

Announcements

Christmas Eve Offering to Haywood Street Congregation

Over 16 years ago, this congregation felt called to dedicate our Haywood Street campus to a special purpose: a church that would "include the most excluded," following the vision of Rev. Brian Combs. Central UMC provided volunteers and funding for meals, worship, respite, and genuine "relationship above all else" with our siblings on the streets.

The Haywood Street Congregation will always be a special part of our DNA at Central. For that reason, the offering taken up at our Christmas Eve services will go entirely to support Haywood Street. You can read more or donate directly at www.haywoodstreet.org.

Table 2 Table Potluck | SUN, JAN 4 | 11:15 AM: Join us for Table 2 Table Potluck! Central will take care of the fried chicken and chicken strips — just bring a side dish or dessert to share if you're able. The meal is free, and everyone is welcome. Come enjoy good food and even better company! *Donations accepted.*

Reconciling Ministry Group | SUN, JAN 4 | 11:45 AM: The RMG (LGBTQIA+ and allies) will meet at 11:45 AM in Room 219, near the Fellowship Hall. Join us as we begin planning for 2026.

(Un)Decorating: Taking Down Christmas Decor | TUE, JAN 6 | 1:00 PM

All the beautiful Christmas decorations that we're enjoying now need to come down after Epiphany. If you would like to help, please meet in the Sanctuary on Tuesday, January 6 at 1:00 pm. If you have any questions, please contact **Alexandra Holland** at alexandra@wncnature.com. A big thank you, as well, to everyone who helped decorate!

NT 101 | WEDNESDAYS, JAN 7-APR 1 | 5:30-7:00 PM

Join Rick Kuenning and Pastor Mary for a 12-week study of the New Testament! We will meet Wednesdays from 5:30 - 7pm in person from January 7 to April 1 (excepting Ash Wednesday, Feb. 18). Participants will do about 15 minutes of reading each day to prepare for questions and discussion during class. NT 101 will provide beginners with a great overview and long-time students of the Bible with a better understanding of the big picture of God's story. Pre-registration is required so you can get a copy of the workbook and complete the first week's reading (suggested donation, \$20). To register, email **Mary Brown** at mbrown@CentralUMC.org.

Confirmation Kick-Off 2026: Lock-in | SUN, JAN 9

Confirmation is for all 6th graders and those yet to be confirmed. Confirmation kickoff is January 9 and will run until Confirmation Sunday on April 26. **Contact Maggie** at mchristy@CentralUMC.org for more information or to RSVP.

Valentine's Parents' Evening Out | FRI, FEB 13 | 4:30-7:30PM

Parents, enjoy a night out while we take care of the kids! Children **3rd grade and below** are invited to join us for a fun, safe, and love-filled evening of activities while parents enjoy a Valentine's break. Students in **4th and 5th grade** are invited to **assist**, and **youth and adults** are welcome to help make the evening special! This is a great opportunity for families to enjoy some time together—or parents enjoy a date night! 💕 More details and sign-ups coming soon. Contact Maggie for questions.

Ministry Staff

Rev. Dr. Mary Brown, Senior Pastor

MBrown@CentralUMC.org

Rev. Lisa Rettew, Minister of Congregational Care

LRetnew@CentralUMC.org

Maggie Christy, Director of Children and Youth Discipleship

MChristy@CentralUMC.org

Corey Powell, Organist & Director of Music Ministries

CPowell@CentralUMC.org

Linda Haggard, Director of Choral Music

LHaggard@CentralUMC.org

Richard Provine, Director of Central Brass

Central.Congregational Care.



Stephen Ministry: As the holidays draw to a close, we offer our continued support if you are "just not feeling it." Central cares about you. Stephen Ministers are available to listen, empathize, and encourage you in a confidential, non-judging manner. Contact Pastor Lisa or fill out a referral On-line, located under Congregational Care at CentralUMC.org/stephen-ministry.



Pastoral Care: Our pastors are also available to support you if you are homebound, facing surgery, and or other medical treatments. Please let our Pastors know so that phone calls, visits, and Communion can be arranged. You are not alone!

Adult Sunday School OPEN HOUSE! | THIS JANUARY

Why not make trying out a Sunday School class one of your New Year's resolutions? A small group experience helps our faith grow deeper and our connections grow stronger. We have **9 great options**, each with its own vibe—and during January, all are ready to welcome visitors!

Expect to be greeted with smiles and name tags—and maybe even some special treats. You might even try a different class each week to explore all the options available.

To see a full list of our Adult Sunday School classes, go to CentralUMC.org/Adults, or simply scan the QR code.



During worship service, the library is available for families wanting to watch the livestream.

Plainclothes law enforcement officers are present during our services so that all may feel welcome, secure and free to worship, fellowship and experience God's grace freely. Our staff members are in direct communication with the officers should you feel the need to ask for assistance or voice a concern.



