# Life at Unity

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

## A Message From The Pastor

Dear Friends,

We recently concluded a six week small group study called "Come to the Table" in which we did a deep dive into the scripture, theology, history, and practice of the sacrament of communion. It was a great study and I hope it helped remind those who participated of the many ways in which Christ is present in and among us as we gather at the table the Lord has prepared for us.

The various names for this sacrament is one of the things we examined as part of the study. Many Christian traditions refer to this sacrament as the Eucharist. Eucharist comes from the Greek word eucharisteo or "thanksgiving." As Christian writer Ann Voskamp describes in her book *One Thousand Gifts*:

> Eucharisteo, thanksgiving, envelopes the Greek word for grace, charis. But it also holds its derivative, the Greek word chara, meaning "joy." Joy. Ah ... yes ... that might be what the quest for more is all about. ... I breathe deep, like a sojourner finally coming home. ...
>
> Charis. Grace.
> Eucharisteo. Thanksgiving.
> Chara. Joy.
>
> A triplet of stars, a constellation in the black.
> A threefold cord that might hold a life? Offer a way up into the fullness of life?
> Grace, thanksgiving, joy. Eucharisteo.
>
> A Greek word ... that might make meaning of everything?

The long prayer before we celebrate communion is called The Great Prayer of Thanksgiving. If you listen closely you'll hear that in our prayers we give thanks to God for creation; for God's continuing care despite our sin; for Jesus's life, death, and resurrection; and for the gifts of the Holy Spirit that unite us with Christ and one another, as well as send us forth to be the body of Christ in the world. It is another reminder that the fundamental posture we take as we gather at the Lord's Table is one of thanksgiving.

In this season, may thanksgiving mark not just the fourth Thursday in November, but everyday. For God's gifts to us are abundant and our response might be as well.

See you Sunday!
Matt

### CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

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

### THANKSGIVING OFFICE SCHEDULE

The church office will be closed Wednesday, November 25 and Thursday, November 26 in observance of the Thanksgiving Holiday.

### STEWARDSHIP IS EVERYTHING

Stewardship is the responsible management of all God-given resources—time, talents, money, and creation—based on the truth that God owns everything and humans are managers (stewards) accountable to Him. Over the next several months the Stewardship Committee will share questions to consider corporately as a church as well as individually and maybe spark some conversation with one another.

**Relationships**

Do we recognize each person we encounter as a child of God with unique gifts and talents?

## EARLY DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

1 -- Kathy Choate; Bob Elisha; Brad Hulbert; Bonnie Norton
2 -- Joanne Blake; Landen Oltmann
3 -- Bob Anderson; Kayden Hughes
4 -- Lily Berens; Andy Donato; Stefanie Hall; Rusty Menchaca; Alden Newberry; Tammie Welch
5 -- Hannah Calbreath; Matthew Hines; Marilyn Mullen; Bud Oehrli; Brian Pope
6 -- Ryan Donato; Olivia Melton
7 -- Cheryl Hill; Ashley Hogon; Andrew Scott; Taylor Sheets
8 -- Steve Chase; Cole Martin; Stuart Thomas
9 -- Ellen Borland; Jeff Chmielinski; Megan Hannon; Garrett Johnson; Georgia Ryan; Mike Whelan
10 -- Lori Glasco; Riley Glasco
11 -- Anna Honeycutt; Laura Honeycutt; Tracey Templeton
12 -- Harris Blackwell; Bruce Delaney; Reagan Michael; John Proctor; Sammie Rusch; Steve Simon
13 -- George Bauserman; Caroline Egnor; Mike Litrenta; Lindsey Morgan
14 -- Susan Benfield; Bryant Gregory; Larry Stewart
15 -- Hicks Bowers; Savannah LaFevers



## LUNCH BUNCH

### NOVEMBER 18

The next Lunch Bunch will be Wednesday, November 18 at Noon in the Fellowship Hall. Anna S. Miller, an Associate Judge with the York County Probate Court, will be our speaker for November. The Probate court has jurisdiction over estates, wills, marriages, adult guardianships, and conservatorships. She will be speaking about the role of the court in mental health and the importance of estate planning. She will answer questions that you may have along these lines. Bring your salad or sandwich and join us for this very interesting speaker. Chips, drinks, and desserts are provided.

