

Life at Unity

February 19, 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,

At the beginning of each calendar year, I provide the Session with a reflection on the last year and attempt to place our congregational life and experience within the larger context of the scriptural story of God's people for we are not the first to try to follow Jesus in this crazy world. Two biblical images come to mind this year:

The first is a story we hear in several of the gospels. A paralytic man's friends carried him to see Jesus but could not get close due to the crowds. So, they carry him to the roof, make a hole, and lower the paralytic down before Jesus. It's a great story! And yet, what draws my attention as we begin this new year is the response of the crowd after Jesus orders the man to take up his mat and walk. "Amazement seized all of them, and they glorified God and were filled with fear, saying, 'We have seen incredible things today.'" (Luke 5:26). In our life together, I am continually amazed at the incredible things God is doing in our midst. Most days I rejoice in these good gifts! Occasionally I am a bit afraid, for much is asked of us in this moment as disciples of Jesus Christ. Sometimes it seems we are merely holding on to the Holy Spirit and it's definitely a wild ride! But it is a good and holy moment to see the incredible things God is doing through and with Unity Presbyterian Church.

The second image has always been a treasured biblical story for me. In fact, during our recent trip to Greece, I bought a Greek Orthodox icon portraying this story of Jesus breaking bread with two disciples after their journey together to Emmaus. In the breaking of the bread, their eyes are opened, and they recognize Jesus. Despite Jesus' vanishing from their sight, the two disciples say to one another, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road." (Luke 24:32) These two disciples run back to Jerusalem to tell the other disciples that they have seen the Lord. I truly believe that we have an opportunity to see Jesus as we gather together for worship, faith formation, fellowship and service at Unity Presbyterian Church. Our faith grows and our witness to Christ's love deepens through our life together. I am asking in this new year, "What does it mean for us to live as post-resurrection disciples, bearing witness to God's transformative work in the world?"

It's God's Story and Our Stories. Where are you seeing them connect in this new year?

See you Sunday!
Matt

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN A SPIRITUAL PILGRIMAGE INTERNATIONAL TRIP

Thank you to all who came to hear Dr. Matt share about the "Footsteps of Paul" trip to Greece and Turkey that he and Sarah took in January. Based on such a big crowd, we are beginning to plan for a Spiritual Pilgrimage International Trip with members and friends of Unity. Visit this link (<https://forms.gle/oHLqP4pkYr59SwT89>) or use the QR Code to express your interest in possible trips to Greece/Turkey; Italy; Egypt; Scotland; Germany/Switzerland, or more, plus to see a recording of Dr. Matt's presentation and slides. With enough interest, we'll look toward traveling together in 2026 or early 2027.



CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Monday through Thursday
8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
(Closed on Fridays)
803.547.5543
www.UnityFortMill.org

EARLY MARCH BIRTHDAYS

1 -- Maggie Bost; Joan DeBruyn; Nancy Fricke; Bill Wacker; Tracy Young

2 -- Harrison Martin; Livia Parise

3 -- William Folsom

4 -- Leigh Burrell; Kathryn Little; Raleigh McCabe; Kim Rozelle; James Sizemore; Emerson Turner

5 -- Georgia Dela Cruz; Keith Hall; Matthew Palmer; Dannie Vaughn

6 -- Bob Cook; Wyatt Hamilton; Krystal Melton; John Thomas Pettus

7 -- Merrick Estes; Susan Mobley; Leah Oppel; Kevin Pascal; Bekah Rich; Robert Ryals

8 -- Vance Ernst; Kelsey Pettus; Charlie Reilly; Kristine Veltri

9 -- Ruth Boetsch; Dan Dunbar; Lilly Hoffman; Barry Wells

10 -- Davis Glasco; Jack Hagood; Kathy Wilson

11 -- Sandra Moore

12 -- Joel Jennings; Ida White

13 -- Nate Baxley; Jake Moore; Easton Shaftner; Becky Smith

14 -- John Cioni; Hayes Jones; Tripp Menchaca

15 -- Gwen Garvey; Cissy George; Holly Jones; Hugh Oakes; Kate Prescott

WELCOME TO UNITY COFFEE - FEBRUARY 23RD



If you would like to know more about Unity Presbyterian Church, please join us for coffee on **February 23rd in Fellowship Hall from 9:45 a.m. - 10:45 a.m.** 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. We look forward to seeing you!

