

# The Unifier



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April 2025

Grace to You and Peace,

I open this month by sharing a letter with a very important announcement from our Director of Christian Education, Ryan Aubrey:

Dear Church Family,

Since I began here in the fall of 2019, this is how I have opened almost every Unifier article I have written. I do it, not just because one of the clear pictures in and through Scripture we see of the church is that of family, but because over the past 5 years, you all have truly become family to Emily, Anabelle, William, and myself. We have shared in wonderful moments together, walked through difficulties together, and shared in the glories of being a community of faith. So, it brings me great sadness to announce my resignation from the position of Director of Christian Education. April 20, 2025 will be my final Sunday here at UPC. I will be transitioning to a new position as Children's Ministry Director at another local church.

My family greatly enjoyed our time here and will miss you so very much. You will forever be in our hearts. Emily and I cannot begin to express how much we appreciate how you welcomed us and especially our children. Your love for the children in our midst is one of the things we have enjoyed seeing expand and grow.

In the final chapter of our recent study of the Gospel of Luke, the author talks about openings and closings. About how the Gospel of Jesus Christ is both an opening and closing. How, as disciples, we are to live in the liminal, or in-between space, where wonder becomes trusting. God's call of faithfulness is to be constantly wondering. This wondering, though, is not merely mental exercise, but one that leads to increased faith as we take steps forward and toward Him. The author of our study book states, "But the Gospel of Luke asks and invites: who is ready to move from wonder into trust, from emotional and spiritual rushes into disciplined and persistent following?" This is the question that over the past weeks Emily and I have asked and explored. We move forward in faith as we seek to be faithful to the call that He has placed upon us. This faith extends to the work that God has for you here at United Protestant Church.

I am so grateful to the leadership of this church who gave me the opportunity to join you in the fall of 2019. My experience here has shaped my ministry and expanded my own spiritual walk.

Again, United Protestant Church will always be in my heart. We have wonderful memories of ministering to you and most importantly alongside of you. I am thankful for the opportunities we have shared to help build God's church here in Grayslake and pray for continued growth for you as a church and as individuals.

With Great Love,

Ryan Aubrey

*(continued on page 2)*

Ryan's news has been in my head, my heart and my prayers this last week as I have been preparing for Holy Week; in particular, I am thinking about April 13, which will also be the day that we formally recognize the closure of Ryan Aubrey's ministry in our congregation. April 13 is also "Palm Sunday", the Sunday that commences Holy Week. Traditionally on that day, the church's liturgy has focused on the Gospel writers' various accounts of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem the final week of his life. However, in recent years a trend emerged in many churches to include texts related to Jesus' passion: his arrest, trial and crucifixion. The reasoning is that too many worshippers will skip the Holy Week services altogether and go straight from Jesus' triumphal entry to his resurrection, skipping the much harder but indispensable chapters of Jesus' betrayal and death. The unfortunate result of this trend was that the Palm Sunday service can become overburdened and confusing.

We at UPC will observe a straightforward Palm Sunday worship. However, we will also take the important opportunity to celebrate and give thanks for Ryan's work among us, and begin the process of saying goodbye to Ryan, Emily, Anabelle and William. I suspect I speak for many in our congregation, including the Aubreys, when I say that for me it will be a mix of both celebration and grief. I want to say clearly that it is okay if it feels strange to celebrate Easter while also grieving the loss of four such significant members of our church family.

It may be helpful to consider that while on its surface The Lord's entry to Jerusalem was a boisterous celebration; we know that Jesus was already preparing the apostles for his departure. Of course, the disciples did not fully understand this, so Jesus' ability to minister to them was limited at best. However, the gospel writers also witness to the fact that the resurrected Jesus ministered to them after his resurrection and before his final ascension.

Part of the reason Jesus spent extensive time with them after his resurrection was precisely because he understood the importance of saying goodbye well. Saying "thank you" and "goodbye" well is an essential part of healthy ministerial parting, both for the congregation and the departing minister. We have the blessed opportunity to bring closure to this important part of our shared life together, and to thank, pray, celebrate and bless them formally on April 13 (and a bonus Sunday or two after that in which they will still be worshipping with us)! I am convinced that as hard as this process and loss will be, we are blessed as a congregation to have this opportunity, and we will do it well.

