

# The Unifier



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September 2025

Grace to you and Peace from God our Father and from Jesus Christ,

Signs abound that another summer is gone and fall is moving in. Like many, fall is my favorite time of year—the leaves, the cool nights, the hot cider, football games, and of course, Halloween and Thanksgiving. For congregations, fall is also stewardship time. Stewardship is when church members gather their pledges in order to create the budget for the next year. The 2026 stewardship campaign will begin Sunday, September 28 with Consecration Sunday on October 19.

When I became your pastor three years ago, one of the first things I encountered was a significant shortfall between the budget and the pledges. These things happen to churches, but I will admit it was a little stressful. In the three years since, I have watched your stewardship committee work hard at improving the stewardship campaign, and the Budget & Finance team work hard at closing the negative variance that we encountered in the budget each year. I can report that both teams have done great work. We have seen our members respond to the stewardship committee efforts in both an increased percentage of members giving and continual raises in the average pledge. We have also seen our Budget & Finance team continue to make gains toward a balanced budget.

As we look forward to this year, it is my sincere hope that we see this positive trend continue. This year, we have asked our committees to submit their annual budget requests before the start of the stewardship campaign. I have noticed that we have a pattern in which we create our budget, and then ask for special pledges after the fact when emergency needs arise. We can shift that trend. We can get balanced and then see our budget grow to incorporate new mission and ministry goals that will grow our church, increase our energy, and stretch the reach of service and mission to transform new lives.

I want to remind you lastly of our 75 for 75 campaign. We are two months into the campaign, and we are already one-third of the way towards our goal of raising \$75,000 for the endowment fund. I have said this before, but it is important that it be stressed: 75 for 75 campaign pledges are for the endowment fund, not the operating budget. The endowment fund is meant to secure the next 75 years of healthy and vibrant life for the United Protestant Church. The operating budget is the budget intended for our daily costs such as staff, building upkeep, and programming costs. In other words, please make budgeting for the 2026 stewardship campaign your priority, and then pledge to the 75 for 75 campaign. The 75 for 75 campaign will remain open through February, 2026, and you are invited to submit those pledges any time.

This September, we are in the books of Genesis and Exodus in worship. I love reading these texts as the season changes around us. I look forward to this coming season, and to seeing where our numerous campaigns lead us into the future.

In Christ,

Rev. Jason Okrzynski, PhD  
Senior Pastor

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWS



Our Christian education classes for children and adults will resume on Sunday, September 14 at 9 a.m. The children will be learning from the *Living the Word* curriculum again this year that utilizes the narrative lectionary. The children will be examining the same or similar passages of Scripture as we will during the 10 a.m. worship services. Children will meet in room 102 each Sunday.

The adults will meet in room 106 on Sunday mornings at 9 a.m. The first book study will be *The Red Tent* by Anita Diamant. Books may be purchased online at either [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) or other book selling websites. Remember to check your local library for a copy to borrow. Contact Abby Madden at [aabergson@gmail.com](mailto:aabergson@gmail.com) for more information.

### **From the Director of Music:**



The new church program year will soon be upon us...and that means the return of the music groups here at UPC to provide meaningful music to our worship services. The Chancel Choir, in particular, is looking for folks who would like to help “make a joyful noise unto the Lord” with their voices! No experience or the ability to read music is necessary, although that is helpful.

We meet on Thursdays at 6:00 p.m. in the sanctuary. Our first rehearsal is **Thursday, September 4**. If you have any questions, please reach out to Kurt. Let’s try to fill the choir loft this year.

### **Men’s Ministry Kick-off:**

All the men of United Protestant Church are invited to join us on Saturday, September 13 at 8 a.m. in Fellowship Hall for the men’s ministry kick-off. We will gather for breakfast, a check-in and conversation, and then plan UPC men’s ministry dates and events for the 2025-2026 program year. If you are willing to help cook that morning, or if you are unable to join us but would like to share your input or schedule hopes for the year, please email Pastor Jason at [seniorpastor@upcgl.org](mailto:seniorpastor@upcgl.org). Hope to see you on September 13!

