



Dear members and friends of Union Presbyterian Church,

Happy February! When February comes, I can't help but think about Valentines Day. And when I think about Valentines Day, I can't help but think about John Donne. Donne was born in the late 16th Century and is known as one of the greatest English poets of his day. Today, Donne is especially well-known for his poems about romantic love (which were mostly done early in his career. Donne became a priest in the Anglican church in his 40's and much of his poetry shifted to faith. One of Donne's most famous Christian poems bridged his faith and his early romantic works.

Holy Sonnet 14

Batter my heart, three-person'd God, for you
As yet but knock, breathe, shine, and seek to mend;
That I may rise and stand, o'erthrow me, and bend
Your force to break, blow, burn, and make me new.
I, like an usurp'd town to another due,
Labor to admit you, but oh, to no end;
Reason, your viceroy in me, me should defend,
But is captiv'd, and proves weak or untrue.
Yet dearly I love you, and would be lov'd fain,
But am betroth'd unto your enemy;
Divorce me, untie or break that knot again,
Take me to you, imprison me, for I,
Except you enthrall me, never shall be free,
Nor ever chaste, except you ravish me.



The language of Donne's work is very poetic, sometimes to the point of being confusing. I found this summary to Holy Sonnet 15 online:

Holy Sonnet 14

Beat me into submission God in 3 persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit;
So far you just politely knock or gently breath on me to try to fix me.
But in order to make rise up and stand before you brand new, devout man,
I need you to use your power to break me, blow me down, and remold me into
someone new.

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February Elders

Tim Grigg
Eric Nelson
Lyn Wollenburg

Communion

February 2

Stated Session

February 16

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I am like a town that has been captured by an enemy
and longs for its savior, to reclaim me.

But it's no good, for my reason- which is supposed to rule my mind when you are away,
has been captured by the other side [the Devi] and is unfaithful to you.

I do love you very much and deeply desire to be loved by you,
but I'm married to the Devil.

So sever the ties between me and him, Kidnap me and put me in your prison,
for I will never be truly free unless you take me as your slave.

And I will never be pure unless you have your way with me.

Most of us think of our faith as a relationship with Christ. But have you ever thought of your heart as being tugged two ways like Donne describes in Holy Sonnet 14? Donne uses very strong language. But let's be honest, isn't it all too easy to get "married" to aspects of this world we live in... to find ourselves captured by the very things that we "say" we don't want to be captured by? Donne asks to be battered and burned, broken and enslaved, all so that he can be freed from the one he does not wish to remain married to... but sometimes sort of still wants to be married to.

This month as we think about Valentines Day, hopefully all of us can find some time to reflect on our relationship with Christ. Is there something we need the Triune God to batter out of our lives? Do we need God to enslave us to a spiritual practice that will help us know him better? Do we just need for God to kidnap our hearts more as we find more time to praise him each day? What do we need to ask for God "to do" to us this month so we can draw closer to him?

Sincerely in Christ,

Pastor James

WORSHIP IN FEBURARY

Did you know that just about two-thirds of the psalms in the Bible include lament, grief, anger, or sadness? One great example of this is Psalm 42. We sing part of the Psalm in church from time to time; "As the Deer panteth for the water, so my soul longeth after thee." For some reason the song we sing does not include any of the middle portion of the Psalm... the part that rants about vile enemies spreading lies about the Psalmist as he is very sick in bed. Lament is a major part of the Psalms. How do we find joy in the middle of heartache or peace in the midst of trials? God might be able to teach us some important lesson through the Psalms of lament.

Lectionary Sermon Series: Come Together

February 2- 1 Corinthians 13: 1-13; "Come Together... What is your Stratego?"

-Celebration of the Lord's Supper

Sermon Series: Good Grief (Lamentations 3: 19-22)

February 9- Psalm 13; "Good Grief... Sadness"

February 16- Psalm 22; "Good Grief... Anger"

-President's Day Weekend

February 23- Psalm 51; "Good Grief... Guilt"

March 2- Psalm 137; "Good Grief... Fear"

-Celebration of the Lord's Supper



PRAYER AFTER WORSHIP

PRAYER AFTER WORSHIP



“Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.”

