

Happy November, Central UMC Family!

I come from a family where Thanksgiving is a big deal. Every year we make a pilgrimage to my dad's hometown, LaGrange, GA. Every year we have a big potluck-style meal. Every year Uncle Glen worries that we won't have enough food, but we end up with way too much. And every year, when we sit down to eat, someone asks, "What are you thankful for this year?"

Because I know the question is coming, I think about my answer all month long. And don't you know, thinking about my thanksgivings helps me notice even more things to be grateful for each November.

This is a great example of how a Journey Group works. In my Journey group, we share "highs" and "lows" from the week and then do our best to answer the question, "How is it with your soul?" Knowing these questions are coming helps me stay more attentive all week long. I pay closer attention to how God is at work in the world – and in me.

Journey Groups come in all shapes and sizes. Here is a list of groups that are open to new members right now:

- *Monday Morning Gang: A men's group that meets on Mondays at 6:30 am for breakfast on Merrimon Avenue. Contact Bill Haynes: bleehaynes@aol.com*
- *Koinonia: A mixed gender group that meets on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays in West/South Asheville. Contact George Sivess: georgesivess@gmail.com*
- *Young Adult Group: A mixed gender group that meets on Wednesdays at 6:30 pm at someone's home. Contact Laura Traister: lrtraister@gmail.com*
- *Thursday Afternoon Group: A mixed gender group that meets on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays at 2:30 in the church Library. Contact Carol Rychly: rychly2@gmail.com*
- *Thursdays at 5: A mixed gender group that meets at a different brewery every week. (Not a strict "Journey Group" – but a great way to meet people who could become your Journey Group!) Contact Steve Noblitt: graynob@charter.net*
- *Brandingirons II: A men's group that meets every other Thursday at 6:30 pm. Contact Steve Holland: steve@wncnature.com*
- *Sunday Evening Ladies: A group of mostly middle-aged women that meets at Creekside Taphouse on the 2nd and 4th Sundays; gathering at 5 pm and group time starts at 5:30 pm. Contact Heather Cree: hrcree@hotmail.com*

If you see one that's of interest to you, email the contact! And if none of these meet your needs, go to https://centralumc.org/adults and fill out the form at the bottom of the page.

You never know – this time next year you might be giving thanks for your Journey Group.

Much love,
Pastor Mary



Some current members of a Journey Group share why their group is so important to them:

"Being in a journey group really helps me live into this house rule because in a journey group, you're there to really hold space for each other, and listen to each other, and share with each other… it's helped me to love myself more when I'm going through really hard things, making tough decisions… doing all that in a space where you are really leaning into God's love helps us remember how to follow that house rule, day in and day out."

"Our group is like an extended family coming to our house for a visit… we exchange thoughts and opinions where we agree and disagree just as a family might, but without arguments. We accept and reject and learn and grow in an effort to expand our faith. Personally, I am excited to see everyone each time and know that love, comfort, and acceptance can be found in our living rooms. In so doing, our journey leads us closer to loving God and our neighbors."

*"…our journey group opens an opportunity for connection. I learn so much from listening to others speak to the state of their souls. In a dominant culture that centers so many other voices – the call to success or materialism or just the myriad ways our attention is pulled – I really value the opportunity to ask myself about the state of my soul and to practice listening to G*d together. Somehow hearing everyone else's shares… turns up the volume on my own soul voice."*

"A Journey Group is like the house. You participate in loving and engaging relationships in the house. It can transform your mindset. Which in turn you carry with you as you go about your daily life."

Central. Family Life.

Our fruit of the Spirit focus in November is ***PEACE***.

NURSERY UPDATES:

We continue our Slugs & Bugs "Sing the Bible" curriculum during worship for our nursery friends, with a focus on peace this month.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY UPDATES:

Godly Play Our regular rhythm is a little different during November due to All Saints Sunday and a change of Communion during worship. We WILL have Godly Play on the first Sunday, but NOT on the second Sunday of November, when we will have communion during worship.

Kids With Purpose is back this fall! As Christians, we are called to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God (Micah 6:8). During Kids With Purpose, children and tweens get to jump into action to share God's love with the world! Susan Hughes is always looking for Ministry Partners to help with KWP!

Tween Ministry We've had so much fun launching this ministry for our 4th-6th graders this fall. Each month, we are enjoying an outing or gathering. These typically fall on the Sundays that Children's & Youth Choirs sing in worship.

