



In Touch



THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, FLANDERS, NJ 07836

August 2011

Get Ready For Some Holy Conversations

“As Christians, we are not called to stand still, but to be constantly moving, growing toward God and toward each other in love.”

George Ragsdale, Methodist Minister and Christian author

In the fall of 2010, the Session of UPC determined that in order to avoid standing still, what was needed was a long range planning effort to move the church forward into our next decade and beyond. From those beginnings, a small Steering Committee was commissioned consisting of Rev Rick, elders Marty Thompson, Tim Clarkson and Jeff Teucke (non-serving elder). The Committee began their task by reading the book, “Holy Conversations, Strategic Planning as a Spiritual Guide for Congregations” by Gil Rendle and Alice Mann of the Alban Institute. The book would become a reference guide for moving the group forward.

Just as Romans 12: 4-8 teaches us that we are all parts of the body of Christ and each endowed with grace given gifts, the Steering Committee recognized that it needed to form a broader team from among the members of UPC. In doing so, it went about its work to select a representative group of members who possessed a variety of skills and attributes that would contribute meaningfully to the work of the Team.

Following adoption by the Session, church members were contacted and as grace would have it, most of the initial desired candidates agreed to become members of the Team. Selected were Faithe Ludlow, Chuck Miller, Maureen Ngoh, Kim Heal and Sara McHugh. Tim Clarkson and Jeff Teucke were selected as co-chairs. To give itself an identity, the Team came up with the name, UPC 20/20 to reflect the clarity of vision needed to plan and grow. The UPC 20/20 Team meets every 4th Monday in the UPC library.

One of the first priorities of this team was to meet with (former?) Elder Bob Reip who co-chaired the last long range planning committee. Bob shared his insights with and answered questions from UPC 20/20 members concerning the prior effort that concluded in 1996. The Team then put considerable time and thought into discerning its mission and insuring that it kept with the tenets outlined in “Holy Conversations.” After much discussion, the following mission was chosen for adoption:

“Through holy conversations celebrating who we are and how God is present with us, the UPC 20/20 Committee looks to discern God’s plan, opportunities and possibilities for UPC to more fully live out our calling as a Christian community.”

In order to most effectively carry out its mission the Team felt it important and necessary to engage in a series of holy conversations with the congregation. This would be done through a variety of methods including small group meetings, a town hall setting and a formal written survey. The latter will be gathered in both traditional and online format and will be based on the mission statement components. Small group meetings will include existing groups within the church such as Friday Bible Study and Second Saturday. Each of these holy conversations will form the backbone of our direction as a church and a member of the Christian community.

News of upcoming UPC 20/20 events will be announced in church and in UPC Communiqués.

Respectfully submitted, UPC 20/20 Team



An old saying has it, "Time flies when you're having fun". Well, by the time you get this in late July or early August, we will have reached the Four Year mark as pastor and congregation here at UPC! Time has flown! And it has been fun (most of the time)!

It was not an easy thing to leave my previous congregation of thirteen and a half years. I left behind dear friends with whom I had shared much over those years. But after some great ministry opportunities, I was ready to move on to new opportunities and new challenges which I came to believe I would find at UPC. On your end, the first years of the new millennium were filled with your own unique highs and lows. I know you were also ready to move on to hopefully better things when you called your new Designated Pastor (in the hopes that he would become permanent in time).

Occasionally when I meet people in Flanders I am still tempted to introduce myself as "the new pastor at the Presbyterian Church". But at this point that's a bit of a stretch!. I will probably never introduce myself as "*the old pastor* at the Presbyterian Church", but our relationship has solidified and we have been through enough together over these four years that well, that sense of newness has settled into a comfortable permanence. At least I feel that. I continue to learn about this congregation to which God has called me and I am still excited about the ministry which lies ahead. I hope you are still learning things about me and are still positive about the relationship which you entered four years ago.

I think we have laid a foundation during these four years to feel comfortable with each other. I know that you are not the perfect congregation and you certainly know I am not the perfect pastor either. But we are attempting to faithfully carry out our ever-new mission to serve Christ in Mt. Olive Township and beyond.

I believe great things are still ahead for UPC. I also believe we have challenges ahead for us as well. These are tough days for churches. We continue to shift away from being a church-based society and churches face more competition these days for people and for dollars than ever before. We receive and welcome visitors regularly and occasionally a few of them decide to become part of the family. Yet the challenge of greater church growth remains, as it does for all contemporary congregations. We need to find new and creative ways to make our presence known and to invite folks to "come and see" what God is doing on our little piece of God's good earth. We've got a lot of treasure, we've just got to get people here to discover it!

