

The Unifier



54 South Whitney Street, Grayslake, Illinois 60030 | (847) 223-8131 | upc@upcgl.org | www.upcgl.org

November 2025

Grace and Peace to You,

I want to declare it now, “Tis the season.” I know that it is not even Advent yet. I am not suggesting that anyone should even consider turning the Christmas music on the first week of November. However, I do want to propose that “the season” may be bigger than all that, and that it just might start this weekend.

This Sunday marks the beginning of 65 of the most sacred and holy days of the church year. This Sunday we will gather to observe All Saints’ Sunday. This most sacred of days is a day to give thanks for those who have passed in the prior year. We will light candles and the speak the names of the dearly departed in the presence of God. I leave it to you to decide how you like to figure the eve of all Saints, All Hallows Eve, in your season.

It is only another three weeks after All Saints Day that we observe Thanksgiving. Technically, Thanksgiving is NOT a religious holiday, (it’s a secular, national holiday). It is, however, a spiritual day. The beating heart of a healthy Christian faith is gratitude. For the serious Christian, gratitude is more than a single holiday; gratitude is the Christian’s way of life. However, the Christian knows that it is a significant and wonderful thing that our country has a day that is intended for all of us to stop and take stock of all the reasons we have to be thankful.

Thanksgiving weekend 2025 will be a blessedly busy one for United Protestant Church. Friday, November 28th from 2-6 p.m., the Village of Grayslake is hosting its annual Festival of Lights; and this year, United Protestant Church will be featured as a stop on the sleighride. The following day, Saturday, November 29th from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., we will be gathering at church for the Hanging of the Greens. Please mark your calendars to come prepare the church for Advent and eat a pizza lunch for the effort!

All of these are, of course, things we as Christian do together because our God gathers people together. God does this because God is invested in God’s creation and in the children of God. So invested is God that he took on the very body of a creature. The first of November may be too soon to start singing Christmas carols or putting up our trees; it is not, however, too soon to take a look at these mysterious and sacred days that are upon us now, all the way through to Epiphany in early January.

It is already the season to give thanks for all God has done for us, and to draw close to the God who is never done with us!

In Christ,

Rev. Jason Okrzynski, PhD
Senior Pastor

From the Director of Music

Sunday, November 9, promises to be an exciting morning of music. A friend of mine from high school (we were in concert band and orchestra) will be with us that morning. She will be playing a movement from Bach's *Flute Sonata in Eb* for the prelude (with yours truly accompanying her on digital harpsichord). She will also join the choir on their anthem. Additionally, our bell sextet will ring a 12-bell arrangement of *The Battle Hymn of the Republic* for the offertory, and Abby Madden will play a violin solo for the postlude. We hope to see you in church that day.



The Agape Ringers, the semi-professional, auditioned handbell ensemble that Kurt rings with, will present their annual holiday concert, *Sounds of the Season*, on Saturday, December 13, at 4:00 p.m. at Elmhurst Christian Reformed Church in Elmhurst. Our guest artist this year is Bird x Butterfly. Tickets are \$27.00. There is a poster about this event on the stairway from the parking lot's bulletin board...or ask Kurt. For more info about The Agape Ringers (and this event), please visit www.AgapeRingers.org.

Christian Education News

Join Pastor Jason on Sunday mornings at 9 a.m. in room 106 for an adult education study on The Reformation and UPC. Have you ever wondered how we became "United" and "Protestant?" In honor of our 75th anniversary, we will be exploring these exact questions from now through November 23. Join Adult Education to learn, deepen, or rediscover our (e)vangelical-Protestant heritage and explore its relevance to faith today. Readings will be available in church the preceding week. We hope you will join us for these engaging topics:

Sunday, November 2: Meet "The (First) Reformers": Luther, Zwingli, Calvin and their adherents

Sunday, November 9: The Later Reformation: The English Reformation and other later developments

Sunday, November 16: UPC's Reformers: The Pilgrims, The Wesley's, Johnathan Edwards & Schleiermacher

Sunday, November 23: The Reformers and their legacy today: UMC, UCC and Beyond

Sunday, November 30 is the first Sunday of Advent. Due to the Thanksgiving holiday weekend, there will be no Christian education classes for children or adults that morning. Classes will resume on Sunday, December 7.



The Adult Education Advent Study to be led by Pastor Jason is being determined and will begin on Sunday, December 7 and will end on Sunday, December 21. Details will be provided soon.



