

# The Union Press

## What's INSIDE

“To know Him and make Him known”

- 2 Letter Continued
- 3 Letter Continued,
- 3 October Giving
- 4 Ground Zero Past
- 5 Ground Zero Future
- 6 Food Bank, Lectionary, Flowers, Greeters & Birthdays
- 7 Calendar
- 9 Thank you notes
- 10 Sunday School News



## QUILTING

We are getting ready to start quilting again, hopefully in February. Watch your bulletin for more information.

## Letter from Session

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

At our December 6<sup>th</sup> Congregational Meeting, the Session addressed the denominational affiliation question that has been on our agenda for the past several years. As you know, our congregation has been wrestling with a decision concerning our denominational future that was initiated by the changes to the PC(USA) Book of Order. The changes included revisions of the Standard for Ordination and the Definition of Marriage. After a long season of research and prayer the Session decided not to recommend a congregational vote to request that the Presbytery of Donegal dismiss Union to another denomination. Instead, Session chose to end the conversation on denominational affiliation and to join the Fellowship Community, an evangelical association of member congregations of the PC(USA)

unhappy with the current trajectory the denomination is moving in, but committed to staying and working towards its reform. Some of the reasons Session made this decision include the following:

**1. The changes in the Book of Order do not compel Union to accept pastors living in ways contrary to our understanding of biblical sexuality, or to host wedding ceremonies that stand in opposition to our understanding of biblical faithfulness.**

Many have voiced a concern that that remaining in the PC(USA) would result in Union being forced to accept a pastor who is not living in accord with biblical sexuality. But we have learned that that in a standard call process the congregation and the pastoral nominating committee it appoints have the majority share in the decision of who its pastor will be.

*Continued on page 2*

## Session Letter Continued (page 1)

This means that it would be our responsibility to vet candidates and to select the right person for the job, and our right to decline the applications of those we do not feel are living a lifestyle in accord with biblical mandates.

The second issue, the change in the definition of marriage, led many to fear that Union will be forced to allow homosexual couples to be married here. But when the Book of Order was changed earlier this year to reflect a new definition of marriage as a union between “two people,” the following clause was included:

*W-4.9006 Nothing herein shall compel a teaching elder to perform nor compel a session to authorize the use of church property for a marriage service that the teaching elder or the session believes is contrary to the teaching elder’s or the session’s discernment of the Holy Spirit and their understanding of the Word of God.*

This means that without the express permission of Session, no marriage may take place on the grounds of Union Presbyterian Church. The denomination has stated in its very constitution that we are not bound to host wedding ceremonies that stand in opposition to our understanding of Scripture.

In summary, we have learned through our research over the past several months that the most widespread concerns about the policies of the PC(USA) really don’t have a bearing on how we run our congregation day to day. We can continue to hold to our values within this denomination.

### **2. Our congregation was not all of one mind as to the fitting response to the changes in the Book of Order.**

Many have expressed dissatisfaction with the PC(USA) in recent years and have stated the need for a change. Yet at our congregational

meeting on November 1 nearly half the people polled expressed a desire not to leave the denomination. Since then we have heard some people’s intention to leave Union if we stay in the PC(USA), and the intention of others to leave Union if we don’t stay in the PC(USA). In the midst of that unwinnable scenario, we’ve felt an overwhelming sense that each and every person in this congregation is valuable and important to our ministry and life together. This recognition made the Fellowship Community attractive to us, for we saw it as an option that respected our members’ many views, and which offered a place for all in its desire to see the PC (USA) reformed, amidst its commitment to stay within its jurisdiction.

### **3. The Fellowship Community presented a compelling option for how to faithfully respond to the changes in the Book of Order.**

The Fellowship Community is an association of over 200 churches within the PC(USA) that have banded together and are committed to working for the renewal and healing of the denomination. They have defined a set of key tenants, or core beliefs, which are biblically sound and considered non-negotiable for any congregation that chooses to join the Fellowship. The Fellowship provides for national and regional gatherings, trainings, and accountability groups for their member congregations, so that these churches can maintain and strengthen an evangelical witness within the PC(USA), and so that the Church as a whole may be grown in its capability to reach an unsaved world.

We further felt the Fellowship Community developed a biblical perspective on how Christians are to confront areas of disagreement in the Church. Voicing a desire to lead, not leave, we believe the Fellowship Community mirrors the action of our incarnational God, who did not move away from a broken and sinful world, but instead came into it to save and redeem it through Jesus Christ.

