



*"Count your age by friends, not years. Count your life by smiles, not tears."*

*-John Lennon*

Dear Friends and Members of Union Presbyterian Church,

The quote above by John Lennon might seem a little simple. But in real life isn't that how many of us measure happiness? It's easy to think of happiness like a math equation. We can look at our life and make one list of all the good stuff going on and then make a list of all the bad stuff going on. Then we can add weight to each item based on "how" good or bad it is. Then compare the 2 lists. If there is more good than bad we must be happy... right?



The Cambridge dictionary defines the word "philosophy" as "the use of reason in understanding such things as the nature of the real world and existence, the use and limits of knowledge, and the principles of moral judgment." Noted pastor and author, Dallas Willard, once said that at the core Philosophy really was about determining "who is well off" and "who is a really good person." In other words it seeks to determine who is flourishing, happy, and living a good life and who is a good, righteous, and ethical person.

One problem with philosophy today is that there are just too many philosophies around to explain what a happy/flourishing or good/ethical life looks like and few agree with one another. In his book, "Jesus the Great Philosopher," Jonathan T. Pennington writes,

Just in the ancient world alone, people disagreed significantly about how to find 'flourishing.' Do we need to detach ourselves from emotions, or is it found in key ecstatic temple-based experiences? [And] when we follow human thought down to today, the differing philosophies of life-happiness are myriad and overwhelming. Is it a keto diet, CrossFit, entrenching into "Make America Great Again" values, finding inner peace through hot yoga, daily journaling, making sure you "pay it forward" every day, etc., etc., etc.? There are simply too many choices, like the menu at the Cheesecake Factory. It can feel paralyzing.

Fortunately, as followers of Christ, we don't need to follow a modern day philosophy to find happiness, because Jesus is the only philosopher we need. Clearly, Jesus wasn't JUST a philosopher. He is also the Word of God (part of the Triune God we worship). He is our Priest, Prophet, Friend, and King. He has conquered sin and death through his incarnation, death, and resurrection. He justifies us, reconciles us to God, brings forgiveness, peace, and love. However, he is ALSO a philosopher.

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#### **August Elders**

Sally McGinnis  
Jan Meek  
Eric Nelson

#### **Communion**

August 4

#### **Stated Session**

August 18

*[Continued from page]*

While on earth, Jesus taught us how to live flourishing and ethical lives. Just look at the Sermon of the Mount in Matthew 5-7. It starts by explaining how a person can be blessed (or happy) here on earth. Interestingly, Pennington writes in “Jesus the Great Philosopher” that some early scribes who copied the original gospels added a title to the whole Sermon on the Mount, telling readers that this sermon from Jesus was all “Concerning Happiness.”

Pennington writes that if you went out in the streets and asked 1000 people who the happiest people in the world are, it would be very unlikely that the majority would say that the happiest people are faithful Christians: “the righteous, the saints, and the holy martyrs.” The reason you wouldn’t is because most people measure happiness by counting smiles or looking how easy one has it in the world. But that’s not how Jesus teaches us to count happiness. In 1 Corinthians 13: 13 Paul sums up Jesus’ teachings about a flourishing life pretty well. Paul writes that when you strip away everything else in life, only 3 things remain: faith, hope, and love.

Isn’t that what Jesus taught? Jesus taught people to have faith; to put their trust in God. He taught people to hope; to look for glimpses of the Kingdom of God around them, to point out God’s Kingdom to others, and to look forward to an eternity in that Kingdom in heaven. And Jesus taught people to love; to live their lives in such a way that they are focused on loving God and loving others each day.

Are you trying to find more “happiness” in your life? You don’t need to find a new self-help book or a special guru to help you. We already have the Bible and Jesus. Jesus didn’t JUST come to deal with spiritual matters. He came to show us how to live a good and flourishing life, by giving us a direction to look toward (God through faith), hope for a future (in Christ, in God’s Kingdom, and one day in heaven), and giving us a purpose (thru love). May Jesus, the Great Philosopher, help each of us live flourishing lives!

