

Life at Unity

February 17, 2026



MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Friends,

At the beginning of each calendar year, I provide the Session with a kind of “state of the church” report that reflects on the last year and attempts 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. The image that came to mind for me this year is found in the opening verses of Isaiah 40:

- 1 Comfort, O comfort my people,
says your God.
- 2 Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her
that she has served her term,
that her penalty is paid,
that she has received from the Lord’s hand
double for all her sins.
- 3 A voice cries out:
“In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord;
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
- 4 Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.
- 5 Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,
and all flesh shall see it together,
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

In this challenging and divisive cultural, political, social, and economic time, the first word so many are longing to hear is a word of comfort and peace. Unity Presbyterian Church is called to be that kind of sanctuary in the storm. What a gift Unity is and can be for those seeking comfort and peace today.

And yet, comfort, peace, and an escape from the troubles of this world is not the last word of this text. The prophet continues to remind the people that they are to announce, expect, and participate in the new thing that God intends. The creation and the community will be re-created so that those who have languished in exile will see the glory of the Lord revealed. Comfort and peace are not a static state - they are the foundation for participating in God’s work of redemption, reconciliation, and new life. Unity Presbyterian Church is called to be engaged in the world in which we live, not just when we are gathered at 303 Tom Hall Street, but each and every day.

That foundation which leads to a new thing God is doing is the essence of this year’s “We Love” Annual Vision of Ministry. It is what most excites me about our “Transformed by Love” Lent and Stewardship theme that begins this week. Thank you for your participation and support for this moment in our life together. I can’t wait to see what God has in store for us.

See you Sunday!
Matt

Since 1788... United in Christ's love, we glorify God through worship, nurture, and service to all people.

The deadline to submit items for the March 3rd, 2026 Newsletter is Wednesday, February 25th, 2026.

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

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.

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; Melissa Lamprich; Zack Spratt

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; Easton Shaftner; Becky Smith

14 -- John Cioni; Hayes E. Jones; Tripp Menchaca

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

CELEBRATION OF REV. DR. MARK VERDERY'S MINISTRY AT UNITY



Mark Verdery has been an essential part of ministry at Unity for the last five years as Parish Associate, colleague, source of wisdom, and great friend. On his retirement, we give thanks to God for Mark and surround him with our prayers. Thank you!

ASH WEDNESDAY - BEGINNING THE SEASON OF LENT

Make plans to join us on February 18th, 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 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and gather for an Ash Wednesday Worship Service worship in the Sanctuary at 6:30 p.m.** 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 or Pastor Molly know and they will make arrangements with you. Our Lenten theme will be "Transformed by Love" and connect with this year's Stewardship Campaign. We'll be following different individuals whose lives and faith were transformed by an encounter with God or the gospel. May our Lenten journey with them be an inspiration for our own lives of faith and generosity as we approach Easter on April 5th.

ASH WEDNESDAY PRAYER STATIONS ARE FOR ALL AGES



Self-Guided Prayer Stations will be available all day on **Ash Wednesday, February 18th**, 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 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.

LENT AT HOME BAGS

If you have not yet picked up a Lent at Home bag, they will be **available in the Historic Sanctuary during Ash Wednesday Prayer Stations as supplies last.** These bags contain interactive materials and short devotions (weekly during the Sundays of Lent and daily during Holy Week) to help your family engage more fully in the Lenten journey, reflecting together on the events from Christ's life, death, and resurrection. They are appropriate for families of all ages and stages or adults who like a hands-on devotion experience.



