

**In response to the gospel, we will love God,
love one another, and love the world
by making disciples of Jesus Christ.**

Union Church Staff

Billy Younger	Lead Pastor
Joshua Hjermvick	Pastoral Assistant of Youth & Families
Monica Laughery	Office Manager
Kellyn von Arx	Assistant Director of Youth & Families
John M. Seybert	Director of Music Ministries
Winona Johnston	DiscipleSHIP Children's Ministries Coordinator
Sue Strunk	Organist
Rebecca Safko	Treasurer
George Shumek	Financial Secretary
Katie Kelly	Childcare Center Director
Carl Reed	Sexton
Sally Andrews	Pastoral Care Coordinator
Mimi Massucci	Wedding Coordinator
Sue Shumek	New Member Coordinator
Mark Trautman	Cemetery

2017 Leadership of Union Church

Session Elders:

Clerk of Session-Sally Andrews
 Administrative Support Team-Connie Rippole
 Childcare Committee-Gail Jackson
 Discipleship Committee-Winona Johnston
 Fellowship Committee-Scott Barker
 Finance Committee-Jeff Scott
 Outreach/Mission Team-Scott Davis & Anthony Calvario
 Nominating Committee-Mariann Bertocchi
 Worship Committee-Tom MacLachlan & Ken Kolberg

Trustees:

Don Jukes, President
 Tom Connell, vice-President
 Nick Cue
 Clyde English
 John Miles
 Donald Lee Tidball

Deacons:

Cathy Scott, Moderator
 Tracy Spiegel, co-chair
 Gwen Davidson, Secretary
 Cory Mickle, Treasurer
 Judy Bocek
 Karen Connell
 Nancy Fotovich
 Karen Jakub
 C.J. Johnston
 Carole MacLachlan
 Jody Menni
 Rick Novak
 Joanne Plannick
 JoAnn Sanders
 Denise Tidball

~ THE HILLOP HERALD IS ALWAYS AVAILABLE ON THE NEWS AND EVENTS PAGE OF THE UNION CHURCH WEBSITE ~
 2017 PUBLICATIONS:

- March 19th with ALL articles due by noon on March 16th
- April 9th with ALL articles due by noon on April 6th
- May 7th with ALL articles due by noon on May 4th
- June 11th with ALL articles due by noon on June 8th

HILLTOP HERALD

FEBRUARY 2017

Special Ash Wednesday Service

Ash Wednesday begins the season of the Church Year known as Lent, which begins forty days prior to Easter and is characterized by a focus on repentance, prayer, and serving the needs of others. The purpose is to set aside time for reflection on Jesus—His suffering and His sacrifice, His life, death, burial and resurrection. This first day of Lent reminds Christians of the words of Jesus in Matthew 16:24, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." The way to Easter is the way of the cross. As the first step in the Lenten journey, the Ash Wednesday service invites us to acknowledge our mortality, our sinfulness and our dependence upon the grace of God.

This year we are doing something a little bit different. In addition to our potluck dinner (which will begin at 6pm), we will then proceed with the worship service up in the sanctuary (which will begin promptly at 7pm). There we will enjoy a time of special music, a brief meditation, and conclude our evening together with Holy Communion.

This will be a very special and meaningful worship service and we hope you'll join us as we begin the Lenten season together as we worship our risen Savior.

~Billy

The Book of Jonah

5-Week Growth Group

Leaders: Billy Younger and Joshua Hjermvick
 Wednesdays, 7-8:30pm
 March 8 - April 5, 2017

The Book of Jonah is a wonderfully complex narrative that gives us a window into the compassionate heart of God; not only for His people Israel, but for all whom He has made.

Join us for a five-session Bible study, as we ask deep questions of the text and consider what it means for our lives today. All the while considering Jonah as a prophet and book that bear the shape of Christ.

Sessions:

1. Overview and Context
2. Jonah Flees from God
3. Jonah's Prayer and Deliverance
4. Jonah's Preaching and Nineveh's Repentance
5. God's Compassion and Jonah's Anger



UNION
 CHURCH

6165 Steubenville Pike, McKees Rocks, PA 15136-1338 • 412.787.1818 • fax 412.787.8126 • www.unionpresbychurch.org

YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRIES

Youth Group (Grades 6-12)

Building authentic faith that the students of Union Church can carry on to college and beyond.

