



August 2026

Union Community Church

UNION NEWS

Dear Friends and Covenant Partners of Union,

Do you know why many call the Crucifixion THE PASSION of Christ? The reason is simple- the word "passion" comes from the Latin word passio, meaning "to suffer." But that's not how we use the word "passion" today.

But I think the way we use the word today describes the crucifixion as well. Christ's *suffering and death* on the cross *for us* is the most important part of Christian life. The word passio describes the *suffering and death* part of that statement. But "passion" describes the *for us* part. Jesus passionately cares about you and me... that's why he came to earth, and that's why he died for us!



I am the first-born child in my family, and I bring with that all the typical traits. I try to be reliable, I'm a perfectionist, and at times I'm even overly cautious. If I don't watch myself, my walk with Jesus can begin to look similar to my personality... it can't get stagnant. What's missing? Passion!

So how can someone like me find the passion? In Christ!!! I can recognize the passion of Jesus, and then I can model my life after Christ by taking new risks in how I follow him! Jesus risked his well-being for me, so the question becomes, what am I willing to risk in following him? Michael Yaconelli, in his book, "Dangerous Wonder: The Adventures of Childlike Faith," writes, "when God lives and breathes in [us], we are delivered from a dead life.... What is passion? Aliveness. Living with expectancy, anticipation, and enthusiasm." Do you need to do a better job at recognizing the passion Jesus has for you and to risk more just like he did? I know I do!

Sincerely in Christ,
Pastor James



Highlights in this Issue

Care Baskets & News
from the New Mentoring
& Care Committee

Special Event in August-
Fall Kickoff Sunday

Highlights from the New
Infrastructure Committee

Report about the ECO
Women's Retreat

August Elders

CAROL BEASLEY
CLAIRE CABRAL
GARY MCGINNIS

Nursery Helpers

AUGUST 2- VICKY & FIONA
AUGUST 9- PAM & SALLY
AUGUST 16- MELODY & SHELLY
AUGUST 23- ALLISON & KIM
AUGUST 30- JORDAN & MADDIE

5615 Union Road, Gastonia, NC 28056
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Webpage: union-communitychurch.com

Office Hours 3 PM—6 PM
Tuesday and Thursday

Is God Calling YOU to serve??

If you feel called to serve our church in this capacity, please see Allison Jones or Pastor James



Looking for Older Youth Leader

— for Union Community Church —

05 May 2035

40 WORDS

 For middle school and high school kids

 Meets each Sunday

 **Leader duties include:** 

-  Planning lessons
-  Organizing fundraisers & mission trips
-  Helping our youth grow closer to Christ

Make a difference. Build faith. Change lives. 
➤ YOU CAN HELP SHAPE THE NEXT GENERATION! ➤

WELCOME Bradley FAMILY



Session Updates

Session invites you to welcome new Covenant Partners, Scott and Kelly Bradley, and their son Matthew Bradley. It was wonderful to be able to get to know them a little better, and we are so excited for how they have already connected to the church.

Flourish Team Updates

August Discipleship Challenge

This month, accept the challenge “Care of the Earth.” Scripture makes it clear that we are caretakers and stewards of all that God has made. Genesis 2:15 states, “The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.” Caring for the Earth is a way of expressing delight in God’s very good Creation and honoring his gifts and treasures.

The Practice:

Try one of the following-

- (1) Plan a way to make the earth more beautiful. Plant flowers around the church or a school.
- (2) Plant a garden and share the produce or plants with others.
- (3) Recycle and use energy supplies wisely.
- (4) Become conscious of the litter in the places you live and work. Consider volunteering to pick up litter.
- (5) Take a resource prayer walk. Thank God for the sheep who give us wool, for the cows who give us milk, for the trees that give us furniture, etc.



Worship & Commitment Updates

Attention All Students (Young & Old)- Remember to bring your backpacks to the annual Blessing of the Backpacks, which will be held on Sunday, August 16th, immediately following worship.

Ensemble Practice- There will be no Ensemble practice in August, but we will be gearing up again in September. If you love to sing, consider joining the Ensemble. Watch for future notices of Ensemble practice times and dates in the Newsletter and Bulletin.

