



Central
United Methodist Church

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CENTRAL CHATTER

Volume 31, No. 9 September 2025

18 The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: ² 'Come, go down to the potter's house, and there I will let you hear my words.' ³ So I went down to the potter's house, and there he was working at his wheel. ⁴ The vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter's hand, and he reworked it into another vessel, as seemed good to him. ⁵ Then the word of the Lord came to me: ⁶ Can I not do with you, O house of Israel, just as this potter has done? says the Lord. Just like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel. ⁷ At one moment I may declare concerning a nation or a kingdom, that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, ⁸ but if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turns from its evil, I will change my mind about the disaster that I intended to bring on it. ⁹ And at another moment I may declare concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will build and plant it, ¹⁰ but if it does evil in my sight, not listening to my voice, then I will change my mind about the good that I had intended to do to it. ¹¹ Now, therefore, say to the people of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem: Thus says the Lord: Look, I am a potter shaping evil against you and devising a plan against you. Turn now, all of you from your evil way, and amend your ways and your doings.

(Jeremiah 18:1-11, New Revised Standard Version, NRSV)

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

A mentor of mine has an extensive collection of pottery. When I saw the collection that he and his wife had amassed over the years, I couldn't believe it. There were bowls, pitchers, chalices, plates, candleholders, oil lamps – you name it. If it was something that could be made out of clay, and formed into something of use, it was in their collection. I wondered how and why they had such a collection. He told me, "The longer you are a pastor, the more pottery you will accumulate over the years. It just happens!"

Pottery and the art of making pottery fascinates me. Have you ever taken a pottery class or watched a potter make a bowl or some other piece of earthenware? I remember as a young boy going with my class to a potter's house. His workshop was in a utility building behind his house. The workshop was well lit and there were shelves of finished miscellaneous pottery. We gathered around his potter's wheel as it spun around and around. Then he took a lump of wet clay and threw it down in the middle of the wheel. The potter wet his hands in a bowl of water that had been placed by the wheel and then placed his hands on the lump of clay. We asked him what he was going to make. The potter said, "Let's try a cup." As the wheel spun around, suddenly the clay began to take the shape of a cup. The potter let us take turns wetting our hands and trying to get the clay to stay in the form of a cup.

Then he said, "I've changed my mind. I want to make a plate." The potter flattened the cup and wet his hands again. As the wheel spun, a plate began to form. At first, it was the size of a teacup saucer. Then it expanded to the size of a dessert plate. Finally, it grew to the size of a dinner plate. But the potter said, "What I really need is a pitcher". The potter stopped the wheel, wetted his hands, and formed the dinner plate into a lump of clay. He added another lump of clay, wetted his hands, and worked the two lumps of clay into one. He turned on the wheel again and before we knew it the lump of clay looked like a vase. Then the potter pinched one side of the opening at the top of the vase and made a spout. The potter asked, "What do we need now?" Someone said, "A handle!" "How do we make a handle?", the potter asked. He said, "Can anyone make a snake?" The potter gave one of my classmates a small lump of clay and she began rolling it on the potter's table. After it was just right, the potter took the worm and attached one end of the worm to the bottom of the vase, the other end to the middle, and the vase became a pitcher!

The potter explained how he had to use special clay (not just the clay you can dig up in your back yard). The clay had to have the right amount of moisture, the right softness, and it had to be pure (no pebbles, or sticks, or grass, etc...). If the clay wasn't soft enough, it could not be shaped by the potter's hands. If it wasn't moist enough, it would fall apart. If the clay wasn't pure enough, after it was glazed and fired in the kiln, it would be flawed.

When it comes to the vision God gave to Jeremiah, I have always imagined that we are like the clay on the potter's wheel. Like the potter, God knows what he wants to make out of us and our lives. If that is the case, the question is, what kind of clay are we giving God with which to work? The good news is that even if we present God with impure clay, we can be made pure in Jesus Christ. In fact, the Apostle Paul once wrote, *...if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!* (II Corinthians 5:17). When you place yourself into the hands of Jesus, he will rework you into another vessel as seems good to him.

