

# Goodbye and Welcome

*Joyfully Sharing God's Boundless Love with All in Our Community  
without Limitation, Exception, or Condition*

## UNIVERSITY PRESS

August 2017

### Saying Goodbye

*by The Reverend Renee Marie Rico, Transitional Pastor*



This is my last newsletter column as your Transitional Pastor. As most of you know by now, August 13 is my last Sunday with you, and shortly after that, your new pastor, the Reverend Renn Serna, is coming to serve with you as your new pastor. I am heading to San Jose, to serve as Transitional Pastor to First United Methodist Church of San Jose, where I start in September.

It's both hard and easy to realize that I've been with University Presbyterian Church a little over two years. It's hard to realize because I can still remember joining you in this in-between time of ministry, and in some ways, it seems like just yesterday. On the other hand, when I look back on all the things that have happened in my time at UPC, it seems longer than it was.

In this short time together, there has been "ministry in the meantime." The Children's Program has been reworked and a new Godly Play curriculum speaks to our young disciples. The Columbarium, a long-term project, came to fruition and we dedicated it on Ash Wednesday 2016. A youth-initiated Community Garden now offers our food pantry customers fresh produce. The Buildings and Grounds ministry initiated and completed a solar project in the parking lot. A new Stewardship Committee is focusing on the "why" of giving. More recently, Session approved a new partnership with the Woven worshipping community, FIRM, and the Synod of the Pacific to provide ESL tutors to recently-arrived Syrian refugees, and training has begun. All of these things, and more, are due to you and your faithfulness to God's work here at UPC and in the world.

Now it's time for me to move on to bring some healing with another congregation in need of a transitional pastor. For me, it's a bittersweet time, as I've connected and come to love and appreciate you. I know I will miss you.

I want to be clear about what it means for a pastor to leave serving a congregation. First, because I will no longer be serving among you, it is important for you to know I am not available to come back to perform pastoral services among you. You'll be getting acquainted with Renn in short order, and of course, Dustin is continuing his ministry among you. In order for you to bond with them, it's important you go to the two of them, and not call on the previous clergy who have served you.

Finally, I'd like to end by saying thank you. Thank you for welcoming me, a stranger in your midst. Thank you for honoring the gifts I brought, and your graciousness when I fell short of the mark. Thank you for your faithfulness in these times of transition, and all your hard work. Thank you for this time, which I will treasure always.

Blessings + Light, *Renée*

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## Fresno Gospel Festival at UPC

*by Cactus Harris, Director of Music & Arts and Resident Organist*

Get your praise on! This month UPC is playing host to the Fresno Gospel Festival on Friday, August 18 at 7 p.m. This event has grown out of a group of folks wanting to break a few barriers and create a community event to bring people from all over Fresno to an ecumenical night of gospel music. As one gentleman put it, "There's just too much division happening and I want to bring the people of God together."



The night features a variety of singers and bands from around the Valley, including a UPC choir.

*This is an open invitation to any who want to do a little summer singing.* We'll have three rehearsals, on August 2, 9, and 16, at 7 p.m. We'll learn two or three fun gospel tunes to perform for the concert. All voices are welcome.

Look for information about this foot-tappin', hands clappin' festival in the bulletin. Tickets for the concert are \$20 and are available through me at [cactus@upcfresno.org](mailto:cactus@upcfresno.org) or by calling Terry Duran at 288-0066. We are hoping to make this an annual event.

Singing Praises, *Cactus*

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## Welcoming the Reverend Renn Serna

*by Linda Stalling, for the Transition Team*



Here is the timeline of our new transition:

**Sunday, August 13:** Pastor Renee's last service | Reception between Services  
**Monday, August 28:** Pastor Renn's first day in the office  
**Sunday, September 10:** Pastor Renn's first sermon

We've come up with a unique kind of welcome basket for Pastor Renn so she can get to know us and also get to know the sights, tastes, and wonders

of living in Fresno. We ask that each of you prepare a note for her telling a bit about you or your family and what you enjoy about Fresno -- a restaurant, a peaceful place to walk, your favorite farmer's market. Your notes can be handmade, store bought, or use the ones we'll have available on Sundays. The idea is to make Renn's transition fun and easy!

