Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost

October 18th, 2026 at 10:30am (Onsite & Online)

umstead park
UNITED CHURCH *of* CHRIST

GATHERING

Welcome and a Time of Greeting — Rev. Tyler Ung

Invocation — Bob Martin

Meditation

"The gospel, then, is not a message about the salvation of individuals from the world, but news about a world transfigured, right down to its basic structures." — Walter Wink, *The Powers That Be: Theology for a New Millennium*

Prelude — David Wilson

***Call to Worship**

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.

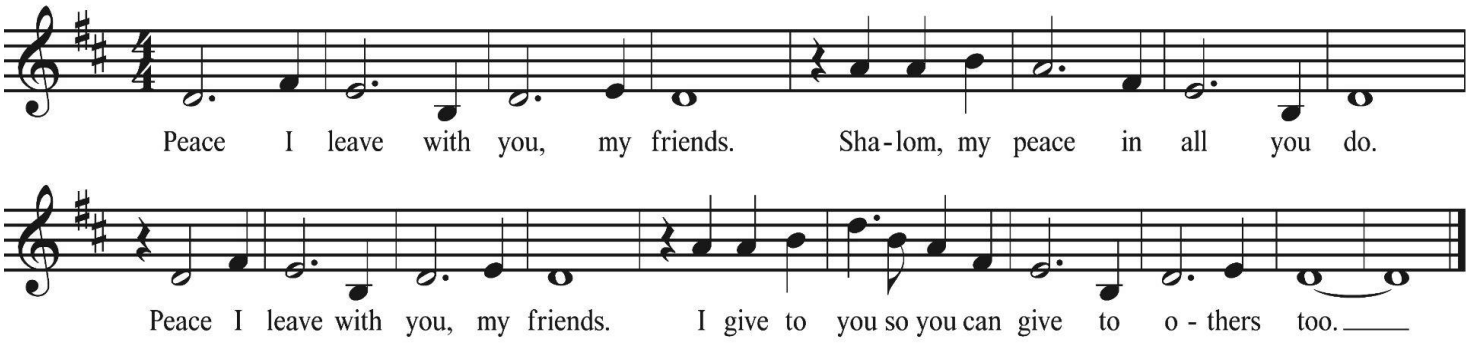
Many: With inarticulate words and unfinished lives, we yearn to further embody this holy love, shaping the future as partners with God, who dances and weeps with us along the way.

-from the UPUCC Covenant

***Gathering Hymn** #273, "Praise with Joy the World's Creator" — Congregation

HEARING AND RESPONDING

Time with Children — Rev. Tyler Ung



Reading of Scripture Matthew 22:15–22, *The Inclusive Bible* (see insert) — Bob Martin

Sermon "Perspective Shift" — Rev. Tyler Ung

***Responsive Hymn** "Take My Gifts" *(see insert)* — Congregation

* Please rise in body or in spirit.

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** Bob Martin

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

umstead park
UNITED CHURCH *of* CHRIST

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.

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
Bill Yoder (he/him), AV Team
Christy Tucker (she/her), Asst. Treasurer
Dan Harrell, Auditor
Bob Martin (he/him), Usher/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!

* Please rise in body or in spirit.

Supplemental Hymns and Texts

Reading of Scripture Matthew 22:15–22, *The Inclusive Bible* Bob Martin

15 Then the Pharisees went off and began to plot how they might trap Jesus by his
speech. 16 They sent their disciples to Jesus, accompanied by sympathizers of Herod,
who said, “Teacher, we know you’re honest and teach God’s way sincerely. You court
no one’s favor and don’t act out of respect for important people. 17 Give us your
opinion, then, in this case. Is it lawful to pay tax to the Roman emperor, or not?”

18 Jesus recognized their bad faith and said to them, “Why are you trying to trick me,
you hypocrites? 19 Show me the coin which is used to pay the tax.” When they handed
Jesus a small Roman coin, 20 Jesus asked them, “Whose head is this, and whose
inscription?”
21 “Caesar’s,” they replied.
At that, Jesus said to them, “Then give to Caesar what is Caesar’s, but give to God
what is God’s.”
22 When they heard this, they were astonished and went away.

***Responsive Hymn** “Take My Gifts” Congregation



* Please rise in body or in spirit.

Announcements

Community Hour | After Worship

1) Join us for a Book Discussion! We will discuss *For Such a Time as This: An Emergency Devotional*. This 2025 book by theologian Hanna Reichel that offers spiritual guidance and historical perspective for Christians navigating political turmoil, social division, and rising authoritarianism.

2) Souls to the Polls: 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. Gather at the church after worship (there will be pizza!), decorate the cars, proceed to the polls. Polls close at 6PM.

