

Life at Unity

February 04, 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,

With the inauguration of President Trump on January 20 and the Inaugural Prayer Service held at the Washington National Cathedral the next day, many are asking questions about the relationship between politics and preaching as multiple prayers from various Christian perspectives were offered at both events. I thought I would share a few of the ways that I try to approach such questions for us here at Unity Presbyterian Church.

As Presbyterians we are committed to a theology that what we believe should influence how we live our lives. Since our lives are lived as a part of communities and nations, our faith will always be “political.” Think of the number of times Jesus interacts with the politicians and political leaders in his day. Throughout scripture we see God using and/or critiquing political figures and authorities to accomplish God’s plans and purposes. So, as Christians, our faith is always personal but never private.

As Presbyterians we are also committed to a theology that says, with the help of the Holy Spirit, each person is able to read scripture for themselves and discern God’s particular call for them. Pastors, teachers, elders, bishops, or popes do not get to determine what it is that each of us as followers of Jesus believe. We all seek to test our readings of scripture and understandings of God’s call to us in conversation with others in the church, but ultimately we each possess a freedom of conscience around issues of faith and belief.

With these two commitments, we gather as a church for worship each week, we pray, and we hear sermons. My hope is that worship, prayers, and preaching all help us: 1) praise God and 2) draw us into a conversation with a scripture text and the world so that we might be better disciples of Jesus Christ in the week ahead. We lift up scriptural visions of how God would have the world be (love, mercy, justice, hospitality, common human dignity, etc.) in ways that are undoubtedly political, but I hope are not partisan (i.e. we do not advocate for particular candidates or policies). In fact, preaching like Jesus and the prophets tends to be critical of all political parties and officials for all fall short of the glory of God.

We pray that worship, prayers, and preaching at Unity draws us all into moments of pondering the interaction between the text and the world; not simply giving you a “do you agree or not with what the preacher said.” We hope that everyone who hears a sermon or joins a prayer at Unity will consider what the gospel means for their own life and faith, for what they post online, for who they vote for, and for the ways they advocate on behalf of others - but very rarely will you hear specifically how you are supposed to do those things. That part remains up to you with the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

As a friend recently shared with me, perhaps our particular calling in every political moment is to something like prophetic compassion and humility. Whenever you have a question, concern, or thought, our doors are always open. We will always be better together as we seek to hear and act on God’s word to us today.

See you Sunday!
Matt

The deadline to submit items
for the February 18th
Newsletter is **Wednesday,**
February 12th

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.

WE WELCOME NEW MEMBERS RECEIVED BY SESSION 1/27/2025

Drew & Lauren Clarke, with their children Ellen & Tyler

Bob & Gloria Hermanns

Michael & Elizabeth Hill, with their son Arthur

Justin Hunt

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 FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

16 -- Paulette Little; Bo Palmer

17 -- Kathy DesErmia; Adelaide Mari

18 -- Lisa Brown; Dehler Hart; Olivia Morgan

19 -- Tucker Cameron; Diana Edwards; Vicki Hawkins; Jake Olinger

20 -- Donita Cooper; James Hubis; Mary Pearson; Erin Pratt; Hill Spinner; Mary Martin Spinner

21 -- Emory Carter; Susan Green-Grove; Christian Meyer

22 -- Ted Benfield; Jean Knox; Tom Mullen; Aaron Wright

23 -- Ted Matthews; Morgan Reid

24 -- Catherine Barhorst; Beth Frattaroli; Samuel Mummy

25 -- Isabella Cardozo; Ella Gaither; Beth Reigel; Grant Smith

26 -- Sam Rich; Adam J. Smith; Scott Thorsell; Janis Yarde

27 -- Benjamin Key; Smith Pope; Charlie Stempler; Sherry Tuttle

28 -- Matt Barhorst; Colleen Baxley; Jacob Couchenour; Etta Routh

SCOUT SUNDAY - FEBRUARY 9TH

Each year in early February, Unity Presbyterian Church welcomes the scouts, parents, and leaders from Troop 108 (right) and Pack 108 (left) to worship for Scout Sunday. Unity has been the charting organization for Troop 108 and Pack 108 since the late 1980's. Groups from both the Troop and Pack continue to meet at the church most nights of the week, perform service projects around the church grounds, plus spend weekends camping, learning, and having a lot of fun. **Join us at both services on February 9th** as scouts and leaders help to lead us in worship and as we mark this important ministry of our congregation.



