

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

September 13th, 2026 at 10:30am (Onsite & Online)



GATHERING

Welcome and a Time of Greeting

Rev. Tyler Ung

You are invited to grab a snack and some coffee or tea, and explore the opportunities to get involved at UPUCC! The Time of Greeting will be extended for Kickoff Sunday.

Invocation

From *Daily Prayer* by Pádraig Ó Tuama

Mark Schurtman

Meditation

"Our spiritual traditions have carried virtues across time. They are tools for the art of living. They are pieces of intelligence about human behavior that neuroscience is now exploring with new words and images: what we practice, we become." -Krista Tippett

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

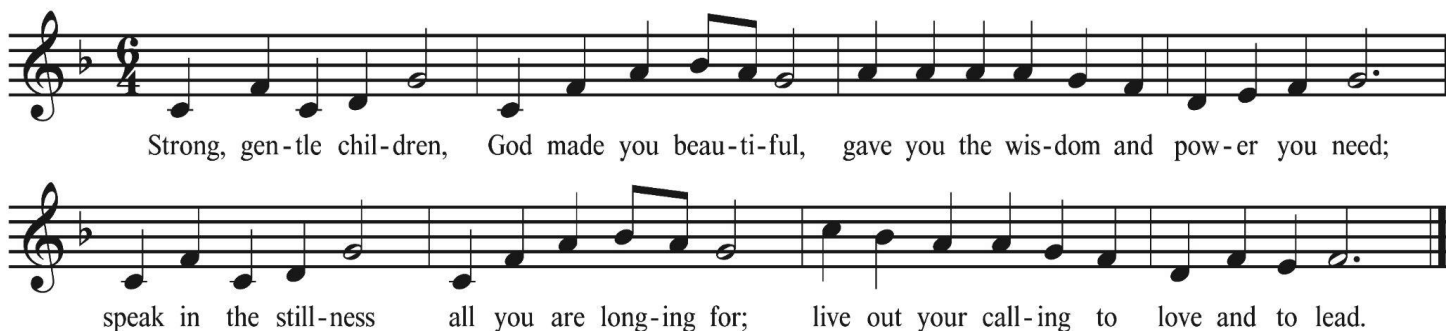
"You Are Welcome Here" (*see insert*)

UPUCC Choir

HEARING AND RESPONDING

Time with Children

Rev. Tyler Ung



Reading

From the UPUCC Covenant (*see insert*)

Mark Schurtman

Sermon

"The Sacred Journey"

Rev. Tyler Ung

* Please rise in body or in spirit.

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.

SENDING INTO THE WORLD

*Sending Hymn

"Sing a New World Into Being" (see insert)

Congregation

*Affirmation of Community

Mark Schurtman

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

Announcements

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

Nevin Fouts, AV Team

Amy Lewis (she/her), Coffee Set-Up

Dan Harrell, Assistant Treasurer

Tim Champion, Auditor

Nina Nalle Robinson (she/her), Greeter

Kailina Grace (she/her), Greeter

Mark Schurtman, Lay Leader

Bob Martin (he/him), 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.



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!

* Please rise in body or in spirit.

Supplemental Hymns and Texts

Anthem

"You Are Welcome Here"
Text and Music by Mark Burrows

UPUCC Choir

Am I welcome here?
Am I safe to sing or laugh or shed a tear?
Will I be loved the way I am? Will friends be near?
Am I welcome here?

You are welcome here.
You are safe to sing or laugh or shed a tear.
We love you just the way you are so have no fear.
You are welcome here.

This is a place of peace and grace,
Where all God's children have a home.
God's reign will come, God's will be done
When all are loved and no one stands alone.

All are welcome here.
All are safe to sing or laugh or shed a tear.
God loves us just the way we are so have no fear.
All are welcome here.
I am welcome here.

Reading

From the UPUCC Covenant

We come together as travelers on a journey, each bringing our unique histories, traditions, and stories of faith, and we prayerfully establish this covenant, seeking:

A closer communion with God,
A more intimate community with one another, and
A committed, mutual relationship with the wider world.

