Emerging!

Perhaps “resurrection” is too strong a theological word, but it certainly feels like we are joyfully emerging from a collective dark space. It was wonderful to gather with more than 60 of you in person on June 20th. This first foray into in-person worship was a huge step in the right direction (even though a hard rain and a less than fully functioning HVAC system threw a little extra chaos into the mix!).

A few dozen more joined online and we anticipate the hybrid worship to continue into the foreseeable future. That, of course, would not be as seamless a possibility without the heroic and time-consuming effort of a group of wonderful Covenant Partners led by Peter van Dorsten (primary collaborators were Eliseo, Peg, Bill Yoder and Don Alderman but several others were also key). The new AV stage and camera made a superb initial run, and this set-up and technology will only improve over the next several weeks. Hooray for “The Great Emergence!”

Speaking of... as we become more comfortable gathering in-person and more of us are able to be vaccinated we want incrementally to offer as many options to move toward normalcy as is safe for the community. We look forward to the availability of vaccines for all ages. With that in mind, we encourage all who are able to be vaccinated as soon as you are able. Because some are not yet eligible (especially children), we will continue to mask while indoors in groups at the church.

Specific to our incremental emergence, the Covid Task Force recognizes that many among us who are vaccinated long for a more normal seating arrangement than the 6-foot distanced chairs while in worship that we offered in June. With that in mind, you can anticipate a center section of chairs in a ‘pre-pandemic’ arrangement beginning in July. (The chairs on either side will remain in a ‘distanced’ pattern and can be slid together in closer, but smaller configurations than the larger center section.) We also recognize, and fully support, those who choose to remain in the safest environment of their homes.

We trust this spectrum of options is in keeping with our Covenant of freedom, inclusivity and safety.

Other efforts in keeping with our “great emergence” are:

- The further development of an outdoor space for our children (see page 4)
- Slowly opening up the remainder of our building (the Library, nursery and auxiliary rooms. Children’s classrooms, unfortunately, will remain closed through the summer.)
- Our garden project is temporarily paused as we wait for decking materials to arrive (held up by the pandemic-slowed supply chain). It may be mid-August before we see any progress there.

But here’s the truth... We are EMERGING!! It feels almost like a resurrection.
from doug

_A Time Capsule: Let’s Make History_

In the process of thinking more deeply about our troubling complicity in systemic racism this past year, most of us hit the reality of our white-washed history head on. Delving into the hidden horrors of the 1898 Wilmington Massacre was but the tip of a chilling iceberg as we quickly experienced a Titanic-sized cover up. Some of you were further along in this ‘intentionally lost’ Black history but others, I’ll include myself, found SO many episodes of history I was never taught: The 1619 Project, the Tulsa Race Massacre, the Red Summer of 1919, the little remembered book “Zeb’s Black Baby” that chronicles Zebulon Vance’s part in gerrymandering a whole county for the purposes of suppressing black votes ...

...and _then_ we were reminded of the time-capsule in the cornerstone of Raleigh’s own Memorial Auditorium. Named “Memorial” to remember soldiers who gave their life in World War I, never-the-less, a time capsule in the corner stone of the building erected in 1932 contains, among its 6 items: a photograph of Robert E. Lee, and a Confederate battle flag from the Civil War.

I think I included that last part in a sermon in late May, about the time that Peter van Dorsten was nearing the completion of our new AV stage. Peter suggested (in the chat during that sermon, if I remember correctly) that we place our own time capsule beneath the almost completed stage. In true Peter form, he suggested we seal it in four days later. I convinced him to temporarily finish the corner where the capsule would be placed while we gave a little more thought to what we would share with some future generation. (Wanna join a time-capsule task force? Let me know.)

Who writes history, and for what purpose? Who deems what is important, what is to be included, what is wheat and what is chaff? (On some levels, these are theological questions and their answers provide as much insight into understanding our scriptures as do translations and word studies.)

Perhaps sometime this fall we will officially dedicate the new spaces emerging among us at 8208 Brownleigh. What a great time to offer a time capsule to some future generation. (What a great time to take stock in what and how this ‘present’ should be preserved for the ‘future.’)

What shall we tell this future generation about us... and about our hopes for them... and about our actions now that will lead to a better future then? What matters, in deed?

