

The Unifier



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April 2026

Grace to you and peace,

The timing of a Holy Week address feels a little tricky. I would like to write to you about resurrection, but we have not reached that moment in our year. It is my prayer that we will see you this week as we walk through the last supper, betrayal and trial, and the crucifixion of Jesus. We know that there are many in our community of faith who are walking through their own valleys of grief this holy week, so we join in praying for them and their families as we walk this valley with Jesus. We do not lose the vision of the new life that will emerge on Easter morning. With that in mind, I would like to take this mid-holy week moment to look ahead to the coming months as our community shifts into the new by-laws together.

On Sunday, April 12, we will be gathering after church for yet another congregational meeting to elect five members for our Board. The Nominations Committee has consulted with the Governance Task Force members, as well as the current Administrative Council to nominate the following persons:

Cinda Bartz (3-year term)
Ken Gipple (3-year term)
Ruth Gheysen (2-year term)
Drew Madden (2-year term)
Dale Message (1-year term)

In the new model, the Board has two main tasks. The first one is to write policy. This means that when there is confusion or concern amongst staff, teams, or members about our practices, it is the responsibility of the Board to write policies for how we are to conduct our ministries. In the past, we have often asked the Administrative Council to make decisions issue by issue. The intention is that this shift will empower our teams to do ministry while simplifying the leadership process in the church.

The second, but arguably more important task of the Board, will be to lead the congregation in big questions about the long-term vision of the congregation, as well as proposing an annual vision for working towards this vision. The Board's work begins by turning in conversation amongst themselves about the mission statement to inquire how UPC is currently accomplishing the mission, and to ask about areas we may be able to grow towards more fully serving that vision here in Grayslake. UPC members can expect to see these meetings and conversations shared with the entire congregation regularly through the (soon to be) Board Bulletin Board outside the church offices. UPC can also expect the Board to hold quarterly opportunities for the entire congregation to gather and engage these big questions together and to offer feedback to Board members as they continue their work.

(continued from page 1)

This first year will be a time of experimentation as the Board and our entire congregation make this new path, but walking it together. Most of our ministerial life will go on as it has been. The biggest thing we can all do is to participate in the communication and process as it emerges and, of course, pray for our new Board and all our teams and members as we move into this process. It is my sincere hope that this will be an energizing, enjoyable, and even exciting time for our congregation. May the Holy Spirit come upon us during this time to lead us forward together into God's planned future!

In Christ,

Rev. Jason Okrzynski, PhD
Senior Pastor



HOLY WEEK

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Soup & Bread Dinner in Fellowship Hall	April 2	6:00 PM
Maundy Thursday Service with Communion	April 2	7:00 PM
Good Friday Tenebrae Service	April 3	7:00 PM
Easter Party & Egg Hunt	April 4	2:00 PM
Easter Sunrise Service	April 5	6:30 AM
Easter Breakfast in Fellowship Hall	April 5	7-10 AM
Easter Worship Service with Communion	April 5	10:00 AM

There will be a special congregational meeting on Sunday, April 12 following the worship service to vote to approve five new Board members for our new governance structure that was approved at the Annual Meeting in January. Please plan to attend. See the names listed on page 1.

The Mission Team will stop taking Kringle orders on April 12. Kringles are a sweet pastry made of layers of flaky, buttery dough, with a filling and toppings in a wide variety of flavors. There are 12 flavors to choose from (or choose them all. They freeze well for 6 months.) The Kringles will be available for pick-up on May 9. Each Kringle is 22 oz and will cost \$12. Funds raised will support UPC's budget.



UPC's
EASTER PARTY
AND
EGG HUNT

Saturday, April 4th 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

75+ Years of Keeping Faith

Join us for some Easter Fun!



