

# CENTRAL CHIMES

## Seasons of Grace



On January 4, Pastor Sarah joyfully returned to lead Communion after her medical leave.



The congregation gathers in prayer as Pastor Sarah offers a blessing for Jacob Williams at the close of his year of service.

## PASTOR PAGE

“Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your hearts, with fasting, with weeping, and with sorrow; 13 tear your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the Lord your God, for he is merciful and compassionate, very patient, full of faithful love, and ready to forgive.” Joel 2:12-13 (Common English Bible)

Dear Central UMC family and friends,

The season of Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on February 18. The focus of Ash Wednesday is confession of our sins and repentance, or turning away from our sins and toward the path of love and grace. I'm entering this Lenten season feeling especially tender-hearted because the national news over the last few weeks has given us so many reasons to weep with sorrow. I don't know what additional tragedies may happen between the moment I write this message and when you read it. I'm also reflecting on what it means to repent from the systemic sins I participate in unknowingly. Are there systems I support with my money that contribute to the oppression of others in our nation or the world? These are the questions I take to my prayer time right now.

God welcomes our tears and our hearts filled with sorrow. The words from the prophet Joel remind us that God's focus is on the internal transformation of our hearts, not the outward signs of our religion. As people seeking God's heart, there are traditions that begin with changing the outside so that we can keep our focus on the transformation we seek on the inside.

On February 18 we'll gather in our sanctuary at 7 p.m. for worship and the imposition of ashes. This ancient practice reminds us of our mortality and our need for God's grace. The ashes on our foreheads mark us as beloved children who are called to repent, to turn around and walk in a new direction. This outward sign we wear reminds us of the inward change we seek.

During Lent, we also often "give up" something or fast in some specific way. This practice isn't about guilt or a diet. It's about making space for transformation. If I give up something that costs money, I can give away the money I've saved. If I give up something that takes time or energy from me, I have more time or energy to devote to the spiritual growth God has in store for me. You'll find a calendar in this newsletter that might help inspire your spiritual growth this Lent with different ways to engage the traditional practices of prayer, fasting, and giving. This Lent, let's make space for God to work in us, not out of obligation, but out of love for the One who first loved us.

Blessings,  
Pastor Sarah

## CORRIE'S REFLECTIONS WITH OLIVE LANE HORNING

We are delighted to announce that on Sunday, February 8, our church will welcome Olive Lane Horning as a special guest speaker, presenting Corrie's Reflections—a unique first-person portrayal of Corrie ten Boom.

Olive Lane, a retired special educator from Kissimmee, Florida, has been bringing Corrie's story to life since 1975. Inspired after hearing Corrie speak in Michigan, Olive Lane began portraying her at a local vacation church school. From that humble beginning, she has shared Corrie's story across the United States, Canada, and Europe. As the Fenton Independent wrote in 1976, "Olive Lane Horning is a gracious lady who has a talent and is willing to use it whenever and wherever the call may lead her."



Through costume, accent, gestures, and mannerisms, Olive Lane embodies Corrie ten Boom, sharing her testimony of faith, courage, forgiveness, and God's sustaining grace. Corrie ten Boom, who spent her early years in her father's watch shop in Haarlem, Holland, famously hid Jews during the Nazi occupation and endured eleven months in Ravensbruck Concentration Camp as a political prisoner. Her story of survival and unwavering faith was shared in her book *The Hiding Place*, which was later adapted into a full-length movie.

During the presentation, Olive Lane speaks in first-person as Corrie, and she continues this immersive experience by answering audience questions in character. This ministry is presented with Corrie ten Boom's personal consent and blessing—in a letter to Olive Lane, Corrie wrote, "I am so glad you are reaching people like this, as I can no longer travel."

Olive Lane reflects on her experience portraying Corrie, saying, "Corrie was a delightful Christian whose eyes were always on Jesus. How humble I feel to be used to share her experiences."

This is truly an experience you won't soon forget. We encourage everyone to attend and to invite friends and family to share in this moving presentation.

For more information:

[www.mycorrietenboom.com](http://www.mycorrietenboom.com) | 407-414-2682 | [ohorning@aol.com](mailto:ohorning@aol.com)

Church Office: [office@cumcballston.org](mailto:office@cumcballston.org) | 703-527-8844



## CELEBRATE THE ARTS AT CUMC!

Join us as **CUMC hosts the Arlington Philharmonic & Artist Alliance** for a weekend of local art and live chamber music!

