

Happening today, 12/14:

8:45 AM	Sunday School – All ages
9:30 AM	Blood Pressure Checks Library
10:00 AM	Worship Service Sanctuary
11:00 AM	Blood Pressure Checks Office
11:00 AM	New-ish to Central Library
11:15 AM	Office Volunteers Christmas Gathering Conference Room
3:00 PM	Inquirers Class Event Fellowship Hall
5:00 PM	Youth Christmas Party Youth Arena

Happening this week, 12/15-12/21:

MON, 12/15	5:45 PM	Theology Pub Village Pub
	6:00 PM	Brass Rehearsal
TUE, 12/16	8:30 AM	G.I.F.T.S. Class Fellowship Hall
	12:00 PM	Finance Meeting Conference Room
	2:00 PM	Dementia Partners AVL Library
	5:00 PM	AC Reynolds HS Holiday Concert Sanctuary
WED, 12/17	10:00 AM	UWF Holiday Party Fellowship Hall
	11:00 AM	Centering Prayer Chapel
	3:00 PM	Building Committee Conference Room
	6:00 PM	Dementia Partners AVL Haw Creek
	6:30 PM	Chancel Choir
THU, 12/18	8:00 AM	Thursday Morning Prayer Zoom
	10:00 AM	Circle of Prayer Zoom
	6:00 PM	Longest Night Prayer Service Chapel
FRI, 12/19	1:00 PM	Newsletter Crew Conference Room
SUN, 12/21	8:45 AM	Sunday School – All ages
	10:00 AM	Worship Service Sanctuary
	11:15 AM	Christmas Caroling Fellowship Hall
	12:00 PM	Young Parent Group Conference Room

For more information about these activities, go to CentralUMC.org/Events.

Central.Advent.

The Gift of Christmas Sermon Series | SUNDAYS, NOV 30-DEC 28 | 10 AM

Join us this Advent as we unwrap *The Gift of Christmas* together.

Longest Night Prayer Service | THU, DEC 18 | 6:00 PM

A service to acknowledge the pain we carry, even as Christmas draws near.

Christmas Eve Services | WED, DEC 24

- **3:00 PM** - Family Friendly Candlelight Worship
- **5:30 PM** - Lessons & Carols: Central Brass prelude at 5:00 PM, featuring Chancel Choir at 5:30 PM (*nursery provided*)
- **11:00 PM** - Candlelight Communion Worship Service

Central.Giving.

Financial Update through 11/30/2025:

- Year to Date Offering: \$1,328,172.55
- Total Annual Budget: \$1,550,000

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

Sermon Discussion Questions

As we remember that the gift of the Christ child is for everyone, continue to reflect by journaling or discussing these questions:

- When were you the unexpected recipient of a gift? How did that make you feel?
- God brought the news of Christ to an unexpected group of people: the shepherds. What does that say about how God hopes we will feel about the gift of Christ?
- Who needs to know that this gift is for them? Invite that person to one of our Christmas services!

Daily Suggested Scripture Readings

Advent is a great season for reading the lectionary (the traditional Scripture readings for each Sunday). Christians before us prayerfully selected these passages for the first Sunday of Advent. As you read them, ask yourself: Why would these be important to read in a season of preparation for Christmas? How do they help ready my heart to receive Christ again?

- Monday: Isaiah 35:1-10
- Tuesday: Psalm 146:5-10
- Wednesday: Luke 1:46b-55
- Thursday: James 5:7-10
- Friday: Matthew 11:2-11
- Saturday: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

Next week in worship...

We continue this season of preparation for Christmas and our theme of "The Gift of Christmas" by reflecting on the tradition of wrapping our gifts. How does wrapping a present make it special? How has God "wrapped" the gift of Christ? Join us (and bring a friend!) as we explore these questions together.

 **Eco-Tip: Greener Gift Giving**  Try using less packaging on your gifts! Reuse wrapping paper, ribbons, and cardboard boxes before recycling them . Choose glitter-free Christmas cards—glitter harms the environment and can't be recycled . Shopping locally helps reduce air and water pollution from long-distance shipping . Simple gifts and simple wrapping are often the most meaningful of all  .



Third Sunday of Advent

December 14, 2025

10:00 AM

WELCOME

Rev. Dr. Mary Brown

CHIMES OF THE TRINITY

VOLUNTARY "Comfort, Comfort, Now My People" arr. Egil Hovland

Prayer cards and name tags are available in the attendance pad at the end of each pew. You can also find prayer cards in the pew rack in front of you.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Ina Messer and Josh Hager

Readers light the first two purple candle.

Reader: On this third Sunday of Advent, we look toward Christmas with joy.

Isaiah 35:10 describes the joy of coming back to God: "... those the LORD has rescued will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away."

Readers light pink candle.

Reader: We light this candle as a symbol of Christ our Joy. May the joyful promise of your presence, O God, make us rejoice in our hope of salvation.

All: O come, O come, Emmanuel.

***HYMN 213** "Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates" TRURO

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Hymnal 33

Elizabeth Rose ("Shev") Doliner, daughter of Link and Joe Doliner

PASTORAL PRAYER

Rev. Lisa Rettew

Ending with the Lord's Prayer: *Hymnal 895*

Children are dismissed to Children's Church in the Chapel

OFFERTORY

“Christmas Cantata”

Daniel Pinkham

Chancel Choir & Brass Quartet

Brad Ulrich, Trumpet 1; Forsby Quick, Trumpet 2

Michael Hosford, Trombone 1; Bill Reichenbach, Trombone 2

While the choir makes their musical offering, the ushers will pass plates for those who wish to offer a financial gift or prayer request. You may also use this QR code to make a financial gift. As you pass the plate—whether or not you give—we invite you to pause and reflect on what you hope to offer God this week.



