



By PASTOR ERIC LEDERMANN

February is Black History Month. There is a bunch of stuff in this issue of the *UPC News & Current Events* that I hope will inspire us to consider our part in perpetuating the systems that have oppressed Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPoC) for the last 400 or more years. The Mission Month Planning Team has been inspired by the work of the Rev. Jimmie Hawkins, director of the PC (USA) Office of Public Witness, who has shared a message of “Advocacy as a Spiritual Discipline.” We embark on our Mission Month journey February 6<sup>th</sup> with leaders throughout the PC(USA) leading us in considering what our call is as Christians and as a Church to both serve those in need *and* advocate for those who are being silenced or oppressed. Every one of the workshops being offered provides an opportunity for us to fully live into our full capacity as human beings.

You might ask, “Pastor Eric, how is climate change and environmental justice related to racism?” Good question! Let me offer this: as the earth’s climate changes, as oceans are rising (already being measured), as air quality declines, as resources become increasingly scarce

(e.g., fresh water), who gets hurt the most? Who are living in the low elevation areas (at, near, or below sea level) that will be flooded as the glaciers recede and ice caps melt? Who cannot afford to sell their house and move, and who would buy it if the land is going to flood? Where are deserts already forming where lush vegetation once grew, and who is living there? The answer to each of those questions is the same: people who are poor, many who are working but who do not earn enough. And in the U.S., thanks to a long history of prejudicial treatment against BIPoC, despite making up only 16% of the population, black people comprise the largest portion of people in poverty. Around the world, the numbers are staggering. This is not to say that white people aren’t also poor and at risk. But it is clear that white people have more opportunities and resources (and assumptions about their capacity) afforded to them than BIPoC who are poor. There’s also the question of immigrants. I realize the challenges of welcoming immigrants, particularly poor immigrants, into the U.S. But have we asked the difficult question: Why are they leaving their

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This issue of the  
UPC NEWS & Current Events  
is brought to you by...  
**the word...**

Reconciliation

From the Latin *reconciliare* or *reconciliatio*, “to bring together again.” It can also mean to “regain” something, like a friendship. Breaking it into its parts we have: *re-* (again) + *conciliare* (to make friendly). During the 14th century, it came to mean otherwise conflicting facts consistent or free of discrepancies—like “reconciling” a bank account to correct errors. In the Roman Catholic Church, reconciliation is very much a part of the sacrament of penance—to reconcile one’s relationship with God.

## ADVOCACY

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homelands, traveling thousands of miles along dangerous routes, just to come to the U.S.? In Central America we could say because of war and violence. But what about in Sudan? Yes, there is war and violence, but it's an ethnic war over depleting resources. Israel and Palestine? It's a war over scattered deposits of fresh water (I encourage you read *Resource Wars: The New Landscape of Global Conflict* (2002) by Michael Klare). And who loses the most in these racial and ethnic conflicts? The poor. Light skinned people are perceived as superior to dark skinned people. It's all over the world. So, yes, even the environment is linked directly to the cause of the oppressed and disadvantaged.

On Page 11 is an announcement for a PBS special that is airing in honor of Black History Month called "The Black Church: This is our story, this is our song." I think it may be worth watching.

Historians and sociologists are saying that the divisions in our nation are deeper than they have been since the Civil War. Some have even suggested we are on the verge of yet another Civil War, echoing the language we are hearing from some far-right groups. It is clear that we are in a war, a war of cultural ideologies that challenge our assumptions of one another, and I believe challenge the establishment of Whiteness in America.

White people are now barely over 60% of the population in the U.S., down from nearly 90% in 1940. But even if we weren't the majority, as UN Secretary-General António Guterres said (along with many others), "We are only as strong as the weakest." He was speaking about the COVID-19 pandemic in March of last year. But I suggest it rings true all the time. Which means that we need to be seeking to lift up and empower those who are being silenced or marginalized from the systems of power. Only then can we truly become a whole people.

As Christians, we are called to follow in the Way of Jesus who paid extra attention to the poor, sick, and marginalized. He sought to lift up those who were often pushed and kept down. He sought to empower the most disempowered to speak against the powers of oppression. He sought to love the ones that were considered untouchable, let alone unlovable. With Secretary-General Guterres' statement, we may merge it with the words of famed activist for the poor, Dorothy Day: "I really only love God as much as I love the person I love the least." Now put that on a communal level—replace "I" with "we." We, as a community, can only claim to love God as we love the people we love the least.

While I deeply grieve the horrible loss of life during this pandemic, I am learning

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## MONTHLY CANNED FOOD DRIVE

### FEBRUARY 28, 2021

*Fourth Sunday of each month! Drop off at church!*

Food pantries are often short of money and protein foods. The pantry at Tempe Community Action Agency (TCAA) needs your contributions of:



- tuna
- beans
- canned meats
- ramen noodles
- canned vegetables
- soups

### Drop off food donations to the Church Office.

Financial contributions may be sent to the office (make checks out to "TCAA" with "Food Pantry" in the memo).



139 E. Alameda Dr.  
Tempe, Arizona 85282  
(480) 966-6267  
[www.upctempe.org](http://www.upctempe.org)  
[www.facebook.com/upctempe](https://www.facebook.com/upctempe)

### Office Hours

Tue. & Thu.: 11:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.  
Wed. & Fri.: 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.  
(Closed for lunch 12:00 p.m. -1:00 p.m.)

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### Requirements:

Announcements: 500 words or less  
Articles/Reflections: 1200 words or less  
Letters to the Editor: 750 words or less  
Submissions may be edited for content, grammar, and space available.

**Send submissions**  
**by the 20th of each month to:**  
[newsletter@upctempe.org](mailto:newsletter@upctempe.org)

# Support UPC Youth, Buy Groceries at Fry's, Shop at Amazon

## Supporting youth ministry is as simple as shopping!

*Do you shop at Fry's using your VIP card?*

Enroll or re-enroll in the Fry's Community Rewards Program by visiting [www.frysfood.com/topic/new-community-rewards-program](http://www.frysfood.com/topic/new-community-rewards-program). Register using your Fry's VIP account and our organization number (NN199). Each time you swipe your VIP card at checkout, a portion of the sale will go straight to UPC!