*Continued on page 3*

## Session Letter Continued (page 2)

### 4. The decision to remain within the PC(USA) seemed like a calling.

In the process of reaching our decision we took a look at the last two years since Session voted to delay the process of dismissal and asked what we had lost as a community by not leaving the PC(USA) at that time. We did not come up with many answers to that question. We then asked what has been accomplished since the fall of 2013 and reflected on the following:

- A youth director was hired and the youth ministry is thriving.
- VBS returned and there are plans in the works for another program this summer.
- Our Benevolence commitments have been paid and in 2016 our total benevolences budget will account for nearly 10% of our annual budget.
- Several people, including a number of young families, have joined the church or become regular attendees.
- We have improved our building with a new floor, painting and repointing of the exterior, and a major repair of our organ.
- We have begun to organize and codify our processes through revising our Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation, by establishing clearer expectations for leadership, and by adopting a new financial policy manual to guide our stewardship.

These signs of God's favor to Union Presbyterian during this time led us to ask another question: *Was it actually God's will that we remained in the PC(USA) two years ago?* Based on the gains that we have made, we believe that the decision to stay in the PC(USA) in 2013 was God's will for Union. Further, based on our current trajectory and our expectation that we will see continued stabilization and growth in our ministry in the years to come, we believe God continues to call us to remain in the PC(USA) as an evangelical witness for Jesus Christ.

We know that for many of you this decision will cause frustration, sadness, and that you have the power to react to it by leaving, by exhibiting anger, or by withholding your financial support of this congregation. Our prayer is that you will not do any of these things, and will instead, work together with us to chart the future of this congregation as a place that helps people in our region and our world find and embrace Jesus Christ.

We thank you for all the prayers you have offered on Session's behalf during this season, and we look forward to your partnership in the Gospel for years to come.

Yours,

The Members of Session

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## October 2015 Giving

<b>Giving:</b>	<b>October</b>
Church envelope/Check	24,179.75
Deacons	108.00
Glover Sunday School	237.00
Sunday School	502.25
Ground Zero	75.00
Kidz JAM	81.00
Church Use	100.00
Special Offering	2,200.00
Special Donation	50.00
Building Fund	2,170.00
Refund/Reimbursement	-----
Per Capita	122.00
Manse Rental	1,000.00
<b>TOTAL Giving</b>	<b>\$30,825.00</b>

## Celebrating Where We've Been

Well as we dive into this New Year, I think it is only fair to celebrate where we have been throughout the year past. The following is a very general list of 2015 highlights in regards to events, numbers, leadership, programs and other things within Ground Zero Youth Ministries.

(\*You can find more detailed lists in our GZ Annual Report\*)

**Events:** (a brief list of some of our most influential events of 2015)

- **Winter Retreats at Black Rock** – though this was nearly a year ago, it was one of the most rewarding times for many of our students as it encouraged community as well as built and fostered a deeper understanding and love for Christ.
- **Chris Tomlin Concert**—for many students this was their first concert and for most, their first Christian music concert. The time was a magnificent opportunity for corporate worship for many of our students.
- **Talent Show**—GZ's first annual talent show was a hit and many of our congregants came to observe the talents and giftings of our young people.
- **Girls' Group Retreat**—A few days away in the woods with our high school girls' group was a most rewarding experience on all sides as we grew in our relationships with one another as well as with the Lord.
- **The Way Extreme**—A very humbling opportunity to engage in a simulation based off of life within the persecuted church, a very eye-opening opportunity for many of our students and one which will be done again in 2016.
- **Broad Street Ministries**—Another very humbling opportunity as students were able to engage with and serve homeless individuals in Philadelphia. Great relationships were built and more opportunities are to be had.

**Programs:** (a brief list of our most developed programs of 2015)

- **HS Girls' Group**—an opportunity for high school girls to meet together on a weekly basis to prepare a meal together and study the Word of God through various materials. **Led By: Shawn O'Connell and Taryn Wherry**
- **HS Guys' Group**—an opportunity for high school guys to meet together at least twice a month in order to hang out and dive deeper into God's Word; seeking to become Godly men. **Led By: James Nixon**
- **Middle School Madness**—an opportunity for our middle school students to be middle school students. Usually consists of a fun outing and an opportunity to learn in hands-on ways. **Led By: Raeanne Nixon and Taryn Wherry**
- **Student Leadership Team**—one of the most prosperous ministries within Ground Zero. An opportunity to pour into and disciple a group of leaders and challenge them in 360°, holistic ministry outreach within their own circles. **Led By: Taryn Wherry**

**Leadership:** We have been very blessed with a solid team of adult leaders that come and serve faithfully week after week. We have also been blessed by numerous people of the congregation showing their support of these students and this ministry in countless ways, thank you all!

