

Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

September 27th, 2026 at 10:30am (Onsite & Online)



umstead park

UNITED CHURCH of CHRIST

GATHERING

Welcome and a Time of Greeting

Rev. Tyler Ung

Invocation

Adapted from *Sacredise.com*

Gwen Vass

Meditation

"Jesus was declared to be like us in every way, except without sin—in other words, not like us at all." -Walter Wink, *The Human Being: Jesus and the Enigma of the Son of the Man*

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

Anthem

"One in Humanity"
(see insert)

UPUCC Choir

HEARING AND RESPONDING

Time with Children

Rev. Tyler Ung

Peace I leave with you, my friends. Sha-lom, my peace in all you do.

Peace I leave with you, my friends. I give to you so you can give to o - thers too. _____

Reading of Scripture

Philippians 2:1–8, *The Inclusive Bible*
(see insert)

Gwen Vass

Sermon

"Humble, Divine Love"

Rev. Tyler Ung

* Please rise in body or in spirit.

***Responsive Hymn**

#539, "Won't You Let Me Be Your Servant"

Congregation

Prayers of the People

Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Rev. Paula Womack



*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. Paula Womack



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**

#565, "God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending"

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

Supplemental Hymns and Texts

Anthem

"One in Humanity"

UPUCC Choir

Words and Music by Bryan Sharpe

We are one in community, we are one in humanity.
Each of us living to spread love, we are one in humanity.
The same sun rises on us all. We're spinning on the same big ball.
No matter where you are, we are one!
There's room for one, there's room for all. Together we can all stand tall.

Reading of Scripture

Philippians 2:1–8, *The Inclusive Bible*

Gwen Vass

¹ If our life in Christ means anything to you—if love, or the Spirit that we have in common, or any tenderness or sympathy can persuade you at all—² then be united in your convictions and united in your love, with a common purpose and a common mind. That is the one thing that would make me completely happy. ³ There must be no competition among you, no conceit, but everybody is to be humble: value others over yourselves; ⁴ each of you thinking of the interests of others before your own. ⁵ Your attitude must be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

⁶ Christ, though in the image of God,
didn't deem equality with God
something to be clung to—

⁷ but instead became completely empty
and took on the image of oppressed humankind:
born into the human condition,
found in the likeness of a human being.

⁸ Jesus was thus humbled—
obediently accepting death, even death on a cross!

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:

Reed Altman, AV Team
Scott Andrews (he/him), AV Team
Christy Tucker (she/her), Asst. Treasurer
Carole Holt, Auditor
Gwen Vass (she/her), Lay Leader
Dan Harrell, Usher
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.

Announcements

Community Hour | After Worship

Every Sunday after worship, we have the chance to deepen our connections through Community Hour. Do you want to craft with other creatives? Share about your travel experiences? Learn about important topics? Eat lunch with friends from the church? All these and more are possible! Bring your ideas and invite others to join you each and every Sunday following worship.

For Community Hour this Sunday, 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. You may bring a bag lunch, or partake in some of the snacks we often have on hand. All are welcome.



Upcoming Community Hour Opportunities:

- **Today** - "Get Out the Vote" Postcards with Nicki N.; Middle School Youth Group Kickoff
- **October 4** - Enjoy World Communion Sunday Bread; Learn to play *Nertz!* with David W; Lunch with Healing Transitions women.
- **October 11** - Make some cards with the Creativity Group!
- **October 18** - Book Discussion with Tyler: *For Such a Time as This: An Emergency Devotional* by theologian Hanna Reichel.
- **October 25th** - Potluck and Congregational Meeting
- **November 8** - Make some cards with the Creativity Group!
- **[Yours goes here!]**

Healing Transitions Sunday | October 4th



We will host women from Healing Transitions next week, and we are always looking for more of the UPUCC community to help with that welcome! If you are willing to bring a morning snack, lunch, drinks, or dessert, you can sign up via the QR code here.

Aesthetics Task Force Vote | October 4th

After listening to the congregation's feedback, the Aesthetics Task Force has drafted a proposed list of guiding values to guide our work with a professional designer. You can review these values by scanning the QR code and we will hold a brief congregational vote following worship on Oct 4 to approve them. If you have any comments or concerns, please reach out to Tyler!



Bring some Bread for World Communion Sunday! | October 4th

World Communion Sunday is the first Sunday of October (10/4), so we'll enjoy bread from around the world at community hour! Bring your favorite loaf, and UPUCC will provide an array of spreads.

