

# Life at Unity

June 17, 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,

One of the most thoughtful and prolific Old Testament scholars of the last fifty years was Walter Brueggemann, who taught for many years at Columbia Theological Seminary. Brueggemann died on June 5th at the age of 92. A number of his commentaries, books, and articles can be found on my bookshelves, but one that seems to speak to me in this moment was a 2001 collection of essays called *Peace*. In one essay he writes:

In these days, fear is deep and broad in the land and in the church. Fear does strange things to people. It makes us withdraw from our brothers and sisters and live in a crouch. ... It makes us say things and do things that do not honor us. It makes us hurt one another – all because we fear the world is falling apart. Fear is our modern form of atheism; fear that there is no order but the one I invent. Thus I must protect what little order I have, scramble to make more, and keep people from intruding on my order or my mystery or my goodies, because if they come there, it will all fall apart. (p 155)

It is not hard to argue that the world still looks like it's falling apart. Primordial chaos is threatening to overwhelm the good and ordered creation we have known and trusted for so long. Protests in the streets. Governments that seem intent on disorder. The future of the denominational church appears bleak. We seem to be floundering directionless as we experience our Lord's bewildering absence.

Yet, in an age that knew as much or even more fear and anxiety as our own, Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem. He went in, he taught, he healed, and he got himself in a lot of trouble. The powers and principalities plotted to kill him. Knowing that plot would be successful, Jesus sat down to eat dinner with his disciples. And as he prepared to leave them he said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you. I do not give as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid." (John 14:27).

Two thousand years later we are still trying to figure out what Jesus meant. Out of our anxiety and fear, we are trying to create, to make, to order the world for peace. But the peace that Jesus gives cannot be created, made, or ordered by our hands. Peace is fundamentally a gift to us. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you." Again, Brueggemann writes,

To the extent that peace is a gift, that is, the enduring work of God, we are relieved of anxiety. There are some things you and I can count on ... the world will not collapse, and we need not be frantic about the prospect that it will. ... Because we thought we could make and unmake worlds, we are now depressed with our failure to do so. Well, of course! The Bible believes that we cannot finally unmake the world because we have not made the world. There is a drive toward peace, *shalom*, located in the promises of God that we cannot obviate. (p 90).

Receiving that gift of peace, of shalom, brings its own kind of work and engagement in the world. In another book, *The Prophetic Imagination*, Brueggemann suggests, "The central task of ministry is the formation of a community with an alternative, liberated imagination, that has the courage and the freedom to act in a different vision and a different perception of reality." I think Unity Presbyterian Church is and is becoming just that kind of place. May it be so.

God bless,  
Matt

The deadline to submit items for the July 1st Newsletter is **Wednesday, June 25th.**

## 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](mailto:vaughndl@comporium.net).

## HEALTH TIP

Get outside. 20 minutes of walking outside each day has been shown to reduce stress and calm anxiety and depression.

## CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

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

## EARLY JULY BIRTHDAYS

- 1 -- Janet Bassford
- 2 -- Jim Bickett; Judy Cowell; Justin Richardson
- 3 -- Gray Patterson; Dave Reimer; Thos Spratt
- 4 -- Nicole Creech; Ken Evans; Emily Newman; Jack Veltri
- 5 -- Missy Babinchak; Melissa Hall; Marianne Holiday; Garion Wascher
- 6 -- Scott Bagwell; Judi Griffin; Emma Lubanski; Jim Mathers; Liam McCabe; David Shamble; Lea Woodward
- 7 -- Hunter Smith
- 8 -- Oscar Beshers; Tom Cowell; Alex Macaulay; Elizabeth Macaulay; Will Macaulay; Jan Rogers
- 9 -- Bruce Edwards; Eve Hansen; Sandy Randall
- 10 -- Bobby Elisha; Scott Hermanns; Bobby Palmer; Betty Squatriglia Craig Templeton; Patrick White
- 11 -- Robert Hudspeth; Sonya Schuermann
- 12 -- Mike Carwile; Ona Mabe; Nim Routh; A.J. Smith; Tim Whitesell
- 13 -- Megan Chmielinski; Collins Kim; Debbie Matthews; Ralph Merlo; Renee Stokes; Will Weaver
- 14 -- Allison Hudson; Stephanie Pecarro; Jennifer Sovia
- 15 -- Melissa Dowd; Terry Hudson; Anissa Lee; Zachary White; Sara Windham

