

# Unity Presbyterian Church

## Yoke Newsletter ~ January 2017

### Church Calendar:

<http://unitypresbyterian.net/page/calendar>

### Prayer Concerns:

<http://unitypresbyterian.net/prayer.php>

## From Pastor Andrew :

### Agreeing to Disagree

Friends in Christ,

Every year Unity Presbyterian Church selects new Elders, Deacons, and Trustees to rotate into service for three years while some Elders, Deacons, and Trustees end their term. We thank those who have served and those now serving for their commitments of time, talent, and energy. Each year the group we've selected are a unique team called to the service of guiding and caring for our church, our congregation, and our presence in the community. We trust and pray they will be guided by the Holy Spirit in all their decisions. We might not always agree with all of their choices, but we know that God is working through them. One of the beautiful things about being a part of the Presbyterian Church is our willingness to sit side by side with people who we sometimes disagree with. Christ invites us all to the same table, and God offers us all the same Grace.

This applies to those we agree and disagree with, inside and outside the church. This election season has shown me that there is a great deal of division in our nation about many complex and difficult issues. We might not always agree about who is elected to office or to the policies our city, state, and national leaders create, but we trust that God is working through them. We can agree to disagree on a many topics: How to approach the influx of immigration; The best way to handle health care; How to address the tensions of race and/or religious differences; How to honor the 2nd Amendment while protecting lives; The best way to handle economic realities; How to care for refugees while defending our nation from terrorism.

While we can agree to disagree on how we approach many of these issues we cannot agree to disagree with Jesus. Christ came to the world in the humblest of ways. Jesus commands us to love God and love our neighbor. He asks us to pray for our enemies. Jesus promises, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." (Mathew 25:40) We are caring for Christ when we care for those among us that are left-out, feel unheard, or who have been disregarded because of their nationality, race, gender, orientation, or religious beliefs.

It is my prayer that the Holy Spirit will be present in the leadership of our church this year. It is my prayer that the Holy Spirit will be present in the leadership of our nation this year. It is my prayer that all of us will seek Jesus among the poor, the hungry, the oppressed, the refugees, the immigrants, the frightened, and the marginalized so that when we find Him there, He will find us providing, feeding, liberating, welcoming, protecting, and seeking justice for Him.

May the Peace of Christ be with you,  
Rev. Andrew Black  
Worship Schedule

January 1st — 1st Sunday after Christmas  
Ring in the New Year with “I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day”

January 8th — Baptism of the Lord, Epiphany Observed  
Sermon: “We Are Witnesses” by Rev. Andrew Black  
Inspired by Matthew 2:1-12 & Acts 10:34-43

January 15th — 2nd Sunday after Epiphany  
Sermon: “What are you Looking For?” by Rev. Andrew Black  
Inspired by John 1:29-42

January 22nd — 3rd Sunday after Epiphany  
Sermon: “Now That You’ve Found It” by Rev. Andrew Black  
Inspired by Matthew 4:12-23

January 29th — 4th Sunday after Epiphany  
Sermon: “Challenged” by Rev. Andrew Black  
Inspired by Micah 6:1-8

### **Growth Giving Challenge for the Potts Food Pantry**

Can we rise to the challenge and can we do a little bit more? Last year we did an amazing job as a congregation helping stock the pantries shelves each week. Just one extra item per person per week added to the one item we already bring can make a world of difference. By just adding a few more items to your weekly shopping list and dropping them off on Sunday morning we can greatly increase the efforts to feed those of our community in need. Keep watching the weekly bulletin insert for suggestions on the items the Food Pantry needs most.