That said, we will also celebrate Resurrection together. Neither death, nor loss, nor grief have the final word with God. The promises we receive from Jesus point us beyond the grief-stricken moments: both in Jesus' life and our lives together. When Christians say goodbye to each other, we do so in the light of the resurrection with the confidence that our relationship will continue by God's grace, on God's time.

In fact, there is nothing more appropriate to our Easter season than this: that the grace of God made known in the risen Christ promises a future in which grace fills all in all. Let us confront the hard task before us, confident in God's promises for what lies beyond them for those who endure.

In Christ,

Rev. Jason Okrzynski, PhD  
Senior Pastor

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWS

Dear Church Family,

As Easter approaches, I want to take some time to remind you and encourage you to come to our Easter Party and Egg Hunt. We are holding our hunt on April 19 at 2:00 PM. It is a wonderful event where we share a brief story about the hope we celebrate at Easter, a great egg hunt with more than 400 eggs scattered over our front lawn, and all this followed by refreshments. The kids really enjoy the process of finding eggs and getting candy, and it is a wonderful opportunity for us to connect with one another. This can be a wonderful event for us as members of United Protestant Church to both invite families to come and participate as well as a time for us to connect with one another.

Once again, we will be taking candy donations to fill our eggs. If you are interested in helping provide candy for this event, please let me know. Candy can be dropped off at the church office by April 13.

Our Lenten Study continues through Palm Sunday, April 13. I encourage you to join us on this journey to the cross as we remember Lent as a season of repentance and renewal, through exploring how the significance of Lent and the practices associated with it. Whether it is participating in our Lenten study or something else, I pray that you take some time to intentionally do something to remember your dependence on God in every area of our lives.

On the family front, we recently went roller-skating as a family. It was the third time that Anabelle had skated and the first time for William. William did a good job persevering as he worked toward figuring out how roller-skating works. Skating him from the entrance to the beginner area in the middle of the floor was always a nerve-wracking experience for me. But, by the end of the night, as we processed how each kid felt about the experience, William said he really enjoyed the process, and wants to try again. We were proud to see how hard he worked to even kind of figure out how to move on roller skates. Anabelle had made a good amount of progress as she was able to skate around outside the beginner area just about the entire time. She even participated in a race with other kids her age. She knew she would not come in first but was determined to try. For myself, after not rollerblading for decades, I was not nearly as sore as I expected the next day. Overall, it was a successful time for the entire family.