Save the Dates:

- **Friday, Feb 6 | 5–7 PM** – Art Show Opening & Flute Quartet Reception
- **Saturday, Feb 7 | 12–6:30 PM** – Art Show & Sale
- **Saturday, Feb 7 | 5 PM** – Woodwinds Concert

Highlights:

- Free and open to the public
- Part of the **Communities of Arlington Chamber Music Festival**
- All donations to the Arlington Philharmonic are tax-deductible

For more information, visit [arlingtonphilharmonic.org](http://arlingtonphilharmonic.org).

## LENTEN STUDY: WITNESS AT THE CROSS

Last year, we journeyed through Holy Week in Slow Motion, spending one week of Lent on each day of Holy Week. This Lenten season, we're slowing down even more. We'll pause to stand at the foot of the cross on Good Friday itself.

Join us for a six-week study of Dr. Amy-Jill Levine's "Witness at the Cross: A Beginner's Guide to Holy Friday." We'll explore the story through the eyes of those who were present at Jesus' crucifixion, from Simon of Cyrene to Mary Magdalene. Dr. Levine, a renowned New Testament scholar, brings the historical and cultural context of Good Friday to life in accessible and deeply moving ways.



Whether you're new to Bible study or have walked with Jesus through many Lenten seasons, this study will deepen your understanding of the cross and prepare your heart for Easter's resurrection joy.

This study begins Monday, February 16 at 7:30 p.m. We will meet weekly for six weeks. You can attend in-person or on zoom. To sign up please email Pastor Sarah at [pastor@cumcballston.org](mailto:pastor@cumcballston.org).

## A HEARTFELT THANKS FROM CARDS FOR TROOPS

Our church community joined a nationwide effort last year to bring joy and encouragement to members of the U.S. military through handmade cards. We are thrilled to share that in 2025, card makers across the country sent a total of 73,650 cards to our troops — surpassing their goal of 60,000!



Thanks to everyone who contributed your creativity, time, and love, these cards became tangible reminders to our service members that they are appreciated and remembered. The team at Cards for Troops is already looking forward to 2026 and hopes to reach 75,000 cards this year.

On a more personal note, we ask for prayers for Pat Brodsky, the founder of Cards for Troops, who is currently undergoing treatment for a serious health condition. She remains committed to this mission and encourages the team to "carry on," a spirit we celebrate in our own church community.

Thank you to all who participated — whether through crafting, donating, or praying. Your efforts made a real difference in the lives of those serving our country.

## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: KATHY SIBERT

I am so glad to be a member of CUMC and delighted to do the Member Spotlight for this month. I grew up as an Army “brat” and moved in and out of the country A LOT. (I did not go to the same school in the Fall that I had attended in the Spring until I was a Junior at Yorktown High School!) I became a person who had to make friends and adapt rapidly. I chose friends who came from solid families as my parents were alcoholics, so I would always attach to a friend AND their family.

The 4 most impactful people in my life have been my brother, George, who was 16 years older than me and who took me from my parents when I was 11. He and his wife, Judy, were a significant influence on my life. Their faith was very strong and they raised me in the Episcopal Church. Sadly, they died in 2016 and 2021 and I really miss them.

The individual who has had the second greatest influence on me is my husband, Mike. We were married in 1981, and it has been a blessing, (well not all the time 😊), but we have loved one another and have reached 45 years of marriage through all the highs and lows. We have a strong faith in God and are huge believers in humor and marriage counseling. 😊

Our children, Elizabeth and Andrew, round out the most important people in my life. When you did not grow up in a safe and stable home, it was such a gift to be a parent and to have a family. There is nothing like becoming a parent to understand your own parents better and to forgive them.

My faith really began in high school. I was very involved in St Andrew’s Youth Group in Arlington and our priest, Herb Lodder, challenged us to examine our faith and what we are called to do as children of God. That experience instilled in me a commitment to assist others, which has remained a significant motivation throughout my life. It led me at the end of my corporate life to become the Executive Director of A-SPAN (now PathForward) which brought Mike and me to Central. Working with Pastor Cobb and Gene on the lobbying for the Homeless Services Center and the CUMC Building Committee have been such an honor.

When I walk into our beautiful space with the ministry we provide through housing, education, meals and counseling, I am in awe of how God can use us all to do his work.



