

The Unifier



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May 2026

Grace to you and Peace,

The month of May has been annually marked by several important church occasions. This Sunday, we will celebrate the affirmation of Greyson Madden's baptism. On May 10, we will celebrate the music ministry and musicians of United Protestant Church on Church Music Sunday. We will also observe the close of our regular programming schedule on Sunday, May 17, all of which signals the closing of another program year. Even more so, after what has been a busy and blessed winter and spring season at UPC, summer is upon us! Consider this your reminder that we do indeed have worship ALL SUMMER at 10:00 a.m. in the sanctuary.

Snarky Pastor summer jokes aside, it is not a surprise that worship patterns can change for folks during the summer. After all, the summer season is a change in pace and patterns for most of us. For families with children, summer marks a significant departure in which children are no longer in school. In fact, for three of our UPC families (including my own), this summer brings a radical new season of life as a member of the household graduates from senior high school. At UPC, we look forward to celebrating Ava Henne, Dylan Okrzynski, and Alisha Walker.

Big changes and little changes can be hard for us. In fact, have you ever noticed how Christians tend to proclaim the things about God that do not change? We like to say that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8), or quote Psalm 145 that The Lord "is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love." Proclaiming the ways that God does and will not change can give us comfort and peace for obvious reasons. However, what of the verses that prompt us to expect something unexpected from God?

In Revelation, God proclaims from the throne "Behold! I am making all things new!" (Revelation 21:5).

I have had this verse on my mind lately. It first popped into my mind related to the many changes that I anticipate in the next year related to the new governance model. It has become more of a mantra for me in the last few weeks as we approach summer. There is for me a break in the busyness of pastoral life during the summer because of the pause in programming. I fill this time praying and planning with our teams and committees for the following program year. While this year will be the same, I am wondering what it might mean to expect things to be made new.

Summer is our best opportunity as a people of faith to make space for the Holy Spirit to make things new. Let me encourage all our members in your ministries and with your ministry teams to consider what might be made new next year.

(continued on next page)

You can expect me to show up at a meeting or in a conversation this summer to ask you how might God be calling us, our programs, our ministries, and our life together to be made new. I will also promise you that over the next year, I am going to be seeking ways in the planning of worship to do things differently, try some little risks, and wonder how worship might be a vessel for the God who is making all things new.

May you be swept up into the newness of God's making.

In Christ,

Rev. Jason Okrzynski, PhD
Senior Pastor

DATES TO REMEMBER

Sunday, May 3 — Confirmation Sunday Worship Service with Communion at 10 a.m.

Sunday, May 3 — Youth Group Pizza Party & Games at 11:30 a.m. in Fellowship Hall

Friday, May 8 — Kringle Fundraiser Pickup from 4-6 p.m. in Fellowship Hall

Saturday, May 9 — Kringle Fundraiser Pickup from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. in Fellowship Hall

Sunday, May 10 — No Christian education classes at 9 a.m.

Sunday, May 10 — Church Music Sunday Worship Service at 10 a.m.

Sunday, May 10 — Kringle Fundraiser Pickup after the worship service in FH

May 17 — Last day of Christian Education Classes at 9 a.m. until September

UPC Financial Update as of March 31, 2026:

YTD Income: \$60,828.42

YTD Expenses: \$63,025.46

YTD Deficit: **\$-2,197.04**



You are invited to join Boy Scout Troop 671 for their annual Pancake Breakfast on Saturday, May 2 from 7-11 a.m. at United Protestant Church in Fellowship Hall. Come support this Troop and bring your appetite!

EASTER EGG HUNT AT UPC—APRIL 4, 2026





MAY 2026

United Protestant Church CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 4:00pm Troop 671 Pancake Breakfast Setup (FH/Kitchen)	2 7-11am Troop 671 Pancake Breakfast (FH/Kitchen)
3 CONFIRMATION SUNDAY 9:00am Education Hour 10:00am Worship Service 11:30am Youth Group Pizza Party Celebration for Greyson Madden (FH)	4 5:30pm Staff Parish (MR) 7:30pm AA (106, 105)	5 6:30pm Pack 451 Den Meetings (FH) 7:00pm AA Ladies (106, 105)	6 11:30am Circle 4/5 (Culver's) 7:00pm Alanon (106, 105)	7 6:00pm Choir Rehearsal (Sanctuary) 7:00pm Grace Notes (Choir Room) 7:00pm Troop 451 Meeting (FH) 7:30pm AA (106, 105)	8 4:00-6:00pm Kringle Pickup (FH)	9 10:00am-12:00pm Kringle Pickup (FH)
10 MOTHER'S DAY & CHURCH MUSIC SUNDAY 10:00am Worship Service 11:00am Kringle Pickup (FH)	11 7:00pm PADS Meal for 60 Team Meeting (FH) 7:30pm AA (106, 105)	12 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)	13 7:00pm PUSH (Parlor) 7:00pm Alanon (106, 105)	14 3:00pm Budget & Finance (MR) 6:30pm Grace Notes (Choir Room) 7:00pm Troop 451 Meeting (FH) 7:30pm AA (106, 105)	15	16
17 9:00am Education Hour 10:00am Worship Service 11:30am Circle 2 (MR/103)	18 7:30pm AA (106, 105)	19 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)	20 6:30pm North Star District Commissioner Meeting (MR) 7:00pm Alanon (106, 105)	21 6:30pm Grace Notes (Choir Room) 7:00pm Troop 451 Meeting (FH) 7:30pm AA (106,105)	22	23
24 10:00am Worship Service	25 MEMORIAL DAY 7:30pm AA (106, 105)	26 6:30pm Pack 451 Den Meetings (FH) 7:00pm Mission Team (103) 7:00pm AA Ladies (106, 105)	27 7:00pm Alanon (106, 105)	28 6:30pm Grace Notes (Choir Room) 7:00pm Troop 451 Meeting (FH) 7:30pm AA (106,105)	29	30
31 10:00am Worship Service						