LUNCH BUNCH

Join us **Wednesday, February 26th at 12:00 Noon** for Lunch Bunch! Former IBM executive, Joe Panko, will be our speaker this month. He had a very charming life until the plane he was traveling on plunged into New York City's East River in 1989. This event changed his life and triggered post-traumatic stress disorder, which he has had to learn to navigate for years. He shares his story in an effort to help others recognize the early signs of the disease, get the help they need, and shorten their path to recovery. Bring your sandwich or salad and join us for this interesting presentation. Chips, drinks, and desserts are provided.



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!

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 at 10:00 a.m. 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.



ASH WEDNESDAY - BEGINNING THE SEASON OF LENT



Make plans to join us on **March 5th, Ash Wednesday** this year, as we begin the season of Lent together. The season of Lent, forty days (not counting Sundays), is a season which helps us to prepare for Easter begins on Ash Wednesday. We will have **self-directed prayer stations available in the Historic Sanctuary from 8:30 AM to 5:30 PM** and gather for an **Ash Wednesday Worship Service worship in the Sanctuary at 6:30 PM**.

The service is a simple service of prayer, scripture, music, a short homily, and the opportunity to receive ashes on your forehead or hand. We begin the Season of Lent with ashes as a sign of our repentance, and yet those ashes are placed in the shape of a cross to remind us that our redemption is found in Christ alone.

If you are unable to attend either the prayer stations or the service and would like to receive ashes, please let Dr. Matt, Pastor Molly, or Dr. Mark know and they will make arrangements with you.

Our Lenten theme will be "Lift Up!" and connect with this year's Stewardship Campaign. We'll be reading and praying the Songs of Ascent (Psalm 120-134) which were used by the Israelites traveling as pilgrims to Jerusalem for festivals like Passover. Perhaps these were the hymns he sang and the prayers he prayed as Jesus made his way toward the city for the final week of his earthly life. As we travel and pray together, may we lift up our eyes, our hands, and our hearts in gratitude, commitment, and praise.

ASH WEDNESDAY SELF-GUIDED PRAYER STATIONS

Prayer Stations will be available on **Ash Wednesday, March 5th, from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. in the Historic Sanctuary** for people of all ages to reflect and prepare for the season of Lent. These simple and interactive self-guided activities will provide a quiet space for those who may not be able to attend the evening worship service and those who would like an opportunity to set an intention for Lent in an interactive and contemplative space. No registration is required. Drop in as you are able.



HEALTH TIP: EXERCISE WITHOUT EXERCISING

Some days are so busy that our exercise routines get bumped. There are still things we do that can count as exercise like some housecleaning chores, yardwork, shopping, and chasing our children/grandchildren. We can stretch while on the phone or watching television. We can wear ankle weights around the house. Our blankets and fireplaces are inviting, however, staying active will help keep us warm and healthy.

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.

PRESBYTERIAN BEDROCK BELIEFS

Presbyterian Bedrock Beliefs, A Sunday Elective, will be offered on **Sunday, March 16th at 10:00 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall**. When it comes down to it, when you boil it down to its very essence, what exactly is it, in just a few words (or phrases) that we Presbyterians believe? Join Rev. Mark Verdery for this one session opportunity to explore what our essential beliefs are. No registration is necessary.

COMMISSIONING OF NEW STEPHEN MINISTERS



Ted Benfield, Lori Glasco, Linda McMullen, Carol Simon, and James Smith were commissioned as Stephen Ministers on Sunday, January 26th at the 11 o'clock service. Don Rice was unable to attend and will be commissioned later. To the left is a picture of the new Stephen Ministers who were commissioned on January 26th.

They have completed 50 hours of specialized training in Christian caregiving and hours of study, and they join our team of Stephen Ministers at Unity to provide one-to-one Christian care to people experiencing a crisis or going through a difficult time.

If you or someone you know might benefit from having a Stephen Minister, please find out more about Stephen Ministry by talking with one of our referral coordinators, Susan Mobley or Dave Johnson, via email at Stephenministryreferrals@unityformill.org or call Rev. Molly Spangler at the church office - 803-547-5543.

MONEY TALKS: CONVERSATIONS ABOUT MONEY, FAITH, LIFE, & THE STORIES WE TELL

Join Dr. Matt for "Money Talks," a small group where we'll talk about money, faith, life, and the stories we tell. The group will meet on **March 9th, 16th, 23rd, and 30th at 4:00 p.m. in M102**. Topics will include reflecting on what we've learned about money and faith from our parents and grandparents; our own motivations for giving of our time, talents, and resources; what scripture tells us about stewardship and money (it's a lot!); and the vision we have for faithful use of our money and resources in the future. There's no doubt that "money talks," so come and see what yours might be saying.



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



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

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>.