RESERVE A CATERPILLAR FOR OUR EASTER BUTTERFLY RELEASE

Orders for caterpillars will be taken through March 2nd. Caterpillar pick up date will be the week of March 9th and will be communicated to all who reserve one once the church order for caterpillars has been placed. For each caterpillar ordered, you'll be given a cup with your caterpillar and everything the caterpillar needs to eat and make its chrysalis. You will need to purchase or make a butterfly house for when the chrysalis opens and your butterfly appears as well as fruit slices to feed your butterfly for a few days until Easter Sunday when we will bring them to church and release them at the end of the 8:45 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Easter worship service, weather permitting. Order here: https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0E4AA9AF22A4FE3-62273163-raise#/. Questions? Contact Kathryn McGregor at KMcGregor@UnityFortMill.org



OUR FIRST SWEETHEART DANCE CELEBRATED LOVE

Children's Ministry sponsored a Sweetheart dance for children and families on February 7th. DJ PreK played tunes that all ages enjoyed. Families enjoyed dressing up and taking pictures in the photo booth, eating snacks, making picture frames, and playing games. A wonderful time was had by all as we celebrated God's love for us and our love for one another.



LUNCH BUNCH



Join us for Lunch Bunch on **Wednesday, February 25th, 2026 at 12:00 Noon**. Kevin Brackett will be our speaker. Kevin is the Solicitor for the Sixteenth Judicial Circuit in South Carolina which comprise York and Union counties. He was appointed to this position by the Governor in 2006 and elected by York and Union counties in 2008, 2012, 2016, and in 2020. He is a graduate of the University of South Carolina with his B.S. and the University of South Carolina School of Law in 1991. Kevin will talk about his present position and be available to answer questions you may have at the end of his talk. Please bring your salad or sandwich for this interesting afternoon. Chips, drinks, and desserts are provided.

SECOND HARVEST EVENT—FEBRUARY 27TH

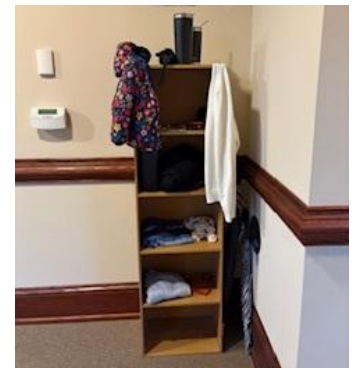
A Second Harvest Food Distribution event is planned for **Friday morning, February 27th, 2026 from 8:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.** All ages are welcome to come and help distribute food. The process is simple and very similar to grocery shopping. Based on what the truck delivers, we divide the content by 150 families (our historic average of participation) and place that portion of each grocery item into a rolling grocery cart. We then roll the cart and load the contents into our guests' cars. Bring any paper or plastic grocery bags that you have available. Volunteers to transport any remaining foods to the Fort Mill Care Center, and help recycling cardboard and shipping pallets is the most difficult and most appreciated for those having that type of ability. Call or text Jim Boyd if you have questions (803.984.2277).



TIPS FOR A HEALTHY HEART:

February is heart month. Heart disease is a leading cause of death in the United States, but there are many things you can do to prevent it.

Taking time to care for your heart can be challenging as you go about daily life. But it's easier than you think to show your heart the love it deserves each day. Small acts of self-care, such as taking walks, getting quality sleep, and cooking healthy meals, help your heart. Research shows that self care can help you keep your blood pressure in a healthy range and reduce your risk of heart disease and stroke. If you plan ahead, taking time each day to care for your heart is easy. Build heart-healthy activities into your daily routine. It is what you can do to improve and protect not only your heart health, but your overall health as well.



OUR LOST & FOUND IS FILLING UP!

If you see an item you have lost or are missing a smaller item, **pick it up** from the Lost & Found **before the end of February**. Items remaining will be donated to charity.

JOIN THE UNITY YOUTH 2026 LENT CHALLENGE!

Sign up now to receive a daily text message during all 40 days of Lent with prompts designed to invite you into deeper relationship with God and others. Text LENT2026 to the number 84576 to join us. The challenge **begins on Ash Wednesday and is open to all!**

**UNITY YOUTH
2026 LENT
CHALLENGE**

Sign-up to receive a daily text message during all 40 days of Lent with prompts designed to invite you into deeper relationship with God and others!



TEXT
"LENT2026"
TO 84576

BEGINS ASH WEDNESDAY!