3) Youth Group: Special Interest Collages

Upcoming Community Hour Opportunities:

- **October 25th:** Potluck and Congregational Meeting.
- **November 1**: Pop-Up Choir - Learn a song to sing as a group in worship on Nov. 15
- **November 8**: 1) CLC Meeting; 2) Creating with Katelyn S.
- **November 15:** Learn to create handmade greeting cards with UPUCC's Creativity Group.
- **November 22**: **Your idea goes here!**
- **November 29**: **Your idea goes here!**
- **December 6:** Fall Crafts Workshop

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

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.

Banned Books Event | October 24th

Throughout October, we're celebrating the freedom to read and the power of books to bring people together, inspired by Banned Books Week. Our youth will be decorating a Little Free Library-style book box (built by Colin M.!) to share books with neighbors in our community. We need your help filling it! Bring new or gently used books to donate or books you'd like to swap with others. Banned and challenged books are especially welcome! A collection basket will be available in the sanctuary each Sunday in October. Join us Saturday, October 24, from 10:30–11:30 a.m. for our Book Box and Book Blessing! We'll celebrate our new little library and offer a blessing for the books, the readers, and the stories that help us build a more thoughtful, compassionate, and connected community. All are welcome to participate, donate, and share the joy of reading! If you would like to host the Free Little Library, please contact Tyler! Scan the QR code to RSVP.

Next PeerSpace Rental | October 24th

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!

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* Please rise in body or in spirit.

Potluck and Congregational Meeting | October 25th after Worship

We will gather after worship on Sunday, October 25th for a potluck and congregational meeting. You're invited to bring a dish to share, as well as your appetite for food and church business! We will discuss a proposed Ministry Plan, the Stewardship Campaign for 2026, and more!

NW Raleigh Board Games MeetUp | October 26th at 6:30pm

In keeping with our Ministry Plan of "Connecting with Courage and Care," we are hosting a monthly game night that is open to those in our surrounding neighborhoods and the Triangle in general. To RSVP, scan the QR code to join the MeetUp group or by email David Wilson.

Halloween Masquerade | October 30th

Come be YOU and join the fun with other LGBTQIA+ Youth and Allies at our Youth Halloween Masquerade on October 30th, 6-9pm. DJ and Dancing, food, crafting, costume contest, mask contest, and more...Open to all youth 6th to 10th grades. Registration $5. Scan the QR code to buy your ticket(s)!

Pauli Murray Pilgrimage | October 31st

Join Tyler for the Pauli Murray Pilgrimage on October 31st from 10am-11:30am. Each year, the Pauli Murray Center's Pilgrimage invites participants to explore Durham sites connected to the life and legacy of the Rev. Dr. Pauli Murray. This year, we're making the experience fully accessible by bringing the pilgrimage indoors—no 4-mile walk required! Participants will journey through the Lyon Park Community Center auditorium, where sites significant to Pauli Murray will be represented. At each stop, you'll learn about its connection to Pauli and Durham history, then have opportunities for reflection, conversation, and fellowship. You can participate at your own pace and choose from prayers, meditations, or conversation prompts. Stops represented include St. Titus Episcopal Church, Standford L. Warren Library, St. Philip's Episcopal Church, and Hillside High School. A map of the physical sites will also be provided for anyone who would like to visit them independently after the event. Everyone is welcome: You don't need to be Christian, Episcopalian, religious, or already familiar with Pauli Murray to participate. Scan the QR code to get your FREE tickets!

Pop-Up Choir Rehearsal | November 1st

For Community Hour you are invited to join the Pop-Up Choir to learn a group song that we will sing in the following week's service (Nov. 15). This is a great opportunity if you love to sing, but may not be able to join our choir that rehearses weekly! This is a change from what was previously communicated!

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

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!

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Craft Workshop | December 6th

Attention crafters, from beginners to skilled! Your Fellowship Lead Team will host a craft workshop during Community Hour after church on December 6. We will provide instruction, supplies, and refreshments. Currently there are four crafts to share. If you have a craft you would like to teach us, please contact Roberta O.

AV Team Volunteers Needed

Have you ever found yourself worshiping 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.

UCC Connections

Future of Faith: Communities of Deep Conversation. In this fraught time–when loneliness is epidemic, when fear can lead to silence or dwelling on the superficial, when political polarization pulls us into circles of sameness creating an "us" vs. "them"–the work of sustaining communities of deep conversation is essential and it is hard. In a United Church of Christ "Nurture the Soul" Zoom on October 19 at 3:30 p.m. Eastern, explore the gifts of the UCC that nurture theological humility and shared leadership, the particular challenges of this time, and the image of the mobius strip. How do we cultivate empathy and imagination, honoring differences and practicing discernment, as we clarify our sense of communal and individual purpose? Scan the QR code to access the registration link.

Upcoming PeerSpace Rentals

October 24th, 31st | November 20th, 21st | December 5th, 12th, 19th, 20th, 30th, 31st | January 1st, 16th (2027) | May 14th, 22nd (2027) | July 10th, 31st (2027) | August 1st (2027)

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Sunday Volunteer Opportunities

Please consider joining us to provide an extravagant Sunday Welcome to all by volunteering to be a Greeter or Usher, to set-up/clean-up coffee, or help our AV Team (training required). Scan the QR code to access the Sign-Up Genius.