Sincerely in Christ,  
Pastor James

## **WORSHIP IN AUGUST**

Often when people talk about our Triune God, it becomes all about trying to figure out how the whole trinity thing works. It can get confusing. It might even leave one to sort of wonder, “Who cares! I don’t get the Trinity, but what difference does that make!” During most of the month of August, we will be exploring aspects of the Trinity. But not in order to figure out **HOW** the Trinity works. Rather, we will be exploring **WHY** God being Triune matters. You may be surprised to see how important the Trinity is to understanding eternal life, forgiveness, and even the character of God!

### **Lectionary Sermon Series: Therefore/ Here For**

August 4- Ephesians 4:1-16, “Here for Grace Given... Therefore Live Worthily”

-Celebration of the Lord’s Supper

### **Sermon Series: Star Witness for the Triune God**

August 11- John 8: 48-59, “Star Witness... Revealing Eternal Life”

August 18- 1 John 2: 1-10, “Star Witness... Revealing Forgiveness”

August 25- Colossians 1: 15-23, “Star Witness... Revealing Character”

### **Sermon Series: Hi-Ho! It’s Off to Work we Go!**

September 1- Ephesians 2:4–13, “Hi-Ho.... Grace Investment”

-Celebration of the Lord’s Supper; Labor Day Weekend

## AUGUST PRAYER WALK



What is the thing every single person on the planet needs? The answer is easy. All of us need a closer relationship with God and more of Jesus in our lives. One of the simplest ways we can evangelize is to pray about that need for another person. That's what our monthly prayer walk is all about... to pray for people we don't know in order to let them know that they are loved by God. Prayer works. The prayers we pray will change people's lives... and they will change our lives as we look outward and pray for the communities around the church. You can join us this month on **August 14 at 7 PM** for our **August Prayer Walk** in a nearby neighborhood. You can join us by walking, driving,

going solo, or even praying with others, as we pray for each house in a nearby neighborhood. You can even leave a door hanger at each house to let them know that they were prayed for and are loved by God. The door hanger will have a link to our webpage so households can request more specific prayers from our church. We hope you will join us this month.

## PRAYER AFTER WORSHIP

Prayer is a very important part of our relationship with God. The Worship and Commitment Committee would like to provide each of us a new opportunity for prayer each month. On the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday, right after our Sunday Service, we will be providing an opportunity for "**Prayer after Worship.**" We will take 15 minutes or so on these Sundays to pray for members, friends, and family of our church who are going through a hard time, pray for upcoming events and ministries of the church, and even pick a couple places in our community that need prayer. If you have a special prayer need, there will also be an opportunity for you to get prayed for corporately or personally and even be anointed with oil if you would like. We've picked the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the month for this, not because this prayer time is an afterthought, but because we want it to be a time of looking forward to the months ahead. Join us, for **Prayer After Worship**, at **11 AM on August 25<sup>th</sup>**, as we look forward to how God might be moving in September and beyond!



## GOD SIGHTING: MIRACULOUS HEALING

For those who do not know, my cousin Chris and his family got in a major car wreck last month. He and his wife and daughter were airlifted to a nearby surgical hospital. The outlook was not good. Chris' wife looked like she would have to have major surgery on her spine and would permanently lose some mobility. Chris looked to have major internal injuries that they couldn't even scan because he was in so much pain. Their daughter, who has some special needs, did not have a parent able to be by her side and advocate for her needs. It looked pretty bad. But on Saturday, July 20<sup>th</sup>, all 3 took a plane back home! They were bruised and battered, but none of them needed surgery. For me, this has been a pretty amazing example of the miraculous way God sometimes works through prayer! -Pastor James