APRIL 2026

United Protestant Church CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 11:30am Circle 4/5 (Culver's) 7:00pm Alanon (106, 105)	2 6:00pm Soup & Bread Dinner (FH) 7:00pm Maundy Thursday Worship Service 7:00pm Troop 451 Meeting (FH) 7:30pm AA (106, 105) 8:00pm Grace Notes (Balcony)	3 7:00pm Good Friday Tenebrae Service	4 2:00pm Easter Party & Egg Hunt
5 6:30am Easter Sunrise Service 7:00am-10:00am Easter Breakfast (FH) 10:00am Easter Worship Service with Communion	6 5:30pm Staff Parish (MR) 7:30pm AA (106, 105)	7 6:30pm Pack 451 Den Meetings (FH) 7:00pm AA Ladies (106, 105)	8 7:00pm Alanon (106, 105) 7:00pm PUSH (Parlor)	9 3:00pm Budget & Finance (MR) 6:00pm Choir Rehearsal (Sanctuary) 7:00pm Grace Notes (Choir Room) 7:00pm Troop 451 Meeting (FH) 7:30pm AA (106, 105)	10	11 12:30pm Meneses Eagle Court of Honor (Sanctuary/FH)
12 9:00am Education Hour (102, 106) 10:00am Worship Service 11:15am Special Congregational Meeting 12:00pm (after special meeting) Circle 2 (MR/103)	13 7:30pm AA (106, 105)	14 5:30pm Circle 9 (Mrs. V's) 6:30pm Pack 451 Den Meetings (FH) 7:00pm AA Ladies (106, 105) 7:00pm Troop 451 PLC (101)	15 6:30pm North Star District Commissioner Meeting (FH) 7:00pm Alanon (106, 105)	16 6:00pm Choir Rehearsal (Sanctuary) 7:00pm Grace Notes (Choir Room) 7:00pm Troop 451 Meeting (FH) 7:30pm AA (106, 105)	17	18
19 9:00am Education Hour (102, 106) 10:00am Worship Service	20 7:00pm Ad Council (FH) 7:30pm AA (106, 105)	21 6:30pm Pack 451 Pack Meeting (FH) 7:00pm AA Ladies (106, 105) 7:00pm Nami Family Support Group (MR) 7:00pm Troop 451 Committee Meeting (101)	22 7:00pm Alanon (106, 105)	23 6:00pm Choir Rehearsal (Sanctuary) 7:00pm Grace Notes (Choir Room) 7:00pm Troop 451 Meeting (FH) 7:30pm AA (106,105)	24	25
26 9:00am Education Hour (102, 106) 10:00am Worship Service	27 6:30pm Worship Team (MR) 7:00pm Mission Team (103) 7:30pm AA (106, 105)	28 6:30pm Pack 451 Den Meetings (FH) 7:00pm AA Ladies (106, 105)	29 7:00pm Alanon (106, 105)	30 6:00pm Choir Rehearsal (Sanctuary) 7:00pm Grace Notes (Choir Room) 7:00pm Troop 451 Meeting (FH) 7:30pm AA (106,105)		

MISSIONS UPDATE



The next UPC packing session at Feed My Starving Children in Libertyville is scheduled for **Tuesday, April 7 from 7:15-8:45 p.m.** If you are interested in participating, please sign up on the sheet on the mission table or contact Cinda Bartz at 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 19.

UPC SHOPPER CARDS

Whether you use gift cards to do your shopping, to plan a special celebration, to give as the perfect gift, or to support PADS, you can help spread the gospel around the world. Your purchase of gift cards is earning funds towards paying for Operation Christmas Child's shipping costs. Does buying gift cards really make a difference? If you spend \$200 on groceries every month for a year at your store of choice (let's use Jewel as an example), it would be like you donated \$96 to OCC. That would be enough to ship nine shoebox gifts to kids in need around the world and have them get to hear the Good News of Jesus Christ. All that happens without costing you a penny more than you would normally spend. This is because 4%* of every Jewel card purchased is donated to the shipping fund. There are over 750 store brands to choose from. Ask for a complete list if you don't see what you want in stock. Special orders usually take one week. Won't you help?

*Percentage varies from store to store.

Be Part of the Fix in 2026!