## THORNWELL DOCUMENTARY SCREENING

### SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 22

On Sunday, November 22, at 12:15 p.m. the Outreach Ministry Team invites you to a screening of Thornwell's new documentary in the Fellowship Hall following the 11:00 a.m. worship service. Thornwell is one of our long-standing mission partners here in South Carolina, and November 22 is our annual Sunday when we share updates on the ministry they are doing and take up a special offering for them. The documentary will last about 30 minutes, with time for questions with their staff members as well. There will be door prizes and brunch food so plan to stay after worship as we spend time with our mission partners that day. All are invited and we hope to see you there.

## WE'RE HIRING - COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

Do you or someone you know have gifts and skills for publications, social media, websites, and design? Perhaps you or they are looking for a part-time position, say 25 hours a week? Maybe you or they are looking for a way to connect their faith with the mission of a really awesome church and ministry team? Unity Presbyterian Church is searching for its next Communications Specialist. This 25 hour/week position (generally Monday - Thursday, 9 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.) is responsible for producing the weekly bulletins, creating weekly church emails and social media engagement, updating the website, creating a twice a month newsletter, and various other poster/publicity/graphic design. For more information, please visit: https://unityfortmill.org/about-us/careers/ or reach out to Dr. Matt. Thanks for sharing this opportunity with those who might be interested.

## FROM STEPHEN MINISTRY

Christmas can bring loneliness and emptiness to those grieving a loss or facing difficulties. Help is available: our Stephen Ministers offer confidential, one-to-one Christian care. They listen, offer encouragement, pray with and for you, and provide support through the holidays and for as long as you need it.

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. Stephen Ministers are always there to listen.

## CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR FORT MILL CARE CENTER

We delivered 1,227 lbs. of food and supplies to the Fort Mill Care Center. This included 1,033 lbs. from the Sharing God's Bounty food drive and 194 lbs. from our regular PB&J Sunday collection. This brings our year-to-date total to 4,705 lbs. This is about 1,200 lbs. lower than we were at this time last year.

The Care Center has requested the following items for the remainder of November:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Applesauce | Canned salmon | Canned mandarin oranges |
| Boxed potatoes | SPAM | Hamburger & Tuna Helper |
| Yams | Canned pasta | Granola Bars |
| Broth | Blueberry & cherry pie filling | Hand soap |
| Fried onions | Shelf stable milk | Laundry detergent |
| Canned chicken | Flavored oatmeal | |
| Canned roast beef | Canned pineapple | |

Any food, hygiene, or cleaning items are welcome. However they are currently overstocked on peanut butter.

## HEALTH CORNER

### BODY, MIND, SPIRIT... STRENGTH FOR YOUR PURPOSE



By strengthening, stretching, and caring for our physical and mental selves, we enhance our ability to serve God with energy, joy, and endurance.

Whether your goal is improving balance, building strength, increasing flexibility, preventing falls, maintaining independence, or simply feeling better, every step matters. You are encouraged to find activities that improve your health.

Walk – Run - Swim - Ride a bike - Exercise at home - Exercise at a gym – Play Pickleball - Join a Unity Fitness Class.

At Unity, we offer a variety of classes to help you move more, feel better, and strengthen your ability to answer life's callings. These classes are one small but meaningful way we can invest in the health that supports our calling. Fitness classes, yoga, dance, hiking, and balance training, there is something for everyone.

Click here to learn more about Unity's exercise and wellness programs and find activities that are right for you.



## TAIZÉ

Our next Taizé service will be Sunday, December 6 at 5:30 p.m. in the Historic Sanctuary. A Taizé service is composed of candlelight, Scripture readings, prayer, intervals of silence, and contemplative chants. Join us for a time of quiet centering and meditation in the busy Advent season as we look with joy to Christ's coming once again in our midst.



## 2027 SANCTUARY FLOWERS

**SIGN UP NOW!**

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 2027 have now been added to a sign-up genius for reserving a Sunday to place flowers in the sanctuary. You may visit https://bit.ly/2027-flowers and complete the steps for selecting your choice of Sunday(s). All instructions are included. If you have questions, please contact the church office.

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

*"We are all flowers in God's Garden."*
- Karen Sweeney-Ryall




## CHRISTMAS MEMORIALS AND HONORARIUMS

As part of their Christmas gift giving each year, many members of our congregation have developed a tradition of giving a financial gift to Unity in memory or honor of loved ones. If you would like to make such an offering, please complete the online form located at https://unityfortmill.org/give/christmas-memorials-honorariums/, or download the form https://bit.ly/48tbt3Q and return it to the church office with your payment. Please make checks payable to Unity and write "Christmas Memorial/Honorarium" on the memo line. If you need additional assistance, contact Anissa Lee (alee@unityfortmill.org) in the church office.

