



Dear Friends and Members of Union Presbyterian Church,

In her poem “Good Friday,” Christina Rossetti compares herself to some of the people and even some of nature itself that witnessed the crucifixion. Rossetti imagines herself as a rock, wishing she could be moved, softened, and changed by Christ’s death on the cross. She longs to be struck and broken like the stone Moses broke to produce clear and abundant water for the people of Israel in the desert.

May each of us be broken in similar way this Easter.

Sincerely in Christ,  
Pastor James

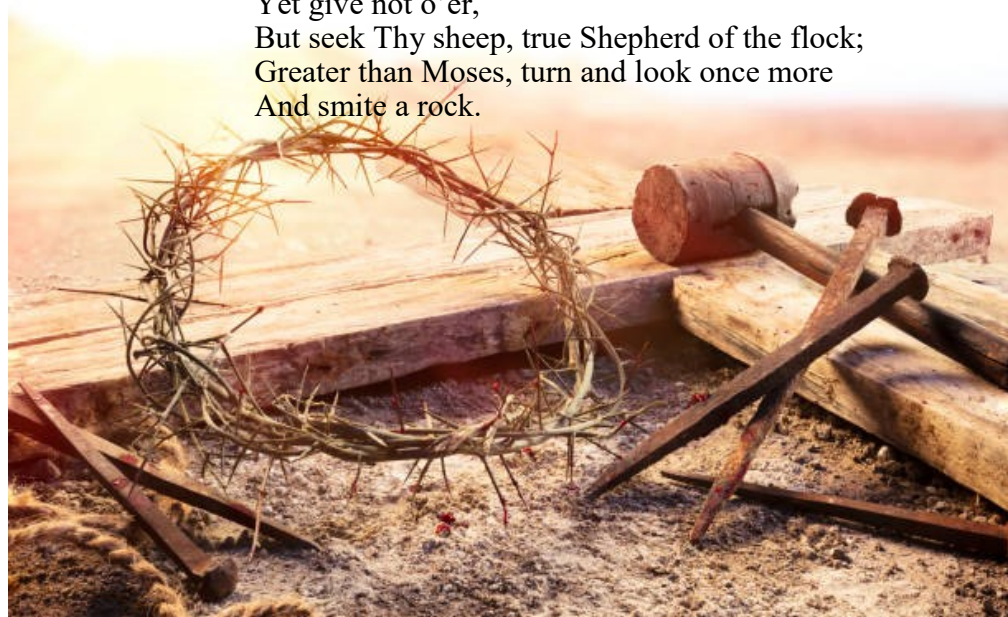
Good Friday  
By Christina Rossetti

Am I a stone, and not a sheep,  
That I can stand, O Christ, beneath Thy cross,  
To number drop by drop Thy blood’s slow loss,

Not so those women loved  
Who with exceeding grief lamented Thee;  
Not so fallen Peter weeping bitterly;  
Not so the thief was moved;

Not so the Sun and Moon  
Which hid their faces in a starless sky,  
A horror of great darkness at broad noon—  
I, only I.

Yet give not o’er,  
But seek Thy sheep, true Shepherd of the flock;  
Greater than Moses, turn and look once more  
And smite a rock.



**INSIDE THIS ISSUE:**

April Worship Good News Rising	2
News From Session	3
New Opportunities to Service Blessing Box Competition	4
Union News & Events	5
Church Finances Celebrations PWNC Prayer List and Concerns	6
Calendar	7
Inserts: Holy Week Calendar Easter Egg Hunt	

**April Elders**  
Sally McGinnis  
Janice Meek  
Glenn Sparrow

**Procession of the Cross**  
April 7

**Easter Egg Hunt**  
April 8

**Easter Vigil**  
April 8

**Stated Session**  
April 16

## WORSHIP IN APRIL

### Lenten Sermon Series: Provision when Be-Wildered

April 2: Mark 15: 16-34, "Looking for the Miracle in Front of You"

-Palm Sunday; Celebration of the Lord's Supper

April 9: John 21: 1-14, "It is the Lord"

-Resurrection of the Lord Sunday

### Lectionary Series: Acts... Sent To Infinity & Beyond

April 16: Acts 2: 14a, 22-32, "Mission Impossible?"

April 23: Acts 2: 14a, 36-41, "What Generation are You a Part Of?"

April 30: Acts 2: 42-47, "Broken and Breaking"

May 7: Acts 7: 44-60, "Putting Four Walls Around God"

-Celebration of the Lord's Supper



### AN EASTER SPECIAL OFFERING

- BRINGING DISASTER RELIEF
- GIVING ESSENTIAL CARE
- SPREADING THE GOSPEL

### EASTER SPECIAL OFFERING: GOOD NEWS RISING

During Easter we celebrate how Christ conquered death and how he brings new life to those who follow him. We invite you to participate in Union's Special Offering this Easter which also hopes to bring new life to many in need all over the world. Special offering envelopes will be available for this offering on Easter Sunday, in the church office, and at all entrance tables outside the Sanctuary for several weeks following Easter.