#### **UPC STAFF:**

SENIOR PASTOR  
DIRECTOR OF MUSIC/ORGANIST  
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT/CLERK  
TREASURER  
FINANCIAL SECRETARY

Rev. Jason Okrzynski, PhD  
Kurt Mockenhaupt  
Sue Schmidt  
Lynn Hallen  
Jan Kendrick, Cinda Bartz



# OUTDOOR WORSHIP SERVICE & PICNIC – AUGUST 24, 2025







# SEPTEMBER 2025

## United Protestant Church CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<b>1</b> LABOR DAY OFFICE CLOSED 7:30pm AA (106, 105)	<b>2</b> 1:00pm Stewardship Committee (MR) 6:30pm Pack 451 All Dens Meeting (FH) 7:00pm AA Ladies (106, 105)	<b>3</b> 11:30am Circle 4/5 (Culver's) 7:00pm Alanon (106, 105) 7:00pm Troop 451 Meeting (FH)	<b>4</b> 6:00pm Choir Rehearsal (Sanctuary) 7:30pm AA (106, 105)	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> 7:00am-3:00pm Annual Grayslake Car Show (UPC parking lot) 3:30pm Pack 451 Scout Welcome Meeting (FH)
<b>7</b> 10:00am Worship Service 11:30am Circle 2 (MR)	<b>8</b> 7:30pm AA (106, 105)	<b>9</b> 2:00pm Budget & Finance (MR) 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)	<b>10</b> 6:30pm North Star District Commissioner Meeting (MR) 7:00pm Alanon (106, 105) 7:00pm PUSH (Parlor) 7:00pm Troop 451 Meeting (FH)	<b>11</b> 6:00pm Choir Rehearsal (Sanctuary) 7:00pm Grace Notes Bell Rehearsal (Choir Room) 7:30pm AA (106, 105)	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> 8:00am Men's Ministry Kickoff Breakfast Meeting (FH)
<b>14</b> 9:00am Education Hour 10:00am Worship Service	<b>15</b> 7:00pm Ad Council (FH) 7:30pm AA (106, 105)	<b>16</b> 6:30pm Governance Task Force (Parlor) 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)	<b>17</b> 6:00pm Confirmation Class (Loft) 7:00pm Alanon (106, 105) 7:00pm Troop 451 Meeting (FH)	<b>18</b> 6:00pm Choir Rehearsal (Sanctuary) 7:00pm Grace Notes Bell Rehearsal (Choir Room) 7:30pm AA (106,105)	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>21</b> 9:00am Education Hour 10:00am Worship Service 11:00am Special Congregational Meeting	<b>22</b> 6:30pm Worship Committee (MR) 7:00pm Mission Committee (103) 7:30pm AA (106, 105)	<b>23</b> 6:30pm Pack 451 Den Meetings (FH) 7:00pm AA Ladies (106, 105)	<b>24</b> 6:00pm Confirmation Class (Loft) 7:00pm Alanon (106, 105) 7:00pm Troop 451 Meeting (FH)	<b>25</b> 6:00pm Choir Rehearsal (Sanctuary) 7:00pm Grace Notes Bell Rehearsal (Choir Room) 7:30pm AA (106,105)	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>28</b> 9:00am Education Hour 10:00am Worship Service	<b>29</b> 7:30pm AA (106, 105)	<b>30</b> 6:00pm Staff Parish (MR) 6:30pm Pack 451 Den Meetings (FH) 7:00pm AA Ladies (106, 105)				



## HUNGER ACTION MONTH

Taking a stand against hunger.

**September is Hunger Action Month**—a time to stop and think about those less fortunate than ourselves. The Mission Committee has chosen to provide you with a list of ways UPC is already fighting hunger in our area and around the world. We invite you to please consider joining the effort by supporting one or more of these missions.

### Locally:

**PADS**—We collect non-perishable food and once the permanent site is open, we will begin to prepare meals for our area homeless. There is a bin in the narthex.

**Avon Township Center Food Pantry**—We collect non-perishable food items to supply the food pantry as well as volunteer to stock the shelves to help those who just can't make ends meet. There is a bin in the narthex. More volunteers are always needed.

