



**GATHERING**

**Welcome and A Time of Greeting**

Rev. Tyler Ung

**Invocation**

Gwen Reagan

**Meditation**

*“Christian forgiveness does too often deny or diminish grief. I therefore want to ask what a Christian forgiveness that rooted itself in grief would look like, and reflect upon the implications for our moral theology. Having observed the lasting grief and anger of...forgiving families, instead of asking ‘Is that forgiveness real?,’ I ask, ‘What if that were real forgiveness?’”*

—Matthew Ichihashi Potts, *Forgiveness: An Alternative Account*

**Prelude**

David Wilson

**\*Call to Worship**

Rev. Paula Womack

**One:** Beckoned to this place of belonging, we, of Umstead Park United Church of Christ, with body, mind, and spirit, gather to worship, serve, and proclaim God, unknowable mystery whose center is love, and Jesus the Christ, who makes this loving mystery known.

**Many:** **With inarticulate words and unfinished lives, we yearn to further embody this holy love, shaping the future as partners with God, who dances and weeps with us along the way.**

*-from the UPUCC Covenant*

**Anthem**

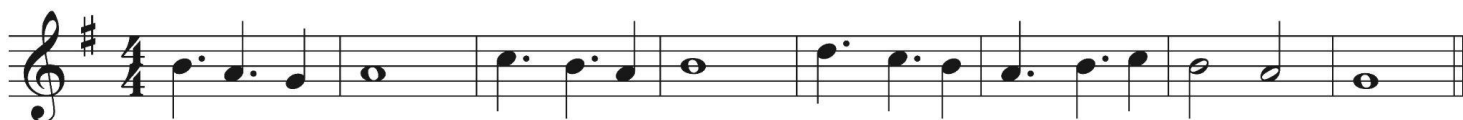
*“To This Altar” (see insert)*

UPUCC Choir

**HEARING AND RESPONDING**

**Time with Children**

Rev. Tyler Ung



God wel-comes all, strang-ers and friends; God's love is strong and it ne-ver ends.

**Reading of Scripture**

Luke 17:3-4; 23:32-34, *The Inclusive Bible*  
(see insert)

Gwen Reagan

**Sermon** "I Choose Love" Rev. Tyler Ung

**\*Responsive Hymn** #581, "Lead Us From Death to Life" Congregation

**Prayers of the People** Rev. Tyler Ung

**(Unison):**

**"We shake with joy, we shake with grief  
What a time they have, these two  
housed as they are in the same body."**

- Mary Oliver



*You are invited to share names or brief joys and concerns.  
To submit written prayer requests for the weekly email, visit  
[tinyurl.com/upuccprayers](http://tinyurl.com/upuccprayers), or scan the QR code to the left.*

**Celebration of Gifts (Offertory)** Rev. Tyler Ung



*In addition to placing gifts into the offering basket,  
you may also visit [upucc.org/giving](http://upucc.org/giving) or scan the QR code  
to the left to make an online contribution.*

## COMMUNION

### Remembering and Communion Liturgy

One: As we share in the bread, may we remember and give thanks for the life that Jesus lived.

**Many: As we share in the cup, may we remember and give thanks for the lives that we are living.**

One: As we receive the fruits of Spirit, we celebrate the communion of all things. Creator, Christ, and Spirit dance as one. So may it always be. Come for all things are ready.

*At this time, you are invited to come forward. The bread may be dipped into the cup and then eaten. The cup contains juice. The center station contains gluten free bread.*

### Prayer of Thanksgiving

**The Prayer That Jesus Taught** words adapted by Mark Miller from "The Lord's Prayer"

Our God, in heaven, holy is your name.

Your reign come, your will done, on earth as in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread, and help us forgive, as we have been forgiven.

In the time of trial lead us into light,

for yours is the kin-dom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

## SENDING INTO THE WORLD

**\*Doxology**

*(see insert)*

Congregation

## Announcements

**\*Affirmation of Community**

Gwen Reagan

One: We believe that all people are God's people, that every child is holy, that every person is a part of the sacred family.

**Many: We believe that God's love embraces all, and that to exclude any person would be contrary to the message of Jesus.**

One: We proclaim that this community of faith, Umstead Park UCC, will strive to be as open as the radical realm of God, and as liberating as the love of Christ.

