September Surge

OK... OK... September is all about things getting back up and running... right!?! 

Humm...

Have you ever watched the Road Runner Cartoons when Wile E. Coyote stops suddenly, and his feet make a sound like car tires screeching to a halt? (This usually just before he falls off a cliff.) That’s sort of what this September feels like.

...not that we intend to fall off a cliff, but with the Delta variant, things at present certainly are not headed in the direction we wanted. That said, we still have plenty of hopeful plans on the horizon.

-Our Worship and Sunday Forums will continue as hybrid offerings (offering them both in-person and simultaneously on Zoom). We are working hard to create one community even from this divided format.

Other meetings (small groups, committees, etc.), unless specifically publicized otherwise, will be virtual.

-Our new Minister with Youth, Tyler Ung, will be introduced in worship on Sunday, September 5th. Tyler brings a wealth of gifts with him, and we are certain that our resilience and his creativity will eventually laugh at the flimsy blockades this weird pandemic time presents our youth community.

-Even though we are now temporarily delaying our in-person activities for children, we are also exploring new online alternatives.

-Sheila Alderman invites any willing singers to join her (and David), beginning September 8th for choir rehearsal. (Who are those masked people? The Toooone Rangers!)

-One great day, there will be mulching and planting and watering to be done... after the City passes the soil compaction (failed the first inspection) for our footings to then be poured, and then the deck structure built, and then the decking fastened, and then the railings delivered and installed. (It’s kind of like the parable of the Sower... There are so many obstacles and ways the seeds are thwarted... but despite them all, a bountiful crop emerges.)

-And, more broadly, the UCC’s Council for Health and Human Service Ministries offers a “Reason to Have Hope: A Public Health Response to Racism” course. The discussion of the exceptional multi-part, interactive, free course begins Sept. 14. (For details and to sign up, follow the link provided here.)

The (more) Official UPUCC Task Force Update

The unwelcome trajectory of the Delta variant necessitates a few steps backward, for now, in our plan of incremental steps toward fully emerging from Covid-19.

Three changes to our present protocol are necessary:

1) Required masking indoors for church activities now extends to masking outdoors as well.

2) More spacing in worship seating is offered. Additionally, chairs can be further arranged as you wish upon your arrival.

3) The wider opening of children’s programming has been delayed until a better understanding of the safety of children can be assessed. Look for an update following our Sept. 16 Coordinating Council Meeting.
from doug

Things I Want You to Know

Like all of you, I suspect, I am totally bummed by the setbacks of the Delta variant. We don’t know how long it will affect us. We don’t know how great the impact will be. What we do know is that we will figure out ways to deal with those developments. We will continue to be community with each other. We will continue to extend that community beyond us. We will offer embrace. (...but first, ask permission!)

If there is one thing I have experienced time and again among you, it’s that, in the face of challenge, you rise. You are a resilient group of ‘do-righters.’ You do the right thing, even when it is challenging, even when it is counter to the status quo.

I am not the least bit concerned about how we react to the challenges the variant or variants will throw at us collectively. I AM concerned, however, about how it may affect some of you, some of us, individually.

Our strength is in our community... a community founded in the goodness of God seeking to be grounded in the wholeness of humanity.

Lean on each other, good people. Beckoned to this place of belonging, we will make a way together.

I will be traveling to Vermont (to meet my new grandson) over the weekend of September 19. Happily, our own Sara Acosta, in the middle of her pursuit of a Master of Divinity, has agreed to lead us in worship. (She will be assisted, at least in part, by Tyler Ung, our new minister of youth and himself freshly ordained this past June.)

Speaking of... I am quite excited about Tyler Ung being among us soon. Each time I meet with Tyler I am more convinced that we have found a treasure, the worth of which I am only beginning to recognize.

(I don’t want to put any undue pressure on him, though. Please forget that I am excited.)

...and, as said before, I speak on behalf of us all thanking Jonathan McLean for his work holding our youth together in the challenging interim!

Update on Time Capsule- Let’s Make Some History, People!!
This is at least the third time over the past 3 months that I’ve announced an opportunity to participate in a time capsule to be placed beneath our newly constructed AV platform in the rear corner of our worship space. It’s our chance to “record a little history of our own.”

What would you like to say about us now, to a group of “us” in the future?