*Do you shop at Amazon.com?*

AmazonSmile is a simple way for you to support UPC's youth ministry every time you shop, at no cost to you. AmazonSmile is available at [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) on your web browser and can be activated in the Amazon Shopping app your phone or tablet. To shop at AmazonSmile simply go to [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) or activate AmazonSmile on your Amazon Shopping app. On your first visit to [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com), search for "University Presbyterian Church Tempe," click on "Select" next to UPC, and start shopping. Be sure to always go to [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) for UPC to receive funds. You can change your charity at any time. Simply select "Change your Charity" in "Your Account." ■



## Docks

By JEAN J. LUCE

*Newly assembled travelers to Switzerland  
sipped wine from flimsy plastic cups on the top  
deck of the working ferry on Lake Thun.  
The evening light was lush across the lake.  
At one village dock a girl,  
about seven, approached the ferry,  
with her grandmother, it appeared.  
Bravely, the girl boarded alone.  
The grandmother gazed at the  
receding ferry, waved without cease.*

*At the next and distant docking, across the  
wide lake, a youngish man waited.  
The girl, in her red shoes, red-striped shirt, and  
small backpack, disembarked.  
below and broke into a run.  
The man scooped her into his arms.  
They cling as one, without cease.*



View of Lake Constance and Säntis, Switzerland,  
from the boat pier in Überlingen-Nussdorf.  
PHOTO: UNKNOWN

## ADVOCACY

Continued from page 2

to appreciate how it has forced us to pause everything (literally!) and take a deep dive to reflect on “what is” so we might dream about a more inclusive and compassionate “what could be.” That “what could be” is a vision of the kingdom of God, the way of life God intends for us humans—living in harmony with God, one another in our beautiful diversity, and with God’s good creation. It is a vision in which people of every ethnicity, language, cultural background, and technical abilities is afforded the benefit of appreciate and respect even before we meet them. It is a vision of hope as we seek to pull those who have been trampled for so long are brought out of the mud and ditches of our social systems, compassionately brought into the centers of our communities, and given a voice (and in which those who are part of the majority culture or race patiently wait for them to find their voice after having been silenced for so long).

Black History Month is not so much for black people as it is for white people to learn about the hardships that have been unfairly and unjustly imposed on people just because of the color of their skin. It is an invitation for white people to recognize how we have been privileged without even knowing it and without earning it, just because of the color of our skin. It is an opportunity for white people to finally listen the cries of those dying in our streets and from the reservations of this land, children of God crying out for justice and freedom. May we hear. May we listen. May we take action to eradicate the systems of poverty, dismantle structural racism, and build a better and more vital Church of Jesus Christ. May we confess our complicity in these systems and structures, and seek to repent from them. May we seek to rebuild our lives, our churches, and our community in a new way. This pandemic, despite the tragedy of it all, is an opportunity for us to further engage in this difficult but necessary work, inviting as many as

possible to join in the work and join with others who have been doing this work for a long time.

In that stream, I encourage you to take part in this year’s Mission Month on “Advocacy as a Spiritual Discipline.” You can register at [www.upctempe.org/advocacy](http://www.upctempe.org/advocacy) and find more info at [www.upctempe.org/missionmonth](http://www.upctempe.org/missionmonth). I look forward to seeing you! ■

*Be of good courage and  
know that you are loved!*

<sup>1</sup> According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 statistics. <https://usafacts.org/data/topics/people-society/poverty/poverty-measures/poverty-rate-of-all-persons/> (accessed Jan. 25, 2021).

<sup>2</sup> Wikipedia, “Historical Racial and Ethnic Demographics in the United States,” [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historical\\_racial\\_and\\_ethnic\\_demographics\\_of\\_the\\_United\\_States#cite\\_note-census.gov-15](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historical_racial_and_ethnic_demographics_of_the_United_States#cite_note-census.gov-15) (accessed January 25, 2020).

<sup>3</sup> The three prongs of the Matthew 25 Initiative of the PC(USA), <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/matthew-25/become-a-matthew-25-church/> (accessed Jan. 26, 2020).

# The Mitchells — Installment No. 26

By ERIC O. LEDERMANN

Their Zoom appointment was for 3:00 p.m. Mr. Mitchell had been working at home mostly, so an afternoon call was easy to manage.

Pastor Cobb signed on first, but only had to wait a few seconds for Mr. Mitchell’s image to appear.

“Hi Steve,” Pastor Cobb said as the audio connected.

“Hey Gary,” Mr. Mitchell responded. “It’s good to see you.”

“It’s good to see you, too. How’s the family?”

“Well,” Mr. Mitchell began, “doing okay. We’re all pretty much in a holding pattern these days.”

“I get that,” Pastor Cobb said with a sigh. “We’re pretty much the same. But it’s nice having Lizzy and Brandon home.”

“I bet it is.” Mr. Mitchell smiled and nodded.

“So, what did you want to talk about?” Pastor Cobb asked.

“Well, Linda and I were talking and started to wonder about our homeless neighbors.”

Pastor Cobb nodded, but saw that Mr. Mitchell had more to say.

“I also keep thinking about those in poorer neighborhoods with people who can’t get to the vaccine sites. And what you said on Sunday keeps echoing in my mind, that we are called to care for everyone, especially ‘the least of these.’”

“Well, Jesus said that, but yes,” Pastor Cobb said as he began to respond. “I appreciate that you’re thinking about the ones we often forgotten about. In India they’re called the untouchables. Here, I can call them the ‘unseeables.’ They’re there, but we often choose to not see them.

“I’m aware,” he continued, “that a number of the social service agencies and organizations are trying to encourage the

governor to make sure they’re included in the overall vaccination plan. On a Zoom meeting last week with some staffers in the governor’s office we suggested that we need to develop some mobile units to get into the areas where our homeless tend to congregate.”

“How did they respond?” Mr. Mitchell asked.

“They seemed a little caught off guard,” Pastor Cobb said, tilting his head and revealing his doubts. “I don’t think the homeless are on their radar. We kept asking how faith communities can help. Many of us have medical people in our congregations. But they had no response.”

Mr. Mitchell then asked, “Aren’t there already mobile medical groups out there?”

