



Contact

May 2026

University Presbyterian Church Newsletter for church members and friends

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A l o n g t h e W a y

We have moved on from the Gospel of John, but it ends with one of my favorite lines in the Bible:

“But there are also many other things that Jesus did; if every one of them were written down, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.”¹

I love that line because John tells us all these amazing things across twenty-one chapters and then says, “but that’s not all!” It feels like an acknowledgement that words can never contain God (or even people’s experience of God). It also reminds us that while the Bible is a unique and authoritative witness to God’s activity in the world, it is not a complete and finished one. It can’t be. John’s last line adds on a big “Amen,” to that.

All of which makes me think of the advertising campaign the United Church of Christ unveiled in 2002 - “God is still speaking. Never put a period where God has put a comma.” Sometimes we forget that God is still at work among us. The Bible is not the end of God’s activity in the world, instead it helps us by instructing us in the ways God has lived and moved in the past, so that we can better keep an eye out today. John tells us about signs and wonders, about the goodness and faithfulness of God, about the love of God, and then, to close, he points our eyes away from the page. He offers his experience then highlights the chance we have to look for ways God continues to offer signs and wonders to us.

That is of help any time, but it is particularly good instruction for Easter, and we are still there for most of the rest of the month! Though the “big day” was way back at the beginning of March, we are in the season of Easter for seven weeks. That means that every day for 49 days we get the chance to look around with “new life” eyes. You can look at page 5 of this issue to read about one of those new life/Easter moments shared between UPC and Iglesia Getsemani in Cuba. I would love to hear about a time **you** have sensed God’s movement or seen with your new life eyes.

Easter is still happening, and it will keep on happening, because the world itself cannot contain all the books that would be written if we tried to set down all the things that Jesus does.

Bendiciones,

Mamie

¹John 21:25



May...

*Meetings times/locations are subject to change.
Please check with your group leader for confirmation and
information on how to log into Zoom meetings.*

- 2 9:00 a.m. Presbytery of South LA Stated Meeting - First Pres. Lafayette
- 3 5th Sunday of Easter**
- 9:30 a.m. Church School
11:00 a.m. Worship - Sanctuary (*Live Streamed via Facebook & upcbr.org*)
4:30 p.m. Youth Group Pool Party - 1455 Hearthstone Dr.
- 4 10:45 a.m. Staff Meeting - Library
5:30 p.m. College Bible Study and Dinner - Library
- 5 8:30 a.m. Nurture Committee - Conference Room
10:00 a.m. Day Circle - Parks Wilson Room
6:30 p.m. UPC @ LSU Baseball - Alex Box Stadium
7:00 p.m. UPC Book Group - 1725 Eugene
- 6 9:30 a.m. Day School Chapel - Sanctuary
10:00 a.m. Day Circle II - 1545 Patrick Drive
7:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal
- 7 11:00 a.m. "Soul Feast" Small Group - Parks Wilson Room
7:30 p.m. New Orleans Gay Men's Chorus Rehearsal - Choir Room
- 10 6th Sunday of Easter**
- 9:30 a.m. Church School
11:00 a.m. Worship - Sanctuary (*Live Streamed via Facebook & upcbr.org*)
No Youth Group
- 11 11:30 a.m. Membership Committee - Library
7:00 p.m. Huntington's Disease Support Group - Conference Room
- 12 5:00 p.m. New Officer Preparation - Parks Wilson Room
7:00 p.m. Mission & Peacemaking Committee - Zoom
7:00 p.m. NAMI - Conference Room & Library
- 13 9:00 a.m. Faith and Community Small Group - Parks Wilson Room
10:00 a.m. Day Circle II - 1545 Patrick Drive
5:00 p.m. Property Committee - Zoom
7:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal
- 14 11:00 a.m. "Soul Feast" Small Group - Parks Wilson Room
6:30 p.m. Day School Committee - Zoom
7:30 p.m. New Orleans Gay Men's Chorus Rehearsal - Choir Room
- 17 7th Sunday in Easter** *Last day of Church School*
- 9:30 a.m. Church School
11:00 a.m. Worship - Sanctuary (*Live Streamed via Facebook & upcbr.org*)
12:30 p.m. Stewardship & Finance Committee - Conference Room
2:00 p.m. New Officer Preparation - Conference Room
3:00 p.m. Children's Music Workshop Recital - Sanctuary
4:30 p.m. Ferncliff Trip Meeting - Fellowship Hall
- 18 10:45 a.m. Staff Meeting - Library
- 19 9:30 a.m. Helping Hands - Conference Room
6:30 p.m. Fellowship Committee - Zoom
- 20 9:30 a.m. Day School Chapel - Sanctuary
10:00 a.m. Day Circle II - 1545 Patrick Dr.
7:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal - Choir Room
- 21 10:30 a.m. "Soul Feast" Small Group - Parks Wilson Room
7:30 p.m. New Orleans Gay Mens Chorus Rehearsal - Choir Room
- 24 Pentecost** *Last day of 11:00 a.m. Worship*
- 11:00 a.m. Worship - Sanctuary (*Live Streamed via Facebook & upcbr.org*)
1:00 p.m. Stated Session Meeting - Conference Room
2:00 p.m. New Orleans Gay Mens Chorus Rehearsal - Choir Room