We are suggesting that your Memorial/Honorarium gifts be directed toward our "General Fund", however you will also have the option to specify another fund if you so desire. The deadline for receiving these gifts is December 13. They will be listed in a booklet which will be available in the Narthex on December 20.



## HELP US DECK THE HALLS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Join us on Saturday, November 28 at 9:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary as we prepare our church for the Advent and Christmas seasons! We need many hands to make light work of setting up our beautiful decorations, trees, and wreaths. Families and children are especially invited to participate this year, and all participants will be fueled by yummy donuts and coffee! Come share your Christmas spirit and help us make our church shine! And go ahead and mark your calendar to help us UNDECORATE on Saturday, January 9 at 9:00 a.m. Let us know you are coming to both by signing up:

https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60B0D45A4AD29A64-67090714-unity
or contacting David Grove at grovehaven@gmail.com




## UNITY'S CHRISTMAS POST OFFICE

Send your Christmas Cards to Unity friends through the Unity Post Office beginning December 4! The New Horizon Circle is providing this fundraising opportunity for the "Emergency Needs Fund" which provides for the unmet emergency needs of members of our community (ex., assistance with utility bills or rent). The "post office" is located in the hallway beside the narthex with boxes organized by the first letter of the last name. In exchange for this postage-free service, please donate to Unity's "Emergency Needs Fund" by placing your donation in one of the collection boxes on the table or by giving online to the "Unity Post" fund. For checks, be sure to identify the donation as "Unity Post". Christmas Blessings to all!






## TONY DEHLER CHRISTMAS AUCTION

The Tony Dehler Circle will hold their annual Christmas Auction on Monday, December 7, beginning at 5:30 p.m. with a hot dog supper sponsored by the Men's Ministry and the sale and silent auction tables. The live auction will begin at 6:00 p.m. Donations are needed of hand crafted items, home made foods and new items. Boat trips, trips to beach or mountain homes are also welcome. You can place your donations in Room M207 Monday through Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. All proceeds from the auction will be divided equally between the Fort Mill Care Center and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance.

## FESTIVAL OF CAROLS

Join us Tuesday, December 8 for a special musical event. Unity's Chancel Choir will be joined by the choirs of Catawba Ridge, Fort Mill, and Nation Ford High Schools for a holiday concert. There will also be a time for the audience to sing favorite Christmas carols! The concert will take place at 7:00 p.m. in our Sanctuary. Please note that doors will not open until 6:30. There are no tickets required, but there will be a free-will offering received to support the choral programs of the three high schools.

## LESSONS AND CAROLS

Our annual service of Lessons and Carols will take place at the 8:45 and 11:00 services on Sunday, December 13. Come hear the story of Christ's birth told anew through the reading of Scripture and music from our Chancel Choir and guest instrumentalists.

## SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP IN ADVENT AND THE CHRISTMAS SEASON




This year our theme for Advent is "A Place for ..." and we will be exploring scriptures from the prophet Isaiah and the four traditional themes of the Advent Wreath: Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. As we worship at 8:45 AM and 11 AM each Sunday and witness the growing light on the Advent Wreath, we pray that we might discover the place God has prepared for each of us as well.

- November 29 - Advent 1: A Place for Hope - Isaiah 2:1-5
- December 6 - Advent 2: A Place for Peace - Isaiah 11:1-9
- December 13 - Advent 3: A Place for Joy - Chancel Choir Lessons and Carols Service
- December 20 - Advent 4: A Place for Love - Isaiah 7:10-17
- December 24 - Christmas Eve: A Place for Christ - Luke 2:1-8
- December 27 - First Sunday of Christmas: A Place for Light (one service at 10 a.m.)