Blessings,

Ryan Aubrey  
Director of Christian Education



UPC's

# EASTER PARTY AND EGG HUNT

Saturday, April 19th at 2pm

**Grab your basket and join us  
for an Easter book  
and egg hunt,  
followed by refreshments!**



**United  
Protestant  
Church**  
*of Grayslake*

54 S. Whitney  
(847)223-8131  
upcgl.org

*Celebrating 75 years in 2025*



# APRIL 2025

## United Protestant Church CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		<b>1</b> 9:00am Park District Preschool Class (202) 6:30pm Pack 451 Den Meetings (FH) 7:00pm AA Ladies (106)	<b>2</b> 11:30am Circle 4/5 (Culver's) 6:00pm Confirmation Class (Loft) 7:00pm Alanon (106, 105) 7:00pm Troop 451 Meeting (FH)	<b>3</b> 9:00am Park District Preschool Class (202) 6:00pm Choir Rehearsal (Sanctuary) 7:00pm Grace Notes (Choir Room) 7:30pm AA (106, 105)	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>6</b> 9:00am Education Hour 10:00am Worship Service 11:30am Circle 2 (MR)	<b>7</b> 7:00pm Stewardship Committee & Budget & Finance Fundraising Meeting (MR) 7:30pm AA (106, 105)	<b>8</b> 9:00am Park District Preschool Class (202) 5:30pm Circle 9 (Mrs. V's) 6:30pm Governance Task Force (MR) 6:30pm Pack 451 Den Meetings (FH) 7:00pm AA Ladies (106) 7:00pm Troop 451 PLC (101)	<b>9</b> 6:00pm Confirmation Class (Loft) 7:00pm Alanon (106, 105) 7:00pm PUSH (Parlor) 7:00pm Troop 451 Meeting (FH)	<b>10</b> 9:00am Park District Preschool Class (202) 2:00pm Budget & Finance (MR) 6:00pm Choir Rehearsal (Sanctuary) 7:00pm Grace Notes (Choir Room) 7:30pm AA (106, 105)	<b>11</b> 6:00pm Girl Scout Troop Meeting (FH)	<b>12</b>
<b>13</b> 9:00am Education Hour 10:00am Palm Sunday Worship Service 11:30am 75th Anniversary Planning Team & Member- ship & Outreach Joint Meeting (MR)	<b>14</b> 7:00pm Children's Ministry Committee (MR) 7:30pm AA (106, 105) 8:00pm Christian Ed. Commission (MR)	<b>15</b> 9:00am Park District Preschool Class (202) 6:30pm Pack 451Pack Meeting (FH) 7:00pm AA Ladies (106) 7:00pm Nami Family Support Group (MR) 7:00pm Troop 451 Committee Meeting (101)	<b>16</b> 6:00pm Confirmation Class (Loft) 6:30pm North Star District Commissioner Meeting (MR) 7:00pm Alanon (106, 105) 7:00pm Troop 451 Meeting (FH)	<b>17</b> 9:00am Park District Preschool Class (202) 7:00pm Maundy Thursday Service with Communion 7:30pm AA (106, 105) 8:00pm Grace Notes (Choir Room)	<b>18</b> 7:00pm Good Friday Tenebrae Service	<b>19</b> 2:00pm Easter Party & Egg Hunt (front lawn)
<b>20</b> 6:30am Easter Sunrise Service 7:00-10:00am Easter Breakfast (FH) 10:00am Easter Worship Service	<b>21</b> 7:00pm Ad Council (FH) 7:30pm AA (106, 105)	<b>22</b> 9:00am Park District Preschool Class (202) 6:30pm Pack 451 Den Meetings (FH) 7:00pm AA Ladies (106)	<b>23</b> 6:00pm Confirmation Class (Loft) 7:00pm Alanon (106, 105) 7:00pm Troop 451 Meeting (FH)	<b>24</b> 9:00am Park District Preschool Class (202) 6:00pm Choir Rehearsal (Sanctuary) 7:00pm Grace Notes (Choir Room) 7:30pm AA (106,105)	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> Confirmation Retreat (TBD)
<b>27</b> 9:00am Education Hour 10:00am Worship Service 4:00pm Aubrey Piano Recital (Sanctuary)	<b>28</b> 6:30pm Worship Committee (MR) 7:00pm Mission Committee (103) 7:30pm AA (106, 105)	<b>29</b> 9:00am Park District Preschool Class (202) 6:30pm Pack 451 Den Meetings (FH) 7:00pm AA Ladies (106)	<b>30</b> 6:00pm Confirmation Class (Loft) 7:00pm Alanon (106, 105) 7:00pm Membership & Outreach Meeting (MR) 7:00pm Troop 451 Meeting (FH)			

# MISSIONS UPDATE



The next UPC packing sessions at Feed My Starving Children in Libertyville are scheduled for **Tuesday, April 1 and Tuesday, April 8 from 7:15-8:45 p.m.** If you are interested in participating, please contact Cinda Bartz at [bartzc@sbcglobal.net](mailto:bartzc@sbcglobal.net).

## OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD (OCC)

We are collecting the following items for Operation Christmas Child throughout the month of April: stuffed animals, puzzles, games, stickers, playing cards, and card games.



## JOY SHARING FOR APRIL

The Joy Sharing offering for April will benefit CURT's Café (Cultivating Unique Restaurant Training). Proven at-risk or formerly incarcerated young adults have few resources available to them. With little hope of securing employment, even for entry level positions, many end up living on the streets and return to destructive habits. Cycling through the courts, 86% of those released are sent back through the system within three years.

