



The Messenger

Newsletter of University Place Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Champaign, Illinois 61820-4503

September 2020

Volume 92 No. 8

Front Stoop Worship Services

September 13, 20, 27!

This summer we have had worship on the farm, worship in the park, and now we are looking forward to worship at UniPlace's front stoop! On the church lawn which borders Wright Street, we have enough space on sidewalks and grass to accommodate several dozen chairs for outdoor worship. We can also accommodate some cars parallel parked on Wright Street for those who prefer to stay in their vehicle.

As we wait for Covid- cases to start going down again, (unfortunately, as of this writing we have had 2 days of positivity rate increases and 4 days of hospital admission increases in our region), we will continue meeting outdoors.

Worship will go on, rain or shine on these outdoor days. In the case of rain, we will pivot to a parking lot service where everyone will remain in their vehicles on the west side of the building. We look forward to gathering!

UniPlace Community Service Registered Student Organization Exec Board!

I've spent the past month working directly with the students to ensure this semester is full of continued opportunity to serve one another and build our community of thoughtful, caring, compassionate students and community members! They are so looking forward to seeing everyone and showcasing their incredible devotion to creating a better world, especially during a time where they know their involvement means so much.

Because we missed out on hosting a formal Quad Day booth this year, I was hoping we could come together to share words of encouragement to the incoming UIUC students! Please email jessi@uniplace.org with short notes, prayers, and words of encouragement. In the coming months I'll be sharing your kindness with students as they navigate the uncertainty and change. I already know how grateful they are for our church family and how much they miss you all! **Jessi Delost**

Financial Update by Eric Freyfogle, Treasurer

To no surprise, UniPlace members and friends have continued their generosity toward the church and its many programs and missions. General donations were only modestly below our expectations as of July 31, while donations designated for specific purposes, mostly the community dinner, have been well above projections. Meanwhile, a few expenses have gone down. The bottom line is that we have had less need than expected, in terms of our day-to-day activities, to draw upon our church "savings"—that is, investments on hand that represent and embody the generosity of members from prior years.

Looking ahead we do face challenges and have begun to address them. Our boiler is due for replacement and board members contracted in early August to deal with the problem, at a cost of a bit under \$40,000. That work should be completed by late October. At the same time, steps are being taken to upgrade the internet service in the building to deal both with the expanding needs of the DREAAM program and the church's own rising internet demands. The cost of this work, estimated at around \$20,000, will be split evenly with the DREAAM program. A contract for might well be signed by the time this issue of the Messenger goes out. Meanwhile, the flat room above the north balcony of the sanctuary is quite close to the end of its life. (We replaced the south balcony roof last year and did emergency patching on the north roof.)

Among the options the board will consider to support these financial needs is a capital campaign in 2021, designed to fund some of these priorities (or to replenish savings used to fund them) while also providing opportunities for members and friends to support and help expand our outreach programs to the local community. The entire membership will be involved in such a decision. In the meantime, though, our needs are apparent and donations to address them would be most welcome.

Musically Speaking

Dear church friends,

It's been a long number of weeks, and there will likely be at least a few more before we turn back towards some resemblance of normal. Together with Pastor Kris, we try passionately to find ways to work around the challenges we all face. We all miss the experience of worshipping together in the sanctuary but we will get there. Every time you access our service online, please know that we are thinking of you.

Meantime, I am grateful for the outdoor services that have been put in place with due precautions, grateful to Kris who hosted some and now plans them, to Eric who selflessly helps in various ways, to Jessica Dager who sings, to Sarah who plays . . . I don't want to forget anyone

We may have soon some "transitional" services, weather and other conditions allowing, somewhere between indoor/outdoor. No matter where we are, we are together.

Music always reminds all of us, even in times of relative unpleasantness, what unites us, what brings us in togetherness, hopefully physical but spiritual always.

Our former choir tenor Walter wrote to us, and I see no better way of ending this message than with his words:

My time spent singing at UniPlace truly was among my most meaningful experiences at U of I, and I wish you and the entire UniPlace community all the best in having a fulfilling and successful year inspite of the strange times we are living in! (Walter Kasmer)

Samir

Community Dinner Connector

I am very excited to see the Community Dinner start operations again on **September 2nd**. After volunteering with the program all summer, I saw first hand the impact this program has on the everyday life of people experiencing food insecurity or are currently without housing. Unlike food pantry items which often require access to a kitchen, these meals provided immediate, delicious, and nutritious food! Guests came hungry and often anxious and left encouraged, seen, and supplied with dinner and often enough for another meal or two.

