



THE CENTRAL ISSUE

September 9, 2020
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CENTRAL UMC SHELBY IS A SAFE SANCTUARIES

Our MISSION: To make disciples of Christ who WORSHIP God, GROW in their faith, and SERVE in the church and world.

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Libby Alexander, Organist
Gina Blanton, Director of Communications
Dianne Whisnant, Financial Secretary
Ed Winder, Facility Manager
Shelley Rempson, Kid's Place Preschool Director
Stacey Watkins Griffith, Pastoral Counselor



Family Camp Day @ Tekoa Foothills: Sunday, September 20th, 12-6 PM

On this day we will get to be together and enjoy all the great perks of Camp Tekoa Foothills here in Shelby. For just \$25 per family, you will have access to ziplining, hiking trails, axe throwing, swimming, and boating just to name a few things! Bring a picnic lunch for your family. See you there!

You must register at this link by September 10:

<https://forms.gle/si9X9jtayTmD9C7o8>

2020 Stewardship

2020 Monthly Budget Needs.....	\$63,576.49
Total Receipts in August.....	\$42,763.56
August Expenses.....	\$51,693.63
Over/—Under Budget for the month.....	-\$8,930.07
Over/—Under Budget for the year.....	-\$39,892.86

Taking Care Of Each Other

And so it continues... we are delivering meals every Saturday to our community and church family, friends and neighbors. This week it is yummy beef tips! If you would like a meal, know someone who would like a meal or would be interested in delivering meals between 11am and 12 noon, please contact Pastor Fawn via email [fawn@cumcshelby.org] or cell phone [954-547-2593].

Fall Children and Youth News Beginning Sunday, September 6th Monthly Discipleship Resource Kits

The first week of each month, we will be providing Children's Ministry and Youth Ministry families with discipleship resources for the month including Sunday School lessons, music, crafts, and other supplies. This will be supplemented with videos and social media posts done by Savanna and Danny.

Backpack Ministry

Our schools are back in the swing of things as is our Backpack Ministry! As the schools recognize children who are food insecure, CUMC provides meals for them to take home for the days they are not in school. This year we are wanting to connect to our students a little deeper by having prayer partners for each child. That means we need YOU! If you are interested in praying for a child during the school year, please contact Pastor Fawn and you will be given a name. What a great opportunity to connect and support a child in our community!

Backpack Food Drive

Our schools are back in the swing of things as is our Backpack Ministry! As the schools recognize children who are food insecure, CUMC provides meals for them to take home for the days they are not in school. Beginning in September we will be collecting **Granola Bars and Individual Packets of Trail Mix**. You may drop them off at the office M-Th 9-4 and Fri 9-1. These will be added to weekly bags of food sent home from school with food insecure students for weekend meals.



SEPTEMBER



birthdays

September 13	Emily Carpenter
September 14	Emily Tapp
September 16	Greer Dalton
September 16	Daniel Talbert
September 17	Dave McDowell
September 17	Jake Gallagher
September 17	Zee Rempson
September 18	Hannah Telle
September 19	Becky Cook
September 19	James Bridges
September 19	Jane Szymborski
September 19	Jason Newman

Memorials and Honorariums

Operating:

In Memory of Ellen Powell by Bill & Marilyn Henshaw
In Memory of George Newman by Sandy Allen
In Memory of George Newman by Sonya Vaughn Davenport
In Memory of George Newman by Bob & Carolyn Gidney
In Memory of Tom Camp by Jim & Tap Ramsey

Piano:

In Memory of George Newman by Bill & Jo Marsh
In Memory of Beth Hamrick by Bill & Jo Marsh
In Memory of Tom Camp by Bill & Jo Marsh

Open Table:

In Memory of Tom Camp by Sarah T. Beam
In Memory of George Newman by Sarah T. Beam
In Memory of Larry Barden by Sarah T. Beam
In Memory of Karen Denise Strickland by Sarah T. Beam

Bible Studies

September has arrived and we are excited to jump into opportunities to grow as disciples of Jesus Christ through new Bible studies! We hope you will join us:

WORD AND WINE – Mondays, beginning September 14th, 6:30 pm We miss gathering at Dragonfly to share a glass of wine and dive into the Scriptures, but we can still be “together” and share as we meet via ZOOM! With so much chaos in our society, we will take this Fall to see where God is in the midst of our fears, conflicts and uncertainty. During September, we will discuss each week a hot topic, asking “Where is God leading us as individuals and a community of believers to be God’s presence in it all?” Grab your Bible and a glass as we ask God and share our thoughts and insights.

