

Stories from Central

A Publication of Central United Methodist Church

August & September 2026

Jot & Tittle

Hello, Central UMC Family!

Wow, have we been to a lot of places this summer! We went to Broadway literally (during the choir trip to New York City) and figuratively (for the 5th Annual Broadway Revue). We went to Rome for Vacation Bible School, Lake Junaluska for Annual Conference, Manteo for the youth mission trip, and Asheville Yards for the first annual Stonewall Fest.

Last but not least, we went to a place dear to my heart: Wilderness Trail!

I've been hiking with Wilderness Trail since 1992, when I first went with my youth group from St. Petersburg, FL. Just hours into the hike, I felt like I had signed up for the impossible. How could I make it through that day, let alone the whole week? The answer, it turns out, is simple but profound: one step at a time.



This year, 14 hikers from Central experienced this for themselves. When we wanted to give up, we told each other, "Just keep hiking! One step at a time, we're going to make it." And we did! On the back of every Wilderness Trail t-shirt is a five-word reminder of this lesson learned: "Each Step With a Purpose."

What's true on the trail is true in life. Sometimes it feels like what we're doing is so small, it doesn't matter. Other times it feels like we're never going to make it. All the time, our role as a Christian community is to encourage each other to keep going – one step at a time. I can't wait to see where all those "steps" will take us into the fall... and into the future!

Much love,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mary".

Pastor Mary

Central.Worship.

AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER WORSHIP SCHEDULE



August 2: Rev. Lisa Rettew preaches on what it means to take up our cross and follow Jesus in Matthew 16:21-26.

August 9: Rev. Dr. Mary Brown preaches on the story of Peter walking on, falling in, and being rescued out of the water in Matthew 14:22-33.



August 16: Rev. Dr. Melanie Harris brings a special message for "Feast of Creation in Christ" Sunday, the first new feast day added to the Revised Common Lectionary since 1983. Dr. Harris is Professor of Black Feminist and Womanist Theologies at Wake Forest University. Her scholarship critically examines intersections between race, religion, gender, and environmental ethics. She is an author, community leader, educational consultant, and former broadcast journalist.



August 23: Derrick Scott joins us all the way from the Sunshine State! Derrick just finished a term as co-lay leader of the Florida Conference of the UMC from 2022-2026. He is a veteran of campus ministry, a leader in digital ministry, and Board Vice-Chair for the Reconciling Ministries Network.



August 30: Rev. Kelli Mullinix brings a message on "Making Disciples" from Matthew 28:16-20. Kelli grew up at Central UMC and is now an ordained elder serving as Spiritual Care Associate at Givens Estates.

September 6: Rev. Brian Combs, guest preacher. In 2010, Central UMC dedicated its Haywood Street campus to Brian's vision of "including the most excluded" in Asheville.



That vision has become the Haywood Street Congregation, "a church that finds every holy excuse – feeding, clothing, healing, gardening, painting, worshiping – to practice the family of faith, to interrupt the isolation of estrangement through relationship."

Come Home Sermon Series

September 13: We begin a series on what it's like to "Come Home" to faith. On this first Sunday, we explore the grace that brings us on the "porch" and facing the "door" of God's house.

September 20: We continue our series on "Coming Home" to faith with a look at the moment when grace leads us through the "door."

September 27: The third week of our "Come Home" series explores the grace that teaches us how to live inside God's house.

October 4: On this World Communion Sunday, we finish our "Come Home" series with a vision of how God's "house" is big enough for the whole world.

Central Family Life.

AMAZING EVENTS FROM SUMMER 2026

VACTION BIBLE SCHOOL - There's No Place Like Rome! We had a lovely time in Rome learning all about God's love! Our amazing volunteers and youth provided snacks, storytelling, music, worship, games, crafts, and lots of love to our campers. We followed Paul's journey with the Underground Church to learn about what God's love means for us. We closed the week with ice cream from Annie B's, sharing music with our families, and even a pie-in-the-face celebration of our mission fundraiser for Kids With Purpose! Thank you to everyone who supported and gave their time, energy, and prayers to this extension of God's love to our community!



MISSION TRIP - In June, our youth went to the Outer Banks to serve our neighbors with Cross Connection. We were reminded to listen for God's whisper while we worked to repair homes, worshipped, and built community with those around us.



WILDERNESS TRAIL



Our youth spent a week backpacking through the wilderness and learning about servant leadership this summer with Wilderness Trail. We experienced teamwork, the beauty of nature, lots of laughter, and God's amazing provision. Thank you to all who donated to our Youth Wall of Money Fundraiser to help make this experience possible!

Central. Family Life.

Here at Central UMC, we welcome EVERYONE WITHOUT EXCEPTION. This most certainly extends to our youngest friends as well. We know that truly welcoming our children and youth starts with providing physical, emotional, and spiritual safety. That's why all of our Ministry Partners (adults who work with minors) are background checked and trained. Thank you to all of our Ministry Partners. If you are interested in learning more, please talk to Maggie!