Worship: our Tweens have taken on the role of collecting the attendance sheets during worship. Thank you to our tweens for doing this!!! They also have worship bags available for them in the back of the sanctuary that are personal to each of them and include some tools for engaging with the sermon, including a sermon bingo card, bulletin with a breakdown of the scripture, a snack, and whatever fidget tools are useful to them.

Next outing: November 15. We will be making and eating lunch together and then going to Fired Up! for an afternoon of creativity.

Sign up today with the QR Code.

Central. Family Life.

Youth.

SUNDAY EVENING YOUTH GROUP
5:00PM -7:00 PM

NOVEMBER 1 - @ CENTRAL We will remember the saints in our own lives who have gone before us and wonder together about peace even in grief.

NOVEMBER 8 - @ HAW CREEK COMMONS
Serving with Covenant Community Church Youth.

NOVEMBER 15 - @ CENTRAL A youth group night with games, dinner, and music, and breakout groups.

NOVEMBER 22 - @ HAW CREEK COMMONS
Friendsgiving! Bring a dish to share (if you can) or just yourself!

NOVEMBER 29 - @CENTRAL Paint & Pizza! Help us create our own space of peace by painting the youth arena.

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY

November 15

Central celebrates Children's Sunday. Our children will lead worship, and our children's and youth choirs will sing. This is always a wonderful Sunday and celebration of our intergenerational church community. Mark your calendars and plan to worship with us on November 15th.

SAVE THE DATE

IgniteUS

APRIL 9 - 11

YOUTH MINISTRY UPDATES:

In Sunday school our Holy Disruptions series will focus on exploring "what faithful engagement in a time of political and social division might look like. This series will explore this engagement through themes of citizenship, hospitality, justice, and peace.

Each of these themes will explore the ways that we are called by God to love our neighbors and our enemies alike in a faithful way that affirms the created goodness in each person while also emphasizing the real need for reconciliation." (Ministry Leadership Center)

Sign up NOW for the Ski Retreat at Cataloochee, January 16-18, 2027. Spend MLK Jr. weekend detaching from the regular busyness of life in the cabin and on the slopes with us! No skiing/ snowboarding experience necessary.

Sign up using the QR code:

PUERTO RICO 2027 MISSION TRIP

BE ON THE LOOK OUT

SIGN UPS FOR THE
PUERTO RICO MISSION TRIP 2027
AND
WILDERNESS TRAIL 2027 LAUNCH
NOVEMBER 15TH



November Worship Schedule

November 1: All Saints Sunday. Join us for a special service where we light candles to remember those in our congregation who died in the past year. Using John 12 as our Scripture, we'll give thanks for the fruit that resulted from the lives of these saints – and reflect on the fruit we hope will come from our own lives.

November 8: The parable of Matthew 25:1-13 is sometimes called "The wise and foolish bridesmaids." If you've ever been a bridesmaid, your experience might help us uncover what this story tells us about the kingdom of heaven!

November 15: Children's Sunday! Don't miss the chance to support our youngest members as they lead us in worship.

November 22: After the midterm elections, this last Sunday of the Christian year brings an important message: "Reign of Christ" Sunday, reminds us that Jesus Christ is our true king. Join us as we let Philippians 2:1-12 tell us about Jesus, our king.

November 29: The season of Advent begins! Pastor Lisa brings a message to start our preparations for Christmas.

Save the Dates

Sunday, November 15: Children's Sunday! Our children will lead worship and our children's and youth choirs will sing.

Sunday, November 22 at 11:15: Charge Conference and Administrative Board Meeting in the Fellowship Hall.

Saturday, December 5 at 8:00 am: Parents Morning Out. Mini Vacation Bible School - Christmas Edition for children while parents/ guardians get a few hours to themselves.

Sunday, December 6: Youth choir sings in Worship. Children's Choir presents Christmas Musical after Worship in the Sanctuary.

Sunday, December 13: Chancel Choir and Brass orchestra present John Rutter's GLORIA during worship.

Sunday, December 20: Church-wide Christmas caroling at Brooks-Howell with lunch to follow. All Central members, children, and youth are invited to participate.

Monday, December 21 at 6:00 pm: Longest Night Service in the Chapel.

Thursday, December 24:
3:00 pm - Children's Christmas Eve Service
5:30 pm - Service of Lessons and Carols
8:00 pm - Candlelight Communion Service

We hope you will join us for all these special events!

RECONCILING MINISTRY GROUP

Central UMC among 14,000 attendees!