**Lake County Haven**—We collect non-perishable food items to support these women and children who are working their way out of being homeless. Six times a year, we provide a meal to the two residences. There is a bin in the narthex. We also take a Joy-sharing for this mission.

**A Safe Place**—We collect non-perishable food items to support those who were victims of domestic violence or human trafficking. While many are employed, it is not always enough. There is a bin in the narthex.

**Feed6**—This first time Joy-sharing recipient packages non-perishable meals at various locations in Lake and Cook Counties, but please also consider volunteering with the group. More volunteers are always needed.

**Midwest Veterans' Closet**—We collect non-perishable foods for active military, veterans and their families to help them get through the lean times. There is a bin in the narthex.

**Gleaning**—UPC volunteers go to Stadel's Farm in McHenry for an hour every Monday morning at 9am during harvest season and pick corn, apples, or other produce from the fields and donate it to area missions and the Northern Illinois Food Bank to keep our neighbors from going hungry. More volunteers are always needed.

**Northern Illinois Food Bank**—UPC has volunteers who regularly attend the Thursday afternoons from 1:00-3:30pm to sort and package food. There are sessions available almost every day of the week. This food is then provided to area food pantries to help feed our neighbors. More volunteers are always needed.

### Internationally:

**CROP Walk**—The CROP Walk this year will be in Antioch. It is currently scheduled for October 12. UPC will have a team. Please consider walking or sponsoring a walker. 25% of the funds from this walk stay locally to help our neighbors and the rest is used internationally for world-wide hunger relief.

**Feed My Starving Children**—Non-perishable meals are packed at the Libertyville facility. UPC members have standing sessions on Wednesdays and Fridays at 11:30am, and at 7:15pm on the first Tuesday of each month. All are welcome to join us. There are also many other sessions available. We also collect a Joy-sharing for this mission.

**Church World Service-Best Gifts**—In December, you have the option to make a donation to CWS instead of buying a traditional gift for someone you know. You even get to choose how your donation is used. Many of these choices are food related whether it is buying seed for a farmer, sending food to a refugee, or another option.

As you can see, UPC offers many opportunities to help those who are hungry. Please join us and participate in some way during Hunger Action Month.

## MISSIONS



The next UPC packing session at Feed My Starving Children in Libertyville is scheduled for **Tuesday, September 2 from 7:15-8:45 p.m.** The session in October is scheduled for Tuesday, October 7. 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 September: **crayons, colored pencils, blunt-tip scissors, erasers, pencil sharpeners, rulers and protractors.**

### JOY SHARING FOR SEPTEMBER

**INK180** transforms the painful reminders of destructive situations into beautiful art by covering the tattoos or scars left from a former life in a gang, enslavement in human trafficking, domestic violence, drug addiction, or self-harm (cutting) to help people get their lives back on the right track. INK180 is also working to stop human trafficking and aid those who are rescued.

We have all heard of gang tattoos, but did you know that human traffickers often tattoo their victims to identify them as their personal property? How awful would it be to go through life with that kind of permanent reminder on your body?

Chris Baker provides his time, supplies and artwork, entirely free of charge to the victims. INK180 is entirely funded by donations; no charge is ever asked of the people receiving Chris' ministry. He cannot operate any other way; beautiful second chances are totally free, already paid in full by the One who paid it all. They were for Chris, they are for us, so they must also be for those who have already suffered so much.

Let's help these survivors take one more step towards being truly free by donating to INK180. Joy Sharing Sunday is September 21.

### FUNDRAISING OPPORTUNITY

The Mission Committee is sponsoring a fundraiser for UPC taking orders for pretzels and cheese dip from Milwaukee Pretzel Company. Orders will be taken Sunday, September 7, 14, and 21 with delivery to the church on Friday, October 17.

Some of you may know the Wessel family who lived in Wildwood for many years. One of Patrice and Tom's sons, Matt, and his wife, Katie, founded the business in 2013 after living in Germany for a year and upon returning to the States, missed the pretzels from Germany so much that they re-created them!