We also respect that children and youth are an important part of the body of Christ. They aren't the future of the Church – they are the Church right now! For that reason, we want everyone to be fully included in all areas of our church. We also want to give them developmentally appropriate opportunities to engage with God and community. Thank you for supporting all of our kids and families at Central and in our community!

Ministry Areas:

Nursery – for children ages 0–4, Sunday mornings, during the Unnamed Women's Circle, and by request. On Sundays, we offer safe physical caretaking as well as a lesson with a story, a song, and a craft or play opportunity related to the lesson.

Children – for children ages 5–3rd grade, Sunday mornings (except the 1st Sunday) we offer a Children's Time, Children's Church, and Play Time to build community! We also have a Children's Choir that meets during the school year.

3rd Grade Bible – in the Spring semester of 3rd grade, children can take the 3rd Grade Bible class to learn the basics of how to navigate their Bibles and beginning Biblical literacy. Once completed, these students are ready for Tween Ministry and to acolyte during worship!

Kids With Purpose – This gives kids a chance to explore missional opportunities in the community in hands-on ways! This happens on Sundays after worship during the school year. TBA if this is for all kiddos or just tweens.

Tweens – Starting this year, we are introducing a Tween Ministry! This will focus on kids in 4th and 5th grade, with students transitioning from Children's Ministry at the end of 3rd grade and transitioning to Youth Ministry at the beginning of 6th grade. More information to come as this develops!

Confirmation – Confirmation is offered to anyone in 6th grade or older who is ready to explore their faith, the history of the Church, the traditions and beliefs of the UMC, and see where their faith walk may be leading. If they so choose, some students may decide to say a big yes back to God and join the Church as full members, taking ownership of their faith.

Youth – For students in grades 6–12, this ministry is specifically designed with teens in mind. On Sundays after worship, youth meet for a weekly check-in and lesson on the 4th floor. Sunday evenings, Youth Group happens from 5–7pm. We have a meal and enjoy time together. This semester, we're trying a new rhythm: 1st + 3rd Sundays will be Youth Group at Central UMC. 2nd + 4th Sundays will be a service opportunity and fun gathering with our youth friends from Covenant Community Church at Haw Creek Commons. We also have a high school Bible study that meets before school once a week.

Family Life Council – This is an open meeting where we discuss and plan for Family Life Ministries at Central. We love to have as many parents, Ministry Partners, youth, and children's voices represented here, so please join us!

Parents Gathering – Sundays after worship, parents/guardians gather in the Conference Room for a discussion around a specific topic and community time to be with folks in a similar life stage

First Fridays Family Fellowship – The 1st Friday of every month, adults with children are invited to meet for a time of fun and fellowship. Kids are invited but not required to attend with their adults!

Central Family Life.

BACK TO SCHOOL FALL 2026

August 23

BACK TO SCHOOL SUNDAY

September 13

FALL KICKOFF FOR CHILDREN'S + YOUTH MINISTRY!

After Church, Family Life Ministries Sunday Rhythm start back

Kids With Purpose Kickoff Celebration 11:15 am – 11:45 am

Children's Choir 11:45 am – 12:15 pm

Youth Group Kickoff at Haw Creek 5 pm – 7 pm

September 20

Church Street Choirster Mini-Festival 12:15 pm – 3:30 pm

Youth Group 5 pm – 7 pm at Central UMC

September 25 – 27

Tween Retreat at Camp Tekoa

Youth Group Service opportunity at Haw Creek 5 pm – 7 pm

FAMILY LIFE SUNDAY RHYTHM RESUMES SEPTEMBER 13

Nursery	Elementary	Youth		Parents
9:30 am – 12:30 pm		Sunday School 8:45 am – 9:45 am		Sunday School 8:45 am – 9:45 am
	Worship 10:00 am – 10:30 am	Worship 10:00 am – 11:00 am		Worship 10:00 am – 11:00 am
	Children's Church 10:30 am – 11:45 am			
	Children's Choir 11:45 am – 12:15 pm	Youth Sunday School 11:15 am – 12:15 pm	Youth Choir 11:15 am – 11:45 am	Young Parent Gathering 11:15 am – 12:15 pm



Calling all Central Children and Friends!

Central UMC, First Presbyterian, and Trinity Episcopal Churches are sponsoring a Church Street Chorister Mini-Festival Sunday, September 20 from 12:15 pm – 3:30 pm at First Presbyterian Church. Lunch provided for all! Music, games, fellowship, and fun for Children and Youth ages Kindergarten through 6th grade are welcome. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend. It promises to be an exciting afternoon for all involved. Please reach out to Linda Haggard, lhaggard@centralumc.org with questions.

Welcome To KINDERGARTEN

Rising Kindergarteners!

Is your child or a child you know about to start Kindergarten? We are so excited to celebrate with you! Please let Maggie know so that they can receive a special Kinder gift!