To give everyone an opportunity to “make history,” all ages are warmly invited to submit their offerings by Sunday, September 26. (You may send your submissions to Peg or me.)

The final placing of the time capsule will be celebrated the following Sunday, Oct. 3rd (...which is, by the way, the 22nd anniversary of our congregation!)

Stay safe, stay healthy, and always lean on each other.

leaning with you-

Doug
Children’s Programming on Hold, But Activities Continue!

As Doug mentioned on page 2, Council has decided to delay any announcement of children’s programming until after their September 16 meeting. In the meantime, all children are invited to participate in our UPUCC Time Capsule! What would we like UPUCC members of the future to learn about us and this time we are living in?

All are welcome to submit their drawings, poems, photos and stories to be included. **Deadline** for submissions is Sunday, September 26. Entries can be dropped off, mailed or emailed to peg@upucc.org. The time capsule will be dedicated on Sunday, October 3 and placed under our AV stage in the worship space- to be opened at some point in the distant future!

Also...

Have a favorite story you’d like to share with other UPUCC families? **Whether child reading to parent or parent reading to child**, all are invited to submit a 3-5 minute video to be shared in our This Week email.

As another option, families are welcome to arrange to share a story live on zoom during worship! Contact peg@upucc.org for details.

Successful School Supply Collection!

Over the summer, Faith In Action and Children’s Committees organized a school supply collection for local children in need. Thank you to all who contributed including a huge donation from the Creativity Group!

The following items were delivered to the Durham Rescue Mission:

- 2800 post it notes
- 192 colored pencils
- 12 rulers
- 60 ball point pens
- 32 gel pens
- 40 highlighters
- 304 pencils
- 21 spiral notebooks
- 21 composition books
- 18 folders
- 18 pairs of scissors
- 10 pencil sharpeners
- 91 erasers
- 488 crayons
- 52 glue sticks
- 20 rolls of tape
- 1700 sheets of notebook paper
- 8 notebook binders

*more on page 4...*
Orientation & Safe Church Policy Review

In anticipation of reopening, all Nursery, Children’s Church and Youth volunteers will be reminded to participate in an orientation and safe church policy review (date TBD). In accordance with the Safe Church Policy adopted by the UPUCC Congregation, a background check is required for persons who work with our children and youth, if not previously done. The policy is available on our website.

adult education

Forums Sunday 9 am (Forums held in the library and also on zoom) Link here: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87850109590?pwd=UloxR1BqWG99na01FM0E5mJ1MWRCUT09
Meeting ID: 878 5010 9590
Password: 001672
Dial in: 929 436 2866

September 5th – No Forum (Labor Day Weekend)

September 12th – Faith Journey - Bill Bingham Don’t miss this opportunity to learn more about Bill Bingham, as he graciously shares his journey of faith with us. Bill will share the life events that have shaped his faith, and how he and Tina found their way to UPUCC.

September 19th - How the Bible Actually Works, Session 3 In this session facilitated by Brian Spears, we’ll be hearing Pete Enns discuss the ambiguity that's "baked into" the Bible. If you've ever wondered why the Bible seems to contradict itself in places, that's because it does! Come listen to Pete and discuss with us why these contradictions may have been left in Scripture by the editors of the Bible.

September 26th – Reparations: What? Why? and How? Have you ever wondered what reparations are, why they're needed, and how they work? Renate Andrews will help us explore the definitions, reasons for and history of reparations using the Reparations Now Toolkit by the Movement for Black Lives. Join us as we learn about this important racial justice issue.

Progressive Bible Study Monday 7 pm (These studies held on zoom only.)

Continuing with materials and the approach outlined in the History in the Bible podcast from Garry Stevens (https://www.historyinthebible.com/), we’ll look at some of the latest research into the Biblical texts and the archaeology behind them. 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).

Watch for topics listed in upcoming This Week emails. These Monday night sessions offer the opportunity to explore the Bible with open minds and open discussions. We’d love for you to join us!

Book Group Tuesday 6 pm
Contact Kathy at kdobbs001@nc.rr.com for details.