» Youth Group meets on Wednesdays from 7PM-9PM during the school year.

Check out the church website Youth Ministry page for events; or contact Josh or Kellyn

March 1 - Ash Wednesday, no youth group

March 8 - Start of weekly youth ministry Bible Study, 6-7pm. We will also be having a "community meal" from 7-8pm and "traditional" youth group from 8-9pm.



For our community meal we are in need of some kitchen and dining supplies. If you have any old plates, dishes, cutlery, pots and pans, or other kitchenware you'd be will to donate to the youth ministry, please contact Kellyn von Arx (kellyn@unionpresbychurch.org).

April 21-23 - Spring Retreat @ TeenQuest. This retreat is for any and all students in 6th - 12th grade. The cost is \$100, per student. Please contact Kellyn to reserve your spot.



Youth Ministry Contacts: * **Josh Hjemvick**, Pastoral Assistant of Youth & Families
724.713.0344, josh.hjemvick@unionpresbychurch.org
* **Kellyn von Arx**, Assistant Director of Youth & Families
412.337.6417, kellyn@unionpresbychurch.org



DEACONS

Although we are experiencing blustery winter weather on our hilltop, the Deacons are busy getting ready for the Easter Flower Sale. As in years past, Easter lilies, Hyacinths, Tulips and Mums will be available for \$10 each. These flowers can be given in memory or in honor of a loved one. There are options on the bulletin insert to pick your flowers up after the 11 am service, leaving the flowers at church for a later pick up date, or donating them. Bulletin inserts will begin February 26 and conclude March 19.

Two new Deacons to our board for 2017 are CJ Johnston and Judy Bozek. These two individuals have been very active in the life of Union Church.

Judy Bocek joined Union only a couple of years ago after I became super impressed with the Youth Ministries program. My daughters Alexa (16) and Victoria (13) each became involved in youth group when they reached 6th grade. I immediately knew Union was a place I could call home when I realized my sister and her husband were members, and when I met Billy, Josh, and the mission and fellowship teams. Besides my two daughters, I have a 21 year old son, Christian who lives in Moon Township, and a 35 year old step-son Nathan, who lives in Fresno, California with his wife and daughter. Alexa, Victoria and I reside in Scott Township, near Carnegie and I am employed as a full-time Pharmacist at St. Clair Hospital. I recently finished a masters degree program at Waynesburg University for Business and Healthcare Administration. I love to travel, vacation, spend weekends at our family camp near Cook Forest, hang out with family and friends, and play games of any kind.

C.J. Johnston has been a member of Union for 17-years. I have been a past member of the Deacons and am honored to serve again in this capacity. Being retired for 7-years now, it has given me time to volunteer. For the past 4-years, I have been on the board of directors for the Pittsburgh Fisher House. It is a "home away from home" for our veterans and their families to stay free of charge in a safe, secure beautiful home when their loved ones are treated at VA Pittsburgh Hospital. It has also given me time to read and attempt to improve my golf game. I'm married to Winona and we have two grown children, Whitney and Zach.

Submitted by: Cathy Scott, Moderator

OUTREACH-MISSION TEAM

Meet: 2nd Tuesday of the month at 7PM
—all are welcome!—

Chili Cook-off is Sunday March 5, 2017.

Pleasant Valley Men's Shelter at Northside Common Ministries: Union volunteers serve a meal to the men residing at the shelter on the North Side, Pittsburgh to serve a dinner and to fellowship with the clients. 2017 service dates: February 27, April 24, June 26, August 28, October 23, and December 25th. Contact Tom MacLachlan (412.626.9146) or Joan Richards (412.787.1559) for more information.

Vista Coffee Project - proceeds go to the global mission effort: Christ for the City International, El Salvador, San Salvador. The program will help to raise money to buy land and build their own, more permanent, facility.