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 10th

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

GCS LOVE THROUGH SERVING OTHERS

Growing Christians (GCs), our 4th and 5th grade fellowship and service group, focused on the call in Matthew 22:36-40 to "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and mind and love others as you love yourself" the past few weeks. We practiced loving others by assembling treat bags for a Valentine's event at Defend the Fatherless for foster families and making casseroles for their freezer ministry. Our children are wonderful cooks and serve others with exuberance and love.



UNITY YOUTH EXPLORE FAITH THROUGH COOKING CLASSES!



On Sunday, our youth engaged in a cooking class with professional chef, Chris Routh! We made lemon blueberry scones and explored stories of Jesus welcoming others to the table, moving beyond social barriers to share God's love with all people. Missed out this week? **Join us again this Sunday, February 23rd, at 5:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall!**

YOUTH DINNER AND DEVOTION AT PATHWAYS

Our youth loved the opportunity to share a devotion at Pathways Community Center with our neighbors experiencing homelessness in our community. Our devotion focused on the gift of community and our call to create a world where all God's children are safe, cared for, and loved. As the Apostle Paul writes, when one suffers, we all suffer, and when one rejoices, we all rejoice. We are all one in the body of Christ!



YOUTH CHOIR

All Youth grades 6-12 are invited to sing in Youth Choir this spring. We will rehearse in the choir room after 11:00 worship on the following Sundays: March 2, March 9, and March 23. We will be singing in worship on Sunday, March 30th at both services. **Use the QR code to sign up.** Contact Margaret Monroe at mmonroe@UnityFortMill.org with any questions or for more information.



RSVP NOW FOR TRIVIA NIGHT FOR YOUTH & FAMILIES!

All youth, parents, and families are invited to join for a fun evening of trivia on **Sunday, March 2nd from 4:00 - 5:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall**. Please bring an appetizer to share. We will also collect donation items for hurricane relief in Western NC (more details coming soon). Please RSVP at: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30E0D49AEAD28ABFD0-54945314-unity>.

Sunday, March 2nd 4-5:30 PM	FELLOWSHIP HALL
	All youth, parents, and families invited!
	Donation items will be collected for Hurricane Helene relief in Western NC. More information coming soon!
	Bring an appetizer to share!

RSVP BY FEBRUARY 26TH ON
SIGN-UP GENIUS!

PRAYER SQUARES AND LAP BLANKET/PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

Are you aware that Unity has several talented women knitting or crocheting Prayer Squares? Each square is accompanied by a prayer for the individual who needs support. There are Prayer Squares in the Narthex and outside of the church office. Please take one for yourself, a friend, or family member that you think may need one.

If you know of a person who may need a Lap Blanket/Prayer Shawl, please contact the office and let one of the ministers know and they can arrange delivery.

We always welcome new members who can knit or crochet to continue this valuable service to our church and community. Patterns can be provided.

For more information contact Paula Jackson at 803-547-3463 or Ann Spitzer at 248-978-5324.



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.

PEANUT BUTTER AND JELLY SUNDAY



Sunday, March 2nd, is Peanut Butter & Jelly Sunday. Please bring your donations of food and supplies for the Fort Mill Care Center and deposit them in the collection box in the Narthex on Sunday or any time you are at church. Current needs at the Care Center include rice (one pound bags), pasta sauce, canned fruit, applesauce, canned meat, jelly, and snacks. You can also drop off donations, including any refrigerated items, directly at the Fort Mill Care Center. They are open MWF 9:00 AM to noon and Tuesday from 5 to 7 PM. Please have them weigh the donation and please send an Email with the total weight to Larry Terrell at larry.terrell@sbcglobal.net. Last month we collected 410 lbs., bringing our year-to-date total to 1,020 lbs. Thank you for generously supporting our neighbors in need.

CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT BENEFITING HABITAT FOR HUMANITY OF YORK COUNTY

The ISACA Charlotte Chapter is hosting a charity golf tournament benefiting Habitat for Humanity of York County on Monday, May 5th, 2025 at River Hills Country Club in Lake Wylie, SC. This Captain's Choice golf event is raising funds for affordable homeownership construction in York County. Cost is \$175/player or \$700/team. For more information and to register go to: <https://yorkcountyhabitat.org/golftournament>.

Habitat for Humanity of York County

2025 CAPTAIN'S CHOICE CHARITY
GOLF TOURNAMENT
RIVER HILLS COUNTRY CLUB

HOSTED BY:
ISACA
Charlotte Chapter

BETHELWOODS CAMP AND CONFERENCE CENTER BOURBON AND BOWTIES

CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF BETHELWOODS!