Pondering the present for the future with you,

\[\text{\textcopyright \hspace{1cm} D} \]

_P. S. Two significant matters of note:_

- **Eliseo**’s frustrations continue regarding his legal status. The process of obtaining a work permit (which is his ‘ticket’ to a driver’s license, etc.) is _painfully_ slow, and not at all certain. There is little his lawyer can do to speed up the appeals process and so, in short, Eliseo finds himself continuing at the mercy of an Immigration system that is understaffed and overburdened. As wonderful as his being “free to leave the church space without fear of pursuit by I.C.E.” is, he remains in legal limbo.

Keep Eliseo and his family close to your heart... and watch for more ideas on how we can support them.

- **The Youth Director Search Task Force** has been working quietly but persistently for several months. Excitedly, they hope to present a candidate to the Congregation within the next month.
July Youth Schedule is still being mapped out; please watch for updates or contact Jonathan McLean jemandkam0520@gmail.com

(Excellent) Youth Summer Offering at Catawba
DISCOVER 2021 (Discover Your Calling)

Catawba College - July 11-16 for High Schoolers and July 25-30 for Middle Schoolers. Students can choose a practical theology track in worship music, sport management, or service and ministry leadership as an additional way to discern their calling. Thanks to grant funding the entire program costs each participant $50. Check out www.catawba.edu/discover or call at 704-637-4725.

-What ages/grades are accepted? Rising 7th -9th graders attend the middle school week, and rising 10th-rising freshmen in college attend the high school week. (If there are scheduling conflicts sometimes rising 9th graders attend the high school week.)

-What is the application process? There is an online application at www.catawba.edu/discover payment is the last step of that application.

Several of our High School Seniors enjoyed a ‘pomp and puppy circumstances’ graduation celebration event hosted by The Frinks this past month!
children

An Outdoor Play Area...

... will soon become a reality at UPUCC!

Thanks to the ‘ground’ work of several UPUCCers, we hope to see the completion of our ‘starter set’ of playground equipment for the children to enjoy. Please watch for updates on ways to help bring this 13-year plan into reality for our families!

Also, tentative plans are coming together for an August 8 (2-4 pm) outdoor event including crafts, games and refreshments!

We look forward to coming together safely and having more ways to enjoy our UPUCC grounds! Thank you to all who have supported this effort!

July School Supply Collection

Children’s and Faith In Action Committees team up to invite everyone to collect school supplies for local area school children.

By purchasing either an extra set of the supply list for your child’s upcoming school year, or from the lists offered at local retailers, we can lessen the expenses for those parents for whom these extra costs are challenging. Donations can be dropped off at the office entrance of UPUCC or at Sunday worship during July. (We hope to delivery these items in early August.) Thank you!

mid-week gathering continues through july

**Wednesdays in July- 7 pm**

Our Wednesday evening Mid-Week Zoom Gatherings were paused for the month of June but will resume in July. Many thanks to Beth Mastick for hosting the 7 p.m. July gatherings. All are invited for this informal time of "community catch up."

The Zoom links will be listed at [UPUCC.org calendar](http://UPUCC.org) and in the weekly UPUCC email announcements the Thursday prior to each Wednesday session.
building & grounds - we love our sweat equity volunteers!

Seeking Volunteers for Clean Teams!

In an effort to keep our maintenance costs low, UPUCC volunteers clean our building. We hope to have our teams cleaning by late August following a professional deep clean of the facility. Volunteer cleaning does not include the atrium bathrooms!

Four teams of volunteers (each team cleans once/month) do a light cleaning (vacuum/dusting) of our space each week. Teams coordinate their day of the week to clean. Tasks are clearly outlined, and teams decide together which tasks each person will do. Teams are notified of any events to work around (e.g. wedding, funeral, theater performance, etc.)

Cleaning commitment-up to 2 hours per month. We have the following openings:

• Team 1 cleans before the 1st Sunday of each month plus 5th week of October: 2 openings
• Team 2 cleans before the 2nd Sunday of the month plus 5th week of January: 5 openings
• Team 3 cleans before the 3rd Sunday of the month plus 5th week of May: 3 openings
• Team 4 cleans before the 4th Sunday of the month plus 5th week of July: 4 openings

Don’t delay! Reserve your spot today! Contact Rebecca van Dorsten @ rebeccalvandorsten@gmail.com.

stewardship & finance

Financial Update

Our finances continued to hold steady in May. Offerings have been a little higher so far this year than in 2020. We have about 2 months’ worth of expenses in our Operating Fund, which is right in the target of 2-3 months.