...

This we know:

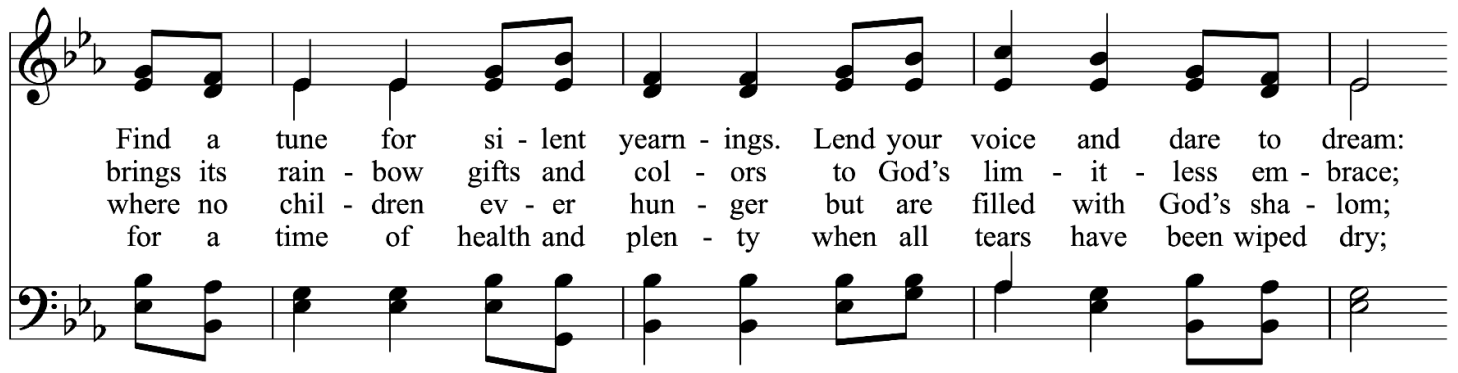
In our faithful sojourning
We do not walk alone. God is present with us.
We have not yet arrived. God continues to beckon.
We seek no destination. The sacred journey is our home.

Sending Hymn*"Sing a New World into Being"**

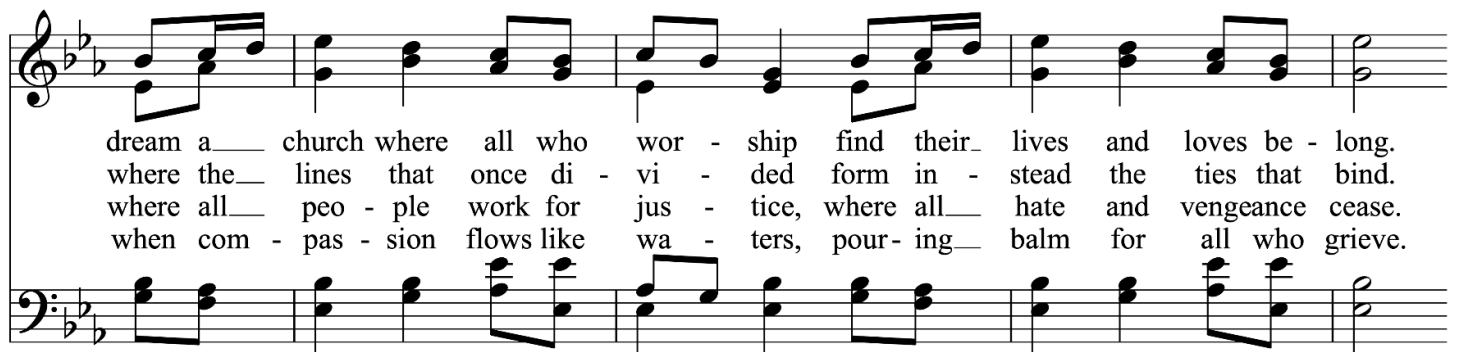
Congregation



1. Sing a new world in - to be - ing. Sound a bold and hope - ful theme.
2. Sing a new world in - to be - ing where each gen - der class and race
3. Sing a new world in - to be - ing where the home - less find a home.
4. Sing a new world in - to be - ing. Join the an - cient proph - ets' cry