LOOK! A RETREAT FOR TWEENS!



WHEN?
SEPT. 25-27, 2026

WHO'S IT FOR?
RISING 4TH-6TH GRADERS

WHERE?
TEKOA HENDERSONVILLE

THIS YEARS THEME:
"WHO AM I?"
EXPLORING MY IDENTITY IN CHRIST

REGISTER YOUR GROUP HERE →



ONLY \$100 PER PERSON!

Calling EVERYONE!

Are you 18 or older, able to pass a background check, and willing to share God's love by supervising, teaching, or feeding our young friends? We need your help! We need more safe adults to volunteer for Children's Church, after worship Children's Playtime or Kids with Purpose, Youth Group, providing youth meals and special events.

Contact Maggie Christy, mchristy@centralumc.org if interested.



We are in need of a Nursery Supervisor, Nursery Staff and Nursery Substitutes.

If this is something you might be interested in doing, please contact Maggie Christy at mchristy@centralumc.org.

Central. Worship.

SEPTEMBER 2

Wednesday

CHANCEL CHOIR

6:30 PM – 7:30 PM

SEPTEMBER 8

Tuesday

WESLEY SINGERS

1:00 PM – 2:00 PM

SEPTEMBER 13

Sunday

YOUTH

11:15 AM – 11:45 AM

SEPTEMBER 13

Sunday

CHILDREN'S CHOIR

11:45 AM – 12:15 PM

SEPTEMBER 9

Wednesday

HANDBELL CHOIR

5:30 PM – 6:30 PM

SEPTEMBER 14

Monday

BRASS ENSEMBLE

6:30 PM – 7:30 PM

Music Ministry at Central – You're Invited!

The Music Ministry of Central invites you to join us this Fall! We have offerings for all ages and abilities and would love for you to check us out. Feel free to attend a rehearsal or two before you decide; no strings attached – just a guaranteed productive good time. Whether you are a professional or just love to sing or play an instrument, we have a place for you. Please contact Corey Powell, cpowell@centralumc.org, or Linda Haggard, lhaggard@centralumc.org, with questions.

Chancel Choir – Sing Sundays at 10:00 am Worship. Rehearsals with Linda and Corey begin Wednesday, September 2, from 6:30 pm – 7:30 pm in the church sanctuary.

Wesley Singers – Sing Sundays once a month at 10:00 am Worship. Rehearsals with Corey begin Tuesday, September 8, 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm in the Choir Room.

Youth Choir – Rehearsals with Linda and Corey begin Sunday, September 13 at 11:15 am in the Choir Room. This is Fall Kickoff Sunday! All youth in grades 6–12 and friends are invited to participate.

Children's Choir – Rehearsals with Linda and Corey begin Sunday, September 13 at 11:45 am in the Choir Room. This is Fall Kickoff Sunday! All children ages 5 through 5th grade are invited to participate.

Handbell Choir – Rehearsals with Corey begin Wednesday, September 9, 5:30 pm – 6:30 pm in the handbell room (ability to read music is required).

Brass Ensemble – Rehearsals with Richard Provine begin Monday, September 14, 6:30 pm – 7:30 pm (Ability to read music is required). If interested, please reach out to Richard, provine78@gmail.com.

Music, the universal language that transcends borders, cultures, and beliefs, has the remarkable power to connect people on a fundamental level. It is a common denominator that unites humanity, regardless of our differences. Music can evoke emotions, stir souls, and bridge gaps between individuals. Come be a part of the magic of music at Central.

Central. Music.

Central Choirs deliver the Fifth Annual Broadway Revue

Friday, June 5, Central's sanctuary burst with Broadway melodies. Chancel choir, youth choir, and children's choir members delivered a lovely evening of Broadway's finest show tunes. Thank you to everyone who participated and to everyone who attended the show. All involved look forward to this annual musical tradition.



Central Chancel Choir Members and Friends conquer New York City!

June 8 – 13 members of Central's Chancel Choir, church staff, family, and friends traveled to New York City. The group enjoyed two Broadway shows, "Ragtime" and "Hamilton," visited the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Radio City Music Hall, and Ground Zero and 9/11 Memorial. Choir Members also sang at St. John the Divine Cathedral. Fun was had by all.





Building Hope with Habitat for Humanity: Central UMC Volunteers Serve with Asheville Area Habitat

Nine volunteers from Central gathered on Friday, July 24, to help put a roof on one house and paint the inside of another. These builds remind us that when we come together to serve, we are not only strengthening our community—we are living out Christ's call to love our neighbors in tangible, meaningful ways.

Thank you to everyone who gave their time and energy on this day of mission and ministry. Stay tuned for more opportunities to serve with Habitat in the future—we hope you'll join us next time!

Central. Adult Discipleship.

This Fall: Study about Small Groups – and try out a Small Group!

