Twenty-fifth Sunday after Pentecost

November 15th, 2026 at 10:30am (Onsite & Online)

umstead park
UNITED CHURCH *of* CHRIST

GATHERING

Welcome and a Time of Greeting — Rev. Paula Womack

Invocation — Sarah Bellak

Meditation

"An example parable may be good; a challenge parable is a far more importantly subversive operation. Why? Because challenge parables humble our prejudicial absolutes, but without proposing counter-absolutes in their place. They are tiny pins dangerously close to big balloons. They push or pull us into pondering whatever is taken totally for granted in our world." –John Dominic Crossan, *The Power of Parable*

Prelude — David Wilson

***Call to Worship** — Gina Sanders

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.

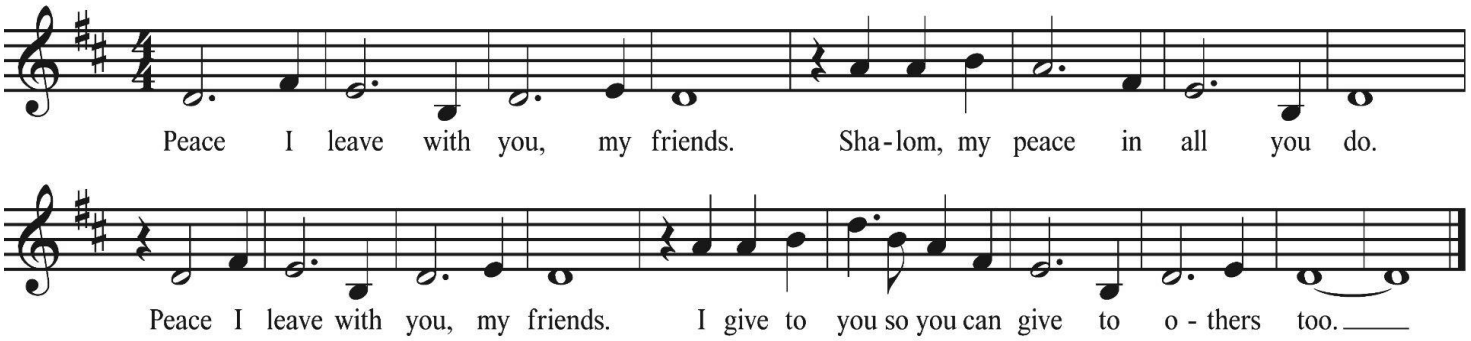
Many: With inarticulate words and unfinished lives, we yearn to further embody this holy love, shaping the future as partners with God, who dances and weeps with us along the way.

-from the UPUCC Covenant

Anthem — "We Are Rising Up" — Pop-Up Choir

HEARING AND RESPONDING

Time with Children — Erinn Long



Reading of Scripture — Matthew 25:1-13, *The Inclusive Bible* — Sarah Bellak
(see insert)

* Please rise in body or in spirit.

