

CENTRAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Christmas in July



WE FOLLOWED A STAR

JULY 19, 2026

4201 FAIRFAX DRIVE, SUITE 1, ARLINGTON, VA 22203

We Gather

Prelude "Old Christmas Carol" (C. Franck)

Welcome
(Scan the QR code for digital connection card)



*Song "Sing We Now of Christmas" UMH #237, v.1

*Call to Worship

Leader: Wise men from distant lands followed a star across
deserts and mountains.

**People: They left everything familiar
to seek the newborn King.**

Leader: On this July morning, we remember their courageous
journey.

**People: We gather to celebrate those who sought Christ
and found him.**

Leader: Come, let us worship the God who calls us to seek
Christ.

All: Amen.

*Song "We Three Kings" UMH #254

Prayers of the People

Leader: Immanuel, God with us,

People: We lift our prayers to you.

*Please stand in body or spirit.

We Hear

Special Music "'Twas in the Moon of Wintertime" UMH #244
Lane Timm, Soloist

Children's Sermon

Prayer of Illumination "Like a Child" TFWS 2092, v.3

Scripture Matthew 2:1-12 (Common English Bible)

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in the territory of Judea during the rule of King Herod, magi came from the east to Jerusalem. 2 They asked, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We've seen his star in the east, and we've come to honor him."

3 When King Herod heard this, he was troubled, and everyone in Jerusalem was troubled with him. 4 He gathered all the chief priests and the legal experts and asked them where the Christ was to be born. 5 They said, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for this is what the prophet wrote:

*6 You, Bethlehem, land of Judah,
by no means are you least among the rulers of Judah,
because from you will come one who governs,
who will shepherd my people Israel."*

7 Then Herod secretly called for the magi and found out from them the time when the star had first appeared. 8 He sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search carefully for the child. When you've found him, report to me so that I too may go and honor him." 9 When they heard the king, they went; and look, the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stood over

the place where the child was. 10 When they saw the star, they were filled with joy. 11 They entered the house and saw the child with Mary his mother. Falling to their knees, they honored him. Then they opened their treasure chests and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. 12 Because they were warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they went back to their own country by another route.

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

All: Thanks be to God.

Sermon

“We followed a Star”

We Respond

Sermon Reflection Questions

1. What does the story of the Magi reveal about whom the gospel includes?
2. What's the difference between the Magi and Herod, and where do you see that contrast today?
3. How has an encounter with Jesus changed the direction of your life?
4. What is currently shaping the direction of your life, and is it worth following?

*Please stand in body or spirit.

Prayer

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.

*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 #95 Doxology

Prayer of Dedication

We Go

Announcements

*Song "Sing We Now of Christmas" UMH #237, vv. 4 & 5

*Benediction

*Sung Benediction "Go, Tell It on the Mountain" UMH #251, v. 3

Postlude

"O Little One Sweet" (J.S. Bach)

WORSHIP LEADERS TODAY

Liturgist	Alisa Thomas
Reader of the Word	Brian Mills
Pianist	Greg Capaldini
Preacher	Rev. Sarah Harrison-McQueen

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

Carl Tanner in Concert

Join our own Carl Tanner for a free all-Wagner concert on Sunday, July 19, from 4:00–6:00 PM at Universalist National Memorial Church (1810 16th St. NW, Washington, DC). The program will feature scenes from Richard Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* and *Die Walküre*, with guest artists Marje Palmieri, Molly Pinson Simoneau, and LeFolia E. Brunt.

Scan the QR code for more information and to reserve your free spot.



Pastoral Care

Pastor Sarah will be on vacation July 22–28. If you have a pastoral emergency during this time, please contact Rev. Sara Keeling from Mt. Olivet UMC at 540-672-8684.

*Please stand in body or spirit.

Men's Group – Fellowship & Games | Sunday, July 19

All men of Central are invited to our monthly Men's Group gathering. This is a relaxed time to share laughs, build friendships, and strengthen one another in faith. We'll enjoy board and card games together and good fellowship. Bring yourself, invite a friend, and feel free to bring a snack to share.

These gatherings are a great way to grow in community with other men of the church, encouraging each other as we live out our faith in daily life. Join us Sunday, July 19 from 3–5 pm in the Fellowship Hall.

Church Fellowship Karaoke Night

Come join us on **Friday, July 24, from 5:30–7:30 PM** for an evening of singing, laughter, and fellowship!

Sing along to your favorite songs with lyrics on the screen, making it easy for everyone to join in the fun. Everyone is welcome—bring your voice, your joy, and, if you'd like, a dish to share. We can't wait to see you there! Questions? Contact the church office at office@cumcballston.org or 703-527-8844.

The First 15 Course – Emergency Preparedness Training

Join us Monday, October 19 from 6:30–9:00 PM for *The First 15*, a free emergency preparedness and response training offered in partnership with Arlington County Emergency Management.

This hands-on course equips participants to respond in the critical first minutes of an emergency before first responders arrive. Training includes emergency planning, building a basic emergency kit, calling 9-1-1 effectively, situational awareness, psychological support, and basic first aid skills such as bleeding

control. This training is open to all and especially valuable for those involved in church ministries, hospitality, or community outreach.

There is no cost to attend. To reserve your spot, contact the church office at 703-527-8844 or office@cumcballston.org

Share Your Musical Gifts This Summer

Musicians and singers of CUMC, have you ever wanted to share your gifts in Sunday worship without making a regular time commitment? Each Sunday through Labor Day weekend, there will be opportunities to contribute by playing an instrument, singing, or even gathering an informal group.

There may be openings for preludes and postludes, accompaniment for congregational hymns, or special music in place of the usual choir anthem.

If you are interested, please email Greg Capaldini at conductor@cumcballston.org or leave a message with the church office at 703-527-8844.

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.

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