

Life at Unity

January 07, 2025



Since 1788...

*United in Christ's love,
we glorify God through worship,
nurture, and service to all people.*

MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Friends,

As we enter this new calendar year, in the church liturgical year we find ourselves in the season of Epiphany. Epiphany is a short season for the Sundays that follow the day of Epiphany (January 6th) until the beginning of Lent on Ash Wednesday (this year on March 5). Traditionally associated with the visit of the magi to the child Jesus, it is easy to miss this season as we often just bring the magi into our Christmas Eve celebrations of Jesus' birth. Also, as January 6th rarely falls on a Sunday morning, our worship sometimes misses this day as well.

While we are not going to follow any particular theme or series this year during the season of Epiphany, I do want to encourage us to be aware as we begin this new calendar year. The name Epiphany comes from the Greek word, *epiphaneia*, which means "appearance" or "manifestation." As Rev. Heather L. Melton has written:

Epiphany is a reminder of the gifts of faith and hope that the world is becoming something new and different. It is a reminder that God is always inviting us to notice what is happening around us, in our dreams, in the sky, in our communities, and in our families. Epiphany is about a whole lot of folks noticing things—from the wise men noticing a star, paying attention to their dreams and bringing totally inappropriate gifts for a baby ... to Jesus' family and community noticing that things weren't at all what they expected, either. There's a lot happening in this community, a lot to notice and potentially overlook. It's clear, however, that our job is to notice and receive the gifts of Epiphany. (<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/uto/epiphany-hope-and-gratitude/>)

In a similar way, I invite us to notice what is happening around us. Where do you see God at work in your family, in our church, in our community, in our world? Where do you see a particular need that you have a gift to help? Where do you see light breaking forth in the midst of despair, grief, or loss?

As we begin to notice where God is at work, we move toward hope. As I mentioned in an Advent sermon, Rev. Maryann McKibben Dana suggests, "Hope is what we do." When we notice God is at work, we begin to act in hopeful ways to make even our one small corner of the world just a little better. I look forward to continuing this journey of noticing and hope with you this year!

See you Sunday!
Matt

DR. MATT AND SARAH - JANUARY TRIP TO GREECE & TURKEY

Dr. Matt and Sarah will be participating in a pastor and spouse trip to Greece and Turkey from January 6-16, 2025. This trip with Elias Tours provides an opportunity for pastors to visit these historic biblical and cultural sites and to explore the possibility of organizing a similar spiritual pilgrimage/travel seminar trip for their congregations. We are grateful for the time to participate in this experience and ask for your prayers for a safe and meaningful trip. And if you might be interested in participating in a trip to Greece and Turkey (or other location) in the future, please let us know.

The deadline to submit items for the January 21st Newsletter is **Wednesday, January 15th.**

PRAYER CHAIN

Did you know that Unity has an email prayer chain? If you would like to receive prayer concerns or have a concern, please contact Dannie Vaughn at vaughndl@comporium.net.

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Monday through Thursday

8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

(Closed on Fridays)

803.547.5543

www.UnityFortMill.org

LATE JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

16 -- John Baumann; Anne Hamilton; Mary Anne Long; Terri Marshall; Bristol Miller; Virginia Richardson

17 -- Olivia Pascal; Caroline Reams; Kate Spangler

18 -- Mike Brown; Avery Cameron; Dickie Havnaer; Amy Poore; Chris Routh

20 -- Larry Cooper; Marty O'Shea; Chris Padgett; David Wascher

21 -- Jeff Burrell; Gus Sharpless; HK Sharpless; Judy Terrell

22 -- Ben Liebert; Kelly Morse; Kym Schneider

23 -- Christian Fulton; Glenn Scott; Ella Sullivan

24 -- Vereen Brown; Mike Hopkins

25 -- Joel Key; Bristol Pascal; Jeff Spitzer

26 -- Bill Noel; Daniel Ryan; Laura Thomas

27 -- Jane Boyd; Jean Holler; Grayson Jennings; Tim Weeks

28 -- Jack Iles

29 -- Gracie Cordell; John Tyler Cordell; Scott Couchenour

30 -- Morrison Creech; Carol Herring; Luca Leventis

31 -- David Bowman; Kelly Spinner; Carolyn Wright

STAR WORDS

On Sunday, January 5th, Unity continued the tradition of giving "star words" as we celebrate Epiphany. Everyone was encouraged to take a star, children, youth and adults. On the star is written a gospel word like delight, vision, hospitality, wonder, or zeal. Perhaps the word you received will guide your prayer or your spirit in the year ahead. Perhaps it will inspire you to set off on an unexpected journey. Perhaps it will help you focus in a new and unexpected way on the true star of the story, Jesus Christ. If you did not receive a star word after worship, **you may pick up one from the church office or the narthex until Sunday, January 19th.**

ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS – SUNDAY, JANUARY 5TH

On Sunday we ordained and installed our new class of officers. Thank you for praying for them as they begin their time of service. Pray that they might know the joy of ministry, the gifts which will allow them to serve faithfully, and an extra measure of the Holy Spirit's guidance as we continue with hope into a new year.

