

Happening today, 12/21:

8:45 AM	Sunday School – All ages
10:00 AM	Worship Service   Sanctuary
11:15 AM	Office Volunteer Christmas Party   Conference Room
11:15 AM	Family Life Christmas Caroling   Brooks-Howell

Happening this week, 12/22-12/28:

MON, 12/22	5:45 PM	Theology Pub   Village Pub
	6:00 PM	Brass Rehearsal
WED, 12/24		Christmas Eve Services:
	3:00 PM	Family Friendly Candlelight Worship
	5:00 PM	Central Brass Prelude
	5:30 PM	Lessons & Carols
	11:00 PM	Candlelight Communion Worship Service
THU, 12/25		Christmas Day! Merry Christmas!
		Church Offices Closed
FRI, 12/26		Church Offices Closed
SUN, 12/28	8:45 AM	Sunday School – Adult Classes
	10:00 AM	Worship Service   Sanctuary
	11:00 AM	Serendipity Class Gathering   Conference Rm
MON-FRI 12/29-1/2		Church Offices Closed

For more information about these activities, go to [CentralUMC.org/Events](https://CentralUMC.org/Events).

## Central.Advent.

**The Gift of Christmas Sermon Series | SUNDAYS, NOV 30-DEC 28 | 10 AM**  
Join us this Advent as we unwrap *The Gift of Christmas* together.

**Christmas Eve Services | WED, DEC 24**

- **3:00 PM** - Family Friendly Candlelight Worship
- **5:30 PM** - Lessons & Carols: Central Brass prelude at 5:00 PM, featuring Chancel Choir at 5:30 PM (*nursery provided*)
- **11:00 PM** - Candlelight Communion Worship Service

Central.Giving.

Financial Update through 11/30/2025:

- Year to Date Offering: \$1,328,172.55
- Total Annual Budget: \$1,550,000

**Thank you!** A big thank you, to Central's United Women in Faith Executive Committee members, Circle Leaders and Membership, for a wonderful Christmas Brunch and General Meeting! Women from each of our six Circles attended brunch on Wednesday, December 17th, and fellowshiped together, welcomed our Blue Ridge District President (Lucy Earls) and Nurturing Partner (Jeannette Byrd), noted our good works this year, remembered those we lost, and shared good food. We installed our officers for 2026, celebrated four Special Mission Recognitions, and ten UWF Reading Program recipients. Mark your calendars for Sunday, February 1, 2026, when United Women in Faith will lead our congregation in worship. Sending good wishes for a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!  
~Kathy Leftwich, Central UWF President

### Ministry Staff

Rev. Dr. Mary Brown, Senior Pastor  
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Rev. Lisa Rettew, Minister of Congregational Care  
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Linda Haggard, Director of Choral Music  
[LHaggard@CentralUMC.org](mailto:LHaggard@CentralUMC.org)

Richard Provine, Director of Central Brass

### Sermon Discussion Questions

As we remember that the gift of the Christ child often comes “wrapped,” continue to reflect by journalling or discussing these questions:

- Have you ever received a gift that wasn’t wrapped? What difference would it have made if it was wrapped?
- How have the gifts from God you’ve received been “wrapped”?
- What can you do this week to “unwrap” the gifts God is giving you?




### Daily Suggested Scripture Readings

Advent is a great season for reading the lectionary (the traditional Scripture readings for each Sunday). Christians before us prayerfully selected these passages for the first Sunday of Advent. As you read them, ask yourself: Why would these be important to read in a season of preparation for Christmas? How do they help ready my heart to receive Christ again?

- Monday: Isaiah 7:10-16
- Tuesday: Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
- Wednesday: Matthew 1:18-25
- Thursday: Luke 2:1-20
- Friday: John 1:1-14
- Saturday: Isaiah 9:2-7

### Next week in worship...

After celebrating with us Christmas Eve (3:00 PM Family Friendly; 5:00 PM Lessons and Carols; 11:00 PM Candlelight), join us next Sunday as we finish our theme of “The Gift of Christmas.” We’ll consider the practice of “regifting” and how we share what we receive with others. Come and bring a friend!

