

January 2025

UPC NEWS



United Presbyterian Church Communicator

STAR WORDS

The use of Star Words, also called “star gifts,” is a prayer practice connected to Epiphany and the new year that has been growing in popularity. The idea is that a list of intention words, or guiding words, are written or printed on paper stars. These paper stars are then arranged on the Communion Table or in a large basket. On Sunday, January 5, at our Epiphany service, you will be invited to draw a word from the basket, and to use that word as a guiding word throughout the year. Place your star word somewhere that you will see it regularly throughout the year – the refrigerator door, the bathroom mirror, next to your computer, or the dashboard of your car - to allow consistent reflection on how God has moved through, around, or in connection to that word. If you are not at the Epiphany service, Star Words will be available in the overflow room for the month of January.

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 or use a Bible concordance to look up passages.

How might this word guide you in the coming year?

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

ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation is **January 26** at 10:30am. We will elect members to the Congregational Nominating Committee, approve Pastor Michelle's Terms of Call, and hear a financial report from Treasurer Hillary Utton. Mark your calendars!

PER CAPITA FOR 2025 = \$48.00

[\$34.16 Presbytery of Wyoming, \$3.00 Synod of the Rocky Mountains, \$10.84 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA)]

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.

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.

What is Per capita?

Per capita is an opportunity for all communicant members of the Presbyterian church through the mid councils to participate equally, responsibly, and interdependently by sharing the cost of coordination and evaluation of mission; and of performing ecclesiastical, legislative, and judicial functions that identify a Reformed Church, while at the same time strengthening the sense of community among all Presbyterians. (GA Minutes, Part I, 1995).

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WOW SERVICE

Join us for our first WOW (Worship On Wednesday) Service of the New Year! **January 8 at 6:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall.** This is an interactive service for children and families. All ages are welcome. Come early for dinner at 5:20 pm in the North Lounge.

SESSION SUMMARY

At their December 17 meeting, the Session of UPC:

- Elected Elizabeth Williams, Commissioner to Presbytery, and Nancy Lick, alternate
- Called the Annual Meeting of the congregation on January 26 following the Worship service
- Renewed our Insurance Coverage for 2025 with Church Mutual
- Carried over to 2025 \$653 remaining of the Pastor's 2024 Continuing Education
- Approved a provisional operating budget to begin 2025
- Updated the Building Use Fees
- Received written reports from committees and the staff
- Reflected on 2024, naming successes and strengths
- Adjourned with expressions of gratitude

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Happy New Year for UPC's Christian Education Committee!

The **CE committee** will meet on January 5 following worship in the Fireplace Lounge. If you would like to be a part of our committee, please join us!

LOGOS will start back up on January 8. Please check your emails for details for the month's activities and themes.

The **mid high youth group** will meet on January 5 at 2:00 at Bullseye 307 at 158 N 2nd St. for mini golf. Please RSVP to Michelle Harris at upckidmin@gmail.com.

The **senior high youth group** will meet on January 12 at 2:00 at Laramie Lanes.

TUESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

Our first meeting of the New Year will be at 10:00 a.m. on January 7, 2025 in the North Lounge. We will be studying the Gospel of Matthew, and members should read the Introduction for the first meeting. For more information, contact Celeste Kobilnicky or Mary Prather.

LAY PASTOR PROGRAM - EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

The Synod of the Rocky Mountains (and all the Presbyteries) have partnered with Dubuque Theological Seminary to offer training for those who are interested in becoming a Commissioned Lay Pastor or just taking one of the classes to help support the ministry of your congregation or the larger Presbytery. The preaching class has already taken place. However, the next scheduled class to come is:

January 6, 2025: Reformed Theology and Presbyterian Confessions
March 10, 2025: Foundations of Christian Education
August 11, 2025: Reformed Worship and Sacraments
October 13, 2025: Presbyterian Polity

The cost is lowered drastically, it is only \$150 to take one course – paid to the Presbytery of Wyoming. Contact your General Presbyter, Rev Jeromey Howard, to let him know you are interested/have questions/participating, and then contact the University of Dubuque as soon as possible and at least a week before the class begins. You can reach Becky Shellabarger at UDTs at rshellabarger@dbq.edu or DERegistration@dbq.edu.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY

Will resume January 22. Watch for more details!