The Operating Fund Balance was $68,291 in May 2021, versus a balance of $50,719 in May 2020. The Stewardship and Finance Committee and Coordinating Council have approved spending funds from the Count On Me! Campaign to cover the additional deck expenses and the live streaming equipment and platform. We are also using money from other funds (such as undesignated memorial funds) for the new playground equipment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>May YTD Results</th>
<th>2021</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
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<tr>
<td>Net Income</td>
<td>$36,320</td>
<td>$24,190</td>
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July Forums... will be offered online and in-person at 9 am Sunday.

July 4th - No forum, due to holiday

July 11th - Curamerica Update (Nurse Alma, guest speaker) UPUCC has gone with Curamerica to Guatemala twice in the last several years to provide support for their maternity center, where they work to reduce maternal and child mortality for the Mayan women in the northwest highlands of Guatemala. On July 11, we will all have the opportunity to renew our relationship with Head Nurse Alma during the forum. Please come to learn from Nurse Alma and her co-head nurse themselves about their work in the remote area in which they live (near the border with Mexico); how they are dealing with the pandemic, and when we might be able to return on a third mission trip. We will be running a zoom session from the worship space, so you can participate in person or zoom from home!

July 18th - Video: How the Bible Actually Works I’m not sure if you’ve noticed, but the Bible is weird. It’s an ancient, ambiguous, and diverse book and there’s no one right way to read it. Join me, Brian Spears, and Pete Enns, Old Testament scholar and professor, as Pete explains how the Bible can lead us to wisdom rather than answers, and why that is good news. Whether you are frustratedly Christian, barely Christian, or formerly Christian – this course is intended for you.

July 25th - UPUCC Racial Justice Work(ing) Group: Please join us to reflect on the work of this group, which has been in formation for about a year now! We'll have an update to share about our conversation with Poplar Springs Christian Church and discuss next steps for the group and our entire church community. We look forward to hearing new ideas and celebrating the work done thus far. Meredith Pope, facilitating.

Progressive Bible Study: History, the Bible & You- Mondays 7 pm

Using materials and the approach outlined in the History in the Bible podcast from Garry Stevens (https://www.historyinthebible.com/), in addition to considering historical and archaeological evidence and critical research from biblical and literary scholars, we’ll take the time to discuss how we can make scripture meaningful to us in our own lives today (and which parts of scripture are NOT meaningful to us personally).

Our Monday night sessions offer the opportunity to explore the Bible with open minds and open discussions. We’d love for you to join us!

July 5th- Genesis Part 2: Tales of the Flood: Flood epics were a dime a dozen in ancient Mesopotamia - Genesis has its own version (or two). This section of Genesis is full of puzzles: sibling rivalry starts; Enoch goes to heaven; the mysterious Nephilim make an appearance; Canaan is cursed for no reason, and slavery is justified. As we explore how this topic is relevant to us today, we’ll discuss, among other things:

- What makes stories of sibling rivalries so powerful? Are they still prevalent to us today?
- How can a vague and mysterious bit of information lead people down a path of creating stories and their own “truth”?
- Is the Noah’s Ark story a good tale for children? Why or why not?
- The text behind “The Curse of Ham” was used to justify slavery in the 19th century and racist ideas throughout the years. How do similar texts or stories continue to get twisted today for those purposes today, and how can that be prevented?

...continued on next page.
adult education continued...

July 12th- Genesis Part 3: Abraham is Called: After the primeval stories, Genesis introduces the man who dominates and forms the very heart of the book, Abraham. He is the first of the patriarchs. As we explore how this topic is relevant to us today, we’ll discuss, among other things:

- How does the tale of the Tower of Babel share more recent concerns (or paranoia) over the United Nations and common currencies such as the Euro in some quarters?
- The God of the Patriarchs was often portrayed as a personal, family god. How do you relate to that type of characterization of god? What are the pros and cons of that type of deity?

July 19th- Genesis IV: Trouble in the Family: Abraham swindles the Philistine king Abimelech just as he did Pharaoh, and almost kills his son Isaac, following God’s commands. At the very last minute, God says it’s all been a test. Was this a remnant of ancient Israelite child sacrifice? As we explore how this topic is relevant to us today, we’ll discuss, among other things:

- What stories do we tell of our “enemies” to justify our disdain?
- What are biblical “family values”?

July 26th- Genesis V: Jacob and Joseph: Jacob is the great trickster in the Bible, outwitting his father Isaac, his brother Esau, and even his own children. The P, E, and J sources have several different versions of Jacob’s stories. For example, Jacob visits and names Bethel twice. We conclude with an introduction to Joseph. As we explore how this topic is relevant to us today, we’ll discuss, among other things:

- What does it mean to have a “personal relationship with God?”
- What is it like to wrestle with our concept of the divine, and what it asks of us?

