

New Chapter

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

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What Transition Taught Us

by Dustin Maddox, Lay Minister & Commissioned Ruling Elder



Transitions are never easy. As an expression this may be a cliché, but as a lived reality it is certainly true. The last two and a half years have presented us with numerous challenges as well as new and exciting opportunities. As we close the chapter on our Senior Pastoral transition, I want to simply acknowledge its difficulty and celebrate your faithfulness in the meantime.

Change is always experienced as loss, and we have had our fair share of change in

the last two years. For many of us, the grief and pain of loss as a result of the transition is still very real. There are faces we miss seeing and voices we miss hearing on Sunday mornings. Maybe there are events we look back on as the "good ol' days." Perhaps you are angry, confused, or discouraged about something that continues to be unresolved. Maybe you find yourself exhausted by how long things have taken, or chomping at the bit to move on to a new season. Wherever you find yourself at this time, I want assure you that your experience is totally valid. I completely understand. I encourage you to remember that at UPC, we hold fast to believing there is a God who is big enough, and a community compassionate enough, to handle whatever you might be experiencing.

However, as we look forward to the future, I am hopeful about what is possible among us. One of the great gifts the transition gave to us was a clear picture of the character of our community. You are passionate, intelligent, creative, and caring people who desire to love God and your neighbor as yourself. You do not want to settle for easy answers to difficult questions. You want to grow deeper in your faith, and you want to connect Jesus into every part of your life instead of a few hours once a week. You long to work through your differences to pursue the common good. You take risks and do not let the uncertainty of the future keep you from doing the work God has called us to do. I saw this time and time again as many of you stepped up to the plate and took ownership of your faith and this community during trying times. As a result, I believe University Presbyterian Church has something uniquely beautiful to offer people in Fresno who long for a community after God's own heart.

May we not lose sight of this as time goes on and as we settle into a new normal. May we continue to dream big, take risks, and show up when things get challenging. May we continue to joyfully share God's boundless love with all in our community without limitation, exception, or condition.

Grace + Peace, Dustin

Rainbows, Fires, Mythical Creatures...What Are We Singing About?

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

Summer is over, school has begun, and we at UPC start a new era with Pastor Renn Serna. Continuing our hymn discovery series, I want to bring to mind one of the hymns we have sung multiple times over the past two and a half years we have been in transition. The hymn, *"In the Midst of New Dimensions,"* has served as our anthem in a season of change. Its text was just right while searching for a pastor with the phrase, "who will lead the pilgrim peoples?"



Aside from the symbolism of our wandering in the wilderness, this hymn is chock-full of rich poetic imagery. With phrases like "God of rainbow, fiery pillar," and "blazing phoenix," one might think we were singing about a J.R.R Tolkien or C.S. Lewis adventure novel, when really each of these images is biblical and theologically sound. "God of rainbow" (Genesis 9:9-17) recalls God's first promise to the earth: "I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth." "Fiery pillar" evokes a sign of God's presence and leadership in Exodus 13:21: "The Lord went in front of them in a pillar of cloud by day, to lead them along the way, and in a pillar of fire by night, to give them light." Although it might seem jarring to discover the mythological creature of the phoenix, we find it in Job 29:18: "Then I thought, 'I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days like the phoenix.'" The phoenix has been interpreted as a sign of Resurrection from as early as the First Century with Pope Clement I of Rome. These three images provide a comfort to know God will fulfill his promise of leading us to new life.

Let us find hope in realizing these things as we enter the midst of a new dimension!

Musically, Cactus

Stewardship in a Time of New Beginnings



It is an exciting time of new beginnings as UPC opens a new chapter in its almost 60-year life! Our new pastor, the Reverend Renn Serna, has begun her new ministry among us, and we hope you join us in worship on Sunday, September 10 as she preaches her first of many sermons among us. It will be a great time to be inspired and reconnected in our faith community. This new chapter could not happen without your generosity and giving. UPC is able to be the kind of place many yearn for - a community of grace and light, a place where diversity in faith and theology are welcomed, and healing in life and faith occurs. This is no small thing in a world greatly troubled.

We began this year in faith that God would walk with us - and God has. The Pastor Nominating Committee was faithful in its work and brought to the church a talented candidate, ready for the opportunities and challenges in this congregation. UPC, during this time of transition, has been reaching out to offer ways for people to connect to God and each other. Take Pub Theology, in which over 30 people meet once a month to wrestle honestly with how God is at work in our world. There's the Godly Play Sunday School, with an imaginative yet deeply spiritual approach, grounding our children in becoming new disciples. Our UPC Community Garden provides our monthly Food Pantry with fresh produce. Summer Sunday FUNdays created an intergenerational space for young and old to gather informally on Sunday evenings.

So many other offerings allow UPC to be a thriving place. Sunday Adult Education is asking deep questions of theology and faith around timeless and contemporary issues. The Contemplative Prayer Group is deepening those who gather in their prayer walk with God. Blessed with many able preachers, we receive faithful preaching of God's word from both clergy and lay people on Sunday mornings. We continue to experience a wide variety of music in worship with our Chancel Choir, Bell Choir, and extraordinary musicians both from within and outside of the congregation. Our local mission work, such as our monthly food pantry, continues to reach 60-80 families a month, while a new effort to tutor Syrian Refugees renews our connections to FIRM.

