

CENTRAL CHIMES

February Highlights



Receiving ashes from Pastor Sarah to begin the Lenten season.



Arlington Philharmonic fills sanctuary with music.



Standing ovation for the Arlington Philharmonic.



String quartet performs at art show opening.



Olive Lane Horning sharing Corrie ten Boom's story of faith.

PASTOR PAGE

“The earth is the Lord’s and everything in it, the world and its inhabitants too. Because God is the one who established it on the seas; God set it firmly on the waters.”

Psalm 24:1-2

Dear Family and Friends of Central UMC,

On February 25, I joined over 1,200 United Methodists in person (with another 1,000 on the livestream) for "A Public Witness for Immigrant Justice." The morning began with worship at Capitol Hill UMC (and two other nearby churches for the overflowing crowd) and then continued with a walk from the churches to Upper Senate Park by the Capitol. I left the event both challenged and inspired.

Bishop LaTrelle Easterling, who serves the Baltimore-Washington Conference, preached a powerful sermon on Psalm 24. The prayers, the songs, and the calls to action from various faith leaders were all grounded in the biblical truth that every person is made in the image of God (the doctrine of *Imago Dei*). When we see God's image in every human being, we cannot turn away from those who are vulnerable, marginalized, or afraid.

Scripture is clear about how we're called to treat immigrants and refugees. Leviticus 19:34 commands us to love the foreigner as ourselves. In Matthew 25, Jesus identifies himself with “the stranger.” We also know that Jesus himself was a refugee as a child. When Herod's soldiers threatened his life, Mary and Joseph fled to Egypt, seeking safety in a foreign land. The Holy Family knew what it meant to be strangers seeking refuge.

When we advocate for immigrant justice, we're living out the gospel call to love our neighbors, defend the vulnerable, and see Christ in every person.

As we navigate complex conversations about immigration, our faith calls us to always remember that every person is made in God's image.

If you're interested in learning more about what scripture and our denominational Book of Resolutions have to say about immigration in the U.S., please check out this resource from the General Board of Church and Society:

<https://www.umcjustice.org/documents/765>

Grace and peace,
Pastor Sarah





PI DAY CELEBRATION 🥧 MARCH 15



Join us on Sunday, March 15, as we celebrate Pi Day (3.14) together! Following worship, we'll gather in the Fellowship Hall for a special time of fellowship filled with conversation, laughter, and, of course, pie. Whether you love baking or simply love eating, you're invited to bring a pie to share if you'd like — sweet or savory, all are welcome!

This is a wonderful opportunity to connect with one another, meet someone new, and enjoy the simple gift of community. Come for worship, stay for fellowship, and share in a slice of faith and fun!

MAUNDY THURSDAY DINNER CHURCH

Join us on Thursday, April 2, at 6:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall for a special Maundy Thursday Dinner Church service. As we remember Jesus' Last Supper with his disciples, we will gather around the table for a meaningful evening of worship, reflection, and Holy Communion.

Together we will share a meal and enter more deeply into the story of Christ's love and service as we begin the journey toward the cross.

EASTER WORSHIP AND POTLUCK BRUNCH

We invite you to celebrate Easter Sunday at Central UMC on April 5, 2026, at 10:30 a.m. Together, we will rejoice in the hope and promise of the Resurrection through vibrant worship, meaningful music, and the proclamation of Christ's victory over death.

After the service, please join us in the fellowship hall for a festive potluck brunch. Bring your favorite dish to share as we continue the celebration with food, fellowship, and community. Easter is a time of joy and renewal, and we would love for you to be part of this special day.

All are welcome—invite a friend!



HOPPIN' DOWN THE BUNNY TRAIL – EASTER EGG HUNT

Now that Lent has started, it's time to think about the Easter Egg Hunt, which will be held after church on **Sunday, April 5th**. We've got plenty of things to do to get ready, so let's get hopping!

We have a large plastic storage tub full of empty eggs and a box with 400 pre-stuffed eggs. We'll need **10–12 bags of small, individually wrapped candies** (no lollipops, please—they don't fit in most of the eggs!) and volunteers to help **stuff the eggs after church on Palm Sunday**.

This year, the egg hunt is open to kids ages 1–12. We'll also need volunteers to:

- Hide the eggs
- Gather the kids by age groups (1–4, 5–8, 9–12)
- Help put supplies away in the storage closet upstairs afterward

We also welcome **donations of prizes**, including small, medium, and large pre-made Easter baskets, toys safe for the youngest kids, and toys, games, or art/activity kits for older children.

Another item we need is **plastic bags**, such as grocery bags, to help the kids take their prizes home. If you have extras, we'd be happy to take them off your hands.

Please bring all items **no later than Palm Sunday (March 29th)**.

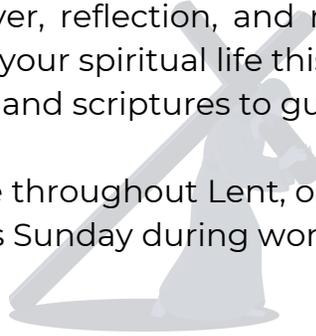
If you would like to help with the egg hunt or have questions, please **contact Sharon Lovering via email at kidmin@cumcballston.org**. Thank you so much for your help in making this a fun and memorable event for our kids!



DEEPEN YOUR LENTEN JOURNEY

Lent is a sacred season of prayer, reflection, and renewal as we prepare our hearts for Easter. We invite you to nurture your spiritual life this season by using our Lenten calendar, filled with simple daily practices and scriptures to guide you along the way.