In recent months a "UPC 20/20" Long Range Planning Group has been meeting to brainstorm a congregation-wide process by which we might discern where God is leading us in the coming years. Such a long range process has not been attempted here since the mid 1990's. UPC is overdue! Please pray for these dedicated UPC folks and this fall when you hear about opportunities they are offering to involve the larger congregation, please avail yourself of the chance to let your voice be heard.

Let's look forward towards what God has yet to do in us and through us. Have a great summer. When you are in town, I hope to see you in church!

Grace and peace,

Rev. Rick

Trip to see Godspell...

at Roosevelt Park in Edison - Monday, August 8th . . . (sponsored by family ministries - all ages welcome). Meet at the box office at 5:30 to get tickets and a good spot for chairs; picnic and fun in the park until the play starts at 8:30.

For more information - turn to page 5



CLERK'S CORNER

By: Kathy Coogen

"Seeking the Will of God for UPC, Flanders" is what the Session strives to do as they meet monthly to conduct the business of the church. In addition to Elders overseeing their respective areas of responsibility, highlights from the most recent meetings include:

- ✦ Electing Lois Steward as Chair Pro Tem for the Nominating Committee in order to convene the committee for the purpose of nominating a member to fulfill the unexpired term of Barbara Seaman-Kociencki
- ✦ Conducting annual evaluations for all staff by the appropriate Elders and members of the Personnel Committee
- ✦ Planning for the Annual Apple Festival with Tom Speer volunteering to chair the event
- ✦ Members of Session and the Fun 'n' Friends Board meeting to improve upon the communication between the two groups and work out an equitable fair share financial agreement
- ✦ Jeff Teucke giving a progress report on the work of the UPC 20/20 Team. More information on this committee's work will become available to the congregation in September.
- ✦ Continuing efforts from the Buildings & Grounds workforce and the Deacons in not only caring for our church and its families, but reaching out to help families in need in the Flanders community
- ✦ Discussing the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) recently approving a change in the ordination standard. This has resulted in an updated version of the *Book of Order* called the new *Form of Government* which Session will begin to study as they seek to understand the new language that will become part of our Church Constitution.

Session is currently in recess until mid-August, but the work of the Elders continues year-round. Elders always welcome your comments, suggestions, and/or questions. Or just seek one out next Sunday and offer your thanks for their commitment to serving the church.

Best wishes for a safe and happy summer!

VBS IS COMING!



In case you have not noticed yet, there is never a dull moment in Christian Education at UPC. I like to think that reflects that there is never "down time" when it comes to God reaching out to embrace and energize our children and youth in the ways of a faithful life in Christ. In terms of activity and planning, it means that long before we had recognized our Sunday School teachers, used and put away our snow shovels this past winter, or even begun the 2010-11 Sunday School year, our VBS powerhouse brain trust of Beverly Brouhard, Mary Lee Plate and Jean Tom had selected and begun preparing for our 2011 Vacation Bible School ; PANDAMANIA.

VBS at UPC is a dynamic week of programming for children through 5th grade. This year it will be held the week of August 1st. As in recent years, the anticipation of VBS is sweeping the community, which is a blessing to UPC as it brings in many from outside our doors in a great opportunity to get to know us and how God is at work here. As one of the VBS songs tells us, God is wild about us and we share that love.

Rev Rick's Summer Hours



During the summer weeks when Rev. Rick is in town, his office hours will be as follows:

Monday: Sabbath Day of Rest
 Tuesday: 9 am - 3 pm
 Wednesday: 9 am - 3 pm
 Thursday: Work at home day
 Friday: 9 am - 3 pm

Rick is available Tues. and Wed. eves and Sat. am by appointment. He also tries to do some visiting on Sunday afternoons.

Because he is sometimes in and out of the office, it is best to call the church or better yet his cell ([732-735-5659](tel:732-735-5659)) to make sure he is at the church or (better yet) make an appointment for a specific time.



FAMILY CAMPING AUGUST 5-6

Our annual family campout will be held Friday, August 5th through Saturday August 6th.

We will be camping in the field behind the church the weekend following VBS. All are welcome, and we can probably find tents if anyone needs one. Please consider joining us for all or part of the weekend. Look for more information on the bulletin board.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL (VBS)

WHAT: Pandamania - where we will explore how God is wild about us!!