Beginning September 13, please join us for an 8-week exploration of the basic building block of the Methodist movement: John Wesley's "class meeting." Over the course of this experience, we'll gradually shift the focus from study to small-group experience, giving participants an understanding and a taste of why these weekly meetings are so important to our spiritual growth. We'll end with an opportunity for those interested to form new small groups that continue meeting.

We will meet after worship at 11:15 am in Room 219 from 9/13 to 11/15, skipping the first Sunday of each month (for the Table to Table meal). Participants will need a copy of Kevin Watson's book, "The Class Meeting." It can be purchased from Amazon or picked up from our church office for a \$20 suggested donation.

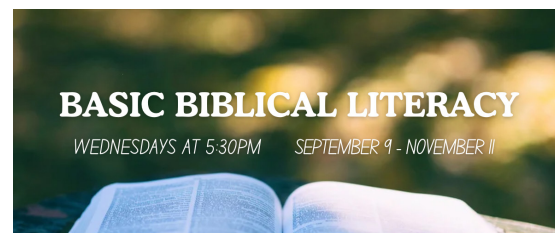
Registration is required using this link: ["The Class Meeting" Registration](#) or the QR Code.



Basic Biblical Literacy Wednesdays at 5:30 pm beginning September 9

Have you wanted to read the Bible but struggled to make sense of it? Or maybe you've avoided reading the Bible altogether! With a little help, the Bible can become a regular way for you to connect with God. Join Rick Kuenning and Pastor Mary for an 11-session class designed to introduce you to major themes of the Old and New Testament. We will meet on Wednesdays from 5:30 pm – 7:00 pm in Room 219 beginning September 9 and ending November 18. Participants will need a Bible; Central has plenty to share as needed. Register online using the QR code or this link:

[Basic Bible Literacy Registration](#)



Theology Pub – Mondays at 5:45 pm

Central United Methodist Theology Pub Group. What's it all about?

Theology Pub is a low-key gathering to kick around theological topics and share life experiences. We are always looking to have new folks join in. All you need to do is come by. We meet weekly at The Village Pub: 100 Fairview Rd in Asheville on Mondays at 5:45 pm, generally ending around 7:15 pm. Everyone is welcome (without exception!), and there is absolutely no need to have deep Biblical knowledge or any Biblical knowledge at all. Typical topics include grace, mercy, God/evil, discipleship, the Beatitudes, church and society, etc., with the goal of growing as followers of Christ.

Each week, we have a new topic and a list of open-ended questions to discuss. We don't have lectures, and there isn't any outside reading or preparation. Just come and share your thoughts, drink a beer (if you wish), and enjoy some pub food. We'd love to have you!

New Young Adult Journey Group

A new Journey Group has formed for young adults! They get together regularly at local restaurants or at someone's home. Members of the group are ages 21 to 35. Interested? Email Maggie Christy at mchristy@centralumc.org.



Central. Adult Discipleship.

Social Principles Planning Team – Putting Faith Into Action

The Social Principles Planning Team is following up with all those who attended one or more of the Social Principles Classes this past Spring. (Even if you were unable to attend a class, you're welcome to join this effort). Participants voted on and selected three social justice topics for focused actions:

- Immigrant Justice
- Diversity and Inclusion with the LGBTQ+ Community
- Building Relationships with the local Asheville African-American Community

The team will be reaching out by phone or text to all 75 participants in the near future and would like to help identify what actions speak to you and in which group(s) you'd like to put your faith into action. For more information, please call or text Peter Barrett, 707-971-9162.

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES

Meet Sundays 8:45 am – 9:45 am

More information can be found at [Adult Classes](#) on Central's website.

Discovery Class Room 220 Near Fellowship Hall	Uses the Standard Bible Commentary curriculum, with class members taking turns teaching and everyone adding to a lively discussion.
Faith Discernment Room 219 Near Fellowship Hall	Rev. Jim Kuse engages a diverse class to connect Scripture and Christian tradition with daily life.
Growing in Faith Through Service Parlor Near Sanctuary	A lively and curious group that loves meaningful discussion! Our studies are chosen by the group, and study sessions are lead by class members who volunteer. GIFTS also does service at Battery Park apartments and the Black Mountain Home for Children.
New Morning Class Room 205 In Education Building near Fellowship Hall	A longstanding group that focuses on scripturally based books designed for group studies.
Inquirers Class Room 206 in Education Building near Fellowship Hall	A large, vibrant class where members take turns leading a discussion/lecture format with lots of class participation.
Serendipity Class Room 307 Near church offices	A caring group whose members volunteer to lead discussions on matters of faith or contemporary issues, complimented by Bible study sessions led by a seminary graduate class member.
The NEST Byrd Room near Sanctuary	A small women's class focused on growing in faith and applying it to everyday life. Studies range from current Bible studies to a wide range of books written by Christian authors.