“Possibly,” Pastor Cobb responded. “I don’t know for sure, though. That’s a

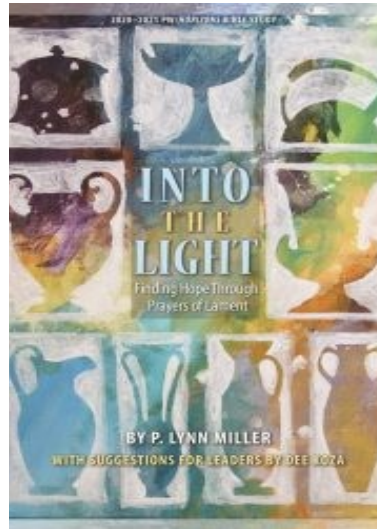
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# Presbyterian Women News

## PW Annual Fat Sunday Celebration (Feb. 14) Cancelled

UPC PW looks forward to their annual Fat Sunday Celebration where the congregation can gather for a sumptuous brunch and participate in a Silent Auction. This wonderful event provides almost \$1,000 in revenue for PW that helps us meet our mission goals.

However, as we remain in safety mode, we regret that this celebration will be canceled. Should you wish to donate to help with the shortfall, checks can be made out to UPC PW with "Fat Sunday" in the memo line. Your donations may be dropped off at the PW mailbox at church or mailed to Jan Felton at 13651 S. 36<sup>th</sup> Way Phoenix, AZ 85044. As always PW would not be able to our good work without your continued generosity. ■



## PW Bible Study *Into the Light* 4th Mondays of each Month on Zoom

**Feb. 22 & Mar. 22  
7:00 p.m.**

Via Zoom  
Meeting ID: 878 8400 9892  
Passcode: 139

# Adult Christian Education

*Advocacy as a  
Spiritual Discipline*

## 2021 Mission Month

**Sunday, Feb. 7, 2020**

11:00 a.m.—12:00 p.m.

**The Rev. Jimmie Hawkins**

Director of the PC(USA)  
Office of Public Witness

**Sunday, Feb. 14, 2020**

11:00 a.m.—12:00 p.m.

**The Rev. Stephanie Hamilton**

Former Director of Montlure Presbyterian  
Camp, and newly elected Arizona State  
Representative, Tucson

**For more info on Saturday events,  
see page 11**

(Saturday events require registration at  
[www.upctempe.org/advocacydays](http://www.upctempe.org/advocacydays))

## THE UNIVERSAL CHRIST

HOW A FORGOTTEN REALITY  
CAN CHANGE EVERYTHING  
WE SEE, HOPE FOR, AND BELIEVE

**Sundays, Feb. 21—Mar. 28**

11:00 a.m.—12:00 p.m.

"God loves things by becoming them," Rohr writes, suggesting that Jesus' life was meant to declare that humanity has never been separate from God, except by our own choice.

In this Lenten series, Pastor Eric will facilitate discussions around some of the major themes and points Richard Rohr makes in his book. Not required to read the book (though, it is a thought provoking book).

(Classes will be held in the same Zoom as Sunday morning Worship. If you haven't already registered, go to: [www.upctempe.org/worship](http://www.upctempe.org/worship))

## THE MITCHELLS

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question I've been trying to answer. It seems many of those groups try to operate under the radar. I'm guessing the groups don't want the scrutiny because they are taking some risks."

Mr. Mitchell took a sip of his afternoon coffee, and then admitted, "I hadn't thought of that."

"We have a good Samaritan law here, but it's very limited and I don't know if it covers those with medical training," Pastor Cobb added.

"So," Mr. Mitchell said, pausing for a moment to collect his thoughts, "what can the Church do to help in all this?"

"That is a great question," Pastor Cobb responded, his hand on his face in a thoughtful posture. "Session has been asking that very question. Keep in mind, our first priority was ensuring the wellbeing of *our* people. There is some pressure to get back to in-person worship. I'm hearing other pastors who are receiving immense pressure, and some that have had to give in."

"I've heard some grumbings here at Faith," Mr. Mitchell said.

"Well, my inbox shows they're more than just grumbings," Pastor Cobb admitted. "We have a small but strong showing of people who want to be worshipping in the sanctuary regardless of the pandemic. It's getting more difficult to hold them at bay, and I can see the position of the session is beginning to weaken."

"Really?" Mr. Mitchell said, surprised by this news. "Is it that the elders believe we should be getting back to some kind of in-person worship, or that they're caving under the pressure?"

"I think, sadly, it's the latter."

There was a slight pause before Pastor Cobb added, somewhat unconsciously, "I sure miss having you on session, Steve. I know you needed to take a break, but right now we need more voices of reason and thoughtfulness. It's not that our elders are thoughtless, but they don't have your quiet resolve. You help others be calm in the face adversity. Evidently I'm not able to provide it in the way they need."

"Thank you, Gary," Steve said,

looking down, somewhat embarrassed. He quickly shook it off and asked, "How can some of us who are not on session help? I know my family will not be going back to any in-person gatherings until we have all been vaccinated."

Pastor Cobb quickly responded, "You're not alone. The vast majority of people I've spoken with have told me that even if there was in-person worship they would not be attending. We're trying to figure out a hybrid, where we can worship in the sanctuary with a small group of people with masks and distancing, *and*, at the same time, be live-streaming. But, if we're going to do a hybrid, which I think we need to consider regardless of when it happens, we need to be invested in full inclusion, which means giving people online the ability engage with worship and not just watch from home."

"What does that look like?" Mr. Mitchell asked as he pondered the complexities of all that.

"Well," Pastor Cobb said with a smirk on his face, "I don't understand all the technology behind it, but I'm trying to imagine a mix elements in the service that are led both in the sanctuary and virtually off site. So, some parts would be led by people at home and they would be displayed in the sanctuary on a screen or monitor."

"How would that work," Mr. Mitchell responded, trying to imagine it.

"I've suggested that each week either the liturgist or I am off site, and we switch back and forth. So, half the time I'd preach from the pulpit, and half the time I'd preach from home, or maybe even some remote place where I can still get a cell signal."

"That'd be wild, Gary," Mr. Mitchell said, smiling but also shaking his head. "Would you have a big TV behind the pulpit or something?"

"I've been talking with Daniel Stancey about some ideas, and he's even thinking about putting up some real money for it."

Mr. Mitchell smiled and nodded, "He would definitely be the one to do that. He's been with Smerther Technology for like thirty years or something. He has the money and the knowledge."

"Yup," Pastor Cobb said assuredly.

"Did you know he started as a programmer there right out of college? Now he's vice president of development and overseeing some of the most cutting edge stuff. He has access to wholesalers for things like the super big LCD monitors. He says they're so thin and light that they could easily be mounted over the chancel with two back to back over the choir loft, one facing out for the congregation and one facing back to the choir for when we're able to have a choir again."

"So, you'd show the Zoom room when no one was speaking or when someone in the sanctuary is speaking, but switch to speaker mode when someone was leading from the Zoom meeting? What about cameras in the sanctuary?"

