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CENTRAL CHATTER

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³² 'Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. ³³ Sell your possessions, and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. ³⁴ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. ³⁵ 'Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit; ³⁶ be like those who are waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, so that they may open the door for him as soon as he comes and knocks. ³⁷ Blessed are those slaves whom the master finds alert when he comes; truly I tell you, he will fasten his belt and have them sit down to eat, and he will come and serve them. ³⁸ If he comes during the middle of the night, or near dawn, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves. ³⁹ 'But know this: if the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁰ You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.'
(Luke 12:32-40, New Revised Standard Version, NRSV)

...Loose Lines from Daniel's Den...

Did you know that God wants to give you the Kingdom of Heaven? Every parent wants to give their children the best they can. Every parent wants to pass along an inheritance to their family. But God giving us the Kingdom of Heaven? There can't be a better gift to receive!

Jesus had been teaching his disciples not to let their lives be consumed by worry – *...I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing* (Luke 12:22,23). Jesus pointed out how ravens have plenty to eat even though they neither sow nor reap. As far as clothing goes, Jesus told his followers to look no further than the lilies of the field who neither toil nor spin yet are clothed in finery better than King Solomon ever wore. Jesus finished his teaching on the uselessness of worry by saying, *...do not keep striving for what you are to eat and what you are to drink, and do not keep worrying. For it is the nations of the world that strive after all these things, and your Father knows that you need them. Instead, strive for his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well* (Luke 12:9-31).

I find it interesting that Jesus went from telling his followers to strive for the Kingdom of God to telling them that it is God's good pleasure to give his followers the Kingdom. Do we have to strive for the Kingdom of God or has God given us the Kingdom? The answer, I believe, is "yes". Please allow me to try to explain. The kingdom of God is on earth and is yet to be on earth as it is in heaven. The Kingdom of God reigns over the whole universe. However, after Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, evil, corruption, and chaos entered the picture. It was then that the whole universe was broken. But God had a plan for that. At the right time, God sent His Only Son, Jesus of Nazareth, to re-establish God's Kingdom on earth. Jesus proclaimed, *The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news* (Mark 1:15). Once Jesus was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming, and he answered, *The kingdom of God is not coming with things that can be observed; nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There it is!' For, in fact, the kingdom of God is among you* (Luke 17:20-21).

Everything Jesus did in his life, death, and resurrection was to make everything right again in God's creation. Jesus gave us an example of how to live a life filled with goodness, purity, and order. Jesus died as the perfect sacrifice to obtain God's forgiveness for our sins. Then God resurrected Jesus from the dead. Next, Jesus ascended into heaven to sit at the right hand of God. One day, Jesus will return to bring God's Kingdom into its fullness here on earth as it is in heaven. Jesus said on that day, *they will see 'the Son of Man coming in a cloud' with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near* (Luke 21:27-28).

So, the Kingdom of God is here among us, but is yet to be fulfilled. Because of Jesus, we can live a new life today. We can live in the Kingdom of God, right now! Until the day Jesus returns, we are to be about the work of the Kingdom (*striving for the Kingdom*) here on earth – sharing the Gospel, feeding the hungry, giving water to the thirsty, providing clothes to the threadbare, visiting the prisoner, and offering friendship to the stranger. As we do the work of the Kingdom, remember we work not to earn a place in God's Kingdom. By God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ, it is God's pleasure to give us the Kingdom. Live each day like you are already there!

Grace and Peace,
Danny ><



Deacon's Dialogue

*Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them,
for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these (Matthew 19:13-14)*

Lessons Learned at VBS

It's that time of summer when you can walk outside and hear the cicadas during the daytime and the katydids and treefrogs at night, and soon enough, these sounds will give way to the lonely cricket who signals fall has arrived. If you have ever worked in retail or just been observant about their inventory strategies and logistics, you know that stores rush time. I'm always amazed that we finally get to summer break and no sooner than we've done that, we're being bombarded with back-to-school events and lists and advertisements from big box stores that have gotten the latest supplies stocked before the calendar even turns to August 1. I personally lament a world that let summer linger. At any rate, it's still the *season* of summer, and we just held VBS at Central July 21-25. As I reflect on this year's theme and time together and look forward to Blessing of the Backpacks and a new school year for our children, parents and teachers, I want to hold on to a few of the most significant lessons or takeaways from this year's VBS—God-winks and wisdom that all of us—not just children—should cling to and practice as we commit to being beacons of light for others in this chaotic and sometimes cruel world.