United
Women
in Faith

UWF Corner

United Women in Faith Circles

Central's United Women in Faith take a break from regular meetings during the summer months. If you're curious about attending a circle, please reach out to any of the circle leaders listed below and ask questions about meetings, mission projects, reading groups, and other ways to connect. We are open to all women, and you do not have to be a member of Central UMC to attend. Come and see what we're all about! There are so many ways to be involved with United Women in Faith at Central UMC! We welcome women of all ages to our circle meetings and to other UWF events. If you would like more information, please get in touch with a circle chair or me, and we'll find the group that best fits your interests.

Real Women. Real Faith.
Real Community.

Kathy Leftwich,
President, Central United Women in
Faith Unit

UWF CIRCLES

ANNA – First Wednesday at 10:00 am

DEBORAH – Second Tuesday at 10:00 am

EVE – First Tuesday at 10:00 am

MARTHA – Second Tuesday at 6:30 pm

RUTH – First Tuesday at 10:00 am

UNNAMED WOMEN – Second
Wednesday at 6:00 pm

Our circles would love to hear from you and have you visit and consider joining. Contact the circle chair for more information about meetings and getting involved, or contact me, Kathy Leftwich, kathleencleftwich@gmail.com.

- **Anna Circle** – We will meet on Wednesday, September 2, at 10:00 am in the church parlor. We will discuss our summer book, "Good Enough," by Kate Bower and Jessica Richie. We will also continue talking about our mission plans. For additional information, please contact Glenda Fuhrmann, glendafuhrmann@yahoo.com.
- **Deborah Circle** meets at 10:00 am on the second Tuesday of the month in a member's home. For our September 8 meeting, we will follow the United Women in Faith program guide, "Mapping Our Way Forward in Times of Change and Uncertainty," with a program centering on caring for others while practicing self-care. All are welcome. Questions? Please contact Susan Snell, ssnell123@bellsouth.net.
- **Eve Circle** will meet in the church parlor on Tuesday, September 1 at 10:00 am. Sue Mather will present a program on UWF Mission Institutions with emphasis on those in North Carolina, including the Alliance Center for Education (formerly Bethlehem Center) in Charlotte, which Eve Circle visited years ago. Thank You, Central! In April of this year, the Eve Circle of UWF held our "Have Hope" bead jewelry sale to raise funds for the Moheto girls' scholarships in Kenya and for the Zoe Orphan Empowerment program. Thanks to your generous support, we have been able to send \$350 to each of these wonderful mission initiatives. You are helping to improve the lives of women and children far away but close at heart. Our next "Have Hope" jewelry sale will be the first two Sundays in December (just in time for Christmas gifts). Come share the fellowship and joy. Everyone is welcome. Please contact Donna Anderson, dlbandy45@gmail.com or Sandra Wells, sandracwells@gmail.com for more information.
- **Martha Circle** meets on the second Tuesday of each month, in a member's home or a location downtown. Please contact Kathy Leftwich, kathleencleftwich@gmail.com.
- **Ruth Circle** meets the first Tuesday of each month at 10:00 am in the Church Library. If you have questions, please contact, Kim Everette, kimeverette525@gmail.com.
- **Unnamed Women's Circle** gathers the second Wednesday of each month for dinner out and lively conversation at a nearby restaurant. Childcare can be arranged if needed. Please contact Sarah Caraway, sarahstrickland92@gmail.com for further information.

UWF INVITES YOU TO READ

The United Women in Faith's Reading Program is a long-standing tradition that continues to inform, inspire, and challenge us to grow in faith and action. Each year, the national United Women in Faith organization releases updated reading lists that reflect the current needs of our communities and the world.

Check out Central's library windows, then check out a new book! Several of the 2026 UWF Reading Program books are displayed in the library windows, and there are many more inside. UWF books are shelved on the back-right wall, with selections for adults, youth, and children. UWF has a great collection of books.

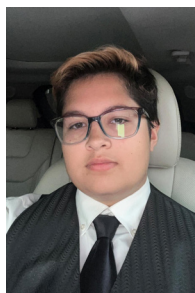
If you'd like to learn more about the UWF Reading Program, or see the complete list of books and their summaries, please visit: [United Women in Faith Reading Program](#). The Reading Program list is available in Central's Library in the UWF section (to the far right, against the wall, on the lower three shelves). Copies of UWF's Response Magazine are also available near the check-out desk in the library.

Maureen Carr Memorial UWF Scholarship Recipients

Central's United Women in Faith are excited to announce the recipients of the Maureen Carr Memorial UWF Scholarship. Thanks to the generosity of Central's congregation, we are able to award two \$1,000 scholarships this year to Kai Provine and Rachel Sessions.

Both Kai and Rachel have been involved in Central since they were about 2 years old. They both play brass instruments and have had leadership roles in their high school bands. When asked to describe a favorite moment, teacher, or activity, etc., each one chose to describe their band director.

Rachel has hiked with Wilderness Trail several times. She has even raised sheep. Rachel will be attending Western Carolina University in the Fall and plans to study psychology with the goal of being a neuropsychiatrist.