Grace and Peace,
Danny ><



Deacon's Dialogue

...I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you
(Isaiah 46:4)

One of my favorite months has arrived! I don't know about you, but I love the break in the weather, the clear blue skies and the renewed energy of September. It also feels like a good time to start everything with a clean slate. Having been in education for more than two decades, I have to say that I also enjoy some of the back to school hype, myself! I love office supplies, I love picking out new folders for my classes, and I look forward to picking out a new planner and even getting a few new items of clothing.

More importantly, the season change seems like a great reminder to check in to see where we are leaning on God and where we are trying to take control too often by ourselves and of our own volition. As a recovering perfectionist, I have to humble myself to admit that I try to control for every situation a little (ok – a lot) more often than I should.

Here's a case in point. Recently, I decided I would finally pick out a new pair of Birkenstocks. Over the past several years, I have really enjoyed wearing the rubber Birkenstocks because they're more comfortable than flip-flops, and they're pretty versatile too! One bonus is they clean up easily, as well. The ones I had been wearing for the past 3-4 summers were pretty worn out, and I noticed the treads were flattening out, which probably explains the pain in my feet if I wore them to walk too far. Once I decided on a color that would go with most of my clothes, I couldn't wait to wear the new pair on one of our opening days before classes started.



Unfortunately, I am hard on shoes. So just keep that in mind. On day two, I wore the new Birks. After getting out of my car and walking through the parking lot, somehow, I made an awkward step and the toe-bed of my left sandal somehow got turned under against the asphalt of the parking lot. How could I trip on flat ground? I don't know, but I did. Thankfully, I did not fall, but when I looked down at my left sandal, I noticed what looked like dirt near the big toe. Just giving it a quick check, I realized that it wasn't dirt; it was a scuff. How annoying to have *just* put on these new shoes and to already have a blemish. I was aggravated with myself, aggravated with the parking lot, and aggravated with the concept of new shoes. Haha!

Then something hit me. We are all like a pair of new shoes. We are not perfect. Clearly, we are prone to making messes and to taking "scuffs" both big and small. Yet God still loves us, and we are still His children, with whom He is well pleased. God wouldn't (and didn't) toss us out just because of an imperfection. If we live long enough, we are going to accumulate many scuffs, and instead of looking at them as ugly marks that make us ugly, we should look at them as proof that we are getting up every day and striving to live a life of purpose, to discern what God wants us to do and where God wants us to go.

As a reminder, I took a quick picture (even *that* turned out uneven!) and walked on toward the C-Building and asked God to turn my silly fixation on perfection with a new pair of shoes into a state of gratitude: gratitude for the ability to *afford* a new pair of shoes, gratitude for the stable job I was about to start again, gratitude for a healthy body, and gratitude for the balance, mobility and feet that carried me, by God's grace. I hope you too appreciate your scuffs and that you remember to fixate on God's overwhelming love and sustenance. And don't stress the marks of a life well-lived because of all the places God asks you to go.

Grace and peace,
Kennette



grace note

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

Happy September! September is the official start of choir and bell choir season. With this in mind, I have been planning for a wonderful season filled with a variety of music.

Once piece I am particularly excited about sharing with the congregation is a handbell piece called *Joy and Elation* by Cynthia Dobrinski. We will be playing this piece at the end of September. Cynthia Dobrinski (1950-2021) was the leading handbell composer in the United States. She leans in to the handbell's unique qualities through her music, making the most of this unique instrument through her plentiful compositions. This original composition is a joyful celebration with its quick tempo, handbell shakes (repeated ringing), and energetic short notes. It will no doubt be delightful to the listener. When I first heard this piece, a smile was my only response. I hope you will enjoy this fun piece played by our very own Bellissima bell choir!

In announcements, both the choir and handbell choir would be delighted to welcome new members. During the start of the season is the best time to get plugged in. If you are interested in joining either ensemble, please reach out to me via email at addy@mtairycentralumc.us. All are welcome! No experience is necessary, just a willingness to learn!