Meeting public visitors at the 2026 Blue Ridge Pride Festival kept Central and Haywood Street United Methodist Church volunteers busy for six hours at Asheville's Pack Square. This mission outreach welcomed hundreds of people and introduced our congregations. By an undercount, we served 400 visitors with free promotion-branded bottles of water, which ran out two hours before the booth closed! We shared conversations, church brochures, and "Come to Me All" story booklets with festival goers. Thank you to every volunteer who helped the Reconciling Ministry Group (RMG) organize and carry out this witness on behalf of Central and Haywood Street UMC.



A focus on faith opened the Blue Ridge Pride Festival 2026

It was the second annual Interfaith Worship Service hosted by Central UMC. People gathered at 10:30 am in unity to worship and praise God for the family-friendly festival. Pastor Mary Brown and other Asheville faith leaders led the service. Preaching, Reverend Dr. Lucy Robbins, UMC pastor at the Biltmore Village Cooperative Parish, focused congregants' attention on one's own story. Sharing her story, her growth experiences involved learning God's loving acceptance and self-acceptance as a lesbian in the challenging and confusing context of family, church, and society. Central volunteers served a table laden with refreshments on the front porch as attendees socialized in the yard.

Supporting Central's FRIENDSgiving event

RMG's mission encourages mission work. It is committed to participating in Central's Mission Council fundraising event on November 19 and is contributing a gift basket. Established in 2022 by the RMG, the Moheto (Kenya) high school girls' scholarship project management has been transferred to the Missions Council. Strong local-global missions support is an historical part of "who" Central United Methodist Church is, and Methodism is!

Central. Congregational Care.

Central's Creation Care Committee is sponsoring another tour of Curbside Management's ("Curbie") recycling facility in Woodfin. We'll learn which items can and can't be recycled, why they can't, and where Curbie sends the recycled items. The tour is Wednesday, November 11th, 2026, at 10 am. The tour lasts about an hour. Participants must be able to climb stairs and be on their feet for an hour. We will meet near Curbie and carpool to the facility. You can sign up by contacting Ellen Furney at efurney08@gmail.com.

United Women in Faith

UWF Corner

UWF MISSION EDUCATION AND INTERPRETATION

I am Sandra Wells, and I serve Central as Co-Chair of the Eve Circle and as Social Action Coordinator on the Executive Committee. In the Blue Ridge District United Women in Faith, I serve as Mission Education and Interpretation Coordinator.

In August, WNC United Women in Faith participated in Mission u at the Catholic Conference Center in Hickory, NC. Our study was "A Deep Knowing: Experiencing Emmanuel Through Every Part of Our Lives," by Linda Louise Furtado. Through prayer, scripture, curriculum study, and deep discussion, we experienced Emmanuel through Holy resistance, transforming community, confronting injustice, and visualizing in prayer, among others. It was a rewarding and transformative experience for all.

In spring 2027, the Blue Ridge District will offer a shorter version of this study, led by Deaconess Tracey Owens, Director of Resident Services at Brooks-Howell Home. Information on the details will arrive in the new year. Everyone is welcome to attend.

I hope to see you there!

- Sandra Wells, Eve Circle co-chair

UWF CIRCLE SPOTLIGHTS

Every woman has a story to tell – a story shaped by memories, experiences, faith and inspiration, and a bit of fun! Circles are not just groups who come together already knowing each other; they are communities that continue to grow and welcome one another.

On the following page, four members of UWF Circles offer glimpses into how long they've been at Central, the Circle they belong to, the connections made, what they are thankful for, and more.

There is always room for one more woman in our Circles. As we look for opportunities to extend that invitation and discover the new stories, gifts, and friendships waiting to be shared, remember…

There is a place for you here. Come as you are. Bring your story.