## GOD SIGHTING: GOD AT WORK

The Medical Mobility Ministry continues to serve the community and surrounding area. The following paints a canvas of God working through it. Recently a family called from Rutherford County. They had previously received a motorized scooter for the elderly husband from our church about 2 years ago. It enables Henry to ride outside and tend his raised bed garden he so enjoyed. Now after a number of hospital stays for a serious illness, he needed a hospital bed. Our church responded immediately donating a hospital bed and setting it up in their house. We were also able to pray with them. Three days later we received a call from another family that had returned a motorized scooter we had provided to them. Their loved one had passed away and they wanted us to have the scooter back to help someone else. Now they wanted to donate a hospital bed to us! We graciously received it to replace the one we had just given out. How amazing God works. A friend, coordinating through Gary McGinnis, graciously donated several items and saw our storage building. He then donated two large storage rack systems to help us better organize the items. Knee scooters are hard to come by and we recently received two, which have already been distributed out to people needing them. A church member had their rolling walker break apart and we were able to immediately replace it. We currently have walkers, a lift chair, bedside toilets, hospital beds, canes, a wheelchair, hygiene products, motorized scooters, and other miscellaneous items available-all of which have been donated. God continues to paint a picture of loving care to those in need through this ministry.

## Church Update

During this month's July Session Meeting, the Session has decided to no longer bulk mail the monthly newsletter to the congregation. This will start in September. There are several reasons for this:

- (1) The cost of bulk mail has increased enough (based on the number of "extra" newsletters we need to send out to get the bulk mail cost) that the monetary benefit for bulk mailing has shrunk significantly
- (2) The process to bulk mail through the post office has gotten increasingly difficult.
- (3) We can no longer reliably depend on the bulk mailings to get to the congregation in a timely manner.

The Session does not believe that bulk mailing the newsletter makes a whole lot of sense. It is bad stewardship. Session also does not believe that mailing a newsletter to each home (or in some cases multiple newsletters to the same household) makes a whole lot of sense either.

Here is how you can help us! In September, we are already planning to mail a newsletter to each of our members who have a harder time getting out or live far away. But we hope that most of the congregation will be willing to get the newsletter online or by picking one up at church the first couple weeks of the month. If getting out isn't a problem for you but for some reason you feel like you still need a newsletter mailed to your home, please contact the church office this month to let us know (a) where you need your newsletter sent, and (b) how many your household needs. Hopefully, this will help us get the September newsletter to you and be good stewards of what God has given us!

### PASTOR JAMES VACATION

Pastor James will be **on a hiatus August 5-7**. If you have a pastoral need during this time, please reach out to one of the members of Session. Thank You!

### TUESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

There will be **NO bible study on Tuesday, August 6th**. We hope to see you each Tuesday the rest of the month at our weekly bible study.

### SCHOOL TOOL COLLECTION 2024

Our School Tool Collection will be wrapping up on **August 11**. We are collecting school supplies to help out **Bess Elementary School & Forestview Highschool**. You may drop off school supplies in our gathering area on Sundays or during the week.

### BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS

It's almost time for school to start again! We invite young and old attending classes this year to bring in their backpacks on **August 18**, so that we might pray for them, for the school year, and for all who serve God through work they do (paid or volunteer) in our schools!







## BOOK CHICKS

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, August 19th, at 6:30 PM.**

## BINGO

Join us for BINGO at Terrace Ridge on **Thursday, August 15th at 3 PM.** You are sure to receive many blessings from this outreach event!



## WOMENS CIRCLE

The Golden Girls Circle and the Soul Sister's Circle are on break until this Fall. Stay tuned for more information coming out about our kick off this fall.

## 5 CENTS A MEAL

Our next 5 Cents a meal offering will be on **Sunday, August 4th during worship.** The money collected will go to support the Blessing Box.



## HAPPY YEARS

Happy Years will meet this month on **Wednesday, August 21st at 12 PM.** We are asking for everyone attending to bring their favorite covered dish and/or dessert for the meal. Drinks will be provided. Everyone is invited to join us!

## MEN OF THE CHURCH MEETING & FELLOWSHIP DINNER

The next Men of the Church Planning meeting will be at **8 AM on August 11th!** Come learn about and help plan future events for the Men of the Church!

## WITNESS & SERVICE

Our next meeting will be on **Sunday, August 11th at 2:30 PM.** Please consider joining us as we try to do God's work!