If you are interested in serving with this ministry, we can use you! The capacity of the RSO to supply volunteers for this program is in constant question as the University of Illinois weathers the pandemic and makes day to day decisions. I greatly value your time and energy and will do all I can to make your experience with the dinners safe and meaningful. Contact me via phone or email and let's chat about how you might get plugged in.

Jess Dager

jessdager@gmail.com

608-692-5933

Open Door Needs

Please bring in cereal, spaghetti sauce and spaghetti noodles this month! Each contribution is needed and appreciated.

Weekly Prayer Meeting Changed

With the return of Community Dinner on September 2, we will be suspending the Wednesday night Prayer Meeting for the remainder of fall. However, you have two other opportunities to gather for weekly prayer with members of the congregation. In September the Psalms Bible study group will be meeting from 5:15-6:00 every Tuesday. In addition to sharing with one another our favorite prayers found in the Psalms, we take time to pray with and for one another as we share needs and celebrations. Also, a new in-person contemplative prayer groups is starting September 2 on Wednesday mornings. 11:00-11:45 in the parlor. UniPlace is still praying!

University Place Christian Church

403 S. Wright Street,

Champaign, IL 61820-4503

Office Hours M-Th 9-3,

217 352-5118 www.uniplace.org

Elder's Corner

The Elders are continuing to meet and discuss concerns of the church and family during Zoom meetings once a month. Next Meeting is early in September. Jane will email us with date and time.

Happy Anniversary this month!

September 16 Priscilla and Richard Lindstrom

September 23 Jennifer and AJ Jimenez

Address change for following:

Shaylissa Alexander
1600 W. Bradley Ave.
Apt. 0275
Champaign, IL 61821

Stay in touch and keep informed

Go to the website each week to watch the service for the week. <https://www.uniplace.org> to hear the latest from Pastor Kris. And check out FB page <https://www.facebook.com/UniPlaceCU/>

Be sure to read Wed. Reflections weekly, too!

Upcoming Donation Drive Update

Mark your calendars for September 25th and 26th! In partnership with *Immigrant Services of Champaign Urbana* (formerly CU Fair of Champaign Urbana), Uniplace will take up a collection of gently used household appliances and furniture.

The mission of Immigrant Services of Champaign Urbana is to support the resettlement of immigrants, refugees & political asylees in their transition from dependency to full self-sufficiency. Uniplace and Immigrant Services volunteers will come TO YOU to pick up your items. Watch your email for more information about this event, and check their website (www.cu-fair.org) for a list of preferred items.

Don't hesitate to contact me with any questions you have!
Jess Dager

HAPPY
BIRTHDAY

September Birthdays

Celebrate with a loved Uniplace member by sending birthday greetings this month! Don't have an address? Contact Elizabeth Slifer or the office.

September 3 Libby Dager

September 6 Lonnie Southern

September 9 Judy Leeper

September 10 Tim Dager

September 30 Jessi Delost

Note that the Church Office is now closed each Friday.

Hours are M-Th 9-3.

Bible Verse for September 2 Corinthians 9:7

Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

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Contemplative Prayer and Scripture in the Parlor

You are invited to an in-person gathering for prayer, silence, and hearing the Word. Starting September 2, we will gather in the Church Parlor on Wednesday mornings from 11:00-11:45 to reflect on the scripture readings coming up in worship each week. No previous experience of Bible study is needed. We will be thoughtful listeners to the scripture speaking to our own lives in this brief gathering. Masks are required, and the parlor chairs will be distanced 6 feet away from one another to keep all our beloveds safe in this holy gathering.

Psalms Study Group Continues

Our study of the book of Psalms continues through September 30. You join in at any time. There are still Psalms journals available at the church for purchase (\$10) or you can use your own Bible. We gather on Zoom each Tuesday at 5:15 pm (Zoom link in this newsletter) and we have a video chat thread on the app MarcoPolo for you to share your experience with the Psalms with others from UniPlace. To join the MarcoPolo thread, just text Pastor Kris from your cell phone and ask to be added to the chat thread. You will be prompted to download the MarcoPolo app in order to participate in video chat with the others.

“O give thanks to the Lord, for God is good. The steadfast love our Maker endures forever!” – Psalms 136:1