

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

September 6th, 2026 at 10:30am (Onsite & Online)



GATHERING

Welcome and a Time of Greeting

Rev. Tyler Ung

Invocation

From "God, Bless the Work Your People Do"

Gwen Vass

Meditation

"[Post-Reformation] Protestantism shattered the bonds restricting all striving for gain—not only by legalizing profit but also by perceiving it as desired by God."

-Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism

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

*Gathering Hymn

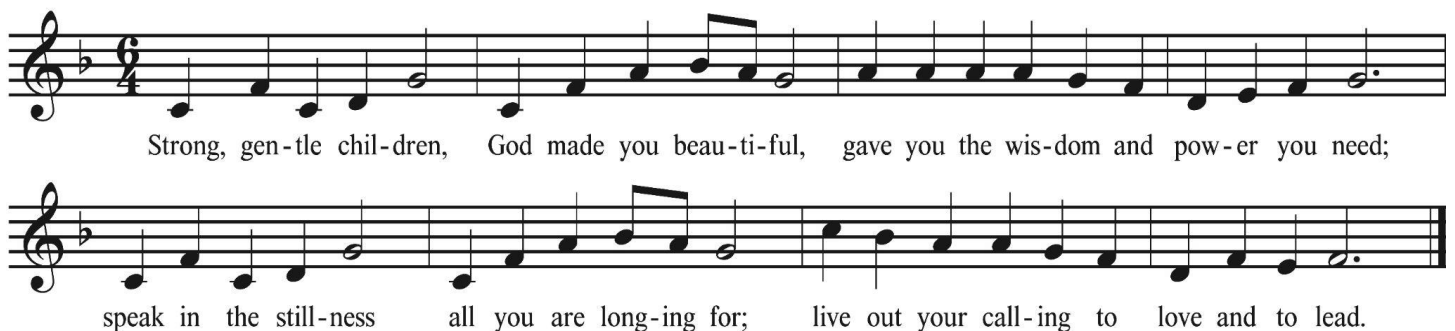
#425, "For the Fruit of All Creation"

Congregation

HEARING AND RESPONDING

Time with Children

Rev. Tyler Ung



Reading of Scripture

Matthew 20:1-16, *The Inclusive Bible*
(see insert)

Gwen Vass

Prayers of the People

Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Rev. Tyler Ung



*You are invited to share your joys and concerns. People onsite can raise a hand and a microphone will be brought to them. People online can type their requests in the chat. We ask that you share carefully, knowing that we do not know what traumas people carry with them into this gathering and striving to not trigger or harm our neighbors. After each person shares, we will respond with: **"This is our prayer."** To submit prayer requests for the weekly email, visit tinyurl.com/upuccprayers, or scan the QR code.*

Celebration of Gifts

Rev. Tyler Ung



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

COMMUNION

Rev. Paula Womack

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.

Those onsite are invited to come forward at this time. The bread may be dipped into the cup and then eaten. The cup contains juice. The center station contains gluten free bread. Those online can prepare their elements and receive words of blessing from the online celebrant.

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.

*Communion Hymn

#347, "Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ"

Congregation

SENDING INTO THE WORLD

*Sending Hymn

#576, "For the Healing of the Nations"

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

umstead park

UNITED CHURCH *of* CHRIST

Church Staff

Lindsay Cooper, she/her
Nursery Director

Ellen Fiedler, she/her
Youth Director

Rev. Tyler Ung, they/them
Senior Minister

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:

Peter van Dorsten (he/him), AV Team
Rebecca van Dorsten (she/her), Coffee Set Up
Lee Harrison (he/him), Assistant Treasurer
Kailina Grace (she/her), Greeter
Nina Nalle Robinson (she/her), Greeter
Gwen Vass (she/her), Lay Leader



Visiting?

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



Giving

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

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.

Supplemental Hymns and Texts

Reading of Scripture

Mathew 20:1-16, *The Inclusive Bible*

Gwen Vass

¹ “The kin-dom of heaven is like the owner of an estate who went out at dawn to hire workers for the vineyard. ² After reaching an agreement with them for the usual daily wage, the owner sent them out to the vineyard.

³ “About mid-morning, the owner came out and saw others standing around the marketplace without work, ⁴ and said to them, ‘You go along to my vineyard and I will pay you whatever is fair.’ ⁵ At that they left.

