



Dear Members and Friends of Union Presbyterian Church,

One of my family's "new" favorite musicals is "The Greatest Showman," the highly fictionalized retelling of the story of P.T. Barnum. I think that one of the best songs in the musical happens toward the end of the movie. Phillip Carlyle, a playwright recruited by Barnum to help drum up publicity wants desperately to win the heart of African American trapeze artist, Anne Wheeler. Wheeler is understandably reluctant, knowing that they would never be accepted socially because of her skin color. This problem is dramatized in the song, "Rewrite the Stars." The two sing to one another as Wheeler rehearses part of her high flying act. In the end, Carlyle, wanting desperately to be with Wheeler as she swings above him about the room, runs to the balcony area and flings himself to her, trusting that she will not let him fall. There is no safety net below... much like their feelings for one another.



It is a great moment in the movie. But I have to admit that in real life, I much prefer watching trapeze artists do their acrobatic feats over safety nets. I don't know about you, but I still find trapeze stunts electrifying even when I don't also have to worry that one wrong move could bring utter disaster.

Juan Carlos Ortiz uses the trapeze as an interesting illustration for Christian life. He argues that in some ways Christians live their lives on the trapeze. We spin and twirl. We catch one another and help keep each other from falling out of the sky. It is easy for us to begin to believe that our call as Christians is to allow the world to watch us do these amazing twists and flips so they will say, "Wow look at how those Christians live! Look at how they love one another! Look at how they do their jobs and raise their families!" But I wonder... is this really our call as followers of Christ?

Over this last month I have been helping lead a confirmation class for our older youth. And one of my favorite weeks to teach is when we get to talk about the Reformation. I love the "5 Alones" of the Reformation (Grace Alone, Christ Alone, Faith Alone, Scripture Alone, and To the Glory of God Alone). I've always thought it to be an incredibly succinct way to describe salvation and our walk with God!

In the book, "Grace Alone: Salvation as a Gift of God," Carl R. Trueman writes how one of the greatest stories in the Old Testament that demonstrates God's grace is in the story of Jonah. After Jonah finally decides to obey God and go to Nineveh to preach, Jonah becomes furious when he's successful.

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JUNE ELDERS

Tammy Biddix
Charlie Nelson
Junior Thompson

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

June 20-June 25

SESSION MEETING

June 26

(continued from previous page)

The Ninevites actually repent and God spares the city. Jonah tells God that he is upset with this because he does not like the people of Nineveh and he knew that the Lord is a gracious God who would forgive these people if they repented (Jonah 4:2). Trueman argues that this is an incredibly ironic response because Jonah knows that it is only “the fact of God’s graciousness that meant Jonah himself could enjoy the relationship with the Lord that he did.” Jonah did not want others to experience the unmerited and amazing gift that he himself had received from God. Not only did Jonah receive this grace through his covenanted relationship with God as an Israelite but he also just literally received even more unmerited mercy when God saved him with the fish. But Trueman wonders if part of the reason that Jonah’s reaction seems so particularly ugly in this passage is “...because God’s grace is so beautiful.” The corrupt city of Nineveh was delivered from judgement and brought into joyful communion with God. Jonah’s bitterness just makes God’s glorious grace even more noticeable.

So I wonder, as trapeze artists for God, is our goal to look amazing as we flip and fly through the air? Or is our real goal to keep pointing at the safety net we fly over? I think that we are only up there on those wires to begin with because of that net (God’s grace shown through Christ’s death and resurrection). Isn’t the only reason we are brave enough to listen to God’s call and minister to others outside of our comfort zones is because we know that God’s gracious net is there catch us? And when we do fall... when we fall short, when we miss God’s leading, when we get out of step with our fellow trapeze artists, or when we try to reach just a little further than God intends... when we fall, is that really a bad thing or is it another opportunity we have to allow God’s grace to be even more noticeable. Is our primary goal to wow the world from the trapeze or to live a life that allows other to see how we keep pointing to the net?

Sincerely in Christ,
Pastor James

WORSHIP IN JUNE

During the month of June, we hope that you will join us as we explore some of the life of Samuel and what Godly leadership might look like. Samuel’s ups and downs as he tried to serve God has a lot to teach us about what it means to listen to God, to be men and women of prayer, and to deal with the changing world we live in.