Sermon "Keeping Our Lamps Burning for the Long Haul" Rev. Paula Womack

***Responsive Hymn** "Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Burning" Congregation
(see insert)

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

Stewardship Moment Jonathan McLean

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

Announcements

***Affirmation of Community** Sarah Bellak

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. Paula Womack

Postlude David Wilson
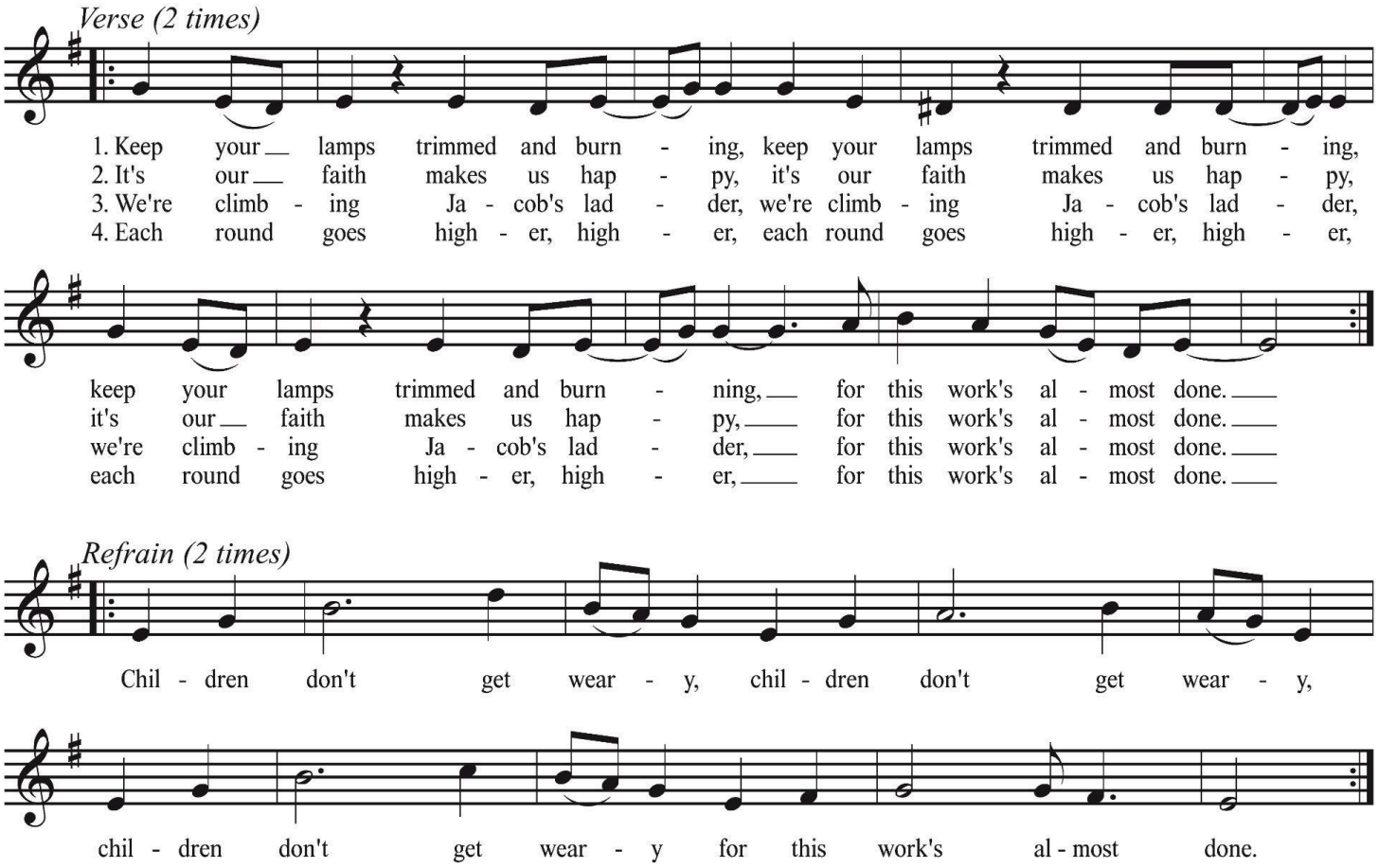
* Please rise in body or in spirit.

Supplemental Hymns and Texts

Reading of Scripture Matthew 25:1-13, *The Inclusive Bible* Sarah Bellak

[1] “Then again, the kindom of heaven could be likened to ten attendants who took
their lamps and went to meet the bridal party. [2] Five of them were wise; five were
foolish. [3] When the foolish ones took their lamps, they didn’t take any oil with them,
[4] but the wise ones took enough oil to keep their lamps burning. [5] The bridal party
was delayed, so they all fell asleep. [6] At midnight there was a cry: ‘Here comes the
bridal party! Let’s go out to meet them!’ [7] Then all the attendants rose and trimmed
their lamps. [8] The foolish ones said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our
lamps are going out.’ [9] But the wise replied, ‘Perhaps there won’t be enough for us;
run to the dealers and get some more for yourselves.’ [10] While the foolish ones went
to buy more oil, the bridal party arrived; and those who were ready went to the
marriage feast with them, and the door was shut. [11] When the foolish attendants
returned, they pleaded to be let in. [12] The doorkeeper replied, ‘The truth is, I don’t
know you.’ [13] So stay awake, for you don’t know the day or the hour.”

***Responsive Hymn** “Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Burning” Congregation



* Please rise in body or in spirit.

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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:
Nevin Fouts, AV Team
Peter van Dorsten (he/him), AV Team
Ada McKerrell, Coffee Set Up
Christy Tucker (she/her), Asst. Treasurer
Colin McKerrell, Greeter
Bob Martin (he/him), Usher
Erinn Long (she/her), Lay Leader
Jonathan McLean (he/him), Lay Leader/Online Greeter
Gina Sanders (she/her), Lay Leader
Sarah Bellak (she/her), Lay Leader

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!

