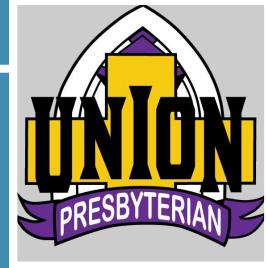


Union News



UNION NEWS

OCTOBER 2022

Dear Members and Friends and Union Presbyterian Church,

Many years ago I was talking to an older member of a church I was attending. I was shocked when she told me that she had never heard God speak to her. I knew that she had gone to church for her whole life, so I asked some questions to try and understand better what she meant. I thought that maybe she just meant that God had never spoken to her out loud (a burning bush moment). But as I spoke to her, it became clear that she believed that God had never spoken to her in any way. In the many years since this encounter, I've heard many, many others express confusion over "how" God speaks to us. Every single time I teach youth confirmation classes, the question, "How do you KNOW that it is God speaking to you," is brought up.

How do you know when God is speaking to you? Its a hard question to answer. On the one hand, Isaiah 55: 8 reminds us that God's thoughts are not our thoughts and that his ways are not our ways. Much about God is mysterious to us. God does not communicate to all of us exactly the same way. In fact, God does not even communicate to the same individual always the same way. Because of this, I think some people just throw their hands up and don't even try to figure out when God is talking with them.

In "God Told Me: Learning to Listen for Guidance from God," Jim Samra writes that even though how God exactly communicates is a mystery, God is also consistent. God does not change. We might not be able to predict exactly how God will communicate and direct us but (1) Scripture shows us that God DOES communicate and direct his people and (2) God seems to direct his people in a certain number of ways over and over again.

In his book, Samra goes on to share several ways we see God communicate and direct his people in the Bible over and over again. How many of these ways have you heard from God?

1. The Bible (Psalm 119:105, 2 Timothy 3:16, Hebrews 4:12)- The Bible does not just give us moral instructions about how to live as followers of Christ, but through the Holy Spirit, it also guides and directs our lives. How often has the Scripture you were reading been exactly what you needed to hear? That is God speaking!
2. The preached Word (Ephesians 3: 7-12)- When we gather together for worship as the church, we believe that God is uniquely present with us. Often during a sermon, God will allow us to hear his Word in a way we needed that day. Sometimes what we needed to hear isn't even exactly what the pastor was preaching!
3. Individual prayer with God (1 John 5: 14-15, John 15: 7, Micah 7:7)- If we take time to listen when we pray, we will sometimes hear God's direction.
4. Inner prompting of the Spirit (Acts 8:29)- In the same way that sometimes the Holy Spirit speaks to our hearts when we pray, sometimes when our hearts are right with God and we are walking in sync with Christ- God will speak to us even when we were not talking to him. We can sometimes hear him distinctly in our hearts or feel an inward nudge or assurance. This is not necessary God speaking to us in a loud voice. Sometimes it is more like a faint whisper or like a thought crossing our mind.

(continued on next page)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Pastor's Article Continued	2
All Saints Day Worship in October	3
Union News & Events	4-5
Church Finances Celebrations PWNC Prayer List & Concerns	6
Church Calendar	7

OCTOBER ELDERS

Tammy Biddix
Charlie Nelson
Junior Thompson

COMMUNION

October 2

CHICKEN & DUMPLINGS DINNER

October 8

STATED SESSION

October 16

HALLOWEEN CARNIVAL

October 29

(continued from previous page)

