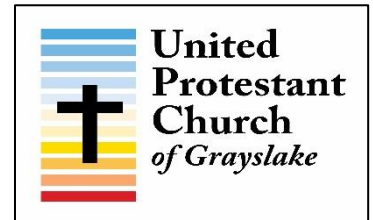


THE UNIFIER



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

September 2026

Grace to you and peace,

At UPC, our outdoor service is usually the annual sign that a new program year is beginning. Although yesterday's service was rained out, there is still a lot to share as we prepare for the year ahead.

First, please note a **time change** for all Sunday morning activities. **Sunday School and Adult Education classes will meet from 8:45 a.m. to 9:45 a.m. every Sunday morning.** Adult Education will meet in room 106, and Children's Sunday School will meet in room 102. We hope this schedule will provide more time for choir rehearsals while also allowing musicians to participate in class offerings.

As always, our Adult Education Team has selected an engaging list of books and topics to help us grow together and deepen our relationship with God:

- **September 20–October 18:** *God So Enters into Relationships That...* by Terence E. Fretheim
- **October 25–November 22:** *1st & 2nd Samuel*
- **November 29–December 20:** *The Carols of Christmas* by Alan Vermilye
- **January 3–February 7:** *This Holy Mystery: A United Methodist Understanding of Holy Communion* by Gayle Carlton Felton
- **February 14–March 21:** *40-Day Journey with Julian of Norwich* by Lisa Dahill
- **April 4–May 16:** *A House of Prayer: The Power of Praying in Community* by Thomas R. Steagald

All adult members are encouraged to participate in Adult Education. Books are available to order online. If you are unable to order a book, please notify Sue Schmidt, and we can place the order for you. Reading schedules will be available in person and online at least two weeks before each class begins.

Men's Ministries will kick off in October. **The first men's breakfast will be Saturday, October 24 at 8:00 a.m. in Fellowship Hall.** Sign-ups for cooks and the full schedule will be available soon.

UPC Women's Circles meet regularly on their own schedule. Please see the Women's Christian Fellowship page in this newsletter for more information.

In addition, **the Grayslake Senior Bible Study meets every Tuesday at 9:30 a.m. at the Grayslake Senior Center.** I lead this wonderful group, and you are welcome to join us any Tuesday morning.

Along with these programming opportunities, our full slate of ministries is also available. If you are interested in joining the Bell Choir or Vocal Choir, rehearsals begin this week. **Vocal Choir rehearses Thursdays at 6:00 p.m., and Bell Choir rehearses Thursdays at 7:00 p.m.**

Our service and mission opportunities are listed in more detail below, but please note several upcoming ways to serve, including Feed My Starving Children, gleaning at Stade Farm, and the annual CROP Hunger Walk. Additional opportunities with Feed6 Hunger, Lake County Haven, PADS Lake County, Operation Christmas Child, and others will be available throughout the fall.

We also look forward to welcoming back a UPC favorite, Chris Baker of INK180. Chris will join us for Joy Sharing on Sunday, September 20 and, as always, will share a word with us that is not to be missed.

More details about these and other opportunities are available below, as well as at church and online. I look forward to another full year of being grounded in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, and transformed by God together.

In Christ,

Rev. Jason Okrzynski
Senior Pastor

CRUISIN' ON CENTER CAR SHOW 2026



Thank you to the many UPC volunteers who baked, donated items, and worked at this year's Cruisin' on Center Car Show in downtown Grayslake on Saturday, August 29. Our parking lot as well as Center and Whitney Streets were full of various models of cars on display to enjoy. We set up our tent and sold coffee, lemonade, bottled water, popcorn, and homemade baked goods.

We raised over \$500 to benefit UPC's general operating budget. A special thank you to Rick Burg for once again organizing our participation in this event. We're already making plans for next year. Please plan to join us for this fun community event in 2027! This year's volunteers included Cinda Bartz, Judi Becker, Rick Burg, Jennifer Cooper, Barb Fischel, Wende Fry, Ken Gipple, Lynn Hallen, Sally Kelly, Abby Madden, Dale Message, Kurt Mockenhaupt, Margaret Porteous, Linda Rambo, Sue Schmidt, Karen Thoms, and Jerry Wessale. Great job, everyone!



Our Christian education classes for children and adults will resume on Sunday, September 20 at 8:45 a.m. The children will be learning from online curriculum that is theme-based and examines the same or similar passages of Scripture as we will read during the 10:00 a.m. worship services. Children will meet in room 102 each Sunday.

