



GATHERING

Welcome and A Time of Greeting

Rev. Paula Womack

Invocation

Gwen Vass

Meditation

“Evil is not just personal but structural and spiritual. It is not simply the result of human actions, but the consequence of huge systems over which no individual has full control.”

—Walter Wink, *The Powers that Be: Theology for a New Millenium*

Prelude

David Wilson

***Call to Worship**

Rev. Tyler Ung

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

***Gathering Hymn**

#563, “We Cannot Own the Sunlit Sky

Congregation

Confession and Assurance

Rev. Tyler Ung

Loving God,
 We have been born into a fractured world,
 where profit is too often held above people;
 where the land and the creatures are not cared for;
 where we do not have equal or sufficient access to what we need.
 We participate in these systems of injustice
 and we do not know how to escape them.

There have been times when we have ignored the call to care for our neighbor,
 when we have chosen what is convenient over what is just,
 when we have nurtured the seed of hatred in our own spirit.

For the ways we have wronged others, we seek forgiveness.
 For the ways we have failed to love ourselves, we seek compassion.
 For the ways we have been trapped by the brokenness of our world, we seek liberation.

HEARING AND RESPONDING

Time with Children

Rev. Tyler Ung

* Please rise in body or in spirit.

Reading of Scripture

Amos 5:7-17; 21-24, *The Inclusive Bible*
(see insert)

Gwen Vass

Sermon

“A Progressive Account of Evil”

Rev. Tyler Ung

***Doxology**

Congregation

For death-de-fy-ing hope, we praise; for love that con-quers all, we raise al-le - lu - ias! 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.

Prayers of the People

Dan Harrell

(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, or scan the QR code to the left.*

Celebration of Gifts (Offertory)

Dan Harrell



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

SENDING INTO THE WORLD

***Sending Hymn**

#588, “Let Justice Flow Like Streams”

Congregation

Announcements

***Affirmation of Community**

Gwen Vass

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

* Please rise in body or in spirit.

Supplemental Texts and Hymns

Reading of Scripture

Amos 5:7-17; 21-24, *The Inclusive Bible*

Gwen Vass

⁷ Ah, you who turn justice to wormwood,
and bring righteousness to the dust—

⁸ seek the One who made the Pleiades and Orion,
who turns the dusk to dawn,
and day to the darkest night,
who calls the waters of the sea
and pours them over the land—
seek God!

⁹ God rains down destruction on the strongholds
and brings ruin to the fortress.

¹⁰ You hate the arbiter who sits at the city gate,
and despised the truth speaker.

¹¹ Therefore, as you trampled upon on the poor,
extorting inhumane taxes on their grain,
those houses you built of hewn stone—
you will never live in them;
and those precious vineyards you planted—
you will never drink their wine.

¹² For I have seen your many atrocities,
and your countless sins,
you enemies of the righteous, you bribe-takers,
you who deny justice to the needy at the city gate!

¹³ Therefore the prudent on that day shall fall silent,
for it is an evil time.

¹⁴ Seek good and not evil,
that you may live,
and so that God Omnipotent may truly be with you
as you have said.

¹⁵ Hate what is evil, and love what is good;
And set out justice at the city gate,
and perhaps God Omnipotent
may grant grace to Joseph's remnant.

¹⁶ For thus says God Omnipotent:
In all the squares—lament;
and in all the streets they wail "Woe is me! Woe is me!"
And they shall call the farmer to mourning,
and to lament, those expert in weeping.

¹⁷ There will be wailing in every vineyard,
as I pass in your midst, says God.

²¹ I hate, I spurn your festivals
and smell no fragrance in your convocations!

²² Should you offer up to me burnt offerings
or grain offerings, I will not accept them;
nor will I look at your sacrifices of fattened cattle!

²³ Spare me the noise of your singers!
I will not listen to the melody of your harps!

²⁴ Instead, let justice flow like a river,
and righteousness flow like a steady stream.


Announcements

Nertz Meet-Up Group | May 11th at 6:30pm

David Wilson has started a Raleigh Nertz Meet-Up group, which will meet this month on Monday, May 11th at 6:30pm! If interested, RSVP to the Meetup group at www.meetup.com/raleigh-nertz-meetup, scan the QR code, or contact David directly in person or via email (david@upucc.org).



Aesthetics Listening Sessions | May 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.

Service Sunday | May 24th

We are holding a Service Sunday on May 24 to celebrate Pentecost! There will be several opportunities available to choose from. To help us make sure we have enough supplies and to coordinate logistics, please scan the QR code and let us know which service project you are most interested in doing.