5. Corporate prayer with God (Acts 13:2)- God sometimes directs a whole group as they pray together.
6. Casting of lots (Acts 1:24, Joshua 18:6, 1 Chronicles 24, Nehemiah 11:1, Jonah 1: 7, 1 Samuel 10: 20-21)- Most of us don't cast lots today but it happens a ton in Scripture. Many of us might feel like casting lots is too much like games of luck (flipping a coin or drawing straws). But nothing in Scripture says that God couldn't communicate this way anymore. And over the years I've seen moments when a Session was essentially casting lots (the Session had a couple of well thought out choices to choose between, they pray, and then essentially casts lots through their voting). 2 things to note about casting lots: (1) Casting lots seems to be used in Scripture most in group decisions not individual ones. (2) It seems to be used primarily as a way for a group to ask God to choose between several equally good and valid options (rather than answering a yes/no question) that the group had already narrowed things down to. It is when a group has already worked to try and answer the question and are left with good options that they are having trouble picking between.
7. Putting out the Fleece (Judges 6, Genesis 24: 14, 1 Samuel 14: 10)- Like with Gideon, sometimes we just need to make sure that we are headed in the direction that God wants. Like with Gideon it would be wise to ask God before you "put him to the test" and it would be wise not to do this often. But there is Scriptural precedent to do something to help you know that your difficult decision is in line with God's will. Samra writes that if you "put out the fleece," you should only count the yes answers from God. If you ask God to have something out of the ordinary happen to you the next day if God wants you to go through with your decision and that something does not happen the next day, God could be saying no to your question or he could just be saying that he isn't going to answer you at all this way. It's also important not to cheat either. Praying, "If the sun rises tomorrow, then I'll know that God wants me to ask for that promotion," is not putting out the fleece.
8. Getting God's spiritual direction from others- This is not the same as getting good advice from a friend. This is when someone you trust takes time with God (through prayer and the study of Scripture) on your behalf, and God reveals something to them to share with you.
9. God directing us through circumstances (Acts 16: 6-7, Matthew 10: 11-14)- This is the whole God closing a door and opening a window way of God directing us. God often uses circumstances to direct us.
10. Dreams or visions that have been carefully discerned hopefully by multiple people (Acts 16, Matthew 1:20, 2:12-22, Acts 2: 17)
11. Feeling passionate about a way to serve the Lord (Psalm 37: 4)- This way of hearing from God occurs when God puts an opportunity in our path that we get passionate about. The danger about this way of hearing from God is that it can be unclear if communication is from God. Is this something that God has made us passionate about or do we just happen to be passionate about it. David was passionate about building a temple for God but it was not something he was called to by God to do (1 Chronicles 17: 1-12).
12. Feeling at peace with a decision that has been made or not feeling at peace with something happening around you (2 Corinthians 2: 12-13)- Like with number 11, it is easy to mishear from God this way. We can feel at peace with a decision being made not because it is what God wants but because it was what we wanted. Hopefully in these situations God is speaking to us in other ways too.

God talks to us in tons of ways!! May all of us, get better at hearing God's voice!

Sincerely in Christ,

Pastor James



HOW DO I COMMUNICATE WITH GOD?



ALL SAINTS DAY

ALL SAINTS DAY PICTURES

The Worship & Commitment Committee knows that these last few years have been hard not just for Union Church but everywhere. Because of gathering restrictions associated with Covid, for several years we were unable to come alongside and grieve with families who lost loved ones.

On **November 6**, we will be celebrating All Saints Day as part of worship service at **10 AM**. Each year on All Saint's Day we take time during prayer to allow people to share out loud the names of saints who have gone before us that have influenced our walk with God. We will be doing this again on **November 6**.

But this year the W&C Committee wants to do a little more. We invite you to share with us pictures of Christian saints who are no longer with us that we can project before and after worship and during our All Saints Day prayer. These could be pictures of people who impacted your faith that have passed away recently or from many years ago. **During the month of October**, you can send pictures digitally to unionpc5615@gmail.com or bring in physical pictures to leave in a basket that will be in the church office. Don't forget to include the full name of who the person is so we can include it on the slides.

WORSHIP IN OCTOBER

During the month of October we will be continuing a sermon series that connects the Beatitudes Jesus gave during the sermon of the mount with Christ's last words from the cross. We will be exploring how Jesus' sermon from the mount was not just words that Jesus once spoke but something he lived out and that we are called to live out too.

In November, we will begin a 3 week series that explores the miraculous side of Christ our King.

Sermon Series: The Beatitudes in Life & Death Continued

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

October 9: John 19: 23-27, "The Beatitudes... Behold your mother"

October 16: Luke 23:32-36, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do"

October 30: Luke 23:44-49, "The Beatitudes... Into Your Hands I Command My Spirit"

Sermon Series: Our Miraculous King

November 6: Mark 4: 35-41, "Our Miraculous King... Jesus as Prophet"

-All Saints Day Sunday; Celebration of The Lord's Supper



NEWS FROM THE SESSION

The elders on Session want to thank everyone who has spoken with them over the summer about the concerns Session has recently been experiencing in our denomination (both nationally and locally). Session knows that these concerns involve issues that all the members of our congregation don't necessarily agree on and has been so thankful for everyone who have been willing to share their thoughts and feelings with them. Session has been praying and talking about these concerns for a year now and have been listening very carefully to the congregation. Based on all of this feedback we believe we have charted what our churches next steps should be moving forward.

In the next couple months Session will:

- (a) Meet with Byron Wade, the current Executive of our Presbytery, to talk about Sessions concerns and how a less progressive congregation can fit and feel supported by this denomination and Presbytery.
- (b) Connect Union Church with the Fellowship Community. The Fellowship Community is an association, a group of PCUSA churches and pastors, in our denomination, that share some of the same concerns that many from our church have been feeling about the denomination. To find out more about the Fellowship Community you can check out their website at-
<https://www.fellowship.community/>.
- (c) Stop financial gifts to the denomination
- (d) Explore a few additional ways to distance ourselves a little more from the more progressive side of our denomination on our sign at the road and webpage.