Adult Education participants will meet in room 106 on Sunday mornings beginning September 20 at 8:45 a.m. The first book study is titled *God So Enters into Relationships That...* by Terence E. Fretheim. Books can be ordered through Amazon or Augsburg Fortress, or speak to Sue Schmidt.



A New Choir Church Season Has Begun

Summer is over and the church's music program has begun once again to prepare music for our weekly worship services. It's not too late...we are still looking for new singers to join our ranks. Will you be one of them? We are a fun group and would love to have you join us. Why not come and give it a try? We rehearse every Thursday at 6:00 p.m. in the sanctuary. If you have questions, please speak with Kurt Mockenhaupt, our Director of Music. You can also email him at MusicDirector@upcgl.org.



Join us on Sunday, October 4, at 4:00 p.m. for a concert by The Agape Ringers, Chicago's premier handbell ensemble (our own Kurt Mockenhaupt is a member). You can learn more about the ensemble at their website www.AgapeRingers.org, and on Facebook and YouTube by searching for "The Agape Ringers."

This year's program encompasses a wide variety of musical styles, from classical to gospel, with arrangements such as the well-known "Clair de Lune" by Debussy, "For Good" from the Broadway musical and blockbuster movie *Wicked*, and many more compositions and arrangements for handbells.

The concert is free and open to the public (a freewill offering will be received).

FUNDRAISING OPPORTUNITY

The Mission Team is again sponsoring a fundraiser for UPC, taking orders for pretzels and cheese dip from Milwaukee Pretzel Company. Orders will be taken Sunday, September 6, 13, and 20 with delivery to the church on Friday, October 16 for pick-up that evening or on Saturday, 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 U.S., 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 and Operation Christmas Child shipping expenses. We appreciated your support of this fundraiser last year, making it a huge success. Please show your support again by ordering these delicious pretzels, delivered fresh, as well as dipping sauces.



SEPTEMBER 2026

United Protestant Church CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 7:00pm AA Ladies (106, 105) 7:15pm Feed My Starving Children (Libertyville)	2 11:30am Circle 4/5 (Culver's) 7:00pm Alanon (106, 105)	3 12:00-4:00pm PADS (Kitchen) 6:00pm Choir Rehearsal (Sanctuary) 7:00pm Grace Notes Bell Rehearsal (Choir Room) 7:00pm Troop 451 Meeting (FH) 7:30pm AA (106, 105)	4 10:00am-12:00pm PADS (Kitchen)	5 1:00pm Pack 451 Informational Meeting (FH)
6 10:00am Worship Service	7 LABOR DAY 5:30pm Staff Parish (MR) 7:30pm AA (106, 105)	8 5:30pm Circle 9 (Mrs. V's) 6:00pm PADS (Kitchen) 6:30pm Pack 451 Meeting (FH/front lawn) 7:00pm AA Ladies (106, 105)	9 7:00pm Alanon (106, 105) 7:00pm PUSH (Parlor)	10 10:00am-4:00pm PADS Cleaning (Kitchen) 3:00pm Budget & Finance (MR) 6:00pm Choir Rehearsal (Sanctuary) 7:00pm Grace Notes Bell Rehearsal (Choir Room) 7:00pm Troop 451 Meeting (FH) 7:30pm AA (106, 105)	11 	12
13 10:00am Worship Service 11:30am Circle 2 (MR)	14 7:30pm AA (106, 105)	15 6:30pm Pack 451 Meeting (FH) 7:00pm Nami Family Support Group (MR) 7:00pm AA Ladies (106, 105)	16 7:00pm North Star District Commissioner Meeting (FH) 7:00pm Alanon (106, 105)	17 6:00pm Choir Rehearsal (Sanctuary) 7:00pm Grace Notes Bell Rehearsal (Choir Room) 7:00pm Troop 451 Meeting (FH) 7:30pm AA (106, 105)	18 	19
20 8:45am Children's Sunday School Class (102) 8:45am Adult Education Class (106) 10:00am Worship Service	21 7:00pm UPC Board Meeting (MR) 7:30pm AA (106, 105)	22 6:30pm Pack 451 Meeting (FH) 7:00pm AA Ladies (106, 105)	23 7:00pm Alanon (106, 105)	24 6:00pm Choir Rehearsal (Sanctuary) 7:00pm Grace Notes Bell Rehearsal (Choir Room) 7:00pm Troop 451 Meeting (FH) 7:30pm AA (106, 105)	25 	26
27 8:45am Children's Sunday School Class (102) 8:45am Adult Education Class (106) 10:00am Worship Service	28 6:30pm Worship Team (MR) 7:00pm Mission Team (103) 7:30pm AA (106, 105)	29 6:30pm Pack 451 Meeting (FH) 7:00pm AA Ladies (106, 105)	30 7:00pm Alanon (106, 105)			