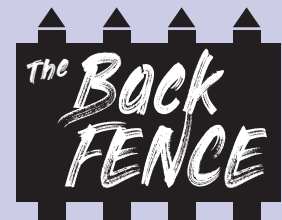
Office Notes

CLOSURES

The Day School and church office will be closed on Monday, May 25 for Memorial Day. The Day School will be closed May 28-29 for Teacher Planning.

CELEBRATING OUR GRADS

If you are graduating in May, please let us know. We would like to celebrate this momentous occasion with you! High School grads, please include your future plans. College grads, please indicate your degree and future plans. Please send this information to the church office by May 20.



- **Andreas Giger**, the Louise & Kenneth L. Kinney Professor of Opera & Musicology in the LSU School of Music, is being recognized by LSU's Office of Research & Economic Development for his scholarship in the arts, humanities, social, and behavioral sciences. <https://bit.ly/4cQZBdS>
- Congratulations to **Dr. Cynthia B. Peterson** on her induction into LSU's College of Science Hall of Distinction, celebrating her remarkable leadership as dean and her role in strengthening the College's growth in research, innovation, and student achievement. Through her commitment to supporting students, fostering partnerships, and advancing academic excellence, she has made a profound and lasting impact on LSU and the scientific community.
- Isaac Ryan, grandson of **Mary Stevens**, born on Thursday, April 9th



The **UPC Book Club** meets the first Tuesday of every month at 7:00 p.m. at 1715 S. Eugene. Contact Ellen Morgan for info.

- May 5 Barking to the Choir: The Power of Radical Kinship by Gregory Boyle
- Jun 2 TBD
- Jul 7 Year of Wonder by Geraldine Brooks

May...

- 25 **Memorial Day** - Day School & Church Office Closed
- 26 7:00 p.m. NAMI - Conference Room & Library
- 27 9:00 a.m. Faith and Community Small Group - Parks Wilson Room
10:00 a.m. Day Circle II - 1545 Patrick Dr.
- 28 10:30 a.m. "Soul Feast" Small Group - Parks Wilson Room
7:30 p.m. New Orleans Gay Mens Chorus Rehearsal - Choir Room
- 30 7:30 p.m. New Orleans Gay Mens Chorus Concert - Unitarian Church
- 31 **Trinity Sunday** *First day of 10:00 a.m. Worship*
10:00 a.m. Worship - Sanctuary (*Live Streamed via Facebook & upcbr.org*)

New Elders and Deacons

At the congregational meeting on April 19th we voted on a slate of new elders and deacons to serve God and this congregation. The following folks were elected to begin their service in August.

Elders: Bizza Britton, Dave Launey, Charles Sabin, Jane Smith and Violet Stroope

Deacons: Mary Clinkenbeard, Dinah Keyes, Wes Mainord, Margaret O'Donnell, Kathie Pohlman

Following their election, they will have a period of preparation and orientation, be examined by the Session, and then be ordained and/or installed in a worship service over the summer. Thanks to each of these folks for their willingness to answer the call. We hope that you will keep them and all church officers in your prayers.

