

JANUARY 2023

# UPC NEWS



United Presbyterian Church Communicator

## PASTOR MESSAGE

The use of Star Words is a prayer practice connected to Epiphany and the new year that has been growing in popularity in Protestant churches for nearly a decade. The idea is that a list of intention words, or guiding words, are written or printed on paper stars. Individuals are invited to use that word as a guiding word throughout the year. On the first Sunday of the new year, everyone in attendance received a “Star Word”.

**Star Words will still be available in the office or on Sunday morning for the next couple of weeks.**

Once you have received your word, please place it somewhere you will see it regularly throughout the year – the refrigerator door, the bathroom mirror, next to your computer, or the dashboard of your car. Placing your star where you can see it regularly will allow you to continue to reflect on how God has moved through, around, or in connection to that word throughout the year.

Here are some questions to help you reflect on your word:

*What are your initial thoughts about the word?*

*What is the definition of your word?*

*What are the different forms your word can take? How do the different forms change its meaning?*

*What synonyms of your word come to mind? How do they help to shape your understanding of your word?*

*What scripture passages or stories does your word bring to mind? If you need some help, try going to [biblegateway.com](http://biblegateway.com) or use a Bible concordance to look up passages.*

*How might this word guide you in the coming year?*

### A Prayer After Receiving Your Star

God of ink black skies and starry nights, like the Magi so many years ago, we seek you. As we receive these star words, for some of us, these words are full of meaning, challenge, and invitation already. For others, these words are a blank canvas—inviting you into our lives.

As a new year dawns, we pray that you would be in our dreams and in our waking. Allow us to use these star words as a tool to see you in our everyday life. May they guide us, as the star guided the Magi. May they illuminate your path, as light always does. And in a year, may we find ourselves with a mouth full of praise for the ways in which you have been present to us. With hearts full to the brim, we pray, Amen.

I look forward to hearing how your Star Word leads you to be present to God’s presence this year. God’s peace and my prayers,

*Pastor Michelle*

## WOW SERVICE

Join us for our first WOW (Worship On Wednesday) Service of the New Year! **January 4** at 6:00 pm. This is an interactive service for children and families. All ages are welcome.

## PER CAPITA FOR 2023 IS \$45.63

\$33.02 Presbytery of Wyoming + \$3.00 Synod of the Rocky Mountains + \$9.61 General Assembly

Members of UPC please make your checks payable to “United Presbyterian Church” and add “Per Capita” in the memo line, or make your payment online at [upclaramie.org](http://upclaramie.org).

**Thank you** for your annual support that provides the means to strengthen the connections of our work together, and build lasting relationships to help all Presbyterians share God’s love through mission and ministry.

## LET US KNOW!

Congregational Life wants to hear from you! What events did you enjoy in 2022 (Pot luck after church, gatherings with adventure, late Sunday times)? What types of events do you prefer (Advent Cafe, Lake Day, Pentecost Sunday Sundaes, parking lot movies, Spruce Ups, cabin weekends, etc)? What events would you like us to try (progressive dinners, Bingo/game nights)? We'd love to hear from you so we can plan for our 2023 calendar. Email Nikki at [upclaramie@gmail.com](mailto:upclaramie@gmail.com) with your comments and ideas! If you want to be part of the committee, we'd love to hear from you. If you're willing to help out with events, Nikki is keeping a list for future event contacts. Looking forward to gathering for some fun and fellowship in 2023 with you!

## HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM CHRISTIAN ED!

The Christian Education Committee is looking for a few more members. We will meet on January 8<sup>th</sup> following worship in the North Lounge. Please join us!

**LOGOS** will meet weekly in January with the 11<sup>th</sup> being LOGOS night out. We will all meet at Laramie Lanes for bowling and pizza. Please drop your children at 3:30 and pick them up at 5:30.

The mid and sr high **youth groups** will have a combined group meeting on the 22<sup>nd</sup> at 2:00 at the church.

## FAMILY PROMISE

The New year is a great time to take a few minutes to get familiar with all things Family Promise of Albany County. Please visit their website to learn more about their organization and the many ways you can help: <https://fpalbanycounty.org/about/>

## TUESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

The Book of Luke Bible study continues on Tuesdays 9:30am in the North Lounge. For more information, contact Celeste Kobulnicky or Mary Prather. All are welcome to attend.

## JANUARY SERMON SERIES

Sunday worship live stream service can be found at [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCyLkd7kE\\_It0acTnxJQ\\_Eg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCyLkd7kE_It0acTnxJQ_Eg) and through the UPC website.