## WELCOME BACK HOME HOMESCHOOL COOP!!

The Home Homeschool Coop is planning to use our facility again this year. They will begin meeting each Thursday in our building at the end of the month. Of course, this all depends on how many sign-up and who shows up to orientation! Let's keep them in our prayers.

If all goes as planned the HOME Coop will be in our facility **each Thursday, from 8 AM- 2 PM.** So don't be surprised if you see our parking lot a little more full on Thursdays and if you run into a child or parent from the Coop please welcome them warmly!

## SPECIAL OFFERINGS COLLECTED

The baby bottle special offering was collected during May and June. We collected \$280.

During VBS, our youth collected \$473 that will be used to purchase school supplies for students at local schools. Let us pray that each collection will be used by God powerfully in our community.



## UNION ENSEMBLE

The Union Ensemble will begin meeting again this August! We will be looking at new music to sing once or twice a month during worship and will even begin to explore some Christmas music to use for a special performance this December! We hope that you can join us for practice on **August 11 and 18 at 11 AM.**

## PRESBYTERY PRAYER CALENDAR & PRAYER CONCERNS

Cherryville First  
107 West Academy Street  
Cherryville, NC 28021  
[jchampion@fpccnc.org](mailto:jchampion@fpccnc.org)

Clinchfield  
87 Greenwood Drive  
Marion, NC 28752  
[lauralong@aol.com](mailto:lauralong@aol.com)

Columbus  
21 Peniel Road  
Columbus, NC 28722  
[cpcatpeniel@windstream.net](mailto:cpcatpeniel@windstream.net)

Conley Memorial  
13853 US 221 North  
Marion, NC 28752  
[conleymemoriaan@gmail.com](mailto:conleymemoriaan@gmail.com)

Crossnore  
P.O. Box 386  
Crossnore, NC 28616  
[crospres@yahoo.com](mailto:crospres@yahoo.com)

- 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 immunotherapy every six weeks for his cancer.



# augUST



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<b>Sundays</b> <b>9 AM</b> <b>Sunday School</b> <b>10 AM</b> <b>Worship</b>				1	2	3
<b>4</b> <b>5 Cents a Meal</b>  <b>2:30 PM</b> <b>SOC</b>	<b>5</b>  <b>7 PM</b> <b>Men's Bible Study</b>	<b>6</b>  <b>7 PM</b> <b>Building and Grounds</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>  <b>6 PM</b> <b>Women's Council</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
PASTOR JAMES ON VACATION						
<b>11</b> <b>8 AM</b> <b>MOC</b> <b>11 AM</b> <b>Ensemble Practice</b> <b>2:30 PM</b> <b>W&amp;S</b>	<b>12</b>  <b>7 PM</b> <b>Men's Bible Study</b>	<b>13</b> <b>10 AM</b> <b>Bible Study</b>	<b>14</b>  <b>7 PM</b> <b>Prayer Walk</b>	<b>15</b>  <b>3 PM</b> <b>Bingo</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>18</b> <b>10 AM</b> <b>Blessing of the Backpacks</b> <b>11 AM</b> <b>Ensemble Practice</b> <b>2:30 PM</b> <b>Session Meeting</b>	<b>19</b>  <b>6:30 PM</b> <b>Book Chicks</b> <b>7 PM</b> <b>Men's Bible Study</b>	<b>20</b> <b>10 AM</b> <b>Bible Study</b>	<b>21</b>  <b>12 PM</b> <b>Happy Years</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>25</b>  <b>11 AM</b> <b>Prayer after Worship</b>	<b>26</b>  <b>7 PM</b> <b>Men's Bible Study</b>	<b>27</b> <b>10 AM</b> <b>Bible Study</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>  <b>HOME</b> <b>School Orientation</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>

## Union Presbyterian Church

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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



August 4  
August 4  
August 18

5 Cents of Meal (for Blessing Box)  
Communion  
Blessing of the Backpacks  
Stated Session Meeting