Jeremiah 29: 12-13

One can get in a rut when it comes to prayer. It is easy for us get in a pattern where our prayers aren't much more than just praying for the struggles that our loved ones are going through and thanking God for his help in challenging situations. None of us want our conversation with God to be reduced to “vending machine” prayers. A rich prayer life is like nothing else! It could regularly include things like adoration, lament, confession, petition, guidance, consecration, and even more! **Every 4th Sunday, right after 10 AM service, join us for Prayer After Worship.** An opportunity each month, to take a little time to put into practice more of the many ways we can reach out to God!

THANK YOU

Dear Union Family,

I'd like to thank you for the love, concern, and support you've shown to me and my family. The cards and notes have been bright spots in my recovery and I have appreciated every one. My recovery is an ongoing process, and I thank you all for continuing to stand by me, my husband Stephen, and the rest of the family.

Love,

Kathy Kytle

NEW COMMUNITY OUTREACH OPPORTUNITY

CRAFT TIME AT TERRACE RIDGE

The Witness & Service Committee have started a new partnership with Terrace Ridge. You are invited to join us as we work quarterly with the residents of Terrace Ridge to create craft projects. This time will afford our church members an opportunity to engage in conversation with the residents about their lives, their relationships with God, & how we may help them at this point in their lives, with their faith journey.

The first date set for this mission opportunity is **Tuesday, February 25 at 1:30 PM.** We would love to have you join us. We will meet at Union at 1:00 PM and will drive to Terrace Ridge together. If you require transportation, we would be happy to pick you up if necessary. Please contact Rita Jumper (704) 458-8980 or Claire Cabral (704) 964-2644 and let us know that you'll be joining us!

MARCH/APRIL NEWSLETTER & BULLETINS

COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

This is a reminder that due to the upcoming arrival of Baby Nelson, we will have a combined March and April newsletter. Please have all articles and updates to Jennifer Nelson by **February 15th.** Please be sure to discuss any important information with you committees so that we can get all your events advertised. We will also be working ahead on bulletins, so please give that information in as much advance as possible as well.

JOIN US AFTER CHURCH ON FEBRUARY 9 FOR A



"SOUP"ERBOWL LUNCHEON

**UNION OLDER YOUTH WILL BE HOSTING A
LUNCHEON AND WOULD LOVE FOR YOU TO JOIN!**

MENU

POTATO SOUP	CORNBREAD
CHICKEN AND RICE SOUP	DESSERT
VEGETABLE SOUP	

This is not taking the place of the "soup"erbowl offering the older youth normally collect. The youth will collect this offering next week for CAM.

Church Updates & Going On's

LOCAL MISSION GIVING

In November, the Session approved giving “local mission” money from our general budget to 3 local missions: Least of These, Crisis Assistance Ministry, and The Cathy Mabry Cloninger Center. Each ministry received \$665. Over the next 3 months, The Witness and Service Committed wanted to highlight each of these ministries.

Crisis Assistance Ministry is a cooperative ministry of the greater Gastonia faith community. By providing direct emergency assistance through collaboration with other community resources, CAM assists those facing financial crisis or struggling with the burden of poverty.

Established in 1976, CAM provides emergency assistance with food, necessary utilities, and rent/mortgage to low-income households in the greater Gastonia community. CAM serves about one-half of Gaston County, including those residing inside Gastonia city limits and rural areas surrounding the city limits. Over 48 churches (including Union) partner with CAM to help them do their work. You can find out more at <https://crisisassistancegastonia.org/>.