*Here are examples of some ideas:*

- Maybe you like browsing the antique shops in Old Town Clovis. Your note would say something about you and that this is an activity you enjoy. You could also add one of the Old Town maps showing the shops, with some notations of your favorites.
- Perhaps your family has a favorite place to dine - a note with a menu would be great. You could also throw in a gift certificate if you desire.
- Maybe hangin' in your own swimming pool is the way to go in your family- add a picture of someone in your family in the pool and maybe a personal invitation to join you for swimming and a BBQ.

Put your note in the basket in the Narthex on any Sunday between now and Renn's arrival on Monday, August 28. If you need more ideas or have questions, stop by the basket in the Narthex and see me on Sunday morning, or email me at [lindastolling@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lindastolling@sbcglobal.net).

Our congregation is loving, kind, fun, interesting, and sometimes a bit quirky; let's welcome Renn to Fresno in our own special way!

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## Inspiring our Children and Youth in Every Season

*by Dustin Maddox, Lay Minister & Commissioned Ruling Elder*

Summer has been a rich time for Children & Youth Ministries. Every Sunday evening, we've gathered in homes for potlucks and community building. I'm convinced these types of gatherings, full of food, fun, and fellowship, are central to the future vitality of our ministry. The size of our ministry grants us remarkable opportunities for depth and intimacy as we are able to get to know one another with intentionality. We are blessed to have front row seats to see our children and teens grow more into who God has created them to be.

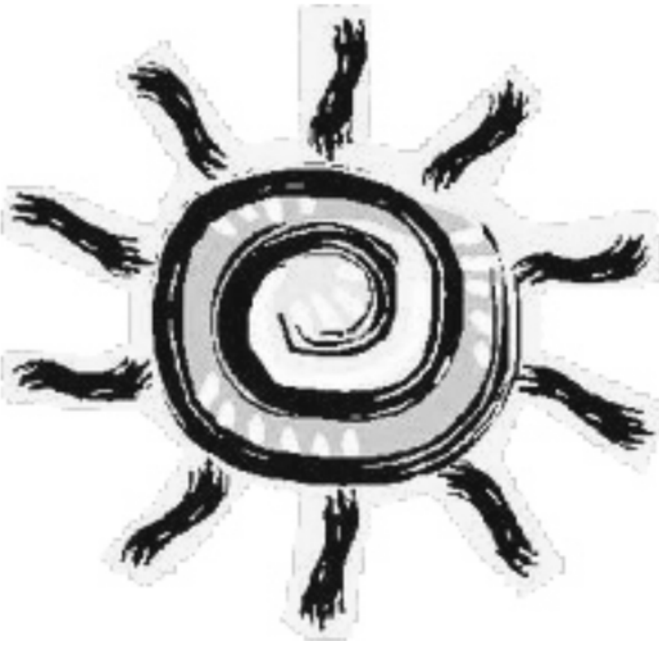
As summer wraps up and we gear up for a new season of ministry with our incoming Senior Pastor, I am hopeful for Children a Youth Ministries. We'll continue to do the type of Jesus-centered intergenerational ministry that is part of UPC's long and unique history. Our middle and high school students will continue to lead and serve our monthly food ministry, as well as fill other roles of leadership and service within our community.

Godly Play continues this summer to guide our children in experiencing the stories of our faith. We are gearing up on Godly Play in the fall with training from expert teachers to guide and inspire our current Teacher/Storytellers and Greeters, and welcome on board those who would like to join in these roles to be a part of offering the best possible spiritual formation to our youngest members and for all in our city.

As we head toward fall, I hope you will feel called to jump on board with Godly Play. Becoming a Greeter is a great way to learn the ropes and build relationships with our children. Interested? Email me at [dustin@upcfresno.org](mailto:dustin@upcfresno.org) or come by and let's talk.



## Solar at UPC: A Six-Month Update



It's been six months since our Solar Plant started generating renewable energy to our campus, and we want to provide an update on where we are so far with our Solar Plant and our Synod 'Green' Loan.

First, here's a bit of history. At the Session Retreat in January 2016, our elders made a wish list of things to accomplish. One item on the list was to have a Solar Plant. In 2015, UPC spent over \$21,000 for electricity, and it was estimated energy costs would rise 6.7% in each succeeding year. So, the goal was to switch to renewable energy to save money and to be better stewards of our planet.

