

What's in a Name?

If you are a member of Union Church you are a member of the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America (PCUSA). Perhaps you have noticed some differences in the way Union is identified. This brief article (the first of two) will try to show how the church's identity and our name has changed through the years.

In 1521, just four years after Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses on the doors of the Wittenburg Cathedral, John Calvin developed some of the theological principles, and polity based on the idea of the presbyteros, the elder. This is the basis of the presbyterian church as we know it.

Calvin has long been known as the father of the Presbyterian Church, and is still thought as such in the European church. However, he did have three associates with him, including John Knox of Edinburgh, Scotland. He carried this reformed church to Scotland, and it became the predominant church in Scotland over the following century.

With the founding of the British colonies in the new world, Presbyterianism made its way carried by the Scots-Irish immigrants. Overtime, as the Presbyterian Church became more and more popular, even the US Constitution was built on the principles of democracy found in the polity of the presbyterian church. Our Union history tells us that in 1794 our Scot-Irish founders established a church in this very location. Worship services were probably held in the area of our present cemetery and that the men carried their rifles because this was Indian territory.

The members of Union Church petitioned Allegheny County to become an incorporated group in 1846 for legal purposes. At that time the legal name of the church was recorded as Union Church of Robinson Township in the County of Allegheny. At this time we are still identified in government records by that name. However, our congregation's religious affiliation is as part of the Presbyterian family.

As with all human institutions (even churches) the Presbyterian Church had major issues as it related to slavery. In 1837, the church split over abolition into the Northern Church (the Presbyterian Church of the United States) based in New York and a Southern Church (the Presbyterian Church in the United States) based in Atlanta. At that time there was also the United Presbyterian church, a group of northern churches separate from the Presbyterian church of the United States of America.

There is much more history and some name changes here at Union in the following years but that information will come in a second article in the next Hilltop Herald.

If you want to learn more about Presbyterians and what we believe author Donald K. McKim has two easy to read and understand books: *Presbyterian Questions*, *Presbyterian Answers* and *More Presbyterian Questions*, *More Presbyterian Answers*

Submitted by Sally Andrews and PCUSA Elder Crawford

Palm Sunday Easter Egg Hunt

The Discipleship Committee is in need of Egg Hiders for Union's Annual Easter Egg Hunt on April 10 (Palm Sunday), 12:30-3PM. If you are able to help please let Kellyn know asap.



Greetings Union Church Family!

We got started with the Lenten season by highlighting the theme of Lament in the scriptures. I suggested this past Sunday that we imagine lament as a terrain to be navigated as well as a daily practice to be adopted. For both ways of looking at lament, we need tour guides and tutors, those who can show us the way. I encourage you to take up the Psalms this Lenten season, in addition to reading through the Book of Lamentations, because in the Psalms, you will find helpful guidance in the way of lament. As we learn to practice lament, and travel the road of lament, we will prepare our hearts for the events of Holy Week and Easter Sunday.

Biblical lament entails a formula with various elements that are expressed in a predictable pattern. One of the elements of lament is waiting. Waiting on God; waiting on an answer; waiting on healing; waiting on justice; waiting on grace and mercy; waiting on the return of joy and peace in the face of sorrow and loss. As I reflect on this element of lament, Tom Petty, of all voices, comes into my head! I can hear him singing, "The waiting is the hardest part!" Petty touches upon something that is fundamentally true about life. Waiting is hard. Yet, waiting is an inevitable part of the Christian life. As disciples of Jesus, we must learn patience in waiting on the Lord and the completion of the Lord's work in us.

What is true of us individually, is also true of us collectively as a congregation. Indeed, waiting characterizes the season of transition of pastoral leadership in which we find ourselves. I offer these suggestions for navigating this season of waiting with faithful patience:

1. Cultivate a prayerful attitude about our transition, with specific prayers for God to provide guidance and wisdom for our leadership, and for God to sustain our worship and shared ministry in the interim.
2. Practice remembering the promises of God. Remind yourself that Jesus promises to sustain his church, and that not even the gates of hell will prevail against the church.
3. Engage in honest assessment of our congregation's strengths, as well as limitations, faults, and shortcomings. One part of the transition will include a self-study/evaluation of ministry, vision, goals, etc. A healthy church has a good grip on the gifts and strengths it possesses. It also has an honest view of its shortcomings. We would do well in this period of waiting to ask each other, "What are the ways we fall short as the manifestation of the Body of Christ in Robinson Township?" (This question should be not be asked with respect to ministry programs, past or present, or with some nostalgic look back to former "golden years" in the life of the congregation. The question needs to be asked with the fullness of the mission of God in mind. Does our congregation reflect the diversity of the Body of Christ in the community? How are we doing with respect to evangelism? Do we understand and pursue justice in our world as a fulfillment of our calling to be salt and light? Do we faithfully guard each other, our children and young adults from the idols of our age? Etc.)