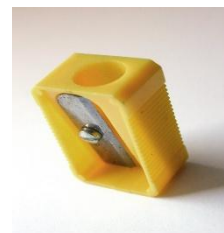
MISSIONS UPDATE



The next UPC packing session at Feed My Starving Children in Libertyville is scheduled for Tuesday, September 1 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 September: crayons, colored pencils, scissors (blunt tip), erasers, and pencil sharpeners.



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 20.

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.

MORE MISSION OPPORTUNITIES

Feel like you could be doing more to help others? Consider attending the Mission Fair at CLC on Wednesday, **September 16 from 3:00-6:00 p.m.** where you can 1) Connect with local organizations to learn about their missions and vital services, 2) Find meaningful volunteer opportunities to actively give back and serve others, and 3) Discover diverse ways to contribute to and strengthen our shared community.

On **Saturday, September 12**, Liberty Prairie Farm (550 Harris Rd, Grayslake) is opening their fields for a guided gleanng morning. From **10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.**, anyone who wants to spend a couple of hours outside doing real, useful work is welcome to join them—no farming experience required. As the weather permits, they'll harvest surplus produce together and send it directly to local food pantries, including the Avon Township Food Bank. Go to [Liberty Prairie Volunteer Sign Up](#) to sign up.

CROP WALK FOR HUNGER



It's CROP Hunger Walk time again! Our UPC team will be walking in the 1-2 mile Northern Lake County CROP Hunger Walk in Antioch at 1:00 p.m. on Sunday, **October 11**. Please join our team or sponsor one of our walkers online at [2026 CROP Hunger Walk - United Protestant Church of Grayslake](#). We also have sponsor sheets on the mission table in the Narthex, or you can scan the QR code below.



CROP Hunger walks were created to support the global mission of Church World Services, a faith-based organization transforming communities around the globe through just and sustainable responses to hunger, poverty, displacement, and disaster. Remember that 25% of the funds that are raised will be donated to PADS this year. Non-perishable food is also being collected. Please contact Cinda Bartz at bartzc@sbcglobal.net with any questions. Thank you for your continuing support!



Thank you to everyone who donated school backpacks to children in need this summer. We collected a total of **73 backpacks**, which exceeds our record of 62 from last year! These backpacks will be delivered to PADS and A Safe Place. Your generosity is greatly appreciated!

UPC Financial Update as of July 31, 2026:

Year-to-date Income:	\$140,695.93
Year-to-date Expenses:	\$146,416.09
Year-to-date Deficit:	\$ -5,720.16



PADS Lake County GALA Fundraiser on Saturday, September 19, 2026: Please pray for this GALA Fundraiser to be a success to support PADS programs to provide shelter, housing services, and healthcare to neighbors experiencing homelessness. In 2025 alone, we served **2,300 people** and provided **91,000 nights of shelter**. Details for the GALA are available by clicking on the GALA poster on the PADS Lake County website: www.padslakecounty.org or by contacting Katie Hoehne at 847-689-0599 or Claress Pettengill at 224-277-8498.

PADS Pathways Family Shelter Update: PADS continues to move forward with plans to open Pathways Family Shelter so volunteers are needed and will continue to be needed in the days and months ahead. If you want to be on the list of people receiving direct updates and/or wish to have the recording of the meetings, or if you wish to volunteer, send your request to Savannah Johnson at sjohnson@padslakecounty.org. Savannah will share additional PADS updates and information and volunteer needs.

UPC PADS Support for Pathways Family Shelter: UPC PADS volunteers on Team 1 will meet on Tuesday, September 8 at 6:00 p.m. to plan for preparing and delivering the "Dinner for 60" on Thursday, October 1. Teams 3 and 5 have already met and will be finalizing their preliminary preparations soon. Some volunteers from all teams and others who wish to volunteer on the second and fourth weeks will work Thursday, September 10 in the UPC kitchen to clean the kitchen and set up Team areas for preparing and packing meals for "Dinner for 60."

We can start providing "Dinner for 60" on the second Thursday of each month as soon as we have one more volunteer, and we can start on the fourth Thursday of each month if we have two additional volunteers. This means we could be providing "Dinner for 60" every Thursday of the year! Prayers are being answered!