BOOK CHICKS

Join us monthly during our Book Chicks book club meetings for some food, fun, and fellowship! For more information or to find out what book we are reading, please reach out to Kim Morrison. Our next meeting is **Monday, February 17th, at 6:30 PM.**

UNION ENSEMBLE

This month the **Union Ensemble** will meet on **February 2, and February 16** right after worship! We will be looking at some brand-new monthly anthems and sight-reading new music for Easter!



5 CENT A MEAL

This month, our 5 Cent a meal special offering will be used to support our very own Union Presbyterian Blessing Box! We have volunteers who fill our box daily and appreciate your support of this local ministry.

BINGO

Join us for BINGO at Terrace Ridge on **Thursday, February 20th at 3 PM.** You are sure to receive many blessings from this outreach event!

CELEBRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Please don't forget that The Lord's Supper will be celebrated during worship on the first Sunday of this month, **February, 2.**

YOU ARE INVITED! MEN OF THE CHURCH DINNER & MEETING

The **Men of the Church** will be coming together in the Fellowship Hall on **Wednesday, February 12th at 6PM** for fellowship and dinner together. Billy Wilson will be providing the food. Come just for dinner or stay after if able to help plan future ventures for the Men of the Church!

WOMEN'S CIRCLE

Join us this month! The Golden Girls will meet Monday, February 3rd at 11 AM and the Soul Sisters will meet Monday, February 3rd at 7 PM. We hope you will join us for one of these meetings!

Prayers for Our Nation & World

- (1) **Frontier Fellowship in South Asia**– Please keep in prayer the work of Frontier Fellowship, particularly in Pakistan and Afghanistan. There is growing tension in this region between those of Christian Faith and government officials. There are many open doors now being closed to ministry, and those doing evangelism in the region are needing to do so less publicly. Violence to those of the Christian faith are intensifying (even in India). But the reason that resistance is intensifying is because of the growing interest of many Muslims in these regions wanting to learn more about Jesus. One ministry in this region has seen over 1000 positive first connections with the Gospel in just last few months.
- (2) **Western North Carolina Mountains**- Please keep in prayer those in the mountains of Western North Carolina. While the immediate need of day to day support is slowing in many areas, rebuilding efforts are really just beginning. Please keep in prayer those who have lost what many of us often take for granted, for the people and organizations supervising and getting their hands dirty with rebuilding, and those managing the funds still being brought in. Let us keep particularly in prayer for the churches in the mountains... that God may give these Christians strength and hope as they minister to neighbors even while often dealing with damage and destruction of their own homes and church facilities.
- (3) **Wildfires in California**– Please pray for those who have lost homes in the California Wildfires. Particularly pray for the churches that were destroyed.





SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Sundays 9AM Sunday School 10 AM Worship						1
2 11 AM Ensemble 2:30 PM SOC	3 11 AM Golden Girls 7PM Soul Sisters 7 PM Men's Bible Study	4 10 AM Bible Study 7 PM B & G	5	6	7	8
					180 Weekend	
9 8 AM MOC 11 AM Youth Luncheon 2:30 PM W & S	10 7 PM Men's Bible Study	11 10 AM Bible Study	12 6 PM MOC Meeting	13	14	15
16 11 AM Ensemble 2:30 PM Session	17 6:30 PM Book Chicks 7 PM Men's Bible Study	18 10 AM Bible Study	19 12 PM Happy Years	20 3 PM Bingo 8 PM FF Prayer Zoom call	21	22
23 11 AM Prayer after Worship 2:30 PM Nelson Baby Shower	24 7 PM Men's Bible Study	25 10 AM Bible Study	26	27 6 PM WOC Council Meeting	28	

**Non-Profit Organization
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Reverend James Holeman
Pastor

Tammy Biddix
Administrative Assistant

Jennifer Nelson
Communications Director

Jieeun Ha
Accompanist

Church Hours
3:00 PM—6 PM
Tuesday and Thursday



Save the Date

February 2
February 9
February 16
March 5

Celebration of the Lord's Supper
Youth Luncheon
Session Meeting
Ash Wednesday Service