Safe Sanctuary Training!! We are in the process of determining a date for Safe Sanctuary training for **ALL Volunteers** (those working with all ages). The Children's Committee previously set tentative dates, but these are subject to change pending confirmation from a trainer. Both onsite and online training options are being considered for individuals unable to attend in-person sessions. CPR and first aid training will also be available to all volunteers and staff. Background checks will be required for Safe Sanctuary training, and there will be minor policy updates. These training courses aim to clarify the needs and purpose of Safe Sanctuary within Central UMC. Please be on the lookout for that announcement soon.

Calling all Rising Kindergarteners and 3rd Graders. We will be celebrating YOU during worship on September 7th at our Bible and Storybook Presentation Sunday. PLEASE make sure I have your name prior to that Sunday.

Trunk-or-Treat Announcement – This notice is being included in the September newsletter to ensure timely communication. Please note that we will **not** be hosting a community-wide Trunk-or-Treat event this year. However, we will continue to collect candy and prizes to participate in the Central Methodist Child Center's Trunk-or-Treat. All collected items will be assembled into gift bags for each child, which will be distributed during preschool hours on the mornings of Wednesday, October 29th, and Thursday, October 30th.

We need at least two families to decorate a trunk—one on Wednesday and one on Thursday—and up to two people to hand out treats during the event. The bags will include candy, prizes, and information about upcoming fall events, Christmas activities, and updated Vacation Bible School dates (the dates for VBS will be held earlier in the summer, per the Children's Ministry Committee. Once set, dates will be announced).

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!*

Covered Dish Meals, Without the Dish or the Cover

We hope everyone has enjoyed worshipping in the Fellowship Hall during August. This past winter, when the boiler that was used to heat the Sanctuary broke down, we improvised by worshipping in the Fellowship Hall. Interestingly, we noticed that we sat closer together. It was easier to greet one another and welcome visitors. Church members, who had been part of Central Methodist Church when the campus was relocated from downtown to our current location, remembered worshipping in the Fellowship Hall while the present Sanctuary was still under construction. Despite the inconvenience, we sensed there was something special about worship in the Fellowship Hall.

After the boiler was replaced and we resumed worship in the Sanctuary, leaders in the Church discussed having worship in the Fellowship Hall during this summer. Because of the positive response, we chose to worship in the Fellowship Hall in August. The Central Worship Team began planning to have a modified Order of Worship that included an extra hymn/special music. The idea was to have an informal, camp meeting type of atmosphere. The overall theme was *Living the Good Life*. Our Director of Music, Addy Knepp, selected familiar hymn favorites and arranged for Elizabeth Campbell, Dr. Randy Keith, Norma Johnson, and The Winston Salem Irish Session to provide special music. Doug Porter made sure the sound system and livestreaming worked. Volunteers set up the Fellowship Hall and worshipers helped take down each week.

During our time in the Fellowship Hall, we celebrated Communion with Rev. Kennette Thomas presiding according to the new responsibilities given to the Order of Deacons at the 2020/2024 General Conference of the United Methodist Church. We received Nancy Russell and Kim Gardner as new members of Central UMC. We sang a lot of good, old hymns, we heard some rousing Irish music, and we laid stones on the Altar at the foot of the Cross to symbolize laying the burdens that hold us back from *living the good life* in Christ. We have been encouraged to *live the good life* in Christ as we move into the autumn by believing in the power of the Resurrection, by having faith in God's Word, by remembering the stories of the heroes of faith, by offering hospitality to new friends, by loving all of God's people, by serving the Kingdom of God, and by accepting our place at the Lord's Table, while inviting others to join us. Yes, we have been invited to a Great Feast. But we have learned that the true bread and the true drink we receive is found in Communion with Jesus Christ and his Church. Worship in the Fellowship Hall has shown us that the Church isn't about a building or a place. The Church is about people gathering together – "a congregation of faithful [people] in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments duly administered according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same" 2020/2024 United Methodist Book of Discipline, ¶ 104 *Articles XIII*).