Curt's provides that opportunity by teaching marketable skills to young adults and then assisting in securing employment. They teach culinary techniques, but also provide instruction needed to fill in educational gaps, gain confidence, and become job-ready.

A portion of Curt's Café's mission reads, "We promote education, respect, compassion and integrity, and embrace the philosophy of restorative justice in all we do."

These young adults are determined to build a positive future for themselves. For them, being able to get and hold a job will contribute immeasurably toward their success. And you can contribute to that success by prayerfully considering your financial contribution to Curt's Café. And consider dining there! The food is delicious! Their closest location is 1766 2nd Street in Highland Park. Joy Sharing Sunday is April 13.

## UPC SHOPPER CARDS

Easter is just around the corner, and whether you like your dinner home-cooked or served in a restaurant, UPC Shopper can help. Plan ahead and order gift cards to pay for your meal or your groceries. You can choose from hundreds of restaurants too. Pick up items to fill your Easter baskets from Walmart, Target, Meijer, Kohl's, or other stores. You can even put gift cards in your Easter basket. Every time you use a shopper card when making a purchase, you make a donation to Operation Christmas Child (OCC) that doesn't cost you anything extra.

*Missions Thrive in 2025!*

## AVON TOWNSHIP

### **UPC COMMUNITY MISSION at Avon Township Center:**

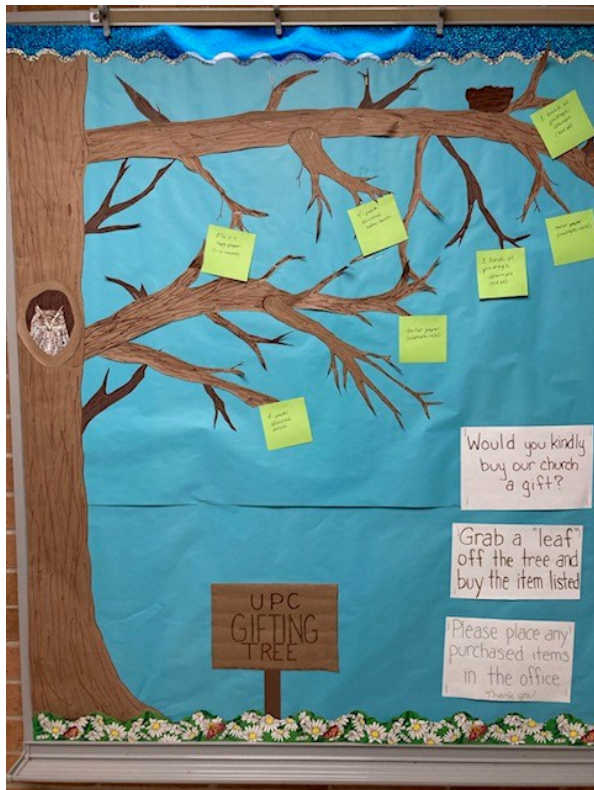
On February 25, the All Pro Rebels softball team, coaches and parents, and a UPC PADS volunteer joined some UPC WCF Circle 2 members to sort food and clothing, and to fill bags of candy for the Avon Township Easter Egg Hunt.



**YOUTH, ADULTS, AND FAMILIES** from UPC and other churches and organizations, and individual volunteers are welcome to volunteer at the Township Center on **the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month**. Sort food, clothing, and/or other donations, or assist in other outreach projects at the Avon Township Center, located at 433 E. Washington Street, Round Lake Park, from 7:00 to 8:30 PM. (Shorter time if needed.)

An Avon Township Volunteer Application is required. Complete one when you arrive if one hasn't already been submitted. Printed forms are on the UPC Mission Table or can be requested by email. A sign-up sheet is on the Mission Table, but advance sign up is not required. This service is already blossoming into a community project. **Our next session will be Tuesday, April 22.** Come any month you're available! Contact Rose Pech, 847-682-2837 or [rose4nonna@hotmail.com](mailto:rose4nonna@hotmail.com) for more information or to have an application form emailed to you.

