

CENTRAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

# Defying Limits



**Breaking Systems of Harm**

MAY 3, 2026

4201 FAIRFAX DRIVE, SUITE 1, ARLINGTON, VA 22203

# We Gather

Prelude Meditation on "Feast of the Lord" (today's anthem)

Welcome  
(Scan the QR code for digital connection card)



\*Song "Christ the Lord Is Risen" TFWS #2116, vv. 1&7

\*Call to Worship

Leader: Christ is risen!

**People: Christ is risen indeed!**

Leader: We gather as people who believe that death does not have the final word.

**People: God's love defies every limit.**

Leader: We come not only to remember a resurrection, but to be shaped by one.

**People: God's love defies every limit.**

Leader: Come as you are. You are welcome here.

**People: God's love defies every limit.**

Leader: We worship the God who defied death, and who calls us to carry that same love into a world that needs it.

**People: God's love defies every limit. Alleluia! Amen.**

\*Song "In Christ There Is No East or West" UMH #548

Prayers of the People

Leader: God, through your mercy,

**People: Your love defies every limit.**

\*Please stand in body or spirit.

## We Hear

Anthem "Feast of the Lord" (Choplin)

Children's Sermon

Prayer of Illumination "Christ is Alive" UMH #318, v.5

Scripture Galatians 3:26-29 (Common English Bible)

*You are all God's children through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 All of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither slave nor free; nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 Now if you belong to Christ, then indeed you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to the promise.*

Reader: The Word of God for the People of God.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

Sermon "Breaking Systems of Harm"

## We Respond

Sermon Reflection Questions

1. Are there ways that you think The United Methodist Church is still losing its vileness today?
2. How might we apply our General Rule to "do no harm" here in Arlington, VA?
3. What systems might we challenge in order to build a more inclusive, equitable, and wholistic table for all God's people?

\*Please stand in body or spirit.

## Invitation to the Table

### Confession

**Merciful God, we confess that we have not loved you with our whole heart. We have failed to be an obedient church. We have not done your will, we have broken your law, we have rebelled against your love, we have not loved our neighbors, and we have not heard the cry of the needy. Forgive us, we pray. Free us for joyful obedience, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

### Pardon

Leader to people:

Hear the good news: Christ died for us while we were still sinners; that proves God's love toward us. In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!

People to leader:

**In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!**

Leader and people:

**Glory to God! Amen.**

### The Great Thanksgiving

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

**People: We lift them up to the Lord.**

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Pastor: It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Almighty God, creator of heaven and earth. You formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life. When

we turned away, and our love failed, your love remained steadfast. You delivered us from captivity, made covenant to be our sovereign God, and spoke to us from your prophets.

And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**People: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

Pastor: Holy are you and blessed is your son, Jesus Christ. Your Spirit anointed him to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captive and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, and announce that the time had come when you would save your people. He healed the sick, fed the hungry, and ate with sinners. By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection you gave birth to your church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit. When the Lord Jesus ascended, he promised to be with us always, in the power of your Word and Holy Spirit.

On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

When the supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Drink

\*Please stand in body or spirit.

from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

**People: Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.**

Pastor: Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood. By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory and we feast at his heavenly banquet. Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church, all honor and glory is yours, almighty God, now and forever.

**People: Amen!**

Lord's Prayer

**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. 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.**

## Distribution Of The Communion Elements

Please come forward as you feel led. You'll be offered a piece of gluten-free bread to dip into the cup of grape juice.

Prayer after Communion

**Eternal God,  
we give you thanks for this holy mystery  
in which you have given yourself to us.  
Grant that we may go into the world  
in the strength of your Spirit  
to give ourselves for others,  
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

\*Giving our gifts to God and passing the peace



To donate online please scan the QR code.

To give cash or check please put your donation in the basket in the front of the sanctuary next to the baptismal font.

\*Song UMH #94 Easter Doxology

Prayer of Dedication

## We Go

Announcements

\*Song "One Bread, One Body" UMH #620

\*Benediction

\*Sung Benediction "Go Now in Peace" UMH #665

Postlude Benediction on "Feast of the Lord"

\*Please stand in body or spirit.

## **WORSHIP LEADERS TODAY**

Liturgist	Dainty Ignacio
Reader of the Word	Carroll Cobb
Pianist	Greg Capaldini
Communion Server	Pat Barham
Communion Steward	Pat Barham
Preacher	Rev. Jan Phillips

### **Assistive Listening Available**

You can now connect your Bluetooth-enabled hearing aids directly to our sound system using the *ListenWIFI* app on your smartphone. Look for laminated signs at the sanctuary entrances for simple setup instructions. Need help? Just ask a greeter or staff member—we're happy to assist!