# VOLUNTEER DAY

FEBRUARY 21ST | 8:00AM-3:00PM

We are excited to welcome all volunteers to join us on **February 21st** to help keep Camp Highroad looking beautiful and ready for all guests! Join us to help through general camp maintenance and small repair jobs.

REGISTER HERE



21164 STEPTOE HILL RD, MIDDLEBURG, VA 20117  
NICK.EARLY@CAMPHIGHROAD.ORG | (540) 687-6262  
[WWW.CAMPHIGHROAD.ORG](http://WWW.CAMPHIGHROAD.ORG)

**Lunch Will Be Provided!**

## SUMMER OPPORTUNITIES AT CAMP HIGHROAD

Camp Highroad, a United Methodist camp in Middleburg, VA, invites our church community to get involved this year through volunteering and summer programs.

### **Summer Staff & Camp Opportunities:**

Camp Highroad is hiring over 50 summer staff, including counselors, program staff, support staff, and food service team members. High school and college-aged youth are encouraged to apply for a meaningful summer experience.

Summer camp registration is now open for day camps (ages 5+) and overnight camps (ages 8+). Camp Highroad offers adventure, outdoor fun, meaningful friendships, and opportunities to grow in faith. Early registration is encouraged.

For more information or to register, visit [www.camphighroad.org](http://www.camphighroad.org)

## LEADERSHIP BOARD UPDATE

The Leadership Board met on Jan. 4, 2026, welcoming back Pastor Sarah's safe return from medical leave since mid-Nov. 2025. With Jacob Williams' resignation, effective Sunday, Jan. 25, the Board discussed splitting most of those responsibilities held by Jacob as CUMC's Worship Coordinator and Accompanist, between Pastor Sarah and Greg Capaldini for a trial period until the Board's evaluation on the feasibility of this arrangement on March 15. Greg will now be the Music Director.

The parsonage study committee is continuing to review the options on how best to address the deficits at our current parsonage. They will present a recommendation to the Board soon. Love gift checks were approved for distribution to appropriate staff – thanks to everyone for their generosity! Additional housekeeping items were reviewed, including the failure of Tech-24's ability to provide adequate service during last month's refrigerator outage.

For your reference, CUMC's 2026 goals are noted below:

- Strengthen Communication & Community Engagement – by increasing awareness of opportunities to connect and serve and fostering a sense of meaningful community involvement.
- Enhance Welcoming Experience with Intentional Structure – by building a consistent and organized hospitality approach to greeting Sunday worshippers.

Upcoming board meetings will be held in the 2nd floor Music & Meeting Room at 12pm noon, Feb. 8 and March 15.



# LENT

## 2026



### LENT IS A CHRISTIAN SEASON OF PREPARATION & REPENTANCE

We spend this time in prayer and look for ways that we have wandered away from God. We “return to the Lord our God” through spiritual practices like those you’ll find on this calendar: praying, giving, and fasting. Join us in growing closer with God these 40 days!

## WEEKLY EVENTS

**Worship** on Sundays at 10:30 a.m.

**Lenten Study** on Mondays at 7:30 p.m. February 15 through March 22.

“Witness at the Cross: A Beginner's Guide to Holy Friday” by Dr. Amy-Jill Levine.

To sign up for the Lenten study email [pastor@cumcballston.org](mailto:pastor@cumcballston.org).

## SPECIAL EVENTS

### ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP

February 18 at 7:00 p.m. in the sanctuary.

### MAUNDY THURSDAY WORSHIP

April 2 at 6:30 p.m. Join us for Dinner church in the fellowship hall.

We will share a meal while we worship and also share the Lord’s Supper.

### EASTER SUNDAY WORSHIP

April 5 at 10:30 a.m.

Potluck lunch in the fellowship hall to follow worship. Please bring a dish to share if you’re able to do so.

## PEOPLE TO PRAY FOR:

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## OTHER PRAYER TOPICS:

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### **DID YOU KNOW? LENTEN FACTS**

- We say “40 days of lent” but there are actually 46 days between Ash Wednesday and Easter Sunday... this is because Sundays are not part of Lent! We do not fast on Sundays because every Sunday is like a “mini Easter” when we celebrate the hope and promise of resurrection.
- You aren’t required to fast from anything during Lent, but you can choose to fast from anything.
- We often try to “give alms” or give to charity above and beyond our typical giving during Lent. You can give more than money!
- Prayer is an important part of who we are as Christians. Prayer can come in many forms, from speaking intentionally with God to coloring, singing, or even just traveling in a car in silence, listening for God’s “still, small voice.”