El Salvador 2017 - A June 24 to July 1, 2017 Mission Trip is in the planning stages. For more information, contact Scott Davis 412.370.7899 or Anthony Calvario 724.255.3742. There can be roughly 15 attendees. Middle and high school students can go; all those under age 16 need 1 parent or guardian on the trip to work with Jake Hjemvick, Director, of El Salvador Christ for the City International. Interested in stepping out in faith to serve? Go to YouTube search: 'Ministerios CPIC El Salvador' and 'Union Presbyterian 09-16 Julio de 2016'.

'Wishing Well' Donation: monthly collection of 'goods' for various ministries that we currently serve and for those we will yet serve. 2017 donation focus: February—sports (tennis) Shoes, gently used & clean. March—folding sports/camp chairs (cup-holders optional). April—baby diapers. May—"Undie Sundays" for Haiti - basic underwear for children and adults, or sandals, flip flops and footwear. June—tooth brushes, toothpaste and whatever Vacation Bible School is collecting! Future months TBA.

Honduras 2017 – A tentative August 1 to 9, 2017. Mission Trip is in the early planning stages. For more information, contact Scott Davis 412.370.7899 or Anthony Calvario 724.255.3742. We would be going with other churches and are limited to fewer participants.

"The Table" - This outreach provides a meal through Hot Metal Bridge Faith Community missional ministry at 2700 Jane Street, Southside Pittsburgh: Union's Outreach-Mission Team and volunteers provide a meal for 85 to 100 people. We need volunteers to prepare each meal, bake brownies, cookies, or a dessert. We have 6-12 volunteers travel to the Southside to 'assemble' and serve the meal and assist in dishes & clean-up of the site. Some leave the church at 3:45PM, or others just meet at The Table at 4:30PM and the meal is served at 5:30, clean-up is done by 6:30PM. Meal Service dates for 2017: February 28, April 4, May 23, June 27, July 27, September 12, October 24, November 23, and December 12. Pray, Cook, Bake, Serve, Clean, Care, Pray! Contact Scott (412-370-7899), Sinikka Davis (412-956-3957), or Joan Richards (412-787-1559).

World Vision Intergenerational Service: World Vision International Distribution Headquarters @ 110 Overlook Drive, Sewickley, PA. Union Church 2017 service dates: May 13, September 23, and November 11th. We package clothing to be distributed to inner-city or international locations. Age 12 & up.

Homeless Camp Ministry Project - Third Saturday of each month (March 18, April 15, May 20, June 17, July 15, August 19, Sept 16, October 21, November 18, and December 16), up to seven(7) Union Church volunteers carpool from Union at 11:20AM, or meet by 11:55AM at Hot Metal Bridge Faith Community Church at 2700 Jane Street, Southside, Pittsburgh. We prepare approximately 50 bagged lunches and deliver them to homeless camps around the city. Volunteers must be age 15+, wear heavy shoes/boots, prepared to hike on hilly trails, railroad tracks, and duck under bridges to serve in this outreach ministry. Hot Metal supplies a 'Care Closet' with clothes, shoes, gloves, toiletries, and camping supplies to give to folks living outside.

"Undie Sunday" for Haiti is an Idea from Presbyterian Church in Florida (Whiteman's). Or, Sandals, flip flops and footwear! Dates to be determined, possibly in February of 2017.

⇒ **2017 Outreach-Mission Team meetings at 7PM in the Noble House:** 2nd Tuesday of the month—February 21 (note change due to Valentine's Day ♡), March 13, April 10, May 8, June 12, July 10, August 14, September 11, October 9, November 13, & December 11.

⇒ Anyone is welcome to Mission Team meetings! For ideas of service opportunities, contact: Scott K. Davis 412-370-7899



PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

*Bible study: last Tuesday of the month at 12:30PM
—all women are welcome!—*

OUR PURPOSE

Forgiven and freed by God in Jesus Christ, and empowered By the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves: to nurture our faith through prayer and Bible study, to support the mission of the church worldwide, to work for justice and peace and to build an inclusive, caring community of women that strengthens the Presbyterian Church (USA) and witnesses to the promise of God's Kingdom.