In other words, the life of the Church is like a covered dish meal without the dish, or the cover, as we feast upon the Word of God!

Central Happenings

Save the Date!!

What: Yadkin Valley District

Fun Day

When: October 18th, 11am-3pm
(it's a drop in)

Where: The Red Barn at
Tanglewood Park

All are invited to enjoy an afternoon of food, fellowship, and family fun at our Yadkin Valley District Fun Day!

If you are interested in caravanning to the event from Central, please let the church office know.



In seek of a photographer to share their talent!

Do you like taking pictures? Do you have an "eye" for photo ops? We are looking for someone to take a few candid photos of the congregation "in action" (as we gather for worship, Sunday School, mission outreach, etc) as well pictures of the building itself. These would be used on the website, Facebook, etc. If this "role" sounds like a way **you** could serve here at Central, please reach out to Logan: logan@mtairycentralumc.us

IT'S TIME FOR THE

2025

LAITY SERVICE

AWARD NOMINATIONS



**Nominations
must be
received by
September 7th**

Please nominate based on the following criteria...

- A member of Central United Methodist Church
- Someone who exemplifies a commitment to the Christian way of life and who's contributions to the life of CUMC and the community reflects a devotion to the service of others.
- One who embodies the mission of the UMC and follows Jesus to make disciples for the transformation of the world.



Hebrews 11:1, KJV

CUMC Financial Update

Following is an update of the CUMC financial status through July 31, 2025...

Total offering income this year is \$177,602 as compared to \$165,033 for the same period in 2024, an increase of about \$12,000.

This offering trend is a very good one! However, our 2025 expenses continue to grow faster than our income, primarily because of \$50,000 in problems with boilers and compressors. At this time, these additional unexpected building expenses will be paid for from our reserve account, which has been steadily decreasing over the past couple of years. We continue to seek additional income from our membership over the next 4 months to offset these unexpected expenses that continue to occur to our 50-year-old church building.

Thank you,
Alan Connolly on behalf of the CUMC Finance Committee



Youth Sunday School is BACK!

After lots of vacations and recuperations, the Youth Sunday School class will reconvene on September 7th. Donna will be there to throw a God's party and YOU are invited. Make sure to invite a friend or two along with you.

Sunday, September 7th at 10am in the Youth Room.

God invites us all to be a part of God's party. God created the world and everything in it and then invited humans to live in it and enjoy it. In a way, that's like God throwing a party, and we are ALL invited. Let's have fun at the party and make sure we are all part of it by pleasing God with our good deeds and with sharing what we have.

-- Jim Penner and Scott Sinclair



September 2025

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1 Labor Day Church Office Closed	2 9:30am:Class Meeting	3 10am - Disciple I Begins 5pm - Staff Meeting Rehearsals Resume 6:30: Bells 7:30: Choir	4 7pm: GriefShare & Al-Anon	5	6
7 Bible & Story Book Presentation Sunday 3pm - Disciple III Begins 7pm - AA & Al-Anon	8	9 9:30am:Class Meeting 7pm - Class Meeting and FCC Lay Team Zoom Meeting	10 10am - Disciple I 6:30 Bells/7:30 Choir	11 7pm: GriefShare & Al-Anon	12	13
14 3pm - Disciple III 7pm - AA & Al-Anon	15 5:30pm - SPPRC	16 9am - Garden Gate 9:30am:Class Meeting 7pm - Class Meeting	17 10am - Disciple I 6:30 Bells/7:30 Choir	18 7pm: GriefShare & Al-Anon	19	20
21 3pm - Disciple III 7pm - AA & Al-Anon	22	23 9:30am:Class Meeting 7pm - Class Meeting	24 10am - Disciple I 6:30 Bells/7:30 Choir	25 7pm: GriefShare & Al-Anon	26	27
28 3pm - Disciple III 7pm - AA & Al-Anon	29	30 9:30am:Class Meeting 7pm - Class Meeting				