 **Eco-Tip:** Many outdoor Christmas lights are LEDs, which use less energy and can be recycled after the holidays . Some strands are even solar-powered ! Use timers to turn your lights on and off on a schedule, instead of leaving them on all night. Conserving energy in your home helps ensure others have enough energy in theirs



Fouth Sunday of Advent  
December 21, 2025  
10:00 AM

**WELCOME** Rev. Dr. Mary Brown

**CHIMES OF THE TRINITY**

**VOLUNTARY** “Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming” arr. Mark Hayes  
Karen Crutchfield, piano and Corey Powell, organ

*Prayer cards and name tags are available in the attendance pad at the end of each pew. You can also find prayer cards in the pew rack in front of you.*

**LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH**  
Tommy, Susan, Parker, and Joey Hughes

*Readers light the two purple candles and the pink candle.*

Reader: On this fourth Sunday of Advent, we anticipate the birth of the Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 9:6-7 tells us:  
“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders.  
And he will be called  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end.  
He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.  
The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.”

*Readers light the last purple candle.*

Reader: We light this candle as a symbol of Christ our Peace. May the visitation of your Holy Spirit, O God, make us ready for the coming of Jesus, our hope and joy.

**All: O come, O come, Emmanuel.**

**\*HYMN 220** “Angels from the Realms of Glory” REGENT SQUARE

**PASTORAL PRAYER** Rev. Lisa Rettew  
Ending with the Lord’s Prayer: *Hymnal 895*



OFFERTORY “Masters in This Hall” William Morris/Mark Hayes  
Chancel Choir

While the choir makes their musical offering, the ushers will pass plates for those who wish to offer a financial gift or prayer request. You may also use this QR code to make a financial gift. As you pass the plate—whether or not you give—we invite you to pause and reflect on what you hope to offer God this week.



\*DOXOLOGY “Praise God, From Whom All Blessings Flow”  
Hymnal 94

SCRIPTURE READING Luke 2:1-14 Parker Cree

CHILDREN’S SERMON Maggie Christy  
Following Children’s Sermon, children in K – 5<sup>th</sup> grade are invited to be part of Children’s Church in the Chapel. Children ages 5 and under may leave at this time to go to the nursery (3<sup>rd</sup> floor across from church offices) with our childcare staff.  
Children Must have name tags on them.  
**The name tag table is located outside the Sanctuary by the Library.**

ANTHEM “O Come, Emmanuel” Elaine Hagenberg

SERMON Rev. Dr. Mary Brown  
“The Gift of Christmas: Wrapped”

RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS Eva Michelle Spicer;  
Hymnal 33 Ken and Lisa Carrig

\*HYMN 202 “People Look East” BESANÇON

\*BENEDICTION Rev. Dr. Mary Brown

CHIMES OF THE TRINITY

VOLUNTARY “Vieux Noel” César Franck

*\*Please stand, if you are able.*

A livestream of the worship service is available in the library for families. Nursery care is available in Room 104 for children ages 0–5.

The flowers on the altar are given in loving memory of Mary Beth Tanner by her husband, Don Landes.

The red rose on the altar today is placed in honor of Henry Joseph Kroll, son Kathryn (Gelder) and Jack Kroll, and grandson of Jan & Bob Gelder, who was born on December 2, 2025.

Plainclothes law enforcement officers are present during our services so that all may feel welcome, secure, and free to worship, fellowship, and experience God’s grace freely. Our staff members are in direct communication with the officers should you feel the need to ask for assistance or voice a concern.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Family Life Christmas Caroling | TODAY | 11:15 AM  
Families, children, youth, and adults of ALL ages are invited to join us for Christmas caroling at Brooks-Howell. Meet in the Fellowship Hall at 11:15 AM and we will make our way to Brooks Howell. We’ll share the gift of music and holiday cheer with the residents. After caroling, we’ll head to Asheville Pizza & Brewing for pizza. Then we will head to Whit’s Frozen Custard for a sweet treat! If you have questions, just find Maggie or Linda. Come help us make spirits bright – we’d love to see you there!

Christmas Eve Offering to Haywood Street Congregation  
Over 16 years ago, this congregation felt called to dedicate our Haywood Street campus to a special purpose: a church that would "include the most excluded," following the vision of Rev. Brian Combs. Central UMC provided volunteers and funding for meals, worship, respite, and genuine "relationship above all else" with our siblings on the streets.  
The Haywood Street Congregation will always be a special part of our DNA at Central. For that reason, the offering taken up at our Christmas Eve services will go entirely to support Haywood Street. You can read more or donate directly at [www.haywoodstreet.org](http://www.haywoodstreet.org).