Pastor Cobb nodded, "He's thought of that, too. There are some fairly inexpensive systems for live streaming. We aren't spending much on utilities right now, and people have for the most part kept up on their pledges, so we're actually building a surplus. We're going to need it if we do this. We're looking at about \$6,000 for the streaming equipment, and then another \$5,000 to \$10,000 for the monitors, cables, and signal splitters. That's just a rough estimate."

"That is a good chunk of change, there, Gary," Mr. Mitchell said, skeptical.

"Yes it is, but because of the pandemic we have the funds."

Mr. Mitchell thought for a moment, and realized out loud, "But then we'd need people to learn how to use it."

"And that, my friend, is the real sticking point," Pastor Cobb said. "But, if we can do this, we can help connect people to church who have not been able worship with us on Sunday mornings even before the pandemic. In an odd way, this whole thing has opened our eyes to ways we can be more inclusive. I'm hearing people ask if we can continue to have meetings on Zoom after the pandemic is over—it saves them a lot of commute time, and that's even good for the environment."

"I would have never thought," Mr. Mitchell said.

"And, some people don't like to drive

# Prayers of Lament

By CHRIS CASANOVA

The January Adult Christian Education (ACE) Class has been studying the Horizons Bible Study, *Into the Light, Finding: Hope Through Prayers of Lament*, by Lynn Miller. This is the current Bible study that the Presbyterian Women (PW) Circles are using as well. Through this study we have learned not only to lament, but how to lament and why we offer prayers of lament.

A lament is not a complaint to God when we have the means to fix our situation, but a lament is a cry to God in times of suffering and despair. A Biblical lament or prayer of lament includes an address to God, a truthful description of the situation, a statement of trust in God, a call on God to act and the reassurance that God hears. The hope we have is in God of steadfast love, as Paul writes in Romans 8.38-39:

*"For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

Here are some of the laments that have been written by participants in both the ACE class and the women of the PW Bible study that meets the 4th Monday of each month on Zoom.

*Dear God -  
Creator of all people of wonderful diversity,  
Our world is fractured by racism —  
Opportunities are not provided for all of your children —  
Violence has been demonstrated against our brothers and sisters—  
Tacit approval of racism is present in all of us.  
Please help us.  
Compassionate One, your children need your love and guidance.  
We believe in your Mightiness to bring equality and justice to ALL your children.  
Show us how to be like your Son.  
Amen.*

*God who loves us all,  
Be with us in our failure to see open our eyes and ears to the suffering in our community.  
So many of us are silent.  
Help us to have the spark, to feel the nudge, and find the courage to action.  
Forgive us for our lack of action.*



*Help us correct the systems that oppress.  
We know you have suffered because of our unwillingness to take action.  
Thank you for hearing our prayer—we know you are with us at all times  
Because you have told us so.  
Amen*

*Compassionate God,  
We are frustrated and angry that we are not getting the vaccine we need.  
We are frustrated at not having leadership to help us.  
Loving, caring, nurturing God  
We want to see our needs met.*

*God of all people,  
We are fractured people  
unable to live together in harmony and peace.  
We are split apart from brothers and sisters,  
by our races, by our economic inequities,  
by our differing opportunities, and by our suffering.  
In the midst of sadness and despair  
we call on You for we all belong to You.  
Wrap your strong arms around all of us and hold us close.  
For: "...nothing can separate us from God's love in Christ Jesus our Lord; not death or life, not angels or rulers, not present things or future things, not powers or height or depth, or any other thing that is created." (Rom. 8: 38-39)  
Hear our prayer, O God.  
Amen.*

*Inspiring Redeemer,  
There are so many unknowns in this time.  
Much of the news we hear focuses on contempt, strife and hate.  
Where are YOU in all of this?  
Help us remember that you are here, always present with us.  
We may forget or even turn away, but YOU do not.*

# ***Presbyterians Today's* Lenten Devotional Takes Readers on a Journey to Peace and Wholeness**

## **The Way to Shalom' starts Feb. 17 with Ash Wednesday and continues daily through Easter Sunday**

By **DONNA FRISCHKNECHT JACKSON**  
**Presbyterians Today**

The season of Lent begins on Feb. 17 with the somber Ash Wednesday reminder that “from dust you came and from dust you shall return.”

But according to the Rev. Jimmie Hawkins, Associate Director of Advocacy for the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the director of the Office of Public Witness in Washington, D.C., Lent is not just a time of penitence or “time to wallow in worry about God’s wrath.”

“It is a time of reflection on what God has done to redeem us and how we can live a whole and full life as a child of God,” said Hawkins, who is one of the authors of the 2021 *Presbyterians Today's* online Lenten devotional, “The Way to Shalom.”

Working with the theme of shalom, the Hebrew word for “peace,” Hawkins is joined by his advocacy colleagues — Catherine Gordon, associate for international issues; the Rev. Christian Brooks, representative for domestic poverty issues; Sue Rheem, representative to the United Nations from the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations; and Ivy Lopedito, a mission specialist for the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations — as they explore the paths to healing and wholeness, both locally and globally.

“In the Bible, ‘shalom’ can be translated as peace, but also translated as tranquility, security, well-being, health, welfare, completeness and safety. How we can receive this gift of shalom and, in turn, bestow it upon the world?” said Hawkins. “We live in a world in desperate need of peace. The United States has just come out of a contentious election, a



**The Rev. Jimmie Hawkins** PHOTO: Courtesy of Rich Copley

struggle with a global pandemic and grappling with racial violence.”

“Poverty, misery and despair fill many corners of the world,” Hawkins said. “Violence holds a vicious grip on the lives of many. We desire peace. We need peace. We must pray — and work — for peace here in the United States as well as in other parts of the world. The need for peace is a global one, and this devotional will raise awareness of our brothers and sisters who are living in areas around the world that are filled with conflict and strife.”

Each week, “The Way to Shalom” will introduce one of the many definitions of

shalom. Readers are invited to begin the week by reflecting on the theme before beginning to read each day’s devotional. In addition to the daily reflections, *Presbyterians Today* invites readers to create their own visual reminder of the importance of praying for peace by using strips of fabric and a fabric marker, writing prayers for peace on the strips and then attaching the prayers to a tree in the yard, a fence or even a railing on the steps of homes. The fabric, blowing in the wind, will become a witness out in the community that peace is possible and that it begins with each one of us. ■

# Louisville Seminary Students Establish Gayraud Wilmore Society of Black Seminarians

## New student organization to enhance and support Black life at the seminary

By LOUISVILLE PRESBYTERIAN  
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

*Special to Presbyterian News Service*

For Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Black History Month kicks off with the establishment of a new student organization. The Gayraud Wilmore Society of Black Seminarians (SBS) centers the distinct voices of the seminary's Black students by providing a sacred and unified space that uplifts Black community, cultural experiences, social connections, mental health, and the academic support of the Black student body at Louisville Seminary.