AVON TOWNSHIP

Avon Township Food Pantry provides critical support to Township residents by operating a mobile drive-thru pantry and a personal indoor food pickup service which are both scheduled regularly for food distribution to citizens who live in Avon Township. The Township serves residents in Grayslake, Hainesville, Round Lake, Round Lake Beach, Round Lake Heights, and Round Lake Park. Bring food to UPC at any time and put it into the marked bin near the elevator. **Join us on Tuesday, April 28, from 6:30 to 8 p.m.** when UPC and Boy Scout Troop 188 co-sponsor the Avon Township Community Night of Giving, where anyone who wishes may come to the Township Center to help check dates, sort items, stock shelves, and do whatever other chores need to be completed. It's a great feeling to know that we're helping to make the food, clothing, and other necessities available and safe for those in need. Contact Rose Pech at 847-682-2837/rose4nonna@hotmail.com or a Mission Team member if you have questions or suggestions.

YOUTH NEWS

UPC YOUTH ENJOYED LAKESIDE CENTER AND LOOK FORWARD TO MEDIEVAL TIMES:



After scheduling prevented going to Medieval Times on March 15, members of the UPC Youth Group enjoyed an afternoon of arcade games, bowling, and Laser Tag at Lakeside Recreation Center in Mundelein. As this UNIFIER



goes out, youth are looking forward to the 4 p.m. show at Medieval Times on April 12. Activities for May, June, and July will be selected and scheduled as soon as the youth turn in the dates that they are **NOT** available during those months.



Contact Rose Pech at 847-682-2837 or rose4nonna@hotmail.com. Rick Burg and Drew Madden will reach out to the youth to set dates to get rid of the “junk” and unwanted items from the loft in preparation for redecorating and setting up the “youth centered” area for young people to enjoy. More information to follow.



PADS Client Update: PADS numbers have surged to over 200. Microwaveable shelf-stable food donations can still be made at UPC, delivered to First Presbyterian Church, or ordered using their Amazon link: https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/XD5I2ZRDQKE5?ref=wl_share Donations can be made online directly to support the PADS programs by going to their website: www.padslakecounty.org. Click on the word "Donate" in the upper right corner of the home page, click on the type of donation you wish to make, and follow the instructions from that point. Donations can be made in honor or memory of someone.

PADS Fixed Site Shelter Update: PADS has set **AUGUST** as the opening date for the **Family Site** due to the construction delays and the permits which will be required during the continued process of remodeling. Opportunities to volunteer in many ways, such as painting, landscaping, etc., will be available prior to and after the shelter's opening. Prior to the opening, there will be a guided tour through the building to which volunteers will be invited. Staff will set up inside the building by early August, and a **few families at a time will gradually transition** from their motel into the site. The March 24 PADS online meeting with these and other updates was recorded, and copies were sent to people on Savannah's email list. Once again, if you want to be on that list and/or wish to have the recording, send your request to Savannah at sjohnson@padslakecounty.org. Savannah Johnson will share additional PADS updates and information as they become available.

UPC PADS Support for PADS Lake County's Fixed Family Shelter Site: Volunteers have started signing up to help with our plan to **provide dinner for 60 at the fixed family shelter site starting in AUGUST. We're almost halfway staffed!**

Still needed:

- **Five or six lead cooks:** One each week and a substitute are needed. Duties: organize and supervise group members so all necessary supplies and meal ingredients are available each week for the preparation, packing, and delivery of the meal for that week and the hot meal is ready to leave UPC by 3:00 or 3:30 p.m.
- **Thirteen** of the twenty regular volunteer cooks: Work with the head cook and your team to be sure the meal for 60 is prepared, still hot, and ready to be picked up by 3:00 or 3:30 p.m. for delivery.
- **Eight** of the ten delivery volunteers: Duties are to load the meal items into their vehicle, deliver it to the Family Shelter, and make sure it gets to staff to be put into the warming ovens.

CONTACT ROSE TO ADD YOUR NAME TO THE VOLUNTEER LIST NOW! If you're interested in helping in **any** way, please contact Rose Pech rose4nonna@hotmail.com or 847-682-2837. Give your name and contact information (name, address, email address, and phone number).

People can help by donating shopper gift cards or money for use in buying food and supplies, checking and **donating items** on our wish list which will be publicized with specific items that are needed, or by **volunteering** when a task that you can do is listed in our newsletter articles. **Everyone can help by praying** for volunteers to step forward, for plans to go smoothly, and for the clients at the fixed family site to have nutritious dinners every day!



**WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN
FELLOWSHIP**
"Happy 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! Updates in church bulletin, Tuesday Newsday, and UNIFIER.

CURRENT INFO & UPDATES: Ladies 18 to 108: We'd love to have you join us!

Circle 2 members meet in the UPC Meeting Room or Room 103 monthly on a Sunday at 11:30 AM. Sundays vary monthly based on UPC events. In March, members separated the rest of the current crayons to be recycled. The broken ones will be stripped of the paper by members and sent to SCARCE to be melted and reused. SCARCE donates the good crayons to schools for students in need. Members are cutting game parts for OCC games. Linda Markham will share the devotions at the **APRIL 12** meeting following the **Special Congregational Meeting**. Contact Catherine Vick for more info.

Circle 4/5 meets on the first Wednesday of the month at 11:30 AM at Culver's in Grayslake. Their next lunch meeting will be **APRIL 1**. Contact Sue Schmidt.

Circle 9 meets 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 14**.

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	Sunday, April 12	After Special Congregational Meeting	UPC Meeting Room or Room 103	Catherine Vick
4/5	Wednesday, April 1	11:30 AM	Culver's in Grayslake	Sue Schmidt
9	Tuesday, April 14	5:30 PM	Mrs. V's in Round Lake Beach	Ruth Gheysen
10	N/A	N/A	N/A	Jasmine Walker

Tyler, Brittany, Danielle, & Joanna will be home in July, and we will be welcoming them at UPC at a time TBD. Watch for that announcement from the Mission Team, so you can plan to visit with them, hear more about their projects in person, and ask questions. They WILL BE RETURNING to Africa in October because a NANNY HAS COMMITTED TO 6 MONTHS to help with their girls. See their praises and requests in the prayer section of this UNIFIER. Donations are needed toward their Phase 2 project which will cost about \$70,000. Donations may be made by giving to their UPC fund at any time or online using this link: <http://www.ilad.ngo/D2002>.

April Birthdays

4/1 Cinda Bartz
4/2 Soren Okrzynski
4/2 Paula Watkins
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

April Anniversaries

4/26 Jerry & Lois Wessale



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

Members: Alam family, Jerry Badgerow, Bill Churchill, Craig Fischel, Marie Frandsen, Gregg Helm, David Holliman, Jan Kendrick, Joanne Lawrence, Joyce Norton, Terry Norton, John Porteous, Lori Rische, Donald Vick, Dan Watkins, Bobbie Weichman, and Jeff Ziegler.

Tyler, Brittany, Danielle, & Joanna: give **praise** for the End of an Era — we finally finished storing and moving the last things out of our former teammate Shelly's house! Our **prayer requests** are for Favor on last day in the village (April 1; not April Fools), our April 2 departure from the village: Safety in travel to capital; safety on all modes of transportation (car, plane, train, boat) on April 3-4 Travel from West Africa to France, April 5-7 Marseilles Goals: Tourist kids train and French kids' books, April 5 Easter at new colleagues' church, Mission Critical to find Kid Helper! (July 2027-July 2028), and Completing last-minute work tasks before break. Donations are always appreciated and may be made any time online at <http://ilad.ngo/D2002> or to their UPC Brittany & Tyler Fund.

Relatives & Friends: Bruce Baird, Kathy Behm, Betty Bournes, Mary Brase, Barry Burgett, Don & Tina Busch, Lorine Cooper, Daniel Dorman, Brad Fuller, Judy Hendrickson, Jennifer Hitch, Trish Jelinek, Rick Juern, Ben Kelly-Fuller, Mary Mason, Hubert & Sharon Maston, Albert Meier, Gloria Meier, Pat Mielke, Marilyn Mockenhaupt, Tommy Nellessen, Melissa Norton, Gail Russell, Gary Sadlack, Eric Schmidt & family, Ray Sisco, Stephan, Erik & Kacie Stanley, their son & Erik's mother, Diane, Bri Walters, Sue (PADS friend), Wendy, and Michelle.

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

Grounded | Empowered | Transformed

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