## Rejoicing In Where We're Going

As we celebrate the many incredible things God has done in the year past, we eagerly anticipate what God will continue to do in the year ahead. Below you will find some exciting ways we are anticipating on encountering God in 2016.

**Attendance:** We have remained pretty stable in our weekly attendance of around 45 students. We have made it a point to whole-heartedly invest into our “regulars” and cater to their personal needs with this ministry. Therefore, we are beyond exciting to continue journeying with them in the year ahead.

**Sunday School Opportunities:** Taryn is beginning a Sunday School class for high school students, beginning January 3, 2016. The class will meet from 9-9:45 in the Big House and we are very excited to engage in Bob Goff's *Love Does* together.

**Events and Activities:** We are eagerly planning the 2016 calendar and are beyond excited to see how God continues to work in the hearts and lives of the students involved within these events. Some potentials are as follows: A week at Broad Street, Christian music festival, mission opportunities, snow tubing, white water rafting, car washes and other fundraisers. We will keep you informed and up to date on these opportunities!

**Programs:** We are very excited to continue in the programs we currently have happening through the end of the school year. Taryn also intends to create opportunities for “break out” sessions regarding specific areas of interest within the teenage world. Some of these opportunities might include conversations and events regarding: teenage relationships, world religions, honoring your body, etc.

**Physical Change:** We are perusing possibilities to revamp some of the space used for Ground Zero in order to make it more conducive and welcoming to the individuals we are reaching. Nothing is set in stone yet but conversations have been started regarding these topics. Stay tuned for more details.

**Fundraiser Opportunities:** It is the heart of the Ground Zero adults to provide opportunities for students to intentionally work for money to take part in events and activities. We desire to make it a point to hold and participate in more fundraiser opportunities in order to raise funds for Ground Zero Youth Ministry and even begin a scholarship fund for students in financial need.

**And Many More:** We are very eager at all that God is doing in the hearts and lives of our young people. The most important thing to note is that God IS indeed working in the hearts of our students. Above anything else, we want to ensure that this continues to happen and we desire to help guide and facilitate continued growth within the lives of our students. We ask that you commit to praying for us as this year continues to unravel. If you're interested in taking part on a deeper level or wish to receive specific prayer requests to pray over, please contact Taryn.

Thank you for your continued support,

Taryn & the GZ Leadership Team

## Lectionary Passages

### January 3<sup>rd</sup>

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Christmas

Jeremiah 31:7-14;  
Psalm 147:12-20;  
Ephesians 1:3-14  
John 1: (1-9) 10-18

### January 6<sup>th</sup>

#### Epiphany of the Lord

Isaiah 60:1-6;  
Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14;  
Ephesians 3:1-12;  
Matthew 2:1-12

### January 10<sup>th</sup>

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after Christmas

Isaiah 43:1-7; Psalm 29;  
Acts 8:14-17;  
Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

### January 17<sup>th</sup>

#### Baptism of the Lord

Isaiah 62:1-5; Psalm 36:5-10  
1 Corinthians 12:1-11;  
Gospel John 2:1-11

### January 24<sup>th</sup>

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after the Epiphany

Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10;  
Psalm 19;  
1 Corinthians 12:12-31a;  
Luke 4:14-21

### January 31<sup>st</sup>

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after the Epiphany

Jeremiah 1:4-10; Psalm 71:1-6;  
1 Corinthians 13:1-13;  
Luke 4:21-30



- 2 *Scott Whitman*
- 3 *Jake Dougherty*  
*Kenny Miller*
- 4 *Daryl Supplee Sr.*  
*Violet Snyder*
- 6 *Annie Thompson*
- 7 *Trey McCardell*
- 10 *Amanda Weicksel*
- 11 *Victoria Pyle*
- 12 *Rodney Whiteside*  
*Pat McCardell*
- 15 *Verna Mae Walton*  
*Mary Traina*
- 16 *Edward Whitman*
- 17 *James Vasco II*
- 18 *Debra Greenleaf-Campbell*  
*Chase Carter*
- 19 *Delsa Wrigley*
- 20 *Kent Hastings*
- 21 *Paul Shivery III*
- 24 *Megan Ferguson*  
*Justin Bouchelle*
- 25 *Joyce Pyle*
- 26 *Daniel Greenleaf*
- 27 *Branden Shoemaker*
- 29 *Debra Workman*  
*Peter Graziano*
- 30 *Daniel Stoner*

## January Flowers & January Greeters

- 3 (Still Available)
- 10 (Still Available)
- 17 (Still Available)
- 24 (Still Available)
- 31 (Still Available)

- 3 William Ray
- 10 Richard & Nancy Hastings
- 17 Roger & Janet Cline
- 24 James & Raeanne Nixon
- 31 Mary Denise Slodki &  
Chris Ambler



## January Food Bank

- Saltines For the SWEEP program:
  - Single-Serve Juice
  - Single-Serve Cereal

In addition, we appreciate any donations of hats, scarves, and gloves for the winter!



