

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

LRettew@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.



Christmas Eve Services | TONIGHT: We still have one more Christmas Eve service. We invite you to join us.

11:00 PM - Candlelight Communion Worship Service

During worship service, the library is available for families wanting to watch the livestream. Nursery is available in Room 104 for children ages 0-5. See Ushers for assistance.

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.



BRASS PRELUDE

"March of the Kings"

"Pat-A-Pan"

"Huron Carol"

"Carol of the Drum"

"Away In a Manger"

"I Saw Three Ships"

"Greensleeves"

"Coventry Carol"

"The Holly and The Ivy"

Richard Provine, director

arr. Charles Evans

arr. Charles Evans

arr. Charles Evans

arr. Robert Nagel

arr. Keith Snell

arr. John McIntyre

arr. John McIntyre

arr. John McIntyre

arr. John McIntyre

GREETING

Rev. Dr. Mary Brown

CHIMES OF THE TRINITY

*PROCESSIONAL HYMN 234

ADESTE FIDELES

"O Come, All Ye Faithful"

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem.
Come and behold him, born the King of angels;

Refrain:

*O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.*

True God of true God, Light from Light Eternal,
lo, he shuns not the Virgin's womb;
Son of the Father, begotten, not created;
(Refrain)

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation;
Sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above!
Glory to God, in the highest;
(Refrain)

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning,
Jesus, to thee be all glory given.
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing:
(Refrain)

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

Alan, Mary, Eleanor, and Reid Brown

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 250 “Once in Royal David’s City” IRBY

Once in royal David's city
stood a lowly cattle shed,
where a mother laid her baby
in a manger for his bed;
Mary, loving mother mild,
Jesus Christ, her little child.

He came down to earth from heaven
who is God and Lord of all,
and his shelter was a stable,
and his cradle was a stall.
With the poor, the scorned, the lowly
lived on earth our Savior holy.

Jesus is our childhood's pattern;
day by day, like us he grew;
he was little, weak, and helpless,
tears and smiles like us he knew;
and he feeleth for our sadness,
and he shareth in our gladness.

And our eyes at last shall see him,
through his own redeeming love;
for that child so dear and gentle
is our Lord in heaven above;
and he leads his children on
to the place where he is gone.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Melisse Latini

...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.**

A Christmas Eve Festival of Lessons & Carols

FIRST LESSON: Isaiah 9:2-4, 6-7 Bill Haggard
The prophet announces the birth of a king to a people in darkness.

CAROL “O Come, Emmanuel” Elaine Hagenberg
Chancel Choir

SECOND LESSON: Luke 1:26-38 Kathy Leftwich
The angel Gabriel announces to the virgin Mary that she will give birth to God’s promised Son, whose kingdom will never end.

CAROL “In the Bleak Midwinter” Dan Forrest
Chancel Choir

THIRD LESSON: Luke 2:1-7 Tom Russell
Against a backdrop of emperors and taxes, Jesus is born.

CAROL “All Praise to Thee” Elaine Hagenberg
Chancel Choir

FOURTH LESSON: Luke 2:8-16 Joanna Beck
The shepherds go to see the Savior of the world and find him lying in a manger.

CAROL “How Great Our Joy” John Rutter
Chancel Choir

FIFTH LESSON: Matthew 2:1-11 Alexandra Holland
The wise men follow a star to find the child Jesus, the King of the Jews.

CAROL “Infant Holy, Infant Lowly” Robert Powell
Chancel Choir

SIXTH LESSON: John 1:1-14 Robin Smith
John unfolds the great mystery of the Incarnation.

CAROL “For Unto Us a Child is Born” G.F. Handel
Chancel Choir

Responding to the Word

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

OFFERTORY “Masters in This Hall” arr. Mark Hayes
Chancel Choir

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

While the choir 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.



***CAROL 239** “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 “Carillon for Christmas” arr. Brenda Portman

**Please stand, if you are able.*