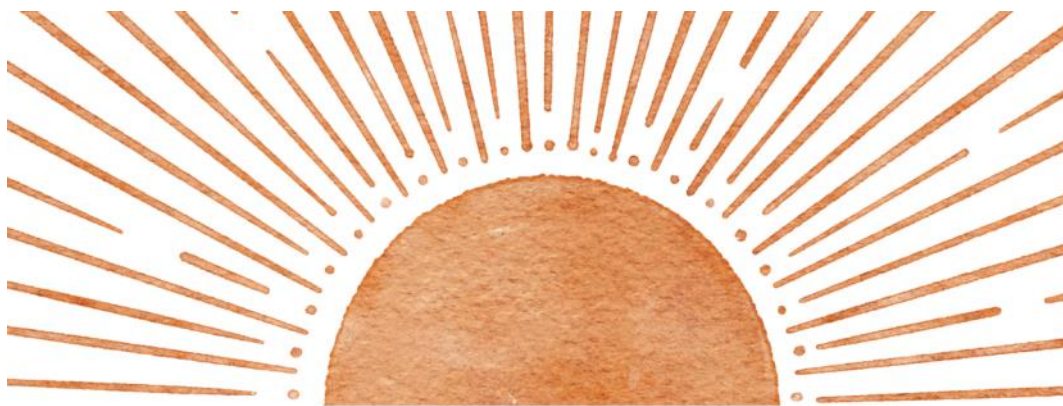
TOP SHELF BOURBON
LOCAL BREWERY
CURATED MENU
SILENT AUCTION
DANCING

APRIL 26, 2025
HORTON LODGE
6PM-11PM

PURCHASE TABLES
AND TICKETS



REGISTER NOW FOR GO MAD DAY!



GO MAD DAY

(Make A Difference)

Saturday, March 29, 2025
from 8AM - 12 Noon

Register before March 16th!

**You're invited to a day of
service for the entire
congregation.**



Registration is open for GO MAD (Go Make a Difference) Day, our intergenerational day of service to be **held on Saturday, March 29th, from 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.** GO MAD Day is for people 4-100 years old and offers small group service projects appropriate for families with children, teens, and adults of all ages. A nursery will be provided for children under age 4. We will be working with many of our local mission partners here in York County. **See information on all projects and sign up for one today on realm using the QR code. Registration is open now through March 16th.** If you have any questions, contact Molly Spangler at mspangler@unityfortmill.org for more information.



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.

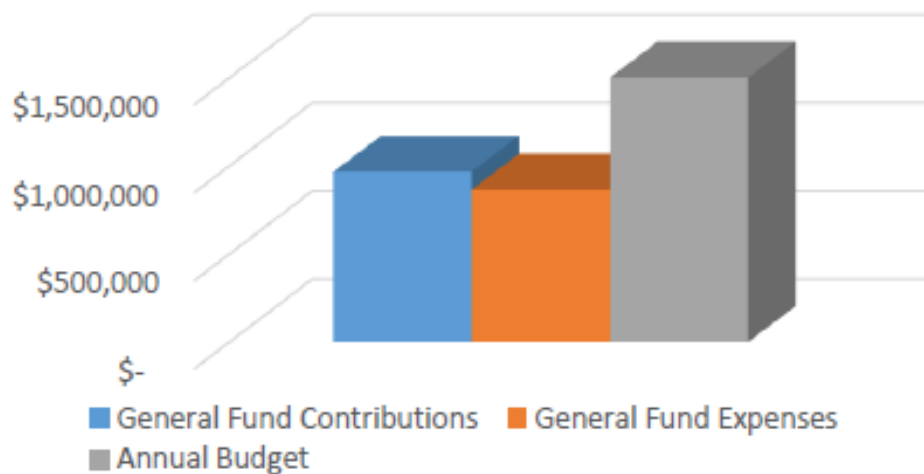
DID YOU KNOW?

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.

2024-2025 BUDGET UPDATE

Contributions & Expenses July - January Compared with the Annual Budget



	January 2025	Jul 1, 2024 through Jan 31, 2025	% of Annual Budget	5-Year Average
General Fund Contributions	\$ 86,195	\$ 965,400	59.0%	\$ 918,401
General Fund Expenses	143,660	864,657	52.8%	792,851
Annual Budget		1,636,321	100.0%	1,519,243

Current Status of the 2010 Sanctuary Building Debt

Balance, January 31, 2025	\$ 369,300
Projected Balloon Payment Due, 6/5/2027	\$ 205,000

Please remember Unity in your estate plan.

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.