

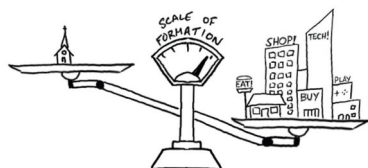


Dear Members and Friends of Union Presbyterian Church,
How can God use prayer to do something in our hearts? I think it can be explained in just 3 pictures [from the book, "What if Jesus was Serious: A Visual Guide to the Teachings of Jesus We Love to Ignore," by Skye Jethani].

THE AVERAGE CHRISTIAN IN AMERICA...

... ATTENDS CHURCH
2 HOURS A MONTH

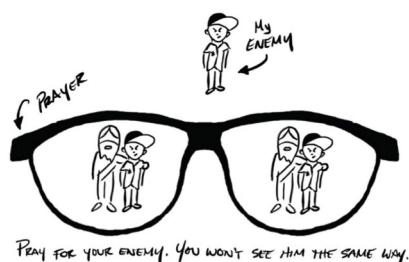
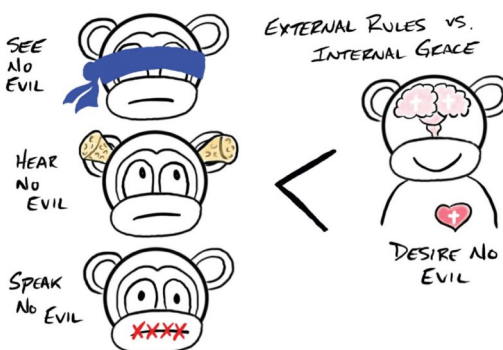
... IS SHAPED BY
150,000 ADS PER MONTH



This picture makes a scary point. Even if we got WAY more connected in our church than the average person, we would still be bombarded by countless more images specifically tailored to make us feel discontent and envious each day. Even worse, these mountains of images all direct us to focus on ourselves and the world around us rather than to the Spiritual and our relationship with God.

Jesus at one point said that unless our righteousness exceeds the scribes and the Pharisees, it will be impossible to enter the kingdom of God (Matthew 5: 20). But Jesus later condemned the Pharisees comparing them to a dish that only looks clean from the outside (Matthew 23: 25). How can both be true? Jesus makes it clear in his sermon of the mount... seeing, hearing, and speaking more like God doesn't fix our biggest problem. The big problem is with our heart.

Between everything the world throws at us, and the sin in our lives, we need to get our hearts someplace else. In the book, "Praying Like Monks, Living Like Fools," Tyler Staton writes that ultimately, "Prayer is about presence before it is about anything else. Prayer doesn't begin with outcomes. Prayer is the choice to be with the Father and prefer his company..." to everything else.



In Matthew 5: 44 Jesus tells us to love our enemies AND pray for them. What if these two things (love and prayer) actually work together? When we make prayer a priority (not just an add on), prayer becomes more about entering God's presence and trying to connect our will to his. This sort of prayer SHOULD begin to transform us from the inside out. Maybe it's only by praying for our enemies like this that we can begin to see them in light of God's presence?

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Pastor's Letter Continued Worship in May	2
Pray in May	3
Church News & Goings On in May	4-5
Church Finances Celebrations PWNC Prayer List	6
Church Calendar	7
Save the Date	8

May Elders

Junior Thompson
Tammy Biddix
Eddie Moten

Communion

May 5

Stated Session

May 19

Continued on next page

Continued from page 1

Prayer can be much than just asking God for some stuff and help now and again. This month there are a number of ways at Union that you could get into practice, praying a little differently! You might want to check them out!

Sincerely in Christ,
Pastor James

WORSHIP IN MAY

Join us in May as we begin a new 2 week sermon series entitled, "Closer than You Think." We will be exploring how prayer & worship tie into Jesus' Ascension and the presence of the Holy Spirit! On May 12, Mother's Day, we will also take time in worship to honor the women of the Union, including a special commissioning prayer for them!

