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Reverend Lisa Stenner, Pastor

January 16, 2026

From the Pastor

Drum roll, please.....

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Local Food Pantry Gets Boost for New Year

Collaborative gift allows pantry to hire its first dedicated employee to manage growth

Abraham's Pantry, an emergency food source for Northern Kentucky residents, is housed at Union Presbyterian Church. In four years, the pantry has grown out of a storage closet into a multi-purpose space that served 1,133 individuals in 2025. Until now, pantry operations have been managed by a small group of volunteers.

Laura Pears, one of the pantry founders and longtime volunteer, will become the pantry's first employee. In her role, Pears will focus on day-to-day operations, volunteer coordination, and manage the growth that pantry volunteers didn't expect when they began collecting food donations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pears says, "Our pantry team has done a remarkable job of carefully growing the pantry to meet the needs of our neighbors. I'm looking forward to the next chapter as community needs require continued support."

The new position is possible due to a combination of grants and a recent collaborative gift from Lakeside Presbyterian Church, Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, and a private donor.

About Abraham's Pantry

It is the goal of Abraham's Pantry to ensure no family that falls on challenging times in our community ever needs to skip meals to make it work. We do this by providing a 3 day emergency supply of food, cleaning and hygiene products. For more information, visit the pantry website at www.abrahamspace.org.

This press release posted to social media on Friday and has been mailed to ministry partners and local officials. While we continue to pray for the day when none of our neighbors are food insecure, we celebrate the Spirit's leading and provision for Abraham's Pantry's growth, development, collaboration and leadership. We also offer prayers of thanksgiving for Laura Pears, for all of

Abraham's Pantry's volunteers, and for UPC's nurturing and housing this vibrant and vital ministry to our community!

This announcement is especially timely leading into Martin Luther King, Jr. weekend and the federal holiday on Monday which is "a day on not a day off" for countless folks who commit this day in service to others. [Click [here](#) for more info about history and significance of the MLK, Jr holiday] MLK, Jr. practiced and encouraged non-violent resistance in his work for civil rights, justice and peace. He was influenced by the work and examples of Mahatma Gandhi and Jesus putting into action the conviction that "peace is not the absence of conflict but the presence of justice" which means justice and well-being for ALL of God's children.

Of course, pursuing peace and justice in this way created all kinds of trouble for Jesus, for Gandhi and for MLK, Jr. and their followers and communities as well as for countless others throughout history and around the globe who have dared to believe that ALL of creation is beloved. John Lewis, civil rights icon and 17 term congressional representative from Georgia, frequently referred to this as "good trouble". I believe Lewis' 2028 tweet "***Do not get lost in a sea of despair. Be hopeful, be optimistic. Our struggle is not the struggle of a day, a week, a month, or a year — it is the struggle of a lifetime. Never, ever be afraid to make some noise and get in good trouble, necessary trouble.***" has been relevant for peacemakers and Jesus' followers throughout history. And, it is a encouragement and challenge for us today.

In worship this Sunday, we will explore why and how we do that today as a faith family and as individual disciples. In preparation for worship, I invite you to read Romans 12:9-18 in which Paul describes life as a disciple of Jesus. What characteristics stand out to you? What might these words have meant to the original hearers? What is comforting? What is challenging?

Then, I invite you to read Jesus' call to the disciples in Matthew 16:21-28. How do you imagine those first disciples heard those words? Do you hear them as comforting or challenging or both? Why? How do you hear the Romans text in light of Jesus' words? How might the Spirit be using these texts to inspire "good trouble"?

Click [here](#) for the worship bulletin. Worship is streamed on the [UPC website](#) and [YouTube](#) channel.

Peace, Pastor Lisa

PS: Worshipers received star words during Epiphany worship two weeks ago and remembrance stones to be reminded of their baptism last week. There are extras in the narthex. Please contact [me](#) if you'd like one or both mailed to you.

Ready. Set. Hike!
It's time again for our
annual ~~competition~~ collection
for the SouperBowl of Caring
food drive!



Each year, organizations across the US collect canned goods and monetary gifts during the Super Bowl football game to benefit local food pantries. At a time when Americans are known to overindulge, we pause to recognize the hunger in our own communities.

In 2025 UPC and Abraham's Pantry collected 1,152 canned goods and \$1,907! In true UPC fashion we will compete to see who can collect the most- the men or (the reigning champs) the women.

This year we are collecting the following items:

- Hearty Soups
- Canned Pasta (spaghettios)
- Canned Fruit or Applesauce (regular-sized)
- Toothpaste (full size)

Canned goods can be stacked under the appropriate sign in the Narthex through Sunday, February 8th!



Congregational Meeting

Congregational Meeting & Lunch Sunday, January 18th

Our deacons are preparing lunch. No need to bring anything but yourself. This annual meeting is for the congregation to approve Pastor Lisa's

2026 terms of call, to elect the 2026 Officer Nominating Committee, and to answer any questions about the 2026 budget. In the PC-USA, the Session approves the budget and has already presented it to the congregation for information and held a question and answer session after worship on December 21st. The Session recommends the pastor's terms of call; however, the congregation calls the pastor and is the body that must annually approve the pastor's terms of call. Finally, the Session presents names for the Officer Nominating Committee with a representative from the Music Program, the UPSeniors group, the Session, the Deacons, and a member at large. Nominations will also be accepted from the floor provided that the person nominated has already agreed to serve. The 2026 Officer Nominating Committee will help our congregation discern who the Spirit is leading to serve as Deacons and Elders in the class of 2029.