Fellowship groups such as the Clippers and the Young Families Group provide Christian fellowship. Our Women's and Men's Retreats deepen connections to God and one another. Our high school youth grow in their faith with weekly meetings, retreats, and mission trips. The Prayer Chain provides a way to share the burdens of life and grow in prayer.

Here's our challenge: Right now, our current-year financial giving is running behind our expenditures. We need your gifts more than ever to sustain the talented staff we have, which takes 70 percent of our annual budget. We are slowing our use of reserve funds, faithfully given in past years, but there is a limit to how much we can draw down.

Last year, when we made a financial appeal, the response was terrific, and it enabled us to plan confidently into the future. We know we can do this again as the fresh winds of the Spirit blow through our congregation.

We're acting on faith that what God has in store for us is abundant and life-giving. In light of all God promises us, we invite you to join us on this journey by providing the funds that will allow UPC to go through this year knowing the resources needed are there.

You can give online at www.upcfresno.org by clicking Online Giving under Quick Links on the home page, or bring your contribution to Sunday worship.

Session Report

by Ceci Johnson, Clerk of Session

Session held their last meeting with Pastor Renée Rico as Moderator on August 8, 2017. Dinner was hosted by Rita Dei, Elder for Congregational Care, and the group welcomed Barbara Schlueter as the representative from Deacons.

Some of the actions taken by Elders this month:

- Finalized matters concerning the Pastor Terms of Call ahead of Pastor Renn Serna's arrival at UPC in late August.
- Approved the formation of an ad hoc Committee on Church Safety and Security to assess, investigate, and recommend changes and additions to matters of safety and security, including signage on the property.



- Elders signed their ministry teams up to run the parking concession for Fresno State home football games.
- Approved continuing the 11 a.m. service in the Great Room through the end of October so Pastor Renn can take part in this new worship venue.

The evening ended with a time of remembering Pastor Renee's season at UPC and a circle of prayer for our continuing journey and hers as well.

The next regular meeting of Session will be Tuesday, September 12.

Sign Up Now for the October Women's Retreat

by Anne Klapste, for the Retreat Coordinators



The Women's Retreat Committee is happily planning the 2017 Women's Retreat which is October 13 -15 at Calvin Crest. This is a wonderful opportunity to get to know each other better; to forge new bonds and strengthen old ones; to ponder and meditate; to dwell in the word without distraction; to deepen your relationship with God; all on the beautiful grounds of Calvin Crest Conferences, north of Oakhurst.

We want all the women of the church to be there, so sign up soon. Calvin Crest needs to know all dietary restrictions well before the retreat. Scholarships are available, so don't let finances stop you. Early Bird Registration cost is \$165 per person double occupancy and \$215 single occupancy, but must be paid by September 3. After September 3, the cost is \$175 per person for double occupancy, or \$225 single occupancy. Childcare will be available if requested in advance. Register in the Narthex on Sunday, or in the office Monday through Thursday.

Check-in will begin at 4 p.m. on Friday, October 13. Check out will be after Sunday morning worship. Calvin Crest runs about 20° cooler than Fresno so pack accordingly. Bring your Bible and sturdy shoes. We'll send more information to registrants as the day draws near. We hope to see you there!

PW Holiday Boutique is Coming in November

by Jean Ann Fulton, for the Presbyterian Women

The annual UPC Presbyterian Women's Holiday Boutique is Saturday, November 11 and Sunday, November 12. This unique boutique offers crafts, baked goods, jellies, jams, green growing things, wonderful collectibles, and white elephants. It's perfectly timed to coincide with holiday gift giving and decorating.

Donations are always welcome! Keep the Boutique in mind as you clean out cupboards, china cabinets and garages. We hope you find treasures someone else might want. (Good, slightly used items only; no clothes or furniture, please.)

Throughout the fall, we invite you to join us for Workshops many Mondays from 9:30-11:00 a.m. Call one of the numbers below to find out when we meet for Workshops to share ideas, work on crafts, and make final plans for the Boutique.

Watch the weekly church bulletin for updates on the Boutique. For more information, call Jean Ann Fulton at 432-5092 or Ruth Kallenberg at 431-7681.



UPC Groups

WEEKLY

Contemplative Prayer: Come Mondays at 6:30 p.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.

Women's Bible Study: The group resumes their weekly meeting on Wednesday, September 13 at 9:30 a.m. in Room 9. They will begin a new study, Women of the Old Testament. Join them and learn about the women of our Faith. For more information, email Laura Lindegren at 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 Denice Leslie at pdkleslie@sbcglobal.net.

MONTHLY

Young Families Gathering: This event is open to all who want to fellowship with young families. For September, this monthly event is on Monday, September 11 at 6:30 p.m. The event location changes each month, but email Dustin at dustin@upcfresno.org about the September gathering. *(NOTE: The gathering usually happens on the first Monday of the month.)*

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, September 11 at 7 p.m. (NOTE: The prayer service usually happens on the first Monday of the month.) For more information, email Pastor Tedd at teddlyons@gmail.com, or call/text him at 906-1438.

