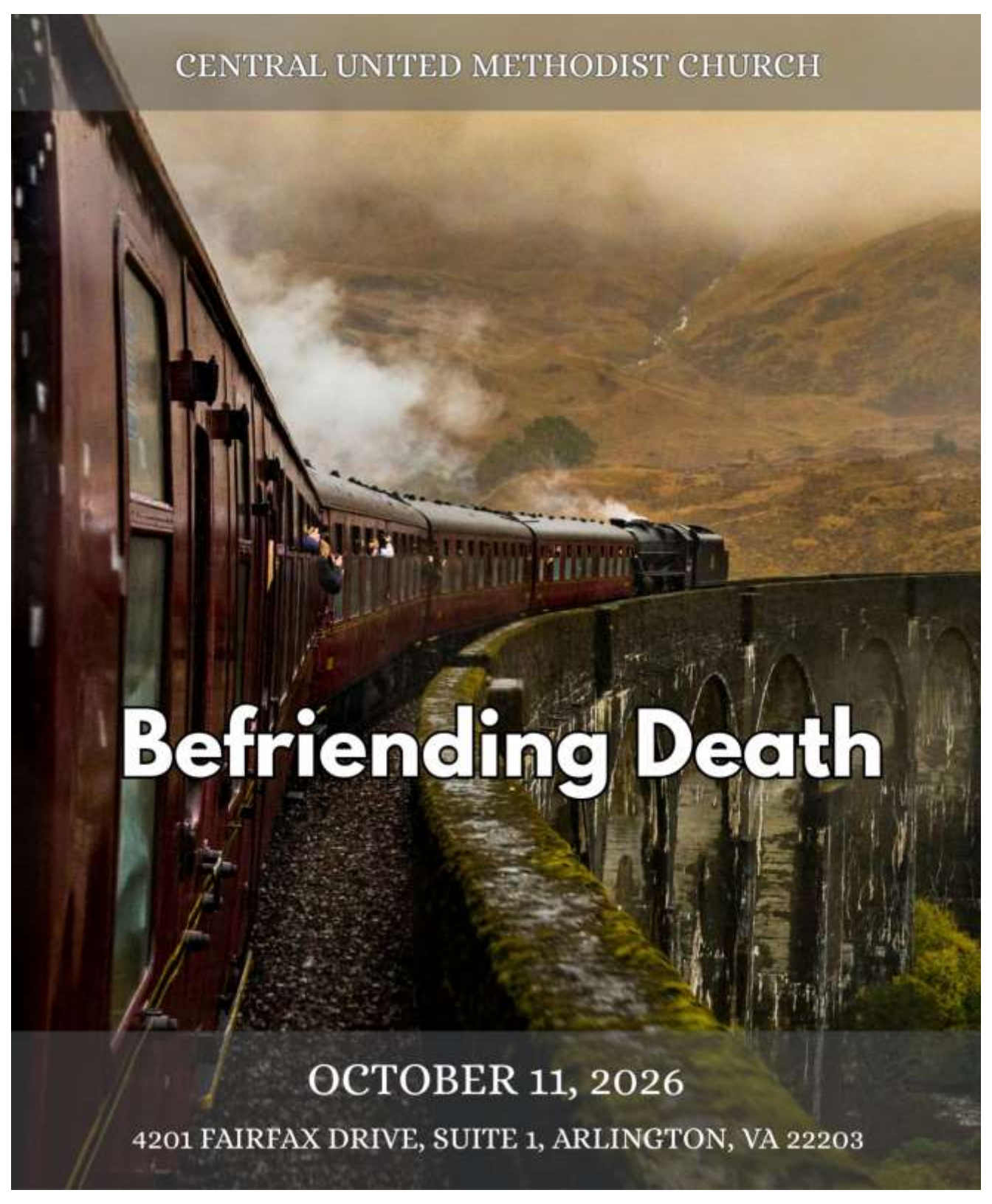


A steam locomotive pulling several passenger cars across a large stone viaduct. The train is moving away from the viewer towards the right. The landscape is hilly and covered in autumn foliage. The sky is overcast with some clouds. The train is emitting a small amount of steam.

CENTRAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Befriending Death

OCTOBER 11, 2026

4201 FAIRFAX DRIVE, SUITE 1, ARLINGTON, VA 22203

We Gather

Prelude Prelude to Suite Bergamasque by Claude Debussy

Welcome

(Scan the QR code for digital connection card)



*Song "Gather Us In" TFWs #2236, v.4

*Call to Worship

Leader: We gather today as people held in the love of God.

People: A love that meets us in our living, and in our dying.

Leader: We come with fears about what lies ahead,

People: and with faith that something greater than our fears is true.

Leader: For we are convinced that neither death nor life, nor anything else in all creation,

People: will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Leader: So let us open our hands, open our hearts, and worship the One who holds us in every season.

People: We come, ready to trust. We come, ready to be loved. Amen.