## SPECIAL SERVICES DURING ADVENT

December 6 - Taizé Service - 5:30 p.m. in the Historic Sanctuary
December 20 - God with Us Service (A Blue Christmas Service) - 5:30 p.m. in the Historic Sanctuary

## LOOKING AHEAD TO CHRISTMAS EVE

### SERVICE TIMES AND DETAILS

Almost 1500 people attended Christmas Eve Services at Unity last year! What a gift!
There will be more information to come in the months ahead, but as you make plans with your family for Christmas, we hope that you will be able to attend one or more of these services as we celebrate Christ's birth and God's gifts of hope, peace, joy, and love that transform the world even now:

- 11 a.m. - Children and Family Service
- 2 p.m. - Service of scripture lessons and singing familiar carols, with communion
- 4 p.m. - Service with Chancel Choir, communion, and candlelight
- 6 p.m. - Service with special music, communion, and candlelight
- 11 p.m. - Service with scripture lesson, familiar carols, communion, and candlelight

## MUSIC CAMP 2027

### REGISTRATION CLOSES SOON!




Don't miss out on the chance to participate in Music Camp! Children in Kindergarten through 5th grade are invited to join us, and children in 4K (having turned four by September 1, 2026) may register with director approval. Music Camp is February 15-19, 2027 from 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., with the performance on Friday, February 19 at noon. Registration is free, but space is limited to the first 40 registrants. Registration is now open and closes on November 30, or when registration is full. Register on REALM.

## CHILDREN AND YOUTH INSTRUMENTALISTS

Our young instrumentalists are invited to share their gifts in worship during the seasons of Advent and Christmas! Piano, band, and strings students are all invited to participate by playing a short sacred Christmas solo. Opportunities are available during Sunday morning worship at each service, or for one of our Christmas Eve services. Please contact Margaret Monroe at mmonroe@UnityFortMill.org if you are interested, have any questions, or need help finding a piece to learn.

## RING IN THE NEW YEAR!




Come try something new this January! Youth and Adults are invited to Ring in the New Year, a short-term handbell group that will meet on Wednesdays in January. We will rehearse at 5:30 on January 13, January 20, and January 27. The group will then ring in worship at both services on January 31.

No prior ringing experience is required. We'll go over basic note reading and ringing techniques. Register on Realm or contact Margaret Monroe with any questions at mmonroe@UnityFortMill.org .






## UNITY YOUTH FRIENDSGIVING




All youth are invited to join us for Friendsgiving on Sunday, November 22 from 4:30-5:30pm in the Fellowship Hall. Sign-up to bring an appetizer, side dish, or dessert. Please also bring unopened, travel-sized toiletry items to help us make Hygiene Kits for Defend the Fatherless.

## UNITY YOUTH BEACH RETREAT 2026






## REGISTER NOW FOR COLLEGE STUDENT & YOUNG ADULT HONDURAS MISSION TRIP




Liz Corsig Finegan will help lead this trip. This will be a work trip, as participants will be split into work teams to build houses in the small villages of the Copan region of Honduras. More details and registration available on Realm.

## MAKE A LASTING IMPACT THROUGH YOUR IRA WITH QUALIFIED CHARITABLE DISTRIBUTIONS (QCDS)

**Are you age 70½ or older?**

You may be eligible to make a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) directly from your IRA to support the ministries of Unity Presbyterian Church.

If you are age 70½ or older and required to take a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD), a QCD can satisfy all or part of your RMD requirement while supporting the mission and ministry of our church.

**Benefits of a QCD**

✅ Supports the ministry and mission of our church
✅ May satisfy all or part of your annual RMD
✅ May reduce your taxable income
✅ Transfers funds directly from your IRA to the church
✅ Helps extend your legacy of faithful stewardship

**Next steps**

Contact your tax or legal advisor, then contact your IRA custodian and provide the requested charity information. The custodian must send the QCD directly to the charity.

**Tax Disclaimer**

This material is provided for informational and educational purposes only and should not be construed as tax, legal, or financial advice. Tax laws and IRS regulations are subject to change and individual circumstances vary. Eligibility for and tax treatment of a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) depend on your specific situation. Before making a QCD or relying on any information contained herein, consult your qualified tax advisor, attorney, or financial professional.

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## CONSIDER DONATING APPRECIATED STOCK

### A Smart Way to Support Our Ministry

If you own stocks that have increased in value, you may be able to make a greater impact through a gift of appreciated stock rather than cash.

**Benefits of Gifting Appreciated Stock**

✅ **Avoid Capital Gains Tax** - You may avoid paying capital gains tax on the appreciation of the stock by donating the shares directly to the church instead of selling them first.

✅ **Receive a Charitable Deduction** - If you itemize deductions and meet IRS requirements, you may be eligible for a charitable income tax deduction based on the fair market value (subject to IRS rules and limitations).