## STEWARDSHIP GIFTING TREE



The Stewardship Committee has created a UPC Gifting Tree bulletin board by the elevator with wish list items displayed on Post-it notes for the congregation to take if you wish to help out with the cost of supplies needed for various areas around UPC. This includes office supplies, custodial supplies, and various requests by committees for items such as Sunday School supplies, etc. The artwork for the board was created by Katelyn Rasmussen. Any committee that would like to request needed items should contact Sue Schmidt to post on the board.

### **UPC Financial Update as of February 28, 2025:**

YTD Income: \$40,998.10

YTD Expenses: \$48,380.43

YTD Deficit: **-\$7,382.33**



## **PADS LAKE COUNTY & UPC PADS:**

### **Fixed Family Shelter Site & Needed UPC PADS Support:**

UPC PADS volunteers will be needed this fall to help provide a hot meal once a week to 60 of the clients who will be living in the PADS Lake County fixed family shelter site. This will be in addition to continuing our donations of shelf-stable food items and other necessities. These new needs will include volunteers preparing or donating the meals, delivering the meals to the site, and helping set up the meal at the site at 3363 North Lewis Avenue in Waukegan. Coordinators will be needed to schedule the volunteers for each of these three needs. Please contact Rose Pech [pads\\_at\\_upchotmail.com](mailto:pads_at_upchotmail.com) or 847-682-2837 for more information or to volunteer. Final details will be available closer to fall when the PADS staff has the information and is able to specify the needs.

### **Current Food Needs:**

- Donation delivery to the First Presbyterian Church in Libertyville have once again slowed down significantly. **All food items and cleaning supplies** are needed and can be donated at UPC, delivered to First Presbyterian Church from 4:00 to 5:30 PM on Wednesdays, or provided directly to First Presbyterian Church by using this link: [https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/XD5I2ZRQKE5?ref\\_=wl\\_share](https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/XD5I2ZRQKE5?ref_=wl_share)
- Sack lunches for all seeking help from PADS can be donated at 1800 Grand Avenue in Waukegan any weekday. Use their online signup genius for an open date, or call 847-689-4357 to set the date and time you would like to deliver lunches to the office.



# H O L Y W E E K

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Palm Sunday Worship Service	April 13	10:00 AM
Maundy Thursday Service with Communion	April 17	7:00 PM
Good Friday Tenebrae Service	April 18	7:00 PM
Easter Party & Egg Hunt	April 19	2:00 PM
Easter Sunrise Service	April 20	6:30 AM
Easter Breakfast in Fellowship Hall	April 20	7-10 AM
Easter Worship Service with Communion	April 20	10:00 AM





## *WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP* HAVE A VERY BLESSED EASTER!

**INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT WCF?** Contact Sue Schmidt, Catherine Vick, Ruth Gheysen, Rose Pech, or call the church office 847-223-8131 for more info! See the church bulletin, Tuesday Newsday, and UNIFIER updates.

**CHECK CIRCLE INFORMATION and the TABLE BELOW** and choose what works for you!

**Circle 2** meets once a month on a Sunday at **11:30 AM in the UPC Meeting Room**. Sundays vary monthly based on other UPC events. Members will strip crayons for SCARCE donation at their **April 6 meeting**. Contact Catherine Vick.

**Circle 4/5** meets on the first Wednesday of the month at **11:30 AM at Culver's** in Grayslake. To join these ladies for **lunch on April 2**, Contact Sue Schmidt.

**Circle 9** meets year-round at **5:30 PM** on the second Tuesday of each month at **Mrs. V's on Rollins Road in Round Lake Beach**. Occasionally, a meeting must be cancelled, so please check with Ruth Gheysen or one of the Circle 9 members prior to joining these ladies for **dinner on April 8**.

**Circle 10** does not meet in person on a regular basis, but members are in contact with each other on Facebook. Contact Jasmine Walker.