We are responsible for the care and stewardship of God's creation.

The phrases have varied through the years, but one of the most memorable ad campaigns I remember from childhood had to do with Smoky the Bear: "Only YOU can prevent forest fires." More recently, nature preserves, national forests and state parks have adopted a "Leave no Trace" campaign to encourage visitors to take all trash and to leave the area just as they have found it. In relation to our VBS theme, "Waves of Wonder," Ms. Kisha encouraged the children (and us, too, of course!) to care for our earth. From recycling to not littering to helping animals, there are basics that all of us can put into practice, and those basics are great places to start in being good stewards of what God has entrusted us to protect. He gave us one earth to sustain us; we can't honor God if we don't respect the resources He has provided to us, and frankly we can't live healthy lives if our soil, water, air and wildlife are diminished or diseased.

We can cause a ripple effect of good right here in our own community!

One night, the children painted kindness rocks which came from the creek on the property where I grew up. My parents and I loaded up 40 of them in my dad's Gator, and it was special to see the creative ways our VBS participants decorated these rocks. Kindness involves more than just being polite for the sake of being polite. I think that's why the word "kindness" sometimes seems to not go "far enough" in my mind. But changing a tiny part of our world in Christ's name—spreading the good news, spreading love, and spreading compassion—really does have to start in close proximity to us—with our families, our actual neighbors, our schoolmates, our co-workers, and those we encounter when we head out in public. Yes, state, national and international missions are extremely important, too, but I thought about the ripple effect of throwing stones in the water, and it hit home this week that the gospel transformation starts within us and from us to another person and then another and then another...

God always wants us to seek His help in our time of need.

Have you ever prayed earnestly for help or understanding and felt embarrassed about what you were praying about to God? Maybe, in the scope of all that is happening in our world, you felt sheepish about praying for something so simple or "silly." Maybe you felt like it was minimal or not worthwhile in the face of "bigger" and more pressing needs in this world, like famine, disease, violence and war. At VBS, I was reminded in one of Ms. Kisha's opening lessons that nothing on our hearts will ever be too big or too small for God to handle. God longs for us to be in conversation with Him; it lets God know we desire relationship with Him and that we trust Him. Pastor Danny drove this home in his July 27th sermon when he referenced a professor who once said that God knows our thoughts, anyway, so we might as well voice them (I'm paraphrasing and butchering it badly—please forgive me, Pastor Danny!).

Even though not everyone is about to head back to school, this time of year always seems an appropriate one to reflect, reconnect and recommit when it comes to our relationship with God...as we enjoy the last days of summer and look forward to fall, I pray that we see the wisdom in getting "back to basics" when it comes to our relationship with Christ. Like reading, writing, and arithmetic, we need cornerstones to put into practice and build on, and I hope that you find these just as helpful as I did. Blessings to all of those heading back to the classroom in just a few short weeks!

Grace and peace,
Kennette



grace note

Definition: *Noun:* an extra note added as an embellishment and not essential to the harmony or melody.

Happy end of summer! Hopefully, we'll be feeling fall in the air soon.

The month of August at Central will look a little different this year. We will worship in the fellowship hall, which provides more opportunity for closer proximity and fosters community! As we wanted this time to be special in multiple ways, I set out to find some special music for this month. With the help of some talented members of the church and a few guest musicians, I am excited to share with you all that we have planned. The month of August will feature bluegrass hymns, bassoon, solos, the chancel choir, and more! Therefore, you don't want to miss worshipping with us in August.

***WAVES OF WONDER* (aka: WoW)**



Vacation Bible School – We are just a few days from finishing up our VBS, Waves of Wonder and had a wonderful turn out and a great week! We welcomed 24 children from our church, preschool, and the surrounding community. The week was filled with learning about scriptures throughout the Bible where God provides water for plants and animals. They also heard stories of how God provided water

when it was desperately needed, and the people had faith in God that they would be provided for. The children also heard great stories of Jesus, The Living Water, and the work that He did through His time on earth. Through Bible study, science and art, and of course games, children learned about how important water is in our daily lives and how water was also important to those throughout the Bible. Water is important for us today as well, for our health, and the Living Water is good for our soul.

*But Lord, you are more powerful than the roar of the ocean.
You are stronger than the waves of the sea. Lord, you are powerful in heaven.
~ Psalm 93:4 (NIRV)*

As part of our VBS week, we had a special Mission Focus that we learned about: Waves for Water. Waves for Water (W4W) raises awareness for water needs throughout the world. They strive to make clean water available to everyone. Throughout VBS week, the children were challenged to fill up their own personal water bottle to help raise funds for W4W's general fund. The water bottle collection, along with a little help from our congregation, we raised close to **\$450.00**.