The Food Pantry currently serves about 12 families along with several emergency need bags each month and there is an ever increasing need in our community. Imagine the difference Unity could make if it could double the number of families we assist on a regular basis. With some creative thinking and your help in 2017 we might be able to do that. The pantry not only needs donations, it needs YOU. There is a great deal of time and effort that goes into operating the food pantry each month. There is food to purchase, stock, pack, and distribute. Our current dedicated group of volunteers is amazing, but they need YOUR help. I hope each of us can spend some time discerning how they might be called to help support the Food Pantry with our time and talents. Please let Pastor Andrew, Dawn Chapman or Jan

Buffington know if you are interested in doing more to help us continue to answer Christ's call to care for and love our neighbors. ~Pastor Andrew

A Special Thank You!

To every one of you for letting me serve with you and follow my Call to serve God here at Unity. Every day this past year has been a joy and a blessing for me. I also want to say thank you to all who contributed to the Christmas staff gift. This year your generosity came exactly when it was needed! Just as Dawn was returning home from the grocery with our Christmas dinner she discovered our refrigerator was broken. Your combined gift helped us to replace it with a new and better unit. Thank you all for the gifts, and for everything you do for us throughout the year. All our love to you and yours in the New Year, Andrew, Dawn, Griffin, Gracen, & Zachary Black

### Weekly Bible Study of the Gospel of Luke

Starting on January 11th, Pastor Andrew will continue leading the discussion group that began looking at the Birth Narrative of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke during Advent. Over five weeks the group will continue to look at the Good News of Jesus in Luke's Gospel discussing: the Early Life of Jesus, the Preparation for Jesus' Ministry, and the beginning of Jesus' Ministry in Galilee. Everyone is welcome to join Pastor Andrew at 10am on Wednesdays. The following chapters of Luke will be covered each week and reading ahead is suggested so everyone can participate in the discussion and come with any questions that the Scriptures bring up for them. Hope to see you there!

Jan 11th: Luke 2: 21-52

Jan 18th: Luke 3:1 - 4:13

Jan 25th: Luke 4:14-44

Feb 1st: Luke 5:1 - 6:16

Feb 8th: Luke 6:17 - 7:50

### **The Mitten Tree**

**Bless all of you for your gifts for the 14th and Chestnut center. The final count was 3 head band wraps, 3 scarves, 13 hats, and 16 mittens and gloves. As you know, the weather is getting colder so these gifts will be appreciated by the children. Thanks to all of you!!**

### **Blanket Sunday**

**Our third Blanket Sunday will be on January 29. We will collect twin or full sizes of blankets, sheets (new or slightly used), pillows and mattress pads. Remember the white sales in January!! Thank you!**

## Morning Glories

The Morning Glories will meet Tuesday, January 10th at 10:30 at the church. We will study lesson five, "According to Paul". Join us for fellowship and remember to bring a sack lunch.



Save the front of your greeting cards as a mission/recycling project. There is a box in the back of the church where you can leave your cards.

### View from the Inside by Camille Church Mouse



**Happy 2017!! It's cold, there's snow on the ground, and I'm ready for Spring!**

**December was busy. The choir cantata was beautiful, Andrea's music was excellent, and the Christmas Eve service was inspiring.**

**Now we can get ready for the new year. We're collecting blankets again, and Souper Bowl Sunday is coming. The Pancake Supper will be here before you know it. All that activity has worn me out and now I need a nap.**

**Join us this year and be a part of our fellowship. Be safe and remember God loves you!**

**God's blessings and joy to all of you! Peace and love!**

### Green Corner

**Happy 2017!!! The start of a new year brings resolutions to save money, eat better, exercise more, organize more, etc. Here are some ideas from Small Footprint Family that will improve your life and help take care of the earth!**

**Bring your own shopping bags.**

**Shopping with reusable bags everywhere you shop is a simple way to reduce ocean pollution and prevent unnecessary sea mammal deaths. It also helps you reduce consumption, prevent deforestation, and reduce our dependence on fossil fuels.**

**Plastic bags are the second most prevalent form of litter after cigarette butts, and over 4 billion bags get caught by the wind and end up clogging storm drains and littering our forests, rivers, lakes, beaches and oceans every year. Plastic bags are also known to kill over a million birds and hundreds of thousands of sea turtles, whales, seals, and other marine mammals every year.**

**Plastic bags are made of petroleum-based polyethylene and require 12 million barrels of oil to produce each year—a nonrenewable resource that creates more greenhouse gases and**

increases our dependency on foreign oil. That's over \$500,000,000 that we're spending on oil, just to throw it away.