PRELUDE

String Quartet

GREETING

Rev. Dr. Mary Brown

CHIMES OF THE TRINITY

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

Todd and Eleanor Callaway

Readers light the three purple candles and the pink candle.

Reader: Tonight we celebrate the birth of Christ!
We celebrate the arrival of a Light that cannot be extinguished.

As John 1:4-5 tells us:
"In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.
The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."

Readers light the center white candle.

Reader: We light this candle as a sign of Christ,
Emmanuel: God-with-us.
God is with us!

All: God is with us!
May the light of Christ shine in us.

***CAROL 211**
(Stanzas 1 and 4)

"O Come, O Come Emmanuel"

VENI EMMANUEL

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here,
until the Son of God appear.

Refrain:

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!*

O come, thou Root of Jesus's tree,
An ensign of thy people be;
Before thee rulers silent fall;
All peoples on thy mercy call.
(Refrain)

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION Rev. Lisa Rettew

...These prayers and praises let us humbly offer up to the throne of heaven, in the words that Christ himself has taught us:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

CAROL 230 “O Little Town of Bethlehem” ST. LOUIS (Stanzas 1 and 4)

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light;
the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in. be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!

OFFERTORY String Quartet
Tonight’s offering is dedicated to Haywood Street Congregation. Everything we receive will go toward the ministry that “includes the most excluded.”

While the string quartet makes their musical offering, the ushers will pass plates for those who wish to offer a financial gift or a prayer request. You may also use this QR code to make a financial gift. Whether you place something in the plate or not, you are invited to pause as you pass it and reflect on what you hope to offer God this week.



THE BIRTH ACCORDING TO MATTHEW Steve Oak
Matthew 1:18-24

CAROL 219 “What Child is This” GREENSLEEVES (Stanzas 1 and 2)

What child is this who, laid to rest,
on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,
while shepherds watch are keeping?

Refrain:
This, this is Christ the King,
whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
haste, haste to bring him laud,
the babe, the son of Mary.

Why lies he in such mean estate
where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christians, fear, for sinners here
the silent Word is pleading.
(Refrain)

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh,
come, peasant, king, to own him;
the King of kings salvation brings,
let loving hearts enthrone him.
(Refrain)

THE BIRTH ACCORDING TO LUKE Cindy Oak
Luke 2:1-7

CAROL 229 “Infant Holy, Infant Lowly” W ZLOBIE LEZY
Infant holy, infant lowly, for his bed a cattle stall;
oxen lowing, little knowing, Christ the babe is Lord of all.
Swift are winging angels singing, noels ringing, tidings bringing:
Christ the babe is Lord of all.

Flocks were sleeping, shepherds keeping vigil till the morning new
saw the glory, heard the story, tidings of a gospel true.
Thus rejoicing, free from sorrow, praises voicing, greet the morrow:
Christ the babe was born for you.

SHEPHERDS IN THE FIELDS Cole Rettew
Luke 2:8-20

CAROL 238 “Angels We Have Heard on High” GLORIA (Stanzas 1 and 2)

Angels we have heard on high
sweetly singing o’er the plains,
and the mountains in reply
echoing their joyous strains.

Refrain:
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
which inspire your heavenly song?
(Refrain)

MEDITATION Rev. Dr. Mary Brown
“The Gift of Christmas: What is it?”

CAROL 224 “Good Christian Friends, Rejoice” IN DULCI JUBILO
Good Christian friends,
rejoice with heart and soul and voice;
give ye heed to what we say;
News, news! Jesus Christ is born today!
Ox and ass before him bow,
And he is in the manger now.
Christ is born today, Christ is born today!

Good Christian friends,
rejoice with heart and soul and voice;
now ye hear of endless bliss;
News, news! Jesus Christ was born for this!
He hath opened heaven’s door,
And ye are blest forever more.
Christ was born for this, Christ was born for this!

Good Christian friends,
rejoice with heart and soul and voice;
now ye Need not fear the grave;
News, news! Jesus Christ was born to save!
Calls you one and calls you all
To gain his everlasting hall.
Christ was born to save, Christ was born to save!

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING Rev. Lisa Rettew

HOLY COMMUNION String Quartet

*CANDLELIGHT CAROL “Silent Night, Holy Night” STILLE NACHT

The ushers will come forward and get the light from the Christ Candle. As they pass the light, be sure to tip unlit candles toward lit ones. Be ready to raise your candles during the final verse.

Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright
round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy infant, so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night, shepherds quake at the sight;
glories stream from heaven afar, heavenly hosts sing Alleluia!
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born!

Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love's pure light;
radiant beams from thy holy face with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

Silent night, holy night, wondrous star, lend thy light;
with the angels let us sing, Alleluia to our King;
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born!

*DISMISSAL WITH BLESSING Rev. Dr. Mary Brown

POSTLUDE “Angels We Have Heard on High” arr. Paul Fey

*Please stand, if you are able.

String Quartet:
Oleg Melnikov, violin, Debra Anthony, violin,
Kara Poorbaugh, viola, and Frances Duff, cello