After what we believed would be a winter/snow break, Presbyterian Women resumed Bible Study on the last Tuesday in January. Weather permitting we plan to meet at 12:30PM on the last Tuesday of the month. Kathy Thomas is filling in as Bible Study Leader and we appreciate her dedication to leading us.

World Day of Prayer will be held on Friday evening, March 3 at the Clinton Presbyterian Church. This is an opportunity to meet with churches in the area to come together as part of an international ecumenical group of Christian Women with the purpose of prayer and prayerful action of which over 170 countries are involved each year. In 2017 the women of the Philippines have written the worship service. This is a time to pray for women in other parts of the world and recognize what they are doing to proclaim the message of Christ.

Our Pittsburgh Presbyterian Women will be meeting on April 8 at the Fox Chapel Presbyterian Church. At this Spring Gathering we will elect new leaders, pass a budget and gather information about our 2017 Presbytery project which is supporting Living in Liberty. This Pittsburgh group is a ministry to women and children who have been sexually exploited. Human trafficking is present in *our communities* as well as a worldwide problem. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (PCUSA) recognizes this serious problem and is providing education and resources to bring attention to this form of slavery. Look on the Presbyterian Women's bulletin board in Fellowship Hall for information.

What was cooking? More than 30 quarts of vegetable beef soup was made and delivered to church shut ins and friends in the community on Monday the 13th. Over the years the soup made by PW has been called love soup and so the day before Valentine's Day we shared a little love in the community. Thank you to the Congregation for their financial support and thank you to the cooks and to those who delivered the soup.

By: Sally Andrews

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE – REMEMBERING THE PAST

As we plan and work toward renovations to our present church building it is interesting to know and understand just how this large, beautiful brick building came to be on this hilltop. The following article is taken from a book published in 1944 to celebrate the sesquicentennial of Union United Presbyterian Church.

"At the time of the organization of this congregation the community was a vast forest with merely paths to guide the traveler on his way"....."This congregation has always been a prosperous and progressive one. It has always had a good financial standing and has always contributed to the boards of the church, assisted the needy and answered the call of every emergency. The present beautiful church home located on this hill top, commanding a view second to none, of the surrounding hills and valleys was preceded by four others. The first church or house of worship was a tent of poles 8x10 feet, this was for the preacher and the choir. It was located down in the center of the graveyard. It was furnished with seats outside by friendly logs cut from the surrounding forest. The next was a log cabin, a hollow square, with eight corners resembling a Greek cross in shape. The front and rear arms were ten feet square, the others twenty feet making an audience chamber 20x50 feet. This church building was furnished with a pulpit in the rear arm; this pulpit was eight feet high with steps for entering, leading from the floor on either side. In front of the pulpit was a choir stand, four feet high; this stand only accommodated two persons, one to line out the Psalms, the other to pitch the tune. This church was at first seated with puncheons, afterwards with modern pews. This was built in 1794 and was located down in the grave yard. The next church building was a structure built of brick in the year 1832, located on the present site; this building was poorly constructed and was partially demolished by a storm December 9,1855. The fourth church building erected in 1856; was constructed of brick and consisted of a vestibule and session room, a large auditorium and a small room above the vestibule where the infant class met. This building was razed in 1899, to give place to our present structure of buff brick, which was dedicated June 9, 1901." Thank you to congregation members in 944 who gathered and compiled this information. If you have not had the opportunity to take advantage of the latest history book printed in 1994 ask for a copy. There is a long history of gathering on this hill to praise and glorify the Lord. "History buffs", take advantage of what recorded history we have.

By: Sally Andrews

CHILDCARE CENTER NEWS

Hoping the church community enjoyed a very happy Valentine's Day! Students celebrated February 14th with an abundance of treats, homemade Valentine's day cards, and lots of crafts! As February is also Dental Health month, the pediatric dentist came to visit us and check our teeth. We even did an "egg-speriment" where we learned how sugary drinks harm our teeth. We will end the month celebrating Read Across America week! Every day will consist of a parent volunteer reading a different Dr. Seuss book and then teachers leading a theme-based craft or activity. Students will get to dress up like their favorite characters from the books as part of our spirit week and get a surprise visit from the Cat in the Hat!