Presbyterian Women (PW): Presbyterian Women have planned their first meeting of the fall season on Tuesday, September 12 at 9:30 a.m. in the Great Room. Refreshments are served and the program is a representative from The Vineyards California Armenian Home, a local retirement community. All women are invited to attend and bring a friend! If you have questions, email Ruth Kallenberg at rbkallenberg@gmail.com, or call her at 431-7681.

Clippers: Clippers meet Friday, September 15 at 6 p.m. in the Great Room for their annual barbecue/potluck. Cost per person for the delicious tri tip, which is prepared by chefs Lou Volpp and Ben Douglas, is \$2. Bring either a salad or a dessert to share, and bring a friend! Please RSVP no later than September 10 to Ruth Kallenberg at 431-7681, Hollie Volpp at 325-7362, or Cathy Douglas at 299-1793.

Pub Theology: Join the discussion on Tuesday, September 19 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, 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 the Sheeper Than Therapy website at [www.http://www.sheeperthantherapy.org/calendar/](http://www.sheeperthantherapy.org/calendar/).

Ways to Serve



Food Pantry item of the month is canned vegetables and we are short on paper bags. We distribute food and fresh produce to those in our neighborhood on the **third Saturday of the month (September 16 @ 8 a.m.)**. We always need volunteers and if you wish to participate in this life-giving event, contact Joy Manion at joyjmanion@sbcglobal.net. To help stock shelves on Thursday morning, text Dustin at 288-0083.

UPC is partnering with FIRM and Woven 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. An **additional orientation for this effort has been added for Wednesday, September 6 in the Great Room from 7-8:30 pm**. A sign-up sheet for this orientation is in the Narthex. If you had signed up with FIRM before, but haven't gone through their training, please sign up again! For more information, email Dustin at dustin@upcfresno.org.



The 2017 Fresno/Clovis CROP Walk for Hunger is Sunday, October 15 with registration at 1:30 p.m. and the walk beginning at 2:30 p.m. The starting place is Memorial United Methodist Church (1726 Pollasky Ave. in Clovis). Up to 25% of the money raised is distributed to local hunger-alleviating agencies in the San Joaquin Valley. To register online, go to www.crophungerwalk.org/fresnoc. For more information, email Sol Eufracio at sol.eufracio@gmail.com

Birthdays, Anniversary, and Events

September Birthdays 3 Greg Pozovich 4 Tom DeWitt 6 Beverly Ellis Shannon Pozovich Wendy Warnes 8 Tony Bounthapanya Dione Lyons 9 Ren Adams Margie Cobb 10 Barbara Schlueter 11 Claire Buchanan Melinda Vinicor 13 Laurel Kiel Deborah Qualle Patrice Sanders 15 Greg Faulk Carol McMillen 18 Ruth Klein Sue Vinicor 19 Virginia Allen 20 Eden Dunn Katrina Melcher 21 Mark Cavagnaro Sherry Walling 27 Micah Qualle 28 Pamela Leonhardt 30 Nathan Berend	September Anniversaries 12 Norm & Sue Christiansen Ken & Anne Klapste 24 Kevin & Cathy Wingert 26 Tom & Janet DeWitt September Calendar 1 Knitters Group 8:30 a.m. Fresno State vs. Incarnate Word 7 p.m. 4 Labor Day - Office Closed 5 Deacons 7 p.m. 6 Choir Rehearsal 6:30 p.m. 7 Bell Choir Rehearsal 6:30 p.m. Thursday Bible Study 7 p.m. 10 Pastor Renn Preaches 11 Boutique Work Day 9:30 a.m. Contemplative Prayer 6:30 p.m. Young Families Gathering 6:30 p.m. Intercessory Prayer 7 p.m. 12 Presbyterian Women 9:30 a.m. Session 6 p.m. 13 Women's Bible Study 9:30 a.m. Choir Rehearsal 6:30 p.m. 14 Bell Choir Rehearsal 6:30 p.m. Thursday Bible Study 7 p.m. 15 Clippers 6 p.m.	September Calendar cont. 16 Food Distribution 8 a.m. 18 Boutique Work Day 9:30 a.m. Contemplative Prayer 6:30 p.m. 19 Pub Theology 6:30 p.m. 20 Women's Bible Study 9:30 a.m. Choir Rehearsal 6:30 p.m. 21 Bell Choir Rehearsal 6:30 p.m. Thursday Bible Study 7 p.m. 25 Boutique Work Day 9:30 a.m. Contemplative Prayer 6:30 p.m. 26 Ministry Meetings (times vary) 27 Women's Bible Study 9:30 a.m. Choir Rehearsal 6:30 p.m. 28 Bell Choir Rehearsal 6:30 p.m. Thursday Bible Study 7 p.m. 31 Fresno State vs. Nevada 7 p.m.
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Non-profit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
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Clovis, California

Sunday Worship Schedule for September
9 a.m. Classic Worship | 11 a.m. Contemporary Service
11 a.m. Lao Language Service | except the 1st Sunday

Return Service Requested

Mailing Label Here

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