Northwest Raleigh Community Game Night Starting Up

 In keeping with our Ministry Plan of "Connecting with Courage and Care," we are starting a monthly game night for the community via MeetUp.com. We plan to open the event to those in our surrounding neighborhoods and the Triangle in general. As a way to ensure that we have enough folks to play games, we are seeking your input first to try to find convenient days and times. Scan the QR code to let us know your availability! You may join the MeetUp group at: www.meetup.com/nw-raleigh-board-games-meetup.

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.




"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)



Guns to Gardens | June 13th

Safe Gun Disposal Event from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Disarming Hearts: A Vigil of Remembrance at 4:00 p.m.

(Both events will take place at Umstead Park UCC, 8208 Brownleigh Dr, Raleigh, NC.)

Give: Financial contributions are welcome, and may be donated via the QR code following this announcement. (Select 'Guns to Gardens' from the fund dropdown menu and write 'Guns to Gardens' in the memo line)

The Event: Umstead Park UCC is partnering with RAWTools South and other local communities of faith to offer a Guns to Gardens Safe Disposal Event on June 13, 2026. The event provides a safe way for people to dispose of unwanted firearms. Participation is voluntary, free, anonymous, and open to all gun owners. Firearms are collected, and, on the spot, chopped up to be turned into garden tools, garden art, and jewelry.

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.

Surrender a Firearm: Gun owners interested in disposing of their guns should arrive at the event any time on June 13 between 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. with their unloaded firearms stored in the trunks or backs of their vehicles. A volunteer will meet each car at the entrance to the event and participants will stay in their cars while guns are dismantled by trained safety specialists. While supplies last, gift cards of up to \$200 will be offered as a "thank you" to those who dispose of their guns at the event.

Why This Is Important: With over 400,000 million guns in American homes, many of these are unwanted for a number of reasons. For instance, there may be vulnerable children or adults in the home, owners have inherited the guns but aren't comfortable with them, or someone has already been harmed by the gun. As faith communities, we can help dispose of these guns and make a difference in preventing more unnecessary gun violence or even death.

Volunteer: Volunteer to help make a difference! We need a wide variety of volunteers. Review volunteer positions and sign up now! You may access the volunteer sign up via the QR code following this announcement.

Attend the Closing Vigil: Join us for Disarming Hearts: A Vigil of Remembrance at 4:00 p.m. on June 13. This service of prayers, songs and readings, is for survivors of gun violence and all who care about gun violence prevention. The vigil will include a forge where those who choose may hammer dismantled gun parts to help turn them into garden tools, making an instrument that could do harm into a tool that can sustain life.

Thank You to Our Partners: Beth Meyer Synagogue, Windborne United Methodist Church, Church of the Nativity, Community United Church of Christ, Pullen Memorial Baptist Mission and Outreach Council, The Catholic Community of St. Francis of Assisi and Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Raleigh.

Stories of Interest: Take a moment to listen, watch and learn more via the QR codes following this announcement! RAWtools South (the group partnering with us on the Guns to Gardens Safe Disposal Event and Disarming Hearts: A Vigil of Remembrance) recently was featured on NPR's All Things Considered. Guns to Gardens also is the subject of a recent 12-minute documentary film made by a UNC film student which offers an interesting college student perspective on the work.

Task Force members: Kathy Austin, Debbie Beroth, Laura Carter-Scheid, Ada McKerrell, Mary Pat Peters, Paula Womack.



Donate



Volunteer



RAWtools
South on
NPR



Guns to
Gardens
Documentary

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 17th 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

A prayer from Reed Kirkman in the United Church of Christ's People's Prayers for Peace:



God,
We'll show up when it's hard.
We'll demand justice when the world refuses.
We'll organize, teach, march, feed, shelter, vote, heal, build community.
We'll reflect critically, think rigorously, act courageously.
#LoveIsLouder #BeTheChurch

Scan the QR code to submit your own poetry!

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!



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!

Facebook: [UmsteadParkUCC](#) | Instagram: [UmsteadParkUCC](#) | BlueSky: [upucc.bsky.social](#)

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:

Reed Altman, AV Team
Peter van Dorsten (he/him), AV Team
Amy Lewis (she/her), Coffee Set-Up
Nina Nalle Robinson (she/her), Greeter
Kailina Grace (she/her), Greeter
Gwen Vass (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