Thank you to everyone that contributed to this Mission Focus. To learn more about W4W, I encourage you to visit wavesforwater.org

One of my new favorite quotes that is their foundation; *do what you love and help along the way.*

Children's Sunday School and Children's Church Volunteers: I am always seeking volunteers to help lead these areas. Volunteering is easy and can be something you do monthly or just when needed. There are a couple Sundays where I am out and need someone to help in these areas in my absence. Please let me know if you would consider volunteering!

Welcome Back! Children's Church resumes Sunday, August 3rd. If you are new to Children's Church, we will meet in the back of the Fellowship Hall during the offering/offertory. We will travel to the children's Sunday School Room and have a special lesson that I try to tie in to Pastor Danny's sermon. Once service is over, please pick up your child(ren) from the Sunday School Room. As always, children are more than welcome to stay in worship with you if you prefer!

Back to School... Are you ready?? Blessing of the Backpacks will be on August 10th, during worship. All children are invited to bring their backpacks for a special blessing as the school year begins. Teachers and staff are also invited up front to participate.

Speaking of Back to School...**Calling all Rising Kindergarteners and 3rd Graders!!!** If your child is a rising kindergartener or 3rd grader, please let Kisha or Logan know as soon as possible. We will be celebrating with them on September 7th, during worship.

Acolytes and Crucifers – We are looking for some wonderful youth to join in on this important role. Please let me know if you have a third grader or up who would like to be a special part of the service.

***Thank you** for your continued support and involvement in our children's ministry!*



Central Happenings

DISCIPLE

BECOMING DISCIPLES
THROUGH BIBLE STUDY

Central will offer two Disciple Bible Study groups this fall. **Disciple I: Becoming Disciples through Bible Study** will be led by Pastor Danny. This is the prerequisite course for all following Disciple studies. **Disciple: Remember Who You Are** will be led by Anderson Rouse and is open to anyone who has completed Disciple I. Both classes are 32-week courses and will meet for an hour and a half. Classes will begin the first week of September. To find out more, or to add your name to the registration list, please reach out to Logan in the church office at 336-786-8324.



We are excited to announce a new **Mission Outreach** opportunity starting in August! Each month, we will highlight ongoing projects and offer a “hands on” opportunity for all ages to participate in. This month, stop by the Mission Outreach table before or after worship and decorate **WELCOME NOTES** for the children attending CUMC Child Care Center this new school year. Everything you need is provided. We need to create and deliver 100 notes to the preschool!

GriefShare®

GriefShare resumes Thursday nights, August 28th through November 20th. Join us for weekly videos, sharing, and support exploring topics like what is normal in grief, how to handle difficult emotions, and what to do with regrets, questions, and worries. For more information & to register, visit griefshare.org or reach out to Rev. Kennette or Sandy Smith. You do not have to navigate grief alone.

Reminder! We will be worshipping in the Fellowship Hall for the month of August. Come enjoy all that is planned!




You're Invited BELL CHOIR *And* CHANCEL CHOIR

Rehearsals resume Wednesday, September 3rd at 6:30 and 7:30 respectively.

As we begin a new season, it is the perfect time to join one of our musical groups. If you are interested to learn more, please reach out to me at addy@mtairycentralumc.us; I will be delighted to get you connected and involved with one (or both) of these groups!



August 2025

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
31 7pm - AA & Al-Anon					1	2
3	4	5 9:30am:Class Meeting	6	7	8	9
7pm - AA & Al-Anon	5:30pm - SPPRC	7pm - Class Meeting		7pm: Al-Anon		
10 Blessing of the Backpacks 3pm - Children's Committee	11	12 9:30am:Class Meeting	13  SCPS 1 st day of School	14	15	16
7pm - AA & Al-Anon		7pm - Class Meeting		7pm: Al-Anon		
17	18  MACS & CMCC 1 st day of School	19 9:30am:Class Meeting	20	21	22	23
7pm - AA & Al-Anon		7pm - Class Meeting		7pm: Al-Anon		
24	25 7pm - Church Council	26 9:30am:Class Meeting	27	28  Begins Tonight 7pm	29	30
7pm - AA & Al-Anon		7pm - Class Meeting		7pm: Al-Anon		