DR. MATT AND SARAH'S TRIP TO GREECE & TURKEY



On Sunday, February 9th after the 11:00 AM worship service in the Fellowship Hall, Dr. Matt will share about their "Footsteps of Paul" to Greece and Turkey. All are invited to come and hear about some of the places where Paul preached and taught, the context for his letters to the Corinthians and Ephesians, and these spiritual/historical sites today. Are you interested in being a part of a similar trip with your church family? We'll also begin talking about potential spiritual pilgrimage trips for Unity Presbyterian Church to Greece/Turkey; the Holy Land; Scotland; Reformation sites, and more.

CONGREGATIONAL BREAKFAST!

Join us on **Sunday, February 16th** for a **Congregational Breakfast in the Fellowship Hall at 9:45 a.m.** We will gather for a delicious breakfast and get to enjoy some fun fellowship with one another. No need to sign up, just plan to show up! We hope to see you there!



CWS BLANKETS +



“From something as simple as a blanket, amazing things can happen” - Church World Service

On **Sunday, February 16th**, Unity will again accept donations to purchase blankets for CWS-Blanket Sunday. A donation of \$10 will purchase a blanket that will be distributed to those facing a difficult time. The blanket will remind them that they are not alone.

Through the CWS Blanket program, you can share compassion in a practical way with neighbors near and far facing hard times. Donation envelopes will be in pews.

“And don't forget to do good and share with those in need.” Hebrews 13:16

WELCOME TO UNITY COFFEE - FEBRUARY 23RD

If you would like to know more about Unity Presbyterian Church, please join us for coffee on **Sunday, February 23rd in the Fellowship Hall from 9:45-10:45**. The coffee is an informal time for those interested in learning more about our church and membership. Members of the Hospitality and Evangelism committee and church staff will be there to greet you, along with others who are also visiting Unity. You will have an opportunity to learn what is involved in becoming a member and answer any of your questions. Children are welcome to join their parents, or they may attend Sunday school. We look forward to seeing you!



REGISTER NOW FOR MDSF!



Women of Unity will host our annual Mother Daughter Sister Friend Luncheon on March 23rd, 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! **Scan the QR code to register.**



Registration deadline is March 12th, or until the event sells out. Please contact Event Co-Chairs Karen Compton Fuqua (kfuqua@comporium.net) and Stephanie Faherty with any questions!

HEALTH TIP Dry Skin in Winter

We are all feeling the effects of lower outdoor humidity and dry indoor heat. Here are a few common-sense tips that consistently appear in medical publications:

1. Take shorter showers in order to retain more natural oil in your skin. Pat, don't rub, dry if you are experiencing skin that is itchy and irritated.
2. Lower the temperature of your shower/bath water. Hot water strips your skin of natural oils more quickly.
3. Apply moisturizer immediately after bathing, while your skin is still damp. Know the difference between lotions and moisturizers. Lotions contain more water and are absorbed more quickly, while moisturizers are creamier and thicker. Most people can benefit from a moisturizer in the winter.
4. Consider using a humidifier.
5. Look for products that are "fragrance-free". Those labelled "unscented" can contain chemicals that are used to mask the scents of other ingredients.

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.



**STEPHEN
MINISTRY**

COMMISSIONING OF NEW STEPHEN MINISTERS

After fifty hours of specialized training, Ted Benfield, Lori Glasco, Linda McMullen, Don Rice, Carol Simon, and James Smith are now qualified to become Stephen Ministers. Ted, Lori, Linda, Carol, and James were commissioned on Sunday, January 26th at the 11 o'clock service. Don was unable to attend and will be commissioned at a later date.

They will join our team of Stephen Ministers at Unity and provide one-to-one Christian care to people experiencing a crisis or going through a difficult time.