Download your copy here to use throughout Lent, or pick up a printed version in the lobby or at the sanctuary entrance this Sunday during worship. May this season draw us closer to Christ and to one another.



CELEBRATING THE 2025 ARLINGTON CROP WALK

The 2025 Arlington CROP Hunger Walk raised an incredible **\$42,090.92** — the most successful walk since 2013. Every walk is a success, but this year's impact is especially meaningful as communities face increasing food insecurity due to government funding cuts affecting food assistance programs.

We are proud to share that **Central UMC** raised **\$1,050**, thanks to the dedication of Steve Barham, who walked on behalf of our church, and to the generosity of those who donated and supported him. Funds raised help provide food for hungry people both around the world and right here in Arlington through the Arlington Food Assistance Center (AFAC).

Thank you to everyone who donated, encouraged, and supported the Arlington CROP Hunger Walk. Your generosity makes a real difference.

SUNDAY BULLETIN NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE

The Sunday church bulletin is now available on our website for all who attend online. You can download it or view it during the service to stay connected with announcements, readings, and service details.

Access it here: www.cumcballston.org/worship-and-events/

SPECIAL CHURCH CONFERENCE – PARSONAGE PROJECT

Since last fall, the Parsonage Study Committee has been diligently evaluating options to repair or replace our parsonage. On February 22, the Leadership Board voted on their recommendation, allowing us to move to Phase Two of the project.

A special Church Conference will be held in the sanctuary on Sunday, March 22, at 11:45 a.m. The congregation will elect a building committee to serve for Phase Two and approve funds for them to begin their work. All are welcome to attend; however, only members of Central UMC are eligible to vote.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: WENDY BODSON

I don't really remember my very first Sunday at Central United Methodist Church, but I clearly remember the season of life that brought us there. Brian and I were engaged and looking for a church where we could both feel comfortable, meaningful, and authentic to who we were as a couple.

Between 2012 and 2013, we spent time "shopping around" for a church, cruising Arlington and visiting different congregations. We were searching for something that felt like home, even if we didn't quite know what that would look like yet.

Then one afternoon, something unexpected happened. Brian was out with a friend who lived in the neighborhood, and I received a text message that still makes me smile to this day. He had walked past Central and seen the sign out front—and it spoke to him. Literally. If you know Brian, you know that's a big deal! His message to me was simple and clear: "We should try this place."

I grew up Catholic, baptized, confirmed, youth group and all. I like to describe my family as "grocery store



Catholics," picking the rules we wanted to follow. As an adult, what I was really searching for was a church that offered a strong, relatable message on Sundays and real opportunities to help those in need. It didn't take long after stepping into Central for us to feel that we had found exactly that.

From the beginning, we felt genuinely welcomed. Pastor Richard started each Sunday with a joke, instantly making you laugh and setting a joyful tone for worship. People like David and Cheri, Pat and Steve, and Jeanie and Gene made a point to connect with us, making us feel seen and included. Their warmth and encouragement gently drew us into the mission work of the church.

We began helping with Thursday night prep and the Friday morning program. That grew into shopping with the Lord family, doing BJ's warehouse runs for Friday lunch bags, and picking up donations from Heidelberg Bakery. I even convinced Brian to join the young adult Bible study—though we were probably the oldest ones there! One of my favorite memories was when the "Adult" and "Young" groups came together. Those gatherings were fun, energetic, and sometimes rowdy, filled with shared perspectives, life experiences, and lots of laughter.

Central has always felt like a place full of people who genuinely want to help one another and serve the wider community. Over the years, programs have evolved and shifted and so has my role. Today, I'm part of the Leadership board, which is made up of smart, thought-provoking individuals, I continue to participate in our Food rescue efforts -picking up Heidelberg Bakery donations and delivering them to the Pathway Forward shelter—a meaningful extension of the service work that first drew us in.

Looking back, it's amazing to see how far Central has come—from where we started to the beautiful new building, we now call home. Pastor Sarah, the building committee, and so many others worked tirelessly for years to bring that vision to life. Being part of this community, its growth, and its mission has truly been a blessing, and I'm grateful to call Central United Methodist Church my church home.

LEADERSHIP BOARD UPDATE

Parsonage Decision

- The Board voted on the parsonage committee's recommendations regarding whether to sell or rebuild the current pastoral home and decided to pursue Option #4 involving a detailed study by professional consultants (within an established budget) to renovate the parsonage.
- If renovation proves financially unviable, the Board will keep Option #3 (selling the parsonage to buy a 3-bedroom condo) as an active alternative.
- A Church Conference will be held on March 22 to elect a Building Committee to serve for Phase 2 of the parsonage building project and to approve funds for the committee to begin their work.

Financial Oversight

- The 2024 audit was satisfactory. Monthly financial statements through January 2026 were reviewed. The Investment Committee is currently addressing Board comments on the new Investment Policy before it is finalized.

Volunteer Opportunities

- Greeters: Needed March–June to cover for Mike Rugala and Kathy Sibert during their travels. Please see Pastor Sarah to sign up.
- Easter (April 5): Volunteers are needed for the potluck and to assist Sharon Lovering with the egg hunt.

Upcoming Events

- Pi Day (March 15): bring a pie to share to celebrate Pi Day!
- Church Conference March 22
- Easter Sunday (April 5): Egg hunt & potluck lunch festivities

The Board will hold its next meeting on March 15, 2026.

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 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, YouTube, or Facebook.

Follow us for updates and community highlights:



Facebook Live

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.

Scan the QR code to donate via PayPal, or give in person at our Sunday service (10:30–11:30 a.m.).

Checks can also be mailed to:

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