

21 “You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ 22 But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell. 23 “Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift. *Matthew 5: 21-24*

Dear friends and Members of Union Presbyterian Church,

Starting this January, the Worship and Commitment Committee has decided to have the celebration of the Lord’s Supper included as part worship on the first Sunday of EVERY month again. For those of you wondering how we will be taking the elements, W&C does believe it would be wise for us to continue using those prepackaged communion cups each month, at least for a while. But plans are in the works to soon transition to other ways of taking communion that remain safe but can allow us to finally ditch that plastic-y-flavored prepackaged wafer “bread!”

One of the concerns often raised when a church plans to have communion more often, is the fear that the Lord’s Supper might lose some of its meaning when you do it more often. There is some truth to this concern. We are coming out of Christmas after all. I love Christmas. But after having Christmas with my immediate family, then flying out to have Christmas with Vicky’s extended family, and then with my own extended family, I’m sort of done with Christmas. I can only imagine what it would be like for the receiver of all those gifts in the song, “The 12 Days of Christmas.” On that 12th day of Christmas do you think she had gone into hiding?

But when it comes to the Lord’s Supper, I wonder if “how often” a church does communion is not really the biggest factor to consider when it comes to losing the meaning of the meal. Recently, I’ve been reflecting on Jesus’ words in Matthew 5: 21-24. Jesus’ cautions us in these verses to make sure we reconcile with one another before we leave a gift on the altar. Because of Christ’s sacrifice, Christians don’t leave offerings on altars anymore. But that makes me wonder. Does this mean that the Lord’s Supper, a time when we remember Christ’s sacrifice, is the closest opportunity we have to put these words of Jesus into practice? Have you ever decided to not participate in the Lord’s Supper because you needed to go be reconciled to another first?

It seems to me that it doesn’t really matter how often our church celebrates the Lord’s Supper. We could do it weekly, monthly, quarterly, even yearly, and it would remain just as easy for us to forget the full meaning of the meal. It is a meal that reminds us of the sacrifice that was undertaken by Christ to make us right before God. It is a meal that remembers where the forgiveness of our faith comes from. But I can’t help but remember what Jesus also said in Matthew 6: 14-15, “If you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”

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**January Elders**  
 Claire Cabral  
 Sue Lewis  
 Jennifer Nelson

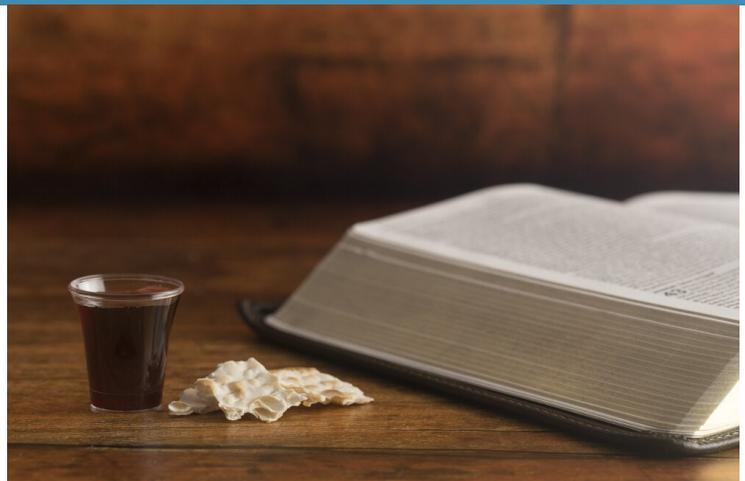
**Session Meeting**  
 January 16

**Mens Fellowship**  
 January 18

*(continued from previous page)*

Looking at it this way, the celebration of the Lord's Supper seems to be pretty serious business. It is an opportunity to make sure our hearts are right with God and with those around us as we celebrate what great lengths Christ went to in order for our hearts to be able to be made right to begin with.

And it's for this reason that I like that here at Union, we are celebrating the Lord's Supper a little more often again. When we do it quarterly, there's a pressure to participate in the meal (even if our heart isn't necessarily in the right place for it) because we won't be doing it again for several months. Plus, at least for me... it is good to have more opportunities in worship (not less) to take time to examine my heart and see where I need to seek forgiveness from God and those around me.



Sincerely in Christ,  
Pastor James



## **Worship for January**

During the month of January we invite you to join us as we finish one sermon series and start another! On January 2 and 9 we will continue to explore the early days of Jesus (before his ministry "officially started"). There is a lot to be learned about our journey of the faith from the beginning of Jesus' journey here on earth. Then starting on January 16, join us for a 4 week look at the story of Noah in Genesis. In Hebrews 11:7 we read, "By his faith [Noah] condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith." What does it mean that Noah became "heir of the righteousness that comes by faith?" This series will explore Noah's story and how he experienced favor, flood, faithfulness, and foolishness in his life... things that I think all of us are familiar with. But are they also the things that can lead to righteousness?