## "TENDING THE SOUL" - SUMMER PREACHING & WORSHIP SERIES

After living into the vision "God's Story and Our Stories" for the last two years, concluding with our current Easter Season series on the Book of Revelation, we sensed a need this summer to collectively pause and consider the spiritual gifts and practices that sustain us as we engage as disciples in the world and look forward to a new vision together. So, **our preaching and worship series for June and July**



**will be "Tending the Soul."** While each week will stand alone, we hope you will join us for this series as we grow, explore, and reflect together:

- June 22 - Being Present
- June 29 - Saying No
- July 6 - Nourishment
- July 13 - Community
- July 20 - Dwelling in God's Word
- July 27 - Wonder, Awe, and Beauty

## SABBATICAL - DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MARGARET MONROE

Unity Presbyterian Church has long granted sabbatical leave to Ministers, Certified Educators, and Church Professionals according to approved guidelines. As recommended by Providence Presbytery's Sabbatical Leave policy, "Sabbatical leave is an extension of the Biblical concept of renewal through the Sabbath day and Sabbath year." It is a time to step away briefly from the persistent obligations of daily congregational life and to engage in a period of renewal and reflection. Renewal periods are not vacations, but times for intentional exploration and reflection, for regaining the enthusiasm and creativity for ministry, for discovering what will make the church leader's heart sing.

In recognition of her seven years of faithful ministry at Unity Presbyterian Church, Margaret Monroe is eligible for sabbatical. With the approval, prayers, and full support of the Human Resources Ministry Team, the Session, and Dr. Rich, Margaret's sabbatical **will begin on Monday, June 23rd, and she will return on Monday, August 4th.** She will be attending conferences, spending time with family, working on complex organ pieces, plus worshiping and learning from other congregations and faith communities. Margaret shared, "I am so appreciative to the church for this time of renewal, and I look forward to returning refreshed and ready for the upcoming program year!"

During this time, so that Margaret can focus on rest and renewal, she will not be answering phone calls, text messages, or emails. If you have questions that you would normally ask Margaret, please reach out to Matt Rich or the chair of the Worship and Music Ministry Team (Lauren Mobley). Patsy Surratt will be playing for worship on Sundays and working with the choir.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to let us know and begin praying that this time of Sabbatical will be an opportunity for rest and renewal for Margaret as well as a chance for new growth for our congregation.

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR - WORSHIP AT 10:00 AM EACH SUNDAY IN JULY



We had so much fun last summer, we've decided to do it again. We will hold a **single worship service each week at 10:00 AM each Sunday in July**. Unity traditionally participates in Change for the Church with casual dress and a special offering in July, so we'll also change our worship time to all worship together. Children in Worship and Nursery will be offered at this service as well

as Family Choir. So, go ahead and change your calendars to note that we'll worship at 10:00 AM each Sunday in July - and come early because it means the sanctuary will be full each week!

## SUMMER ALL-CHURCH FAITH FORMATION

**Road Trip:  
On the Go with God**

**All-Church Faith Formation**  
Sundays at 10:00 am  
in June  
Fellowship Hall

Join us for an interactive Bible story each week reminding us that  
***"The Lord our God is with us  
wherever we go."***

We'll explore a variety of responsive activities that help us connect these stories to our own journeys with God. Come any Sunday you are in town for a trip through the Bible you won't want to miss!

For people of all ages  
No registration needed

Nursery provided for children 3 and under

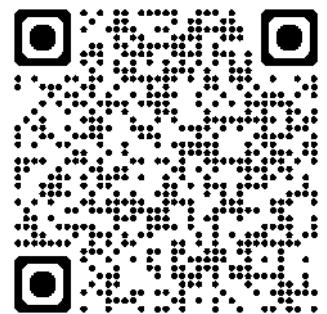


## WEDNESDAY DANCE FITNESS CLASSES - modified summer schedule

The Dance Fitness classes will meet every other week in the summer. Both classes (Rhythm-n-Moves at 9:30 a.m. and Line Dance at 10:30 a.m.) will meet on June 18th, July 2nd, July 16th, and July 30th. We will return to meeting every week beginning in August.

## VOLUNTEER TO HELP RECYCLE HERE AT CHURCH

As a community of faith, we are always discerning how we can be good stewards of all that God has given us, including the creation around us. We have begun to recycle our paper again here on Unity's campus, and we are in need of volunteers to help us take that recycling to the recycling center each week. If you can help us with this effort, **please use the QR code to sign up** for a Thursday to come pick up recycling. Or if you are interested in learning more or have questions, please contact Rev. Molly Spangler at [mspangler@unityfortmill.org](mailto:mspangler@unityfortmill.org).