If you or someone you know is hurting, find out more about Stephen Ministry by talking with one of our referral coordinators, Susan Mobley or Dave Johnson, via email at Stephenministryreferrals@unityfortmill.org or call a pastor at the church office - 803-547-5543.

For more information on "What's Happening" at Unity, please visit...
www.unityfortmill.org/whats-happening/

MEDICAL EQUIPMENT CLOSET UPDATE

If you have borrowed equipment from our closet and are no longer using it, please return the item to the church's Medical Equipment Closet. We are in need of transfer wheel chairs, shower stools and knee walkers. Our medical equipment closet items are available for short term loan. Contact Susan Mobley (swmnurse@gmail.com) or the church office to arrange the loan.

REV. MARYANN MCKIBBEN DANA PREACHING ON MARCH 2

The author of *Hope: A User's Manual*, Rev. MaryAnn McKibben Dana will be preaching here at Unity on **Sunday, March 2nd** and leading a Q&A during the Faith Formation hour in the Fellowship Hall. Mark your calendars to be here that Sunday for a special word about hope in today's world. If you are not in a small group, pick up a copy of the book from your favorite bookseller or purchase one in the church office (limited copies available) and read on your own.



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



VBS PLANNING IS UNDERWAY! SIGN UP NOW TO VOLUNTEER



Vacation Bible School will be held Monday, June 9th - Thursday, June 12th from 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. for children in Rising 4K-4th grade. Mission Camp will be held concurrently for children currently in Rising 5th and 6th grade. This year's theme is "Road Trip: On the Go With God". **Registration will open** for Unity families, grandchildren of Unity members, and Unity Preschool families on **March 10th**. **Sign up now to volunteer** and help us make this summer the best VBS ever!: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0E4AA9AF22A4FE3-54606563-vbs2025>.

UNITY YOUTH ENGAGE IN INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING!

On **Sunday, February 2nd**, our middle and high school youth had a wonderful afternoon visiting with some of older members of our faith family. We enjoyed hearing stories about the ways that their faith and church community have been integral parts of their lives. We are inspired by their commitment to discipleship and grateful for the ways the church connects us across generations!



ALL YOUTH INVITED TO JOIN FOR OUR ANNUAL SUPER BOWL PARTY!

Join us on **Sunday, February 9th at 6:00 p.m.** until after the halftime show in the Fellowship Hall. Bring an appetizer, side dish, or dessert to share. Can't wait to see you for this evening of games, food, and fellowship!

Unity Youth
SUPER BOWL PARTY
Sunday, February 9th
6:00 pm
until after
the halftime show
Fellowship Hall
PLEASE BRING AN APPETIZER,
SIDE DISH, OR DESSERT TO
SHARE!

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

Children's Choirs started last Sunday, but you can still join in the fun! Cherub Choir (children who turned 4 by September 1, 2024 through first grade) meets 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!



YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING



Do you know how to respond to a youth facing a mental health crisis? Join the Children's Attention Home for "Youth Mental Health First Aid", delivered by Robyn Ellison, M.Ed.

Learn about the risk factors and warning signs of adolescent mental health issues, with an emphasis on early intervention. Using role-playing and simulations, you'll learn how to assess crises, provide initial help, and

connect adolescents to appropriate care. This **FREE** training includes lunch and your certification.

WHEN: Wednesday, February 12th | 9am - 5pm

WHERE: La Quinta Inn & Suites in Rock Hill: 1235 Springdale Rd, Rock Hill, SC 29730

Visit https://mhfa921.swell.gives/?blm_aid=264986631 to register. **Deadline to register is Sunday, February 9th.** Questions? Please call 803-372-5981.

SIGN UP TO BE AN ACOLYTE!