According to SBS President and second-year Master of Divinity student John Randolph, the formation of the group was inspired by three separate factors. First, seminary alums laid the groundwork in developing an organization that centered on shared cultural experiences. Second, the "three-headed monster of 2020" (including sickness from the global pandemic; the events leading to the Jan. 6 violence at the U.S. Capitol; and violence from the injustices inflicted on Breonna Taylor) inspired the need to understand the fallen world in which students would minister. Lastly was the desire to honor Wilmore, a paramount figure in Black theology who died on April 18, 2020 at 98.

"We wanted to build an organization that centered around our Black experience in faith, social justice and healing during this tumultuous season," said Randolph. "While the focus is on Black students, we seek to provide a safe space for all people of color, those seeking community, and those who authentically want an opportunity to learn about the Black experience.

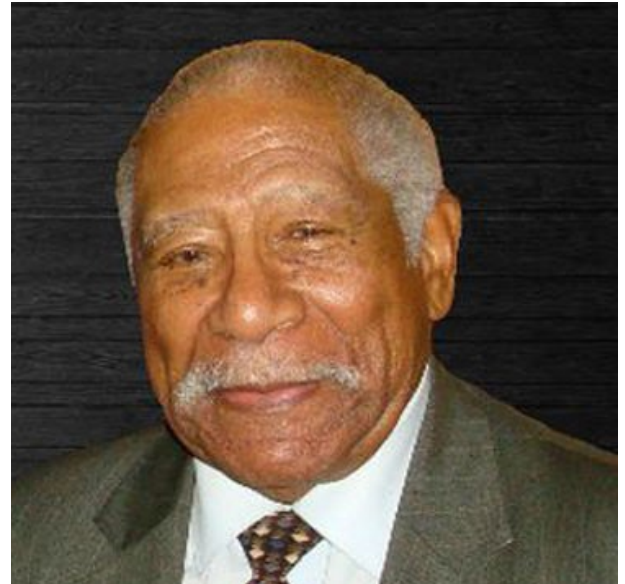
The SBS will create an environment that acknowledges the distinctiveness of the Black experience, values Black students and recognizes the importance of community among the Black student body."

Randolph adds that the SBS will assist and inspire the student body and Louisville Seminary in working toward an anti-racist institution and to educate, engage and ignite the local community to act on issues and concerns related to the well-being and success of Black people.

Serving with Randolph on the SBS board are: Kimberly Blackford, vice president and second-year Master of Divinity student; Jai Everette, secretary and first-year Master of Divinity student; Mohlatlego Makgoba, treasurer and first-year Master of Divinity student; and Jacques Francois, chaplain and second-year Master of Divinity student.

Dr. Ashley Hicks, Associate Professor of Marriage and Family Therapy, and Dr. Brandon McCormack, Adjunct Professor at Louisville Seminary and Associate Professor in the University of Louisville Pan African Studies Department, serve as the SBS faculty advisors.

"Community and relationships matter," said Hicks. "Black students at our institution need a place where they are able to share their voices, identify their concerns, and build community on and off campus. I think the SBS will be a prime organization to help promote the needs of Black students and to aid in their formation as seminarians. The group will



Dr. Gayraud Wilmore

also help hold Louisville Seminary accountable to our commitment to anti-racism as an institution and in the larger world. I am excited about the good work the SBS is doing and will continue to do."

Dr. Gayraud S. Wilmore, the organization's namesake, was a key figure in the civil rights movement, a Presbyterian pastor and an African American church history scholar. He also was the first executive director of the United Presbyterian Church's Commission on Religion and Race. In 2019, Louisville Seminary conferred an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree on Wilmore. It was the first such degree conferred in the seminary's 165-year history.

"We welcome this new student organization at Louisville Seminary and their faithful **dedication to the struggle for Black lives** in the spirit of our honorary alum, Gayraud Wilmore," said Louisville Seminary President Alton Pollard, III. ■

# Presbyterian Center Plans Online Black History Month Service

Black history is a lived-out message of faith, hope, and love.

By GAIL STRANGE

*Presbyterian News Service*

“Black history is important for all people because Black history is American history,” says the Rev. Michael Moore, Associate for [African American Intercultural Congregational Support](#) in the Presbyterian Mission Agency’s [Racial Equity & Women’s Intercultural Ministries](#) (RE&WIM).

On Wednesday, Feb. 24, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) will celebrate Black History Month with a special worship service led by RE&WIM. The service this year will be live streamed on the [PC \(USA\) Facebook page](#) starting at 9 a.m. Eastern Time.

The theme for this year’s service is adapted from [Maya Angelou’s](#) poem of liberation and survival, “[Still I Rise](#).” Moore will be the preacher.

Moore, who is also giving leadership to the committee planning the service, says, “Black History Month is a month typically dedicated to celebrating the achievements of Black Americans and the central role they’ve played in U.S. history.”

“We traditionally celebrate the histori-



## African-American History Month

cal figures, times, and places of the contributions of Black people during Black History Month,” said Moore, “and it’s very important that we pay homage and celebrate the achievements of Black Americans of the past and today. However, this Black History Month I am more intrigued by what I call the ‘spirit’ of Black history.”

Moore says “spirit” in this instance doesn’t mean something other-worldly. It’s something that can’t be named, but is known and passed down through generations, Moore said.

“The spirit of Black history is an incredible witness to the church and society of a deeper meaning of what faith really looks like in the truest sense,” Moore said. “Not confessions, not just doctrines, not just a theology, but a witness of faith forged in unmerited suffering and redemption.”

He described Black history as a journey of a people who, despite the contradictions, unfairness, inequity and disparities, just keep getting back up, stepping up, standing out and going forward despite it all.

“I am amazed, astounded, flabbergasted and sometimes bewildered and dumbfounded by the spirit of

Black history,” said Moore. “What is it that allows a people — not immigrants, but a stolen people from a diverse continent — to endure the horrors of the transatlantic slave trade, learn a new language, be bought and sold and designated as chattel — and survive?”