JOIN US FOR THE ALL-CHURCH CHILI COOK-OFF HOSTED BY UNITY YOUTH!



UNITY ALL-CHURCH

Presbyterian Church (USA)

CHILI COOK-OFF

HOSTED BY UNITY YOUTH

Sunday, March 1 Fellowship Hall
5 - 6:30pm 

Join us for an evening of great food and fellowship! Come taste and vote on your favorite chili or enter your name as a contestant.

**DONATIONS
WILL BE ACCEPTED TO
SUPPORT THE MISSION
OF UNITY YOUTH.**

Sign-up to be a Chili Cookoff contestant



All are invited to join us on **Sunday, March 1st** in the **Fellowship Hall** for a Chili Cook-Off hosted by Unity Youth! Come taste and vote on your favorite chili or **sign-up at:** https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30E0D49AEAD28ABFD0-61506379-unity# to enter your name as a contestant. Donations will be accepted to support the mission of Unity Youth. We can't wait to see you for this tasty evening and fun and fellowship!

MDSF LUNCHEON

*Mother*Daughter*Sister*Friend*

Luncheon

**Sunday, March 15, 2026
12pm to 1:30pm**

Join us for warm fellowship, a delicious lunch, and our inspirational speaker, Sharon Collins, author of *"Becoming His Masterpiece"*.




In her presentation *"Becoming His Masterpiece: It's All About Saying Yes"* Sharon will share with us the profound lessons God is teaching her as a new painter and writer. Woven through her message is her truth that spending time with God nourishes the soul and feeds one's journey.

We will also present our 2026 Honorary Life Membership Award.

Catered lunch from Flipside Cafe
\$20 for adults/\$10 for small plate
ADULT plate: Chicken salad; pasta salad; fruit cup
SMALL Plate: Ham and cheese pinwheel; fruit cup

How to make your reservation:
Via Realm or QR code beginning 2/1,
On sale in person 2/22 and 3/1 in the Narthex



GROWING CHRISTIANS - WINTER 2026





**GROWING
CHRISTIANS
(GCs)**

Winter 2026
For all 4th & 5th graders

What is GCs?
GCs is a fellowship group for 4th and 5th graders. It meets seasonally on Sunday afternoons for games, fellowship, and devotions.

When do we meet?
Sundays from 4-5 pm



February 22
March 1
March 8
March 15



**GC's Cookout/
5th Grade Celebration**
April 26
5:00-6:30 pm

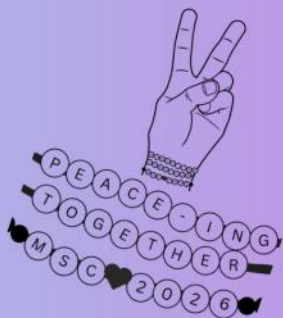
Where do we meet?
Room M208
Drop off in the Fellowship Hall parking lot beside the Courtyard.

Questions? Contact Kathryn McGregor 803-547-5543 kmcgregor@UnityFortMill.org

MASSANETTA SPRINGS MS CONFERENCE

Massanetta Springs Middle School Conference

Who: Current 5th-7th graders
When: July 14-17, 2026
Cost: \$415
Where: Massanetta Springs, VA



Registration is open on Realm

Come along for this transformational program that welcomes hundreds of middle schoolers and their leaders from all over the country.

Please note: At Unity, we'd like everyone to be able to participate. For financial subsidies, please contact Liz Corsig (lcorsig@unityfortmill.org) The Youth Ministry Team has funds available for this purpose.



MONTREAT YOUTH CONFERENCE

Montreat Youth Conference



June 14-20, 2026

Who: Current 8th -12th graders
Cost: \$650
Where: Montreat Conference Center, Black Mountain, NC

Montreat Youth Conference affirms youth in their calling to be and shape the church of today and tomorrow. Through worship, keynote, recreation, and small groups, Montreat helps young people form deep, spiritual relationships with God and others.