What is feeding your spirit?

Last week I (Pastor Lisa) shared some resources that are feeding my spirit during this time where the world feels off the rails and heavy, and I asked that you share what is feeding your spirit, bringing you joy, encouraging hope, etc. I'm working on a google doc to share in UPC's Facebook group or website, so please keep sharing! I am not vetting resources but merely sharing what the Spirit is using to work in you. If something speaks to you, great. If it does not, let it go.

So far the collaborative resource list includes:

- Taking care of one's physical body - exercise, good sleep, eating well, massage therapy, yoga, progesterone, blood pressure meds, estrogen patch, meds for depression/anxiety, GLP-1
- Community - friends with whom one can be one's authentic self - for venting, worshiping, sojourning, eating, playing, helping others, etc.
- Therapy, journaling, gratitude lists
- Prayer, regular devotions, worship, meditation, spiritual direction
- Listening to music, playing and/or singing music, theater, gardening, cooking, watching animal videos, doing puzzles, brain games, dancing, playing with pets, snuggling grandbabies
- Podcasts: [Jay Shetty](#), [The Confessional with Nadia Bolz-Weber](#), [Pantsuit Politics](#)
- Websites or blogs: [Heather Cox Richardson](#), [Piloting Faith](#), [Proverbs 31](#), [The Blue Room](#) by MaryAnn McKibben Dana, [The Cottage](#) by Diana Butler Bass, [Sabbath Moment](#) by Terry Hershey, [Imago Scriptura](#) by Ed Goode (referenced in last week's sermon), [Center for Action and Contemplation](#)

Donations needed for Quarter Auction

The auction isn't until June, but you may have some extra holiday gifts that weren't distributed or gifts that you cannot use. Proceeds from the auction benefit UPC's ministries with children and youth. We need donations of 15-20 items such as cool jewelry items, bath goodies, supplies for a family game night or movie night, gift cards, etc. Auction items can be dropped off in the vestibule or church office. We'll store them until the auction.

From Andrea Vanzant:

Happy New Year!
Are you looking to become
more active in the worship service this year?
Good news!

Delivering the children's sermon is a great way to become more involved and get to know the younger UPC members. Pastor Lisa and I are happy to help you prepare. The message is based on the scripture reading or important days to remember (World Wide Communion, MLK Day, for example). And the children would probably love to hear someone new!

If you are interested in this ministry, contact the [church office](#) or [me](#).

From Boone County Pride

Believe it or not, it is time to start planning for Boone County KY Pride Festival 2026.

Do you want to help us plan and implement Boone County KY Pride Festival 2026? Please join us on **January 26th at 7pm at the Main Boone County Public Library, 1786 Burlington Pike, Burlington, KY 41005.**

2026 PRIDE PLANNING KICK OFF

Jan. 26th
7-8:30 pm
Main Boone County
Public Library

Click [here](#) to RSVP. Contact [Pastor Lisa](#) if you would like to carpool to UPC.



Schedule for This Week

2nd Sunday after Epiphany
Sunday, January 18th
9:30am Choir Warm-Up
10am Worship

After worship
Congregational Mtg & Lunch

Monday, January 19th
Church Office Closed
9:30am Yoga
6:30pm Session
7pm Boy Scouts Troop 805
Tuesday, January 20th
Noon Florence Womans Club
6:30pm Cub Scouts Pack 3805

Wednesday, January 21st
9:30am Yoga
12:30pm NKY SafetyNet @
Lakeside Christian
6:30pm Choir
Girl Scout Troop 2830
8pm AA

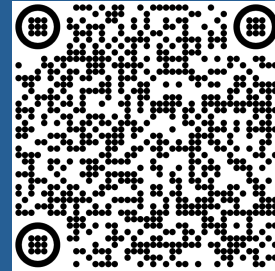
3rd Sunday after Epiphany
Sunday, January 25th
9:30am Choir Warm-Up
10am Worship

After worship
Sunday School K-3rd, 4th - 7th
and adults



BIRTHDAYS

1/22 - Richard Sloan
1/25 - Sheila Wenstrup
1/26 - Iris Daniel
1/27 - Michael Frost,
Ray Merkel
1/29 - Brent Tolle
1/30 - Nancy Shupe
2/1 - Malcolm
Cuthbertson-Adams
2/3 - Joanie Kenkel
2/5 - Martin Sabogal
2/7 - Heather Dern
2/10 - Dave Claar
2/11 - Ainsley & Braeden
Brown, Laney Tolle
2/12 - Sue Arts
2/13 - Chad Cuthbertson-
Adams
2/14 - Hayden Monson
2/16 - Marin Ball
2/17 - Dan Spanier
2/18 - Lauren Bruns



Online Giving

You may give online or via text through the UPC website. You can make a one time gift or set up a recurring gift. You may make a memorial or honorary gift and even pay for youth conferences. The online transaction processes the gift from your checking account, savings account, credit card or debit card and is secured through Global Payment Services which integrates with Servant Keeper, our membership program.

UPC does not receive the total amount of your gift due to processing fees. At the end of the transaction, you will be asked if you wish to donate an additional percentage to cover the processing costs.



ANNIVERSARIES

1/31 - Jim & Sheila
Wenstrup
2/14 - Joe & Holly
VonLehman
2/26 - Julie Bailey & April
Merkel

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Contact Us



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