We may look at this time of transition as an unwelcome interruption to our shared life together. Or we can look at this time of change as the Lord's doing. That somehow, mysteriously, and wonderfully, the Lord is doing a new work in our shared life. What the Lord has in store is not immediately apparent. So, we actively, patiently, prayerfully wait with humble and expectant hearts. The Lord invites us to cry out at just such a time as this and give voice to our longing for the Lord to reveal his purposes. That cry is a faithful part of our waiting! Let's do so knowing to whom we belong – God, in Jesus Christ – and by what power we forge ahead – the Holy Spirit who dwells in our hearts.

Peace,
Tom Ribar
Associate Pastor

Nominating Committee Work Has Begun

The members of the Nominating Committee have begun meeting to prayerfully engage in the process of identifying people who are well-suited and eager to serve our church as leaders.

The Nominating Committee will be seeking congregational support in selecting candidates for church offices. Brochures which provide precise information about the process are available in the church Narthex. We urge you to take one or several of the brochures home and to give prayerful consideration to people you might like to recommend to the committee. The candidates are presented to the congregation for the purpose of election at the annual congregational meeting later in the year.

Members of the committee will be happy to speak with you should you have questions about the process.

The 2022 Nominating Committee: Elder Anne Burke; Deacon Sue Shumek; Patti Milsom; Nancy Coulter; Sally Andrews; Rachel Phillips.

The Purpose of Presbyterian Women

Union's Presbyterian Women work to live out the purpose of the group in various ways by going through the established ideals of the churches' women around the world. A few of the activities of the group are mentioned as our purpose is explained.

Forgiven and freed by God in Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit we commit ourselves:

- **to nurture our faith through and prayer and Bible study**, Bible study as a group scheduled monthly and often in informal gatherings, prayer chain to keep members, friends and those in need of prayer
- **to support the mission of the church worldwide**, financial supporting projects of the Synod, Presbytery worldwide, Pittsburgh projects through many local needs, participating in Union's mission projects
- **to work for peace and justice**, by prayer and educating ourselves
- **to build an inclusive caring community of women that strengthens the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and witnesses to the purpose of God's kingdom** by working with women in area churches and building friendships from other PW groups.

Guided by this purpose (printed in bold type) we witness to the reality of God's present realm.

All the women of Union are working to bring the grace of the Lord to our community and are very welcome to join the active members of Presbyterian Women at any time.

Submitted By: Sally Andrews

2022 Summer Trip:

This year UYM will be doing a combined middle and high school Mission Trip. We will be heading to Beverly, Kentucky with Red Bird Missions, June 19-24. The cost will be \$475 plus transportation costs. Students will need \$ for food during travel to and from. We will have fundraising opportunities and scholarships available.

Think Spring!

Originally organized as a Sunday School Class on February 28, 1947, "KTA, Kindness to All" celebrates 75 years during 2022!

While the group numbers around fourteen, their purpose remains the same—grow in spiritual life by giving "Kindness to All" through social, charity, sympathy and concern for others. KTA continues to provide Christian fellowship for all women and raises funds for Union Church projects and charitable distributions.

"And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone..."
- 2 Timothy 2:24 (NIV)

All women are invited to KTA's (Kindness to All) second get together meeting of 2022. Thursday, April 21, 2022 at 1 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. Enjoy Bible devotions, lots of conversation and a tasty dessert while meeting some new friends. Other 2022 KTA meetings are June 9 and October 13. Contact Sally Lickovich (412) 787-2687.

Next Food Pantry: Tuesday, April 12, 2022 6 p.m.

Place your donations of non-perishable grocery items in the "Food Pantry" bin located near the Fellowship Hall entrance. **We need:** cereal, pasta sauces, canned tuna and chicken, peanut butter and jelly, cake mixes and icing, soap bars, shampoo, toilet paper. Also, gently used (or new) clothing, shoes and household items are always welcome!

On Pantry Day: 1. Help pack food boxes at 9 a.m. in Fellowship Hall. 2. Help distribute food boxes at 5:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall.

If you or someone you know could use support right now (prayer requests, home calls, food boxes, emergency funding) please call the church office and ask for the Deacons.

Thank you for your continued support in Union's efforts to respond to the needs of our congregation and local community through these ministry programs.

30 Hour Famine

30 Hour Famine: The 30 Hour Famine has been around for 30 years. Through it, students raise funds to fight hunger, while being challenged to grow deeper in their faith. UYM will be taking part in World Vision's 30 Hour Famine. Starting Sunday, March 13 at 12:30PM, we will meet to prepare for the Famine. We will have 4 meetings, in the youth room leading up to the Famine.

Each meeting will be one hour and lunch will be provided. For students to participate in the Famine they will need to be at the Sunday meetings.

To sign up please visit the church website AND create a fundraising page, under our Team page, using the "Join Our Team" link. Team page: <https://30hourfamine.worldvision.org/team/34413>

Meetings:

- Sunday, March 13, 12:30PM
- Sunday, March 20, 12:30PM
- Sunday, March 27, 12:30PM
- Sunday, April 3, 12:30PM
- 30 Hour Famine: Friday, April 8, 9AM - Saturday, April 9, 3PM