Kai recently earned their Eagle Scout award. They have played with Central's brass band for several years. Kai will be attending UNC-Greensboro and studying music education. They plan to teach elementary music upon graduation.

Central is blessed to have Kai and Rachel in our church family. Congratulations to both of them! We wish them many blessings in their future.



WNC Conference and Blue Ridge District UWF Events

Our Conference and District will sponsor the following events through the summer. All are invited to attend! Contact me for more information: Kathy Leftwich.

Book Studies – Held over Zoom, Saturdays, 10:00 am – 11:30 am:

- **August 8, 2026** – "The Personal Librarian" by Marie Benedict and Victoria Christopher Murray
- **September 19, 2026** – "The Bookwoman's Daughter" by Kim Michele Richardson

August 15 – District Annual Celebration – Piney Mountain UMC

August 21 – 22 – Mission U – Catholic Conference Center – Hickory, NC



Congregational Care – “Widening Our Embrace!”



New Opportunity! FREE MOMS start-up on UNC-A’s campus!

A new chapter of the Free Moms organization is launching at UNC Asheville in August. Volunteers are needed to help bring this meaningful mission to life.

Originally founded in Raleigh, NC by Nancy Nelson to support students at NC State, Free Moms is dedicated to providing care, encouragement, and a sense of home to college students who may be far from their families, or even right around the corner. Through simple but powerful acts of kindness--such as sharing homemade baked goods, offering flowers, celebrating birthdays, organizing pet interactions, and

creating spaces for connection. Free Moms aims to remind students that they are seen, valued, and supported.

Volunteer roles:

- help organize and grow the group
- regularly contribute your time and talents: whether it’s baking, showing up on campus to lend a listening ear, or helping coordinate events and outreach, etc.

Every effort makes a difference!

If you have a heart for supporting students and building community, consider joining this initiative. Together, we can create a welcoming and compassionate presence for the students at UNC Asheville one small act of kindness at a time. Please contact Cameron Smith at clg7498@gmail.com if you are interested.

Here’s what is happening in our “neck of the woods”!

Central’s newest care ministry focus: HEALTH CARE!



Under the coordination of April Messer, PhD, PMHNP-BC, CCRN, our CCC will be launching a Health Care Ministry in 2027 that will hopefully incorporate parts of Maureen Carr’s vision, but expand to all age groups.

April currently serves as Assistant Professor and Associate Director of the School of Nursing at Western Carolina University. We are so grateful for her passionate desire to lead this new ministry and for her depth of skills!

Be on the lookout for more information as this new care ministry unfolds!

It’s time! Here are ways for you to get involved!

Contact Pastor Lisa, lrettew@centralumc.org for more information.

On - Call Opportunities:

- Set Up and Take Down for Bereavement receptions
- Be a Meal Train Provider
- Assist with health care events

Ongoing Opportunities:

- Join Circle of Prayer
- Participate in Children’s Care Ministry
- Become a Homebound Visitor

Central. Stewardship.

Did you know that August is National Make-a-Will Month? Its purpose is to raise awareness about the importance of creating or updating a will to ensure your wishes are honored and to provide peace of mind for you and your loved ones. This month serves as a reminder for everyone to take action to provide for loved ones and perhaps leave a legacy.

During a normal lifetime, many of us work as many as 40 years or more in the accumulation of assets. Then we'll spend 10, 20, or 30 years preserving those hard-earned dollars through retirement, and we will take great care to plan strategically to conserve for the long haul. But all too often, there has been little or, sometimes, no planning for the last chapter of our lives. This can have dire consequences, including burdening our families with the task of picking up the pieces. Did you know that 50% of the membership of most congregations do not have a will? Why do you suppose this is? Many are concerned that the cost may be too great or that they don't have enough to justify creating a will. But not having a will can create a much greater cost in the long run and not just in monetary terms.

A will is a Legal Avenue for :

- *Naming a trusted individual to represent our wishes and desires – an executor*
- *Naming a guardian for minors*
- *Making gifts or transfer of property*
- *In some cases, reducing estate tax liability*

Not having a will can result in loss of the ability to make advanced decisions that benefit family and loved ones. Not having a will can also be a missed opportunity to leave a lasting legacy to be remembered for. Part of being a good steward of the resources God has entrusted to us during our lifetime is to create a plan. A good plan will not only protect and provide for our family but also serve as a vehicle to pass on our legacy to our loved ones through our example. A will is our final communication, a lasting testimony, our personal witness. It is our final opportunity to give expression to our hopes, dreams, wishes, and desires, all of which have the capacity to make a difference, a legacy.



If you would be interested in Central UMC offering a Wills Workshop sometime this Fall, we could certainly arrange to provide a program with resources, experts, and opportunities for questions and answers. If you are interested in a program like this, please reach out to Lauralee Bailey, Chair of the Central UMC Stewardship Committee, at lauraleedbailey@yahoo.com.