✅ **Increase Your Kingdom Impact** - Because you avoid selling the stock yourself, more of your investment may go directly to support the church's ministries and mission.

**Example**

If you purchased stock for **$2,000** that is now worth **$10,000**, a direct gift of the stock may allow you to potentially:

- Avoid capital gains tax on the $8,000 gain
- Claim a charitable deduction based on the stock's **fair market value**, subject to IRS rules and limitations

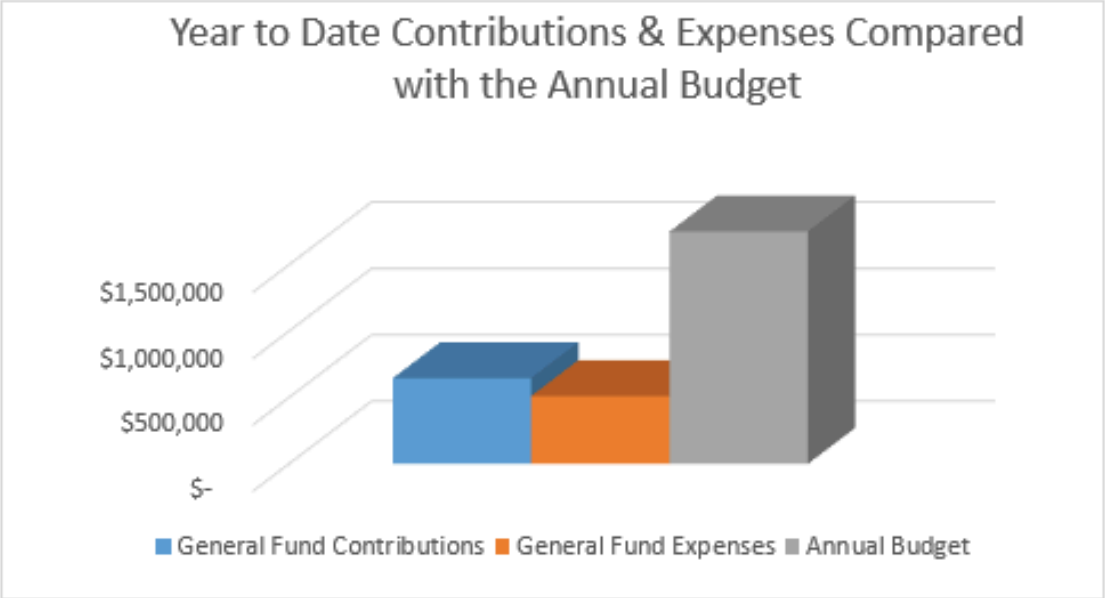
Your financial or tax advisor can help determine if this strategy fits your financial situation.

**Tax Disclaimer**

This material is provided for informational purposes only and is not intended as legal, tax, or financial advice. Tax benefits from charitable gifts of appreciated stocks vary based on individual circumstances and current tax laws. Please consult your attorney, tax advisor, CPA, or financial professional before making any charitable gift to determine how these rules apply to your specific situation.

# 2026-2027 BUDGET UPDATE

## Year to Date 2026-2027 Budget Update




| | October 2026 | July 1, 2026 through October 31, 2026 | % of Annual Budget |
|---|---|---|---|
| General Fund Contributions | $ 133,154 | $ 644,819 | 35.3% |
| General Fund Expenses | 117,458 | 510,373 | 27.9% |
| Annual Budget | | 1,826,194 | 100.0% |

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

# Journeys of Paul & The Greek Islands

**Join Dr. Matt Rich, Kathryn McGregor, and the people of Unity Presbyterian Church on an unforgettable spiritual pilgrimage through Greece and the Greek Islands, tracing the footsteps of the Apostle Paul and discovering the places where the story of the early church first unfolded.**







**DATES:** **APRIL 22 - MAY 2, 2028**

**COST:** **$5,390.00 per person** based on double occupancy, includes airfare

$1,300 - Single room supplement

$4,290 - If you purchase your own airfare

$300 deposit per person to register

**OUR TEACHER** and fellow pilgrim on this tour: **Dr. Frances Taylor Gench**

- A beloved professor and friend of Dr. Matt, Pastor Molly, and Pastor Liz

**REGISTRATION OPENS:** **JANUARY 1, 2027** on the Elias Tours website

UNITY
Presbyterian Church (USA)

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**Share Your Tithes and Offerings Online**

***Return Service Requested***

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