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



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## CHILDREN IN WORSHIP SUMMER SCHEDULE

CIW will be offered at the 8:45 service only in June and at the 10:00 am service in July. CIW will resume during both services in August. Rising 4K children (age 4 before September 1, 2025) are invited to attend beginning in June. Rising second graders may continue attending through July or begin sitting with their parents in the worship service and practicing their worship skills.

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## SPIRITUAL PILGRIMAGE TO SCOTLAND

There are two open spots left for the trip! Register by July 2nd with a deposit of \$1,295.



**SPIRITUAL  
PILGRIMAGE TO  
*Scotland***

RETREAT, RENEWAL, & PILGRIMAGE  
ARE SPIRITUAL PRACTICES AT THE  
HEART OF THE CHRISTIAN  
COMMUNITY.

WE INVITE YOU TO PARTICIPATE IN  
A TRAVEL PILGRIMAGE TO  
SCOTLAND IN THE SPRING OF 2026.

CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE  
2 SPOTS LEFT! REGISTER TODAY!



## CHURCH OFFICE FRONT DESK VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Unity's church office has opportunities for members to volunteer at the front desk every month. The duties include answering the phone and taking a message, buzzing the door open for guests, and light administrative work.

Volunteers are needed for 1 to 2 hours in the morning or early afternoon, Monday-Thursday. Sign up for as little or as much as you would like! Training will be provided prior to your first day. If you are interested in learning more about volunteering at the front desk, please email or call the receptionist, Stephanie Girardot: [sgirardot@unityfortmill.org](mailto:sgirardot@unityfortmill.org) (803) 547-5543.

## UNITY YOUTH MID-WEEK MISSION AT DEFEND THE FATHERLESS

We had an awesome time sorting clothes and learning about how we can support foster and adoptive families in our community! We also enjoyed lunch together at Hobo's. Sign-up to join us for our next Mid-Week Mission on Wednesday, June 18<sup>th</sup>!

## 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](http://www.UnityFortMill.org)

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

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

Be sure to "like" our page.

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## SAVE THE DATE FOR UNITY YOUTH MID-WEEK MISSION & ICE CREAM SUNDAYS THIS SUMMER!

We'll engage in outreach projects together on Wednesday mornings (RSVP at <https://bit.ly/3SBTeRJ>), and gather for ice cream together on Sunday afternoons!

### UNITY YOUTH SUMMER 2025



## MID-WEEK MISSION

MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH

6/4 (Defend the Fatherless, 10-11:30am)

6/18 (Bethel Men's Shelter, 9:30-1:30pm. Bring \$ for lunch at Hobo's! Transportation provided!)

7/23 (Adult Enrichment Center, 10-11:30am, more details coming soon!)

Registration & more details available on Sign-Up Genius!

### UNITY YOUTH SUMMER 2025



## ICE CREAM SUNDAYS

MIDDLE SCHOOL, 2-3PM  
HIGH SCHOOL, 3-4PM

6/15 (SweetFrog, 914 Smithfield Way)

6/29 (Whit's Frozen Custard, 1642 Hgwy 160 W)

7/13 (Cold Stone Creamery, 1329 Broadcloth St.)

7/20 (Scoop n' Swirl, 753 Crossroads Plaza)

No registration needed!

## FAMILY CHOIR

While the Chancel Choir takes a break from Wednesday rehearsals in July, you are invited to join us for Family Choir! Family Choir is open to children (who are readers), youth, and adults. Each Sunday of July, Family Choir will rehearse at 9:00 in the choir room with Patsy Surratt to get ready for our single 10:00 worship service. We will learn a simple anthem together, and you don't have to wear a robe! This is a great low-pressure opportunity for singers who can't commit to participation in the choir throughout the year, as well as a chance for potential new choir members to try it out. Join us for all four Sundays in July, or as often as you're in town.

## SAVE THE DATE FOR MUSIC CAMP!



Save the date! Registration will open in the fall.

**Who?** Children age 4 (by September 1, 2025) through 5th grade

**What?** A VBS-style music camp where we'll learn and perform a musical!

**Where?** Unity Presbyterian Church

**When?** February 16-20, 2026, 9:00-12:30 (after care also available until 5:30 p.m.)

**Why?** To praise God through drama, dance, and music.



## VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Thanks to All Our VBS Leaders and Shepherds, VBS was a Fabulous Journey!

We had a blast at VBS last week traveling on a road trip through the Bible with God. Thank you to the 80 plus adults and youth who decorated, planned, led, and guided our children along the way. We learned that God is always with us on our journeys near and far. Mark your calendars for registration to open in early March for VBS 2026 to be held June 15-18.