Welcome!

Welcome to all the new members who affirmed they want to be on the Christian journey with us here at UPC.

Ignace Agbadan	Paul Foster	Sadie Knapp
Alyse Pfeil	Trish Quarles	Jessica Stroope
Lilias Stroope	Sam Stroope	Nathan Tipton

We are so glad to have you in our midst!

Photos of these fine folks are on the Membership board near the elevator. If you don't know them, now is a good time to introduce yourselves. If you are interested in joining we will have another Inquirer's class in the fall, but you can talk to Mamie or Erin about it any time.

Faith Formation

VBS: Stories That Shape Us

Mark your calendars for June 19th and 20th to participate in "Stories That Shape Us: An Intergenerational UPC Happening!" We will dive into Bible stories that shape our faith, explore ways to tell our own stories, dream about the story we want to tell as a church, build relationships in intergenerational small groups, and of course, share a meal together. Let Erin know if you're interested in volunteering and keep an eye out for registration in the next few weeks!

Confirmation

Confirmation for rising 7th and 8th graders will take place this fall during the church school hour. Reach out to Erin if you have questions about how this impacts your current 6th and 7th grade youth.

**JUNE/JULY CONTACT DEADLINE
MAY 20**



School's almost out for the summer! We can use prayers, actions, and simple rituals to mark the transition and keep our hearts oriented toward God in every season. Here are a few activity ideas and one-sentence prayers as we shift into new summer rhythms. It's the small, ordinary moments that build a lasting faith.

- As backpacks are put away: "God, please help those who struggle to fill their bags with what they need." Add one new school supply each week and donate them to a drive in August.
- As church school ends and worship shifts to 10 a.m.: "God, we're grateful for the chance to worship you all year." Volunteer as a liturgist, usher, or musician sometime this summer.
- As tempers grow short with new rhythms: "God, we're sorry for the times we take out our frustration on others." Practice apologizing quickly when your words or actions have been unkind.
- As kids head to camp: "God, thank you for the opportunity to show and share your love in new places." Kids, leave a thank-you note for your adults. Adults, tuck a note in their bag reminding them they are loved by God wherever they go.

LNK LOVE

Some fun, funny, inspirational, or thought-provoking links for you enjoy this month.

- The musician Nick Cave reads an eloquent response he gave to a fan who asked him whether he still believed “in us” - in human beings. The short video is worth a watch, but his response is also printed beneath the clip. <https://bit.ly/3JK79nV>

- One person's reflections on having clinical depression that might prove helpful if this is not a challenge for you, or might feel familiar if it is. Feel free to disagree with it entirely too. <https://bit.ly/41VFSEP>

- A lovely review of Dick Van Dyke's career in a clip from 60 minutes after he was nominated for a Kennedy Center honor in 2021 for his contribution to American culture. He's 101 in December. Wow. <https://bit.ly/3v2T0ae>

- Hyper-attentive parenting - can it hurt parents as well as children? An interesting podcast from the New York Times about the surgeon general, Vivek Murthy's warning about parental stress. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Z1_xhIE-Rw

- Moving around, even just a little bit, can make you feel better - physically and mentally - and we all need that! Here are 8 ideas for how to help you move around more during the day. <https://bit.ly/4h0tloA>

- David Zinn makes public chalk art in and around Ann Arbor, MI. His drawings appear 3D from the right angle and often make use existing elements. It's whimsical and fun, and you don't need an Instagram account to view his work (though you can follow him if you do)! <https://www.instagram.com/davidzinn>

- In Kansas City communities are replacing some empty lots and dumping sites with orchards and gardens with the help of the non-profit Giving Grove. What if we got something like that started? <https://bit.ly/4u34kly>

Youth Group

April Highlights: We had a great time this month celebrating Easter with (surprisingly difficult) Easter egg hunts and relays, volunteering at the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank, and learning how to talk about hard topics. As youth group winds down for the year, I'm so grateful for all of our wonderful youth and looking forward to our summer trip to Ferncliff!