Sermon Series: Philippians 2- Whistling in the Dark

May 5- Philippians 2, 19-30, "Which Comes First"

-Celebration of the Lord's Supper

Sermon Series: Closer than You Think

May 12- Matthew 28: 1-20, "More Than Words"

-Ascension of the Lord Sunday; Mother's Day

May 19- Romans 8: 22-30, "Groaning Creation"

-Pentecost Sunday

May 26- Guest Preacher

-Trinity Sunday; Memorial Day Weekend

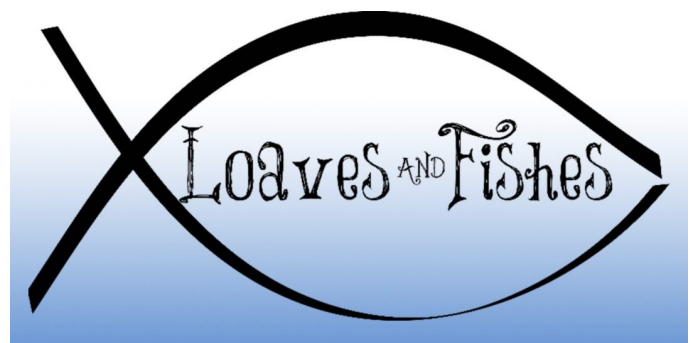
Lectionary [Plus] Sermon Series: "Not in Sync w/God's Frequency"

June 2- 1 Samuel 3: 1-16, "Not in Sync... Blind Eye"

-Celebration of Lord's Supper

LOAVES & FISHES STORE

The Union Presbyterian **Loaves and Fishes** store will be back open and ready for business **every Sunday in May**, beginning May 5th, directly following worship service! There will be personal shoppers available to help you with your orders. Our youth are looking forward to helping our shoppers and serving the Lord! Please join us!



HOME HOMESCHOOL FINAL DAY OF THE YEAR

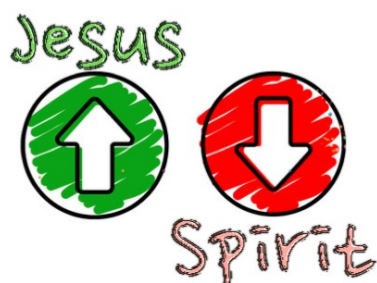
The **Home Homeschool** is concluding its school year on **May 2!** It's been a wonderful getting to know the School Board and parents of this awesome program this year. Session has agreed to allow the school to use our facility again in the Fall. Let us keep the school in our prayers as they wrap up the year and begin planning for next September!



PRAY IN MAY

The words “PRAY” and “MAY,” just sort of seem like they fit together, don’t they? Well, this month we are going to try and make that connection clear here at Union! We hope that you will consider participating in 3 special prayer opportunities this month: **National Day of Prayer** at Firestone Wesleyan Church, Worship at Union on **Ascension & Pentecost Sundays**, and our very own **May Pray Day**!

National Day of Prayer: On **Thursday, May 2**, Union’s Worship and Commitment Committee invite you to join one of **Firestone Church’s Prayer Services** (at 1700 Union Road). They will be holding outdoor services at **7:30 AM, 12 PM, and 6 PM** at Firestone’s flag. It is an opportunity to join with individuals from other churches to pray for our nation. Pastor James will be helping lead the prayer at 12 PM.



Ascension & Pentecost Sundays: During worship on **May 12 and 19**, our services for **Ascension Sunday** and **Pentecost Sunday** will focus on how the Ascension and Pentecost should influence our prayer lives. On May 12 there will be a special prayer of supplication, and on May 19 a special prayer of confession as part of worship.

May Pray Day: On **May 18**, from **1-3 PM** we will be having a special **Prayer Day**. We will begin at the church building at 1 PM, praying for the church, the leadership of the church, and those connected to our church in need. We will then head out to pray for a couple of the neighborhoods near the church. And then finally cluster in Lake Wiley and Downtown Gastonia to pray for our community as a whole.



