

The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
 Philippians 4:5b-7

Dear Friends and Members of Union Presbyterian Church,
 One of my favorite comedy sketches was done on MadTV. Bob Newhart played Dr. Switzer, a psychiatrist being visited by a new patient. Dr. Switzer is not like other psychiatrists. He has the patient describe what brought her to him. Then he told her 2 words that he believed would fix all her problems. He yells at her, "STOP IT!" The patient then goes through a list of other things she is going through and Dr. Switzer tells her which of those things are ok and what other ways she should "STOP IT!" Newhart plays the scene completely straight faced and calm. He does not want to hear about the patient's past, or her family issues, or the reasons for why she might feel the way she does. He generally believes he is helping her. The whole thing is so ridiculous because who would go to a psychiatrist if it was that easy to just "stop" what was bothering them! You can watch the whole hilarious sketch on YouTube:



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ow0lr63y4Mw>.

I wonder though if sometimes Philippians 4: 5-7 is used by Christians in a similar way as this sketch. Someone is feeling anxious. They wish that they felt more of God's peace but find themselves worried anyway. And then they look at Philippians 4 and it sort of sounds like Paul is just yelling at them to "STOP IT!" We usually start reading these verses at verse 6 and it can feel like we are just being commanded to stop being anxious. But these verses read a little differently if you just start reading half a verse sooner.

In the book, *Praying Like Monks Living Like Fools: An Invitation to the Wonder and Mystery of Prayer*, Tyler Staton wonders if the starting point for dealing with anxiety and prayer should be realizing that the Lord is near. Staton writes that often it is when we do not believe that the Lord is near that we start to worry. If we do not believe that we are in good hands how could we ever be at peace? Staton writes that "its the worry that, at the end of day, God can't be trusted, that he is something less than who he promised to be, and that- really, when it comes right down to it- I'm on why own," that gets us in trouble.

God is near. There are so many moments in Scripture where God transforms common places into holy ground. In his book, Staton reflects on just a couple: God making the wilds where Moses is tended his sheep a holy place with a burning bush, the room where Esther presented herself before the king, the windowsill where Daniel prayed about a new challenging royal law, a humble dwelling in Bethlehem where a

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NOVEMBER
ELDERS
 Faye Harrell
 Larry Meek
 Frank Suggs

COMMUNION
 November 6

DEDICATION
SUNDAY
 November 20

STATED SESSION
 November 20

THANKSGIVING
SERVICE
 November 20

CHURCH OFFICE
CLOSED
 November 21-25

(continued from previous page)

baby would be laid in a manger, the beach where a strange teacher showed up to where Peter had probably docked his boat for years, the upper room of a normal home where the wind started blowing inside. In all these places (and so many more in Scripture) God took normal everyday places and made them holy. In all these places God reminded his people that he was near.

God is near. Why is it so easy for us to forget that? Today, God is even MORE near to you and I than he was for many of the people we read about in Scripture. God came very close to Moses through that burning bush. God came very close to many people through the incarnation of Christ. But don't we believe that because of Christ's death and resurrection and through faith, the Holy Spirit is now literally present in our hearts. How much more near could God get to us than in each of our own hearts!

Every single place we pray is just as holy as where Moses came upon that burning bush, because God is right there with us. That spot next to the bed where I pray, that place I talked to God for a little bit while driving, that time I prayed in line for groceries. It is all holy ground because God was near. Maybe I need to be like Moses at that burning bush, and take off my shoes a whole lot more during the day!

God is near. Could those 3 words change everything about how we pray and even transform how we look at the world around us? Maybe. But I can say one thing for sure. I like those 3 words "God is near," a whole lot better than the words, "STOP IT."

Sincerely in Christ,
Pastor James

NOVEMBER WORSHIP

The Gospel of Mark is often thought of as the "action Gospel." It focuses far less of Jesus' teachings and much more on his actions. But what can we learn about Christ's character, intent, and mission from the miracles he performed? Join us for the first 3 Sundays in November as we explore some of what makes Jesus our Miraculous King!

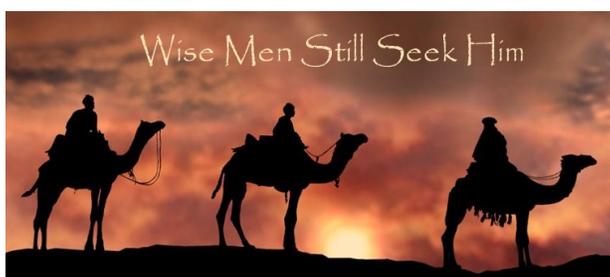
This year, Advent begins the last Sunday in November. We encourage you to join us throughout the Christmas season as we deck our halls, sing carols, and read through the nativity story as told by Matthew!

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
- November 13: Mark 2:1-12, "Our Miraculous King... Jesus as Priest"
-Veterans Day Sunday
- November 20: Mark 1: 1-12 "Our Miraculous King... Jesus as King"
-Christ the King Sunday

Sermon Series: Wise Men Ask...