**Many: And so we journey into our hopeful future with joy, pledging to offer each other welcome, compassion and care. May God grant us wisdom, grace, and guidance in our life together.**

**\*Benediction**

Rev. Tyler Ung

**Postlude**

David Wilson

# umstead park

UNITED CHURCH *of* CHRIST

## Church Staff

**Lindsay Cooper, she/her**  
Nursery Director

**Rev. Tyler Ung, they/them**  
Senior Pastor

**Gwen Vass, she/her**  
Financial Administrator

**Cody Walter Welch, he/him/they/them**  
Teaching Intern

**David Wilson, he/him**  
Director of Music

**Rev. Paula Womack, she/her**  
Associate Pastor

### A special "thank you" to this week's volunteers:

Don Alderman, AV Team  
Bill Yoder (he/him), AV Team  
Dan Harrell, Assistant Treasurer  
Gwen Reagan (she/her), Lay Leader  
Hope Kiser (she/her), Usher



We at  
Umstead Park  
United Church of Christ  
welcome and affirm all  
as we journey to seek  
the divine, to embody loving  
community, and to strive for  
justice as a progressive  
community of  
faith.

## Giving

Scan the QR code to make a one-time or recurring donation!

## Visiting?

You are invited to fill out the online visitor form so that we can get to know you!

## Realm

Access your Realm account

\* Please rise in body or in spirit.

Series by Worship Design Studio

# Supplemental Texts and Hymns

## Anthem

“To This Altar”

UPUCC Choir

Words and Music by Ken Medema

To this altar we are bringing all the scattered bits and pieces.  
To this altar we are bringing all the strife that never ceases.  
To this altar we are bringing all the joy and all the gladness.  
To this altar we are bringing all the hurt and all the madness.  
To this altar we are bringing all the work along the journey.  
To this altar we are bringing days of dreams and nights of yearning.  
God of Grace and God of glory, see our tears and hear our story.  
From this altar let us rise, knowing once again we are Your very own.

## Reading of Scripture

Luke 17:3-4; 23:32-34, *The Inclusive Bible*

Gwen Reagan

<sup>3</sup> “Be on your guard. If your sisters or brothers do wrong, correct them; if they repent, forgive them. <sup>4</sup> If they sin against you seven times a day, and seven times a day turn back to you saying, ‘I’m sorry,’ forgive them.”

<sup>32</sup> Two others were also led off with Jesus, criminals who were to be put to death. <sup>33</sup> When they had reached the place called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there—together with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. <sup>34</sup> And Jesus said, “Abba forgive them. They don’t know what they are doing.” Then they divided his garments, rolling dice for them.

## \*Doxology

(see insert)

Congregation

For death-de-fy-ing hope, we praise; for love that con-quers all, we raise al-le - lu - ia! Al-le -  
lu - ia! For jus-tice here on earth we sing and right-eous-ness as if a stream. Al-le -  
lu - ia! Al-le - lu - ia! Al-le - lu - ia! Al-le - lu - ia! Al-le - lu - ia! A - men.

# Coming Up Soon

## Presentation from Musalaha | Tomorrow, May 4th at 1:30pm



All are invited to attend a presentation from Musalaha, a faith-based organization founded by indigenous people of the Holy Land dedicated to promoting reconciliation between communities separated by ethnic, religious, and social barriers. We'll learn about their work and how we can get involved! You may join in via the regular worship Zoom link as well! Scan the QR code to learn more about Musalaha.

## How to Stay Regulated in a Dysregulated World | May 5th

When the world feels chaotic and overwhelming, regulation becomes resistance and preservation becomes power. Join the North Carolina Council of Churches' Partners in Health and Wholeness initiative for a free webinar on Tuesday, May 5, from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m., featuring Dr. Sherronda Banks for an honest conversation about what it means to protect your peace in a dysregulated world.

Drawing from her Radical Preservation™ framework and more than two decades of culturally responsive clinical work, Dr. Banks, who is a therapist, speaker, and founder of Intentional Steps Counseling Services, will offer a bold and innovative approach to sustainable well-being, one that centers rest, boundaries, identity and intentional self-care. Scan the QR code for more information.



## Game Night | May 7th at 6:00pm

Come to Game Night on Thursday May 7 at High Park Bar and Grill! Gather at 5:30 for dinner or 6:00 when the games begin. Let Scott Pope know if you plan to attend (scottpope11@gmail.com).

## Aesthetics Listening Sessions | May 7th, 19th, and 31st

As we move forward with decorating our newly refreshed space, we believe that form should follow function. To help guide our work, we are beginning by listening to the community to create a list of values that we want to be reflected in the way our space looks and feels. We will have a number of listening sessions:

May 7th, 6pm (online only) | May 19th, 6pm (online only) | May 31, 11:45am (onsite/online)



Please share during the listening sessions, or via the survey accessible through the QR code to help contribute to the larger story of who we are and what we value! Please note: at this time, we are not considering specific design elements or ideas. We want to start with our values and build up the art from that groundwork.