Souls to the Polls | October 15-18

UPUCC is making big plans to help people vote their values as part of a national campaign of 1000 marches to the polls on the first day of voting. We are helping folks at Healing Transitions with registration, education, and transportation. We plan very visible caravans to the polls on the first day of early voting, and the following Saturday and Sunday. Let the PACE team know if you want to participate. Signups for drivers and riders will be set up shortly. We will target both Durham and Wake Counties. Mark your calendars! Make a plan to vote! Take people with you!

Here's the schedule:

- **Oct. 15th:** First Day of Early Voting in NC: Gather at the church at 4PM, decorate the cars, proceed to the polls. Polls close at 7:30PM (Ice Cream after?)
- **Oct. 17th:** Gather at the church at 10am, decorate the cars, proceed to the polls. Polls close at 3PM (Ice Cream after?)
- **Oct. 18th:** Gather at the church after worship (there will be pizza!), decorate the cars, proceed to the polls. Polls close at 6PM.

Holiday Cards Available for Order from Creativity Group | Order by Nov. 22

This Holiday Season, consider sending one of our beautiful handmade Christmas cards. Our cards are uniquely designed to help you share your holiday wishes. With a variety of designs, personalize the inside message with one of ours or with your own. Start a new tradition and send a little piece of holiday wonder to everyone on your list. Specifics are on the order form, accessible via the QR code. Orders must be placed by Sunday Nov, 22. The Creativity Group appreciates your support!



A Music and Mental Health Mini-Retreat | Oct. 24

All are welcome to join for 'A Song in My Heart: A Music and Mental Health Mini-Retreat' on October 24 from 9:00am-12:00pm. This mini-retreat is hosted by our friends at Good Shepherd UCC and facilitated by Lois Deloatch. For more information or to register, scan the QR code..



Rev. Doug Long Honored

Rev. Doug Long, UPUCC founding pastor, received the Carolyn and Cy King Peace and Justice award at Community UCC on Sunday, Sept. 20. The award is issued annually to those who have significantly contributed to a more fair and just world. Doug looked well and was able to address those gathered, despite some verbal limitations caused by his recent stroke. Read more at <https://communityucc.org/king-award/>

Interested in Serving Communion?

Have you ever served communion? Would you like to? Would you like to again? Here at UPUCC communion is usually served the first Sunday of each month. All information you need is provided prior to Communion Sunday, and we review everything with you on Sunday morning. So, if you have never served before and would like to, or if you would like to serve again sometime, please let Jane W. know!

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



Join a United Church of Christ webinar on "Preventing Violence Against Women" on Wednesday, October 7 at 12:00 p.m. EST. The conversation will center on how the UCC and other professionals are working to prevent violence against women, both domestically and globally. Scan the QR code to register.

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

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

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				
	August	2026 YTD	2026 Budget	Difference / Remaining
General Offerings	\$38,996	\$189,105	\$304,882	-\$115,777
Total Income	\$38,252	\$209,073	\$331,466	-\$122,393
Total Expenses	\$29,469	\$225,967	\$386,585	-\$160,618
Net Income	\$8,783	-\$16,894	-\$55,119	-\$38,735
*As a reminder, the 2026 Operating Budget projects a net income deficit of \$55,000 which will be offset by the Operating Fund Reserve				
**General Offerings for August include \$20,000 from a \$30,000 anonymous pledge. The remainint \$10,000 will accrue over the next 4 months				

Next Meeting: Sunday, October 11th at 12:00pm in the UPUCC Library & Online. All are welcome!

CLC Update: Building Community, Planning for the Future, and Getting Involved

There is a lot happening at UPUCC right now! The CLC spent its most recent meeting looking at our finances, planning for the coming year, supporting community-building efforts, and thinking about how we can invite more people into the work and life of the church. One of the biggest themes running through the conversation was simple: we have resources, energy, and ideas — and we want more people to help put them to work.

Looking Ahead to 2027

The CLC is beginning work on the 2027 Ministry Plan and Spending Framework. A Ministry Plan Task Force has been formed with Laura, Paula, Tyler, Gia, David W., and others working together to develop the plan. The goal is to think about the big picture first: What are the ministries and priorities that will shape our next year together? The spending framework will then follow from those priorities. This work will also connect directly with the upcoming Stewardship Campaign, so you can expect to hear more about how our shared financial resources support the ministry we do together.

There will be an important opportunity for the congregation to participate on Sunday, October 25, when we will consider the proposed Ministry Plan and 2027 Spending Plan at our Fall Congregational Meeting and Potluck. We will also share a State of the Congregation update, including work around rentals, outreach, the Masquerade, equity training, and more. We'll also take some time to look back at what we've accomplished this year — including Guns to Gardens and Out! Raleigh — and consider how those experiences can help shape the year ahead.