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **Welcome Guest Preacher Rev. Jan Phillips**

CUMC is pleased to welcome Rev. Jan Phillips as our guest preacher this Sunday, as Pastor Sarah travels back from Pittsburgh after officiating the wedding of Jen Lui, a member of our leadership board.

Rev. Jan Phillips is a clergywoman, coach, philanthropist, and founder of J.L.P. Ministry Collective. Her ministry integrates pastoral leadership with creative and equity-centered design thinking to foster inclusive, trauma-informed spaces within faith communities.

At the heart of her work is a commitment to accompanying young adults and emerging leaders as they discern their callings. This same focus extends through her coaching, where she works with youth leaders, seminarians, and community founders as they explore, develop, and articulate their gifts.

She is passionate about connecting communities with resources, promoting healing and reconciliation across differences in the greater Washington, D.C. area, and creating pathways to leadership in the church, education, and beyond. Rev. Phillips earned her Master of Divinity from Wesley Theological Seminary in 2024 and currently serves there in extension ministry following her time serving in Arlington, VA.

### **The May issue of the *Central Chimes* is now available!**

Inside you'll find updates on upcoming events and activities at Central UMC, opportunities to connect in worship and fellowship, important church news and announcements, and ways to get involved in the life and mission of our church community.

Pick up your copy at the sanctuary entrance or welcome table, or receive it by email or mail—whatever works best for you. To join our newsletter mailing list, contact the church office at [office@cumcballston.org](mailto:office@cumcballston.org) or call 703-527-8844.

### **Kits for Conference**

We are continuing our tradition of sending **Hygiene Kits** to Conference to support those affected by tornadoes, floods, and other emergencies. In past years, proceeds from White House ornament sales supported this mission. This year, you can participate by donating to **Missions**—just write **"Kits"** in the memo line of your check.

Your gifts help us purchase supplies in bulk so we can assemble complete kits that provide comfort and care where it is needed most. Donations will be collected **through May 10**. Thank you for helping make a difference in the lives of those in need! For questions, please contact **Pat Barham** or the church office.

\*Please stand in body or spirit.

## **Discover & Serve – Summer Guide (May–August)**

Looking for ways to connect or get involved at CUMC? Our new Discover & Serve handout is now available at the sanctuary entrance and welcome table.

It highlights a variety of ways to serve from May through August, including children’s ministry, hospitality, tech team, readers of the Word/liturgists/communion servers, food rescue pickups, men’s group, and more. Take one and explore where your gifts might be a blessing to others and a way to stay connected in the life of the church!

## **An Invitation to a Virtual Bible Study from Carroll Cobb**

The Rowdy, Motley Bible Study crew led by Carroll Ellis Cobb has begun a study of the book of Nehemiah. We meet via Zoom on Tuesdays, with 2 sessions: one at 2:00 pm and another at 7:00 pm. It is open to everyone – young and not-so-young, single and married, those who have studied the Bible a lot and those who’ve never been in a Bible Study at all – all from the comfort of your home.

So, if you are interested or have questions, please contact the church office at [office@cumcballston.org](mailto:office@cumcballston.org). And just know that we would love to have you join us!

## **Stay Connected to CUMC Throughout the Week**

Looking for ways to stay connected beyond Sunday morning? Follow Central United Methodist Church online for weekly encouragement, sermon messages, event updates, and moments from our church life that help you stay inspired throughout the week. Scan the QR code to connect with us on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube—plus access sermons, updates, and more.



## **Considering Membership at Central UMC?**

At Central, all are welcome to worship God and serve others. You don't need to be a member to take part in the life of our church. Still, for many, church membership is a meaningful step in growing as a disciple of Jesus Christ. Membership is a commitment to support the ministries of Central with your prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness.

If you're discerning this next step in your faith journey, we'd love to talk with you. For more information, contact Pastor Sarah at 703-527-1783 or [pastor@cumcballston.org](mailto:pastor@cumcballston.org).

## **Join the Prayer Chain**

*"Carry each other's burdens and so you will fulfill the law of Christ."* — Galatians 6:2

Be part of a ministry of care, hope, and encouragement through prayer. Our Prayer Chain email goes out weekly, and more often as needed for time-sensitive requests, so that our church family can lift one another up.

Want to pray for others? Need prayer? Write your request on a Connect Card and place it in the offering basket, or email [office@cumcballston.org](mailto:office@cumcballston.org). Your prayers matter. Together, we carry one another's burdens in love.

## **Join the Choir!**

Do you love singing? Come share your voice with our choir! We welcome all skill levels and would love to have you be part of our harmonious community. Practice sessions are at 9 AM on Sunday in the 2nd-floor music and meeting room. If you're interested, please reach out to Greg in person or via email at [conductor@cumcballston.org](mailto:conductor@cumcballston.org) and let your voice be heard!

\*Please stand in body or spirit.