Meditation Group 1st Saturday of the month 10 am
Contact Bridget at babyspears@gmail.com for details.
faith in action

Prayers and Actions for Afghanistan

Deeply moved to take meaningful action, here are specific ways UPUCC Covenant Partners are inviting you to join them:

-Nationally, call the White House and encourage the President to extend the deadline for our exit from the country until all refugees can be safely transported. You can reach the White House here:
https://www.whitehouse.gov/get-involved/write-or-call/

-Locally, Linda Harding, with the Raleigh office of the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI) offers:
- Make a financial contribution that provides families with critical resettlement services and resources. https://refugees.org/donate-uscri-nc/
- Become a Welcome Home Partner and set up apartments for new arrivals.
  Email WelcomeNC@uscrimail.org
- Volunteer to teach English, tutor students, or serve as family mentor.
  Email Volunteer@uscrinc.org
- Provide temporary housing. (Call 919-334-0072 x 4000)

Additional Information and opportunities:
- The International Rescue Committee (IRC): https://www.rescue.org/article/how-can-i-help-afghanistan
- The United Church of Christ: https://p2a.co/FbTo63R

Sign Up for Fresh Produce
The Fall Black Farmers CSA Season is Now Open!

Over the summer, UPUCC was one of 3 area churches joining 8 churches already involved in a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture). Eleven UPUCC families signed a membership agreement to purchase shares (or ½ shares) for the 8-week summer season.

Through efforts such as these farm-to-church connections, churches are able to participate in the building of thriving local food systems and economies while also engaging in relational ministries with farmers of color in their communities.

This month, September, brings another opportunity for UPUCCers to sign-up and participate.

First delivery date is planned for October 5. To join, please contact Peter van Dorsten pv2049@gmail.com.
Deadline to sign up is September 21. (The fall season offerings include: Lettuce, mustard greens, spinach, beets, bok choy and Swiss chard.)
faith in action continued

Creativity Group

The Creativity Group greatly appreciates your ongoing support, which has enabled us recently to donate to the Food Bank of Central and Eastern NC and to purchase and donate many school supplies to the UPUCC School Supply Drive. We are grateful for the interest shown in our card displays in the Worship Space. It is easy and meaningful to send a special card AND at the same time support worthy causes. We are always happy to accept special requests. Our Christmas/holiday cards will again be available in an online catalog. These are cards we are happy to duplicate; we just ask that orders come in early as we have a limited supply of certain items. Complete directions for ordering these cards will be on the UPUCC.org website starting in mid September. We will also have samples of these cards on display in the Worship Space; you can order cards there as well. One of a kind Christmas/holiday cards will be available later in the year.

Gail Holden  gailwholden@gmail.com  Linda Hebert  lnhebert1@gmail.com
Alice Jermyn  adjermyn@rocketmail.com  Marcia Welsh  homeofwelsh@gmail.com

building & grounds

Thank You!
Thank you to all who helped clear our space in prep for deep cleaning and then reset it! It took three days and about 30 person-hours to professionally deep clean our facility, and it shines!

- Rebecca van Dorsten, Chair
  Building and Grounds

-Demonstrate our concern for neighbor through service and prophetic voice;
-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.

-from the UPUCC Covenant
Mid-Week Wednesday Night Zooms Now on Hold

We are grateful for the 'pandemic produced' (necessitated?) mid-week virtual gatherings over the past many months. They have provided fellowship, support and camaraderie for those who participated in a time of unexpected isolation. That said, we are shifting the 'official' activities of UPUCC in different directions during that time slot. (No doubt you will continue to support each other regularly in a less 'church sponsored' manner!)

Please Save Cardboard

The UPUCC Garden Deck Project is finally underway! In anticipation of our garden prep and planting portions coming closer, cardboard boxes can be used as an environmentally friendly way to block weeds. Please bring your cardboard to church on SUNDAY ONLY and drop off at the shed at the corner of the parking lot.

- all tape removed
- flattened
- pizza box tops ONLY if free of all food matter
- to be stored in the shed between the dumpsters

All in hopes of a 'Weed Block and Mulch Day' this fall to prepare for planting. Thanks for your help!
-Peter van Dorsten

Greeters Welcome!

Individuals comfortable attending in-person worship are invited to sign up for greeter duty and offering a friendly hello to people who are new to our community as well as Covenant Partners and friends!
Here is the link to the sign up, which includes attached Greeter Instructions.
Thanks for your help!

Shout Out to Our New Clean Teams!