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're 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 lead worship. Thanks for helping 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.

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!

* Please rise in body or in spirit.

Follow Us on Social Media!
Facebook: UmsteadParkUCC | Instagram: UmsteadParkUCC | BlueSky: upucc.bsky.social

Covenant Leadership Circle

CLC Members:
Moderator: Gia Hafler
Moderator-Elect: Laura Carter-Scheid
Treasurer: Vickie Teal
Secretary: Sarah Bellak
Facilities Lead: Gary Sanders
At-Large: Elliot Acosta
At-Large: Gwen Reagan
At-Large: David Frink
At-Large: Bob Martin

Financial Results				
	September	2026 YTD	2026 Budget	Difference / Remaining
General Offerings	$23,339	$212,444	$304,882	-$92,438
Total Income	$25,427	$233,941	$331,466	-$97,525
Total Expenses	$30,208	$256,176	$386,585	$130,409
Net Income	-$4,781	-$22,236	-$55,119	-$32,684
*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!

Our community continues to build momentum through ministry planning, outreach, fellowship, and opportunities to serve. At our recent meeting, the CLC discussed financial planning for 2027, community visibility, upcoming youth and family events, and ways to strengthen our shared ministry.

Looking Ahead to 2027
Planning is underway for our 2027 Ministry Plan and Spending Plan. This work will include both continuing ministries and new opportunities, with input from Home Groups helping shape the direction of our shared work. The congregation will have an opportunity to engage with these plans at the October 25 Congregational Meeting, where the proposed 2027 Spending Plan will be presented.

Sharing Who We Are
The CLC approved moving forward with the remainder of a publicity consulting contract to help strengthen our presence on social media and communicate the kind of welcoming community we strive to be. Recent posts highlighted several important observances, and the group affirmed the value of this outreach.

Youth, Families, and Community Events
There are several exciting opportunities to connect, learn, and celebrate in the weeks ahead!
October 24: Banned Books event.
October 25: Congregational Meeting, including the presentation of the proposed 2027 Spending Plan.
October 30: Masquerade Ball! Preparations are well underway, and volunteers are needed to help with setup, chaperoning, and cleanup. Please help spread the word to families and friends.
November 1: Button Memorial Service.

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* Please rise in body or in spirit.

Financial Stewardship
The CLC reviewed the year-to-date financial picture and discussed the Thompson Fund, which is now held at Southern Bank. Twenty percent of rental income is returned to the fund. As we look toward 2027, thoughtful financial stewardship remains an important part of sustaining our ministries and supporting the work we do together.

Growing in Community
Community Hour continues after Sunday worship, and recent postcard-writing activities have been well received. It is encouraging to see so many meaningful offerings taking shape across our community. Thank you to everyone who contributes time, energy, generosity, and care. Whether you volunteer at an event, participate in a Home Group, support our ministries, or simply invite someone new to join us, you help make this community what it is.

New Task Forces Starting Up
We are forming 2 Task Forces – one to help identify our publicity & communications strategy, and one to propose a cohesive technology platform.

<u>The Publicity and Communications Task Force</u>
The CLC recognizes that our path to growth is through communicating our core values across various platforms with invitations for people to join our efforts. A communications audit was recently completed by an independent consultant that looked at our existing communications practice and provided very tangible examples where we are executing well and areas for improvement.

In addition, these messages need to be tied into our publicity strategy. There are three areas for consideration: 1) Communications needed to function on a weekly basis (bulletins, Friday email, etc.); 2) Developing consistent messaging across social media platforms.; 3) Our priorities for publicity.

We are looking for 3 to 4 people, although more are welcome, for a 6-week period beginning in late October/early November and ending in mid-December. If you would like to participate, please reach out to Gia H., Laura C-S. or Tyler Ung.

<u>The Technology Strategy for Connection and Growth Task Force</u>
The CLC recognizes that our existing technology platforms are not effectively connected, leading to additional time and effort to update across systems. In addition, it makes it more difficult for Covenant Partners to interact with various aspects of the church (Contributions, Zoom links, announcements, prayer requests, etc.) and there is no connection between our on-site and on-line communities.

The task force is asked to review software options and evaluate their appropriateness and cost for adoption at UPUCC, with a goal of eliminating extra steps while providing greater Covenant Partner connection. In addition, the task force will look at the skills needed to perform day to day tasks and identify any unique skills needed. We are looking for 2 people, although more are welcome, to join a core team for a 6-week period beginning in late Oct./early Nov. and ending mid-December. If you'd like to participate, reach out to Gia H., Laura C-S., or Tyler Ung.

Next CLC Meeting: Sunday, October November 8th, 2026 at 12:00pm

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