WHEN: August 1 - 5

TIME: 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

WHERE: Here at UPC, rain or shine.



UPC members please register your children as soon as possible for this year's Vacation Bible School. We can only hold a maximum of 130 campers. We have a registration form on the church website and the public is already registering on a daily basis. We do not want any UPC members to miss being able to attend. You can register on-line now and fill out the form when you are in church or fill out

the attached form and bring with you. Don't miss out. Register as soon as possible. PandaMania "Where God is wild about you!" promises to be a wonderful week here at UPC.



Fund Raisers

1. Are you interested in helping to create ongoing fund raisers for UPC?
2. Do you have an idea for a great way to raise money for our church?
3. Are you willing to help with a fund raiser for UPC?

If you answered yes to any of these questions please come to a meeting on Thursday, July 21st at 7:30 PM. If you are interested but cannot attend please contact Lois Steward at 973-867-8865.

Sunday School Superintendent Positions Available

Having completed the Sunday School year, our co-superintendents have stepped down for the 2011-12 year, which begins September 18th. The significant contributions to the program by Lisa Ciccio and Diane Halper have been such a blessing to our young people. Continuing our rotation system, where lesson plans are provided for each station studying a given Scripture passage over several weeks, the co superintendents' roles have included confirming teacher coverage, preparing each classroom with the needed materials before classes start, and overseeing the flow of Sunday School. Above all, our superintendents have possessed the caring enthusiasm that is a hallmark of UPC Sunday School and inspired teachers and students to participate in the program with joy and interest. Please consider if God is placing on your heart the invitation to become our next superintendent and contact Elder Tim Clarkson or Director of Curriculum Beverly Brouhard.



THE DEADLINE FOR THE
September 2011 *IN TOUCH* is
September 21

Please submit any information you want included in the September 2011 **In Touch** to the church office or by e-mail (UPCintouch@aol.com) on or before that date. All are welcome to contribute.

Stewardship Team

It is time for the Stewardship Team to begin working on the 2012 Stewardship campaign. If you are interested in helping please contact Lois Steward at 973-867-8865. The first meeting will be in July but a date has not been set at the writing of this note.

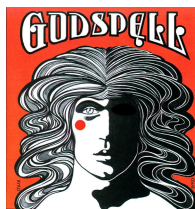
THANK A Sunday School Teacher

Summer is finally upon us. At some point between what seemed the fiftieth and sixtieth snowstorms this winter, the anticipation of the season of warm sunshine was rampant and now it has come. With this came the opportunity to express our appreciation for all those who took part in leading, providing and coordinating another phenomenal Sunday School year. Being able to celebrate this type of stewardship by recognizing this long list of people during worship June 5th was a special moment not only for me as the Elder involved but, really, for all of us at UPC. If you are a child or youth, you know how much Sunday School and the kind people who lead it mean to you. If you are a parent, you noticed the songs the children know, the projects they have been making, and the joy on their faces. If you are a member without a family member involved, still you have the confidence of knowing the youth of UPC are participating in a well run Sunday School program which provides our young people a foundation of faith with which to confront the demands of the challenges we all know they face. Please join me in continuing to express our thanks to the Sunday School staff while encouraging our children and youth to build upon what they are learning about how Christ dwells within, between, and among us.

WELCOME BACK BRUNCH SUNDAY SEPT 18TH

OUTSIDE IN THE PAVILLION
RAIN INSIDE

What to bring?
Sign-up sheet will be
On church office door
Any questions call
Karen Brand
(973) 512 - 3308



Come Join Family Ministries For a Performance of "GodSpell"

One of the biggest off-Broadway and Broadway successes of all time, Godspell is based primarily on the Gospel According to St. Matthew. Featuring a sparkling, seminal score by Stephen Schwartz, Godspell boasts a string of recognizable songs, led by the international hit, "Day By Day." The show opened 5/17/71 Off-Broadway and transferred to Broadway in 1976. It ran for 2,124 performance off-Broadway & 527 on Broadway.

As the cast of actor/clowns makes it way through "All Good Gifts," "Turn Back, O Man" and "By My Side," & other memorable hits, we, as audience members get to see the parables of Jesus Christ come humanly and hearteningly to life. The show also touchingly presents the story of Jesus' last moments beginning with the Last Supper. The main story of Godspell is portrayed in the show's subtext—in the way the players interact with their leader, coming together to create a loving community.