Communion- will be served on Sunday, August 2nd.

Intinction- Since COVID, Union has been celebrating the Lord's Supper only by "passing the plate." In July, Session approved to begin alternating every month between passing the plate and intinction (dipping the bread in juice), with intinction starting this September. For those who have not practiced this form of communion with us, you will be invited to come forward to our communion table, take a piece of pre-cut bread, and dip it in the cup. For those who wish to remain seated, 2 elders will be available to bring bread and juice to you. For those who have hygienic concerns, there will be pre-packaged bread and juice that you can use instead!

Fall Kickoff Sunday

≡ MARK YOUR ≡
CALENDARS:

Fall Kickoff Sunday

is scheduled for

SUNDAY, AUGUST 16

right after worship! ♥



We will have our annual

Blessing of the Backpacks ♥



and learn more about

church education opportunities

for the new school year! ♥

*Let's start the new season together in faith, fellowship,
and a shared commitment to growing in God's word!* ♥

ECO WOMEN'S RETREAT

Women of Union Community Church Host Inspiring ECO Women's Event

On Saturday, July 18, the Women of Union Community Church welcomed ladies from several ECO churches for a day of fellowship, learning, and encouragement.

The day began with an uplifting devotion, "Joy in Your Pocketbook," shared by Martha Simmons, followed by a fun pocketbook game complete with prizes. We also welcomed a representative from the Gaston County Police Department, who provided valuable information on personal safety, self-protection, and practical steps to take during an active shooter situation.



Guests enjoyed a delicious lunch prepared by the women of Union Community Church before spending over an hour sharing ministry ideas, resources, and ways our ECO women's groups can support and encourage one another. It was a wonderful day of building friendships, strengthening connections, and growing together in faith. We are grateful to everyone who attended and helped make the event such a success.

We are hoping to make this an annual event, with different churches hosting. 2nd Presbyterian in Kannapolis will host next year.

Infrastructure Committee Highlights

Serving Behind the Scenes

Since January, 2026, Union Community Church has had a newly established Infrastructure Committee. Many of you may be wondering, “What exactly does the Infrastructure Committee do?” We hope this article answers that question and gives you a glimpse into the many ways this committee serves our church family.

The Infrastructure Committee is what was formerly known as the Finance Committee, with an expanded mission. While we continue to oversee the financial stewardship of Union Community Church, our responsibilities now extend into several additional areas that support the life and ministry of our congregation. Finance remains a vital part of our work. We strive to manage the church’s financial resources responsibly, ensuring that the gifts entrusted to us are used wisely to support the ministries and mission of Union Community Church.

Our committee also oversees Building & Grounds, whose members work diligently to maintain the beauty, safety, and functionality of our church facility. Their efforts help create a welcoming environment where members, guests, and visitors can worship, learn, and fellowship in comfort. Our goal is to provide surroundings that encourage and enhance your spiritual connection with our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Another important responsibility is Communication and Technology. This team manages the signage in front of and within our church, prepares the audiovisual presentations displayed during worship services, oversees the livestream and online publication of our services, and produces our weekly bulletins and monthly newsletters. Their work helps keep our congregation informed and connected, whether you are worshiping in person or from home.

The Infrastructure Committee also oversees our newly established Safety Team. This team is developing policies and procedures designed to help protect everyone who gathers in our church facilities. You may have noticed a county police officer stationed outside our sanctuary on Sunday mornings. The officer is there to provide an added level of security so that we can worship together with greater peace of mind.

Much of the work of the Infrastructure Committee happens quietly behind the scenes, but every task is carried out with the same purpose: to support the ministries of Union Community Church and to provide a safe, welcoming, and well-maintained place where God’s people can gather to worship, grow in faith, and serve others.

Witness & Service Updates

Blessing Box- One of the ways our church reaches out to our community is through the Blessing Box. You may occasionally notice that the box is empty, but we want to assure you that it is checked and restocked every day. In fact, an empty box is often a sign that someone has received the help they needed. We are thankful that this ministry is being used by members of our community, and the Witness & Service Committee is prayerfully discussing how we can continue to grow this outreach. We are considering ideas such as adding more food, restocking the box more than once each day, or including other helpful items. We would love to hear your thoughts! If you have suggestions, ideas, or would like to help stock the Blessing Box, please speak with any member of the Witness and Service Committee. Thank you for helping us share God's love and care with our neighbors in such a practical way.