At age 19, American theologian Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) wrote down 70 resolutions, or commitments, and then read them every week until his death. Some of those resolutions include:

- To live with all my might while I do live.
- To study the Scriptures...steadily, constantly, frequently.
- Never to lose one moment of time.
- Never to do anything which I should despise or think meanly of in another.
- Never to do anything out of revenge.
- To let there be...benevolence in all that I speak.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					<b>1 Scott Away</b> New Year's Day	<b>2</b>
<b>3</b> 9:00 Sunday School 9:45 Fellowship 10:00 Worship 11:30 Choir Practice	<b>4</b> 7:00 Trustee Mtg	<b>5</b> 6:30 Girl Scouts	<b>6 Epiphany</b> 9:00 Art Class 5:30 Ground Zero	<b>7</b> 4:15 Kidz JAM 7:00 Handbells	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>10 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE</b> 9:00 Sunday School 9:45 Fellowship 10:00 Worship 11:30 Choir Practice <b>Baptism of the Lord</b>	<b>11</b> 1:00 Circle #1 7:00 Circle #3	<b>12</b> 6:30 Girl Scouts 7:00 Session Mtg.	<b>13</b> 9:00 Art Class 9:00 Deacons Mtg 5:30 Ground Zero	<b>14</b> 1:00 Circle #2 4:15 Kidz JAM 7:00 Handbells	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>17</b> 9:00 Sunday School 9:45 Fellowship 10:00 Worship 11:30 Choir Practice	<b>18</b> Martin Luther King Jr. Day	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> 9:00 Art Class 5:30 Ground Zero 7:00 Worship Mtg	<b>21</b> 4:15 Kidz JAM 7:00 Handbells	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>24</b> 9:00 Sunday School 9:45 Fellowship 10:00 Worship 11:30 Choir Practice	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> 9:30 Presbytery @ Covenant Malvern 6:30 Girl Scouts 7:00 Christian Ed	<b>27</b> 9:00 Art Class 5:30 Ground Zero	<b>28</b> 4:15 Kidz JAM 7:00 Handbells	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>31</b> 9:00 Sunday School 9:45 Fellowship 10:00 Worship 11:30 Choir Practice						



## Thank You

Thank you for the many kindnesses and love shown to Lew and I this past year. We've been truly blessed by our Union Church family and thank you for your thoughts and condolences these past days.

In His Love,

Colleen Shoemaker

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## Thank You

Thank you to those who sent cards, flowers and food honoring Charles 'going home' and after my fall. My body is now healed. Thank you also to Scott for his visits and healing words and counsel. I am so

## Thank You

Thanks to our Union Family and the prayer chain for all your prayers. Our niece Rebecca Link and unborn baby are doing well after surgery on the baby.

Joe & Helen Pugh

blessed to have my church family encouraging me through this passage in my journey of life.

Love to you all,

Carolyn Sacks

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## Thank You

Thank you to everyone who participated in the Christmas Pageant. It was another successful year and we couldn't have done it without all the cast and crew who volunteered their time and talents.

Thank you, Andrea

## Thank You

Dear UPC,

Jordan Hogberg and his family thank you for upholding him in prayer during his service in the military. Jordan is one of Ted's nephews.

In appreciation,

Barbara Pyle



**To: Union Bakers & Buyers**

**From: Chief Dottie**

**Re: Cookie Sale**

**Due to your hard work and perseverance, the cookie project has a profit of \$1100.**

**Thanks to each of you.**

**Best Regards,**

**Chief Dottie**



**Overflowing With Thanks**

Union Presbyterian Church  
5637 Street Road,  
Kirkwood, PA 17536

(Address Services Requested)

Non-Profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Quarryville, PA  
Permit No. 22

January 2016

The Union Press

## SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS



**LOVE**

WHEN YOU LOVE LIKE JESUS LOVES,  
YOU'LL LIVE LIKE JESUS LIVES

**DOES**

Sundays from 9-9:45 in the Big House for High  
School Students .  
Starting January 3<sup>rd</sup>