Following the ‘top to bottom’ professional cleaning of our building last month, ten of our Covenant Partners have committed to keeping our spaces neat and tidy each month. They include:

Captain Edward McFarland  Captain Dan Harrell
-Johnny Gatlin  -Scott Pope
-Mark Stevens  -Maria Mauriello
-Mary Pat Peters  -Ada McKerrell
-Shawn Holmes  -Colin McKerrell

Many thanks to each of you for stepping up during this time to keep our church home sparkling clean!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Contact/Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thurs.</td>
<td>Sept. 2</td>
<td>9:30 am</td>
<td>Creativity Group in the library</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat.</td>
<td>Sept. 4</td>
<td>10 am</td>
<td>Meditation Group. Contact <a href="mailto:habspears@gmail.com">habspears@gmail.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun.</td>
<td>Sept. 5</td>
<td>10:30 am</td>
<td>Worship: Labor Day- Missing ‘the Grind’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon.</td>
<td>Sept. 6</td>
<td>7 pm</td>
<td>Progressive Bible Study. See page 4.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tues.</td>
<td>Sept. 7</td>
<td>6 pm</td>
<td>Book Group. Contact <a href="mailto:kdobbs001@nc.rr.com">kdobbs001@nc.rr.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7 pm</td>
<td>Racial Justice Work(ing) Group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed.</td>
<td>Sept. 8</td>
<td>7 pm</td>
<td>UPUCC Choir Rehearsal in the worship space.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurs.</td>
<td>Sept. 9</td>
<td>7:30 pm</td>
<td>Brew Theology. Contact Brian Spears at <a href="mailto:raleighdurhambrewtheology@gmail.com">raleighdurhambrewtheology@gmail.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9:15 am</td>
<td>Stewardship &amp; Finance Committee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10:30 am</td>
<td>Worship: What if … We ‘planted’ a Church Today?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Following worship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon.</td>
<td>Sept. 13</td>
<td>7 pm</td>
<td>Progressive Bible Study. See page 4.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tues.</td>
<td>Sept. 14</td>
<td>6 pm</td>
<td>Book Group. Contact <a href="mailto:kdobbs001@nc.rr.com">kdobbs001@nc.rr.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed.</td>
<td>Sept. 15</td>
<td>7 pm</td>
<td>UPUCC Choir Rehearsal in the worship space.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurs.</td>
<td>Sept. 16</td>
<td>9:30 am</td>
<td>Creativity Group in the library</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5 pm</td>
<td>Covid Response Task Force</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6 pm</td>
<td>Coordinating Council</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10:30 am</td>
<td>Worship: Responding to the Sadness of the World, Sara Acosta preaching.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11:45 am</td>
<td>Music &amp; Worship Committee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon.</td>
<td>Sept. 20</td>
<td>6 pm</td>
<td>Garden Task Force</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7 pm</td>
<td>Progressive Bible Study. See page 4.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tues.</td>
<td>Sept. 21</td>
<td>6 pm</td>
<td>Book Group. Contact <a href="mailto:kdobbs001@nc.rr.com">kdobbs001@nc.rr.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed.</td>
<td>Sept. 22</td>
<td>7 pm</td>
<td>UPUCC Choir rehearsal in the worship space.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurs.</td>
<td>Sept. 23</td>
<td>5 pm</td>
<td>Children’s Committee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10:30 am</td>
<td>Worship: Perpetual Kindness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon.</td>
<td>Sept. 27</td>
<td>7 pm</td>
<td>Progressive Bible Study. See page 4.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tues.</td>
<td>Sept. 28</td>
<td>6 pm</td>
<td>Book Group. Contact <a href="mailto:kdobbs001@nc.rr.com">kdobbs001@nc.rr.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed.</td>
<td>Sept. 29</td>
<td>7 pm</td>
<td>UPUCC Choir rehearsal in the worship space.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Live Theater Returning to UPUCC October 8-24**

“An Interactive Play That Shines A Light On All Things Worth Living For”

**TICKETS** are available now. Reserved seating by groups for safety. Limited capacity.

Email for tickets: thejusticetheaterproject@gmail.com.

**SAFETY FIRST:** For this show, masks required. Everyone must be vaccinated and show proof of vaccination. All artists, volunteers, patrons, and staff.

**SEATING:** Reserved group seating available. Half the theater will be pods, the other side will be general seating. Seating will be in the round.

The show runs 90 minutes with no intermission. [http://www.thejusticetheaterproject.org/](http://www.thejusticetheaterproject.org/)

- 8 -