Ruling Elders – Class of 2027

Susan Bates, Steve Gribble, Erin Pratt, Laurie Rogers, Chuck Welfare, and Barry Wells

Deacons – Class of 2027

Lauren Cole, Sarah Egnor, Brynne Fisher, Jill Grossoehme, Jon Hattaway, Justin Richardson, Riley Shaefner, Jennifer Smith, and Jim Smith

Youth Deacon - Class of 2025

Tyson Shouse

Youth Ruling Elder - Class of 2025

Elizabeth Watson

THANK YOU TO ELDERS AND DEACONS

As we celebrated the ordination and installation of our new ruling elders and deacons on January 5th, we also paused to say thank you to those who completed their term of service. The class of 2024 served with great faith, vision, and dedication. We give thanks to God for their leadership and service as we discovered our "new normal" after the pandemic. We are a stronger and more faithful church in no small part due to their faithfulness. Thanks be to God!

Elders – Jim Boyd, Anne Cardozo, Ronnie Glenn, Angela Pope, Susan Mobley, Patrick White

Deacons – Janet Bassford, Mike Brown, Isabella Cardozo, Ed Martin, Sandra Moore, Kendra Ryan, Cathy Schaefer, Andrew Thomas, Ronda Williams

LUNCH BUNCH



Join us on **Wednesday, January 22nd at 12:00 p.m.** for the first Lunch Bunch meeting of 2025! Cassidy Plyler, the Catawba Cultural Center Program Specialist, will be our speaker this month. She will discuss the rich history of the Catawba Nation and their history and struggles. Catawba History 101 explores the rich 6,000-year history of the Catawba Nation. The information included will focus on the constant changes the Catawba Nation has faced since the European explorers made contact with them in 1540. Please bring your salad or sandwich and join us for this very interesting speaker.

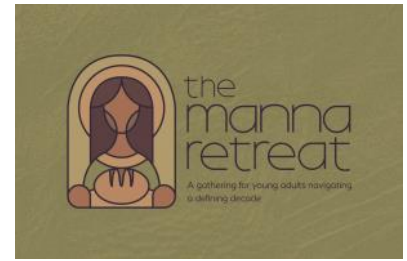
Chips, drinks, and desserts are provided.

SAVE THE DATE FOR MDSF!



Co-Chairs are Karen Compton Fuqua (kfuqua@comporium.net) and Stephanie Faherty.

Women of Unity will host our annual **Mother Daughter Sister Friend Luncheon on March 23, 2025**. Our theme this year is “Learning to Share Our Stories” with Rev. Julie Hester. We are people formed by stories - the stories we've heard and lived through, the stories we tell ourselves, and the stories we tell together. Join us as we explore how the spiritual practice of writing can help us understand and share our stories as part of God's beloved community. We'll listen, learn, write, and share around our small group tables. No writing experience is needed, and grammar and spelling don't count! If you can talk, you can write. We'll do some of both together. More details coming soon! Event



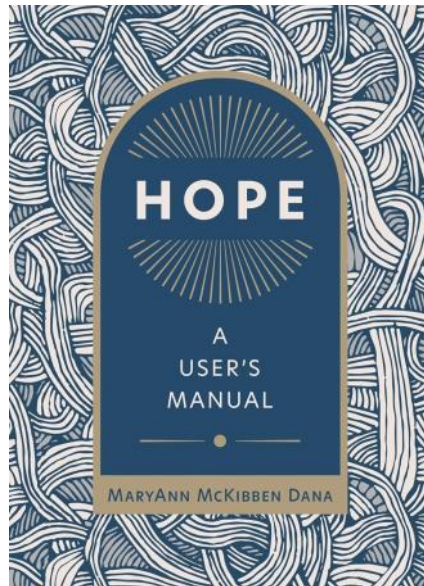
THE MANNA RETREAT FOR YOUNG ADULTS AT MONTREAT

Young adults looking for a great spiritual retreat are invited to the Manna Retreat in Montreat, **January 24th - January 26th, 2025**. This event is designed for folks roughly between the ages of 22-35, but even if you are outside of those numbers, if you read their description on the website and it sounds like something you need, no one will be there checking your I.D. There will be worship and a host of great workshops. There will be small groups for deeper discussion, as well as free time to relax in Montreat. More details and registration information can be found at: <https://montreat.org/events/manna-retreat>.

REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN FOR AN ALL-CHURCH READ SMALL GROUP



Our All-Church Read for 2025 will be *Hope: A User's Manual*, by Rev. MaryAnn McKibben Dana. Small groups will begin the week of January 26th and meet once a week for 6 weeks through the week of March 2nd. On March 2nd, we will have the privilege of hosting Rev. McKibben Dana at Unity to preach and lead a conversation about what she hopes we got from the book during the Faith Formation hour that day. Small group signups are open through January 15th. A limited number of books are available for purchase at the church. You can also order your own book through your favorite bookseller. Please **scan the QR code** or visit <https://bit.ly/All-ChurchReadRegistration> to register for the class of your choice.



JOIN MESSY MOTHERHOOD



Both Messy Motherhood groups will resume the week of January 26 and will read the All-Church Read book, *Hope: A User's Manual* by Rev. MaryAnn McKibben Dana. Both groups meet on Zoom at 7:30, one group on Tuesdays and one group on Wednesdays. There are a couple of openings in each group. Please email Kathryn McGregor at KMcGregor@UnityFortMill.org if you are interested in joining one of the groups and let her know which day works for you.

STAY IN TOUCH

Whether you are looking for a specific activity or the latest news and information on children, youth, and adults, visit us at . . .

Website: www.UnityFortMill.org

Instagram: [@UnityFortMill](https://www.instagram.com/UnityFortMill)

Facebook: [@UnityFortMill](https://www.facebook.com/UnityFortMill)

Be sure to “like” our page.



START YOUR NEW YEAR OFF WITH NEEDED HELP

In addition to the cold weather outside, many people experience winters in their personal lives. A recent loss through death, divorce, or relocation may leave them feeling lonely. A hospitalization, a cancer diagnosis, or ongoing medical problems may leave them feeling isolated. The loss of a job, the fear of layoffs, or a financial setback can devastate one's self-esteem. Family and personal struggles may leave them with nowhere to turn for support.

If you are going through a difficult time, our Stephen Ministers can bring God's warm love back into your life. They provide confidential, one-to-one Christian care. They will meet with you privately on a weekly basis to listen, to support and encourage you, to pray with and for you, and to walk with you for the duration of your crisis.

To find out more about Stephen Ministry and how you or someone you know could be matched with a Stephen Minister, talk with talking with one of our referral coordinators, Susan Mobley or Dave Johnson, via email at Stephenministryreferrals@unityofortmill.org or call a pastor at the church office - 803-547-5543.

Our Stephen Ministers are here to care!

UNITY PRESCHOOL UPDATE

It has been a joyful and exciting year at Unity Preschool. We began our school year in September with 57 children in five classes. We ended 2024 with a beautiful Christmas program in the Sanctuary. We are grateful to teach these beautiful children that God's love is always with us.



UNITY PRESCHOOL REGISTRATION

Unity Preschool registration for the 2025-2026 school year is now open. Please visit the Unity Preschool website (www.unitypreschool.org) for important dates, forms, tour information, and details. **Registration forms for new students are due Monday, January 27th.** Please e-mail Linda Bunge (preschoolatunity@gmail.com) if you have any questions.

HOW CAN I HELP UNITY PRESCHOOL?

***Monetary Donation:** Make a monetary gift to support our programming. Your donations will be divided between our Playground Fund and our Scholarship Fund. The Playground Fund will be used to design and build an improved playground space in the fenced wooded park area. The Scholarship Fund was established for current preschool families to use for tuition when they face unexpected financial hardships. Please donate online to "Preschool" (include "Fundraiser" in the Notes) or make checks payable to "Unity Preschool" with "Fundraiser" on the memo line. You may mail checks or drop them in the church mailbox, church office, or Sunday offering plate.

***Amazon Wish List:** You can also help by purchasing one of the items on the Unity Preschool Amazon Wish List. These are items that we will use throughout the year in the Preschool. As you can imagine our craft and supply bins need replenishing throughout the year. https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/1AODLHWQMIRP6?ref=wl_share

***Volunteer:** Sign up to volunteer as a classroom volunteer or a behind-the-scenes volunteer.

***Share the News:** Encourage your friends and family to attend Unity Preschool. Thank you in advance for your support of Unity Preschool and our programs.