Find a tune for si - lent yearn - ings. Lend your voice and dare to dream:
brings its rain - bow gifts and col - ors to God's lim - it - less em - brace;
where no chil - dren ev - er hun - ger but are filled with God's sha - lom;
for a time of health and plen - ty when all tears have been wiped dry;



dream a church where all who wor - ship find their lives and loves be - long.
where the lines that once di - vi - ded form in - stead the ties that bind.
where all peo - ple work for jus - tice, where all hate and vengeance cease.
when com - pas - sion flows like wa - ters, pour - ing balm for all who grieve.



Sing a new world in - to be - ing. Sing as Christ in - spires your song!
Sing a new world in - to be - ing: risk trans - form - ing heart and mind!
Sing a new world in - to be - ing: raise the har - mo - nies of peace.
Sing a new world in - to be - ing: live the prom - ise you be - lieve!

Announcements

Nertz Meet-Up Group | September 14th at 6:30pm

David Wilson has started a Raleigh Nertz Meet-Up group, which will meet this month on Monday, September 14th 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.



Farmers of Color Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Begins Sept. 19th!

Each Season we contract with our Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farmers for eight weeks of produce, delivered Saturday mornings to the church. Shares are stored overnight in the church refrigerator to make it easy to pick them up after church on Sunday. After the recent unexpected death of John Bryant, we were uncertain whether his wife Brenda and her sister Carolyn would be continuing and we've just learned they plan to keep their farms going. So if you



want to enjoy what a local farm can produce, please sign up! We know the first week will include 6 eggs, fresh honey, and two fresh veg. Go to the UPUCC Donation page at the QR code, or at upucc.org/giving and select the CSA option from the pull down list. We need all payments completed by Sept. 10th. Thank you.

UPUCC To Host UCC ENCA Church Women | September 19th

UPUCC will host the district meeting of the United Church of Christ Eastern NC Association Church Women on Saturday, Sept. 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 group's focus is 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!

Covenant Leadership Circle Meeting | September 20th after Worship

You are invited to attend the Covenant Leadership Circle (CLC) for their monthly meeting after church onsite in the library or online via the QR code included here. You may bring a bag lunch, or partake in some of the snacks we often have on hand. All are welcome.



Garden Cistern in Need of Repair

Our beautiful garden is in need of some water. We have a cistern which is full of water but the pump is broken and needs to be replaced. We need to keep it watered to stay beautiful and we don't want to waste water. A new pump is around \$600. If you are able to contribute to garden fund so we can raise enough money to get the pump fixed the plants would be very grateful! To donate, scan the QR code, or go to upucc.org/giving, click "Make a Donation," and select "Garden Fund" from the dropdown menu. Thank you all so very much! -Debbie B.

Early voting begins this week | Top 5 Reasons to Vote Early

1. Avoid waiting in line. 2. More time to remedy issues. 3. Fewer political fliers in your mailbox. 4. More resources for the party you support. 5. More time to help your neighbors make a voting plan. Voting in the 2026 General Election begins this week in NC.

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!

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



Global Table Talk: The UCC at the United Nations. Join the United Church of Christ UN Team on September 15 at 2:00 p.m. EST for the first webinar in their new monthly series, Global Table Talk: The UCC at The United Nations. Explore current developments at the UN, with a focus on the UN Human Rights Council and the UN General Assembly. Learn more about how the UCC is engaging in these global spaces, the issues and conversations shaping this work and why they matter to our shared commitment to building a just world for all. Participants will also discover ways UCC congregations, members and advocates can stay informed, connect global issues to their local communities and engage in the church's ongoing work for human rights, justice, and peace.

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.



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!

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

October 24th, 31st | November 20th, 21st | December 5th, 30th, 31st | January 1st (2027) | May 29th (2027) | July 3rd, 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.