*Song "Soon and Very Soon" UMH #706

Prayers of the People

Leader: In life and in death,

People: Lord, hold us close.

*Please stand in body or spirit.

We Hear

Anthem "Flee as a Bird" (J. Martin)

Children's Sermon

Prayer of Illumination "Thy Word Is a Lamp" UMH #601, v. 1

Scripture Romans 8:31-39 (Common English Bible)

So what are we going to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? 32 He didn't spare his own Son but gave him up for us all. Won't he also freely give us all things with him?

33 Who will bring a charge against God's elect people? It is God who acquits them. 34 Who is going to convict them? It is Christ Jesus who died, even more, who was raised, and who also is at God's right side. It is Christ Jesus who also pleads our case for us.

35 Who will separate us from Christ's love? Will we be separated by trouble, or distress, or harassment, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? 36 As it is written,

We are being put to death all day long for your sake.

We are treated like sheep for slaughter.

37 But in all these things we win a sweeping victory through the one who loved us. 38 I'm convinced that nothing can separate us from God's love in Christ Jesus our Lord: not death or life, not angels or rulers, not present things or future things, not powers 39 or height or depth, or any other thing that is created.

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

All: Thanks be to God.

Poem

"When Death Comes"

When death comes
like the hungry bear in autumn;
when death comes and takes all the bright coins from
his purse
to buy me, and snaps the purse shut;
when death comes
like the measles-pox;
when death comes
like an iceberg between the shoulder blades,
I want to step through the door full of curiosity, wondering:
what is it going to be like, that cottage of darkness?
And therefore I look upon everything
as a brotherhood and a sisterhood,
and I look upon time as no more than an idea,
and I consider eternity as another possibility,
and I think of each life as a flower, as common
as a field daisy, and as singular,
and each name a comfortable music in the mouth,
tending, as all music does, toward silence,
and each body a lion of courage, and something
precious to the earth.
When it's over, I want to say: all my life
I was a bride married to amazement.
I was the bridegroom, taking the world into my arms.
When it's over, I don't want to wonder
if I have made of my life something particular, and real.
I don't want to find myself sighing and frightened,
or full of argument.
I don't want to end up simply having visited this world.
—Mary Oliver

*Please stand in body or spirit.

We Respond

Sermon Reflection Questions

1. "What does a good day look like?"
2. Henri Nouwen suggests that befriending death involves becoming like a child again, leaning into dependence on God and on others. Is there a place in your life right now where you are resisting that kind of dependence? What might it look like to loosen your grip and lean in?
3. Mary Oliver wrote that she wanted to live like someone "married to amazement," fully awake to the world around her. What is something in your own life that you want to pay more attention to or not take for granted? What would it look like to live that way this week?

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 "In Christ Alone" WSH #3105

*Please stand in body or spirit.

In Christ Alone

(as published by Capitol CMG Publishing)

Words and Music by
Keith Getty and Stuart Townend

VERSE



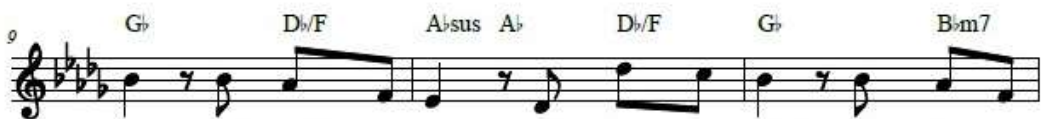
1. In Christ a - lone my hope is found, He is my
2. In Christ a - lone, who took on flesh, full - ness of
3. There in the ground His bod - y lay, Light of the
4. No guilt in life, no fear in death, this is the



light, my strength, my song; This Cor - ner - stone, this sol - id
God in help - less babel! This gift of love and right - eous -
world by dark - ness slain; Then, burst - ing forth in glo - rious
pow'r of Christ in me; From life's first cry to fi - nal



Ground, firm through the fierc - est drought and storm. What heights of
-ness, scorned by the ones He came to save. Till on that
Day, up from the grave He rose a - gain! And as He
breath, Je - sus com-mands my des - ti - ny. No pow'r of



love, what depths of peace, when fears are stilled, when striv - ings
cross as Je - sus died, the wrath of God was sat - is -
stands in vic - to - ry, sin's curse has lost its grip on
hell, no scheme of man, can ev - er pluck me from His

12 A^bsus A^b G^b D^b G^b A^b D^b/F

cease. My Com - fort - er, my All in All, here in the
 - fied. For ev - 'ry sin on Him was laid; Here in the
 me; For I am His and He is mine, bought with the
 hand; Till He re - turns or calls me home, here in the

INSTRUMENTAL

15 G^b D^b/F E^m7 G^b/A^b D^b A^bm7 E^m7 D^b D^bsus D^b

love of Christ I stand.
 death of Christ I live.
 pre - cious blood of Christ.
 pow'r of Christ I'll stand!

