

Dear Members and Friends of Union Presbyterian Church,

In his book, “Enjoying the Bible: Literary Approaches to Loving Scriptures,” Matthew Mullins argues that the Christian church in the United States has a major problem. The problem is that most of us hate poetry. Mullins writes that recent studies show that only 6.7% of American adults have read poetry at least once in the last 12 months. In the United States, poetry seems to be less popular than jazz music and only slightly more popular than opera. So why is this a problem? It’s a problem because over 30% of the Bible is poetry. Over 40% of the the rest of the Bible is written in a narrative style. Mullins argues that our Western Culture “tends to prioritize the head over the heart when it comes to reading and learning.” So when we want to learn something from the Bible, we sort of treat it like an instruction manual. We have it only engage our brains. But over 75% of the Bible isn’t written like an instruction manual with carefully crafted arguments. Most of the Bible is written to touch our hearts.

In “God in the Dock,” C.S. Lewis writes that there are 2 ways that we can look at anything in the world: along it or at it. We look along something if we are experiencing it. We look at something if we are critically examining it. Lewis writes that when a man looks at a woman he loves, he sees something very different from the psychologist who is looking at that same woman. Probably all of us have experienced this difference when it comes to music. When we fall in love with a new song... we are looking “along it” (experiencing it). When we then stop to examine exactly what the lyrics say... we are looking “at it” (critically examining it). Lewis argues that understanding these 2 different ways of looking at the world are super important because (a) they are both necessary and (b) you can’t do both at the same time.

So how does this relate to reading the Bible? It means that if we mostly read the Bible by "critically examining it" (like it is an instructional manual) and over 75% of the Bible is written in a way that you need to “experience” rather than just “examine,” then we end up missing a whole lot of what the Bible has to offer. In “Enjoying the Bible,” Mullins argues that biggest problem that this leads to is people learning from the Bible but never learning to love Scripture.

Mullins gives a great example of this in his book. He invites us to look at the verse, Psalm 119: 105.

Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.

Mullins writes that looking at this verse give a simple but important message: “we should turn to God’s Word when we cannot see where we are going.”

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**SEPTEMBER**

**ELDERS**

Claire Cabral  
Sue Lewis  
Jennifer Nelson

**COMMUNION**

September 4

**RALLY DAY**

September 11

**ROCKIN’ RALLY  
RETREAT**

September 24

**STATED SESSION**

September 25

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But the person who wrote that verse “chose to write a poem, not a proposition” for reason. The psalmist shares this message using a metaphor of a lamp shining in the darkness. Haven’t you ever woken in the middle of the night when the power has gone out? It’s totally dark. All the little electric powered things in your home have turned off. It’s suddenly too quiet. Then you begin hearing things you weren’t able to hear before. And it is so dark. You instinctively want to turn on a light.

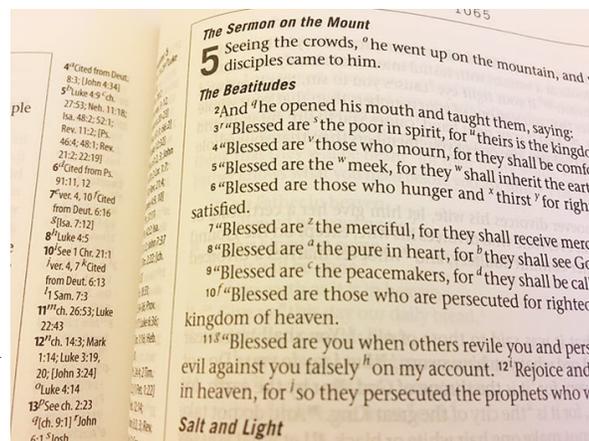
In these moments Mullins argues that he “is terrified to walk across [his] living room for fear that [he] might step on a Lego and lose [his] religion.” He writes, “nothing will make you long for light like finding yourself in darkness. In such a moments, you don’t merely know you need a light as a logical solution to a problem you’re trying to solve. You are drawn to [the light]. You love it. You long for it.” Mullins argues that “Psalms 119:105 is not only trying to persuade [us] that God’s Word is illuminating. It is trying to stir up a longing for God’s Word in [us].”

As we read the Bible, may we all not just look AT the words but may we also take the time to read ALONG THEM. We don’t have to start loving poetry but wouldn’t it be nice to come to love the Bible more? If you are interested in finding out more about the genres of the Bible, I encourage you to watch some YouTube videos from the Bible Project that walk through the different genres of Scripture. A great starting point is: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oUXJ8Owes8E&t=258s>.