BIRTHDAY PARTY FOR JESUS HELPED BABIES IN NEED



The participants at the Birthday Party for Jesus in December donated 113 pounds of diapers, wipes, baby food and formula to the Fort Mill Care Center to assist families care for their babies. As we celebrated the birth of a baby born long ago and born again in our hearts this Christmas, we seek to serve the least of these as Jesus calls us to do every day. Thank you to all who gave.

GCS RESUMES JANUARY 12TH

Growing Christians (GCs), our 4th and 5th Grade fellowship group, will resume on Sunday, January 12 and meet each Sunday from 4:00-5:00 pm through February 9. All 4th and 5th graders are welcome. No registration is required. GCs meets in Room M208, which can be accessed on Sunday afternoons by parking in the Fellowship Hall parking lot and walking between the Fellowship Hall and the labyrinth courtyard. Leaders will meet children at the door. For questions, contact Kathryn McGregor at KMcGregor@UnityFortMill.org.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR 2025 CHILDREN'S MINISTRY SUMMER CAMPS:

VBS & Mission Camp – June 9-12, ages 4 – Completed 3rd Grade (VBS), Completed 4th and 5th Grades (Mission Camp) – Registration opens March 10

Grands Camp – July 23-25, Ages 4 -5th grade with a Grandparent or Surrogate Grandparent – Registration opens April 7

UNITY CHILDREN'S CHOIRS

The next session of Children's Choir begins on February 2nd. Cherub Choir (children who turned 4 by September 1, 2024 through first grade) will meet from 2:00-2:45 in the handbell room, and the Covenant Choir (grades 2-5) meets from 3:00-3:45 in the choir room. Parents, please register any children singing for the first time this school year using the QR code (returning singers do not need to register again). Contact Margaret Monroe at mmonroe@UnityFortMill.org or 547-5543 with any questions. Come make a joyful noise!

JOIN YOUR FRIENDS AT



PASSPORT KIDS! CAMP

FOR CURRENT 3RD
THROUGH 5TH GRADERS

JUNE 30
- JULY 3,
2025

COST
\$375

A NON REFUNDABLE
DEPOSIT OF \$150 IS
DUE BY JANUARY 15TH.



Montreat Conference
Center, Montreat, NC

SCAN THE QR CODE FOR MORE
INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER:



For more information on
"What's Happening" at
Unity, please visit...
[www.unityfortmill.org/
whats-happening/](http://www.unityfortmill.org/whats-happening/)

YOUTH GROUP OUTREACH PROJECT ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 19TH!



All youth are invited to join us for an outreach project at Defend the Fatherless on Sunday, **January 19th from 3:00-4:30 p.m.** Defend the Fatherless is a non-profit organization that seeks to reduce the burdens of foster and adoptive families in our community. We look forward to joining together to participate in God's work of justice and compassion and we hope you will join us. All youth should meet at and be picked up from Defend the Fatherless (230 Flint Hill Rd., Fort Mill, SC, 29715).

REGISTRATION CLOSING SOON FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL ASHVILLE YOUTH MISSION WEEKEND: FEB 21-23, 2025

REGISTRATION OPEN NOW FOR HIGH SCHOOL MONTREAT HURRICANE RECOVERY TRIP: MARCH 21-23, 2025



All current 6th-8th grade youth are invited to register here: <https://bit.ly/UnityPresYouth-AYMRegistration> for our brand new mission weekend for middle schoolers. **Register by Wednesday, January 15th!** We will travel to Asheville to explore the hidden needs and struggles of those who are living on the margins withing and around a beautiful tourist town. We expect that this trip will be focused heavily on Hurricane Helene recovery. Our youth will work with a variety of agencies to address poverty, homelessness, and food insecurity.

It's official! Our high school youth are headed to Montreat Conference Center this March to engage in hurricane recovery work! We will also take time to enjoy meals together, play games, and take a break from the busyness of daily life. **Register here:** <https://bit.ly/UnityYouth-HS-MontreatRecovery> by February 1st!

SUNDAY MORNING FAITH FORMATION

Come grow in your faith

SUNDAY MORNING FAITH FORMATION

10:00 AM



CHILDREN

Birth-3 years - Rooms S103 & S104
4K/Kindergarten - Room M203
1st/2nd grade - Room M205
3rd - 5th grade - Room M208

YOUTH

6th & 7th grade - Room M106
Confirmation - Room M107 & Fellowship Hall
High School - Room M108

ADULTS

As a Child - Room M312
Faith Connections - Historic Sanctuary
Fellowship - Room M201
Gospel of Matthew - Room M210
Unity - Room M102



BLOOD DRIVE



Start out your new year with a donation of blood to the Red Cross. Unity will host a blood drive on **January 28th, 2025 from 2:30-7:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall**. You can sign up for an appointment on the Red Cross website: <https://www.redcrossblood.org/give.html/find-drive> and look for the date or the location. Donations of blood are needed in our area. Give the gift of life!