For many years C4C Volunteers have helped the children of Emma Elementary through this wonderful program. A huge thank you to these faithful volunteers that made the trek to Emma every week for some one-on-one reading time with their buddy! Spending time with these children, listening to them, reading with them and encouraging them is a special time for all the volunteers.

Do you have a little time to spend with a child at Emma Elementary School this coming school year?

For only about 30 minutes a week, you have the opportunity to have a special friendship with a K-4th grader as a Reading Buddy. The children only need a little help in becoming better readers. They are sweet and fun, and will probably tell you some jokes. Please join our group and volunteer to help a child enjoy reading! A background check is required. Training and all materials are provided. It may become the highlight of your week! If you are interested or need more information, please contact Elizabeth Devereaux, C4C@centralumc.org.

FILLING EMMA ELEMENTARY'S CLOTHES CLOSET

Congregations 4 Children (C4C) and the Growing in Faith Through Service (GIFTS) Sunday School class request your help with donations of these essentials for the Children at Emma.

What is needed:

- NEW Pants – Sweatpants, black – Unisex, all sizes 5/6, 7/8 & 10/12
- NEW Underwear – Boys and girls, all sizes Small, Medium & Large
- NEW Shirts – Boys and girls, all sizes Small, Medium, & Large
- NEW Shoes – Tennis (athletic) shoes – Youth sizes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, & 7 (No "child sizes") – All students

When can items be donated?

Donations can be made beginning August 2 through August 30, 2026

Where may you leave your donations? The bin for the Emma Clothes Closet is located in the hallway by the Reception Desk

SUPPORT C4C TO SUPPORT LOCAL SCHOOLS

AUGUST 2026 CALENDAR



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
2 10am - WORSHIP 11:15am - Table to Table 11:15am - Reconciling Ministries	3 5:45pm - Theology Pub	4 Youth Splash Country Trip 9:45am - Church Staff Meeting 12pm - Dementia Partners AVL 5pm - Church & Society Committee	5 11am - Centering Prayer 12:30pm - Worship at Haywood Street Congregation	6 8am - Thursday Morning Prayer 10am - Circle of Prayer	7	8
9 10am - WORSHIP 11am - Cross Connection with AME Church 11:15am New-ish to Central	10 5:45pm - Theology Pub	11 9:45am - Church Staff Meeting	12 11am - Centering Prayer 12:30pm - Worship at Haywood Street Congregation	13 8am - Thursday Morning Prayer 10am - Circle of Prayer	14	15
16 10am - WORSHIP 11am - Cross Connection with AME Church 9:30am and 11:00am - Blood Pressure Checks	17 11am - Executive Team 5:45pm - Theology Pub	18 9:45am - Central Staff Meeting 2pm - Dementia Partners AVL	19 11am - Centering Prayer 12:30pm - Worship at Haywood Street Congregation	20 8am - Thursday Morning Prayer 10am - Circle of Prayer	21	22
23 10am - WORSHIP BACK TO SCHOOL SUNDAY 11am - Cross Connection with AME Church	24 5:45pm - Theology Pub	25 9:45am - Central Staff Meeting	26 11am - Centering Prayer 12:30pm - Worship at Haywood Street Congregation	27 8am - Thursday Morning Prayer 10am - Circle of Prayer	28	29
30 10am - WORSHIP 11:15am - Meet the Author, David Ourisman	31 5:45pm - Theology Pub					

SEPTEMBER 2026 CALENDAR



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 9:45am – Church Staff Meeting 10am – Eve Circle 10am – Ruth Circle 12pm – Dementia Partners AVL 5pm – Church & Society Committee	2 10am – Anna Circle 11am – Centering Prayer 12:30pm – Worship at Haywood Street Congregation 6:30pm – Chancel Choir	3 8am – Thursday Morning Prayer 10am – Circle of Prayer	4	5
6 10am – WORSHIP 11:15am – Table to Table	7 LABOR DAY CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED  5:45pm – Theology Pub	8 9:45am – Church Staff Meeting 10am – Deborah Circle 1:00pm – Wesley Singers Rehearsal 6:30pm – Martha Circle	9 11am – Centering Prayer 12:30pm – Worship at Haywood Street 5:30pm – Basic Bible Literacy 6:00pm – Unnamed Womens Circle 5:30pm – Handbells 6:30pm – Chancel Choir	10 8am – Thursday Morning Prayer 10am – Circle of Prayer	11	12
13 10am – WORSHIP FALL KICKOFF 11:00 Kona Ice Cele 11:15am – The Class Meeting 11:15am – Youth Choir 11:45am – Children's Choir	14 5:45pm – Theology Pub 6:30pm – Brass Ensemble Rehearsal	15 9:45am – Central Staff Meeting 1:00pm – Wesley Singers Rehearsal 2pm – Dementia Partners AVL	16 11am – Centering Prayer 12:30pm – Worship at Haywood Street 5:30pm – Basic Bible Literacy 5:30pm – Handbells 6:30pm – Chancel Choir	17 8am – Thursday Morning Prayer 10am – Circle of Prayer	18	19
20 10am – WORSHIP 11:15am – The Class Meeting 11:15am – Youth Choir 11:45am – Children's Choir 12:15pm – Church Street Choirster Mini-Festival	21 12:00pm – Newsletter Deadline 5:45pm – Theology Pub 6:30pm – Brass Ensemble Rehearsal	22 9:45am – Central Staff Meeting 1:00pm – Wesley Singers Rehearsal	23 11am – Centering Prayer 12:30pm – Worship at Haywood Street 5:30pm – Basic Bible Literacy 5:30pm – Handbells 6:30pm – Chancel Choir	24 8am – Thursday Morning Prayer 10am – Circle of Prayer	25	26
27 10am – WORSHIP 11:15am – The Class Meeting 11:15am – Youth Choir 11:45am – Children's Choir 	28 5:45pm – Theology Pub 6:30pm – Brass Ensemble Rehearsal	29 9:45am – Central Staff Meeting 1:00pm – Wesley Singers Rehearsal	30 11am – Centering Prayer 12:30pm – Worship at Haywood Street 2:00 – Newsletter Assembly 5:30pm – Basic Bible Literacy 5:30pm – Handbells 6:30pm – Chancel Choir			