May Schedule

May 3rd: End of year pool party at Costello house, 4:30-6

May 10th: No youth group, Mother's Day

May 17th: Ferncliff trip meeting, 4:30-6 at the church



College Group

This year we restarted our college group, experimenting with different days, times, and formats to see what works best for our core group of undergraduate students. We met at 5:30 Monday evenings this spring, alternating between casual hangout time and faith discussions/ Bible study. Congregants provided homemade dinner each week, which was much appreciated by the group. The final college group meeting this semester will be May 4th at 5:30pm, but stay tuned for special summer events!

There were also two Sunday gatherings for graduate students and young adults to eat lunch and do a Bible study together. The gatherings went well and we hope to create something more consistent in the future.

If anyone is interested in providing a meal or helping with either group next year, please reach out to Erin.

Mission & Peacemaking

Lights on at Iglesia Getsemaní in Cuba

Thank you to everyone who joined Mission and Peacemaking for our Cuba potluck and presentation on April 12th, and to all who contributed to the special offering on April 19th.

At the time of writing, UPC has raised \$3886 to hold in reserve so we can respond quickly to future emergent needs of our Cuban brothers and sisters. You can still give.



Here is the good news we are blessed to share:

For 36 years, UPC has maintained a faithful partnership with Iglesia Getsemaní, a Presbyterian church in the rural community of San José de los Ramos. This relationship has been marked by mutual faith journeys, deep friendships, annual financial support, and regular gifts of over-the-counter medicines, personal hygiene items, Sunday school supplies, and more.

In 2013, recognizing a critical need for clean water, UPC installed a water treatment system through the Presbyterian ministry, Living Waters for the World. Since then, more than half a million gallons of clean water have been provided free of charge to the community.

In recent months, Cuba has been facing a severe humanitarian crisis. The agricultural system has collapsed, medicines and personal care items are in desperately short supply, and food shortages are widespread. Families wait for hours in long lines for basic staples like rice or cooking oil. Island-wide power blackouts have become routine, with electricity often available for only two hours a day — if at all. Hospitals and clinics are deteriorating rapidly, leading to preventable deaths.

In response, with the Session's support, UPC committed \$9,000 to install a solar power system at Iglesia Getsemaní. Carl Motsenbocker delivered the funds during his trip to Cuba in early March. The system was installed on March 23rd and is now operational — bringing light in the darkness. The church can now continue essential ministries and pump clean water for the community even during blackouts.



We are truly blessed to continue walking together in faith with our brothers and sisters in Cuba.

Visits to ICE Detention Facilities

“I want to convey my heartfelt appreciation to the entire team for your endless support and encouragement. I was so thrilled to receive the card and to know the church is praying for us. I am certain that not long from now, God is going to answer our prayers. Thank you for the books, notes, commissary allowance, and all the prayers. It is just so amazing to know that you people are there for us.”

On April 11, six visitors met with fourteen men at the Adams ICE Detention facility in Natchez. We had three visiting tables - French (5 men), Spanish (4), English (5). Each time we go, men give us names of other detainees who want to be visited. It's important to them and to us.

How can you help?

1. Visit with us! Spanish & French speaking visitors are needed. Adams (Natchez) visits: Mary Mikell. River (Ferriday) visits: Kathy Perry
2. Become a pen pal.
3. Want to buy them a book? Let Betsy or Mary know.
4. Pray for all in detention and for an end to the warehousing of immigrants

Hot off the digital presses, your incredible Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank Impact Report for 2025 is ready! You'll be amazed and encouraged to learn about the difference you helped make for children, families, seniors, and veterans across the Greater Baton Rouge area.

Your Impact in 2025

Together we:

DISTRIBUTED

14. 3 million pounds of food

PROVIDED

the equivalent of 11.9 million meals to neighbors in need

SERVED

2,592,935 neighbors in the Greater Baton Rouge area

REACHED

23% more neighbors as compared to 2024

Day School

The Day School (DS) won first place in The Advocate newspaper poll, "Best of Baton Rouge" — taking top honors in both the Child Care and Preschool categories! We are the "Best of Baton Rouge"!



Enrollment continues to go well, with families already registering for both the summer and fall terms. Kenishia, our DS Director, has been busy giving tours to interested parents. The Annual Book Fair was also a great success.