Loaves and Fishes- Thank you to everyone who supported our Loaves and Fishes collection! Over the past month, our congregation generously donated food and personal hygiene items for our local Crisis Assistance Ministry. These much-needed supplies will be distributed to individuals and families in our community who are experiencing difficult times. Between the food sales, the budget line item and 5 Cents a Meal in February and May we sent \$1,500.74 to help support this important ministry. Thank you for your generosity and for helping us share Christ's love in practical ways with our neighbors.

Bingo Break- The Witness & Service Committee has decided to take a temporary break from hosting Bingo at Terrace Ridge Assisted Living. Due to several circumstances, the attendance of residents has not been as it was in the past. We are thankful for the friendships that have been formed and are pleased to continue our quarterly arts & crafts visits with the residents. Our church will remain in regular communication with the Terrace Ridge activities coordinator to monitor resident interest and participation. If interest and attendance grows, we look forward to prayerfully considering the opportunity to bring Bingo back in the future.



Please Keep these ECO Churches in your Prayers this Month:

Second Presbyterian Church, Kannapolis- Please keep in prayer Pastor Sue Black and her work at Second Church. Keep in prayer the church's partnership with a church in Egypt.

Snow Hill Presbyterian Church, Snow Hill- Please keep in prayer Snow Hill as it begins its collection for Operation Christmas Child. Please keep their pastor, Scott Hardy, in your prayers.

St. Johns Reformed Church, Kannapolis- Please keep in prayer St. John's Women's Bible Study as it prepares to start up again this fall and for their work with the Kannapolis Bible Teaching Association which works to allow Bible classes to be taught in Kannapolis schools.

Praying for all People of all Nations

Each week, we receive the names of three unreached people groups, many of whom are just beginning to learn about Jesus. Along with the country names, we receive a brief introduction and a little information about their ministry. The groups will be added to the Prayer List, or you can pick up an information card in the hall outside of the Sanctuary. Please continue to keep in prayer the Brahmin, Korubo, Sakiriabar, Chaube, Kudumi, Sanei, Joshi, Kumhiar, and Sardar people.

Cemetery Committee Updates

This August, our Online Cemetery Index has been updated to include "all" currently interred. This information has been collected from multiple sources, so we are confident that there are many mistakes and several missing names. We encourage you to check out the index (www.union-communitychurch.com/cemeteryindex) for the names of your loved ones and let the office know about any editing needs. A big posthumous thank you must go out to the work Bill and Wilma Craig did with this list over the years and to Kathy Kytle for helping us get caught up with it today!

Worship For August

Sermon Series: "Growing Good Fruit by Abiding in the Spirit"

August 2- Luke 10:25-37, "Abiding in the Spirit... The Greatest is Love"

-Celebration of the Lord's Supper/ Youth Sunday

August 9- James 3: 13-18, "Abiding in the Spirit...
The WHY of Peace"

August 16- Ephesians 4: 1-6, "Abiding in the Spirit...
The One Secret of Patience"

August 23- Matthew 6: 1-8, "Abiding in the Spirit...
The Quiet Place of Generosity and Kindness"

August 30- Hebrews 11: 24-29, "Abiding in the Spirit...
Faithfulness is a State of the Mind"

September 6- Philippians 4: 4-9, "Abiding in the Spirit...
Gentle Prayers"

-Celebration of the Lord's Supper



Finance Corner

FINANCIAL REPORT AS OF JUNE 30, 2026

	<u>June</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
Revenue	\$18,822.	\$ 108,727
Expenses	<u>17,856.</u>	<u>104,563</u>
	+ 966	+4,164

***And give thanks for everything to God the Father
In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Ephesians 5:20***

Non-budgeted expenses FYI: Paid the second payment of \$3000 to Presbytery of WNC. Received a receipt stating payment applied to Helene Relief as we requested.

Thank you for your continued support! So blessed to be heading into our summer months with a good report!

Martha Simmons – Disbursing Treasurer
Jason Morrison – Treasurer