MISSIONS UPDATE



The next UPC packing session at Feed My Starving Children in Libertyville is scheduled for **Tuesday, May 5 from 7:15-8:45 p.m.** If you are interested in participating, please 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 May: toothbrushes, wash cloths, paddle balls, and dolls.

UPC SHOPPER CARDS

Not sure what to get mom for Mother's Day? Why not give her a gift card and let her pick out something special, such as Bath & Body Works, Ulta Salons, DSW Shoes, local theatres, Starbucks or Barnes and Noble.

Want to make it more personal? Buy a gift card and use it to purchase her present, such as Kohl's, Spafinder, Mario Tricoci, Express, JC Penney, Macy's, Royal Caribbean, or Michael's.

Taking her out to dinner so she doesn't have to cook? We have gift cards for a variety of restaurants and can order many others—plain or fancy, expensive or inexpensive. Choose from Taco Bell to Lou Malnati's Pizza to Maggianos to Ruth's Chris Steakhouse. Just ask if you need help. If we don't have what you are looking for in stock, ask to have it ordered for you.

Did you know that this year the profits from the UPC Shopper will be going to help pay the shipping for our Operation Christmas Child shoe boxes? We hope to ship 200 boxes which would amount to \$2,000 in shipping fees and a lot of very happy children. If you love OCC, please consider purchasing gift cards to help support the cause.

JOY SHARING FOR MAY

Our May Joy Sharing is for Midwest Missions. This mission is part of UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief) and was recently visited by three members of the Mission Team who came back excited to share this mission opportunity with you, which is "Bringing the hearts and hands of God's people together to transform resources into humanitarian relief." They receive requests from trusted non-profits, then prepare items they have and ask their supporters for items they need. Volunteers process, revitalize, and assemble donations. Then the donations are shipped to their trusted partners and distributed to those in crisis. Several "kits" that are donated include layettes for new mothers, home, disaster, school, birthing, hygiene, and bedding kits. They also send bicycles, sewing machines, desks, and protective clothing for firefighters. Please prayerfully consider supporting Midwest Missions for our May Joy Sharing. Thank you.

S.C.A.R.C.E.

Items do not need to be new, but they should be clean and in good condition. SCARCE provides much needed supplies to low-income schools while keeping many materials out of the landfill. As the school year ends, please consider donating some of the following items:

- Musical Instruments
- Box Tops for Education
- School Supplies—new/like-new including:
 - Pens, Pencils, Markers, Pencil Sharpeners
 - Scissors
 - Glue, Glue Sticks
 - Notebooks - unused or like-new
 - Folders - unused/like-new (all kinds)
 - Binders - new only, no branding
 - Staplers, Staples
 - Paper Clips, Binder Clips
 - Push Pins
 - Poster Board – unused
 - Paper - unused, all kinds
 - Calculators (no adding machines)
 - Chalk
 - Rulers & Protractors
 - Crayons (new, used, broken)

FIFTH SUNDAY COLLECTION

May 31 is our Fifth Sunday Collection highlighting our PADS ministry. We are so blessed to have this continued relationship with such an amazing organization helping the growing number of individuals and families in need of housing assistance. In addition to providing volunteers for preparing and delivering meals, we have an ongoing opportunity to collect much needed items. The new Fixed Family Shelter will be opening in August, and UPC will be providing meals on Thursdays starting at this time. To support this effort, we are collecting restaurant-sized aluminum pans, heavy duty aluminum foil, food service gloves, dish washing liquid, kitchen staples, such as salt, pepper, and sugar. We also have our ongoing collection bins in the Narthex with lists of items that are needed throughout the year. Please join us in supporting PADS and spreading Christ's love to our neighbors.

AVON TOWNSHIP CENTER

Join us on Tuesday, May 26, from 6:30 to 8:00 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, located at 433 W. Washington Street in Round Lake Park, 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 or rose4nonna@hotmail.com if you have questions or suggestions.



