


October 27, 2026 Vol. 78, No. 42

# ON WATCH

## Overcoming Spiritual Malaise

The Spanish mystic and Catholic poet St. John of the Cross describes overcoming spiritual malaise in his poem “The Dark Night of the Soul” (Spanish: “La noche oscura del alma”). He opens the poem, “One dark night, fired with love’s urgent longings—ah, the sheer grace!—I went out unseen, my house being now stilled.” For John of the Cross, there’s a stage of passive purification in which the soul is stripped of normal supports and experiences confusion, helplessness, stagnation of the will, and a sense of God’s withdrawal. This stage ends with union with God. When we experience this union with God, he describes finding a “radiant dawn.” The dark night goes full circle and ends in the light of a new day.

What John of the Cross calls “radiant dawn,” I would call transformation in Christ. Either way, it’s drinking the living water and finding oneself with the desire to return to the well for more. Yet, for a variety of reasons, many people who have seen the “radiant dawn” or drunk the living water can still experience God’s distance.

This vague feeling of spiritual discomfort or dissonance can leave prayers feeling empty. Worship becomes uninteresting. Volunteering at church starts to feel like an obligation. The Bible then appears wooden, detached, and uninspiring. Left unchecked, spiritual malaise can lead to drifting farther and farther away from being part of the church family. Eventually, being part of church is just a memory from a hazy past.

Overcoming a spiritual malaise requires intentionality. No one can make someone else get excited about Jesus. First, try to recognize when it’s happening. Acknowledge it. Then, let go of the past. This is a great point to explore God’s grace. God forgives you, but you also have to forgive yourself and let go of where you’ve been. Journaling, talking about your experience, and being honest are part of the solution.

Next, seek nourishment. I cannot prescribe an antidote for you because what feeds your soul is as unique as you are. It might mean singing a favorite hymn, trying something new (e.g. have you tried Jazz Vespers?), reading scripture, picking up a tattered copy of *Mere Christianity* by C.S. Lewis or some other classic, or something else. Prayer is also an essential ingredient to overcoming spiritual depression. Tell God about it. Be honest.

John of the Cross writes, “O guiding night! O night more lovely than the dawn! O night that has united the Lover with his beloved, transforming the beloved in her Lover.” The night won’t last forever. Have faith. Keep walking in the light. And trust that God is with you every step of the way.

Peace,
Matt




## SERVICE OF HOLY WORSHIP

**Sunday, November 1, 2026**
11:00 AM
**Sermon:**
Standing Faithfully in a
Faith-Needing World
Dr. Matthew Tennant
**Scripture:**
Revelation 7:9-17
**Anthems:**
*Come Unto Me*
Mark Blankenship
*Bound for the Promised Land*
arr. Jerry DePuit

## SUNDAY SERVICE

**Deacons**: Scott & Rachel Miller
**Ushers:** Cindy Bryant, Jimmy Li
**College Dinner:** Kittie Colvin Trail
Sign up here to provide a dinner.



## HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Join us in wishing some of our church family a Happy Birthday!

**Nov. 6:** Cassidy Guyton, Megan Sharp
**Nov. 8:** Jeanette Mills, Amy Teachey

## Visioning Prayers Update
## October 22

We had 5 people in attendance for our Visioning Prayers session last week. Matt opened with a prayer entitled *I Need You* by Howard Thurman (author of *Jesus and the Disinherited* and Dean of Marsh Chapel at Boston University).
What is God calling us to do next?

- To start a music school or after school music program?
- How to better engage current membership
- Focusing on foundational issues

Time of communal prayer
We closed with another prayer from Howard Thurman.

You're invited to join on zoom any Thursday morning from 10:00-10:15. Zoom link.




## Third Quarter Financial Update
## January - September 2026

Contributions: $386,963.54
(This amount excludes estate gifts, endowment grants, missions gifts, parking revenue, and building usage revenue.)
Expenses: $493,571.05

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## Young Adults Group

The Young Adults Group will begin meeting at various homes every other Monday evening at 6:30 beginning October 19. Contact Dean or Hadessah Tennant for more information.

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Daylight Saving Time ends this weekend. Remember to set your clocks back 1 hour.