Additional Adult Ed Offerings

Book Group Tuesday 6 pm Contact kdobbs001@nc.rr.com

Brew Theology resumes August 12 @7:30 pm raleighdurhambrewtheology@gmail.com (2nd & 4th Thursdays)

Meditation Group Saturday 10 am babspears@gmail.com (1st Saturday of each month)

Check the UPUCC Website for schedule and some links: https://www.upucc.org/newscalendar/calendar

-Claim our inescapable connection with the sacred earth and all of creation;
-Live justice as the social expression of love, and peace as the present manifestation of the world to come.
in our wider community

Kids Camp! Story Theatre - “Around The World”
Summer 2021

~ Weeks of July 12, 19, and 26 at Umstead Park United Church of Christ, 8208 Brownleigh Drive, Raleigh.

~ Weeks of August 2 and 9 at the Emily K Center in Durham

www.emilyk.org

~ Enroll for 1 week, 2 weeks, or all weeks!

WEEK 1: Animal Tales - Favorite stories from the animal kingdom, including some of the best of Aesop’s fables.
WEEK 2: Stories of the World - Folktales from cultures all over the world.
- Camp culminates in a performance. At this time, it will be live-streamed.
- Camp is limited to 25 students per week.
- Rising 2nd to Rising 9th Graders.
For complete details: http://www.thejusticetheaterproject.org/summer-2021

UCC VIRTUAL GENERAL SYNOD 33

The 2021 General Synod of the United Church of Christ, meeting July 11-18, will consider 11 resolutions and several bylaw changes.

Register today and join us for General Synod 33 – a fully virtual event. Registration provides you access to all aspects of General Synod, including worship, optional events, business, over 50 workshops, exhibit hall, keynote speakers and much more.

General Synod events will occur in the later half of the day to afford all an increased ability to engage. Registration is more affordable this year than it’s ever been ($100/visitor).

Register here.

Establish a safe haven, free from the fear of judgment, where wounds are healed,
differences are celebrated and inclusivity is intentional;
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sat.</td>
<td>July 3</td>
<td>10 am Meditation Group. Contact <a href="mailto:babspears@gmail.com">babspears@gmail.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sun.</td>
<td>July 4</td>
<td>10:30 am Worship: Our Country “Tis of Thee</td>
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<td>Mon.</td>
<td>July 5</td>
<td>7 pm Progressive Bible Study. See page 6.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tues.</td>
<td>July 6</td>
<td>6 pm Book Group. Contact <a href="mailto:kdobbs001@nc.rr.com">kdobbs001@nc.rr.com</a></td>
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<td>7 pm Racial Justice Work(ing) Group</td>
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<td>Wed.</td>
<td>July 7</td>
<td>7 pm Mid-Week Gathering. See link in weekly email.</td>
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<td>Sat.</td>
<td>July 10</td>
<td>9 am Congregational Care Prayer Breakfast</td>
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<td>9:15 am Stewardship &amp; Finance Committee</td>
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<td>10:30 am Worship: World (D)iVision</td>
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<td>11:45 am Fellowship and Personnel Committees; Advocacy Task Force</td>
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<td>Mon.</td>
<td>July 12</td>
<td>7 pm Progressive Bible Study. See page 7.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tues.</td>
<td>July 13</td>
<td>6 pm Book Group. Contact <a href="mailto:kdobbs001@nc.rr.com">kdobbs001@nc.rr.com</a></td>
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<tr>
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<td>7 pm Mid-Week Gathering. See link in weekly email.</td>
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<td>Thurs.</td>
<td>July 15</td>
<td>5 pm Covid Response Task Force</td>
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<td>6 pm Coordinating Council</td>
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<td>10:30 am Worship: Am I A Christian Atheist?</td>
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<td>11:45 am Music &amp; Worship Committee</td>
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<td>7 pm Progressive Bible Study. See page 7.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tues.</td>
<td>July 20</td>
<td>6 pm Book Group. Contact <a href="mailto:kdobbs001@nc.rr.com">kdobbs001@nc.rr.com</a></td>
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<td>7 pm Mid-Week Gathering. See link in weekly email.</td>
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<td>Sat.</td>
<td>July 24</td>
<td>9 am Congregational Care Prayer Breakfast</td>
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<td>10:30 am Worship: Rooted in Love: General Synod 33</td>
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<td>Following worship Congregational Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tues.</td>
<td>July 27</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed.</td>
<td>July 28</td>
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We seek no destination.

The sacred journey is our home.