



⁵ The apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith!' ⁶ The Lord replied, 'If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, "Be uprooted and planted in the sea," and it would obey you.' ⁷ 'Who among you would say to your slave who has just come in from plowing or tending sheep in the field, "Come here at once and take your place at the table"? ⁸ Would you not rather say to him, "Prepare supper for me, put on your apron and serve me while I eat and drink; later you may eat and drink"? ⁹ Do you thank the slave for doing what was commanded? ¹⁰ So you also, when you have done all that you were ordered to do, say, "We are worthless slaves; we have done only what we ought to have done!"'

(Luke 17:5-10, New Revised Standard Version, NRSV)

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

This passage always leaves me taken aback. "If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you" (v.6). Since Jesus said this, it always makes me ask the question, "Does anyone possess that much faith – the faith to move mulberry trees or mountains (as in Matthew 17:20)"? "Is our faith lacking when we do not get the results for which we pray?"

It is interesting that Jesus' statement about the mulberry tree was prompted by a question, or rather a request, made by his disciples: "Increase our faith!" (v.5). The disciples made the request to increase their faith after Jesus taught them about forgiveness, saying, "Be on your guard! If another disciple sins, you must rebuke the offender, and if there is repentance, you must forgive. And if the same person sins against you seven times a day, and turns back to you seven times and says, 'I repent,' you must forgive" (Lk. 17:3,4). Other rabbis of that day taught that if someone committed the same sin against them three times and asked forgiveness three times, they were obligated to forgive the sinner each of the three times. However, after the fourth offence, even if the sinner asked forgiveness, they were no longer obligated to forgive. With Jesus' statement that his followers were obligated to forgive a repentant sinner seven times a day! I can almost see the disciples rolling their eyes after Jesus said that. But instead of exclaiming, "What exactly do you mean by that, Jesus?", the disciples exclaimed, "Increase our faith!"

It takes faith when you forgive someone who sins against you. It takes faith to believe someone has truly repented of their sin and will change. It takes faith to believe the relationship will be healed, restored, and strengthened – especially if you have to keep forgiving that person seven times a day! Jesus is asking a lot of us! Or is he?

When the disciples told Jesus to increase their faith, Jesus told the disciples they only had to have faith the size of a teeny tiny mustard seed. If you want to know how big a mustard seed is look at the dot here, above the letter, i. That doesn't seem to be a whole lot of faith. Yet, Jesus said, if we have faith the size of a teeny, tiny mustard seed, we could tell mulberry trees to come up out of the ground here in Mount Airy, move to the Outer Banks, and it would happen! The thing is, Jesus never called us to move mulberry trees. However, Jesus did call us to forgive one another – often. Jesus also said, "Forgive, and you will be forgiven..." (Lk. 6:37). And we must never forget what Jesus said as he hung upon the cross, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing" (Lk. 23:34).

No, Jesus never told us to move mulberry trees, but Jesus did tell us to forgive. Jesus was willing to give his body, his blood, and his very life so that we may be forgiven for all our sins. You can be sure Jesus understands what it means to forgive until it hurts. Which do you think is more difficult, to move a mulberry tree or to forgive someone's sin? If it only takes faith the size of a mustard seed to move a mulberry tree, how much faith does it take to forgive?

Grace and Peace,

Danny ><



Deacon's Dialogue

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation
(1 Corinthians 5:18-19)



Happy October, everyone! I wanted to take the opportunity to update you on a professional development that I have been doing to expand my skill and ability to serve all of you and our community.

First, let me give you some backstory. In Winter 2022, I received an invitation to apply to the inaugural cohort of the Certification in Conflict Transformation and Reconciliation through Duke Divinity School's Center for Reconciliation. Clergy and laity in the Western North Carolina Conference, as well as the North Carolina Conference, were encouraged to apply. Further, all expenses for the certification program would be completely covered. So I applied to the program and was accepted in a cohort of 20 people, and I finished that certification in April of 2024.

That 18-month-long program was so impactful to me as a pastor and as an instructor. Two more cohorts have gone through that program, and funding was made available this year to start a second certification for those who have completed the first one. This certification is an applied program to become a *practitioner* of conflict transformation and reconciliation. In other words, it's time to put theory into practice!

Some may ask: why is the program focused on transformation and reconciliation? It is focused on transformation because as people of faith, we acknowledge that only God is able to truly transform us. And the focus is on reconciliation rather than resolution because we realize that no human efforts are perfect, and growth is ongoing rather than completely finished. And reconciliation is biblical! Just re-read the passage above from 1 Corinthians.

I will be participating in this program to become a certified practitioner in conflict transformation and reconciliation for the next eight months. During this time, I will attend four in-person sessions at Duke, along with four Zoom sessions, and I will be required to do some homework! This homework will consist of practice in mediation, group conferencing, conflict coaching, and facilitating transformative Circles. Please be on the lookout over the next several months for opportunities to participate in some of these offerings. The first offering is going to be a healing circle that will coincide with the holiday season.