“Christmas Cantata”

Daniel Pinkham

Quem Vidistis, Pastores?

Quem vidistis,
pastores, dicite,
annunciate nobis,
in terris quis apparuit?
Natum vidimus
et choros angelorum
collaudantes Dominum.
Alleluia.

Whom do you see, Shepherds?

Whom do you see?
Shepherds, tell us!
Proclaim to us:
who has appeared on earth?
We saw the new-born child
and choirs of angels
praising the Lord.
Alleluia!

O Magnum Mysterium

O magnum mysterium,
et admirabile sacramentum,
ut animalia viderent
Dominum natum,
jacentem in praesepio!
Beata Virgo,
cujus viscera meruerunt
portare Dominum Christum.

O Great Mystery

O great mystery,
and wondrous sacrament,
that animals should see
the new-born Lord
lying in their manger!
Blessed is the Virgin
whose womb was worthy
to bear the Lord Jesus Christ.

Gloria in Excelsis Deo

Gloria in excelsis Deo
Et in terra pax
hominibus bonae voluntatis.

Glory to God in the Highest

Glory to God in the highest.
And on earth peace
to men of good will.

Verse I

Jubilate Deo, omnis terra;
servite Domino in laetitia.

Verse I

Sing joyfully to God, all ye lands;
serve the Lord with gladness.

Verse 11

Introite in conspectus
ejus in exultatione.

Verse II

Enter into His presence
with great joy.

Verse III

Scitote quoniam
Dominus ipse est Deus;
ipse fecit nos,
et non ipsi nos.

Verse III

Know that
the Lord alone is God;
He has made us,
and not we ourselves.

SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 2:1-14

Lily Everett

SERMON

Rev. Dr. Mary Brown

“The Gift of Christmas: A Gift for Everyone”

ADVENT RESPONSE from *The United Methodist Book of Worship*

Merciful God,

You sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation. Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may celebrate aright the commemoration of the nativity, and may await with joy the coming in glory of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit. One God, for ever and ever. Amen.

***HYMN 718** “Lo, He Comes with Clouds Descending” HELMSLEY

***BENEDICTION** Rev. Dr. Mary Brown

CHIMES OF THE TRINITY

VOLUNTARY “Nun Komm der Heiden Heiland” Johann Pachelbel

**Please stand, if you are able.*

A livestream of the worship service is available in the library for families. Nursery care is available in Room 104 for children ages 0–5.

The flowers on the altar are given by Don Landes to celebrate the many wonderful musicians who have blessed the Central worship services with their talent and skill throughout 2025.

Special love and thanks go to Corey Powell and Linda Haggard for their outstanding musicianship, dedication and leadership.

The white rose on the altar today is placed in memory of Larry Taylor, who died November 18, 2025; Daniel Furtuna, who died November 26, 2025; and Elsie Howard, who died December 8, 2025.

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.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Youth Christmas Party | TONIGHT | 5:00 PM: All middle and high school youth are invited to our **Youth Christmas Party!** We’ll enjoy games, music, and plenty of holiday fun together. Please bring a favorite snack or dish to share (sweet or savory) if you’re able. Friends are always welcome—come celebrate the season with us! 🎄 ✨ Contact **Maggie** for more details.

Family Life Christmas Caroling | SUN, DEC 21 | 11:30 PM

Families, children, youth, and adults of ALL ages are invited to join us for Christmas caroling at **Brooks-Howell**. Meet in the Fellowship Hall and we will travel to Brooks Howell. We’ll share the gift of music and holiday cheer with the residents. After caroling, we’ll head to **Asheville Pizza & Brewing** for pizza. Then we will head to **Whit’s Frozen Custard** for a sweet treat! If you have questions, contact **Maggie or Linda**. Come help us make spirits bright – we’d love to see you there!

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.



Where You Can Help Your Neighbors This Holiday Season

As we move into the holidays, here are some meaningful ways we can serve our neighbors, starting now. Thank you for being a church that shares Christ’s love in tangible, joyful ways.

ABCCM: With SNAP benefits in danger, **ABCCM** needs your food donations. What you leave in the **big wooden tub each Sunday** is picked up. If you want to donate *fresh items* bring them to the **Crisis Ministry** at 24 Cumberland Ave.

Buncombe County: is asking for food to help feed our neighbors until SNAP is restored. Items can be **dropped off at the Public Libraries** in Buncombe County. The food that is collected will go to **MANNA**. If you buy canned goods, be sure they have a pop top on them. Not everyone has a can opener.

OUR 2026 PLEDGE CAMPAIGN

We are grateful to share that *143 households* have already made a pledge for 2026 — including **54 first-time pledgers** and **46 households increasing their pledge**. We have already surpassed last year’s total of 133 pledges!

To date, we have **\$771,146** committed toward our **\$1.55 million goal**, which means we have **\$778,854 left to reach the finish line**.

Every pledge truly makes a difference. Please prayerfully consider your 2026 commitment and scan the QR Code or visit CentralUMC.org/GIVE. Thank you for your faithful generosity!