Led by Mel Enns, an incredible amount of due diligence ensued. We learned we needed to work quickly to get the plant up and running by the end of the calendar year in order to lock into existing

PG&E rates. Four solar companies presented proposals and we decided to go with Barrier Solar. Next, we decided to build the solar plant in the parking lot rather than placing solar panels on the sanctuary roof. The cost was \$148,600 so we researched various loan options and decided to go with a PC(USA) Synod Green Loan at 3.5% fixed for 15 years, with monthly payments of \$1,062.32 (\$12,748 yearly). At 2016 electricity rates, our initial yearly savings were projected to be \$8,250.

The plant became fully operational on December 29, 2016, thus we locked in 2016 PG&E rates with two days to spare. With solar, Barrier Solar estimated our PG&E bill for electricity (taxes, etc.) would be a few hundred dollars annually, and so we budgeted \$500 for 2017. We won't know for sure what our final bill will be in December, but each month we get a bill from PG&E with estimates based on energy used and renewable energy generated. As of the end of June, our estimated charges are -\$252 (note this is minus \$252).

Synod loaned us 100% of the cost of the project with the caveat that in 2017 UPC would raise a 'delayed down payment' of 10% of the loan (\$14,860) which would be applied directly towards the principal. Through your generosity, in less than three months we raised the entire down payment, and more. And, you have continued to support the project with donations that go directly to pay down the loan principal. Currently our loan balance is \$119,182.

If you want to continue helping to reduce the principal on this loan, please designate "Solar" in the memo Line of your check.

Enjoy parking in the shade provided by the Solar Plant. It's a dream come true for staff. For more information, email Kerry at [kerry@upcfresno.org](mailto:kerry@upcfresno.org), or call the office at 439-8807.

## Mission in Action

*by Edy Corum, Volunteer Tutor at Wolters Elementary*

One day last fall, as I was volunteering in a first grade classroom at Wolters Elementary School; the door opened and in walked three Syrian refugee children. They had recently arrived in the United States and spoke no English. The classroom teacher asked me to work with them, and I did, even though I had no idea where to begin. They didn't know what I was saying and vice versa, so I hoped my smile and gentle tone of voice would help put them at ease.

From then until the end of the school year, I worked with them for one hour, two mornings a week, an experience I would describe as both frustrating (especially at first) and rewarding (increasingly so, as time went by).



As we worked on the ABC's and simple words and sentences; I got to know each child (two boys, one girl) better, and to appreciate their unique personalities. One of the boys had been badly burned at age five in a bombing in Syria, an explosion that killed his mother. His visible scars are all too fresh a testimony to the trials these children, their families, and millions of their countrymen have endured over the past six years.

By the end of the school year "my kids," as I call them, were speaking rudimentary English. Several other volunteers and I arranged to make home visits to continue their education over the summer. So, I'm still teaching English to my three kids (plus two others!) two mornings a week in one of their apartments. Being exposed to their culture has been eye-opening and enriching for me, and I feel increasingly privileged to be able to work with these children, bond with them, and help them have a positive learning experience in their new country.

*Another Opportunity to Help Syrian Refugees in Fresno: UPC is partnering with Fresno Interdenominational Refugee Ministries (FIRM) and the Woven worshipping community to work with Syrian refugees in one-on-one tutoring for English language skills through iPad and software. A commitment to two hours of tutoring per week is needed. For more information, email Pastor Renée at [rrico@aol.aol](mailto:rrico@aol.aol), or Dustin at [dustin@upcfresno.org](mailto:dustin@upcfresno.org).*

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## UPC Groups

**Sunday Night Youth Group:** This group for our teens usually meets Sunday nights at 6:30 p.m. in the Youth Room for fun, laughs, and Jesus. This summer, they are meeting for Summer FunDAYS on Sunday evening at various homes. For more information, email Dustin at [dustin@upcfresno.org](mailto:dustin@upcfresno.org), or text him at 288-0083.

**Contemplative Prayer:** Come Mondays at 6:30p.m. to the Godly Play Room (Rooms 3- 4) for Christ-centered meditation. No previous experience is necessary, just a desire to spend quiet, still time with the Divine. For more information, email Cathy Wingert at [wingy104@aol.com](mailto:wingy104@aol.com).

**Women's Bible Study:** The group is off for the summer but begins again on Wednesday, September 13 at 9:30a.m. in Room 9. They'll begin a new study, Women of the Old Testament. Join them in September and learn about the women of our Faith. For more information, email Laura Lindegren at [punkin2826@yahoo.com](mailto:punkin2826@yahoo.com), or call her at 299-1838.