Monday, September 14th – Food Supply: Hunger and Waste

Monday, September 21st – Police Reform

Monday, September 28th – McGirt vs. Oklahoma – The Significance of Native American Treaties

Today Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83391585122>

REVELATION – Tuesdays, beginning September 15th 7 pm The book of Revelation has always intrigued Christians. This exciting and thought-filled study will NOT be your “Left Behind” theology of the end of times, but rather a clear, readable look at the Scripture’s historical context (approximately AD 90), and its message for us today. We will be using “Revelation for Today” by James M. Eford as our guide (available at Cokesbury.com). Join leader, Savanna Craig, at Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86843458934>

WHITE FRAGILITY – Women’s Study, Wednesdays, September 16th, 7 pm

Men’s Study, Thursdays, September 17th, 7 pm

This ZOOM book study will help us answer the question: Why is it so difficult for white people to talk about racism? And if you don’t think that is an issue, just check your blood pressure after having read this so far! We, as white men and women, have the opportunity to understand how we have protected racial inequality and learn how to engage in meaningful cross-racial dialogue to provide a positive change in our society. Stan Anthony and Jennifer Buckner will be leading us. You MUST register for this class as size is limited. To register you may call the church office or sign up at:

Women’s Study: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/5080E45A5AF2CA2FE3-white>

Men’s Study: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/5080E45A5AF2CA2FE3-mens>

SAVING JESUS – Date and time to be determined

Who knew Jesus needed to be saved? And saved from what? This is a very progressive study, for those who may have ever felt like Jesus has been kidnapped by the Christian Right and discarded by the Secular Left? Through video presentations by theological scholars of today, participants will engage in meaningful conversations around the relevance of Jesus for today.

Sermon from September 6th

Hear these words from Paul as written to the Colossians 3:12-17:

So, chosen by God for this new life of love, dress in the wardrobe God picked out for you: compassion, kindness, humility, quiet strength, discipline. Be even-tempered, content with second place, quick to forgive an offense. Forgive as quickly and completely as the Master forgave you. And regardless of what else you put on, wear love. It's your basic, all-purpose garment. Never be without it.

Let the peace of Christ keep you in tune with each other, in step with each other. None of this going off and doing your own thing. And cultivate thankfulness. Let the Word of Christ—the Message—have the run of the house. Give it plenty of room in your lives. Instruct and direct one another using good common sense. And sing, sing your hearts out to God! Let every detail in your lives—words, actions, whatever—be done in the name of the Master, Jesus, thanking God the Father every step of the way.

The word of God for the people of God...

Do you remember the day you fell in love? Hopefully, you have had that (and if you are young I pray those moments will come) when your breath is taken away and it is no longer about you but so completely about THAT person. Maybe you are like me and your first love was the red-haired freckled boy in 1st grade. Or it was the girl sitting next to you in middle school. Many of us have experienced that incredible person in high school or college that we could spend hours with and really helped us understand the selflessness of love. Eventually, I met a man that I knew was THE ONE. I've always said Glenn makes me a better person, helps me discover who I am, and loves me unconditionally. Literally, on our first date, as we were driving, I can remember looking at him and knowing as we rounded a curve in the road, THIS was THE ONE. And with HIM came 2 little boys to fall in love with as well. And then one day a 3rd baby boy was placed in my arms and my heart flipped again. Falling in love can be instantaneous... you know, that love at first sight moment... and then sometimes, we may know someone for years before we suddenly realize that we want this person in our life forever.

But here is the BIG QUESTION – are you still in love? Sometimes love changes – we grow up, move away, change drastically. We get hurt, we cause hurt. Sometimes we get too comfortable, taking each other for granted. To stay in love, you have to work at it – every day. I know, who knew it was going to be so hard. You have to constantly be willing to put another first – whether it is a spouse, child, parent, friend... showing grace, forgiveness, compassion, selflessly giving with a desire to place the other person ahead of self.

So do you remember the moment you fell in love with God? Madly, passionately, wholly in love with God... That would probably be my greatest prayer always for you. Now I don't expect everyone to have the same experience – that is simply not how God works. Some of us have known God our entire lives and so we have this comfortable presence with God that we cannot imagine living without – it is like the couple that has been married for decades and is content with silence, holding hands on the porch. We understand each other, complete each other's sentences, know each other's likes and needs. Others of us may have had that moment – a single moment when it all clicked, your heart is racing and you fall hard and fast. In an instant you give your heart. You remember the date, time and place.

But here is the BIGGEST QUESTION – are you still in love with God? God is still madly passionately in love with you. The Scriptures are full of God telling us of God's love for us – from the creation story found in Genesis to the promises fulfilled in Jesus now and in the days to come as read in Revelation. There is no doubt of God's love for you and me, but how often do we question our love for God?

John Wesley was the father of the Methodist Church. As a clergy of the Church of England, he led a group, called the "Holy Club", whose purpose was to study and pursue a devout Christian life. Wesley worked hard to become a great disciple of Jesus Christ. But it was on 24 May 1738, he experienced what has come to be called his evangelical conversion, when he felt his "heart strangely warmed"... and his faith changed. Wesley no longer believed being a Christian was only about devout wisdom and knowledge, but also about knowing through a personal relationship with God. And I believe that Wesley understood how very fragile that relationship could be on our part. As he preached and taught, John would show he believed that even in this life, Christians could achieve a state where the love of God "reigned supreme in their hearts", giving them not only outward but inward holiness.

