

The Beacon

The Latest at **CHRIST UMC** | MARCH 2025



Belly of the Beast

A New Series Coming Soon



We are approaching the season of Lent, which prepares for the celebration of Easter. Lent allows us to see all the ways that Jesus, the Son of God, experienced human existence. That is why we say that Jesus was both fully God and fully human. He revealed to us how to live a life that is devoted to loving God and loving others. In Matthew 12, Jesus is pressed by scribes and pharisees to be given a sign to prove he is the Messiah. Jesus actually uses the Book of Jonah as his response. You are probably wondering, what does a story about a big fish have to do with Jesus? Jonah's journey is more than just the fish. It

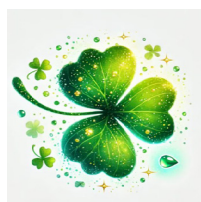
teaches us about how we can face our fears when life seems overwhelming. It also helps us to trust in God when called to do what seems impossible. I hope you will join us for this Lent Series called Belly of the Beast as we work through the Book of Jonah. This series will begin at the Ash Wednesday service, March 5th, at 6:30pm. It will continue every Sunday morning through Lent.

Blessings,
Rev. Eric Williams



Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

March 2025



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2 9am Heavenly Hash 10:15am Worship in Person & Online 10:30am Adventure Kids 11:15am Fellowship 12:00pm Youth Group 3pm Harvest Community	3 7pm AA Meeting	4 2pm CYPPT Training 3pm Feed the Hungry 5pm Shrove Dinner	5 *Ash Wednesday* 7am Drive thru Ashes 10am UWF Board Meeting 10am Preschool Chapel 5:30pm Choir 6:30 Ashes Service	6 10am Christ Quilters 10am P/S Book Parade	7 10am Church Women United 5pm Girl Scouts	8 10am CYPPT Training
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9 9am Heavenly Hash 10:15am Worship in Person & Online 10:30am Adventure Kids 11:15am Fellowship	10 7pm AA Meeting	11 10am Circle One Mtg 10am Preschool Connection 6:15pm Operations Meeting 6:30pm Freedom Circle	12 10am Hope Circle 10am Preschool Chapel 5:30pm Choir 6pm Messy Church	13 9:30am P/S Singing 10am Christ quilters	14 5pm Girl Scouts	15
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16 9am Heavenly Hash 10:15am Worship in Person & Online 10:30am Adventure Kids 11:15am Fellowship 12:00pm Youth Group	17 7pm AA Meeting	18	19 5:30pm Choir	20 9:30am P/S Singing 10am Christ quilters	21	22
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23 9am Heavenly Hash 10:15am Worship in Person & Online 10:30am Adventure Kids 11:15am Pick up your Tetraxini	24 1pm Congregational Care 7pm AA Meeting	25 10am P/S connection Craft 6pm P/S Conscious Parenting	26 10am UWF Unit Meeting 10am Preschool Chapel 3:30pm Worship Design 5:30pm Choir	27 9:30am P/S Singing 10am Christ quilters 1pm Church Book Club	28 5pm Girl Scouts	29
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30 9am Heavenly Hash 10:15am Worship in Person & Online 10:30am Adventure Kids 11:15am Fellowship 12:00pm Youth Group 12:30pm Girls Scouts Meet	31 7pm AA Meeting					
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Under This Roof

We are officially at the halfway mark of our roof campaign, and thanks to your generosity, we've raised an incredible \$54,125 toward our \$100,000 goal! Every dollar given has been a testament to our church's commitment to ensuring a safe and welcoming space for worship, fellowship, and ministry.

But the work isn't done yet. We still need \$45,875 to reach our goal, and with your help, we can get there! Every donation, large or small, brings us closer to completing this much-needed project. Together, we can ensure that our church remains a strong foundation for ministry—literally and spiritually. Let's finish this campaign with faith, generosity, and momentum!

How to Give

Online: Christumcnb.org/giving

In Person: Drop donations in the offering and designate them for Under This Roof campaign.

Mail: Checks can be sent to the church office (Memo: Under This Roof campaign).

Thank you for your unwavering support. Let's keep building—one gift at a time!

HIT YOUR READING GOALS FOR 2025

Join Our Monthly Book Club

Calling all book lovers! Our monthly book club is the perfect place to connect, share ideas, and enjoy meaningful conversations. We meet on the fourth Thursday of each month at 1pm, and we'd love to have you join us. Even if you haven't finished (or started) the book, you're welcome to join in! Come for great discussion and fellowship with other readers. We look forward to seeing you there!

Upcoming Books & Dates:

March 27: Ordinary Grace by William Kent Krueger

April 24: The Warmth of Other Suns by Isabel Wilkerson

NEW TECH

Do You Venmo?

Calling all Venmo users! We want you to know that we too Venmo. The Church now has a Venmo account with a charity profile that can accept donations.