Katie Kelly, Childcare Center Director

NOTES FROM SESSION

Communion was served on February 5 to 188. Income for January was \$46,823. Expenses were \$44,845. Positive income month for the Church Operating account by \$1,978. As reported in the January Hilltop Herald the newly elected Elders, Deacons and Trustees were installed and recognized at worship on January 22. A Leadership dinner on January 18 provided a time of fellowship, recognition of the work of those leaving office and a welcome and a charge to those who will be in leadership during 2017 to work faithfully in God's service.

The annual report to General Assembly has been completed. For your information we received 25 members during 2016. However we lost 9 members of our congregation because of death. Session removed 15 members from the active roll. These changes leave us with an active roll of 414 members and God's eternal kingdom with 9 faithful servants from Union. The average attendance for worship services during 2016 was 180.

2017 Elders:

Administrative Support Team-Connie Rippole
Childcare Committee-Gail Jackson
Clerk of Session-Sally Andrews
Discipleship Committee-Winona Johnston
Fellowship Committee-Scott Barker
Finance Committee-Jeff Scott
Outreach/Mission Team-Scott Davis & Anthony Calvario
Nominating Committee-Mariann Bertocchi
Worship Committee-Tom MacLachlan & Ken Kolberg

Watch the bulletin and website for the Easter season worship services:
Ash Wednesday, March 1—covered dish dinner @ **6pm** with Communion Worship Service @ **7pm** in Sanctuary
Palm Sunday Services, April 9 —9:15 & 11:00
Maundy Thursday, April 13— Communion Service
Good Friday Tenebrae service, April 14
Easter Sunday, April 16

Submitted By: Elder, Sally Andrews

WOMEN'S RETREAT(S)

Mark your calendar . . .

One-Day Women's Spiritual Retreat: Saturday, June 3rd from 8AM—2PM. Arrival, Registration, and Continental Breakfast 8:00-8:30AM in Fellowship Hall.

Overnight Women's Spiritual Retreat at Seven Springs: Saturday, October 21st—Sunday, October 22nd.

Winona Johnston, Women's Retreat Coordinator

FELLOWSHIP TEAM

*Meet: 1st Tuesday of the month at 7PM
—all are welcome!—*

Looking ahead, our Palm Sunday Brunch will be on April 9th. Would you like to join the Fellowship Team and help to plan, create, prepare, and/or serve? Help when you are available - we share times and tasks. Come to a meeting in 2017 at 7PM on the 1st Tuesday of the month - we welcome and need you!

Contact: Scott or JoAnn Barker 412.494.5507

KTA NEWS

KTA began in the mid-1930's. Its purpose is to nurture and grow in the faith through social, charity, sympathy, and concern for others while remember their motto of showing "Kindness To All".

All Women: Make some new friends, share Bible devotions, and enjoy tasy dessert at KTA's (Kindness To All) first meeting of 2017—Thursday, March 9 at 1PM in Fellowship Hall (we are hoping to avoid the usual "February Frost" meeting this year by scheduling in March instead!). Help plan 2017 events, bring your ideas to raise funds for church projects and charitable donations. KTA meetings in 2017: March 9, April 13, June 8, October 12. Contact: Sally Lickovich 411.787.2687



discipleSHIP CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

9:15AM Contemporary Worship Service with discipleSHIP Children's Ministries* and Nursery Care*.
11AM Traditional Worship Service with Nursery Care*

Preschool (age 3-5)* learns "God Made Me, God Loves Me, God is Always With Me".

Elementary (K-grade 5)* creatively get to know God through Bible teachings built around monthly virtues or characteristics of God.

Nursery Care (infants thru age 2)* Children will be cared for by gentle, loving, compassionate hands while you attend the worship service.

*All children MUST sign in at KidCheck on the 1st floor of Christian Education Building.

February: Love is a reflection of the character of God.

God is love. As we read through God's One Big Story in the Bible, we see an epic love story unfold that started in a garden with a perfect relationship between God and His creation. When Adam and Eve sinned and broke that relationship, God didn't give up on creation. His love for us drove Him to make the ultimate sacrifice: sending His one and only Son, Jesus to pay the ultimate price to make it possible for us to be with God forever. Because we are created in God's image, we have the capacity to love. Every time we choose to treat others the way we want to be treated, we show others a glimpse into the perfect love God has for each and every one of us.