Calling all Unity students 4th grade and higher to be a part of the Acolyte Ministry at Unity! Acolytes are a very important part of our worship services each week by carrying the light of Christ into the sanctuary at the beginning of worship. After the service, the acolytes extinguish the candles and carry the light of Christ out of the sanctuary and into the world. Acolytes are needed for both the 8:45 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. services. The upcoming acolyte schedule will be for the period March through June, 2025

If you are interested in participating in the worship service by being an acolyte, please join me for an acolyte training session to sign up and learn more about this ministry. Training sessions can be arranged after school, on Saturdays, on Sunday afternoons, or on school holidays. The session takes place in the narthex and the sanctuary and should last about 30 minutes. A parent is required to attend to provide the information necessary to make a schedule and to hear the details of the program.



Please contact Jessie Little at jmlittle@comporium.net if your child(ren) are interested in participating as an acolyte in order to set up a training day and time that is convenient for you.

PW HONORARY LIFE MEMBERSHIP AWARD 2025 NOMINATION GUIDELINES

Thank you for choosing to nominate a candidate for the Presbyterian Women Honorary Life Membership Award. Each year the Women of Unity nominate and select an extraordinary woman to receive the Presbyterian Women Honorary Life Membership Award. This is a national honor originating in 1912 from the Presbyterian Women in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A). It recognizes women that are known for their commitment to Christ and the mission of the church. This award honors the woman who has given of herself over her lifetime in devoted service to her church and community. A woman who has impacted the lives of many with her love, generosity, and actions.

The following guidelines apply for this nomination:

- Any woman who has been active member of Unity Presbyterian Church for no less than 5 years.
- The nominee should be no younger than 30 years of age.
- The nominee may or may not be currently active in a Women of Unity Circle.
- Consider how this nominee has used her time and talents to service God, the church, her family and the community.

Deadline to receive nominations is Sunday, February 23rd. There's a brown envelope in the Narthex where you can get a nomination form, or you can visit <https://unityfortmill.org/ministries/adults/women-of-unity/honorary-lifemember-award/> or click here to fill out a nomination form. Forms can be submitted to ftmillhowell@comporium.net, or placed in the brown envelope for "completed forms" in the Narthex or WOU box across from the church office. Questions? Contact Emelia Howell at ftmillhowell@comporium.net.

DID YOU KNOW?

Did You Know, like all entities, Unity pays fees for collecting certain donations?

- **Cash & Checks** are handled in-house and do not have fees associated with depositing them.
- **Online giving initiated through your financial institution** does not have fees associated with depositing them.
- **Automatic Bank Draft** where you provide Unity's financial office with your bank's routing and account number, and we pull the donation monthly or quarterly. There is a small batch fee that when spread over many donations is pennies for each donation.
- **Online Giving initiated through Unity's Realm system** carry both a transaction fee for each transaction and a processing fee as a percentage of the transaction.

BETHELWOODS CAMP & CONFERENCE CENTER: BOURBON AND BOWTIES

BETHELWOODS CAMP AND CONFERENCE CENTER
BOURBON AND BOWTIES
CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF BETHELWOODS!

TOP SHELF BOURBON
LOCAL BREWERY
CURATED MENU
SILENT AUCTION
DANCING

APRIL 26, 2025
HORTON LODGE
6PM-11PM

PURCHASE TABLES
AND TICKETS



Ecumenical Mission Trip to Mexico May 24-30, 2025

The Providence Presbytery Mexico Border Ministry Neighborhood is excited to offer a trip for local disciples to travel to Frontera de Cristo in Agua Prieta, Mexico. This is where our missionaries, Mark Adams and Miriam Maldonado are serving. We will spend 7 days learning about the work that they and their Mexican partners are doing.

Some of the places we will visit are the Migrant Resource Center, CAME and the Lily of the Valley Presbyterian Church. We will also learn more about Café Justo when we visit Café Justo y Mas coffee shop. To learn more about the mission partners that Frontera de Cristo works with visit www.fronteradecristo.org.



Cost- Each traveler will pay for their own air travel to Tucson. The Basic cost per person will be **\$800**. This will include dormitory style lodging, meals, and transportation from the airport and while we are in Agua Prieta. We have a detailed Mission Handbook which we give to anyone who is interested in the trip.



G  **MAD DAY**
(Make A Difference)

SAVE THE DATE!

Saturday, March 29, 2025
from 9AM - 12 Noon

**A day of service for the entire
congregation.**

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.