“Around noon and again in the mid-afternoon, the owner came out and did the same. ⁶ Finally, going out late in the afternoon, the owner found still others standing around and said to them, ‘Why have you been standing here idle all day?’

⁷ “‘No one has hired us,’ they replied.

“The owner said, ‘You go to my vineyard, too.’

⁸ “When evening came, the owner said to the overseer, ‘Call the workers and give them their pay, but begin with the last group and end with the first.’ ⁹ When those hired late in the afternoon came up, they received a full day’s pay, ¹⁰ and when the first group appeared they assumed they would get more. Yet they all received the same daily wage.

¹¹ “Thereupon they complained to the owner, ¹² ‘This last group did only an hour’s work, but you’ve put them on the same basis as those who worked a full day in the scorching heat.’

¹³ “ ‘My friends,’ said the owner to those who voiced this complaint, ‘I do you no injustice. You agreed on the usual wage, didn’t you? ¹⁴ Take your pay and go home. I intend to give this worker who was hired last the same pay as you.

¹⁵ “I’m free to do as I please with my money, aren’t I? Or are you envious because I am generous?’

¹⁶ “Thus the last will be first and the first will be last.”

Announcements

Next PeerSpace Rental | September 12th

Please be advised that our space will be rented for an event on the above date. If you are able to help prepare the worship space on the Sunday prior that would be much appreciated!

Kick-Off Sunday | September 13th

Are you passionate about your group, task force, lead team, or any other part of our church community? We need you on September 13th for our Kick-Off Sunday! We're inviting a representative from each group to host a table in the worship space after service. This is a fantastic opportunity to meet new people, share what your group is all about, and help others find their place at UPUCC. Don't miss this chance to help make our Kick-Off Sunday a success! Please sign up to represent your group by September 6. You can sign up using the QR code or by emailing us at office@upucc.org.



Community Hour Begins Soon! | September 13th

We are excited to start a weekly Community Hour after church beginning September 13th! The hope is to create space for our UPUCC community to find time to explore mutual interests, share meals together, try new things, and generally connect to one another! More information to come!

UPUCC To Host UCC ENCA Church Women | September 19th

UPUCC will host the district meeting of the United Church of Christ Eastern North Carolina Association Church Women on Saturday, September 19 from 10:00 a.m. to Noon. We are happy to share our space with this group which includes churches from Raleigh, Cary, Hillsborough, Holly Springs, Durham, Clayton, Kenly, Eagle Rock, Youngsville, Wendell, Fuquay-Varina and Chapel Hill. The ENCA Church Women. The group's focus is on encouraging and equipping women to live lives of service, meaningful connection and faithful leadership. Any UPUCC women who would like to participate are welcome! Please email Pastor Paula to let her know you'll be coming so we have a count for breakfast!

AV Team Volunteers Needed

Have you ever found yourself worshipping online? Was it valuable to you? Is being able to worship online a valuable service for our community? Do you value hearing great speaker audio and piano sound during the worship service? Have you ever used computer software, such as PowerPoint that required active monitoring and changes? If you answered, Yes to some of these questions, the AV Team needs you! While AV work may sound highly technical, it is not as complex (or frightening!) as some might think. Responsibilities are currently split between audio and video jobs. Audio monitors sound levels monitors onsite and online, making active adjustments. Video typically works with 2-3 software applications to do things such as aim the camera and transition between a service Welcome screen, onsite camera feed, and Celebration of Gifts screen, frequently with just the click of a button. Training is required. Perfection is not. With experience will come greater ability. But, experience can only come if you join us. So join us!! Reach out to Peter v.D. or Scott A. if you're interested!

Write UPUCC a 5-Star Review!

One easy way to spread the word about our wonderful community is to leave us an online review! You are invited to take a minute or two this week to search “Umstead Park UCC” on Google and write us a 5-star review! Bonus points for adding a written comment in addition to the stars!

Compost Now fund needs a refill!

The Compost Now fund is getting low, and we need to replenish it. In the 4 years that UPUCC has been composting, we’ve diverted >24,000 pounds of waste and created almost 8,000 pounds of compost. Compost Now costs ~\$130/month and is funded through donations from covenant partners who use the service or those who want to support the environmental impact we are making. Please submit your donation in the offering basket with a check designated to “Compost Now” or by scanning the QR code.



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!



Hiring Teaching Intern



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.