If your group needs an alternative in addition to or instead of cash or credit cards, then Venmo is a popular cash app that may meet your needs. Our Venmo QR code is displayed to the right. Our Venmo business name is Christ United Methodist Church, Inc., and our handle is @christumcnb. When a Venmo user makes a donation, be sure to ask them to designate the reason for the donation in the box with the words "What's this

for?" Venmo charges a fee of 1.9% of the donated amount plus \$0.10 per donation. Contact Mike Chambers (815 342-9752) if you have questions for the use of Venmo by your church organization.



venmo

CUMC FAMILY

March Celebrations!

Birthdays

- 1 Jim Ransom
- 3 Victor Cymbalski
- 6 Richard Wallace
- 7 Karen Huges
- 13 Alessandra Card
- 19 Aaron Brunner
- 20 Eula (Mae) Jones
- 21 Ann DeVane

- 24 Karen Lagitch
Kathy Wallace
- 26 Becky Osborne
- 29 Mary Laseter
- 31 Don Dodds

Anniversaries

- 23 Randy and Cindy Kalar

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

MEET Nancy Russell

Nancy Russell, our current lay leader, volunteers unseen at many church functions. One of our favorites is Blue Christmas. Nancy keeps everyone, well mostly everyone, on track (some of us are beyond even Nancy's help!) Where would CUMC be without the commitment of leaders like you? Thank you so much for your love of your church!

TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH COMPASSIONATE CARE

Mission Highlight: Residing Hope

Our Mission Highlight this month is Residing Hope, an organization dedicated to empowering children and families to experience the transforming love of Christ through evidence-based care and holistic services. Formerly known as the Florida United Methodist Children's Home, Residing Hope has been a beacon of support since 1908, evolving into a multifaceted ministry that addresses the complex needs of vulnerable populations.

Residing Hope offers comprehensive service including therapeutic residential care, foster care services, independent living assistance, montessori education, and more.

Your contributions during the 5th Sunday Offering on March 30th will directly impact the lives of those served by Residing Hope, providing

essential resources and support to children and families in need. Together, we can help transform lives and offer hope to those who need it most.



KEEPING KIDS SAFE

Child & Youth Protection Training

Mandatory Training – March 8 | 10am–12pm
Location: Christ UMC
Brunch will be served.

This training is **mandatory** for all key holders, those who work with children and youth, and church leaders, as required annually by the Methodist Conference. Your attendance is essential to ensure the safety of our children, youth, church, and yourself.

We strongly encourage you to attend on **March 8**, as this is the primary training date. If you absolutely cannot make it, an alternative session will be held on March 4 at 2pm at the church, where the training stream will be shown. No RSVP is needed, just show up!

This training is not just about meeting requirements—it’s about creating a safer environment for our children and youth, protecting our church, and equipping you with knowledge to make a difference in our community.

Who Should Attend?

While mandatory for certain roles, this training is open to anyone who wants to learn how to better support and protect children and youth. Parents, caregivers, and community members are all welcome to join.

Questions?

Contact Hanna Thomas at 904-612-7286 or Pastor Eric at 904-249-5370.

YOUTH NEWS

Community Youth Group Info

The community youth group will not meet during Spring Break, but here are our upcoming meeting dates: March 2 & 30, April 13 & 27. These gatherings will take us through the Easter season!

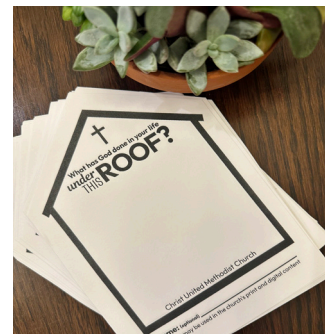
Our youth group is open to all 5th grade and up—no church membership required. If you know a student who would love to connect, learn, and grow in a fun and welcoming environment, we’d love to have them join us!

For more information, contact Hanna Thomas at 904-612-7286.

HOW HAVE YOU SEEN GOD?

Share Your Story

What has God done in YOUR life under this roof? Find this sheet in the narthex and in Wilson Hall and share your stories of gratefulness. (Fill out as many as you want!) Once completed, drop them in the basket in the narthex, or hang them right up on the clothesline in Wilson Hall so that we can all celebrate the good things God has done and continues to do at Christ UMC.



SECURITY CORNER

We Listened

I have alluded in previous Beacon articles that a security camera from an outside CUMC location was to be relocated to Wilson Hall. It is now a reality.

Those of us who use Wilson Hall have wondered why this gathering place did not have camera surveillance. The Sanctuary does; why shouldn’t Wilson Hall? These two spaces have the most people in them, after all.