Sincerely in Christ,  
Pastor James

## WORSHIP IN SEPTEMBER

During the month of September, we invite you to join us for a 7 week study on the beatitudes. Over the history of the church, scholars and pastors alike have consistently argued that we can witness the beatitudes best lived out in the life of Christ. But is it possible that these teachings from the Sermon on the Mount are not only evident in Christ’s life but through his death as well? Join us as we take time to look at each of Jesus’ last words from the cross and explore how they might connect to the beatitudes in Matthew 5.



### Sermon Series: Foundations of the Spirit

September 4: Joel 2: 28-32, “Foundations of the Spirit... No Quick Patch-Up Here”  
-Celebration of the Lord’s Supper; Labor Day Weekend  
-Acts 2:1-12

### Sermon Series: The Beatitudes in Life & Death

September 11: Matthew 27: 32-46, “The Beatitudes... My God, my God why have You Forsaken Me?”  
September 18: John 19:30-37, “The Beatitudes... it is Finished”  
September 25: John 19:28-29, “The Beatitudes... I Thirst”  
October 2: Luke 23:38-43, “The Beatitudes... Today You Shall Be with Me in Paradise”  
-Celebration of the Lord’s Supper; World Communion Sunday

# Join us and invite friends!

# Rockin' Rally

# RETREAT!



**Saturday  
September 24th  
(2 PM-7 PM)**



**Games for all ages both indoor &  
outdoor AND a FREE  
hot dog supper**



**UNION PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
5615 Union Road, Gastonia, NC 28056  
704-864-7681**

**Email: [unionpc5615@gmail.com](mailto:unionpc5615@gmail.com)  
[www.unionpresbyterianchurch.com](http://www.unionpresbyterianchurch.com)**



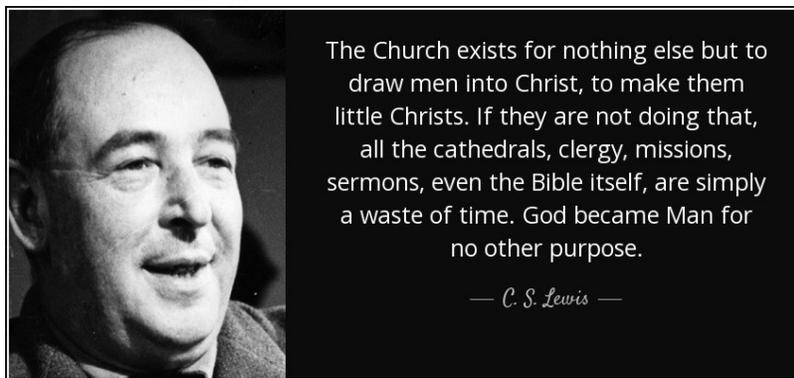
# Church

## “A C.S. LEWIS INSPIRED CHURCH,” SABBATICAL PRESENTATION

During the month of my Sabbatical (and several months leading up to it), I’ve had an opportunity to complete a goal I’ve had for many years: to read all of my favorite author’s published Christian works (as an English Professor, C.S. Lewis also wrote many books and articles about literature, language, literary criticism, and history that frankly is way above my head)! In the end, I had the opportunity to read or reread over 70 books, essays, dissertations, and videos by and about Lewis. I also had the opportunity to visit the Wade Center at Wheaton College which houses the largest collection of C.S. Lewis’ writing in the world.

I did all this reading with a question in the back of my mind. What (if anything) would Lewis have to say to today’s church? From his writings I’ve put together 5 critiques Lewis might have about the state of the Christian church in the United States today... and some Lewis inspired ideas on how those critiques might be addressed.

We invite you to join Pastor James in the **Fellowship Hall** on **September 11**, at **2:30 PM** for an introspective presentation from his sabbatical, “A C.S. Lewis Inspired Church.” A time of fellowship and refreshment will follow.



**CELEBRATE THE LORD’S SUPPER** with us... **Sunday, September 4.**

### RALLY DAY - JOIN US!

**Sunday, September 11**, come join us for breakfast at **8:45 AM** (no Sunday School) as we celebrate the accomplishments of our students and teachers. Our new Sunday School rotation begins on **September 18.**



### FROM THE SESSION

Union’s Session wishes to thank all of you who have attended the congregational meeting or informational meetings or have talked to a Session member about the concerns that were brought up about the denomination. It was good to be able to hear from so many of you about your feelings on some of these issues. Session has been reflecting on and discussing your feedback the last few months. This month, they will be having a special called meeting to attempt to discern what the next steps that the church should take. We encourage you to talk to an elder if you have concerns (particularly if we haven’t heard from you yet)!

# News



## MEN OF THE CHURCH MEETING

The Men of the Church will meeting **Sunday, September 4** at **8 AM** for breakfast and a meeting. All Men are invited!

