

Life at Unity

April 20, 2021



A MESSAGE FROM MATT

I have shared with you the metaphor of the pandemic as an “ice age” which requires the church to ask new questions and respond to new realities because the landscape in which we seek to follow Christ has forever changed. To help provide focus and structure in this new world, as I have been listening to the voices of our congregation and community, and prayerfully considering the guidance of the scriptures and the way of Christ, the image that kept coming to mind for me was “Connections.” We are always longing, but especially now, for deep and life-giving connections with Christ and others. The biblical image that corresponds to this longing for connection is John 15:1-11 in which Jesus says, “I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.”

Thinking together about both connections and this scripture, the Session prayed, discussed, proposed, and revised a vision to guide our church’s ministry in the upcoming fiscal and program year. We are excited to share with you this vision for 2021-2022:

Connections - as Christ is the vine and we are the branches, we will seek to bear fruit by deepening, restoring, repairing, and forging new connections:

- ***With Christ***
- ***With One Another***
- ***With Our Neighbors Near and Far***

Our staff members and Ministry Teams will all be developing particular goals for how their ministry and ministry area will deepen, restore, repair, and forge new connections with Christ, with one another, and with our community. As we work and serve together around this focus, we trust that we will bear much fruit for the kingdom of God.

But we need your help. What are your reactions to this vision for ministry? Where is God calling us to deepen, restore, repair, and forge new connections in the year ahead. We will be holding six “Connections - Listening Sessions” for you to share your thoughts and dreams for our life together. You can sign up here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0544AEA82CA7FA7-connections>. If none of these times work for you, send me or Clerk of Session Dannie Vaughn some thoughts via email or letter.

I look forward to deepening, restoring, repairing, and forging new connections with Christ, with you, and with our neighbors in the year ahead. God is at work in this place and I know you will join me in prayer and faith as we discover the part we can play.

See you Sunday!

Matt

*Since 1788...
United in Christ's love,
we glorify God through worship,
nurture, and service to all people.*

Live on the Lawn: Wednesday Nights in May

We had so much fun worshiping on the lawn on Wednesday nights in September and October that we want to try it again in May! In addition to our Sunday morning 8:45 AM Live on the Lawn service each week, we will worship Live on the Lawn at 7:00 PM on the Wednesdays in May beginning on May 5th. You'll be able to drive and park on the lawn, set up your chairs, and enjoy the beautiful weather with a 30 minute service of prayer, scripture, sermon, and singing! A variety of musicians will join Director of Music Margaret Monroe to lead us. Our theme will be “The Family of God” and we'll be exploring the parable of the Father who had Two Sons. No registration required, so invite your friends to join you!

For more information on
“What’s Happening”
at Unity, please visit...
www.unityfortmill.org/whats-happening/

EARLY MAY BIRTHDAYS

1 -- Dial Devaney; Travis Smith

2 -- Andrew Burrell; Margaret Collom; Philip Mace; Kevin McGrath; Karen Roof

3 -- Dorene Grant; Samuel Pecarro; Mark Schemine; Ben Weaver

4 -- Cleve Fisher; Mike Fritz; LeAnne Morse

5 -- Ryan Bunge; Elaine Evans; Tom McElmoyle; Kayla Orloff; Jessica Shamble; Maxwell Windham

6 -- RJ Bates

7 -- Owen Efird; Madelyn Jennings; Anna Mace

8 -- Evelyn Creech; Amy Gamble; Eric Hansen; Brenda Joynner; Kate Pilley; Barbie Wynings

9 -- Brian Fish; Layne Fisher; Jan Konkus; Ned McAteer; Jolie Palmer; Ken Sheets

10 -- Joyce Gammon; Ann Neel

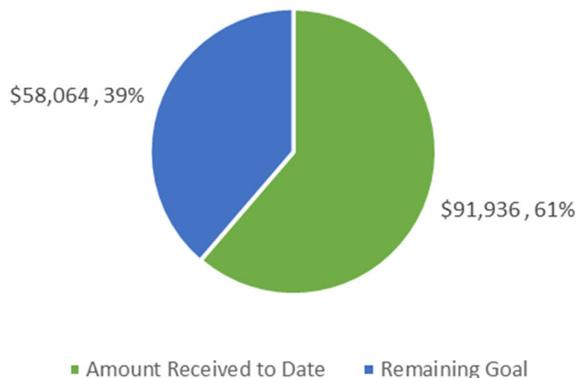
11 -- Matthew Anderson

12 -- Layla Brindisi; Brad Fox; Jennifer Smith; Jessi Young

13 -- Michael Benanti; Lauren Cole; Lisa Henley; Nancy Nutter; Nicole Swainey; Beth Windell

SANCTUARY DEBT REDUCTION CAMPAIGN

IMAGINE THE POSSIBILITIES CAMPAIGN - APRIL 12, 2021



THE JOY SET BEFORE US

Final program and budget decisions will be made soon for 2021-2022. Over the next few weeks we will be reconciling the proposed 2021-2022 budget against projected giving for the period as well as sharing your time and talent interests with ministry leaders. If you have not sent in your Stewardship information for the upcoming program year, please do so today so we can plan accordingly.