Pledge Campaign

We are in the middle of our pledge campaign! With different ways to pledge and a hope for a fully engaged community, our goal is to have 100% participation in the pledge campaign this year. Even if you pledge $5 per month, or to volunteer once per month, these contributions are vital toward reaching our goal and building a beloved community. Thank you for all that you give, and you can make your pledge today!

Currently we are at **40%** with **$124,472** pledged to date – a good start, and some work still to do!

Scan to Pledge

or visit:
https://forms.gle/cedydyZu8fopKq6g7

There is also a hard copy of the pledge form on the next page, which you may remove from the bulletin and hand to an usher or member of staff.

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2027 Pledge Form

Your Name	
Your Email	

Your Financial Pledge	$		
Pledge Frequency	☐ Annually	☐ Monthly	☐ Other:

How often will you volunteer?	☐ 1/month	☐ 2/month	☐ 3/month
	☐ 4/month	☐ Other:	
What groups are you pledging to help?	☐ AV Team		
	☐ Building & Grounds (includes Garden)		
	☐ Community Hour offerings		
	☐ Covenant Leadership Circle		
	☐ Event setup/cleanup		
	☐ Fellowship		
	☐ Guns to Gardens		
	☐ Healing Transitions Sundays		
	☐ Out! Raleigh		
	☐ Stewardship & Finance		
	☐ Sunday Worship		
	☐ Other:		

* Please rise in body or in spirit.

Announcements

Community Hour| After Worship

Upcoming opportunities (Scan the QR code for more information or to add yours!)

- **November 15:** Learn to create handmade greeting cards with Creativity Group.
- **November 22**: Hanging of the Greens
- **November 29**: Book Discussion Pt. 2 (*For Such a Time as This: An Emergency Devotional*)
- **December 6:** Fall Crafts Workshop - Learn or share a craft!; Learn about Hanukkah!
- **December 13:** Cookie Swap!
- **December 20th: Your idea goes here!**
- **December 27th: Your idea goes here!**

Make Cards with Creativity Group | Nov. 15 during Community Hour

Alice J., one member of our Creativity Group, has offered her time to teach folks how to make greeting cards! Because Alice is leading by herself, this particular offering is available to the 12 folks who have previously signed up to participate.

Next PeerSpace Rental | November 20-21

Please be advised that our space will be rented for an event on the above date(s).

Hanging of the Greens | November 22 during Community Hour

Join us during community hour as we prepare our space for advent with the hanging of wreaths and of ornaments on our Christmas tree!

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!

Thanksgiving Day With UPUCC | November 26th at 1pm

If anyone would like to be in community on Thanksgiving Day, Paula W. and Jane W. invite you to join in a potluck at UPUCC! Come share a meal at 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, November 26 and stay for good conversation with friends! Please fill out the Potluck Sign Up via the QR code if you would like to join in. We'll do set up and clean up together. Let's be in community on Thanksgiving Day!

Book Discussion (Part 2) | November 29th during Community Hour

Join us to discuss *For Such a Time As This: An Emergency Devotional.* Hanna Reichel, theologian, offers spiritual guidance and historical perspective for Christians navigating political turmoil, social division, and rising authoritarianism. All are welcome! This was rescheduled from Nov. 22.

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* Please rise in body or in spirit.

Help Host Healing Transitions | December 6th

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 via the QR code. Get to know our neighbors!

Craft Workshop | December 6th during Community Hour

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.

Learn About Hanukkah! | December 6th during Community Hour

Emily B. will be facilitating a retelling of the story of Hanukkah and teaching anyone interested how to play the dreidel game. Hanukkah is a Jewish holiday, celebrated Dec 4-12 this year, and celebrates a story of overcoming adversity and the miracles G-d provides. Dreidel is a spinning top game appropriate for all ages (and you win chocolate coins!). Please join us!

Winter Wonderland Tea | December 12th from 1-3pm

McMannon United Methodist church (4102 Neal Rd, Durham NC). Full afternoon tea, to include assorted tea sandwiches, assorted sweets scones with Devonshire cream and jam. Photo opportunities, door prizes and tea-themed games. Tickets are $40. Contact Patty K. for more info.