DON'T FORGET TO WEAR RED



When we think of the holidays of May, usually our first thought is of Mother’s Day or Memorial Day. However, on the church calendar there are often 3 more holidays that get forgotten: Ascension Sunday, Pentecost, and Trinity Sunday. This year these church calendar holidays will be on May 12, 19, and 26. The 3 days are closely tied to one another. In John 16: 7 Jesus said, “It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.” It is because Jesus ascended, that the Holy Spirit came with power on Pentecost. And it is only because the Holy Spirit is with us, that we can experience the presence of Christ, and connect with God the Father through Scripture and prayer.

Often times, churches like to decorate with red on Pentecost. But because of how these 3 days are all linked, here at Union we use red all 3 Sundays! We invite you to **wear red, May 12, 19, and 26** for these special days on our church calendar.



DENOMINATION DISCERNMENT

The Session of Union wishes to thank everyone who participated in the Administrative Commission Hearing on April 14th. Richard Boyce, from the Commission, did a nice job moderating the meeting on behalf of the council and presbytery, and the Session would like to thank everyone who had the courage to speak. It seemed like each person spoke respectfully and from the heart.

The Session is moving forward in the dismissal process. Session has just finished putting together a dismissal team that will meet with the Administrative Council to work through all the details of what leaving the denomination would look like & cost. The dismissal team will also prepare what is necessary to join the ECO denomination, if the church ultimately votes to leave the PCUSA. Getting these details together will take several months. In the meantime, please bring any questions you have about the process or where the church is at in the process to any Session Elder or Pastor James.

“MY BUBBLE POPPING STORY”

Have you ever felt that the Holy Spirit was nudging you to do something? Mine started out as a gentle nudge at the Administrative Commission Hearing on April 14 here at the church. It quickly turned into more of a punch with an elbow. I whispered to myself, “God, I didn’t come here to talk, just to listen and show support.” But the feeling wouldn’t go away. Then I asked myself, “Shouldn’t I stand up for what I think is just and right? If I can’t do something small like this for God, then how in the world could I stand up for Him under real pressure or persecution?” A sense of peace and calm came over me, and I did what the Holy Spirit was nudging me to do. I stood up and expressed my feelings and thoughts. Did I get nervous? Yes. But I am so glad I got out of my comfort zone and did what God was asking me to do.

“Jesus said the helper will teach you everything and will cause you to remember all that I told you. This helper is the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name.”

John 14:26

If you have a “Bubble Popping Story,” I pray that you will share it with the rest of us. Pam Moton



SPEICAL OFFERINGS & FUNDRAISERS

GOOD NEWS RISING OFFERING

Thanks to your generous giving for the Good News Rising Offering, \$717 will be equally divided three ways to support World Renew Disaster Response, Frontier Fellowship and to “C” missionary in Southeast Asia, granddaughter of one of our Church families

CHURCH SIGN FUND

Thank you for supporting the Soup and Talent Show sponsored by the Presbyterian Women. Thanks to your contributions, we were able to establish our new **Church Sign Fund** with an opening balance of **\$2328.28**. If at any time you have a few extra dollars, would like to give a memorial or honor a friend for their birthday, please consider this fund. You can put your check in the offering plate marked “Church Sign Fund.” We hope you are excited to see this project moving forward – maybe baby steps, but we are moving! Thank you!





BOOK CHICKS

Do you enjoy reading a good book? How about snacks and socializing? Join us monthly during our Book Chicks book club meetings for some food, fun, and fellowship! For more information or to find out what book we are reading, please reach out to Kim Morrison. Our next meeting is **Monday, May 20th at 6:30 PM.**

BINGO

Join us for BINGO at Terrace Ridge on **Thursday, May 16th at 3 PM.** You are sure to receive many blessings from this outreach event!