UPC will celebrate Teacher Appreciation Week May 4–8, with the DS Committee providing breakfast and treats for the teachers.

A new banner is on display along Dalrymple Drive, and new yard signs have been purchased to strengthen our marketing efforts. If you're able to display a yard sign in your yard, please contact the DS office at 225-344-8077 or email them at upcdayschool@upcbr.org. The new sign

**University Presbyterian
Day School**

225-344-8077
<https://upcbr.org/day-school/>

Linda Benedict shared several promising new grant opportunities the DS is exploring. Peggy Carroll reported that the DS budget remains solid and is able to cover its share of the cost for a new refrigerator in the kitchen.

As a reminder, the DS will be closed May 28 and 29 for teacher planning. The summer session starts June 1.

Presbyterian Women

Join our Facebook group PW of UPC, Baton Rouge
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/340272321019732>

PW at UPC has expanded beyond women only to include ALL!

2 CIRCLE MEETINGS to choose from

- Presbyterian Women (with a few guys) will meet Tuesday, May 5th at 10:00 a.m. in the Parks Wilson Room. We will discuss Lesson 9, of "Finding Resilience, Joy, and Our Identity in Jesus Christ." We also will be celebrating the P W Birthday Offering to support the missions of Presbyterian Women.
- Peggy Carroll's carport group (1545 Patrick Drive) will gather every Wednesday in May at 10:00 a.m. on Peggy's carport for conversation, fellowship and laughter.

HELPING HANDS

Presbyterian Women will gather as Helping Hands on Tuesday, May 19th at 9:30 a.m. in The Conference Room. Bring a lunch and join in for a morning of projects, fellowship and laughter. No particular skills are required.

2026 PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

Birthday Offering

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may *abound in hope* by the power of the Holy Spirit."

—Romans 15:13*

Learn more about the Birthday Offering of Presbyterian Women by visiting presbyterianwomen.org/birthday.

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Prayer Requests

To add a name, remove a name, or update information on our prayer list, please contact the church office by noon on Wednesday at cdurham@upcbr.org.

**Lois Liggett • Ruth Bivins • Cody Lucero • Gerard Klein • Pat Phelps
Alan Williams • Kathy Poché • Lynn Nichols Dull • David Strain • Hal Horan
Cheryl Whitting • Faye Coco • Melanie Driscoll • Dawn Dominy
Members of our sister church in Cuba, San Jose de los Ramos**

- **Michael Williams**, recovering from an ulcer procedure
- **Randy Williams**, brother of Micheal and brother-in-law of Jonathan Hubchen, with back problems arising from sickle cell
- **Ivy Ollendike**, 8 yr old neighbor of Caralyn Durham, in isolation at St. Jude Children's Hospital, undergoing MIBG/chemo therapy for neuroblastoma
- **Messiah Hammond**, grandson of Susan Seifert, dealing with mental health issues
- **Kay Broadhead**, friend of Susan Seifert, recovering from knee replacement surgery
- **Susan Comeaux**, diagnosed with Parkinson's and her daughter, **Carrie Comeaux**, diagnosed with stage three breast cancer and is undergoing treatment
- **Samear Zaitoon**, recovering at an assisted living facility after a fall
- **Mary Stevens**, upon the death of her father
- **Jerry Kennedy and family**, upon the death of his sister, Kathy
- **John Stoddard**, brother of Linda Walker, waiting for medical pain relief in back and knees
- **Susan Brooks**, friend of Linda and Doug Walker, whose step-granddaughter (17) died in a car accident along with two of her friends
- **Mickey Brown**, in the hospital with pancreatitis
- **Terry Miller Jr.**, son of Ann and Terry Miller Sr., with health issues in Virginia
- **Josh Rosenberg**, praying for continued, good MRIs showing no return of cancer
- **Ellen Severin**, Lois Kuyper Rushing's aunt, in hospice care, and her daughter and full-time caretaker, Jo Ellen Parrott
- **Gary & Judy Crow**, friends of the Brittons, as they deal with Gary's cardiac issues
- **Sherri Wilson**, friend of Darla O'Connor and Tavia Crumpler, with brain cancer
- **Amy Heller**, mother of the Hoffman's granddaughters, with a recurrence of cancer
- **David Pohlman**, dealing with liver disease
- **Warren Goodman**, friend of Mary Stevens, undergoing chemotherapy
- **Gretchen Goodrich**, mother-in-law of Kathie Pohlman
- **Doug Toothman**, brother-in-law of Jerry and Sarah Kennedy, with liver cancer
- **Lee Wirth**, brother of Karen Paterson, as he continues treatment for lymphoma
- **Corrie Hale's Dad, Conrad**, with inoperable cancer on his spine
- **Joellen Hawkins**, Aunt of Emily Cogburn, with Alzheimer's
- **The United States of America** during these uncertain times
- **All those affected by war - Ukraine, Middle East, and beyond**
- **All those affected by gun violence**
- **All families affected by Huntington's Disease**
- **All hospice patients and their families**
- **All those who suffer with mental illness and emotional disorders**
- **Those who are affected by alcoholism and addiction**
- **Those who are serving in the armed forces**
- **Those who are going through separation or divorce**
- **Those who are affected by domestic violence**