The Session will also put together a task force to begin exploring other Presbyterian denominations that are out there and what it might look like to leave the denomination when/if the congregation chooses to enter a period of discernment with Presbytery.

Session is trying very hard to make these decisions based on how they are hearing God directing this church. And Session knows that one of the many ways God speaks to us is through one another (often through people who don't share all the same opinions). Session hopes that if you have any questions or concerns about this plan or if you have more that you want to talk about with a Session member about the actions Session is taking, that you will seek a Session member out. Thank you so much for your continued prayers.



5 CENTS A MEAL

For many years on the first Sunday of the month, we have received a special offering to fight hunger and feed the hungry. Starting this month, these monies will be distributed to one of three ministries: our Blessing Box, CAM or the Salvation Army. This October the money will be received for CAM. Thank you for your support.

CHOIR PRACTICE

Our next choir practice is **October 2 at 1:30 PM** in the choir room! Hope you can be there!!

CHICKEN 'N DUMPLINGS DINNER

We invite you to join us for a fundraising dinner hosted by the Men of the Church on **Saturday, October 8 from 5-7 PM**. Please invite your friends and family and come on out and enjoy a great meal while supporting the ministries of the Men of Union Church.



CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED

The church office will be closed **October 10 through October 14** and closed on **Thursday, October 20**.

THE HAPPY YEARS FELLOWSHIP

Happy Years will be meeting on **October 19 (Wednesday) at 12 PM**. The menu is hamburgers, hotdogs and all the fixins' that make it a great meal. Join us no matter what age you are for some good food and lots of great fellowship!

HAUNTED TRAIL

The older youth will meet at the church at **5:30 PM on Friday, October 28** to decorate for the Halloween Carnival. We will then leave to go to a haunted trail afterwards.



HALLOWEEN CARNIVAL

You are invited to join us as the older youth are hosting a Halloween Carnival on **Saturday, October 29**. Games and dinner will be inside from **6 - 7:30 PM** followed by trunk or treat outside from **7:30 - 8:30 PM**. Invite your friends and family and come out for a great night of games, fun and food!



FINANCIAL NEWS August 2022

	August	Year to Date
Revenue	\$16,133	\$139,183
Expenses	<u>15,074</u>	<u>143,791</u>
	1,059	- 4,608

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 Treasurer
Martha Simmons - Disbursing Treasurer



PRESBYTERIAN PRAYER CALENDAR & CONCERNS

Duncan's Creek
C/O Joe Brooks
P.O. Box 568
Bostic, NC 28018

Ellenboro
P.O. Box 189
Ellenboro, NC 28040

Etowah
P.O. Box 384
Etowah, NC 28729

Fairview
P.O. Box 2460

- 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. His last lab tests came back undetectable, meaning no cancer was present! He will have another follow-up in a few months.
- Hold Ronnie Puckett, husband of PWNC staff member Marcia Puckett, in prayer as he continues immunotherapy every six weeks for his cancer. His last scan results showed that he is holding stable.
- Continuing prayers are coveted for Bert Sigmon and his wife, Eva, as Bert's dementia progresses. Bert is the former Stated Clerk of PWNC and previously served the Duncan's Creek Presbyterian Church as their Commissioned Pastor.

OCTOBER

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2 Communion 11 AM WOC\MO 1:30 PM Choir 2:30 PM SOC	3 11 AM Golden Girls 7 PM Soul Sisters	4 10 AM Bible Study 6 PM B & G	5	6 6 PM C & T	7	8 5 - 7 PM Chicken & Dumplings Dinner by MOC
9 2:30 PM W & S	10	11 10 AM Bible Study	12	13	14	15
		Nancy - Vacation				
16 11 AM W&C Youth Field Trip/Corn Maze 2:30 PM Stated Session	17	18 10 AM Bible Study	19 12 PM Happy Years	20 Church Office Closed	21	22
23	24	25 10 AM Bible Study	26	27	28 5:30 PM Haunted Trail	29 6 - 8:30 PM Halloween Carnival
30	31				<u>Sunday</u> 9AM Sunday School 10 AM Worship	<u>Sunday</u> 4 PM Kids of the Kingdom & Youth

Union Presbyterian Church

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www.unionpresbyterianchurch.com

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit No. 8
Return Service Requested

Reverend James Holeman
Pastor

Nancy Newman
Administrative Assistant

Jieeon Ha
Accompanist

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

SAVE THE DATES

October 8
October 29
November 20

MOC Chicken & Dumplings Dinner
Halloween Carnival
Dedication Service
Thanksgiving Service