## DONATIONS FOR THE TRINIDAD SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

Nine of Unity's members, July 9-18 will bring a mission trip to Honduras. This will be Unity's 12th trip to the municipality of Trinidad, Copan. We will be working in a 10-house project in the neighborhood of San Juan Planes. We will be accompanied by Tim Wheeler, retired PCUSA mission co-worker. Members of past teams have met many children that are now in their teens and need help in completing their education. The 2025 team plans to take a monetary donation for the Trinidad Scholarship Committee to help these young people. We are asking for your help. If you would like to make a donation, you may visit <https://onrealm.org/unityfortmill/-/form/give/default> to donate online on Unity's website using the account name "Adult Missions" and enter in the memo space "Honduras Scholarships". Scholarships of \$130/year for students in town and \$160 for students from communities that need transportation, to cover the cost of school supplies, books, uniforms, computers and printing supplies. The 2025 team of Bob Edwards, Brian Fish, Michaela Fish, Jonathan Mikulsky, Adam Rusch, Joyce Sullivan, Beverly Tysinger and Ken Tysinger thank you for your donations. **Donations should be made by June 22nd.**

## STEPHEN MINISTRY & CONFIDENTIALITY

We like to think of summer as being a relaxing, enjoyable time, but hurts, struggles, crises, and problems don't take a vacation. Often our difficulties seem even worse during the summer because everyone else seems to be enjoying life while you are feeling down. If you are experiencing a difficult time—emotionally, spiritually, or relationally—you don't have to suffer alone.

Our Stephen Ministers are trained caregivers, ready to listen, care for and encourage you, pray with and for you, and provide one-to-one Christian care to help you through whatever it is that you are facing. It will make a difference in your life!

To learn more about Stephen Ministry, please contact one of our referral coordinators, Susan Mobley or Dave Johnson, via email at [Stephenministryreferrals@unityfortmill.org](mailto:Stephenministryreferrals@unityfortmill.org) or call Rev.



## MISSION CAMP 2025

June 9<sup>th</sup> through the 12<sup>th</sup>, 22 rising 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders had an awesome week of Mission Camp! We engaged in 16 different mission projects around Fort Mill and Rock Hill, visiting with partners at Defend the Fatherless, Fort Mill Care Center, Classroom Ready, Bethel Men's Shelter, and more! We explored what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ every day by using our gifts to care for all of God's children. Thank you to all of our adult leaders who made this week possible and to all of our children who showed us each day with energy, enthusiasm, and commitment to following Jesus Christ!



## CHANGE FOR THE CHURCH

**Beginning Sunday, July 6th, and continuing throughout the month of July,** we will collect our **CHANGE FOR THE CHURCH OFFERING**. During this time, we encourage everyone to collect their household change and donate to Unity for the following missions:



One-third of the Change for the Church offering will be used to provide school supplies for children in need in the Fort Mill School District through the Foundation for Fort Mill Schools' Classroom Ready project.

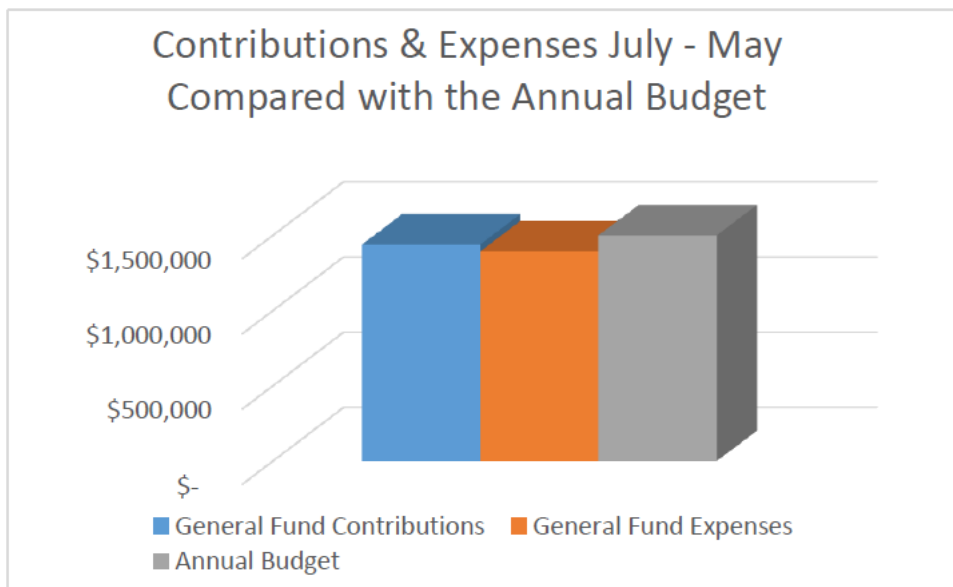
One-third of the offering will provide funds to the Syria/Lebanon Support programs

One-third of the offering will provide funds for Hurricane Helene relief and recovery efforts.