MISSION TRIP TO HONDURAS - INFORMATIONAL MEETING

On **January 19th at 4:00 p.m. in Room M210**, an informational meeting about Unity's mission trip to Honduras will be held. Dates are July 9-18 2025. The project includes a 15 home building project in the community of San Juan Planes, Trinidad, in the department of Copan, Honduras. For more information or questions, please email jsullivan@comporium.net. We will be accompanied by Gloria Wheeler, retired PCUSA mission co-worker. Gloria is a native of Honduras and has been with us on previous trips.



FAMILY PROMISE



What is Family Promise? Family Promise of York County provides a comprehensive and compassionate program of meals, shelter, and case management services to homeless families through a community network of congregations and staff that foster long-term self-sufficiency, independence, and success for families.

How is Unity involved in Family Promise? Once every 2 months Unity serves as a host site for a week from Sunday to Sunday. Families arrive at church in the evening. They are served dinner and spend the night in one of the Sunday School rooms in the Youth Wing. They leave early each morning and go to work, attend school, or work on job skills at the Family Promise Center. Family Promise is an outreach ministry coordinated by the Women of Unity - Tony Dehler Circle. We need many volunteers for the different service opportunities that it requires to host the families during our hosting weeks.

When is our next hosting? Unity serves as a host church from **Sunday, January 12 - Sunday, January 19.**

How can I help? You can volunteer during our hosting week. We need over 45 people each hosting (families are welcome) to cook/serve dinner each night; help with set-up or takedown on the Sundays of our hosting week; spend the night with our families; wash laundry following our hosting week; or donate supplies to be used during hosting week. Here is the link to sign up: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/508094EA5A82DA3F85-54146140-family>

Questions? Email Dannie Vaughn (vaughndl@comporium.net). Thank you in advance for your support of this Outreach Ministry.

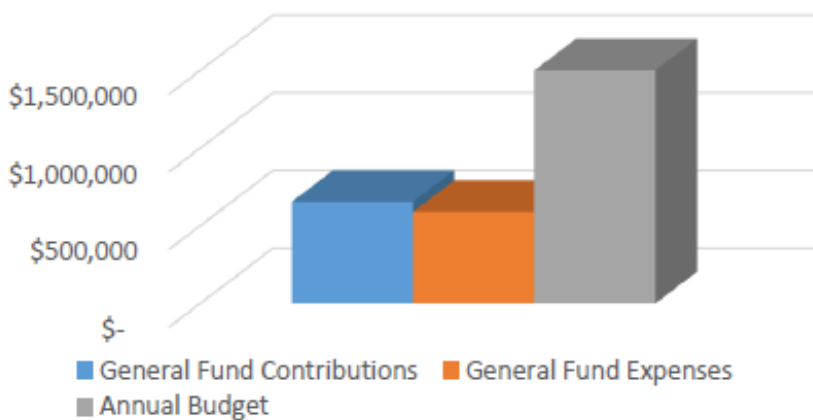
2024-2025 BUDGET UPDATE

	November 2024	Jul 1, 2024 through Nov 30, 2024	% of Annual Budget	5-Year Average
General Fund Contributions	\$ 117,596	\$ 653,379	39.9%	\$ 614,491
General Fund Expenses	113,608	589,851	36.0%	553,319
Annual Budget		1,636,321	100.0%	1,519,243

Current Status of the 2010 Sanctuary Building Debt

Balance, November 30, 2024 \$384,600
 Projected Balloon Payment Due, 6/5/2027 \$209,000

Contributions & Expenses July - November Compared with the Annual Budget



TAIZÉ



Our next Taizé service will be **Sunday, January 12th. Join us at 5:00 p.m. in the Historic Sanctuary.** A Taizé service is composed of candlelight, Scripture readings, prayer, intervals of silence, and contemplative chants. Join us for a time of quiet centering and meditation as we remember our baptisms.

Unity Presbyterian Church
303 Tom Hall Street
PO Box 1267
Fort Mill, SC 29716-1267

www.UnityFortMill.org

JOIN US SUNDAY

8:45 a.m.
In-Person/Livestream
Worship

11:00 a.m.
In-Person/Livestream
Worship

**Share Your
Tithes and Offerings
Online**



Return Service Requested

Thank you for supporting God's ministry through Unity Presbyterian Church.