MISSION

...for unto us a child is born...

The results from the **Cookie Sale** were terrific. Michelle Harris and her 2024 team of cookie makers outdid themselves. Many thanks to those who patronized both the Bazaar and the Cookie Sale.

Mission appreciates the comments about **UPAVIM** and its fair-trade items. Yes, its staff are terrific and they have been a joy to work with. Their involvement brought in many people who didn't know about the Cookie/Nuts/Soup Mix Sale which contributed to the success of that effort. We will be receiving a check for 10% of their proceeds that will go into UPC's general budget. We're planning to have them back at the 2025 Sale.

UPC met our commitment to **Community Holidays** of serving 5 families (20 individuals). Mission is grateful to the 18 folks who participated by signing up for one or more of the 40 needed sponsorships as well as the high school youth and other volunteers who shopped. Patty Butler, Corrine and Keith Seebart, Linda and Henry Haynes, Diana Denison, Nancy Lick, and Linda Sheets sorted to put the families together on Sunday, some shopped for the few missing items on Monday, and Linda and Henry delivered everything to the Baptist Church on Tuesday. Nancy W, Corrine and Keith, and Nancy L joined Russ Oliver with Distribution after bagging the cookies and candy (provided by UPC). We are truly blessed.

January's Minute for Mission will feature the director of the **Soup Kitchen** who will remain through the Coffee Hour to respond to any questions of comments that you might have. Since the start of the Pandemic, UPC has been providing take-out supplies to the program. We have now switched to a cash donation for food as they can purchase more through their vendors that we could if we purchased it at a local store. There are volunteer opportunities at the Soup Kitchen that will be presented.

Jesus born to be king of all—from Out Under the Winter Sky by Billie Edd Wheeler

WOMEN'S & MEN'S GROUP

UPC Men! Please join us at Perkins on Saturday, **January 4** and **18** at 8:00 am for great conversation! All are welcome!

Mary Martha Circle will meet Wednesday, **January 15th** at the home of Janice Shuster at 1:00pm. Freda Dixon will lead our study "Let Justice Roll Down, God's call to Care for Neighbors and all Creation. All women are invited to join us for prayer, study and fellowship.

Rebekah Circle's first meeting of the new year will be on Thursday, **January 16**, from 9:30 to 11:15 in the church's Fireplace Lounge. We will begin our study of another of James Bryan Smith's books, The Good and Beautiful Community. Our hostesses will be Marla Smith and Patty Butler. Guests are welcome. For information, contact Pam at pamelagalbreath23@gmail.com

THANK YOU FROM FAMILY PROMISE



Thank you so much to the United Presbyterian church and to all of the dedicated members who baked and donated cookies, cinnamon rolls, goodies, soup kits, and holiday items. We are unbelievably grateful for the support, and they **raised over \$2,000 for families facing housing insecurity** in Albany County! What a fun fundraiser, and great impact!

Family Promise of Albany County continues to help our Laramie neighbors in many ways. If you are not familiar with the organization, please take a moment to check out our website! <https://www.fpalbanycounty.org/>

Happy New Year!



JANUARY SERMON SERIES

Sunday worship live stream service can be found at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCyLkd7kE_l0acTnxJQ_Eg and through the UPC website.

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

The church office is open Monday-Friday, 8:00-3:00pm. Rev. Michelle Bacon's office hours are 9:00-5:00 Monday-Thursday. If you would like to make an appointment to meet with her please call the church office. On Tuesdays, from 10:00 am-noon Pastor Michelle is in her office available for conversation. Feel free to drop in.

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

**The church office will be closed January 20
for Birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr.**

UPC's ELDERS AND DEACONS



Elders: Art Snoke, Nancy Lick, Hank Kobulnicky, John Galbreath, David Jones, Elizabeth Williams, Cam Collamer, Corrine Seebart

Deacons: Nancy Fillion, Linda Haynes, Linda Sheets, Pam Galbreath, Gerald Van Campen, Marla Smith

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/. Call the church office if you are in need of the password.