The Security Task Team heard this suggestion and acted once certain technical hurdles could be overcome. Mike McEvoy ran special video cabling from the administrative office, through

the attic, into a utility closet, and drilled through concrete blocks to provide cable access to our vendor SecureOne. Kudos to Mike! Pastor Eric, our resident technical guru, assisted in the camera’s placement and interfaced with our vendor as part of his Security Task Team duties.

We can now see all the activity in Wilson Hall and have views of the kitchen door and side door near the Youth Room. We already had camera access to the main Wilson Hall double doors and the back side doors. (We chose to relocate this camera because another camera covered nearly the

same area.)

Of course, the goal of having cameras in the Sanctuary and Wilson Hall is not to spy on people in those places but rather to act as a deterrent for someone with nefarious intentions. These cameras also provide evidence of someone trying to gain access through one of these doors.

Next time you are in Wilson Hall, smile for the camera!

Stay Alert Stay Alive
Bob Strachan Chair, CUMC
Security Task Team

YOU’RE INVITED

Messy Church

You are cordially invited to the next Messy Church!

When: March 12th, 6pm till 7pm
Where: CUMC Wilson Hall

Yummy dinner will be served, fun activities will be provided, sing and dance to great music, with an outstanding message on invitation!

Bring the whole family and any friends or neighbors you can gather up. This invitation is for everyone! And it is all free! Come see for yourself how this evening is made just for you.

Volunteers are always welcome, contact; Sally Ogburn: 904-703-3424 or srogburn@comcast.net
Kathy Scott: 904-612-4361 or kathy_s45@yahoo.com

United Women in Faith

We welcome all women to our Circle meetings or our unit meeting!
Circle One – Tuesday, March 11, at 10am in Wilson Hall.
Freedom Circle – Tuesday, March 11, at 6:30pm in the kitchen.
Hope Circle – Wednesday, March 12, at 10am in Wilson Hall.

And join us for our Unit meeting on Wednesday March 26, at 10am in Wilson Hall. Come and join us for fellowship, food and a program!

And lastly, Circle One will be holding their Chicken Tetrazzini casserole sale March 23. All casseroles must be preordered and prepaid. Find out more on page 4!

SAVE THE DATE
SPRING FESTIVAL

Join us for the Spring Festival on April 12, 2025, from 11 AM – 1 PM! We need volunteers to help make this event a success! Filled plastic eggs are also needed by April 11—fill them with anything you like. Egg collection starts now! To volunteer or drop off eggs, contact Hanna Thomas at 904-612-7286 or helpfulhannajax@gmail.com.

SUMMER FUN

Warren Willis Camp Registration is Open!

Calling all rising 4th graders through graduating seniors—get ready for an unforgettable week at Warren Willis Camp! This amazing camp experience is packed with faith, fun, and friendship, and **Christ UMC will be attending July 21–26, 2025.**

Worried about the cost? Don't let that stop you! Scholarships are available, and we're here to help make camp possible for everyone. **Scholarship applications are due by April 1**, so don't wait! Let me help you navigate the registration process and make this summer one to remember for your youth. I can't wait to take your kids to camp!

Contact: Hanna Thomas, Family Ministry Coordinator, at Helpfulhannajax@gmail.com or 904-612-7286.

Chicken Tetrazzini Takeout!



It happens once a year. On Sunday, March 25, Circle One of the United Women in Faith will be distributing their delicious preordered Chicken Tetrazzini takeout in Wilson Hall after the worship service. The casserole comes refrigerated and will feed 2 people or 1 person very generously.

They are \$12 each, and all orders must be preordered and prepaid (look for the order form in the bulletin in the coming weeks.)

What does the Circle do with the proceeds? This is our annual fundraiser! We use most of the money to provide scholarships for our church youth at the Methodist summer camp (see above). We also support programs at the camp and other missions when funds allow.

For more information, contact Cindy Kastner 904-221-4103 or Josette Gamble 904-318-0338.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Lent Begins March 5th

Mark your calendars for the beginning of Lent with Shrove Tuesday Dinner and Ash Wednesday services. **Shrove Tuesday**, from 5:30-7pm on March 4th, will include a pancake & bacon dinner and an opportunity to fellowship with your church family. Its just \$2 per person at the door! Please stop by the info table in the narthex to RSVP so we may have an approximate headcount (but drop-ins are welcome). Then, on Wednesday, March 5th, join us as we worship, reflect, and receive the imposition of ashes at 6:30pm during our **Ash Wednesday Service**. We will also have drive-thru ashes available in our circle driveway that morning from 7-9am. You only need to drive up and Pastor Eric will impose the ashes on your forehead and have a prayer with you.



Shrove Tuesday

March 4 • 5:30-7pm

Drop-in Pancake Dinner
RSVP at info table in the narthex

ASH WEDNESDAY

March 5th

- Service at 6:30pm
- Drive-Thru ashes 7-9am

Lent Begins