- November 27: Mathew 1-18- 25, "Wise Men... What will You Say?"
-First Sunday of Advent, Thanksgiving Weekend
- December 4: Matthew 2:1-8, "Wise Men... Where will You Seek?"
-Second Sunday of Advent, Celebration of the Lord's Supper





NEW! UNION'S WHAT WE BELIEVE DOCUMENT

In October, Session approved a short statement on "what we believe." The plan is to have this document on our website and at our church entrances to help new members of our church family and potential visitors understand a little more about the flavor of church life here at Union. Included in this month's newsletter is a flyer that shares this document. We encourage you to check it out. Although the document has been approved by Session it is not chiseled in stone and Session welcomes to hear your thoughts and feedback!

5 CENTS A MEAL

On the first Sunday of the month, we receive a special offering to fight hunger and feed the hungry. This month, these monies will be distributed to Salvation Army. Thank you for your support.

HAPPY YEARS FELLOWSHIP

Due to the Thanksgiving holiday and all of the activities with Advent and Christmas, there will not be a Happy Years gathering in November. Instead there will be a Happy Years Holiday Party on **December 7** (the first Wednesday in December) at **12 PM**. Everyone is encouraged to bring some of your favorite party foods like sandwiches, sausage balls, chips, cheese balls, fruit, fudge, cookies, etc. to share. Drinks including coffee will be provided. Please join us for good food and fun fellowship no matter what age you are. Contact Kathy Kytle if you have any questions.

CHOIR PRACTICE

Union's next choir practice will be **November 6 at 11:45 AM** in the Sanctuary. We will be preparing some numbers for Thanksgiving and Christmas! You don't want to miss it!

THANKSGIVING SERVICE

Join us on **Sunday, November 20 here at Union** as we worship the Lord with Sandy Plains at **7 PM**, giving thanks to our God for all He has done!



REMEMBERING OUR STUDENTS

We have an opportunity to remember and encourage our college students. Below is a list of the students with their birthdays and address. Please consider taking times to drop them a note or card to encourage them along their journey with Jesus.

DECORATING THE CHURCH

We will be decorating the church for Christmas beginning on **Friday, November 25** from **6 PM - 9 PM**. Pizza will be served to all who come out. We will finish on **Saturday, November 26** beginning at **9 AM**. We invite you to join us...bring your family and let's beautifying our church for Christmas!

UPDATE ON MALAWI: A CATCH-UP AFTER COVID

The Presbytery of Western North Carolina has recently entered its 18th year of partnership with Nkhoma, Malawi. PWNC began in 2004 by supporting Dr. Barbara Nagy as a mission co-worker physician at the Nkhoma Hospital. Since then, God has called PWNC to reach out in many different ways:

Supporting Nkhoma Hospital. Nkhomas Hospital has 290 beds, 11 rural health centers, catchment of 80,000 people around Nkhoma, and close to 500,000 served at health centers, the nursing school, family medicine, and surgery residences.

The Mobile Medical Health Unit/ambulance. The MHU goes to areas near villages and finds people who have walked miles waiting for care.

Building Hope Funds to buy medicine and emergency funds for charity care

Ebenezer School: The school serves nearly 400 students. PWNC helped start the school at the request of the hospital, so the children of staff and villagers could get quality education.

Supporting Nkhoma Presbytery Synod with nearly 3 million Presbyterians, its projects, and its Seminary

Special Covid Relief: \$62,150 to Nkhoma Hospital and \$11,406 to Ebenezer School.

Seminary Graduates: receive a Bible Commentary, clerical shirts, and bicycles

Part of "5 Cent a Meal" has gone to Malawi hunger relief.

Annual mission trips to Malawi, and Malawian leaders have visited us.



Malawi remains one of the poorest countries in the World. Its population is roughly 20 million people in an area about the size of Pennsylvania. 83% of the people live in a rural area. 70% live on less than \$1.90 per day. There are four physicians for every 100,000 people. Recently the country has suffered from both flood and drought.

RECENT NEWS FROM NKHOMA HOSPITAL

Over the last few years, PWNC was able to send an extra \$62,150 to help the hospital with Covid related challenges. Building Hope Funds are still providing money for the Rural Medical Center/Clinics and their staff housing; for needed medicine; and for upkeep and use of the Mobile Health Unit.

Since Covid, several wonderful things have happened at the Hospital. The African association of surgeons has selected Nkhoma Hospital to start a "Surgical Residence Program." This is in addition to the "Family Medicine Residence Program" already at Nkhoma. These programs will concentrate on training Malawian and African surgeons and Family Health Doctors in advanced degrees.



Since Covid, several wonderful things have happened at the Hospital. The African association of surgeons has selected Nkhoma Hospital to start a "Surgical Residence Program." This is in addition to the "Family Medicine Residence Program" already at Nkhoma. These programs will concentrate on training Malawian and African surgeons and Family Health Doctors in advanced degrees.