Moore asked what is it that allows a people [designated as three-fifths of a human being](#) and stigmatized because of the color of their skin to endure lynchings and Jim Crow laws and yet still be resilient and adaptable enough to share crop or work for nothing and build and contribute greatly to the making the wealthiest country on the planet?

Moore says that as he reflects on Black history, he wonders what is the something that still to this day strengthens Black people to resist being marginalized and segregated and being killed openly without justice, without restitution or even acknowledgement of the horrible wrongs perpetrated against them.

“What is it that allows a people to hold to a vision and value that one day they will be not be judged by the color of skin, but content of character?” he said.

“Black history,” Moore said, “is a lived-out message of faith, hope and love.” ■



The Rev. Michael Moore

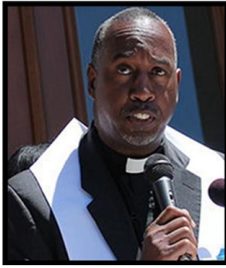
# ADVOCACY DAYS

at University Presbyterian Church, Tempe

**Feb. 6-7 & 13-14**

*Advocacy as a Spiritual Discipline*

## GUEST LEADERS



**The Rev. Jimmie Hawkins**  
Director of the Office of Public  
Witness for the PC(USA),  
Washington, D.C.



**The Rev. Stephanie Hamilton**  
Parish Associate, St. Mark's PC, Tucson  
AZ House Rep., LD 10

### Saturday, Feb. 6

10:00 am Welcome & Plenary I  
10:45 am Communion Worship  
11:15 am Morning Workshops  
12:15 pm Lunch Break  
1:00 pm Plenary II  
1:45 pm Afternoon Workshops  
3:00 pm Close

### Sunday, Feb. 7

9:30 am Worship - Rev. Jimmie Hawkins  
11:00 am Adult Christian Education with  
Rev. Jimmie Hawkins

### Saturday, Feb. 13

9:00 am Discussion Panel  
1:00 pm Corey Woods  
Mayor, City of Tempe  
Doreen Garlid  
Councilperson, City of Tempe  
Debora Arteaga  
Executive Director, Tempe  
Community Action Agency

### Sunday, Feb. 14

9:30 am Worship - Rev. Stephanie Hamilton  
11:00 am Adult Christian Education with  
Rev. Stephanie Hamilton

Register at [www.upctempe.org/advocacydays](http://www.upctempe.org/advocacydays)

# Black History Month



## PBS Special to Air in Honor of Black History Month

PBS will air "The Black Church: This is our story, this is our song". Illuminating the multifaceted, interactive roles of the Black Church as its joyful worship sustained — and continues to nurture — faith, community and social justice.

Additionally, "The Black Church" promises to resonate beautifully with last fall's compelling Sunday School classes on Dr. Martin Luther King's *Letters from a Birmingham Jail*.

Thank you for leading this memorable class, Catherine May and Dan Abbott!

Additional information available at <https://www.pbs.org/video/trailer-ectdli/> ■

### Episode 1

Tue., Feb. 16, 08:00 pm on Arizona PBS HD  
Wed., Feb. 17, 02:00 am on Arizona PBS HD  
Wed., Feb. 17, 02:30 pm on Arizona PBS HD  
Sat., Feb. 20, 08:00 pm on World  
Sun., Feb. 21, 12:00 am on World

### Episode 2

Tue., Feb. 23, 08:00 pm on Arizona PBS HD  
Wed., Feb. 24, 02:00 am on Arizona PBS HD  
Wed., Feb. 24, 02:30 pm on Arizona PBS HD  
Sat., Feb. 27, 08:00 pm on World  
Sun., Feb. 28, 12:00 am on World

## THE MITCHELLS 2

Continued from page 6

at night, so now they're participating in more committees and fellowship events," Pastor Cobb added.

"Will any of this help us help the homeless?" Mr. Mitchell asked, bringing the conversation back around.

"Not directly," Pastor Cobb said slowly and thoughtfully. "But it could bring more voices to the table to help reshape our work in ways that invite more possibilities, which, in turn, might break us out of our boxes and be more creative with how we help those who are vulnerable."

"So, between that," Mr. Mitchell said, "and pressuring the governor, maybe we can push for more support for our more vulnerable populations?"

"That's the idea," Pastor Cobb responded.

They talk about other things

happening in the life of Faith Presbyterian, as well as the dreams they shared for when the pandemic is under control—going out, having coffee in person, and appreciating relationships all the more.

"I know you have other things to do," Mr. Mitchell finally said. "It's good just to talk with you, Gary. Thanks for entertaining my concerns and for just yapping for a bit."

"It's my pleasure, Steve," Pastor Cobb said as he raised his coffee mug as if to offer a toast. "I do have some things I need to get done, but know I'm always here to talk. If you have any ideas, you know how to get ahold of me."

"Absolutely," Mr. Mitchell smiled, responding with his coffee mug in the air as well. "Talk to you later."

And with that, the Zoom call ended. ■

# National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

## 1-800-273-TALK

(1-800-273-8255)

### Talk to someone.

If you're thinking about suicide, are worried about a friend or loved one, or would like emotional support, the Lifeline network is available 24/7 across the United States.

En Español: 1-888-628-9454

Hard of Hearing: 1-800-799-4889

Veterans Crisis Line: 1-800-273-8255

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THE DIFFERENCE IS IN THE ROASTING

# Worship Volunteer Schedule

Most of what happens at UPC would not happen if not for an actively involved membership! Below is the schedule of worship volunteers for the next couple of months. If you are listed and have a conflict, you are asked to please find a replacement and then contact Ruling Elder Sada Reed, co-chair of the Worship Committee.

To volunteer or get on one of the rotations, Sada Reed! Thank you!