UPC FALL FEST — OCTOBER 25



Happy
Halloween



*Thank you
to everyone who helped with our
Fall Fest event. The children had
fun and even Flo from Progressive
showed up to insure our safety
needs.*





As of October 19, we have received 36 pledges for 2026 totaling \$126,256.60. We thank those of you who have turned in your pledge forms and made a commitment to furthering our ministries here at UPC for another year. If you have not yet completed a pledge form for next year, you still have time to do so. Blank forms are located on the table in the church parlor. If you received your mailed packet, please submit your form via mail, or place it in the offering plate during the worship service, or give it directly to Jan Kendrick, our financial secretary. The Budget & Finance team will use this information to construct a viable budget for next year. All of our efforts depend on the generosity of our members and friends. We thank you for your support and look forward to serving together to make disciples for God's kingdom here in Grayslake and beyond.

Blessings,

The Stewardship Committee

UPC Financial Update as of 9/30/25:

YTD Income: \$177,995.12
YTD Expenses: \$187,385.59
YTD Deficit: \$ -9,390.47

\$75K for 75 Campaign Update as of 10/19/25:

\$22,805.00	Cash received to be matched
407.21	Fundraisers
<u>4,250.00</u>	Pledges received to be matched
\$27,462.21	Total
68.7%	Completed towards \$40,000 goal
\$40,000.00	Committed to be matched

Don't forget to check out the Stewardship Wish List Tree by the elevator. Special requests are posted on Post-it notes. If you are able to donate any requested items, please bring them to the office. Your generosity is appreciated as this helps offset our deficit budget.

UPCOMING EVENTS – SAVE THESE DATES

Saturday, November 22	OCC Packing Party 10 AM to 2 PM in Fellowship Hall
Tuesday, November 25	Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service at UPC 7 PM
Thursday, November 27	Happy Thanksgiving! Office is closed.
Friday, November 28	Sleigh Ride Stop at UPC, time TBD
Saturday, November 29	Hanging of the Greens 10 AM
Sunday, November 30	Advent begins; No Christian Education Classes



NOVEMBER 2025

United Protestant Church CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 All Saints Sunday 9:00am Education Hour 10:00am Worship Service	3 7:30pm AA (106, 105)	4 6:30pm Pack 451 Den Meetings (FH) 7:00pm AA Ladies (106, 105)	5 11:30am Circle 4/5 (Culver's) 7:00pm Alanon (106, 105)	6 6:00pm Choir Rehearsal (Sanctuary) 7:00pm Grace Notes (Choir Room) 7:00pm Troop 451 Meeting (FH) 7:30pm AA (106, 105)	7	8
9 Veterans Sunday 9:00am Education Hour 10:00am Worship Service	10 7:30pm AA (106, 105)	11 2:00pm Stewardship Committee (MR) 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, 105) 7:00pm Troop 451 PLC (101)	12 7:00pm Alanon (106, 105) 7:00pm PUSH (Parlor)	13 2:00pm 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)	14	15
16 Joy Sharing Sunday 9:00am Education Hour 10:00am Worship Service 11:30am Circle 2 (MR)	17 7:00pm Ad Council (FH) 7:30pm AA (106, 105)	18 6:30pm Pack 451 Monthly Pack Meeting (FH) 7:00pm AA Ladies (106, 105) 7:00pm Nami Family Support Group (MR) 7:00pm Troop 451 Committee Meeting (101)	19 6:00pm Staff Parish (MR) 7:00pm Alanon (106, 105) 7:00pm North Star District Commissioner Meeting (MR)	20 6:00pm Choir Rehearsal (Sanctuary) 7:00pm Grace Notes (Choir Room) 7:00pm Troop 451 Meeting (FH) 7:30pm AA (106, 105)	21 OCC Packing Party Setup (FH)	22 10:00am OCC Packing Party (FH)
23 Christ the King Sunday 9:00am Education Hour 10:00am Worship Service	24 6:30pm Worship Committee (MR) 7:00pm Mission Committee (103) 7:30pm AA (106, 105)	25 6:30pm Pack 451 Den Meetings (FH) 7:00pm AA Ladies (106, 105) 7:00pm Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service at UPC	26 7:00pm Alanon (106, 105)	27 HAPPY THANKSGIVING! OFFICE CLOSED 7:30pm AA (106, 105)	28	29 10:00am Hanging of the Greens
30 First Sunday of Advent 10:00am Worship Service						