Nkhoma hospital has also just opened a new Oxygen Plant. Because it was so difficult to obtain oxygen during the Covid pandemic, the hospital determined it needed to ensure in the future that the hospital always had the oxygen supply it needed. In addition, the oxygen can be sold to other hospitals and provide income to Nkhoma Hospital. The plant opened last month and eventually will pipe oxygen directly into the hospital.

f Malawi



RECENT NEWS FROM EBENEZER SCHOOL

The new term began in September and the PWNC sent \$20,300 for 67 scholarships. However, more scholarships are needed and can be provided by individuals, churches, or church groups. Each scholarship is \$300. PWNC also sent \$2,500 for maintenance from Building Hope Funds.

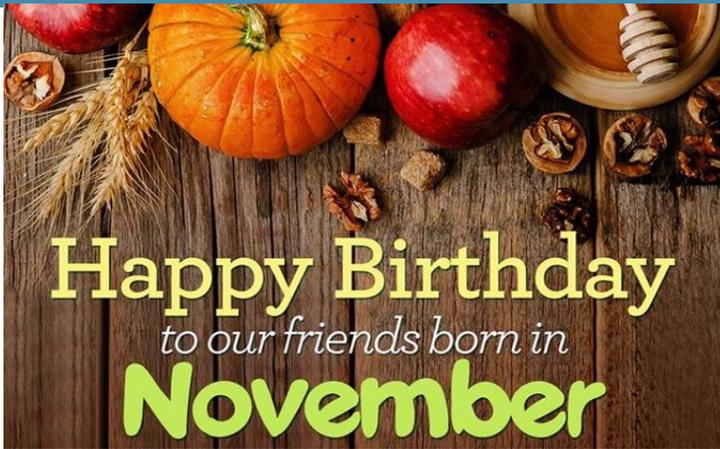
Chrissie Mbewe, the principal of the school, wrote in their newsletter that during the pandemic, there have been many challenges and a shortage of resources due to the distorted economy. But that they have seen the hand of our Lord at work at Ebenezer. Recently, the school has been able to get a van, a new solar panel system, and a copier thanks to donors connected to the Presbytery.



CALLING ALL WHO SEW!

There is a lot of exciting things happening in Malawi. But there is also a new opportunity to make a difference in Nkhoma. Helping girls stay in school might ultimately be the best way we can help women in Malawi get out of poverty. But every month, many teenage girls miss up to a week of school because they do not have needed menstrual products, which are often not available or affordable. Missing a week of school each month adds up until many of these girls get so far behind in their studies that they drop out of school altogether. Reusable washable sanitary pads could make all the difference. In our church office we have patterns and instructions for how these pads could be sewed together and where finished products could be sent. It might even be a fun activity for a group of sewing enthusiasts to do together! Is God tugging on your heart today to make a difference in Malawi in a new way?





FINANCIAL NEWS
September 2022

	<u>September</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
Revenue	\$17,474	\$156,657
Expenses	<u>16,027</u>	<u>159,817</u>
	1,447	- 3,160

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



Fletcher P.O. Box 493 Newland, NC 28657	Forest City First P. O. Box 181 Forest City, NC 28043	Franklin First 26 Church Street Franklin, NC 28734	Gastonia First 1621 E. Garrison Boulevard Gastonia, NC 28054
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The Presbytery received an urgent prayer request on September 28 for Rebecca Morton. Rebecca is a retired missionary in Malawi whose husband, David, was a doctor and CFO at Nkhoma Hospital. David is also retired but has continued to help with the financial management at Nkhoma through Covid, even though he is now living in Tennessee. He was always very supportive and helpful to our mission and teams. Rebecca was in the hospital in critical condition but has now been moved to rehab. It is answered prayers that she is off the ventilator but David shared that it is going to be a long recovery and no one can predict how she will do. Please continue to pray for Rebecca's full recovery and keep David in your prayers for his own strength and well-being at this time.

do not be anxious
about anything, BUT
in every situation,
by prayer and petition,
with thanksgiving,
present your request
to God.

Philippians 4:6

PRESBYTERIAN PRAYER CALENDAR & CONCERNS



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Sunday 9AM Sunday School 10 AM Worship		1 10 AM Bible Study 6 PM B & G	2	3	4	5
6 Communion 11 AM WOC/MOC 11:45 PM Choir 2:30 PM SOC	7 11 AM Golden Girls 7 PM Soul Sisters	8 10 AM Bible Study	9	10	11	12
13 11 AM W & C 2:30 PM W & S	14	15 10 AM Bible Study	16	17	18	19
20 Dedication Sunday 2:30 PM Session 7 PM Thanksgiving Service (atUnion)	21	22	23	24 	25 6- 9 PM Decorate Church	26 9 AM Decorate Church
CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED Nancy - Vacation - Tuesday - Friday Pastor - Vacation - Wednesday - Saturday						
27	28	29 10 AM Bible Study	30			<u>Sunday</u> 4 PM Kids of the Kingdom & Youth

Union Presbyterian Church

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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

November 20	Dedication Service
	Thanksgiving Service
November 21-25	Church Office Closed
December 4	Communion
December 11	Children's Christmas Play
December 18	Christmas Caroling