This years **Good News Rising Offering** will go to 3 organizations:

- (1) 1/3 of the offering this year will go to **World Renew Disaster Response Service**- which helps rebuild communities after natural disasters strike close to home and around the world.
- (2) 1/3 will go thru the **Medical Benevolence Foundation** to support the work at **Nkhoma Mission Hospital** in Malawi. This is the hospital Union has supported in Malawi for many years.
- (3) 1/3 will go to **Frontier Fellowship** to help train and support local ministries that work with people groups who are still largely unreached with the Gospel in **Pakistan and India**. Money will be used as needed for the following purposes: to help train and equip local missionaries and Bible translators in India, plant house churches in rural areas of Northern India, provide Christian based primary school education for children in the Meghwal and Bhil people groups (part of economically poor low caste), and explore new Christian ministries and local missionaries to support in Pakistan.



## NEWS FROM THE SESSION

Last October, the Session of Union shared steps that they had begun to take on behalf of the congregation based on denomination concerns in the PCUSA. These concerns were shared at several congregation informational meetings last Summer.

Since then, Session has met with Bryron Wade, the current Executive of our Presbytery, to talk about Sessions concerns. The Session has connected Union church with the Fellowship Community, a group of PCUSA churches and pastors who have similar concerns about the denomination and share a similar call toward Jesus' Great Commission. Session has also created a "What We Believe" statement for the church and has stopped all financial giving to the PCUSA denomination.

In October, Session also put together a task force (including both elders and members of the congregation) to explore other Presbyterian denominations and what our church could expect if we officially began the process with our Presbytery to explore leaving the PCUSA denomination.

This discernment task force has finished their work, and has presented their findings to Session. Now Session wants the congregation to be informed so that the entire church can continue to discern what is in the future for Union. The Session will be hosting 3 Congregational Information Meetings to share this information. We hope that you will be able to make it to all 3.

**-Informational Meeting 1: "What is in Front of Union," April 23, 4 PM.** Pastor James will remind the congregation of some of the concerns that Session has about the current state of the denomination and go over the 3 main options that a church in our denomination might take when they have such concerns. **Session will be providing pick ups for this meeting.**

**-Informational Meeting 2: "If Union Disassociated with the Denomination Where Would the Church Go?," May 7, after church, lunch provided by Session.** A presentation about the similarities and differences between our denomination, the PCUSA, and the denomination ECO (A Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians). You can find out more about ECO on your own on their website: <https://eco-pres.org>.

**-Informational Meeting 3: "What to Expect if Union left the PCUSA," May 12, 6 PM. Ice Cream provided by Session.** This meeting will explore what Union could expect were it to choose to begin an official discernment process with our Presbytery to explore leaving the denomination.



We hope that you will be able to make it to all 3 of these informational meetings and become more informed! If you are interested in finding out what is presented but physically unable to attend, please let us know. Session is currently working on other ways to get the information out to everyone.



## NEW OPPORTUNITIES & A NEW STEPS IN FOLLOWING GOD'S CALL

For over 5 years, Union Church has been trying to live out our church's Mission Statement, "to know Christ and make Christ known," through the following Vision Statement:

1. Actively share the Good News of Christ to the students of Forestview High school
2. Become a church of outward focused Groups
3. Communicate the Gospel in worship and in the community through a variety of media platforms
4. Enthusiastically welcome new additions to the community & be a place of Christian hospitality within our region

Last month Session modified our vision statement broadening #1 and eliminating #3. Our Church's new Vision Statement to live out the Great Commission of making disciples is:

1. **Use our time, treasures, and talents to actively share the Good News of Christ to the younger generations of our community.**
2. **Become a church of outward focused groups.**
3. **Enthusiastically welcome new additions to the community & be a place of Christian hospitality within our region.**

At Union we hope our Session, our committees, and individuals in the church will continue to look for new ways that we can reach out to Forestview with the Gospel. But we also realize that this is just part of a wider need to reach out with Christ to the next generations. Our Strengthening of the Church Committee is now looking to set up a team of 6 or more members of the church who would begin to explore how we can transform our children and youth programs of the church to more effectively share Christ with young people not just in our church but also out in our community. Could God be calling you to be part of such a team?

LOOK  
what the  
LORD  
has done

### BLESSING BOX MONTH

The winners of the Blessing Box competition was the Youth/Children

**1044 individual food items.**

We count this a successful month in which you have been the Lord's instrument in supplying food for those who are in need. The total:

**2,075 individual food items**

This is all in addition to the monies raised during "5 Cent a Meal" and our special lunch this month!

**The pictures below represents just a portion of what the Lord has done through YOU. Thank you!**



# What's Happening

**NEW BIBLE STUDY HELP READY**  
April's Congregational Bible Study Help on the book of James is now available. We invite you to take extra time each week to dig into Scripture. If you are unable to get a paper copy you can go online to get the same resources and even more: <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/james/>.

## COMMUNION

Come join us as we celebrate the Lord's Supper on **April 2**. Recently we have been serving the bread in individual cups. This month we will once again be passing the Communion plate with the pieces of bread all together in the same plate. Pre-sealed bread and juice containers will be available upon request.