## Meal Train for Covenant Partner

We celebrate that Marie Grace Brook's surgery went well, and we'd like to offer support to her and her husband Peter as she recovers! Click here to provide a home-cooked meal or a Door Dash gift card to allow them to focus on her healing.



## Guns to Gardens | June 13th - Volunteer Sign Up Open!

*Gun Safe Disposal Event 11am-2pm*

*"Disarming Hearts": A Vigil of Remembrance at 4pm*

UPUCC is partnering with RAWTools South to offer a Guns to Gardens safe surrender event on June 13, 2026. Guns to Gardens is a movement and gun safe surrender program where unwanted firearms are collected, dismantled and then transformed into garden tools or other artistic creations, often in partnership with local faith communities.

This initiative aims to reduce gun violence by providing a constructive way to dispose of unwanted firearms while promoting peace and sustainability. Trained volunteers, often blacksmiths, transform the metal into various garden tools, such as shovels, trowels, or mattocks and sometimes into artistic pieces.

The process of turning weapons into tools is deeply symbolic, representing a shift from violence to growth, from destruction to creation and from harm to healing. The program draws inspiration from the biblical passage Isaiah 2:4, which speaks of beating swords into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks, signifying a transformation from warfare to agriculture.

The UPUCC Guns to Gardens task force will be reaching out to the UPUCC community for support in the weeks and months to come. Please watch for more information and consider working with us in this important initiative.

You can get involved with our Guns To Gardens event on June 13th by volunteering for a variety of roles. We need about 42 volunteers to make this happen and will be reaching out to our 7 other faith organization allied partners too. So, if there is a role that really speaks to you and you would like to make a difference in preventing unnecessary gun violence, please sign up now via the QR code.!



Scan the QR code to donate to the Guns to Gardens Task Force (select "Guns to Gardens" from the dropdown menu). **Task Force members:** Kathy Austin, Debbie Beroth, Laura Carter-Scheid, Ada McKerrell, Mary Pat Peters, Paula Womack.

## "Thriving in Ministry" Film with Pastor Paula

After worship on 4/19, those who were present watched the film produced for the Duke Divinity School "Thriving In Ministry" program that focuses on Pastor Paula's ministry journey. The five and one-half minute film, shot at UPUCC in December and January, features cameo appearances by several UPUCC folks and reminds us of the power of our community in making space to embrace and affirm people fully. Scan the QR code to watch.



## Help Plan Our First Halloween Masquerade!

On Friday October 30th, we are inviting community LGBT youth and ally youth to our church for a Halloween Masquerade. We want this to be a safe, fun, and welcoming event that welcomes individuals throughout the Triangle, and shows the community what we value as a church. We invite all interested, youth and adults, to join the



Masquerade planning task force so that the event reflects an array of skills and viewpoints in the creation of an event that we hope will become annual. Scan the QR code to help plan!

## Mutual Care Network Starting Up

The UPUCC 2026 Ministry Plan calls for building a culture of helping one another, fostering genuine connections, and ensuring that no one feels alone. In support of this aim, the Covenant Leadership Circle has created a task force (TF) that is charged with outlining a structure for UPUCC to implement a mutual care network. Our first step is identifying volunteers who are willing to help out when covenant partners have needs. We want to emphasize that signing up and letting us know how you can help, DOES NOT mean that you must respond to every request, but rather helps us know who might have the needed skills and/or inclination to assist with a particular request. We recognize that each of us has unique skills and different gifts to offer. The TF has come up with a list of things that folks might need and we invite you to add your name to any area you might be willing to assist with. If you think of something we've missed, please add it to the "other" category or send us an email. Thank you for helping us get this valuable resource up and running. Scan the QR code to access the form to sign up! —The UPUCC Mutual Care Task Force (care@upucc.org)



## Covenant Leadership Circle

The purpose of this section is to update you on the work of the Covenant Leadership Circle (CLC). We hope that this enables you to have a more thorough understanding of what happens behind the scenes at UPUCC, and to discover opportunities to join us in actualizing new ideas!

### CLC Members:

**Moderator:** Gia Hafler

**Moderator-Elect:** Hope Kiser

**Treasurer:** Vickie Teal

**Secretary:** Sarah Bellak

**Facilities Lead:** Gary Sanders

**At-Large:** Elliot Acosta

**At-Large:** Laura Carter-Scheid

**At-Large:** David Frink

**At-Large:** Bob Martin

Financial Results			
	March	Year-To-Date	2026
General Offerings	\$28,787	\$64,421	\$304,882
Total Income	\$31,254	\$70,241	\$331,466
Total Expenses	\$30,006	\$83,086	\$386,585
Net Income	+1,247	-\$12,845	-\$55,119
From Reserves*		\$12,845	\$55,119
*As a reminder, the 2026 Operating Budget projects a net income deficit of \$55,000 which will be offset by the Operating Fund Reserve			

**Next Meeting:** Sunday, May 17<sup>th</sup> at 12:00pm in the UPUCC Library. All are welcome!

The Covenant Leadership Circle (CLC) continues to be energized by the many ways our community is growing, connecting, and living out our values—both within our congregation and across the wider Triangle.