Lectionary Series on Revelation: Rehearsing for Heaven

June 5: Revelation 22:12-21, “Rehearsing for Heaven... Come”

-Pentecost Sunday; Celebration of the Lord’s Supper

Sermon series on Samuel: True Grit

June 12: 1 Samuel 3:1-4:1, “Listen For It”

-Trinity Sunday

June 19: 1 Samuel 7:1-17, “Raise Your Ebenezer”

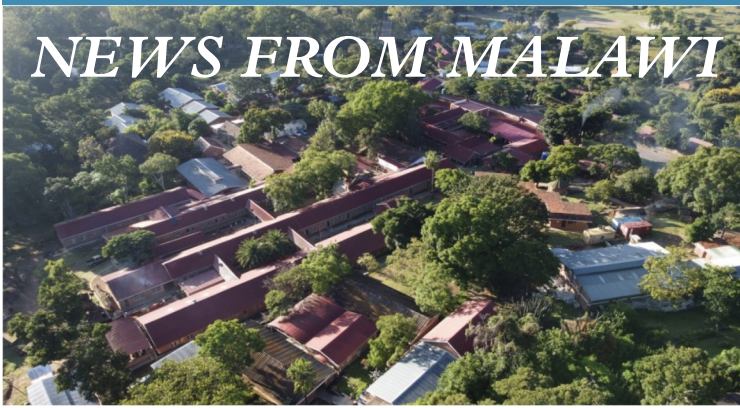
-Father’s Day; Commissioning of the Men of the Church

June 26: 1 Samuel 8:1-22, “To Everything Turn Turn Turn”

SABBATICAL FOR PASTOR JAMES

During the **month of July**, Pastor James will be on Sabbatical. Each week, there will be an emergency pastoral contact who you can reach through one of the Elders serving on Session. Also please note that due to the Sabbatical, we will not be celebrating the Lords Supper during the month of July. Please keep Pastor James and his family in your prayers as he uses this time to recharge and prepare to come back to Union with a renewed sense of call and vision for the church.

NEWS FROM MALAWI



On May 24th, Frank Dimmock, the Deputy Director from the Nkhoma Mission Hospital in Malawi met with pastors from Presbyterian Churches in the Gaston County Area to give an update on what is going on in the region.

Things are hard in Malawi right now. Although in the last couple years, Covid-19 did impact Malawi (closing Ebenezer School for a time, and straining the resources of Nkhoma Mission Hospital), its impact was much smaller in Malawi than elsewhere in the world. This is probably largely due to the fact that the median age in Malawi is only 18 years.

The war in Ukraine is having a much larger impact. Food and fuel prices are at historic levels. Since 83% of the population lives in rural areas and 70% live on less than \$1.90 a day, this is truly a challenge. The cost for the fuel needed to bus students to the school and the cost for the hospital to buy supplies and get them to its rural clinics and mobile ambulances is significant.

However, despite these challenges, Ebenezer School and Nkhoma Hospital continue to grow. Ebenezer School began in 2008 with 11 children and this year's enrollment is 380. Since 2016, 4 classes of students have graduated and 3 students are in University. The school currently employs 23 teachers.



The Nkhoma hospital's mission continues to be to provide quality healthcare for all, inspired by the love of Jesus Christ. There are currently 290 beds that provide medical, surgical, adult and pediatric medicine, neonatal, maternity, ophthalmic, Palliative Care, mental health, and care for TB, HIV, COVID, burns, and dental. The hospital currently staffs 526 including 5 chaplains. The hospital has 2 "mobile ambulances" that are used to get medical supplies to rural clinics and villages. The hospital's biggest need right now is with staff housing. Many of the current staff housing is very old and in need of replacement

and repair and as a growing hospital there is need for even more housing. Each 3 bedroom cement block house costs about \$45,000 to build. The hospital is also hoping to raise funds to build a new 1.3 million dollar surgical building with maternity wing.



Please continue to keep Malawi in your prayers. If you feel led to give financially, you can contact W&S or Pastor James. There are ways you can support the hospital and school's ongoing work, help provide scholarships for the students at the school, or support the hospital's staff housing needs and proposed surgical building.



UNION'S UP COMING

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

From a whimsical lighthouse on an enchanted island, Explorers are guided by a Lighthouse Keeper and Beacon the Puffin on an exciting quest to find five mysterious Infinity Lanterns to help light their way. Using map coordinates from the Reference Book (the Bible), children discover clues to finding each Lantern while learning how God's light shines in the lives of familiar biblical characters in Old and New Testament stories.

Come join us **June 20 - June 25** from **6 PM - 8:30 PM** for a great time of learning about the Bible.



thank you

A big thank you to everyone who participated in the Loaves and Fishes Store this year! Look at how much food we collected!

- Thank you to all the youth who helped run the store!
- Thank you to all our customers!
- And especially thank you, Mickie Nelson, for doing such an amazing job as the store's general manager, supplier, and general contractor! You are amazing!!!

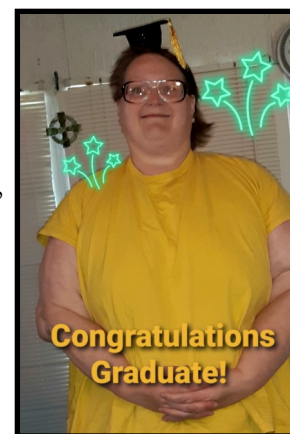
The food collected will go a long way in helping Crisis Assistant Ministries provide food, financial assistance, and medication for those in need in Gastonia.