As we slowly move into our new normal we hope that each and every one of you will find your place in it. Explore our website if you still have not decided on where you would like to serve in the coming year. Communicate your time, talent and pledges to the Unity office in one of the following ways: 1. Mail your responses to Unity, PO Box 1267, Fort Mill, SC 29716, 2. Drop your responses in the locked, black mailbox in front of the Historic Sanctuary, or 3. Use the Log-in button in the upper right corner of our homepage to access your personal Unity account www.unityfortmill.org and communicate your responses.

STEPHEN MINISTRY

Stephen Ministers are the After People. Stephen Ministers are there:

- after the phone call you hoped you'd never get.
- after the funeral, when everyone has left and the emotions you've held at bay come crashing in on you.
- after the relationship falls apart and the bottom falls out of your life.
- after the doctor says, "I'm sorry, but there's nothing more we can do."
- after the nursing home director shakes your hand and says, "Welcome to your new home."
- after the baby arrives, demanding more of you than you ever dreamed possible.
- after you find a pink slip with your final paycheck.

If you need an "After Person" please consider a Stephen Minister. Contact Susan Mobley at swmnurse@gmail.com or cell 704-575-7344 with questions.

CONFIRMATION SUNDAY: MAY 2 AT 11 AM

Thank you for your prayers and support of our 2021 Confirmation Class: Brooke Barrett, Nathan Baxley, Parker Blake, Layla Brindisi, Cecilia Creech, Dominic Fratrotoli, Anna Honeycutt, Laura Honeycutt, Gabby Oltmann, Bekah Rich, Hayden Sova, James Watson, Elise Welfare, and Harper Young.

It has been an odd year of in person and zoom classes, but they have done so well in exploring their questions of faith and what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. Continue to pray for them as they meet with the Session on April 26 to share their statements of faith and then we celebrate with them on Sunday, May 2 at the 11 AM Worship Service.

SABBATICAL FOR KATHRYN MCGREGOR

Unity Presbyterian Church has long granted brief sabbatical leave to Minister, Certified Educator, or Church Professional. As recommended by Providence Presbytery's Sabbatical Leave policy, "Sabbatical leave is an extension of the Biblical concept of renewal through the Sabbath day and Sabbath year." It is a time to step away briefly from the persistent obligations of daily congregational life and to engage in a period of renewal and reflection. Renewal periods are not vacations, but times for intentional exploration and reflection, for regaining the enthusiasm and creativity for ministry, for discovering what will make the church leader's heart sing.

Kathryn McGregor was eligible for sabbatical leave last summer in recognition of her seven years of ministry at Unity Presbyterian Church. She had carefully planned her time for renewal and reflection when the pandemic hit and all plans changed. So, Kathryn postponed her sabbatical to this summer. With the approval, prayers, and full support of the Human Resources Ministry Team, the Session, and Dr. Rich, Kathryn's sabbatical will begin on Wednesday, May 12 and she will return on Wednesday, July 28.

During this time, so that Kathryn can focus on rest and renewal, she will not be answering phone calls, text messages, or emails. If you have questions that you would normally ask Kathryn, please reach out to the chairs of the ministry teams (Maggie Bost - Adult Discipleship; Kathy Sizemore - Children's Ministry; Don Rice - Health Ministry). Kaiti Bryant and Matt Rich will be staff resources for these ministry areas while Kathryn is on Sabbatical.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to let us know and begin praying that this time of Sabbatical will be an opportunity for rest and renewal for Kathryn as well a chance for new growth for our congregation.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES

Super Sunday: "Surprises" Sunday, April 25

Children 4K-5th grade are invited to Super Sunday. For more information and to register, visit <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F0C4FA9AD2EA5F58-super6> To volunteer, sign-up here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0e4aa9af22a4fe3-super>

Children and Family Picnic Sunday, May 23

Join us to celebrate the end of the Super Sunday year – 3:00-5:00 pm at Bethelwoods Camp and Conference Center, 922 W. Mount Gallant Rd, York, SC.

Help us plan! CMT Survey

As we begin limited in-person worship and open Nursery and CIW for children and families who are ready to attend in person on Sunday mornings, Children's Ministry is planning our next steps in re-gathering for children's programming. Families with children birth – 5th grade are asked to help us plan safely and faithfully by sharing your honest thoughts with us about things we have offered during the pandemic, things your family misses at church from pre-pandemic and what new things God may be leading us to in the future. Complete our short survey here: <https://forms.gle/rDaoT3eU31jGjPFv5> by Sunday, April 25.

Unity Presbyterian Church
303 Tom Hall Street
PO Box 1267
Fort Mill, SC 29716-1267

www.UnityFortMill.org

JOIN US SUNDAY

8:45 a.m.
Live on the Lawn

11:00 a.m.
Livestream Worship



Return Service Requested



*You're Invited to
Women of Unity's*

PPE

PERSONAL PICNIC EVENT

Monday, May 3, 2021  6:30 PM
Unity Preschool Parking Lot

Bring your own food, drink, & chair
Individual desserts provided

A SPECIAL "BIRTHDAY OFFERING" WILL BE COLLECTED
TO SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS SELECTED BY
PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN (PCUSA)