The Pastor's Discretionary Fund is currently low on funds. Please consider a donation.

This fund allows our pastors to respond quickly to particular needs of folks within the congregation and in the wider community.

Contributions may be made in Realm, but there is a 10 day delay in processing.

Stay Connected!



Facebook Instagram

See us Sundays on Facebook for a live broadcast of our worship service!

www.facebook.com/universitypresbyterian
<https://www.instagram.com/universitypresbr/>

The University Presbyterian Church CONTACT is printed monthly. Articles may be submitted via email to cdurham@upcbr.org or turned in to the church office no later than the 20th of each month. To be removed from the mailing list, please contact the church office.

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3240 Dalrymple Drive
Baton Rouge, LA 70802
(225)383-0345
(225)383-3495 Fax
www.upcbr.org

5 WAYS TO GIVE



IN PERSON

Drop your gift into the offering plate on Sunday



MAIL

Mail your gift to:
University Presbyterian Church
3240 Dalrymple Drive
Baton Rouge, LA 70802



ONLINE

Give online at:
<https://onrealm.org/UniversityPresb15909/give/now>
or through your REALM portal under GIVING/+GIVE



MOBLIE APP

Realm Connect is available for download at iTunes and Google Play (uses your onrealm login)

UPCBR 75

TEXT

Text UPCBR and your amount to 73256 (as shown above)

May Birthdays

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 Bliss Barnes
David Shaffer | 15 Joseph Reynolds
Henry Rowland
Erin Tolar |
| 2 Sherry Olds | 17 Karen Foote |
| 3 Jimmy Robertson | 19 Angelle Rosenberg |
| 4 Joseph Nguyen | 20 Rosemary Goodell
Albertha Hubchen |
| 5 Skeeter Cedars | 21 Caralyn Durham |
| 8 Jeana Esser | 22 Robert Gourgues |
| 9 Stacy Fontenot
Garrett Haynie | 23 Tom Warner |
| 10 Lorinda Sealey | 24 Kay Lindsey |
| 11 Stuart Irvine
Morgan Patty
Kristin Shaffer | 25 Judy Dedrick |
| 12 Melanie Driscoll | 30 Ruth Bivins
Steven Hartman
Nathan Tipton |
| 13 Richard Williams | |

****Please remember to contact the church office if your contact information changes.****

The New Orleans Gay Men's Chorus
presents
ELTON
the man, the music, the legend
MARK YOUR CALENDARS
Friday, May 29, 2026
University of New Orleans
Performing Arts Center
7:30pm
Saturday, May 30, 2026
Unitarian Church of Baton Rouge
8470 Goodwood Blvd.
7:30pm

Mission Statement
In response to God's grace,
University Presbyterian
Church of Baton Rouge
seeks creatively – through
nurture, education, worship
and community outreach,
– to sustain an inclusive,
compassionate family of
faith; it seeks to promote
spiritual growth by
awakening souls to God's
infinite mercy embodied in
the reconciling love of Christ.
--Adopted by the Session
December 1995

University Presbyterian Church
3240 Dalrymple Drive
Baton Rouge, LA 70802



Change Service Requested