WOMENS CIRCLE

The Golden Girls and Soul Sisters Circles will meet on **Monday, May 6th.** The Golden Girls will meet at **11 AM** for their monthly meeting. The Soul Sisters will meet at **7PM** for their monthly meeting. We hope you will join us!

5 CENTS A MEAL

Our next 5 Cents a meal offering will be on **Sunday, May 5th during worship.** The money collected will go to support The Salvation Army.



HAPPY YEARS

Happy Years will be on **May 15th at 12 PM.** All ages welcomed and invite a friend.

MEN OF THE CHURCH MARCH MEETING

The next Men of the Church Planning meeting will be at **8 AM** on **May 12th**! Come learn about and help plan future events for the Men of the Church!



UNION ENSEMBLE PRACTICE

Practices for Union's Music Ensemble in **May** will be right after church on **May 5 and 19!** Feel free to join us if you love to praise God with your voice!

Thank you friends for your support of our granddaughter through our *Good News Rising Offering*. The needs are great in Southeast Asia and your support is greatly appreciated. Please continue to pray for our precious "C" as she follows God's direction for her life. We are so proud of her as she answers God's call and we can use your prayers too! We treasure the saying "The will of God will never take her where His Grace won't protect her." *Family of "C"*

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude for the meals and acts of kindness shown after the loss of my sister, Jen. Thank you also for helping with our travel expenses for her memorial service. It has been a blessing to be surrounded by the love of our church family during this difficult time. *Vicky and the Holeman family*



PRESBYTERY PRAYER CALENDAR & PRAYER CONCERNS

Banner Elk
P.O. Box 158
Banner Elk, NC 28604
BePresChurch@skybest.com

Belmont First
P.O. Box 1
Belmont, NC 28012
ssmith@fpc-belmont.org

Bessemer City First
P.O. Box 365
Bessemer City, NC 28016

Black Mountain
P.O. Box 39
Black Mountain, NC 28711

Brevard-Davidson River
249 East Main Street
Brevard, NC 28712
bdrpcdenise@citcom.net

- We continue prayers for the Rev. Beth Newman, pastor of Byson City Presbyterian. Beth was back in the hospital dealing with a number of complications. A Caring Bridge website is available for communication and updates. You can reach it by clicking [here](#).
- We ask for your prayers for safety of our latest Mission Team in Guatemala as they return to North Carolina on Thursday.
- Prayers for Presbytery Associate Rev. George Thompson who broke his foot and awaiting treatment decisions.
- Hold Ronnie Puckett, husband of former PWNC staff member Marcia Puckett, in prayer as he continues immuno-therapy every six weeks for his cancer.





SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Sunday 9AM Sunday School 10 AM Worship			1	2 8 AM HOME Co-Op	3	4
5 5 Cents a Meal 2:30 PM SOC	6 11 AM Golden Girls 7 PM Soul Sisters 7 PM Men's Bible	7 10 AM Bible Study 7 PM B & G	8	9 6 PM Women's Council	10	11
12 8 AM MOC 2:30 PM W&S	13 7 PM Men's Bible Study	14 10 AM Bible Study	15 12 PM Happy Years	16 3 PM Bingo	17	18 May Pray Day 1-3PM
19 2:30 PM Session	20 6:30 PM Book Chicks 7 PM Men's Bible Study	21 10 AM Bible Study	22	23	24	25
26	27 7 PM Men's Bible Study	28 10 AM Bible Study	29	30	31	

Union Presbyterian Church

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

Non-Profit Organization

U.S. Postage Paid

Permit No. 8

Return Service Requested

Reverend James Holeman
Pastor

Tammy Biddix
Administrative Assistant

Jennifer Nelson
Communications Director

Jieeun Ha
Accompanist

Church Hours
3:00 PM—6 PM
Tuesday and Thursday



May 3
May 4
May 5
May 18

MOC BBQ & Butt Sale
Spring Fling
Communion & 5 Cents of Meal
May Pray Day