This month, the CLC took several steps to support that shared work. Funding was approved for our presence at Out! Raleigh, along with resources for new community-building tools, updated signage, and additional tables to better host gatherings in our space. Each of these decisions reflects a commitment to hospitality, visibility, and connection.

### *Building Community & Deepening Connections*

Multiple teams are actively shaping how we care for one another and engage beyond our walls. New tools are being developed to help people find pathways into groups and activities, while efforts in community connection and mutual care continue to grow. A new congregational care system—including a dedicated email and sign-up form—will soon make it easier to both offer and receive support.

Our Family, Youth & Children team is reimagining opportunities for middle school-aged youth and their caregivers, with creative programming focused on transformation—beginning with the upcoming Guns to Gardens initiative. This powerful project, in partnership with other faith communities, will need around 50 volunteers and continued fundraising support to bring it to life.

### *Looking Ahead: Events & Engagement*

There are many meaningful ways to get involved in the coming weeks—keep an eye on your Friday email! In addition, planning is underway for a Halloween Masquerade designed especially for LGBTQ youth and allies—an exciting opportunity to create a safe, joyful, and affirming space. Volunteers are warmly invited to help shape this event.

### *A Snapshot of Our Finances & Facilities*

Financially, we remain stable, with strong participation in giving and rental activity on track with last year. Ongoing building improvements—including new locks, upcoming renovations, and accessibility updates—are helping ensure our space continues to serve both our congregation and the broader community well.

### *Join the Work*

The heart of the CLC's work is shared leadership. Whether you're interested in event planning, community care, youth programming, justice work, or simply exploring where you might connect, there is a place for you. Many of our current efforts began with a simple "yes" from someone like you.

If you'd like to learn more or get involved, we'd love to help you find your way in.


## **Ongoing Announcements**

### **Help Host Healing Transitions on First Sundays**

We host our friends from Healing Transitions on the first Sunday of every month. If you would like to help with food, drink, and fellowship, sign up via the link on the website, or at the QR code. Get to know our neighbors!



### **UCC Connections**

 The National Religious Partnership for the Environment (NRPE) has invited churches of the Southern Conference of the United Church of Christ to participate in its collaboration on two tree planting grants. NRPE is an organization that seeks to “encourage people of faith to weave values and programs of care for God’s creation throughout the entire fabric of religious life and to bring the religious voice to the forefront as

we join together to address environmental concerns and care for God's earth and God's people." It is an ecumenical and interfaith working group with partners that represent over 156,000 congregations, parishes, and synagogues. The focus is on two projects in Chesapeake Bay and at urban church sites in Durham and Greensboro. Scan QR code for more information.

## Hiring Youth Director and Teaching Interns

We are hiring for two part-time positions currently:

The Youth Director role designs and leads weekly opportunities for youth to gather, helps plan and implement programs, and collaborates with our established network of progressive youth ministries in the area. Read the Youth Director job posting for more information on the role and how to apply via the QR code.



The Teaching Intern role is a valuable opportunity to gain hands-on experience in curriculum development, classroom management, and faith-based teaching within a supportive and progressive community environment. This includes teaching Sunday School classes and preparing lessons and materials. Read the Teaching Intern job posting for more information on the role and how to apply via the QR code. We are thrilled to have Cody on staff as one teaching intern, and are looking to add to our team!



## Want to Submit an Announcement?

To submit an announcement for publication on the website and the bulletin, simply scan this QR code and fill out the online form! To submit an announcement in time for the Friday email, the deadline is the preceding Tuesday by 11:59pm.



## Submit Photos and Videos of UPUCC Happenings

Did you know that we have an online Google Photos album? It's chock-full of moments from UPUCC past and present, and you are invited to add your own! Simply scan the QR code, click the "Add Photos" button pictured here, and select which photos you would like to submit to the album. Alternatively, you may email photos or videos to [umsteadparkucc@gmail.com](mailto:umsteadparkucc@gmail.com)!



## Visiting With Us Today?

We're so glad that you spent your Sunday with us—we would love to get to know you better! You are invited to fill out the visitor form by scanning the QR code so that we can connect with you about our church and add you to our email list!



## Follow Us on Social Media!

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