Cookie Swap! | December 13th during Community Hour

Join us right after worship on December 13th for a cookie swap! Please bring 3-4 dozen cookies, along with a copy of the recipe. If your cookie is vegan, gluten free, or dairy free, please highlight that on the recipe. Bring any kind you like, but it would be great if you have a favorite family cookie to share. Depending on how many people participate, you will have 2-3 cookies of each kind to take home. Questions? Contact Roberta O.

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.

Upcoming PeerSpace Rentals

November 20th-21st| December 5th, 12th, 19th, 30th, 31st | January 1st, 9th, 16th (2027) | February 6th (2027) | May 14th, 22nd (2027) | July 10th (2027) | August 1st (2027)

Follow Us on Social Media!

Facebook: UmsteadParkUCC | Instagram: UmsteadParkUCC | BlueSky: upucc.bsky.social

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.

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* Please rise in body or in spirit.

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!

UCC Connections

Future of Faith: Becoming Neighbors in an Age of Division and Social Isolation. At a time of deep division and social isolation in our nation, on November 16 at 03:30 p.m. Eastern the United Church of Christ's "Nurture the Soul" webinar series will offer a pathway forward to help restore parts of our humanity and connection that have been lost along the way. We recognize that each of us has a human story that both complements and transcends our political, cultural and religious differences. Join the leaders and dreamers of Becoming Neighbors Community Conversations to hear stories of how in their work diverse people have come to know and care about one another through stories and meaningful conversations–building bridges of understanding, trust and cooperation across lines of difference–for the common good of all.

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!

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.

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!

* Please rise in body or in spirit.

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.

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.

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!



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!

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				
	October	2026 YTD	2026 Budget	Difference / Remaining
General Offerings	$23,305	$235,749	$304,882	$69,133
Total Income	$25,162	$258,843	$331,466	$72,623
Total Expenses	$26,922	$283,097	$386,585	$103,488
Net Income	-$1,760	-$24,255	-$55,119	$-30,864
*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, December 13th at 12pm in the UPUCC Library & Online. All are welcome!

* Please rise in body or in spirit.

Financial Updates
The 2027 Pledge Campaign is underway! One of our goals is 100% participation among active covenant partners—everyone who is attending or continuing to support CLC financially. Every commitment matters, regardless of size. Our participation is about more than dollars; it's about sharing in the ministry and future of our church. If you haven't made your 2027 pledge yet, now is a wonderful time to do so!CLC continues to navigate its building mortgage thoughtfully. Council discussed the existing mortgage, the available $250,000 line of equity, and options for managing those resources responsibly. Further conversations with Southern Bank will help clarify the terms and determine the best path forward.

Ministry That Moves Us Forward
Our Ministry Plan was approved at the congregational meeting! This plan identifies four main areas of ministry, with concrete goals and room for flexibility as we continue the work already underway in 2026. Several teams and task forces are helping turn those goals into action:

- Publicity & Communications Task Force – This team will be exploring how we communicate who we are, what we do, and how we connect with the wider community.
- Technology Task Force – We're looking at ways to strengthen our technology and support the work and worship of our congregation.
- Aesthetics Task Force – It's time to bring renewed attention to our worship space! The goal is to work with a designer to develop proposals that help make our space welcoming, meaningful, and visually inspiring.
- Hanging of the Greens (December 22nd) – We're preparing to welcome the Christmas season with a more meaningful and visually beautiful church environment. Plans include exploring the addition of at least two large wreaths.
- The PACE task force continues its work and will be meeting to process next steps.

Celebrating Community Connections
Our Masquerade event was a wonderful success! Twenty-five young people attended, many from outside our church community, along with youth from CLC and other congregations. With a great DJ, lighting, and plenty of fun, it was a memorable evening and a wonderful example of how CLC continues to create welcoming spaces for people beyond our walls.

The CLC Needs You!
One of the biggest takeaways from our meeting is that the strength of CLC comes from the participation of its people. There are many ways to be involved, and you don't have to take on a big commitment to make a meaningful contribution. Here are a few ways to jump in:

- Share your creativity: Help with worship space aesthetics, seasonal decorations, or Community Hour activities.
- Share your skills: Join a technology, communications, or ministry task force.
- Share your time: Volunteer on Sunday mornings or church events.
- Share your ideas: Suggest new ways to connect with one another and our neighbors.
- Share your commitment: Participate in the pledge campaign to sustain CLC's ministry.

You don't need to have all the answers or know exactly where you fit. Sometimes participation begins with simply showing up and asking, "How can I help?"

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* Please rise in body or in spirit.