Sunday Volunteer Opportunities

Please consider joining us to provide an extravagant Sunday Welcome to all-volunteer below to be a Greeter, Usher, or Barista (Coffee Set Up and Clean Up). Scan the QR code to access the Sign-Up Genius.



UCC Connections



Responding to the Deadly ICE Detention System: Ways to Resist: As Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) continues to terrorize communities, separate families and even kill citizens and non-citizens alike as part of this administration’s mass deportation campaign, there is also increased public scrutiny of this country’s detention center system for migrants. In 2025 alone, ICE broke records for the number of people who have died in detention, most often due to the horrific conditions and lack of proper medical care. Since this administration’s inauguration in 2025, 52 people have died in detention according to Human Rights Watch—four times that of the previous administration. Join the United Church of Christ’s “Nurture the Soul” webinar on Thursday, September 10 at 3:30 p.m. to learn from UCC pastors and lay leaders as they share how they’ve taken action and learn what we can do as people of faith to stop detention and continue to resist this deadly system.

Lay Leading in Worship



We want our worship to offer a rich diversity of leadership, as well as help connect our congregants to the spiritual themes that resonate with them. If you are interested in being in our pool of lay leaders, please provide your contact via the QR code here! We will make sure that the people in the Lay Leader interest pool are regularly helping to lead worship. Thank you for helping to keep our church a community-led congregation!

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!



Mutual Care Network

The UPUCC Mutual Care Network was designed to build a culture of helping one another, to foster genuine connections, and to ensure that no one feels alone. There are 2 parts: (1) 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 desire to assist with a particular request; (2) Providing a way for covenant partners to easily request care help when they need it. We've identified individuals who are willing to provide care in areas such as running errands, tech help, pet care and so on. Please let us know what you are needing and we will do our best to pair you up with someone ASAP. Join the Mutual Care Network by scanning the QR code included here.



Follow Us on Social Media!

Facebook: [UmsteadParkUCC](https://www.facebook.com/UmsteadParkUCC) | Instagram: [UmsteadParkUCC](https://www.instagram.com/UmsteadParkUCC) | BlueSky: [upucc.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/upucc.bsky.social)

Receive Email Updates!

Each week we send out an e-mail full of updates about upcoming events, Sunday services, as well as joys and concerns of our church family. If you would like to receive these emails, scan the QR code here and submit your email address!



Upcoming PeerSpace Rentals

September 12th | October 24th, 31st | November 20th, 21st | December 5th, 12th, 30th, 31st | January 1st (2027) | May 29th (2027) | July 31st (2027) | August 1st (2027)

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: Open Seat

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				
	July	2026 YTD	2026 Budget	Difference / Remaining
General Offerings	\$20,948	\$150,109	\$304,882	-\$154,773
Total Income	\$26,601	\$170,821	\$331,466	-\$160,645
Total Expenses	\$26,609	\$196,642	\$386,585	-\$189,943
Net Income	-\$8	-\$25,981	-\$55,119	-\$29,442
*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, Sept. 20th at 12:00pm in the UPUCC Library and Online. All are welcome!

Looking Ahead Together: Building Ministry, Community, and Connection

This month's meeting reflected a church community that is actively looking ahead—strengthening ministry, welcoming new people, supporting children and youth, deepening community partnerships, and preparing for the year ahead. Much of the conversation centered on how we can build on what is already working while creating more opportunities for people to connect, participate, and help shape our shared ministry.

Financial and Administrative Updates

The group approved the previous month's minutes. A July financial update is still being finalized because of the early meeting date, and a summary will be shared once the reports are complete. The year-to-date financial picture and full financial report are available in the church's financial materials. An audit report was also discussed. The review highlighted the unique nature of our online community and was encouraging in that it did not identify major gaps in the church's operations. Follow-up materials from the audit conversation will be shared by email. There was also discussion about whether the audit can be shared with covenant partners.

Welcoming New Visitors

A significant part of the conversation focused on ways to make a first visit to our church more welcoming and memorable. The group explored creating small gift bags for new visitors that could include a postcard or brochure, branded pens, tissues, a snack or candy, a magnet, a small bottle of water, and other helpful items. There was also interest in including information about our social justice ministries and even notes from children, similar to the welcome materials shared at Out! Raleigh.