This is the first time that Plays-in-the-Park has presented this timeless classic on our main-stage during the summer season. Bring the entire family!

Where: Roosevelt Park in Edison
1 Pine Drive, Edison, NJ
When: Monday, August 8th
Who: all ages welcome.
Cost: \$7.00 adults, \$5.00 seniors,
Kids 12 and under FREE!

Meet at the box office at 5:30 to get tickets and a good spot for chairs, picnic and fun in the park until the play starts at 8:30 pm.
(bring a cooler with your dinner)

Call Lisa Silkowski 973-548-5274 for more information.

Summer of Sundays

Having concluded the regular Sunday School year, Summer of Sundays for 2011 commences June 26th. Throughout the summer, each week our young people will be meeting together to explore the Scriptures, engage in creative activities, sing inspirational songs (highlighting the songs for the upcoming VBS: Pandamania), and, most importantly, developing their faith in a fun atmosphere. Each Sunday's lesson and materials are provided, making teaching the class clear and organized. If you are able to teach on one or more of the Summer of Sundays, please sign up on the list in the hallway outside the library, or speak with Elder Tim Clarkson or Director of Curriculum Beverly Brouhard. Summer of Sundays runs through September 11th.



All Hands on Deck! Apple Festival Saturday, September 24th

We may be enjoying the good life of summer right now, but the fall will be here before we know it and here at UPC that means the annual Apple Festival at the end of September (the 24th to be exact). This is our biggest community event and fundraiser all year and requires a tremendous amount of support by our congregation. Plans are already well-underway under the leadership of Elder Tom Speer, who has volunteered to oversee the efforts of our great cadre of volunteers. As in previous years, we will hold our Auction in early afternoon; have many goodies for sale; just a buck tables, hayrides, book table, vendors, games and activities for the kids, live music and great food and perhaps a surprise or two. If you have not yet signed up to help in some way, please contact Tom ASAP. And please begin passing the word to your friends and neighbors about this big event on Sept. 24. Through the course of the year the Session uses the proceeds from the Apple Festival to support various groups and ministries of the church.



10 Practical Commandments

1. Prayer is not a "spare wheel" that you pull out when in trouble, but it is a "steering wheel" that directs the right path throughout.
2. Why is a car's windshield is so large and the rearview mirror is so small. It is because our past is not as important as our future. So, look ahead and move on.
3. Friendship is like a book. It takes few seconds to burn, but it takes years to write.
4. All things in life are temporary. If going well, enjoy them; they will not last forever. If going wrong, don't worry, they can't last long, either.
5. Old friends are gold! New friends are diamond! If you get a Diamond, don't forget the gold! Because to hold a diamond, you always need a base of gold!
6. Often when we lost hope and think this is the end, God smiles from above and says, "Relax, sweetheart, it's just a bend, not the end!"
7. When God solves your problems, you have faith in his abilities. When God doesn't solve your problems, He has faith in your abilities.
8. A bild person asked St. Anthony, "Can there be anything worse than losing eyesight?" He replied, "Yes, losing your vision!"
9. When you pray for others, God listens to you and blesses them. When you are safe and happy, remember that someone has prayed for you.
10. Worry does not take away tomorrow's troubles, it takes away today's peace.

UPC, FLANDERS

AUGUST

Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday

| | | | | | | |
|----------------------|---|----|-------------------|-------------------|----|--|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| | 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM Vacation Bible School (VBS) All Week | | | | |  |
| | ASP MISSION TO WEST VIRGINIA | | | | | |
| 7 COMMUNION | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| 10:00am Worship & SS | GodSpell at Roosevelt Park | | | | | 9:00 AM 2nd Saturday  |
| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 10:00am Worship & SS | 7:30pm Session Meeting | | | | | |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 10:00am Worship & SS | | | IN TOUCH DEADLINE | 10:00am Soup Kit. | | |
| 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | | |
| 10:00am Worship & SS | | | | | | |

ALL TIMES AND DATES ARE TENTATIVE. PLEASE CONSULT SUNDAY BULLETIN OR CALL CHURCH OFFICE FOR DETAILS.



AUGUST 2011 *In Touch*

**The United Presbyterian Church
58 Drakesdale Road
Flanders, NJ 07836**

**Phone: 973-584-8195 and 973-584-1450
Fax: 973-584-8253**

**Pastor: Rev. Rick Oppelt
Church e-mail: office@unitedpcf.com
Website: www.unitedpcf.com
In Touch e-mail: UPCintouch@aol.com**