Our Finances: Resources and Responsibility

The CLC reviewed our year-to-date financial picture and approved the budget. Overall, we are tracking better against the budget than expected, which is encouraging. At the same time, there are some important things to keep an eye on. We currently have more than \$13,000 in unallocated funds from the \$30,000 budget. Unspent funds do not automatically carry over into the next year's budget; they go into our reserves. That raises an important question for all of us:

* Please rise in body or in spirit.

What could we accomplish together if more people got involved in helping identify and carry out the ministries our congregation wants to support?

There is also a significant change coming to our mortgage. For the past two years, we have been making interest-only payments, but that arrangement ends in April 2027. Beginning in May, our mortgage payments will increase significantly, making thoughtful stewardship and financial planning especially important.

A New Opportunity to Support Children in Foster Care

Emily proposed a new community service project supporting the Children's Home Society, an organization working with children in foster care. The idea is to hold a donation drive in spring or summer 2027 for items such as luggage, hygiene supplies, books, diapers, and other necessities. Emily is willing to lead the initiative, and the CLC approved \$500 in seed funding to help get it started.

There are still details to work out, including storage, whether the drive will be primarily internal or open to the wider community, and how youth might participate in deciding how funds are used. We may also have an opportunity to partner with other churches and organizations in our network. Want to help? Keep an eye out for more information as this project develops — or reach out if you would like to be part of the planning team.

Racial Equity Training Coming to UPUCC

The CLC also approved \$8,500 to bring Organize Against Racism to UPUCC for a full two-day racial equity training. The training would accommodate up to 45 participants, with approximately 20–25 seats being filled by UPUCC and the remaining seats filled by the organization leading the training. The training will likely take place on a Friday and Saturday, with the possibility of scheduling it as early as late October or sometime in the coming year. The exact date is flexible and will depend on the organization's availability.

The training cost does not include food. A nominal registration fee — with the possibility of waivers — could potentially help cover catering and childcare. The CLC also discussed whether a book study or other introductory opportunity could happen beforehand to help people become familiar with some of the topics the training will address.

This is an exciting opportunity not only for our own congregation but for the wider community. More details will be shared once a date is established.

A Few Other Things Happening Around the Church

There is plenty of activity beyond the CLC meeting room!

- **Masquerade Dance:** The CLC approved \$1,500 for the Masquerade Dance Task Force to cover the DJ and photo booth. Tyler will also reach out to offer additional support. If you have been thinking about helping with the Masquerade, this is a great time to jump in.
- **Garden:** The CLC approved the purchase of a new garden pump. Funding will come first from the remaining Garden Fund, with any additional cost covered through general

maintenance funds. The Garden Fund has received approximately \$350 in recent directed donations.

- **PACE:** Peter has been doing significant organizing and education work at Healing Transitions. More updates about PACE and related work will continue to come through the church.
- **Community Hour:** Community Hour continues following its kickoff last week. The early conversations have had good energy, and there is an opportunity to keep building connection by sharing experiences, ideas, and stories with one another.
- **Get Out the Vote:** Upcoming activities include postcard writing and other opportunities to participate in civic engagement.
- **CLC Membership:** The congregation will vote after worship on Sunday, October 4, 2026, on accepting the new member-at-large and Moderator-elect to the CLC.

A Conversation About Bathroom Signage

The CLC also approved changes to the bathroom signage. The current male- and female-identified signs will be removed, and new signage will return to Male and Female designations. An informational poster will explain the history behind the signage and the church's evolving understanding and stance. The poster will be placed in the church-area hallway rather than the atrium. The CLC also discussed the possibility of a removable or more concise sign for the atrium on Sundays. The goal is to make sure the church's history and welcoming commitments are communicated clearly while preserving the important language developed for the informational poster.

How Can You Get Involved?

If there is one thing we'd love you to take away from this update, it's this: there are lots of ways to participate, and you don't have to join the CLC to make a difference.

The CLC is working on big-picture planning, but the ministry of UPUCC happens because people throughout the congregation offer their time, creativity, energy, resources, and ideas. You could: help with the Masquerade, join the Ministry Plan conversation, help organize the Children's Home Society donation drive, participate in racial equity training, tend the garden, join Community Hour, come to an event, invite a friend, or start a conversation about something you'd love to see happen at UPUCC. If you've been wondering where you fit in, this is a great time to ask. Talk with a CLC member, a ministry leader, or someone else already involved. There is room for new ideas, new energy, and new people.

Next CLC Meeting: Sunday, October 11, 2026 at 12:00pm

Everyone is encouraged to stay connected, ask questions, share ideas, and find a way to be part of the life of our church.