### Details of how to give are listed below:

- Visit <https://onrealm.org/unityfortmill/-/form/give/now> to give online, select the "Change for Church" fund from the list of available funds.
- Buckets will be placed in the Narthex of the Sanctuary during the month of July for you to bring your loose change, folding money and checks for this annual Change for the Church offering.
- If you would prefer to mail a check, please make checks payable to Unity Presbyterian Church and write "Change for Church" in the memo line.
- You can also drop off your offering to the "Change for Church" fund by placing it in the black mailbox in front of the Historic Sanctuary (no glass containers please).

## 2024—2025 BUDGET UPDATE



	May 2025	Jul 1, 2024 through May 31, 2025	% of Annual Budget	5-Year Average
General Fund Contributions	\$ 102,671	\$ 1,437,656	87.9%	\$1,312,835
General Fund Expenses	116,214	1,392,437	85.1%	1,287,285
Annual Budget		1,636,321	100.0%	1,519,243



## WHAT IS A MAJOR MAINTENANCE RESERVE AND WHY DO WE MAINTAIN ONE?

A maintenance reserve is a dedicated pool of money set aside to cover the costs of maintaining and repairing our assets. It is a proactive financial strategy that contributes to the long-term financial health and stability of our property. Here are the reasons for establishing a maintenance reserve:

### 1. Ability to Cover Unexpected Repair Costs & Emergencies:

- Financial Safety Net: A reserve acts as a financial cushion to handle unexpected repairs, breakdowns, and emergencies, such as roof leaks, plumbing issues, or appliance failures.
- Prompt Repairs: Funds are readily available to address problems quickly, preventing further damage and minimizing disruptions.
- Avoids Debt Accumulation: Reduces the need to borrow money or use operating funds for unexpected expenses.

### 2. Preserves Asset Condition: Ensures regular maintenance and timely repairs, keeping assets in good and safe condition.

### 3. Ensuring Long-Term Cost Savings:

- Prevents Minor Issues from Escalating: Regular maintenance and prompt repairs can prevent minor problems from becoming major and costly issues.
- Extends Asset Lifespan: Proper maintenance and timely repairs can extend the lifespan of assets, reducing the need for premature replacements.
- Reduces Repair Costs: Addressing issues early can often be less expensive than dealing with extensive damage later.

### 4. Facilitates Better Financial Management:

- Consistent Cash Flow: A reserve fund helps to maintain consistent cash flow.
- Accurate Budgeting: Allows for better financial planning and budgeting by anticipating and allocating funds for future maintenance needs.

### 5. Compliance & Safety:

- Ensures Compliance with Regulations: Ensures that properties are maintained in compliance with building codes, safety standards, and legal requirements.
- Addresses Safety Hazards Promptly: Enables prompt repair of safety hazards and reducing potential liabilities.

The established benchmark for Unity is to maintain at least 5% of the insured value of the property in our maintenance reserve. As a result, we were able to immediately begin clean-up and repairs after our 2018 fire and have not had to cut ministry budgets to address unexpected repairs. During the past year, from our reserve, we have

- pointed up the brick mortar work in our walkways,
- painted the outdoor, metal railings
- addressed the paving issues campus-wide.

The paving project was a \$100,000+ expense and our reserves are now at 3.2% of the properties insured value of \$14,857,000. Overall, we are financially sound, but Stewardship and the long-term planning committee will be working on plans to re-establish funds to our benchmark. If you have any questions concerning our reserves, contact Pam Bright, Financial Manager, 803-547-5543 or [pbright@UnityFortMill.org](mailto:pbright@UnityFortMill.org).

## ENDOWMENT IMPACT STATEMENT: FAMILY PROMISE

Unity Presbyterian Church has partnered with Family Promise of York County for several years, an outreach ministry, through the coordination of the Women of Unity - Tony Dehler Circle. 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.

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, where they sleep on inflatable air mattresses. They leave early each morning and go to work, attend school, or work on job skills at the Family Promise Center. The Family Promise Coordinating Team recently used endowment funds to purchase six air mattresses of various sizes. Our new air mattresses are taller in size, making it easier for guests to get on and off. They also have built-in pumps that make inflating and deflating more efficient. We are grateful for the endowment fund grant that will make our sleeping areas more comfortable for our Family Promise guests.



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

[www.UnityFortMill.org](http://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*

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