"Feast of Creation" added to Lectionary

The Consultation on Common Texts has officially added the "Feast of Creation" to the Revised Common Lectionary used by many Protestant and Anglican churches. This is the first time a new feast is adopted by the common Lectionary since its release in 1974. This is a major ecumenical milestone.

A lectionary is a schedule of Scriptural readings to be shared in worship. Other names for the new feast are "Feast of Creation in Christ," "Creation Day," or "Creation Sunday." Grounded in an ancient liturgical tradition of the Orthodox Church, this is a day to praise God as Creator and ponder the great mystery that everything was created through Christ. And, as a result, it also inspires us to care for the gift of the created world—which is why it is also celebrated as a "World Day of Prayer for Creation." The entire world is invited to offer prayers and supplications to the Maker of all, both as thanksgiving for the great gift of Creation and as petitions for its protection and salvation.

The new feast day includes four interrelated themes: 1) Creation as God's creative act; 2) Creation as Christological mystery; 3) Creation as Trinitarian mystery; and 4) Creation as sacramental and covenantal.

Christian feast days are annual liturgical celebrations commemorating key events in the life of Jesus, Mary, and the saints. These include Easter, Christmas, Epiphany, Pentecost, and All Saints' Day. And now the Feast of Creation is on the list. (edited from feastofcreation.com)

The Faith & the Arts Committee is pleased to host in the Church Street Gallery "UnLabel Poverty," a program by the Asheville Poverty Initiative designed to raise community awareness and engagement. Portraits of our neighbors will be on display through August and September.



Supporting Our College Students – Addresses Needed!

We would like to remind you of a Central Ministry that focuses on our College Students. Four times a year, your college student will receive a note from the church, letting them know we are thinking of them, and including a devotional and a gift card for a treat. If you would like your student to be a recipient of this, please send their current college address to Jan Griffin at jgriffin@centralumc.org. The first mailing will go out in October, so please submit addresses by September 15.



Upcoming Events



Join us after worship at 11:15am in the Fellowship Hall for our Table to Table Potluck, where good food and good company come together! Central will provide the entree, and we invite you to bring a favorite side dish, appetizer, or dessert to share. Whether you love cooking or prefer to pick something up on the way, your presence is what matters most. All are welcome! There is no cost, though donations are welcome to help offset the cost of the meal. Pull up a chair, share a meal, and connect across tables. We can't wait to gather with you!

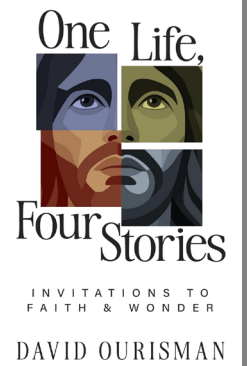
JOIN US ON AUGUST 2ND AND SEPTEMBER 6TH!



Meet the Author: Our Own David Ourisman!

Sunday, August 30 at 11:15 am in the Fellowship Hall

In addition to being a part of our Central UMC family, Rev. Dr. David Ourisman is also an ordained United Methodist minister, teacher, and author. He served seventeen years in the pastorate and now enjoys being a guest speaker and teacher. With his graduate degree in Preaching and the New Testament, he published his first book in 2000 and has taught in both theological seminaries and secular settings. Pastor Mary referenced David's newest book, "One Life, Four Stories: Invitations to Faith & Wonder," in her July 12th sermon! Come hear more about the book from David himself after worship on Sunday, August 30. Malaprops will be on hand with copies to purchase!!



Central.United.

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Stories From Central: Jot & Tittle Submission Deadlines:

October/November Submission Deadline - September 21, 2026

December Submission Deadline - November 18, 2026

Please send all submissions to: announcements@centralumc.org

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