*Benediction

*Sung Benediction "God Be with You till We Meet Again"
 UMH 672, v.3

Postlude Praeludium No.1 by JS Bach

WORSHIP LEADERS TODAY

Liturgist	Sarah Harrison-McQueen
Reader of the Word	Pat Barham
Pianist	Alan Naylor
Preacher	Cathy Abbott

*Please stand in body or spirit.

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. Cathy Abbott

Central United Methodist Church is pleased to welcome Rev. Cathy Abbott as our guest preacher this Sunday. Rev. Cathy Abbott grew up in Hyattsville, Maryland, and now lives in McLean, Virginia. She holds degrees from Swarthmore College, Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government, and Wesley Theological Seminary. Cathy served as pastor of Arlington Temple United Methodist Church from 2006 to 2013 and as District Superintendent of the Arlington District of the Virginia Conference from 2013 to 2019. Since retiring from ministry in 2019, Cathy has devoted much of her time to art and spirituality. She serves on the Board of Penland School of Craft and the Board of Governors of Wesley Theological Seminary. Cathy and her husband, Ernie, have two children and five grandchildren.

Love One Another Hospitality Guide

Our "Love One Another" Hospitality Guide is now available! Printed copies are available in the lobby, and you can also download a digital copy using the QR code. The guide is designed to help us put hospitality into practice by inviting others to take a seat at the table with us. It includes conversation starters and even recipes shared by



members of our church family, both past and present, to help inspire us to follow Jesus' commandment to love one another by building relationships around the table. We hope you'll take a copy and find a simple way to invite someone to the table.

2026 White House Christmas Ornaments for Sale

CUMC is again offering the official 2026 White House Christmas Ornament, celebrating the 250th anniversary of our nation's founding. The brass ornament features enamel detailing, a 24-karat gold finish, the Declaration of Independence on the front, and the Betsy Ross flag and modern Stars and Stripes on the back. It includes a red, white, and blue ribbon and keepsake gift box.

Ornaments are \$24 each with orders accepted September 13–October 11. Make checks payable to Central UMC, with "ornaments" in the memo line, and give them to the church office or Pat Barham. All proceeds support our annual Health Kit mission. Questions? Contact the church office at office@cumcballston.org or 703-527-8844.

Find Your Place to Serve at the Ministry Fair

Join us after worship on Sunday, October 18, for our Ministry Fair! Connect with ministry leaders, explore ways to share your gifts and talents, and discover a place to serve. Opportunities include the Community Café, children's ministry, Men's Group, and Sunday roles such as Reader, Liturgist, and tech volunteer. We're also kicking off our "World Series of Stewardship" that Sunday! Everyone is invited to wear a baseball shirt to worship as we celebrate the start of our stewardship season.

Tables will be set up in the fellowship hall after worship. Come browse, ask questions, and find your place to serve!

*Please stand in body or spirit.

All Saints Day

All Saints Day is an opportunity to give thanks for those who have gone before us in the faith. Hebrews 12 tells us about the "great cloud of witnesses" who surround us, encouraging us, cheering us on as we run the race of this life. During worship on November 1, we'll honor the memory of those from our church family and those connected to Central who have died and joined this great cloud of witnesses.

If there is someone you would like remembered during this special moment of worship—a family member, friend, or fellow member of our church family who has died since last All Saints Sunday—please share their name with the church office by October 15. You can reach Brian at 703-527-8844 or office@cumcballston.org.

The First 15 Course – Emergency Preparedness Training

Join us Monday, October 19, 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 training prepares participants to respond during the critical first minutes of an emergency, before first responders arrive. Topics include emergency planning, emergency kits, effective 9-1-1 calls, situational awareness, psychological support, and basic first aid/bleeding control.

Open to all and especially valuable for those involved in church ministries, hospitality, and community outreach. No cost to attend. Reserve your spot by contacting the church office at 703-527-8844 or office@cumcballston.org.

Support Steve in the Annual CROP Walk

Steve Barham will once again walk in the annual CROP Walk on behalf of Central. This year's walk will take place on Saturday, October 17, beginning at 9:00 a.m. at the Presbyterian Church on Carlin Springs Road.

If you would like to support Steve's walk, please make your check payable to CWS.CROP and give it to Steve. 25% of the money raised through the CROP Walk stays right here in Arlington to help support local needs. Thank you for supporting Steve and helping make a difference in the fight against hunger!

Virtual Bible Study

The Tuesday Bible Study led by Carroll Ellis Cobb has just begun a study of the book of Job. The group meets via Zoom on Tuesdays at 7:00 pm. The Bible study is open to everyone – young and not-so-young, single and married, those who've 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.

Special Charge Conference on October 25

Central will have a special Charge Conference on Sunday, October 25, 2026, at 12 noon. The meeting will be held in the Music and Meeting Room on the second floor. All are welcome to attend. Only members of the Leadership Board are eligible to vote. The purpose of the meeting is to approve 2026 pastoral compensation for the transition from local church payroll processing to conference payroll processing.

*Please stand in body or spirit.