Adult Sunday School OPEN HOUSE! | THIS JANUARY  
Why not make trying out a Sunday School class one of your New Year’s resolutions? A small group experience helps our faith grow deeper and our connections grow stronger. We have 9 great options, each with their own vibe. During January, they are ready to welcome visitors! Expect to be greeted with smiles and name tags and maybe even some special treats. You might try a different class each week as a way to see all the options available!

(Un)Decorating: Taking Down Christmas Decor | TUE, JAN 6 | 1:00 PM  
All the beautiful Christmas decorations that we’re enjoying now need to come down after Epiphany. If you would like to help, please meet in the Sanctuary on Tuesday, January 6 at 1:00 pm. If you have any questions, please contact Alexandra Holland at [alexandra@wncnature.com](mailto:alexandra@wncnature.com). A big thank you, as well, to everyone who helped decorate!

NT 101 | WEDNESDAYS, JAN 7-APR 1 | 5:30-7:00 PM  
Join Rick Kuenning and Pastor Mary for a 12-week study of the New Testament! We will meet Wednesdays from 5:30 - 7pm in person from January 7 to April 1 (excepting Ash Wednesday, Feb. 18). Participants will do about 15 minutes of reading each day to prepare for questions and discussion during class. NT 101 will provide beginners with a great overview and long-time students of the Bible with a better understanding of the big picture of God's story. Pre-registration is required so you can get a copy of the workbook and complete the first week's reading (suggested donation, \$20). To register, email Mary Brown at [mbrown@CentralUMC.org](mailto:mbrown@CentralUMC.org).

Confirmation Kick-Off 2026: Lock-in | SUN, JAN 9  
Confirmation is for all 6th graders and those yet to be confirmed. Confirmation kickoff is January 9 and will run until Confirmation Sunday on April 26. Contact Maggie at [mchristy@CentralUMC.org](mailto:mchristy@CentralUMC.org) for more information or to RSVP.

Valentine's Parents' Evening Out | FRI, FEB 13 | 4:30-7:30PM  
Parents, enjoy a night out while we take care of the kids! Children 3rd grade and below are invited to join us for a fun, safe, and love-filled evening of activities while parents enjoy a Valentine’s break. Students in 4th and 5th grade are invited to assist, and youth and adults are welcome to help make the evening special! This is a great opportunity for families to enjoy some time together—or parents enjoy a date night! 💕 More details and sign-ups coming soon. Contact Maggie for questions.


Central.Congregational Care.



Stephen Ministry: Celebrations often center around family. These can be warm and cozy times OR stressful and isolating. How can we support you? Stephen Ministers are available to listen, empathize, and encourage you in a confidential, non-judging manner. Contact Pastor Lisa or fill out a referral On-line, located at [CentralUMC.org/stephen-ministry](http://CentralUMC.org/stephen-ministry).



Homebound Ministry: Our pastors are also available to support you if you are homebound, facing surgery, and or other medical treatments. Please let our Pastors know so that phone calls, visits, and Communion can be arranged. You are not alone!



### Giving to those in need.

Ways you can give at Central to make a difference during the Holidays!

Where You Can Help Your Neighbors This Holiday Season  
As we move into the holidays, here are some meaningful ways we can serve our neighbors, starting now. Thank you for being a church that shares Christ’s love in tangible, joyful ways.  
ABCCM: With SNAP benefits in danger, ABCCM needs your food donations. What you leave in the big wooden tub each Sunday is picked up. If you want to donate fresh items bring them to the Crisis Ministry at 24 Cumberland Ave.  
Buncombe County: is asking for food to help feed our neighbors until SNAP is restored. Items can be dropped off at the Public Libraries in Buncombe County. The food that is collected will go to MANNA. If you buy canned goods, be sure they have a pop top on them. Not everyone has a can opener.

### OUR 2026 PLEDGE CAMPAIGN

We are grateful to share that 158 households have already made a pledge for 2026 We have already surpassed last year’s total of 133 pledges!

To date, we have \$879,956 committed toward our \$1.55 million goal, which means we have \$670,044 left to reach the finish line.

Every pledge truly makes a difference. Please prayerfully consider your 2026 commitment and scan the QR Code or visit [CentralUMC.org/GIVE](http://CentralUMC.org/GIVE). Thank you for your faithful generosity!