United Women in Faith Circles

- ***Anna Circle*** will meet on Wednesday, November 4, at 10:00 am in the Central Parlor. April Messer will present on the new Health Ministry being formed at Central. Visitors are always welcome. Please contact Glenda Fuhrmann, glendafuhrmann@yahoo.com for more information,
- ***Deborah Circle*** meets at 10:00 am on the second Tuesday of the month in a member's home. All are welcome. Questions? Contact Susan Snell, ssnell123@bellsouth.net.
- ***Eve Circle*** meets the first Tuesday of each month in the Central UMC parlor at 10:00 am. 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 Sandra Wells, sandracwells@gmail.com or Donna Anderson, dlbandy45@gmail.com for more information.
- ***Martha Circle*** meets on the second Tuesday of each month, in a member's home or a location downtown. For more information, please contact Kathy Leftwich, kathleencleftwich@gmail.com.
- ***Ruth Circle*** - Please join members of the Ruth Circle on Tuesday, November 3, 2026, at 10:00am in the library at Central UMC as we gather for Faith, Action and Sisterhood! Members of the Ruth Circle will be reviewing our United Women in Faith Goals for 2026 and will be helping to fill Christmas Food Boxes with our donations to ABCCM. The following items are needed for the Christmas Food Boxes for families in our area. Cake Mix (any flavor), Jars of Gravy (turkey and beef are appreciated), and Cans of Cream of Chicken and Cream of Mushroom Soup. Let's do This, Let's be Bold, Let's be UNSTOPPABLE! Together! We look forward to sharing the morning with you! Please contact, Kim Everette, kimeverette525@gmail.com for more information about Ruth Circle.
- ***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. For more information, please contact Sarah Caraway, sarahstrickland92@gmail.com.

Cindy Lund – Martha Circle

How long have you been at Central and what Circle do you belong to? Our family joined Central in 1993. When looking for a church in Asheville I wanted to find a strong youth group for our young family. After joining Central, I joined Eve Circle. Years later, they changed to daytime meetings and I joined Martha Circle because attending evening meetings fit my schedule better. I have been involved in a Circle in every church we have belonged to. It has helped me connect with other women in the church.

If animals could talk, which one would you most like to have a conversation with? Birds are very interesting creatures. I could imagine a conversation with a bird who has perched on a branch and observed people and their intersections from above.

What is something creative you're working on now? My current project is finishing a Halloween quilt. Hopefully it will be finished before the end of the month.

What is always on your Thanksgiving table? Two types of cranberry sauce. We live in a house divided.

What is bringing you joy right now? I am thrilled to have our daughter Ilsa home for a very short visit.

What do you give thanks for most often? Healthy grandchildren who attend church regularly and know that Jesus loves them.

What makes worship wonderful? Music has always enhanced the worship service for me. Central's choirs have always made the service a more spiritual experience. One of my favorite hymns is "It Is Well with My Soul." After hearing that hymn performed by the Church Street Choirs, I told Sansa that she needed to sing that hymn at my funeral.

Favorite flavor of ice cream? I love ice cream and will try several different flavors, but vanilla is probably my favorite. It pairs great with Oreo cookies!

Sharon LeDuc - Eve Circle

How long have you been at Central and what Circle do you belong to? We've been at Central for 25+ years! I am a member of Eve Circle.

If animals could talk, which one would you most like to have a conversation with? An eagle.

What ministry is important to you? All ministries are important to me and I've been involved with several. Still am!

What's the best piece of advice you've ever received? To tell the truth.

What is always on your Thanksgiving table? Turkey (except when we were out of the country).

What is bringing you joy right now? Observing or doing acts of kindness.

What do you give thanks for most often? Health and opportunity.

Is there a verse from Scripture that has especially impacted your life? Love your neighbor as yourself. This scripture provides guidance for me to make decisions.

Barbara Rice - Martha Circle

How long have you been at Central and what Circle do you belong to? I have been attending Central for several years, and I belong to Martha Circle. As I was looking for ways to meet members of Central and become involved, UWF seemed a wonderful option for small group fellowship. I grew up with my mother enjoying an important relationship with her Methodist Circle.

If animals could talk, which one would you most like to have a conversation with? Well, I'd need to have a chat with my dog to ask "What were you thinking?" But, after seeing elephants in Africa and learning a little about their deep attachment to their family, hearing how they remember their relationships with people and other elephants would be fascinating.

What ministry is important to you? I appreciate the diversity Central offers us...Haywood Street Respite, Haywood Street resident needs, helping with student dorm room furnishings, Faith Feeds, meal preparation for those that find it helpful. Also, the Faith Discernment class provided me the opportunity to be of service to another attendee.

What's the best piece of advice you've ever received? Forgive so that you may be forgiven.

What is always on your Thanksgiving table? Traditional Southern fare...cornbread dressing, sweet potatoes, green beans, pecan pie and turkey, of course!

What is bringing you joy right now? My new dog, always joyful, full of wonder and loving.

What do you give thanks for most often? Every day, I thank God for his love, forgiveness and mercy. And every day I thank him for good health, freedom and the ability to serve.