## MEN'S FELLOWSHIP DINNER

You are invited to the Men's Fellowship Dinner on **Tuesday, September 20** at **6 PM** at **Jackson's Cafeteria**. Come on out for really good food and great fellowship. Those in attendance will pick where we eat next time!



## CHOIR PRACTICE

The Choir is back, BABY!! Calling all future choir members young and old, returnees and brand new people! The choir will be having it's first practice of the year and it will be in the Sanctuary, **September 11** at **11:15 AM** right after worship! We hope you can make it!

## WOMEN'S MINISTRY

Are you ready for this year's Women's Circles? Our Women's Circles will be meeting again on **Monday, September 12**: the Golden Girls will meet in the Fellowship Hall at **11 AM** and the Soul Sisters at **7 PM**.



## TAKING PART IN THE JOURNEY

Every other month, we are collecting different items to pack into the Christmas shoeboxes distributed by Samaritan's Purse. In the month of September, we will be collecting toys such as: balls, games puzzles, harmonicas, cars, Legos, dolls, stuffed animals, jump ropes, wind-up trains, slinkies, finger puppets, etch-a-sketch, plastic tools & dinosaurs. We are nearing the end of the year, so be on the lookout for information about when we will be gathering together to put together the boxes!

## THE HAPPY YEARS FELLOWSHIP

Happy Years will be meeting on **September 21<sup>st</sup> (Wednesday)** at **12 PM** for lunch. The meal will be a potato and salad bar, fixings, dessert, and drinks. Please join us for good food and fun fellowship no matter what age you are.!





## FINANCIAL NEWS July 2022

	<u>July</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
Revenue	\$13,516	\$123,050
Expenses	<u>19,233</u>	<u>128,716</u>
	-5,717	-5,666

Following are unexpected expenditures that impact our financial picture.

**January:** repair exterior leak in the Sanctuary  
**Cost: \$6285**

**April:** digital music machine for Sanctuary  
**Cost: \$2854**  
fire & safety inspection  
**Cost: \$857**

**July:** Church computer for Martha  
**Cost: \$642**

Please pray for our Church, Pastor James and our leaders as we work through the day to day operations of maintaining God's House.

Jason Morrison - Receiving Treasure  
Martha Simmons - Disbursing Treasurer



Dallas First  
412 West Trade Street  
Dallas, NC 28034

Dixon  
602 Dixon School Road  
Kings Mountain, NC 28086

Dorland Memorial  
P.O. Box 307  
Hot Springs, NC 28743

Dulatown  
P.O. Box 982  
Lenoir, NC 28645

- Prayers are appreciated for Daniel Tipton, minister member of Presbytery and Grief Services Director for Four Seasons Compassion for Life, as he awaits news about a potential heart transplant.

- Continue to remember our General Presbyter, Byron Wade, following surgery for prostate cancer. He received a good report from his last lab results and will undergo testing again later this month.

- Hold Ronnie Puckett, husband of PWNC staff member Marcia Puckett, in prayer as he continues immunotherapy every six weeks for his cancer. He'll have another scan soon, so continue to pray that the treatments are doing their job!



# SEPTEMBER

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<b>Sunday</b> 9AM Sunday School 10 AM Worship	<b>Sunday</b> 4 PM Kids of the Kingdom & Youth			1	2	3
4 8AM MOC Breakfast & Meeting  COMMUNION	5 	6 10 AM Bible Study  6 PM B & G	7	8	9	10
11 Rally Day 8:45 AM Breakfast (no SS) 11:15 AM Choir Rehearsal 2:30 PM Sabbatical Presentation w/refreshments	12 Blessing of the Forestview Students 11 AM Golden Girls 7 PM Soul Sisters	13 10 AM Bible Study	14	15	16	17
18 New SS Rotation Begins	19	20 10 AM Bible Study  6 PM MOC Fellowship (Jackson's)	21 12 PM Happy Years	22	23	24  2 PM - 7 PM
25  2:30 PM Stated Session	26	27 10 AM Bible Study	28	29	30	

**Union Presbyterian Church**

5615 Union Road  
Gastonia, NC 28056  
Phone: 704-864-7681  
E-mail:  
unionpc5615@gmail.com  
www.unionpresbyterianchurch.com

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Reverend James Holeman  
Pastor

Nancy Newman  
Administrative Assistant

Jieeun Ha  
Accompanist

Church Hours  
9:00 AM—1:00 PM  
Tuesday—Friday  
Office Closed Monday and Saturday

**SAVE THE DATES**

September 24	Rockin' Rally Retreat
October 1	MOC Chicken & Dumplings Dinner
October 29	Halloween Carnival