-From Witness & Service

Congratulations!

WELL DONE, KELLY!

Congratulations to Kelly Digh, graduate of Gaston College's Associate of Arts program, Class of 2022! She will continue towards her Bachelor's in English, with a concentration in Creative and Professional Writing, at Fayetteville State University this fall. Love from Mom, Kathy, Steve, and the family.



NEWS AND EVENTS



THE LORD'S SUPPER

We invite you to join us as we celebrate the Lord's Supper on **Sunday, June 5, at 10 AM.**

THE HAPPY YEARS FELLOWSHIP

Join us on **Wednesday, June 15 at 12 PM** for lunch. The meal will be chicken salad, other cold salads, fixings, dessert, and drinks. Please join us for good food and fun fellowship no matter what age you are.

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED

The church office will be closed on **Friday, June 3** and **Monday, June 6** through **Wednesday, June 8** due to vacations.



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 June**, we will be collecting crafts and activities such as:

- Pencils
- Colored pencils
- Pencil sharpeners
- Markers
- Crayons
- Coloring Books
- Pads
- Glue stick
- Adhesive tape
- Water colors
- Play dough
- Stickers
- Skip ropes
- Deflated soccer ball/pump

There will be a basket for the collection of these items.

BABY BOTTLE BLESSINGS CAMPAIGN

The Baby Bottle Blessings Campaign is going on to assist Crisis Pregnancy Center . If you would like to participate, just take a baby bottle and fill it with your spare change. Please bring the bottle back on **Father's Day, June 19**



WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE HYMN?

Now is the time to recommend to us hymns to be sung in July. This is a great opportunity to look at the new Glory to God Hymnal and pick out some of your favorites or even request a song that is not in one of our hymnals! In July, we will be singing as many of these songs as we can in worship of our Lord. Let us hear from you (bulletin inserts will be available first Sunday of June) and we will worship our Lord with some of our very favorites!



FINANCIAL NEWS

April 2022

	<u>April</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
Revenue	\$12,819	\$78,205
Expenses	<u>21,017</u>	<u>76,405</u>
	-8,198	1,800

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

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

PRESBYTERIAN PRAYER CALENDAR & CONCERNS

Bridgewater
3327 US Hwy 70 West
Morganton, NC 28655

Brittain
3456 US Hwy 64
Rutherfordton, NC 28139

Brittain's Cove
P. O. Box 1590
Weaverville, NC 28787

Bryson City
P.O. Box 549
Bryson City, NC 28713
Brevard, NC 28712

- Presbyterian Disaster Assistance has reached out to the Presbytery of Western New York and the Presbytery of Los Ranchos to offer assistance following the senseless acts of violence in Buffalo and Laguna Woods. Please join us in praying for the community of Buffalo, Laguna Woods, Geneva Presbyterian Church and the Taiwanese congregation who worships there. In your mercy, O Lord, we pray.
- Please be in prayer for the people of Ukraine as they live courageously but suffer needlessly in the midst of violence and war. Also remember Robert Gamble, a member of our Presbytery, as well. Robert conducts a ministry in Ukraine for orphaned children and recently returned to the U.S. Pray that the conflict that rages may swiftly come to an end. And pray for leaders around the world, that they may be diligent in leading us all to peace, so that neither soldiers nor civilians suffer further for want of leadership grounded in God's shalom.
- Hold Ronnie Puckett, husband of PWNC staff member Marcia Puckett, in prayer as he continues immunotherapy every three weeks for his cancer. He'll have another scan in three months, so continue to pray that the treatments are doing their job!

JUNE



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Sunday 9AM Sunday School 10 AM Worship	Sunday 4 PM Kids of the Kingdom & Youth		1	2 6 PM C & T	3 NANCY ON VACATION	4
5 Communion 11 AM Women's Council MOC 2:30 PM SOC	6 Ladies Circles 11 AM Golden Girls 7 PM Soul Sisters	7 NANCY ON VACATION 6 PM B & G	8	9	10	11
	PASTOR ON VACATION					
12 11 AM W & C 2:30 PM W & S	13	14 10 AM Bible Study	15 12 PM Happy Years	16	17	18
19 Father's Day	20	21 10 AM Bible Study	22	23	24	25
	DISCOVERY FROM ADVENTURE ISLAND VBS 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM					
26 2:30 PM Stated Session	27	28 10 AM Bible Study	29	30		

Union Presbyterian Church

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Non-Profit Organization

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Permit No. 8

Return Service Requested

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

June 20-25 Vacation Bible School