Our memory verse for February comes from 1 John 4:10.

In 1 John 4:10, we read, Here is what love is. It is not that we loved God. It is that he loved us and sent his Son to give his life to pay for our sins. (NirV)

WEEK 3: In Mark 6:30-44, we see how Jesus' care for others turned into one of His most amazing miracles. Jesus reached a point in His ministry when He was extremely popular. Everyone wanted to hear what He had to say about the kingdom of God. On one occasion, thousands of people showed up to hear Him speak. As it became later in the day, Jesus could have sent them all home to grab some dinner, instead He made the unthinkable happen. He turned five loaves of bread and two fish into a meal for more than 5,000 people.

Bottom Line: Give to others who are in need. As we start to see others the way God sees them, we will become more aware of their needs. We have opportunities everyday to help others and meet their needs. This can be as simple as lending a pencil to a friend or offering to share part of your lunch. It's amazing how kids will start to show love to others when they become aware of the needs around them.

WEEK 4:

We finish the month in Luke 10:25-37. When Jesus told the Pharisee's "Love your neighbor as you love yourself," they shot back with another question. "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus went on to tell the story of the Good Samaritan. When faced with the decision to ignore an enemy or have compassion, the Samaritan chose to set aside His differences and show love.

Bottom Line: Love others because they matter to God. We won't always get along with everyone we meet, but that doesn't mean they aren't deserving of God's love. Through this story, we pray that kids will see that all people matter to God, and we should show His love to everyone we meet.

SAVE THE DATE: Union Church Summer J.A.M.
"MAKER FUN FACTORY"... June 19—23



discipleSHIP CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES, continued

March: In Forgiveness is a reflection of the character of God.

Throughout Scripture, we are reminded about God's grace and forgiveness: God makes us white as snow. (Isaiah 1:18); God's mercies are new every morning. (Lamentations 3:22-23); and God is faithful and just to forgive our sins. (1 John 1:9)

Jesus made it possible for us to have God's forgiveness. God's showed us just how much He cares about forgiveness when He made the ultimate sacrifice and sent Jesus to pay the price for our sin. While sin separates us from God, He offers grace and forgiveness as a gift for us to receive. We have been forgiven of so much, it's only right that we turn to those in our lives and offer forgiveness to them in return.

Our Memory Verse for March comes from Colossians 3:13, we read, "Put up with one another. Forgive one another if you are holding something against someone. Forgive, just as the Lord forgave you." (NirV)

We will spend the month of March taking a closer look at the way forgiveness shows up throughout a few of the parables Jesus told His followers.

WEEK 1: We start off the month learning about the lengths God will go to rescue His children. In Luke 15:1-7, we listen to a story Jesus told about a shepherd that risked the entire flock in order to find and rescue the one sheep who has run off.

Bottom Line: God forgives you. We'll focus on God's love for us that went to great lengths to rescue us from our sin. Through this story of the Lost Sheep, we pray that kids will remember that God forgives us.

WEEK 2: We continue our look at forgiveness with one of Jesus' most well known parables. In Luke 15:11-24, Jesus talks about a kid who thinks he's got it all together. He demands half of his dad's money and takes off to spend it on himself. It's only when the money is gone he realizes he's made a HUGE mistake and needs forgiveness. He's got just one hope: that his dad will let him come home and be a servant.

Bottom Line: Everyone needs to be forgiven, even me. Realizing one's need for forgiveness is a huge step for anyone. But through Jesus' story, we hope kids realize that everyone needs forgiveness, even them.

Winona Johnston

Children's Ministries Coordinator

EASTER EGG HUNT

Please join us
Palm Sunday, April 9th
2:00-4:00 p.m.

Activities include:

food, crafts, face painting, games, a visit from the Easter Bunny

Photographer will be present to take photos

Age specific Easter Egg Hunt(s):

birth-2 years, 3-5 years, k-grade 2, and 3rd-5th grade

Please leave your baskets at home.

Bags will be decorated by the kids to collect eggs.