Please note:

At Unity, we'd like everyone to be able to participate. For financial subsidies, please contact Liz Corsig (lcorsig@unityfortmill.org) The Youth Ministry Team has funds available for this purpose.



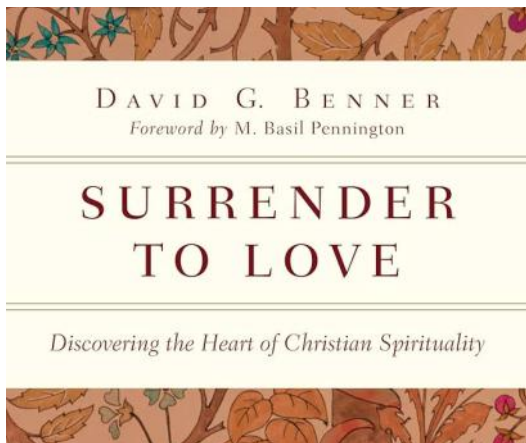
Registration is open on Realm

YOUTH HANDBELLS

All Youth grades 6-12 are invited to participate in a handbell choir just for you! We will rehearse after 11:00 worship on the following Sundays: March 1st, March 8th, and March 15th. We will then play in worship on Sunday, March 22nd at both services. Come learn the art of ringing in a fun setting! Contact Margaret Monroe at mmonroe@UnityFortMill.org with any questions. Register on Realm here - <https://onrealm.org/unityfortmill/PublicRegistrations/Event?linkString=MzKxM2U0NzgtYTRkMC00NTRiLWEwYmMtYjNkYjAxNTk5OGYz>.



REGISTRATION CLOSING FEBRUARY 22ND FOR ALL-CHURCH READ



Our All-Church Read this year is *Surrender to Love: Discovering the Heart of Christian Spirituality* by David G. Benner. "In this profound book, David Benner explores the twin themes of love and surrender as the heart of Christian spirituality. Through careful examination of Scripture and reflection on the Christian tradition, Benner shows how God bids us to trust fully in his perfect love." Books are on sale for \$10.75 today in the Narthex. **Register for a small group on REALM:** <https://onrealm.org/unityfortmill/PublicRegistrations/Event?linkString=Yzc2ZjEtNTgxYi00MGFkLWE5MGUyYjNlNTAxNzgxOGYw> or **read the book on your own.** Groups will meet weekly beginning next week through the week of March 22nd.

PEANUT BUTTER AND JELLY SUNDAY



Sunday, March 1st, is Peanut Butter & Jelly Sunday. Last month, we collected 248 lbs. of food and supplies for the Fort Mill Care Center, bringing our year-to-date total to 924 lbs. Current needs at the Care Center include pineapple, fruit cups, shelf stable milk, brown & granulated sugar, salad dressing, Ramen, collards, and corn bread. They also need fresh hams, frozen chicken breasts or thighs, cheese, and eggs. **(NOTE: They are currently well stocked on peanut butter, green beans, corn, and Mac & Cheese.)** Please bring your donations and deposit them in the collection box in the Narthex any time you are at church. You can also drop off donations, including any refrigerated items, directly at the Fort Mill Care Center. The Care Center is open MWF 9:00 a.m. to noon and Wednesday from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. Please have them weigh the donation and please send an Email with the total weight to Larry Terrell at larry.terrell@sbcglobal.net. Thank you again for generously sharing God's love with our neighbors in need.

2026 SANCTUARY FLOWERS SIGN UP

Would you like to honor a family member, friend, or a special group of people? Placing fresh flowers in the sanctuary to the glory of God is a perfect way to remember and celebrate a special person/s or occasion in your life.

Dates for 2026 are available on Sign-Up Genius for reserving a Sunday to place flowers in the sanctuary. You may visit <https://bit.ly/2026-Flower-Calendar> and complete the steps for selecting your choice of Sunday(s). All instructions are included. If you have questions, please contact Michaela Braswell at mbraswell@UnityFortMill.org or 803-547-5543 ext. 130).