As always, I strive to grow in faith and to serve you better as a bridge-builder. If you're interested in learning more about these programs or have questions, please feel free to email me at kthomas@wnccumc.net, or you can text or call me at 336.469.5734.

Grace and peace,
Kennette



grace note

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

I hope everyone has had a lovely September! I am certainly looking forward to cooler fall weather. The choirs are in full swing and preparing for the months ahead. We are looking forward to sharing some wonderful music with the congregation in the coming month! Although Methodists do not always celebrate Reformation Sunday in the way that Lutherans do, I enjoy choosing Reformation hymns for this day as a way of remembering Martin Luther nailing his famous ninety-five theses to the All Saints Church in Wittenburg, Saxony-Anhalt, Germany. This year Reformation Sunday will be celebrated on October 26th. Perhaps the most famous and well known hymns written during the Reformation is a Mighty Fortress is Our God, *Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott*, written by Martin Luther himself around 1529. With both the words and music written by Luther, this hymn is a classic for the ages. Throughout time, many famous composers have written pieces based on this hymn tune, including J.S. Bach and Dietrich Buxtehude, both composers of which I play music of often during our services here at Central. The hymn's words focus on God's strength "a bulwark never failing," Christ's triumph over the evils of this world and over death, and reminds us to stand in Christ's strength alone.

As always, I am incredibly grateful for this congregation, the chancel choir, the bell choir, staff, and all those who have been so integral in my flourishing here at CUMC.



Safe Sanctuary Training – We are in the process of determining a date for Safe Sanctuary training for **ALL Volunteers** (those working with all ages). Both onsite and online training options are 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.

Trunk-or-Treat – 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. We will fill bags the Sunday before the event with donated items such as 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.

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.

BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS



October 5th 3:00pm in the Courtyard

Let us

Celebrate

On September 14th, we welcomed Marinda and David Rives as our newest members. On September 28th, we celebrated the baptism of Reese Charles Brown. We are so delighted to walk along side each of you on your faith journey and look forward to all that is to come!



Come join the Pacesetters Class as we study the Birth of the Christ Child as interpreted by Dr. James Michael "Mickey" Efird, renowned Past Professor Emeritus of Duke University. Dr. Efird was committed to making the Bible relevant and properly understood for pastors and laity alike. He was an ordained minister who taught many, many Methodist ministers, including our very own Pastor Danny. Come be moved by this beloved Birth Narrative.

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All adults are invited, beginning November 02.





Lessons will be facilitated by our own roster of teachers, beginning with Dr. Lyn Smith. Please join us!!

Save the Date! We are so excited to announce that our Fall Festival/CUMC Corn Husking Event is returning **Sunday, October 26th**. This is a fun tradition here at Central that includes food, fellowship, games, and friendly competition for ALL AGES! We will form teams to compete for the title of *champion*...contests will include sack races, nail driving, dessert judging (ladies, dust off your old family recipes!), bible trivia, name that hymn, and SO MUCH MORE! There will be something for everyone to participate in...**October 26th, 3pm, right here at Central**...mark your calendars now and be on the lookout for sign up sheets in the hallway.





October 2025

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1 10am - Disciple I 5pm - Staff Meeting 6:30: Bells 7:30: Choir	2 7pm: GriefShare & AI-Anon	3	4 Flu Vaccine Clinic 9am-12pm
5  Blessing of the Animals 3pm 3pm - Disciple III 7pm - AA & AI-Anon	6 5:30pm - SPPRC	7 9:30am:Class Meeting 7pm - Class Meeting	8 10am - Disciple I 6:30 Bells/7:30 Choir	9 7pm: GriefShare & AI-Anon	10	11
12 3pm - Disciple III 7pm - AA & AI-Anon	13	14 9:30am:Class Meeting 7pm - Class Meeting	15 10am - Disciple I 6:30 Bells/7:30 Choir	16 7pm: GriefShare & AI-Anon	17	18  Yadkin Valley Family Fun Day - Red Barn Tanglewood
19 Laity Sunday 3pm Memorial UMC in Thomasville 3pm - Disciple III 7pm - AA & AI-Anon	20	21 9:30am:Class Meeting 7pm - Class Meeting	22 10am - Disciple I 6:30 Bells/7:30 Choir	23 7pm: GriefShare & AI-Anon	24 Charge Conference Reports Due to Logan	25
26  3pm CUMC Corn Husking Event 3pm - Disciple III 7pm - AA & AI-Anon	27 7pm - Church Council	28 9:30am:Class Meeting 7pm - Class Meeting	29  CMCC Trunk or Treat Event	30	31	

SECOND CHANCE BLUEGRASS



SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 8 7pm
CENTRAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
1909 NORTH MAIN STREET
MOUNT AIRY, NC

FREE CONCERT

SEATING LIMITED