### *Continued Lectionary Series: Early Days of Faith*

January 2: Luke 2: 41-52, "Early Days of Faith... My Father's House"

-Celebration of the Lord's Supper

January 9: Luke 3: 15-22, "Early Days of Faith... Filling up on Appetizers"

### *New Sermon Series: Noah: Favor, Flood, Faithfulness, & Foolishness*

January 16: Genesis 6: 9-22, "Noah: Favor, Flood, Faithfulness, & Foolishness"

January 23: Genesis 7:17-8:12, "Noah: Favor, Flood, Faithfulness, & Foolishness"

January 30: Genesis 8: 13-17, 9: 8-17, "Noah: Favor, Flood, Faithfulness, & Foolishness"

February 6: Genesis 9: 18- 27, "Noah: Favor, Flood, Faithfulness, & Foolishness"

-Celebration of the Lord's Supper



### **To My Friends at Church,**

I want to thank all of you for your prayers. I want to thank Billy & Soo Soo, Pam & Eddie, Francis, Twilah and Patricia for getting me back and forth to the hospital for six (6) weeks.

Thank you, Pastor James for your support and rides from the hospital. Also thank you for making Russ's wishes to become a member of the church possible. It meant a lot to him and to me.

I also want to thank Tim for recording Russ's memorial. I will treasure it. Thank you to the WOC for the wonderful lunch after the memorial service. Thank you to the MOC for the fruit basket. You all will be forever in my heart.

I love you all and thank you,  
Deanna Rucker

### **Dear Union Presbyterian Church,**

My family and I cannot express our gratitude enough for the gift we received from the church this Christmas. The fact that these Christmas gifts are given out as part of our church's Christmas Joy Program is not lost on us, for it truly brought my family joy this year. We thank you so much!

Sincerely In Christ,

Pastor James & The Holeman Family

### **Dear Union Family,**

Thank you for the gift you have gave to me at Christmas. Even though I am a sheep from another pasture, I consider Union my church family also. You have blessed me more than I could possibly express! I love being a part of the Kingdom work you do!

Love,  
Nancy



### **History Buffs**

For all you who are Gaston County and Union Church history buffs, we have a book that was gifted to us, "To the Stars: The Glenns of Gaston County, North Carolina (a story of determination, achievement and charity) by Barbara H. Voorhees. This book mentions our church at several points and is available for check out from the church office.



# UNION'S UP COMING

## Witness & Service

If you have an awesome idea of something Union Church should be doing in the community, if you wonder who or what areas the church supports in missions. If you have a service project you wish you could do but don't have all the resources necessary. If you wish we did something special for new members. If this sounds like you, Witness & Service Committee would like for you to join them. Their first planning meeting of the year is on **Sunday, January 9 at 2:30 PM**. Please contact Faye Harrell or Sue Lewis if you have any questions.

## Union's Prayer Waking Trails & Benches

Thank you to all of you who participated in the naming of Union's walking trails and benches/stops! We have decided upon the following submitted names:

The names of the four (4) trails are :

Mail Trail	<b>HOPE</b>
Upper Loop/ Cemetery view	<b>JOY</b>
Bypass Loop	<b>PEACE</b>
Stephen's Stump	<b>LOVE</b>

The name of the seven (7) benches/stops :

**ANGELS WATCH**  
**GOD'S TIME**  
**TIME OUT FOR JESUS**  
**SHEPHERDS REST**  
**SANCTUARY**  
**HEAVEN'S WAY**  
**TRUE VINE**

It is our prayer that the trails and benches will be used by the congregation and community as a place to commune with God in nature. At the 7 stops along the way, a walker will be able to read Scripture and/or pray. Also we hope that the trails might also be used for children's programs through the library and by our own children and youth ministries.

Many hands have made this project possible, from the clearing of the land, building of the benches and the naming of it all and we want to say **THANK YOU** to all who labored. Our prayer is that these trails and stops will be a blessing to the all!



# NEWS AND EVENTS



## Notice from the Cemetery Committee

All flowers and arrangements will be removed from the cemetery the **last week of January**. Please contact Kathy Kytle if there are any questions or concerns.

## Happy Years

We will not be meeting on **January 12, 2022** as planned due to issues with the COVID pandemic. We will meet on **February 16, 2022 at 12 PM**. The meal will be provided, which will be chicken pot pie, fixings, dessert, and drinks. Donations for the meal will be accepted. Please join us for good food and fun fellowship no matter what age you are. After the meal, a video of Larry and Janice (Currence) Meek's wedding will be shown. Also please contact Kathy Kytle if you plan to attend, so we will know how much food to prepare.