DECEMBER 2025

United Protestant Church CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 7:30pm AA (106, 105)	2 6:30pm Pack 451 Den Meetings (FH) 7:00pm AA Ladies (106, 105)	3 11:30am Circle 4/5 (Culver's) 7:00pm Alanon (106, 105)	4 6:00pm Choir Rehearsal (Sanctuary) 7:00pm Grace Notes (Choir Room) 7:00pm Troop 451 Meeting (FH) 7:30pm AA (106, 105)	5	6 9:00am-5:00pm Veritas Music Center Recitals (Sanctuary)
7 Second Sunday of Advent 9:00am Education Hour 10:00am Worship Service	8 7:30pm AA (106, 105)	9 5:30pm Circle 9 (Mrs. V's) 6:30pm Governance Task Force (MR) 6:30pm Pack 451 Den Meetings (FH) 7:00pm Troop 451 PLC (101)	10 6:00pm AA Ladies Holiday Party (FH) 7:00pm PUSH (Parlor) 7:00pm Alanon (106, 105)	11 2:00pm 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)	12 7:00pm Caroling at Library Lane—TBD	13 9:00am-5:00pm Veritas Music Center Recitals (Sanctuary)
14 Third Sunday of Advent 9:00am Education Hour 10:00am Worship Service 11:30am Circle 2 (MR)	15 7:00pm Ad Council (FH) 7:30pm AA (106, 105)	16 6:30pm Pack 451 Monthly Pack Meeting (FH) 7:00pm AA Ladies (106, 105) 7:00pm Nami Family Support Group (MR) 7:00pm Troop 451 Committee Meeting (101)	17 6:30pm North Star District Commissioner Meeting (MR) 7:00pm Alanon (106, 105)	18 6:00pm Choir Rehearsal (Sanctuary) 7:00pm Grace Notes (Choir Room) 7:00pm Troop 451 Meeting (FH) 7:30pm AA (106, 105)	19	20
21 Fourth Sunday of Advent 9:00am Education Hour 10:00am Worship Service	22 7:30pm AA (106, 105)	23 7:00pm AA Ladies (106, 105)	24 7:00pm Christmas Eve Intergenerational Candlelight Service 7:00pm Alanon (106, 105) 11:00pm Christmas Eve Candlelight & Communion Service	25 MERRY CHRISTMAS! OFFICE CLOSED 7:30pm AA (106, 105)	26	27
28 First Sunday of Christmas 10:00am Worship Service	29 7:30pm AA (106, 105)	30 7:00pm AA Ladies (106, 105)	31 NEW YEAR'S EVE 7:00pm Alanon (106, 105)			

MISSIONS



The next UPC packing session at Feed My Starving Children in Libertyville is scheduled for **Tuesday, November 4 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)

It's that time of year! The OCC Packing Party at UPC will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, November 22. Our goal is to pack 200 shoeboxes with gifts for boys and girls ages 2-14 years old. Many of these children live in extreme poverty and may never have received a gift before. We want to supply them with toys, personal care items, school supplies, and accessories. We have many of the items that we need to pack these boxes, but are still lacking **pencil sharpeners, scissors, and balls**. We can also use small toys such as **jacks, yo-yo's, slinkys, playing cards, and kaleidoscopes**. Fishing and sewing kits would also be helpful. Please join us for this wonderful event and donate if you are so led by the Holy Spirit.



JOY SHARING FOR NOVEMBER



The Mission Committee is proud to once again highlight the Veterans Giving Tree for November's Joy Sharing. We will be providing Christmas gifts for so many deserving veterans at the VA Hospital in North Chicago. We will be placing gift tags for the veterans on a Christmas tree in the parlor. These tags are created from lists that the VA provides from the veterans' "wish lists." You are encouraged to select one or more gift tags and shop for one or more items requested on the tags. Gifts must be wrapped and brought to UPC to be delivered to the VA facility. The tag must be attached to the wrapped package. The deadline for the gifts to be dropped off at UPC has yet to be determined. Watch for more information in future Tuesday Newsday emails

and Sunday bulletins. Thank you all for your continued and generous giving to show gratitude to those who have given so much for our country.