If you're interested in these positions or in providing desserts for these Thursdays, please contact Rose Pech rose4nonna@hotmail.com or pads_at_upc@hotmail.com before September 2. After September 2, you may also text or call Rose at 847-682-2837. Give your name and contact information (name, home address, email address, and phone number). Watch for other volunteer needs in the Tuesday Newsday/Thursday Mission articles.

Donations are also needed: Heavy duty disposable aluminum pans (restaurant size, ½ size and ¼ size) from Sam's Club, SOS or similar soap pads, plastic and metal scouring pads, sponges, bleach, paper towels, salad dressings, dish rags and dish towels are among the items we know will be needed. **Donations of Walmart shopper gift cards or money for buying food and supplies will be an ongoing need** with the cost of groceries being so high.

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



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

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. The August meeting was in room 103 where the members worked on more mission projects for the UPC Mission Team. Devotions were given by Janette Leathem. The September meeting will be on

Sunday, September 13 in room 103 with devotions by Linda Markham. Contact Catherine Vick for more information.

Circle 4/5 meets on the first Wednesday of the month **at 11:30 a.m. at Culver's in Grayslake.** Join us for friendly conversation and good food. The next lunch meeting will be on **Wednesday, September 2.** 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.** Join us for dinner and interesting conversation. 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, September 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., Sept. 13	11:30 AM	UPC Room 103	Catherine Vick
4/5	Wed., Sept. 2	11:30 AM	Culver's in Grayslake	Sue Schmidt
9	Tues., Sept. 8	5:30 PM	Mrs. V's in Round Lake Beach	Ruth Gheysen
10	N/A	N/A	N/A	Jasmine Walker

Praises and prayer requests for Tyler and Brittany and their family can be found on the next page.

September Birthdays

9/2 Patti Friesema
9/4 Ruth Gheysen
9/10 Olivia Henne
9/13 Joseph Friesema
9/20 Jeanne Yomine
9/24 Connor Bethmann



September Anniversaries

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

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

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

Tyler, Brittany, Danielle, & Joanna: give praise for being able to see so many supporters, family, and friends during our 7+ week trip to TX, PA, OR, and IL. For those we weren't able to visit, we'd love to **Zoom** with you while we're still in a US time zone (EST); please let us know if you'd like to Zoom to hear more about our Farm and Translation. Additional praises include Brittany and teammates restarted Zooming with Luke and Solo for two hours Monday-Thursday for **OT Summary progress**, Brittany's really successful week of **Orthography Workshop Planning** with 3 teammates (planned for April 2027); **God's provision:** MI church's VBS raised money for bricks, and a new \$100/month donor joined our team; the **Joseph** section of OT Summary is ready to go to the final Consultant Check. Our prayer requests are for favor as all four of us submitted our biometric **visa application**; prayers as we **pre-grieve** all the fun people and US things we'll have to leave behind—pickleball, swimming, grocery stores; for a Nanny for the fall of 2027; African Christian for making bricks; and 9 more \$100/month donors to join our team. Let us know if you'd like a copy of our new prayer card. Donations may be made by giving to the UPC fund or online at <http://www.ilad.ngo/D2002>.

Relatives & Friends: Bruce Baird, Mark Becker, Kathy Behm, Betty Bournes, Mary Brase, 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, Nancy Message, Pat Mielke, Marilyn Mockenhaupt, Melissa Norton, Sami Paris, Gary Sadlack, Eric Schmidt & family, Chris Shields, Ray Sisco, Stephan, Erik and Kacie Stanley, their son and Erik's mother, Diane, and Bri Walters, Sue (PADS friend), Wendy, and Michelle.

UPC STAFF:

SENIOR PASTOR
MUSIC DIRECTOR/ORGANIST
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
TREASURER
FINANCIAL SECRETARY

Rev. Jason Okrzynski, PhD
Kurt Mockenhaupt
Sue Schmidt
Lynn Hallen
Cinda Bartz & Ruth Gheysen

To Access UPC's Calendar On-Line

[http://www.mychurchevents.com
/calendar/calendar.aspx?ci=L6F0H2
O9G1F0O9L6I3](http://www.mychurchevents.com/calendar/calendar.aspx?ci=L6F0H2O9G1F0O9L6I3)

CONTACT US

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Pastor: Rev. Jason Okrzynski
seniorpastor@upcgl.org

Church Office Hours:
Tuesdays 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Thursdays 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Grounded | Empowered | Transformed

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