

PASTOR'S REPORT 2025

It has been an honor to begin serving Unionville Church as Pastor. I began in July of this year, and I am getting used to a new town, UMC district, and church staff. I am very grateful for all of our people; they have welcomed me and kept my family in prayer during a busy time of learning.

I remember recently when I drove into the church parking lot early in the morning on a Saturday. It was my first church event, an all-you-can-eat community breakfast, and I had a lot to learn. I walked into the kitchen, and each person was busy with their individual assignment. There was a good attitude in the air, and people were laughing as they stirred the sausage gravy and carried cookie sheets loaded with bacon. It was easy for me to fit in. Community meals are something our congregation does very well.

In addition to the breakfasts, our Lenten fish fry is well-known in our community. We also host a very popular Vacation Bible School that draws dozens of children each summer. We are a vibrant and active congregation with programs and activities for people of all ages. This is a partial list of some of our programs:

Sunday school for people of all ages during the school year

Several adult Bible studies

Kids club on Sunday evenings

An active food pantry

Youth group meetings and activities

Church choir

Scouting meetings and activities

Joint activities with Oak Grove Lutheran Church

Recreational softball and volleyball

An annual worship in the park service

A monthly newsletter

Prayer ministry

Blood drives with the American Red Cross

Family Life Center available for community usage

People at Unionville Church are genuine and warm-hearted; our programs benefit from their faithfulness and willingness to jump in. People are usually happy to serve on committees and assist in worship services. We are blessed with church members of all ages.

WORSHIPING GOD TOGETHER

Our Sunday worship service is early (9:30 am) which allows us plenty of time for Sunday School afterward. Our Sunday worship services feature Bible readings, liturgies, prayers, hymns, and passing the Peace of Jesus. We also have a children's message. Our music is traditional with hymns, but we are adding some contemporary choir songs and guitar-led praise songs. On October 19 we started worshipping the Lord through our giving (along with the doxology). We also formed five teams of liturgists to serve each Sunday of the month;

our liturgists do the announcements, call to worship and offertory prayer. We continue to receive Holy Communion on the first Sunday of the Month. Holy Communion keeps our congregation strengthened and unified as the Body of Jesus. We are blessed with a beautiful sanctuary and state-of-the-art sound system.

PRAYER

Prayer was critical in my call to be a pastor and our cabinet's appointing me to Unionville Church; and seeking the Lord in prayer is absolutely needed as we go forward. Before I arrived at Unionville, Pastor Alan and many church members sought to hold prayer at the center. They held prayer services and prayer meetings at homes. I believe the Lord is still leading us more into the discipline of prayer. I cannot wait to see how and where God continues to lead our church!

HEALING

Unionville Church continues to recover from the pandemic and changes in the UMC General Conference that disrupted the life of our church. Teamwork and serving others is key for us as we keep programs going strong and bring back others that may have been trimmed back during the pandemic. Through God's healing and unlimited grace, we can be hopeful as we look toward the future. We are prayerfully seeking the way forward that allows us to be the hands and feet of Jesus in our communities. Where is the Lord leading us as we reach out to our neighbors and those who visit our worship services?

VISION

Unionville Church is blessed with faithful people engaged in their church ministries; we are also blessed with great facilities. Our trustees do an excellent job keeping our property in top shape. Where is the Lord leading us as we share our faith and make disciples of Jesus Christ? A vision is a picture of our preferred future based on where and how God is leading us. Is it time to seek the Lord's vision for our church? What specifically do we seek to accomplish over the next few years? Who are the people we need to reach, and how can we reach them? What spiritual gifts has the Lord given to our members and how can they be discovered and activated? The first step in getting a vision for our church is seeking the Lord through prayer and then listening. Furthermore, there may be opportunities to take advantage of our United Methodist connection when it comes to lay training, evangelism, outreach, marketing and stewardship.

PASTORAL CARE

Pastoral care over the past few months has included grief counseling, and visits to homes, hospitals, and nursing homes. Even though our members and friends have suffered some serious health concerns, we have seen God hear our prayers and mercifully answer.

ECUMENICAL MINISTRIES

I look forward to working with Oak Grove Lutheran Church for youth group activities and worship services on Thanksgiving Eve service and Good Friday. I am not currently part of a

ministerium, but I have reached out to three pastors to see if they would be interested in forming a clergy cluster group or ministerium.

CLERGY MENTORING & SUPPORT

I am part of the Butler District local pastor mentoring group led by Pastor Bev Roscoe. I also participate in the WPAUMC Clergy Communities of Practice group; my current leader is Pastor Carol Hickman. I have benefited from all forms of clergy mentoring, and I am grateful our denomination offers them. Our PPRC committee here at Unionville Church has been effective and supportive since I began my appointment. I am also thankful for my wife's constant support since I received a call to serve the body of Jesus Christ as a pastor. Nikki also helps out at some of our church events. I am grateful for Pastor Alan Morrison who provided materials and tutorials to make the change to a new pastor easier.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

I have completed 11 out of the required 20 courses for the UMC Basic Course of Study. My next course will begin in February 2026 at Methodist Theological School of Ohio. These classes are directly relevant to all that I do as Pastor of Unionville Church; the professors have been excellent.

SPIRITUAL LIFE

In her book, "Soul Feast," author and pastor Marjorie J. Thompson said, "spiritual life has to do with how God relates to us and how we in turn relate to God." Even though I always want to grow spiritually, God is the one who leads my spiritual growth and initiates our one-on-one time together; I simply respond. I need quiet time to read God's word, hear God's thoughts and enjoy private prayer. My spiritual life needs to be vibrant no matter how things are going in the other parts of my life (including ministry). When it comes to specifics, I take advantage of silence, devotionals, journal-writing, and a through-the-Bible program that offers passages from four parts of the Bible for each day.