Monday

FEB. 16

LENTEN STUDY  
BEGINS 7:30 P.M.

Tuesday

17

SHROVE  
TUESDAY

Wednesday

18

ASH  
WEDNESDAY  
WORSHIP 7:00 PM

Thursday

19

GIVE  
encouragement  
to a friend

Friday

FAST 20

from screens for  
today (notice what you  
have time for)

Saturday

21

PRAY  
for children living in the  
midst of war

Sunday

22

Remember your baptism  
with a  
bubble bath

PRAY 23

for those who  
are hungry

GIVE 24

your time by  
sharing a warm  
beverage with someone

PRAY 25

for the lonely

GIVE 26

a 10-second hug  
to someone  
you love

FAST 27

from music today  
(notice what you  
hear instead)

PRAY 28

for those without  
adequate housing

MARCH 1

Make a special meal  
with family or friends

2

PRAY  
for students  
and teachers

3

GIVE  
your attention to  
Creation

PRAY 4

for families  
of all shapes  
and sizes

GIVE 5

gently used clothing to a  
local charity

FAST 6

from using plastic today  
(notice how hard this  
might be)

PRAY 7

for first responders

8

Start a puzzle or word  
search and spend time  
with family or friends

9

PRAY  
for nursing home  
residents

GIVE 10

artwork to a nursing  
home for a resident's  
room!

PRAY 11

for caregivers  
and hospital staff

GIVE 12

a donation  
to the CUMC Manna  
Ministry

FAST 13

from social media today  
(notice how it impacts  
your screentime)

PRAY 14

for those who need  
healing

15

Read or watch a show  
for some Sabbath rest

PRAY 16

for those who  
don't have a faith  
community

GIVE 17

some love:  
send a note to someone

PRAY 18

for those  
who mourn

GIVE 19

your time! corral carts in  
a store parking lot

FAST 20

from gossip  
(notice your  
relationships)

PRAY 21

for all who struggle  
with loneliness

22

Spend some time outside  
in Creation today

GIVE 23

yourself time  
to focus on God's love  
for the world

GIVE 24

laughter!  
tell a joke to a friend

PRAY 25

for those who teach  
about  
our faith

GIVE 26

your help with someone  
else's chore or job

FAST 27

from spending money  
today (notice how you  
use what you have)

PRAY 28

for teachers  
and parents

29

PALM  
SUNDAY

FAST 30

from busyness... slow  
down and journey  
through Holy Week

GIVE 31

a sweet treat  
to a neighbor

APRIL 1

PRAY  
for pastors and worship  
leaders everywhere

MAUNDY  
THURSDAY  
WORSHIP 6:30 PM

GOOD  
FRIDAY

HOLY  
SATURDAY

5

EASTER  
SUNDAY  
WORSHIP  
10:30 AM

## STAY CONNECTED – YOUR WAY

Would you like to receive the Central Chimes right in your email inbox? It's quick, convenient, and helps us save resources—just email us at [office@cumcballston.org](mailto:office@cumcballston.org) or call 703-527-8844 to switch.

Printed copies are available for pick-up at the church anytime during Sunday services throughout the month, and of course, we're still happy to send them to your home by mail if that's easiest for you. Whichever way you choose, we're glad to keep you connected with all that's happening at Central United Methodist Church.

## GOD IS EVERYWHERE. WE CAN BE, TOO.

### Join Us Online!

Can't make it to church in person? Watch our Sunday service at 10:30 a.m. live on [cumcballston.org](http://cumcballston.org), YouTube, or Facebook.

### Follow us for updates and community highlights:



Facebook Live

[www.facebook.com/cumcballston](http://www.facebook.com/cumcballston)



Instagram

<https://www.instagram.com/cumcballston/>



Youtube

<https://www.youtube.com/@CUMCBallstonVA>

## Support Our Church

Your gifts help us serve our community and grow our ministries.

**Donate via PayPal**

*Every gift—large or small—makes a difference.*

You may also scan the QR code below to donate.

### Checks can also be mailed to:

Central United Methodist Church  
4201 Fairfax Drive, Suite 1  
Arlington, VA 22203