CROP WALK

Thank you to all who walked in or donated to this year's Crop Walk. The 11-member UPC team raised \$980 to benefit those in need in Lake County and around the world. To give that some perspective, that is the same as 22 chickens, or 16 pigs, or 20 beehives, or 2 cows. Please consider joining us next year. The Northern Lake County Churches CROP Hunger Walk (of which we were a part) raised \$3,529.

THANK
YOU

MISCELLANEOUS

If you are a crafter and are looking for something to make, we can use some handmade winter hats and scarves for the Midwest Veteran's Closet. Contact Cinda Bartz for more details.

World Relief, one of our past Joy Sharing recipients, needs comforters (any style, used or new, twin size), and winter coats for men (size S, M, L) and boys (all sizes).

UPC SHOPPER

When buying your Thanksgiving turkey and all the fixings, don't forget to plan ahead and use some UPC Shopper gift cards. We carry many grocery stores like **Jewel, Mariano's, Meijer's and Sunset Foods**, as well as **Target and Walmart**.

If you are heading out for some early Christmas shopping or hitting those Black Friday sales, pick up some UPC Shopper gift cards to use for your purchases.

Don't see cards for a store you shop at? Ask the salesperson to request a special order. Many more stores are available than just what we keep in stock. Special orders are usually available in two weeks and do not cost extra. Want those cards even faster? Ask Lynn Hallen about using the app on your phone and getting the cards immediately.

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 shoeboxes? Use Shopper cards and make a lot of children very happy. If you love OCC, consider purchasing gift cards to help support the cause.

COMPANIONS JOURNEYING TOGETHER

We said, "Missions thrive in 2025!" and you proved us right with an increase of over 70%! **THANK YOU!**

Card type with notes to the inmate	2023 Total	2024 Total	2025 Total
Christmas	131	216	189
Card types the inmates can send to their family			
Christmas	986	1,579	2,469
Birthday	108	151	610
Blank	64	148	321
Thinking of you	40	26	57
Thank you	15	12	0
Total	1,344	2,132	3,646

Cards of each of these types are now being accepted for 2026, and packets of Christmas cards are on the Mission table with suggested messages for signing them. Inmates who stay connected to family and friends are more successful upon their release.





PADS Lake County Gala fundraiser was an outstanding success thanks to all who contributed in any way. It was a fun night, and PADS can continue to offer programs assisting clients because of funds raised from sponsors, other donors, people who attended, and those who participated in the online auction. Photos of the event, including one with some UPC PADS volunteers, will be shared next month because Rose Pech has not been able to access them while in Italy.

PADS Client Update: PADS had only 106 people in shelter as of October 20, but that number will grow as the weather gets colder. Forty-five of those people (42%) are children.

PADS Fixed Site Update: The fixed site is moving along with construction in full swing. There have been no real surprises, which is good. Everything is on budget and on schedule. If all continues on this path, they will be cutting a ribbon in April 2026.

Holiday Party Update: Dave Marsden and his team at First Presbyterian Libertyville have been asked to host the holiday party again this year, but a date and time have not yet been set. PADS will communicate that information once it's established.

UPC PADS Support for PADS Lake County's Fixed Family Shelter Site:

Volunteers are needed as UPC PADS plans to provide a weekly dinner to 60 of the clients at the coming fixed Family Shelter Site in Waukegan in the spring of 2026. **We'd love to have you as part of our team!** Help will be needed in several ways:

1) contacting restaurants or others to donate food or items to be used in preparing meals, 2) providing some of these food items yourself, 3) helping to prepare a meal, 4) delivering a meal to the site once it opens, 5) scheduling kitchen volunteers, and 6) scheduling delivery volunteers.

Adults and youth who would like more information or want to volunteer can have their name and contact information added to our PADS Fixed Site Contact List for Rose Pech to contact when plans are being made. Email your information, questions, concerns, and/or ways in which you'd like to volunteer to rose4nonna@hotmail.com, or send to this info to United Protestant Church, %Rose Pech, 54 S. Whitney St., Grayslake, IL 60030.

After November 5, Rose can be contacted at 847-682-2837.

Curt's Café Invitation

On Wednesday, November 19, a few of us from UPC will be heading to Curt's Café in Highland Park to support the mission and its students. We will meet there around 1:30-1:45 p.m. for a Dutch-treat lunch. Please sign up on the Mission table or contact Cinda (847-727-1552 or bartzc@sbcglobal.net) by November 16 if you would like to join the group. If you wish to pre-order from their menu, please contact Cinda and let her know what you want.





WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT WCF?

Contact Sue Schmidt, Catherine Vick, Ruth Gheysen, Rose Pech, or call the church office at 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 gather in the UPC Meeting Room on a Sunday once a month at **11:30 AM**. Sundays vary monthly based on other UPC events. Rose Pech will give devotions and members will donate money for a Veteran's gift **during their meeting on November 16**. Contact Catherine 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 on November 5**. Contact Sue Schmidt.

Circle 9 meets at **5:30 PM on the 2nd 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 November 11**.

Circle 10: does not meet in person. Members are in contact with each other on Facebook. Contact Jasmine Walker.

Circle	Day/Date	Time	Place	Contact
2	Sun., Nov. 16	11:00 AM	UPC Meeting Room	Catherine Vick
4/5	Wed., Nov. 5	11:30 AM	Culver's in Grayslake	Sue Schmidt
9	Tues., Nov. 11	5:30 PM	Mrs. V's in Round Lake Beach	Ruth Gheysen

Tyler, Brittany, Danielle, & Joanna: give praise for everyone who is praying for them and their projects, for reaching 55% of the funds needed for their fruit farm, for the 102+ pages of Brittany's French homeschool blog having been indexed, and for those who made donations for container items and for other needs. Ongoing requests include prayers for a Nanny from now until April 2026, and for 6+ months in October 2026, and for an African Christian for farm and brick machine. Donations can still be made to help fund the fruit farm. See flyers at UPC for suggested donation amounts. All sizes of donations are needed and very much appreciated. These may be made online using this link www.ilad.ngo/D2002 or by giving to their UPC fund at any time.

The next issue of The Unifier will be a combination of December 2025 and January 2026, and may not be available until mid-December.

November Birthdays

11/7 Sofia Henne
11/8 Doreen Churchill
11/9 Candi Becker
11/14 James Bethmann
11/17 Cheyenne Grubbs
11/18 Lynn Hallen
11/19 Barbara Weichman
11/22 Sue Schmidt
11/25 Craig Fischel



November Anniversaries

11/6 Richard & Linda Dzwonkiewicz
11/15 Jamie & Denise Fuller
11/24 Gregg & Jill Helm

December Anniversaries

12/13 Shelly & Felix Kutsin
12/14 Aimee Divis & Dennis Wong
12/16 Richard & Nancy Johannsen

December Birthdays

12/3 Emma Henne
12/4 Katie Gheysen
12/5 Reese Divis
12/9 Charlie Grubbs
12/9 Jackson Grubbs
12/9 Nancy Johannsen
12/13 Kenny Madden
12/15 Suzanne Harvey
12/20 Jackie Ianson
12/26 Darlene George Craig
12/31 John Porteous



*Daylight Saving Time ends on November 2.
Don't forget to change your clocks back one hour.*

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

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

Tyler, Brittany & Danielle, & Joanna: give praise that their branch's new print shop is operational for printing scripture. Additional praise that Shovel got Brittany's whole wheat berries ground to flour at a different machine in town, and for capital highlights of ice cream, new restaurant with friends, and playground/trampoline. Prayer requests are for a good and quick solution for room in port for the shipping container to dock because it's ready to arrive, for tough realities to mobilize them and others to find creative solutions to difficult issues to help solve their branch's continued struggles with healthy admin with all the needs of branch members and unclear roles/responsibilities. Their organizational culture is very slow to adapt. Pray that an easy solution would be found for help to get their bulk order from the plastic factory across the country. Donations can always be made at <http://ilad.ngo/D2002> or can be given to the Tyler & Brittany Fund at UPC.

Relatives & Friends: Alam family, Kathy Behm, Lorine Cooper, Patricia Davis, Daniel Dorman, Judy Hendrickson, Jennifer Hitch, Mary Mason, Hubert & Sharon Maston, Albert Meier, Gloria Meier, Pat Mielke, Tommy Nellessen, Melissa Norton, Gail Russell, 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, Ben Kelly-Fuller, Barry Burgett, 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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churchsec@upcgl.org

Pastor: Rev. Jason Okrzynski

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seniorpastor@upcgl.org
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Church Office Hours:
Tuesdays & Thursdays
10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Grounded | Empowered | Transformed

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54 S. Whitney Street
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