PADS Lake County Update: THANK YOU TO ALL WHO CONTINUE TO BRING ITEMS TO UPC! See the Fifth Sunday PADS article in this UNIFIER for more information about PADS and donations. Microwaveable shelf-stable food donations are still needed and can 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. Find their wish list to purchase needed items or 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: As PADS prepares to open the Family Site in AUGUST, more commitments are needed to provide hot meals for the clients. **The topic of youth and children volunteering at the fixed Family Shelter Site will be discussed at the next meeting which will be scheduled soon.** A list of other items and ways to volunteer is being developed by PADS and will be shared soon. Contact Savannah Johnson sjohnson@padslakecounty.org to receive the latest PADS news and meeting link.

UPC PADS Support for PADS Lake County's Fixed Family Shelter Site: More volunteers have signed up to help provide dinner for 60 at the fixed family shelter site starting in AUGUST! One team has been formed and will start planning with Rose Pech on May 11. Our second team needs just ONE MORE MEMBER to be ready to meet.

Three more teams are needed so we can provide dinner every Thursday; each team needs:

- **A lead cook:** Duties: Follow guidelines as you organize and supervise group members and the team works together so necessary supplies and ingredients are available each week for the preparation, packing, and delivery of the meal and so the hot meal leaves UPC by 3:00 or 3:30 p.m.
- **Four regular volunteer cooks:** Duties: follow guidelines as you work with the head cook and your team to have the meal for 60 prepared, still hot, packed, and ready for delivery by 3:00 or 3:30 p.m.
- **Two delivery volunteers:** Duties: load the meal items into your vehicle, deliver them to the Family Shelter, and give everything to staff to be put into the warming ovens by 4:00 or 4:30 p.m.

Substitutes are needed for all positions. CONTACT ROSE TO VOLUNTEER! 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).

A Way to Help if you can't volunteer: Purchase a Walmart gift card from our UPC Shopper card table and donate it to PADS, and in this way donate to three of our UPC missions at once. (1) Money from your purchase goes to ship Operation Christmas Child boxes, (2) the gift card buys items for PADS dinners, and (3) the empty card goes to recycling where guitar pics are made and given to veterans.

Everyone can help by praying! PRAY 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 May Day! Happy Mother's Day!
 Happy Memorial Day!*



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 a.m. Sundays vary monthly based on UPC events. In April, members planned more of their meetings and decided to request more OCC games to prepare for the OCC boxes to be packed in November. Future meetings will begin with sharing joys and concerns followed by prayer and devotions. Meetings will end with a closing prayer. The May meeting will be on **Sunday, MAY 17** in Room 103 with devotions by Sally Kelly. The mission will be Oasis for Orphans where Amanda Bartz will be serving during the summer. The next missions will likely be crayons to be sorted for SCARCE or the marbles games for OCC. Contact Catherine Vick for more info.

Circle 4/5 meets on the first Wednesday of the month at 11:30 a.m. at Culver's in Grayslake. Their next lunch meeting will be **Wednesday, MAY 6**. Contact Sue Schmidt.

Circle 9 meets at 5:30 p.m. 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 **Tuesday, MAY 12**.

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., May 17	11:30 AM	UPC Room 103	Catherine Vick
4/5	Wed., May 6	11:30 AM	Culver's in Grayslake	Sue Schmidt
9	Tues., May 12	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 appreciate prayers as they have traveled and now as they stay with Brittany's parents until May 13. They request prayers for grandparent fun time, partnership development prep, personal finance planning, and favor as Brittany scripts and Tyler edits a Farm Vision Video. Donations may be made at any time by giving to their UPC fund or online using this link <http://www.ilad.ngo/D2002>.

May Birthdays

5/6 Jennifer Cooper
5/9 Mary Ann McDowell
5/16 Terese Bell
5/17 Jasmine Walker
5/19 Dick Dzwonkiewicz
5/24 Drew Madden
5/26 Lexie Craig
5/26 Jill Helm
5/29 Joshua Grubbs
5/29 Dale Message

May Anniversaries

5/12 James & Laurie Bethmann
5/13 Brett & Kori Henne
5/30 David & Wendy Holliman



UPC Prayer List:

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, Cathy Vick, Dan Watkins, Bobbie Weichman, and Jeff Ziegler.

Tyler, Brittany, Danielle, & Joanna: give praise for the prayers and other support they continue to receive. Their prayer requests include safe travel from TX to FL to reunite with their girls, favor during the time they are at Brittany's parents, for the girls to have grandparent fun time, for their partnership development prep, personal finance planning, for Brittany as she scripts, and Tyler as he edits a farm vision video.

Relatives & Friends: Bruce Baird, Mark Becker, 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 Nellesen, Melissa Norton, Gail Russell, Gary Sadlack, Eric Schmidt & family, Ray Sisco, Stephan, Erik and Kacie Stanley, their son and Erik's mother, Diane, and 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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54 S. Whitney Street
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