UPC will earn a whopping 50% of all sales! The proceeds will go to the church's general budget. Please show your support by ordering these delicious pretzels, delivered fresh.

## UPC SHOPPER

With school starting again, we find ourselves even more on the run than ever. We have to get the kids to school, practice, events and still get our errands run. We may find ourselves grabbing quick meals more often than usual. Please consider stopping by the UPC Shopper table and check out the array of fast-food restaurant gift cards we have in stock. Maybe you just need some extra energy to get everything done. Get a Starbucks or Dunkin' card and give yourself a boost to get through the day. All proceeds from the shopper cards benefit Operation Christmas Child.

Did you know that you can order gift cards on your phone or computer and get them almost instantly? For more information, see Cinda Bartz, Linda Rambo or Mary Ann McDowell.

## YOUTH SERVICE PROJECT—AUGUST 24



After attending UPC's outdoor worship service and the picnic/ice cream social on August 24, seven UPC Middle and High School Youth distributed sacks for collecting shoes for our August Fifth Sunday Sharing Mission "Soles for Jesus." Some sacks were taken to homes in the neighborhood surrounding UPC, and others were taken home for the youth to distribute in their own neighborhoods and bring back to UPC on August 31. The sacks at homes near UPC were scheduled to be picked up on August 30 to have

the shoes at UPC for the Fifth Sunday Mission. The **next youth activity** will be held on a Sunday near the end of September when the youth will enjoy ice cream sundaes and other treats as they have game day following the Sunday morning worship service. In November/December between Thanksgiving and Christmas, there may be a trip to Chicago to attend worship and have the Sky Tour at The Temple UMC followed by visiting the nearby Christkindlmarket. Watch for more information in the UPC Tuesday Newsday emails. Contact Erik Fries at [erikfries@yahoo.com](mailto:erikfries@yahoo.com) or 847-366-5040 if you have any questions.



## Important Stewardship Dates for Fall 2025

- ✓ Kick-off for the **2026 Stewardship Campaign** on September 28 with stewardship letters arriving in your homes that week.
- ✓ Consecration of our pledges in worship on October 19.



***Thank you to everyone who donated school backpacks for children in need in our local community! We collected 62 backpacks this year. These were blessed during our outdoor worship service on August 24.***





**PADS Lake County Info & Needs:** PADS has about 115 clients in the Super 8 Motel in Mundelein and 12 clients in the Hometowne Motel in Waukegan as of August 26. The ongoing needs of these clients have been published weekly in the Tuesday Newsday paragraph sent from the PADS Food Hub at First Presbyterian Church in Libertyville. Many of you have helped with your direct donations, and money has been used from the UPC PADS Fund to purchase UPC Shopper gift cards to buy items. We've also continued to honor requests from case managers for clothing, shoes, and other items needed by specific clients, just as we've done since the 1990's shortly after we became a PADS Site. For the first time in all these years, our PADS Fund will likely not be sufficient to meet the requests we expect to receive within the next few months. Therefore, **please watch Tuesday Newsday emails for case managers' specific need requests** starting the first week of September. These donations will be brought directly to UPC so Mary Zorc can deliver them to the case manager who has made the request during September and October. The following items are needed for the many toddlers and young male clients:

- ♦ Diapers in sizes 1 through 5.
- ♦ Boys' jeans in all sizes (new or like new and showing no apparent wear).

Please consider registering and bidding for items in the PADS online auction which will open on the same day as the **PADS Gala** scheduled for **Saturday, September 20 at 6:30 PM at Tighthead Brewing Company [161 N. Archer Ave, Mundelein, IL 60060](https://www.tightheadbrewing.com/)**. Thank you to those of you who donated baskets for this event! Watch the upcoming Tuesday Newsday for instructions on how to bid for items in the online auction.