## Men of the Church

Calling all men! The MOC will be meeting at Jackson's Cafeteria on **Tuesday, January 18 at 6 PM**. The election of Man of the Year and new officers will be held at this meeting.

## Welcome! New Members

We welcome our new members, Janice Meek, Janice Short, George Ratchford and Margaret Zill. We are thankful you have joined us in worship to our Lord and in fellowship with the Union family.

## Noisy Elevator

Some have expressed concerns about using the elevators in the church because of the noise they hear sometimes. Well, we talked to our elevator service people to get to the bottom of this noise! Apparently, when it is very cold and no one is using it, the elevator keep itself running to keep the oil flowing. On the next usage of the elevator, it can be a bit slow and even bumpy, but it will readjust. These sounds and actions are totally normal! This is information passed on to us by the expert who services our elevator regularly.

## Worship Survey

Be on the lookout this month for a new worship survey with some questions about how you think worship is going and worship time at Union. We will let you know when the surveys will be available to be picked up and dropped off.

## Women's Ministry

The Women's Council will meet **Sunday, January 9** after the worship service in the Fellowship Hall.

On **Monday, January 10**, the Golden Girls will meet at **11 AM** and the Soul Sisters Circle will meet at **7 PM**, Both circles meeting in the Fellowship Hall.

The last several years the Golden Girls circle has been preparing Christmas gift bags for senior citizens which are taken to CAM (Crisis Assistance Ministry) for distribution. Circle members gather items during the year. These items include personal hygiene items, socks, gloves, hard candy, pens/pencils, note pads, devotion books, and Kleenex. During the month of December, the ladies in the circle prepare the gift bags and then deliver them to CAM. Approximately ten to fifteen bags are assembled. CAM distributes these gift bags to senior citizens who are clients of CAM.

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY!**



**FINANCIAL NEWS**

**December 31, 2021**

	December	Year to Date
Revenue	\$19,004	\$235,597
Expenses	<u>20,914</u>	<u>245,556</u>
	-1,910	- 9,959

Monthly Budget Requirements                      \$18,958

If you have any questions regarding the financial information of the Church, please feel free to contact Martha Simmons, Disbursing Treasurer, or any member of the Finance Committee. Martha is responsible for disbursements only. Questions regarding your financial giving to the Church should be directed to Jason Morrison, Treasurer.

**NOTE FROM MARTHA:**

It has been my pleasure to serve God and our Church in the capacity as Disbursing Treasurer.

This year (2021) we experienced several unexpected expenses, death of members and finished the year with a deficit. As we begin 2022, please pray about your giving. We are facing numerous maintenance issues that must be addressed.

Thank you!



**PRESBYTERY PRAYER CALENDAR & PRAYER CONCERNS**

Tryon  
430 Harmon Field Road  
Tryon, NC 28782

Union  
5615 Union Road  
Gastonia, NC 28056

Union Mills  
2378 Centennial Road  
Union Mills, NC 28167

United  
P.O. Box 1495  
Lenior, NC 28645

Unity  
8210 Unity Church Road  
Denver, NC 28037

Prayers are appreciated for Anne Buchanan, mother of PWNC staff member Robbin Buchanan, who has been hospitalized with some health issues.

Hold Rita Spivey, Office Manager at Waldensian Presbyterian Church, in prayer as she deals with a recurrence of breast cancer after 22 years.

Keep the tornado victims in prayer as they deal with the loss, confusion and devastation left behind.

Commissioned Pastor Ken Humphreys shared that he will be undergoing surgery on December 27 for a total replacement of his right knee. Please remember him as he prepares for his upcoming surgery and the recovery thereafter.

Please lift Linda Everhardt, an elder and also the church secretary at Fairview Presbyterian, in prayer as she has been diagnosed with cancer.

Please remember Elder Lucretia Bell as she recovers from surgery for a pacemaker. Her church family at Ryburn asks for prayer for a full recovery.

Please remember Ronnie Puckett, husband of PWNC staff member Marcia Puckett, as he undergoes another round of cancer treatments.



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<b>Each Sunday</b> 9AM Sunday School	<b>Each Sunday</b> 10 AM Worship					1
2 After Service & MOC  2:30 PM SOC	3	4	5	6	7	8
PASTOR ON VACATION						
9 After worship Women's Council  After worship W & C 2:30 PM W & S	10 11 AM Golden Girls FH  7 PM Soul Sisters FH	11 10 AM Bible Study  7 PM B & G	12	13  6 PM C & T (Zoom)	14	15
16  1 PM Session	17	18 10 AM Bible Study  6 PM Men's Fellowship Jackson's	19	20	21	22
23	24	25 10 AM Bible Study	26	27	28	29
30	31					

**Union Presbyterian Church**

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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