**Thursday Evening Bible Study:** The group meets for study Thursdays at 7 p.m. They are currently "wrestling" with the Gospel of Matthew. They invite you to join them. For more information, email leader Denice Leslie at [pdkleslie@sbcglobal.net](mailto:pdkleslie@sbcglobal.net).

**Intercessory Prayer Service:** This monthly service, where all are invited to come pray for loved ones, members of our congregation, community, and world, meets Monday, August 7 at 7 p.m. For more information, email Pastor Tedd at [teddlyons@gmail.com](mailto:teddlyons@gmail.com), or call/text him at 906-1438.

**Presbyterian Women (PW):** Presbyterian Women meet monthly on the second Tuesday at 9:30a.m. from September to June. In the summer, they meet for Boutique workdays on most Mondays from 9:30 to 11 a.m. to work on projects for the Annual Holiday Boutique which will be held on November 11-12. All women are invited to PW. If you have questions, email Ruth Kallenberg at [rbkallenberg@gmail.com](mailto:rbkallenberg@gmail.com), or call her at 431-7681.

**Clippers:** Clippers does not meet in August, but watch the next newsletter to find out the fun they will have in September! For information about this lively group of adults, click here to email Ruth Kallenberg, or call her at 431-7681.

**Pub Theology:** Join the discussion on Tuesday, August 15 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Sequoia Brewing Company (corner of Champlain and Perrin in the Piazza Del Fiore Center). Add your voice to the discussion of a variety of topics concerning faith, religion, and God. Seating is limited so come early to ensure a spot. They meet monthly on the third Tuesday. Listening and discussion are encouraged; drinking is optional. For more information, email Dustin at [dustin@upcfresno.org](mailto:dustin@upcfresno.org), or text him at 288-0083.

## Meeting at UPC

**Sheeper Than Therapy:** Enjoy a group of knitters and crocheters whose skills range from beginner to expert. They meet at UPC the first Saturday of the month. Join them Saturday, August 5 from 8:30-11:30 a.m. For information, visit their website at [www.sheeperthantherapy.com](http://www.sheeperthantherapy.com).

<b>August Birthdays</b> 1 Bao Bosavanh Trish Orr 2 Becky Bartsch-Bergthold Cynthia Wachner 4 Jo Dull 6 Kathleen Smith 8 Roland Bergthold Kason Dunn Kathy Pinto 9 May Fengthong David Taylor Dorothy Wood 12 Linda Jean Voth 13 Jim Quinn Sharon Stanley-Rea 15 Leonard Deal 16 Charles Small 20 Phyllis Neal 21 David Knudson 22 Melinda Cunningham Jane Reid 24 David Manion 26 Bill Hoey 27 Christopher Reid	<b>August Anniversaries</b> 1 Mark & Keran Sutton 7 Craig & Jennifer Howells 8 Paul & Ursula Masquelier 9 Tedd & Dione Lyons 15 Bob & Sue Smith 16 Todd & Carrie Minturn Souk & Thim Phothivong- say 21 Charles & Sharon Small 23 Ron & Becky Souza 25 Ray & Jo Dull John & Linda Jean Voth 26 Tom & Janet DeWitt  <b>August Calendar</b> 1 Deacons 7 p.m. 3 Thursday Bible Study 7 p.m. 5 Knitter's Group 8:30a.m. 6 Sunday FUNday 5 p.m. 7 Contemplative Prayer 6:30 p.m. Intercessory Prayer 7 p.m. 8 Session 6 p.m. 10 Thursday Bible Study 7 p.m.	<b>August Calendar cont.</b> 13 Pastor Renée's Last Sunday 14 Contemplative Prayer 6:30 p.m. 15 Pub Theology 6:30 p.m. 17 Thursday Bible Study 7 p.m. 18 Gospel Festival 7 p.m. 19 Food Distribution 8 a.m. 20 Ice Cream Freeze Off 6 p.m. 21 Contemplative Prayer 6:30 p.m. 22 Ministry Meetings (times vary) 24 Thursday Bible Study 7 p.m. 26 City without Orphans Seminar 9 a.m. 28 Pastor Renn's First Day at UPC Contemplative Prayer 6:30 p.m. 31 Thursday Bible Study 7 p.m.
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**Sunday Worship Schedule for August**

9 a.m. Classic Worship | 11 a.m. Contemporary Service  
11 a.m. Lao Language Service | except the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday

**Return Service Requested**

Mailing Label Here

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