Early sign-up is recommended to ensure the Sunday of your choice.

“We are all flowers in God’s Garden.” - Karen Sweeney-Ryall



GO MAD DAY—APRIL 18TH



Go MAD Day

(Go Make-A-Difference Day)

Save the Date!

Saturday

April 18, 2026

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



PROVIDENCE PRESBYTERY LEADERFEST SEMINAR

Providence Presbytery Leaderfest Seminar March 28, 2026

Unity Presbyterian Church / 303 Tom Hall St / Fort Mill, SC 29715

Presented by Stephen Ministries, St. Louis, featuring Joel Bretscher

The mental health crisis has been a growing challenge in society for decades, with numerous proposed solutions that have fallen short of resolving the problem. Building on more than two years of research, Stephen Ministries St. Louis has developed a bold new approach for the church to make a far-reaching difference in this area. Come and hear about this unexpected, powerful way for you, your small group, and all of our congregations to help solve the mental health crisis.

Schedule

- 8:30–9:00 a.m. Check-In and Continental Breakfast
- 9:00 a.m.–Noon Presentations
 - How Your Congregation Can Help Combat the Health Crisis: A New, Expanded Approach
 - What Jesus Teaches Us about Empathy
- Noon–12:45 p.m. Lunch (included with registration)
 - Optional Presentation on Getting a Church Involved with Stephen Ministry
- 12:45–3:00 p.m. Presentations
 - Unexpected Ways to Care
 - What We've Learned about Grief and Relating to Those Who Are Grieving



Scan the QR code on the left to register
\$20 registration fee

Space is limited. Pre-Registration by March 21 is requested.



Joel Bretscher has been a member of the staff at Stephen Ministries in St. Louis since 1995. As Program Director, Joel leads the writing and editing team in the development of books, videos, training materials, courses, and other resources.

He is the lead author of *The Gift of Empathy* and coauthor of *Caring Assertiveness*, both award-winning books.

STEPHEN MINISTRY



When you meet with a Stephen Minister, you will be meeting with someone who will listen to you without any judgement and with love. Anything you say is very confidential. They are well trained, equipped with caring ministry skills.

Your Stephen Minister will meet once a week with you, or if you have a busy schedule or don't want to meet that often, they will fit visits around your needs and schedule and their schedule.

When you need someone to talk to about your challenges, please consider requesting a Stephen Minister by contacting one of our referral coordinators, Susan Mobley or Dave Johnson, via email at Stephenministryreferrals@unityfortmill.org or call a Rev. Molly Spangler at the church office (803.547.5543).

Our Stephen Ministers care!

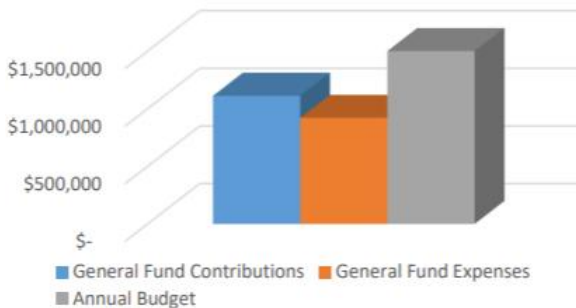
DID YOU KNOW?

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 do 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 carries **both a transaction fee** for each transaction **and a processing fee** as a percentage of the transaction.

YEAR TO DATE 2025-2026 BUDGET

Year to Date Contributions & Expenses
Compared with the Annual Budget



	January 2026	July 2025 through Jan 2026	% of Annual Budget	5-Year Average
General Fund Contributions	\$ 121,147	\$ 1,111,704	65.2%	\$ 966,728
General Fund Expenses	130,130	920,020	53.9%	828,998
Annual Budget		1,705,640	100.0%	1,569,561

As you contemplate your legacy, please consider including Unity in your estate planning.

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.