Preparing for Our Next Chapter of Ministry

The church is also preparing to develop its 2027 Ministry Plan. Home Group gatherings are taking place throughout August, with many being led by church members. The conversations and ideas shared through these groups will help shape the ministry plan, with a goal of completing the core plan before September 20. A broader church survey will also be distributed soon. Together, the Home Groups and survey will give the congregation meaningful opportunities to share hopes, ideas, and priorities for the future. Task force work is expected to move forward after August, with a visible presence planned for Kickoff Sunday on September 13.

Guns to Gardens: A Ministry With Momentum

The recent Guns to Gardens event was celebrated as an example of what can happen when thoughtful ministry planning, community partnerships, and financial support come together. The event grew beyond its initial expectations, attracted additional financial participation, and concluded with a surplus. The organizers also gathered survey responses that can help tell the story of the event and its impact. The group discussed ways to share those results more broadly—not only within religious communities, but throughout the wider community. Possibilities include updating the church website, making greater use of social media to tell ministry stories rather than simply announce events, and building on coverage already received through the UCC Southern Conference newsletter. There was also discussion of pursuing broader media coverage. Because the event was made possible in part through support from RAW Tools South, a motion was approved to give more than \$800 of the cash surplus to RAW Tools South as an expression of gratitude for their partnership and discounted 2025 rate. Gift cards from the surplus will be held for next year's event. Looking ahead, the hope is for Guns to Gardens to become an annual event, with different partner faith communities taking the lead from year to year. Our church may also offer its facility as a location, since the space and traffic flow worked particularly well. Perhaps most importantly, the conversation emphasized that the impact of Guns to Gardens cannot be measured only in attendance numbers or dollars. The stories, relationships, outreach, and social justice work generated through the event are an important part of its success.

PACE and Community Engagement

PACE is beginning to look toward the coming election season, with particular attention to education, voter registration, and early voting. There is also ongoing work with Healing Transitions. The group discussed how the church can amplify the work already being done by community organizations and make useful, reliable information accessible to people.

Building on the Energy of Out! Raleigh

The church's presence at Out! Raleigh was another encouraging example of community engagement. The booth generated good conversations, attracted interest through merchandise and signage, and resulted in new email connections. Most of those who shared their email addresses remain subscribed to the church's Friday email. The next challenge is helping people take a natural next step—from meeting us at a community event to exploring the church more fully. Online worship can be an especially welcoming entry point for those who are curious but not yet ready to attend in person. The team also discussed reusing the popular photo booth and signs at future church events, including the August fellowship cookout. There was strong interest

* Please rise in body or in spirit.

in creating magnets or other materials based on the signs for future welcome bags. The group also hopes to build a stronger connection between major community events and upcoming church initiatives, and to plan an event soon after next year's Out! Raleigh to maintain that momentum.

Making Giving Easier

The possibility of accepting donations through services such as Venmo or PayPal was discussed. Having a simple way for people to give electronically could make it easier to receive donations at community events and during worship.

Supporting the Creativity Group

The Creativity Group is working to improve how its materials, cards, and donations are stored and displayed. Because some donated materials have gone missing or been damaged, the group is seeking a dedicated and secure space where its items can be stored and displayed safely. A tall rolling rack has been purchased as one possible solution. There was discussion about using lobby space rather than the worship area during the week, as well as creating a digital payment option.

Coordinating Building Use

The group discussed ways to make information about upcoming building rentals more accessible, including potentially adding rental information to the bulletin. Since the Friday email has limited space, other communication options may be needed. It is also important to clearly communicate that renters are not permitted to enter the church office area.

What's Coming Up

There are several opportunities for connection and participation in the coming weeks:

- **August:** Home Group networking and conversations shaping the 2027 Ministry Plan
- **August 30:** Fellowship cookout
- **September 13:** Kickoff Sunday, with task forces invited to have a presence
- **September:** Development of the draft 2027 Ministry Plan
- **September 20:** Next meeting and continued work on the ministry plan

There is also continuing work around racial equity training for our church and the wider community.

An Invitation to Be Part of What's Next

Across all of these conversations, one theme was clear: the future of our church is something we build together. Whether through a Home Group, a task force, a community event, welcoming a visitor, sharing an idea through the upcoming survey, or simply showing up and getting to know someone new, there are many ways to participate. The energy around Guns to Gardens, Out! Raleigh, Home Groups, and our upcoming ministry planning reminds us that ministry grows when people bring their gifts, ideas, time, and care. If you have been wondering where you might plug in, this is a great season to take that next step. There is a place for you in what we are building together.