Circle	Day/Date	Time	Place	Contact
2	Sun., April 6	11:30 AM	UPC Meeting Room	Catherine Vick
4/5	Wed., April 2	11:30 AM	Culver's in Grayslake	Sue Schmidt
9	Tues., April 8	5:30 PM	Mrs. V's in Round Lake Beach	Ruth Gheysen
10	N/A	N/A	N/A	Jasmine Walker

**Missed the fun time enjoyed at March BUNCO?**  
**Watch for October BUNCO date this fall!**

**Tyler, Brittany, Danielle, & Joanna** are thankful for the prayers and financial support they receive from us. See their recent praise items and prayer requests on the UPC Prayer List. Donations are always much needed and may be made to their UPC fund or at [www.ilad.ngo/D2002](http://www.ilad.ngo/D2002) at any time.

**SAVE THE DATE:** UPC is celebrating 75+ years of keeping faith! Join us on Sunday, June 22 as we worship and celebrate together at 10 AM followed by a luncheon. Watch for more details as they become available.

### April Birthdays

4/1 Cinda Bartz  
4/2 Soren Okrzynski  
4/2 Paula Watkins  
4/5 Anabelle Aubrey  
4/8 Jerry Wessale  
4/11 Aimee Divis  
4/11 Brett Henne  
4/11 Margaret Porteous  
4/11 Roger Weichman  
4/15 Cynthia Lee  
4/17 Sally Kelly  
4/18 Milla Kutsin  
4/18 Gabrielle Walker  
4/19 Linda Rambo  
4/23 Jamison Fuller  
4/23 Karen Thoms  
4/23 Carter Trowitch

### April Anniversaries

4/3 John & Lillian Eldridge  
4/26 Jerry & Lois Wessale



### UPC's Continued Prayers for Members, Relatives, and Friends:

**Members:** Marlene Badgerow, Craig Fischel, Marie Frandsen, David Holliman, Jan Kendrick, Joanne Lawrence, John Porteous, Dan Watkins, Bobbie Weichman, and Jeff Ziegler.

**Tyler, Brittany, Danielle, & Joanna:** give praise for the continued support they receive from UPC and others. April will be a very busy month so please say extra prayers for: 1) host visitors for a week and 2 weeks in capital all during busy farm season; 2) Tyler to balance time with team, transplanting, and building Shovel's house; 3) two leaders come to help team evaluate translation process/goals April 3-7; 4) April 3-10 favor during Brolliers' one-week visit (Laura's first time back in 10 years); and 5) also April 3-10 mornings: team meets, afternoons: Brent with Solo/Luke, and evenings: team-building.

**Relatives & Friends:** Allen Anglin, Kathy Behm, Kathy Weichman Bradley, Lorine Cooper, Patricia Davis, Judy Hendrickson, Jennifer Hitch, Mary Mason, Albert Meier, Gloria Meier, Pat Mielke, Tommy Nellessen, Sohail Rana and the Alam family, Gary Sadlack, Ray Sisco, Stephan, Erik & Kacie Stanley, their son & Erik's mother, Diane, and Bri Walters.

**Long-term prayers:** Bruce Baird, Betty Bournes, Mary Brase, Don & Tina Busch, Brad Fuller, Trish Jelinek, Rick Juern, Conny Kappler, Ben Kelly-Fuller, David Novak, Sue (PADS friend), Wendy (friend of Rose Pech), and Michelle (friend of Linda Markham).

*Lord, in your mercy,  
hear our prayers.*



To Access UPC's Calendar On  
Line

[http://  
www.mychurchevents.com/  
calendar/calendar.aspx?  
ci=L6F0H2O9G1F0O9L6I3](http://www.mychurchevents.com/calendar/calendar.aspx?ci=L6F0H2O9G1F0O9L6I3)

## Contact Us

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Cell: 224-463-2171

Church Office Hours:  
Tuesday & Thursday  
10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Grounded | Empowered | Transformed

United Protestant Church of Grayslake  
54 S. Whitney Street  
Grayslake, IL 60030