## WOMEN'S MINISTRY

The Ladies Circles will meet on **Monday, April 3**. Ladies, if you are not involved in one of our circles, please come and enjoy good fellowship and Bible study. We have both a morning and evening circle for your convenience:

- The Golden Girls Circle will meet at **11 AM** hosted by Janice Short in the Fellowship Hall for a time of Bible Study, business meeting and lunch together.
- The Soul Sisters will meet at **7 PM** in the Fellowship Hall.

## EASTER EGG HUNT

We invite you to come on **Saturday, April 8, 10 AM** and join in the fun of an Easter egg hunt sponsored by the youth. Please feel free to use the enclosed flyer to invite others. Bring your family friends and neighbors and join the fun...rain or shine! And please bring in wrapped candy for the youth to put in eggs before!!

## HOLY WEEK

Please join us Holy Week as we remember the price Jesus Christ paid for our salvation and as we celebrate His resurrection from the dead so that we might live forever with Him! Feel free to use the enclosed flyer to invite others.

## HAPPY YEARS

Happy Years will be meeting on **April 19 (Wednesday)** at **12 PM** for lunch. The meal will be ham, slaw, other fixings, bread, desserts, and drinks. Please join us for good food and fun fellowship no matter what age you are.

The Happy Years Fellowship would also like to thank the Women of the Church for the wonderful meal on **March 15<sup>th</sup>**. The food was great, the decorations were very special, and the door prizes were appreciated. We want all the ladies who helped to make this event possible know how much we appreciate their efforts. Also the ladies who were serving the food and being our gracious hosts need to be recognized. A special thanks to Melody Caldwell, Shelly Grigg, Twilah Jordan, and Pam Moton!

## BINGO AT TERRACE RIDGE

We will play Bingo with the residents of Terrace Ridge on **Thursday, April 20** from **3:30 - 4:30 PM**. Volunteers are needed so we invite you to come out if you are able and help us bless these residents.

## THE MEN OF THE CHURCH MINISTRY

Attention all men! We invite you to join the men for fellowship on **Thursday, April 6**, at **6:30 PM** at Villa Roma. The MOC would also like to thank all the men and women who helped with the Pancake Supper and all of you who came out and ate with us. The donations cleared were approximately **\$750**. Thank you!



**FINANCIAL NEWS  
February 28, 2023**

	<u>February</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
Revenue	\$13,373	\$26,231
Expenses	<u>16,368</u>	<u>31,804</u>
	-2,995	-5,573

February:  
Ice machine & installation supplies  
**Cost: \$555**

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 Treasurer  
Martha Simmons - Disbursing Treasurer

**PRESBYTERY PRAYER  
CONCERNS**

- Melissa Upchurch, Pastor of Marshall Presbyterian Church, requests that you please pray for the people of Canton and Canton Presbyterian Church. The town’s major employer—a paper mill—announced it is closing and it will put a lot of people out of work. This news took everyone by surprise.
- Please remember Susan Ward, Clerk of Session at Union Mills Presbyterian Church. Susan underwent emergency surgery due to a ruptured colon. Prayers are appreciated for healing and the upcoming surgery to reverse the colostomy.
- Corise Gambrell requests prayers for her husband, Bob Gambrell. Bob had surgery to repair ruptured tendons in both knees, due to a fall. He is now at Givens Highland Farms, where he expects to have an extensive rehab period.
- Casey Newton, from Hagerstown, MD, daughter of Presbytery Associate Beth Gunn, is now recovering at home after being hospitalized for a subarachnoid bleed. Prayers are appreciated for continued healing.



# APRIL

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					<b>1</b>	
<b>2</b> Palm Sunday Communion 11 AM MOC 2:30 PM SOC	<b>3</b> 11AM Golden Girls (Janice Short in FH) 7 PM Soul Sisters	<b>4</b> 10 AM Bible Study	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> 6:30 PM MOC Fellowship (Villa Roma)	<b>7</b> 6 PM Procession of the Cross (New Hope Presbyterian)	<b>8</b> 10 AM Easter Egg Hunt 4 PM Easter Vigil	
<b>9</b> 7:15 AM Sunrise Service 8 AM Breakfast 10 AM Celebration of Christ's Resurrection	<b>Pastor Vacation</b>		<b>11</b> 7 PM B & G	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> 3 PM Finance 6:30 PM C & T	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> 10 AM Session
<b>16</b> 1 PM W & S 2:30 PM Stated Session	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> 10 AM Bible Study	<b>19</b> 12 PM Happy Years	<b>20</b> 3:30 PM Bingo at Terrace Ridge	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	
<b>23</b> 2:30 PM W & C 4 PM Session Presentation	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> 10 AM Bible Study	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	
<b>30</b>							

**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

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**

April 2	Palm Sunday
April 7	Good Friday Service
April 8	Easter Egg Hunt & Easter Vigil
April 9	Sunrise Service/Breakfast Resurrection Celebration
April 23	Session Presentation