There is an easy way to always remember your reusable bags. Let's make the plastic bag industry extinct this year, not sea turtles!

### Cook from scratch.

This is a harder resolution to stick to, but your health, your wallet, and the environment will thank you for it. From farm to factory to store to table, processed, packaged convenience foods are dripping in wasted energy, oil, water and trees. This is especially tragic, since processed foods contain little to no nutrition, and usually have to be sweetened, fortified, preserved and "flavor enhanced" to be edible.

Batch cooking on weekends, meal planning, and cookbooks specializing in easy, fast preparation can make cooking from scratch much easier. Having something home-cooked in the freezer is invaluable for those nights when you are just too tired or too harried to cook. Start with just one or two days a week, or a batch-cooking session every weekend, and then work up from there. Take the opportunity to slow down, spend time with family or friends, and enjoy taking care of yourself.

### Eat organic as much as possible.

Organic costs a bit more up front, but this is money well spent because your food will be more nutritious and you won't have to worry about the health effects of eating GMOs, toxic pesticides, or sewage sludge. (Ew.)

Plus you can be sure that your food was grown in a way that helped protect and enhance the ecosystem it was grown in. And if your food is also locally grown, then you can be sure that it is also supporting your local economy, too.

You can get organic food cheaply if you join a CSA, start a buying club, visit the farmer's market at the end of the day when they are trying to get rid of everything, or wait for and stock up during sales. Of course, starting an organic garden is perhaps the best way to reduce your food costs and improve your nutrition. You actually need less than an acre of land to grow all you need to eat.

### Eat better meat, and eat less of it.

Vegetarians have their environmental argument against today's mass-produced meat right: The highly industrialized way in which we raise most livestock is inhumane, unhealthy and extremely unsustainable. Let there be no doubt: Conventional, grain-fed meat is a home-wrecker!

But here's where environmental argument for vegetarianism ends: Whether you feed the grain to livestock or people doesn't matter. An industrially farmed corn or soybean monoculture is a major source of greenhouse gases, air, water and GMO pollution either way. But a permanent grassland ecosystem is a biodiverse, ever-cycling pump that continuously pushes carbon back into the soil where it increases fertility and builds topsoil.

The irony of all of this is that the very prairie we destroyed to grow grains to feed livestock not only released most of the carbon dioxide that harms our climate today, but was already the perfect, natural habitat for raising healthy, happy cows, sheep, chickens and pigs virtually for free.

They have calculated that converting just half the U.S. corn and soy acreage back to pasture might cut carbon emissions by as much as 144 trillion pounds—and that's not even counting the reduced use of fossil fuels for vehicles, machinery, fertilizers and pesticides that would also result. To put that in perspective, that's enough carbon sequestration to offset the emissions from all the cars and trucks on the planet!

Avoid fast fashion.

Big chain stores with insanely cheap clothing seem too good to be true—and that's because they are. America's insatiable appetite for cheap clothing that we wear for only one season couldn't be more destructive.

In order to meet our demand for the latest fashion fad, Asian and Indian farmers ravage their fertile soils and deplete precious ground water to grow millions of acres of GMO cotton for export—instead of food for their hungry people.

Cheap fashion also supports the petroleum-based, highly toxic synthetic fabric and dye industry, and uses tons of fossil fuels during farming, manufacturing and shipping. Our love affair with cheap clothes-on-demand also sustains inhumane, often toxic, sweatshop conditions for garment workers all over the world.