## February 2021

Deacon of the Month: ..... TBA  
Sanctuary Readiness Team ..... Larry Seubert

### Feb. 7—6th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Liturgist ..... Joni Jacobs  
Children's Moment ..... Joni Jacobs  
Worship Tech ..... Scott Home

### Feb. 14—Transformation Sunday

Liturgist ..... Mary Danforth  
Children's Moment ..... Pastor Eric  
Worship Tech ..... Chris Trella

### Feb. 17—Ash Wednesday

Liturgist ..... Helen Griffin  
Children's Moment ..... Helen Griffin  
Worship Tech ..... Mike Williamson

### Feb. 21—1st Sunday of Lent

Liturgist ..... Lawn Griffiths  
Children's Moment ..... Suzanne Niemann  
Worship Tech ..... Mike Williamson

### Feb. 28—2nd Sunday of Lent

Liturgist ..... Chris Casanova  
Children's Moment ..... Chris Casanova  
Worship Tech ..... Jim Niemann

## March 2021

Deacon of the Month: ..... TBA  
Sanctuary Readiness Team ..... Larry Seubert

### Mar. 7—3rd Sunday in Lent

Liturgist ..... Joni Jacobs  
Children's Moment ..... Joni Jacobs  
Worship Tech ..... Jim Niemann

### Mar. 14—4th Sunday in Lent

Liturgist ..... Joyce Godfrey  
Children's Moment ..... Joyce Godfrey  
Worship Tech ..... Chris Trella

### Mar. 21—5th Sunday in Lent

Liturgist ..... Nancy Martin  
Children's Moment ..... Nancy Martin  
Worship Tech ..... Mike Williamson

### Mar. 28—Palm Sunday

Liturgist ..... Molly Winkler  
Children's Moment ..... Molly Winkler  
Worship Tech ..... Chris Trella

## LAMENT

Continued from page 7

Help us take time to remember your  
unconditional love that always  
surrounds us, recall all you do for us  
and be mindful of our blessings.  
Thank you for hearing what is in our  
hearts and on our minds.  
Amen.

Gracious, compassionate God,  
how much more can we tolerate?  
Our country is on the verge of losing our  
democracy.  
Our friends & relatives are struggling  
with COVID.  
Hate towards our brothers & sisters has  
been amplified.  
God, you can soften our hearts and let  
love in.  
You can inspire people towards  
community rather than power and  
greed.  
I know you are hearing our cries.

*I know you are present in our world.  
Amen.*

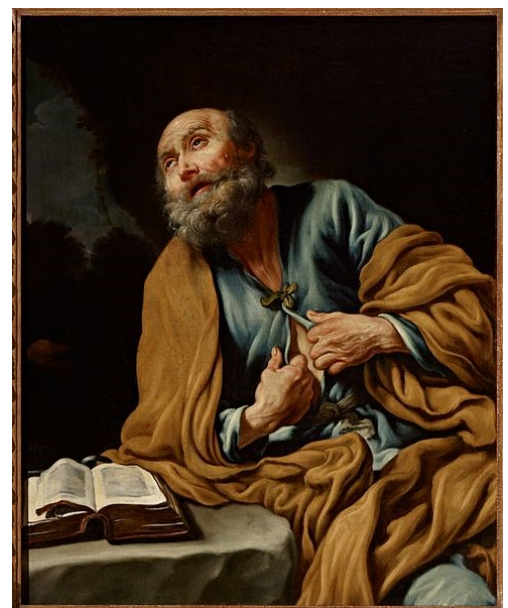
*Our God—we have lost our jobs, our  
homes, our human contact, our  
dignity, our connections to support  
systems to help ourselves and  
others.*

*God listen to our cry for your help.  
Please lead us and guide each of us and  
all of us to the roads you show us to  
re-knit our lives using economic  
justice.*

*You God, are our hope and we trust in  
your presence in our lives. Amen.*

*God of love,  
there is great divisiveness among your  
people.*

*Please open our hearts and minds to  
your truths  
so we may do your will.  
With You this will be possible. Amen. ■*



Lament of St. Peter, Claude Vignon (c. 1623-1630)

# February Birthdays

2 Danny Maloney	18 Nolan Vale
Jo Fancher	19 Kathy Wagner
Rick Casanova	22 Don Morton
5 Allison Johnson	24 Mikki Gallagher
6 Randy Hermanson	25 Steve Vale
Betsy Gephart	26 Chet Henry
8 Helen Alderson	27 Pete Godfrey
15 Bob Knox	Pat Armstrong
13 Kendric Knorr	28 Sharlan Pierce
Al Gephart	

*Prayers of thanks for all  
these beautiful lives!*

*If your birthday is missing or we have the wrong date,  
please contact the office so we can update our records.*

## Newsletter Submissions

### Poems, Stories, Reflections

UPC actively seeks submissions. Did you have a particular “God moment” you’d like to share? Send stories, information, letters to the congregation, photos, and announcements for the  
**UPC News & Current Events.**

Send submissions to:  
newsletter@upctempe.org  
and be sure to review the submission requirements on page 2.

## Stay Informed on All-Things-Presby! Subscribe to Presbyterian News Sources

### Stay informed about the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):

#### PC(USA) News & Announcements

Available in a daily or weekly digest format  
[www.pcusa.org/newsupdates](http://www.pcusa.org/newsupdates)

#### Presbyterian Outlook

An independent magazine covering all things Presbyterian  
\$19.95/yr, 18 issues  
<https://pres-outlook.org>



#### Presbyterians Today

Award-winning denominational magazine published by the PC(USA). Also available is a free twice monthly e-newsletter  
<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/today>

#### Presbytery of Grand Canyon Weekly E-focus Newsletter

News and views around our presbytery, and words of wisdom from our presbytery leadership  
<https://pbygrandcanyon.org/subscribe-to-efocus>

# Let us remember in our prayers...

- ✘ **Homebound:** Evelyn Colby, Elaine Murray
- ✘ **Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC)** in the U.S.
- ✘ **Communities** bearing the weight of violence in their streets and neighborhoods
- ✘ **All affected by COVID-19**, especial those who are hospitalized and their families, and the families of those who have died.
- ✘ **Medical personnel** and first responders on the front lines of battling COVID-19
- ✘ **Indigenous People** who are suffering under the weight of COVID-19 and hundreds of years of subjugation.
- ✘ **Teachers and students** as they continue online and in-person.
- ✘ **Helen Alderson**
- ✘ **Don Morton**
- ✘ **Carl and Barb Smith**
- ✘ **All of creation**, and for the strength to stand up for environmental conservation
- ✘ **Elected & community leaders**, that they can bring peace to our nation and world
- ✘ **Military personnel**, stateside and abroad
- ✘ **Peacemakers/Mission Workers**
- ✘ **Our nation and world**—praying for peace
- ✘ **Immigrants**, especially those separated from families
- ✘ **UPC Officers:** elders, deacons, trustees
- ✘ Those who are **suffering & are marginalized**
- ✘ Those struggling with **mental illness**

# UPC Calendar

Submit corrections, additions, or deletions to the church office at (480) 966-6267 or [upc@upctempe.org](mailto:upc@upctempe.org).