## CALENDAR

### WEDNESDAY, October 28
9:00 Work Team
10:00 PB&J Bible Study
5:15 Wednesday Night Dinner
5:45 Sanctuary Bells Rehearsal
6:00 Wednesday Night Program
6:30 Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal

### THURSDAY, October 29
10:00 Visioning Prayers

### FRIDAY, October 30
5:30 Jazz Vespers
6:30 College/Young Adult Halloween Party

### SUNDAY, November 1
8:30 Church Council Meeting
9:30 Seekers Bible Study
9:45 Sunday Morning Bible Study
11:00 Morning Worship
12:00 Harvest Luncheon
4:00 Jubilate Rehearsal
5:30 College Dinner

### MONDAY, November 2
6:30 Young Adults Group
7:15 Women's Book Study

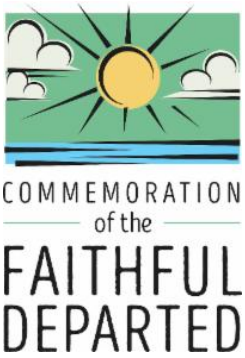
### TUESDAY, November 3
7:00 Kittie Colvin Trail Circle
7:00 Voces Laetae Rehearsal

*For our most up-to-date calendar, click here.*

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Still room to register for the luncheon. Email Linda or call the church office at 434-293-5106.




## Reading of Names on All-Saints Sunday

As part of our All Saints worship service on November 1, we will read the names of members of the church who have died since last All Saints Sunday (Nov. 2, 2025). You are also invited to add names to the list of those read aloud in worship. Please contact the church office, if you have a name to add.

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## Prayer Requests*

Jack & Jo-Ann Averill
Ed & Betty Barker
Tony & Patti Barretta
Alba & Pam Beasley
Clara Brown
Johnny & Gail Ellen
David & Linda Hendon
Margie Howell
Renfro & Sandy Manning
Larry & Lynn Martin
Edith Parker
Amy Teachey
Barbara Weber
Jane Whitworth
Jack & Anne Wilkerson

*In order to respect privacy, limited information is included here.




Come for dinner tomorrow evening, Wednesday, October 28, 5:15pm followed by
Sanctuary Bells Rehearsal at 5:45 in the balcony,
Celtic Evening Liturgy - *What good thing must I do to get eternal life?* (Matthew 19:16-30) at 6:00 in the Fellowship Hall,
and Sanctuary Choir rehearsal at 6:30 in the Music Suite.

Menu:
*Apple-cranberry Pork Roulade w/ Onion Gravy*
*Rice and Cannellini Bean Pilaf*
*Roasted Fall Veggies*
*Warm Sourdough*
*Pumpkin Bar*

Call the church office to register.

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## She's on Her Way!

Allison is expected to arrive in Charlottesville this evening and be in the office sometime tomorrow. Her first Sunday with us will be All Saints Sunday, November 1.

If you would like to be part of welcoming Allison, we will have a Gift Basket on Sunday in the Fellowship Hall for any gift cards or small gifts (i.e. useful household items) you may want to bring. Let's make Allison feel welcome and help make her move and transition an easy one.



## Raynell Stokes to be inducted into the Albemarle High School Hall of Fame

On October 30, Raynell will be inducted into the AHS Hall of Fame. She completed her master's in education with an emphasis on reading from Norfolk State University in 1982 and completed her second master's in administration from the University of Virginia in 1990. She began teaching in 1976 and served as AHS Assistant/Associate Principal for 22 years until her retirement in 2014. We congratulate Raynell and say, "well done, good and faithful servant".

## Heirs to a Legacy of




Our theme for this year's Stewardship Campaign is *Legacy of Love*. In your bulletin on Sunday, November 8, you will find your 2027 pledge card. Please begin to prayerfully consider how you will fill your card out this year to help us continue our legacy of love here at UBC. Don't miss worship on that Sunday when you will hear a testimony to that legacy of love. We will collect the cards on Sunday, November 15 and share the results on Sunday, November 22.

## Staff Contact Information:

Senior Minister: Dr. Matthew Tennant - matt@universitybaptist.org
Associate Minister for Music and College Students: Rev. Megan Sharp - megan@universitybaptist.org
Associate Minister for Education: Rev. Allison Benfield - allison@universitybaptist.org
Voces Laetae Director: Will Cooke - wcooke@universitybaptist.org
Office Coordinator: Linda Weirich - linda@universitybaptist.org
Financial Coordinator: Amanda Ohlms - aohlms@universitybaptist.org
Church Administrator: Alan Hendricks - ahendricks@universitybaptist.org
Communications Coordinator: Hadessah Johnson Tennant– socialmedia@universitybaptist.org
Organist: Barbara Moore - call the church office at 434-293-5106
Maintenance Assistants: Hunter Cooper & Jay Hendricks - call the church office at 434-293-5106

## Sunday Morning Worship

Our Sunday morning worship service begins at 11:00 am. We encourage everyone in the congregation to join us whether in person or virtually. As always, you can listen by radio on WINA (1070 AM and 98.9 FM), or you can join us online for our live broadcast. To view the live video broadcast, visit our Facebook page or click this link to watch on YouTube.

**Do you have something to submit to our weekly newsletter?**
**Suggestions must be submitted to linda@universitybaptist.org by Monday at noon.**

*University Baptist Church*
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Charlottesville, VA 22903
434-293-5106

Connect with us