Is there a verse from Scripture that has especially impacted your life? 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 because it speaks to how I want to live and hopefully be a witness.

Susan Snell - Deborah Circle

How long have you been at Central and what Circle do you belong to? I have gratefully been a member of Central since our family moved to Asheville in 1991, blessed to see my children and now grandchildren grow up here. I am happily a member of Deborah Circle, being a third-generation United Women in Faith. I follow my mother and grandmother, who were active with the women in their home Methodist churches in the Atlanta area, my grandmother being named a life member of WSCS in 1957.

What do you give thanks for most often? I am most thankful for my family and friends, finding joy daily in spending time with them. Those interactions are treasures to me.

Is there a verse from Scripture that has especially impacted your life? Remembering a favorite Scripture verse, 1 Timothy 1:7, God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and love and a sound mind.

What's the best piece of advice you've ever received? Those words from 1 Timothy give me strength, following advice I was given years ago, to give thanks for all things, even when the blessings are hidden. We count our many blessings, as I pray you do, thanking God for His many gifts.

What is always on your Thanksgiving table? As we all enter into the holiday season, I keep that in mind as my family joins me for a typical Southern Thanksgiving, turkey and dressing, many sides and pies in abundance with vanilla ice cream.

NEWS FROM THE MUSIC DEPARTMENT AT CENTRAL

Central's Music Department has a busy December. Plan now to participate in and attend these services, programs, and activities.

Sunday, November 15 - Children's Sunday

- Our children will lead worship and our children's and youth choirs will sing. This is always a wonderful Sunday and celebration of our intergenerational church community.

Sunday, December 6 – Second Sunday of Advent

- 10:00 a.m. – Youth choir and chancel choir sing in worship.
- 11:30 a.m. – Children's choir presents "Once Upon a Holy Night" Christmas musical after worship.

Sunday, December 13 – Third Sunday in Advent

- The chancel choir presents John Rutter's "Gloria," accompanied by Corey Powell (organ) and the brass choir, during our worship hour.

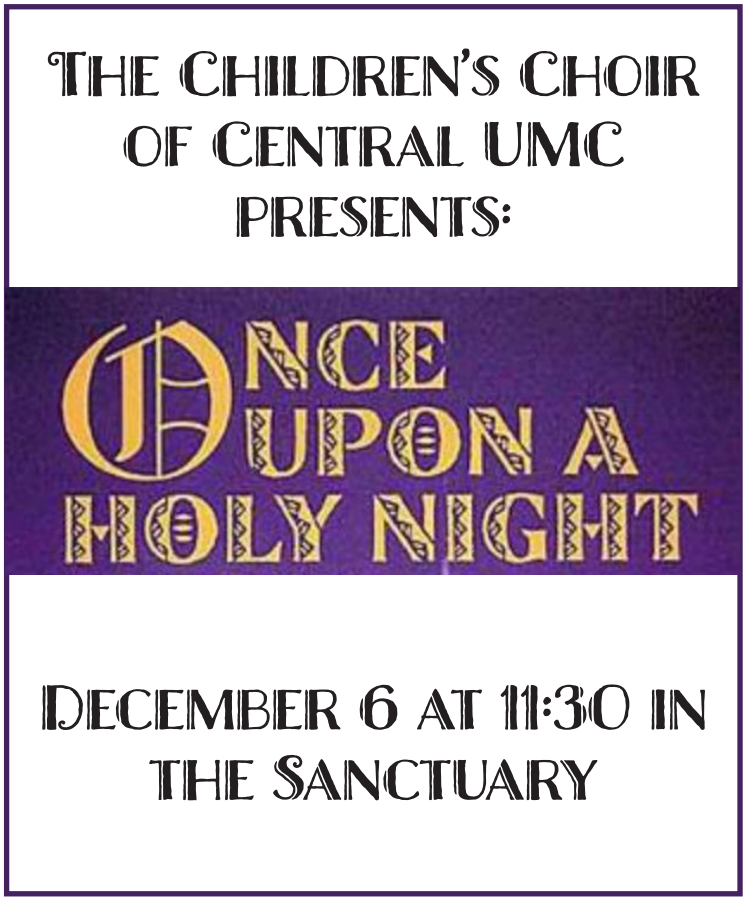
Sunday, December 20 – Fourth Sunday in Advent

- After our worship service, everyone is invited to Christmas Carol at Brooks Howell and to share in a Christmas lunch fellowship. Please contact Linda Haggard at lhaggard@centralumc.org for more information about caroling or any of these activities.