### **Future UPC PADS Support for PADS Lake County:**

UPC PADS volunteers will still be needed in 2026 to help provide a weekly dinner to 60 of the clients at the coming fixed Family Shelter Site in Waukegan. However, due to numerous delays, the site is now **expected to open in March instead of this coming winter. UPC Coordinators now have more time to get ready for the site opening!** Adults and youth who would like more information or want to volunteer can have your name and contact information put on our PADS Fixed Site contact list for Rose Pech to contact you when plans start being made. Send your contact information, questions, concerns, and/or ways in which you would like to volunteer to United Protestant Church, Attention: Rose Pech, 54 S. Whitney St., Grayslake, IL 60030 or email Rose at [rose4nonna@hotmail.com](mailto:rose4nonna@hotmail.com). Help will be needed with contacting restaurants or other donors to provide food or items to be prepared, providing some of these food items yourself, helping to prepare a meal, or delivering a meal to the site once it opens.





## 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 information. See the church bulletin, Tuesday Newsday, and UNIFIER for updates.

USE INFORMATION AND THE TABLE BELOW. *We would love to have you join us!*

**Circle 2:** members have returned to the meeting room for their meetings on a Sunday once a month at 11:30 AM. Sundays vary monthly based on other UPC events. Janette Leathem will provide devotions at the September 7 meeting. Contact Catherine Vick for more information.

**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 September 3. 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 September 9.

**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., Sept. 7	11:30 AM	UPC Meeting Room	Catherine Vick
4/5	Wed., Sept. 3	11:30 AM	Culver's in Grayslake	Sue Schmidt
9	Tues., Sept. 9	5:30 PM	Mrs. V's in Round Lake Beach	Ruth Gheysen

**Tyler, Brittany, Danielle, & Joanna:** give praise for God's many blessings in the midst of life's challenges. Prayer requests for the arrival of Starlink for the internet, experimenting with new schedule as Nanny leaves, and for the two urgent needs: a **Nanny** (September 2025-April 2026 & 6+ months: October 2026) and to **identify an African Christian for farm & brick machine**. Donations are always much needed and may be made at <http://www.ilad.ngo/D2002> or to their UPC fund or at any time.

## September Birthdays

9/2 Patti Friesema  
9/4 Ruth Gheysen  
9/6 Justin Trowitch  
9/10 Olivia Henne  
9/13 Joseph Friesema  
9/20 Jeanne Yomine  
9/24 Connor Bethmann  
9/24 Ann Drevalas



## September Anniversaries

9/7 John & Margaret Porteous  
9/19 Louis & Karen Thoms  
9/30 Dave & Cinda Bartz



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

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

**Tyler, Brittany & Danielle, & Joanna:** give praise for the blessing of having access to a shipping container for the first time since 2022, and this is the **ONLY** way to get large items from the U.S. to their remote location, which is essential for the upcoming building phase. They are grateful to have a friend in NC who received, repacked, and delivered everything for them. Because their work funds had a cushion, they were able to quickly respond to this unexpected opportunity. Now they need to replenish their account to use for building. You are invited to help by purchasing a container item to help support their fruit tree farm. **See the lists of items and prices on flyers at UPC.** Donations can be made at <http://ilad.ngo/D2002> at any time. This information is included on flyers with the list of items. **Prayer requests** this week are for their nanny's dad's visit from August 28 to September 5, and endurance until their cruise and home assignment in April 2026.

**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, 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, David Novak, Sue (PADS friend), Wendy (friend of Rose Pech), and Michelle (friend of Linda Markham).

UPC Financial Update as of July 31, 2025:

YTD Income: \$138,456.12  
YTD Expenses: \$151,132.50  
YTD Deficit: **\$-12,676.37**

\$75K for 75 Years Campaign Update

*Update as of September 1:*

Money committed to be matched = \$30,000

Cash received be matched = \$7,175

Pledges received to be matched = \$4,100

Total completed towards \$30,000 goal = **\$11,275 (37.6%)**

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

September 13 Men's Ministry Kick-off, 8 a.m. in Fellowship Hall

September 28 2026 Stewardship Campaign Begins

October 5 World-wide Communion Sunday

October 18 Troop 451 Spaghetti Dinner, 5:30-7:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall

October 19 Consecration of Pledges Sunday

October 25 UPC Annual Fall Fest, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on the front lawn (weather permitting)



**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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Pastor: Rev. Jason Okrzynski

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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**