## DECEMBER SESSION SUMMARY

At their December 18, 2022 meeting, the session of UPC:

- Received written and verbal reports from the staff and standing committees
- Awarded \$100 gift cards to each of the five staff members (Michelle Bacon, Michelle Harris, Donna Marburger, Nikki Rogers and Kathryn Harding)
- In appreciation of their efforts gave thank you notes and gift cards to key volunteers: Hillary Utton, Treasurer; Kim Buchanan, Handbell Director; Pete Lindahl, Sound
- Elected Ruling Elder, Elizabeth Williams to be our Commissioner to Presbytery
- Approved the following worship services: Dec 21, 7:00pm, Longest Night; Dec 24, 4:00pm & 7:00 pm, Christmas Eve
- Set January 29, 2023 as the date for the Annual Meeting of the Congregation immediately following worship
- Removed four inactive members from the Member Roll
- Approved the proposal from the Property Committee for replacing the flooring in the lower level damaged by the flood
- Renewed the quarterly distribution from New Covenant Trust for 2023
- Approved a preliminary budget for 2023

## ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation is **January 29** at 10:30am. Mark your calendars!

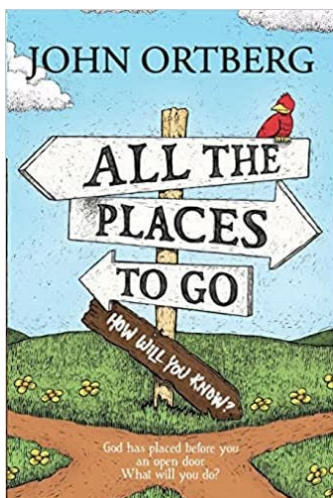
## “STAR OF THE MAGI”

On **January 6th** at 8:00pm learn about the heavens, wonder, and speculate with astronomer and UW Professor Dr. Chip Kobulnicky, son of Hank and Celeste, as he presents some of the celestial possibilities that may underlie the storied “star that rose in the East” leading the “magi” to the birthplace of Jesus. Tickets are \$3-5. Walk-ins welcome.

UW Planetarium  
1000 E University Ave  
Phone: 307-766-6506  
Email: [planetarium@uwyo.edu](mailto:planetarium@uwyo.edu)



## DATE NIGHT FOR COUPLES



Dessert, DVD, and Discussion. Hosted by Hank and Celeste Kobulnicky. Six weekly sessions: Starts Thursday, January 12, 2023 from 7:00 to 8:30 pm. DVD presentation All The Places To Go (How Will You Know?) by Rev. John Ortberg: Rarely in the Bible does God command someone to “stay.” Instead, he opens a door and invites us to walk through it—into the unknown. Whether we stay or go will ultimately determine the kind of life we live and the kind of person we become. In this DVD presentation John Ortberg opens our eyes to the countless doors God places before us every day, teaches us how to recognize them, and encourages us to step out in faith and embrace all the extraordinary opportunities that await. Sign up at church or call The Kobulnickys at 307-460-3520 or 630-222-0733.

## WOMEN’S CIRCLES & MEN’S GROUP

**Mary Martha Circle** will meet Wednesday, **January 18th** at the home of Janice Shuster, 530 Beaufort St. #119 at 1 pm. Merilee Holnholz is our co-hostess. We will continue in our study “Celebrating Sabbath, Accepting God’s Gift of Rest and Delight”. Freda Dixon will lead lesson number 5 titled Sabbath and Servitude. You are invited to join us for prayer, study and fellowship. Please let Freda, [fdixon@bresnan.net](mailto:fdixon@bresnan.net), or 760-9728 or Janice [jmshust@outlook.com](mailto:jmshust@outlook.com) or 745-3132 know if you are planning on attending.

**Rebekah Circle** will meet for Social & Study time on **January 19th** from 9:30 to 11:15 in the church's Fireplace Lounge. Linda Sheets and Patty Butler will be our hostesses, and Cheri Bellamy will lead us in "Lesson Five: Sabbath and Servitude" of the Horizons Bible Study. For more information, email Pam at [pamelagalbreath23@gmail.com](mailto:pamelagalbreath23@gmail.com). Guests are welcome.

**Evening Circle** will meet **January 12**. We will meet at 6:00 at Front Street/Sweet Melissa's. We will study chapters 9-15 of the book Lamb: The Gospel According to Biff, Christ's Childhood Pal. For more information contact the church office. All are welcome!

**UPC Men!** Please join us at Perkins on Saturday, **January 7 and 21st** at 8:00 am for great conversation! All are welcome!

## MISSION COMMITTEE BAZAAR

Last day to shop at the bazaar will be January 8<sup>th</sup> after the church service. Items will be discounted to 50% off.

### MISSION

Mission thanks everyone for their support of the Cookie Sale/Bazaar. The financial results will be announced after the 50% off sales following church on the 8<sup>th</sup>.