Thursday, December 24 – Christmas Eve

- 3:00 p.m. – Family Service, all are welcome.
- 5:30 p.m. – Lessons and Carols service with music from the chancel choir, preceded by special music from our Brass choir at 5:00. All are welcome.
- 8:00 p.m. – Candlelight service. Special music by a string quartet and Corey Powell. All are welcome.





Central.Congregational Care.



Central's Congregational Care Ministries are not a theory:
We are a congregation of people who care for one another.

In November, our congregation sets aside time to remember special loved ones now in God's loving arms.

Sister Joyce Rupp, in her book, "Praying Our Goodbyes," prayerfully reflects:
"Jesus, to the very end you lived our humanity, that life where one must always let go, must pass through death to enter into the fullness of life, that life where joy never completely buries sadness, where we move through days that demand goodbyes and come to moments that leave us no choice but to bid farewell to our loved ones."

Sunday, November 1 – All Saints Day

Our Prayer Shawl Ministry and our Bereavement Ministry invite you to join us in worship to remember these special people, and to draw on the Holy Spirit to "overpower our own aches and struggles in all of life's farewells and goodbyes."





Congregational Care has MANY FACES:

***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 (Males particularly needed!)
- Become a part of the Prayer Shawl ministry!
- Write notes to our college students.

New Opportunity!

Free Moms at UNC-A - 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.

We'd love to have your participation in any way you can!
Contact Pastor Lisa, lrettew@centralumc.org to talk it over!!

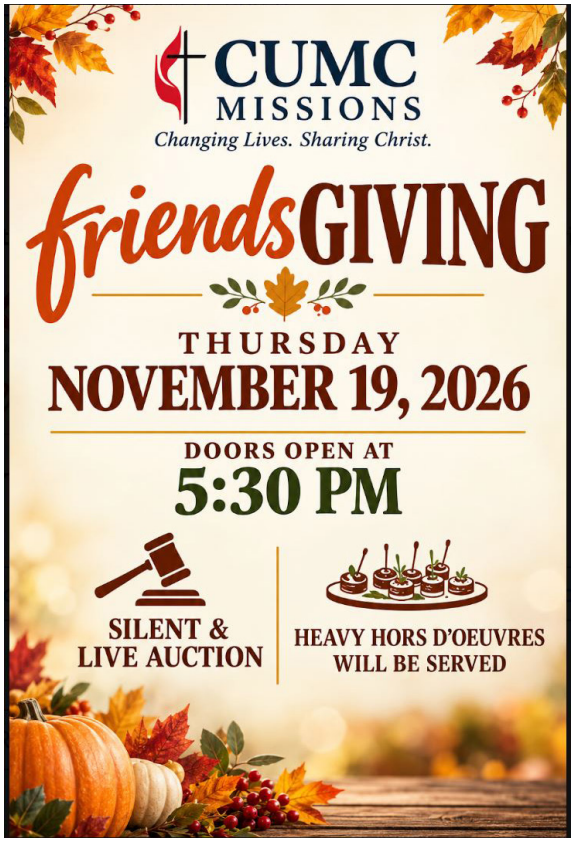
Upcoming Events



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 chicken tenders, and we invite you to bring a favorite side dish, salad, bread, 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 a suggested $10 donation is 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 NOVEMBER 1ST!



FriendsGIVING IS BACK!

Join the fun!
November 19 at 5:30 pm

Join us at Highland Brewing Event Center on Thursday, November 19, 5:30-8:30 pm, for a fun time including heavy hors d'oeuvres, entertainment, and both silent and live auctions supporting Central's Missions.

This will be a meaningful opportunity to make new friends and give to causes that matter. Suggested donation is $25/person. IF that's a problem, use code COMP to attend for free!

5:30 pm: Doors Open
6 - 6:30 pm: live band, hors d'oeuvres, silent auction
6:30 - 7:15 pm: Panel of speakers facilitated by Pastor Mary
7:15 - 7:30 pm: Silent auction bidding last call
7:45 pm: Auction winners announced, closing and auction check out
For more information and to register, please use the QR Code.

Central.United.

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We are once again going to publish a monthly edition of

Stories From Central: Jot & Tittle

Upcoming Submission Deadlines:

December/Early January Submission Deadline - November 18, 2026

Please send all submissions to: announcements@centralumc.org

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