/56-2202519>



coming in early March...



the river speaks of thirst by jaki shelton green

The power and truth of North Carolina Poet Laureate Jaki Shelton Green's poetry illuminate the African-American experience, past, present, and future, in this extraordinary new compilation. Actors, musicians, and dancers enliven her powerful messages with spoken word, interpretive dance, and song.

This vibrant artistic collaboration shines a bright light on critical issues of race, injustice, and dignity affecting all of our lives in this pivotal moment in our history.



thejusticetheaterproject.org

Tickets available via: thejusticetheaterproject@gmail.com or 919-264-7089.