Check online for updates or to subscribe on your computer or device:

[www.upctempe.org/calendar](http://www.upctempe.org/calendar)

## February 2021

### Mon, Feb 1

4:00 pm ACE Team (Zoom-U)  
7:00 pm Administration Committee (Zoom-U)  
8:30 pm A.A. Meeting (Rm 7)

### Wed, Feb 3

9:00 am Lectio Divina Bible Study (Zoom-U)  
4:00 pm Worship Planning Team (Zoom-U)  
4:30 pm Staff Meeting (Zoom-U)  
5:15 pm UPC Social Hour (Zoom-U)  
6:00 pm Bell Choir Practice (Zoom-P)  
7:00 pm Choir Practice (Zoom-P)  
7:30 pm UKIRK @ ASU (Zoom-U)

### Thu, Feb 4

11:30 am Theology Group/Reflection Study (Zoom-U)  
7:00 pm CE Meeting (Zoom-U)

### Fri, Feb 5

2:00 pm I-HELP (FH, K)  
8:30 pm A. A. Meeting (Rm 7)

### Sat, Feb 6

ALL DAY I-HELP (FH, K)  
9:00 am Mission Month: Advocacy Days (Zoom-U)

### Sun, Feb 7

#### Mission Month

2:00 pm I-HELP Guests Depart  
8:45 am Children's Bible Time (Zoom-P)  
9:30 am Worship Service (Zoom-U)  
11:00 am Adult Christian Education Class (Zoom-U)

### Mon, Feb 8

8:30 pm A.A. Meeting (Rm 7)

### Tue, Feb 9

7:00 pm Worship Committee (Zoom P)

### Wed, Feb 10

9:00 am Lectio Divina Bible Study (Zoom-U)  
4:00 pm Worship Planning Team (Zoom-U)  
5:15 pm UPC Social Hour (Zoom-U)  
6:00 pm Bell Choir Practice (Zoom-P)  
7:00 pm Choir Practice (Zoom-P)

7:30 pm UKIRK @ ASU (Zoom-U)

### Thu, Feb 11

7:00 pm MSJP Committee (Zoom-U)

### Fri, Feb 12

2:00 pm I-HELP (FH, K)  
8:30 pm A. A. Meeting (Rm 7)

### Sat, Feb 13

ALL DAY I-HELP (FH, K)  
9:00 am PW Fat Sunday Brunch Set-Up (K, FH)

### Sun, Feb 14

#### Mission Month

2:00 pm I-HELP Guests Depart  
7:00 am Dimanche Gras (Fat Sunday) PW Luncheon (k FH, MR)  
8:45 am Children's Bible Time (Zoom-P)  
9:30 am Worship Service (Zoom-U)  
11:00 am Adult Christian Education Class (Zoom-U)

### Mon, Feb 15

7:00 pm Deacon Meeting (Zoom-U)  
8:30 pm A.A. Meeting (Rm 7)

### Wed, Feb 17

#### Ash Wednesday

9:00 am Lectio Divina Bible Study (Zoom-U)  
4:00 pm Worship Planning Team (Zoom-U)  
5:15 pm UPC Social Hour (Zoom-U)  
6:00 pm Bell Choir Practice (Zoom-P)  
7:00 pm Choir Practice (Zoom-P)  
7:00 pm Ash Wednesday Service (Zoom-U)  
7:30 pm UKIRK @ ASU (Zoom-U)

### Thu, Feb 18

11:00 am Tempe Interfaith Fellowship (Zoom-P)  
11:30 am Theology Group/Reflection Study (Zoom-U)

### Fri, Feb 19

2:00 pm I-HELP (FH, K)  
8:30 pm A. A. Meeting (Rm 7)

### Sat, Feb 20

ALL DAY I-HELP (FH, K)

### Sun, Feb 21

#### First Sunday in Lent

2:00 am I-HELP Guests Depart

8:45 am Children's Bible Time (Zoom-P)  
9:30 am Worship Service (Zoom-U)  
11:00 am Adult Christian Education Class (Zoom-U)

### Mon, Feb 22

7:00 pm PW Bible Study (Zoom)  
8:30 pm A.A. Meeting (Rm 7)

### Tue, Feb 23

7:00 pm Session Meeting (Zoom-U)

### Wed, Feb 24

9:00 am Lectio Divina Bible Study (Zoom-U)  
4:00 pm Worship Planning Team (Zoom-U)  
5:15 pm UPC Social Hour (Zoom-U)  
6:00 pm Bell Choir Practice (Zoom-P)  
7:00 pm Choir Practice (Zoom-P)  
7:30 pm UKIRK @ ASU (Zoom-U)

### Fri, Feb 26

2:00 pm I-HELP (FH, K)  
8:30 pm A. A. Meeting (Rm 7)

### Sat, Feb 27

ALL DAY I-HELP (FH, K)

### Sun, Feb 28

#### First Sunday in Lent

2:00 pm I-HELP Guests Depart  
8:45 am Children's Bible Time (Zoom-P)  
9:30 am Worship Service (Zoom-U)  
11:00 am Adult Christian Education Class (Zoom-U)

**Get calendar updates at**  
[upctempe.org/calendar](http://upctempe.org/calendar).

#### Location/Room References:

(CH)-Choir Room (CR)-Conference Room/Office (COR/Rm7)-Community Room (FH)-Fellowship Hall (HSR)-High School Room (MSR)-Middle School Room (K)-Fellowship Hall Kitchen (L)-Lounge (MR)-Meeting Room (N) Nursery (PO)-Pastor's Office (Rm#)-Room Number Indicated (S)-Sanctuary

## UPC NEWS & *Current Events*

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## Church Office Hours

Tue. & Thu.  
11:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Wed. & Fri  
10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.  
(Closed for lunch 12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m.)

## Quick Links

- **Sunday morning worship** at 9:30 a.m. (to attend via Zoom, register at [www.upctempe.org/worship](http://www.upctempe.org/worship)), followed by fellowship breakout rooms!
- **Get the Weekly Update Email:** Make sure you're in the loop with all the latest info! Sign up at: [www.upctempe.org/email](http://www.upctempe.org/email).
- **Days for Girls Mission:** For training and lending a hand contact Helen Griffin ([helen.e.h.griffin@gmail.com](mailto:helen.e.h.griffin@gmail.com))
- **Deacons:** Contact your neighborhood deacon if you have a particular need or just want to chat.