The scope of community participation and cooperation in Community Holidays has grown impressively since UPC asked the Baptists if they needed some help over 6 years ago. This year, UPC continued to serve on its Board while UPC provided gifts for 50 people (12 families). Mission apologizes for the confusion over the information on the Sign Up Genius. Plans are already underway to avoid this in 2023. UPC joined other local churches, civic groups, businesses, and agencies as sponsors. The program's return to its pre-pandemic distribution method was a success. Along with the generous donations from the congregation, the sorting and shopping by Linda H, Linda S, Marilee, Nancy W, and Nancy L allowed UPC to reach our goal in serving our twelve families. Many thanks to Mary Prather and Nancy Weidel for joining Nancy Lick to mentor our neighbors through the distribution process to make sure that they were welcomed and didn't miss the cookies, the raffle, the wrapping paper, etc. The Community Holiday partnership is thriving with the Vedauwoo Fire Company (38 free live tree were distributed), Spring Winds (30 toiletry gift bags were prepared for residents with no local family members and, additionally, books and magazines were provided), the school (for the first time Community Holidays served school age children and their families who attended the Connections Academy or were home-schooled), the Laramie Fire Department (donates new bikes), and Toys for Tots. Cash donations from Community Groups provided food gift cards to each applicant.

The Laramie Fire Department has traditionally provided new bikes for the program and a local bike shop rehabs the used bikes that are provided by the police; however, as there are not enough bikes to meet the requests, the bikes are raffled. This year, after the bikes were raffled, another ticket was pulled for a \$50 gift certificate to the UPC Bazaar. The winner was absolutely thrilled and kept saying that she never won anything before in her entire life. She shopped at the Bazaar on the Wednesday before Christmas and had a great time. She had to be from one of UPC's 12 families as she was wearing a parka provided by UPC (she loved the warm parka that was in her "favorite" color). When asked about her last "shopping" trip, she couldn't remember as she only shops for groceries. This woman said she receives \$720/month from Social Security Disability and her husband, also on disability, receives about the same. They use his check to pay the rent and live off of her check for food and utilities. She looked at every item at the Bazaar at least 3 times before she made her selections and left with a big smile and a Merry Christmas "thank you." It was really a Tiny Tim, "God bless us, everyone," moment.

Many thanks to the children of UPC who stopped by the Bazaar for their frogs, critter books marks, and Christmas stickers. Parents, don't worry, they all said "thank you."

Mission thanks the cookie makers. Early calculations looks like the Cookie Sale will be financially more successful than in recent years. As the Community Holiday Distribution Days are usually the same week as the Cookie Sale, Mission does not have enough hutzpah to ask the congregation for additional cookies but UPC does provide purchased cookies, candy, and bagging supplies. Other members of the Community Holiday Board provides homemade cookies (this year, the children attending Sunday School at the Baptist Church provided a virtual mountain of wrapping supplies).

The next Mission Activity will be the Souper Bowl Sunday soup collection for the Interfaith Food Pantry.

Mission wishes everyone a healthy and joyful 2023.

## **FOC & STEWARDSHIP**

Thank you for your generosity! This is how UPC stands financially at the end of November 2022:

**Total Income \$210,807.92; 81.5% of 2022 operating budget.**

**Total Expenses \$235,484.59; 91% of 2022 operating budget.**

The ministry of UPC continues and relies on your generosity. Please consider sending your tithes and offerings through the on-line giving on the UPC website or mail through the US postal service. On-line is very easy and categories that you can choose from have been created to direct your donation to the correct place. There is a "Notes" box at the end of the form which will allow you to be more specific if you so desire. We now have a new fund on our on-line giving. It is called Miscellaneous Non-Charitable Payment. This can be used for such things as Easter Flowers, Congregational Life events such as the Faith Day at the Rockies, Mission nut sales, VBS donation, etc.

## **CHURCH OFFICE HOURS**

The Church office is open Monday-Friday, 8:00-3:00 pm. Rev. Michelle Bacon's office hours are 9:00-5:00 Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Wednesday 11:00-5:00. We are all easily available through our cell phones and email.

Any information you would like shared in the weekend reminders needs to be emailed to the office by Wednesday morning.

**The office will be closed Monday, January 16th in observation of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.**

## **UPC's ELDERS AND DEACONS**



**Elders:** Bryce Barker, Elizabeth Williams, Erin Irick, Isa Riley, Hank Kobulnicky, John Galbreath, Donna Marburger, David Jones

**Deacons:** Nancy Fillion, Linda Haynes, Linda Sheets, Cheri Bellamy, Jan Dittmore, Pam Galbreath

## **CALENDAR OF EVENTS AT UPC**

For a full calendar of events click on the calendar link. If you or your group wants to add something to the UPC calendar please bring it or send to the church office for approval. [CLICK HERE](#) for calendar.



## **REPORTS AND SESSION MINUTES**

The UPC Session Minutes and reports can be read at our website at [upclaramie.org/minutes/](http://upclaramie.org/minutes/)