This year, consider whether you need any new clothes at all, and if so, only buy what you need. When clothes shopping, try to choose timeless styles that won't go out of fashion in six months, choose high quality materials and manufacturing so they will last, and buy domestically-made garments whenever possible.

Also consider organizing clothing swaps with friends or buying at thrift stores and consignment shops. It's amazing what you can find at a good thrift store!

**Bring your own water bottle.**

Did you know that, every year, the oil used to produce plastic water bottles in the U.S. alone is enough to fuel about 1,000,000 cars? The more we squander what little accessible oil we have left on this planet on really stupid things like single-use plastic bottles, the more we have to procure from other countries and dangerously and expensively drill out of pristine ecosystems.

Anything we can do to quickly and permanently phase out disposable plastic bottles would help improve our relationship with the people living in oil and gas-rich nations, protect ecosystems, save resources, reduce waste and deadly pollution, and save money.

If you're still buying bottled water, take a trip to the store and check out the many great reusable water bottles on the market. We don't go ANYWHERE without our BPA free Camelback water bottles. Get into the habit of treating your reusable water bottle like your keys or your wallet. Make sure it goes to work, school, and around town with you.

**Hang your laundry to dry.**

According to Project Laundry List, commercial, industrial and residential clothes dryers use a whopping 15-20% of domestic energy in the U.S. In 2007 alone, clothes dryers in U.S. homes emitted 4.72 million metric tons of climate changing carbon dioxide.

If all Americans used a clothesline or folding drying racks just once a week, the savings would be enough to close several coal fired or nuclear power plants! Throw in a high efficiency, front-loading washer, a cold water wash, and your own homemade laundry detergent, and 21st century laundry couldn't get any greener!

Walk, bike, or take public transportation.

Nothing would protect the environment and decrease our dependence on oil more than taking steps to reduce your transportation footprint. Transportation accounts for more than 30 percent of U.S. carbon dioxide emissions.

In big cities like New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Denver, and Washington, D.C., car pollution causes the grey smog that leads to hotter summers and those horrible orange, red and even purple air-quality days that cause asthma attacks in children and other health problems in adults.

That \$4 a gallon you pay for gas does not even begin to cover the costs that the use of that fuel places on our economy. American's end up wasting 1.9 billion gallons of gasoline just sitting in traffic jams every year. This costs American's over \$100 billion dollars per year in fuel alone. Then there are pollution remediation costs, loss of productivity due to asthma and poor air quality, healthcare costs, and more.

Anything you can do to reduce your transportation footprint this year by walking, biking, taking public transportation or telecommuting will be a boon to both the environment and your wallet.

### Detox your home.

According to the EPA, household cleaning products rank among the most toxic everyday substances to which people are exposed, and most chemical brands are not safe and contain ingredients that have never been tested for safety. And to top it all off, to protect "trade secrets," manufacturers are not even required to disclose the ingredients in their cleaning products at all!

Some especially toxic household cleaners include ammonia, chlorine bleach, aerosol propellants, detergents, petroleum distillates, drain cleaners, and toluene. Many of these substances are not only absorbed into the skin, but they also give off toxic fumes that affect the person using the product and everyone else in the area.

Everything from dermatitis to headaches to cancer have been associated with the chemical products we use to clean our furniture, bathrooms and clothes—including air fresheners. Traditional cleaning agents assail our skin and lungs with carcinogens, assault our immune system, and expose us to unnecessary physical stress. They are also typically made from petroleum, and remain toxic in the earth's soil, water, and environment for generations. In contrast, green cleaning products are typically made with common kitchen ingredients like water, white vinegar, baking soda, and castile soap. Some also include coconut or orange oils, and other powerful plant-derived ingredients. Plus, making your own green cleaners, disinfectant, and laundry detergent is easy, and significantly cheaper than buying them at the store.

Many blessings to you in the New Year! May it be a healthy, abundant and prosperous one!