The Holy Club eventually became United Society. The Society was a group of men, gathering weekly to seek godliness, pray together, study Scripture, care for each other with love, and hold each other accountable. As I thought of these Societies this week I couldn't help but think of a family where each person strives to place each other first, praying together to live out God's plan and desire for each person and the family unit. Loving each other unconditionally and that means sometimes being painfully honest with each other. These societies asked one thing of their participants – and that was a deep desire for salvation, knowing that as they lived out their faith they would be recognized as Christians by their fruits – living lives of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control as expressed in their words and actions. These Societies were designed to keep God as each person's most important priority and 1st love.

So, John Wesley and the societies knew they would need structure and so they created 3 Simple Rules:

Do no harm – that seems easy enough, right? Don't kill anybody or cheat on your spouse. But actually Wesley and his friends realized that doing no harm could be quite difficult in daily life... in family life, in the business world, in relationships, in our community, even in our churches.

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Do good – ahhh.... Much easier surely. Be nice and considerate, smile. Open the door for others and use your manners. If it were only that easy – how good are we in giving and being charitable? How good are we accepting accountability? How acceptable are we to those not like us? And for that matter how good are we even to ourselves.

Attend upon the ordinances of God – Today we often say “Stay in love with God.” Wesley understood that sometimes falling in love can come easily but we have to work at staying in love with God.

As I have grown in my understanding of faith over the years I am ever so thankful for having met the Methodist church. I resonate so much with the way we Methodist live out our faith. As a child I loved Jesus – I was suppose to. I grew up knowing Jesus and going to church and I wanted to be assured that I would go to heaven some day. But as I grew older I took my faith for granted, leaned on it in times of trouble, believed God loved me but did little to fan the fires of my love and commitment for God.

Eventually, I began to feel the need to deserve God’s love so I got really busy – REALLY busy! Serving in the church as much as possible – giving time and energy. But it was the Methodist church teaching me that God’s desire in my pursuit of holiness needed to change from an effort to earn God’s love and forgiveness to living in such a way that I am responding to God’s grace and being obedient and disciplined with love in my practices of discipleship.

Over the next three weeks we are going to look at each of these simple rules: do no harm, do good, stay in love with God. Our hope is for each of us to rejuvenate our love for God in such a way that we are energized to make and keep God our first priority, that our hearts may also be strangely warmed with a deepened desire to live out our faith with renewed passion.

I hope you have your Bible handy. If so I want you to turn to Colossians 3. Underline verses 12-17 These next few weeks I encourage you to read these verses every day and consider your love for the God who loves you infinitely and more.

So, chosen by God for this new life of love, dress in the wardrobe God picked out for you: compassion, kindness, humility, quiet strength, discipline. Be even-tempered, content with second place, quick to forgive an offense. Forgive as quickly and completely as the Master forgave you. And regardless of what else you put on, wear love. It’s your basic, all-purpose garment. Never be without it.

Let the peace of Christ keep you in tune with each other, in step with each other. None of this going off and doing your own thing. And cultivate thankfulness. Let the Word of Christ—the Message—have the run of the house. Give it plenty of room in your lives. Instruct and direct one another using good common sense. And sing, sing your hearts out to God! Let every detail in your lives—words, actions, whatever—be done in the name of the Master, Jesus, thanking God the Father every step of the way.

May it be so...



OPEN TABLE NEWS!

Yes, the church is alive and well. We are blessed with wonderful donations of fresh produce and food every Wednesday and Friday afternoon from the Episcopal church, as well as Friday mornings from Wal-Mart and Food Lion. **BUT we really need help** picking up and unloading all those goodies. Friday afternoons are usually the largest donations, so please consider helping from 4:30-5:30 pm... students can receive volunteer hours as well as the knowledge of making a significant difference in our community. ALSO -- Extra muscles, hands and hearts are always needed on Saturdays. Please arrive to help by 10 am. **AND ONE MORE THING** – if you are able: we are in great need of **plastic grocery bags!**

Just Because We Love You -- Who would have ever thought we would still be staying at home, protecting ourselves and each other from a pandemic? I can assure you, the staff and leaders of the church, had no idea in March we would still be needing to refrain from group activities, especially worship and church events. We began almost 6 months ago creating a small team of individuals (staff and laity) to call and check on congregants. It is now evident that this may be continued for some time to come, especially for our more vulnerable church family members.

We are still in need of 5-10 adults to contact 10 families every 2 weeks just to check in, see if they have any needs, and let them know they are important to this church “just because we love you.” Team members will make phone calls, text, email, even write notes and send cards to parishioners.

If you feel God calling you to be a part of the team, please contact Pastor Fawn at fawn@cumcshelby.org Or you may call her at 954-547-2593 or 828-675-3094.



Take a Breathers

As we are being bombarded with news and anxiety may be building, Central UMC invites you to **Take a Breather** with us Monday-Saturday at noon on Facebook Live. One of our ministry staff will lead us in a short devotional and prayer, uniting us as we keep our eyes and hearts on God's promises. You do not have to have a FB account to see the videos. You will also find a week's worth of videos on our website at <http://cumcshelby.org/grow/>. Below you will find the transcripts for the previous weeks' videos. We hope you join us as we remember: Together, we ARE the Body of Christ!

September 8th:

Tomorrow is an exciting day at Central United Methodist Church. I will imagine that there will be a few sleep-deprived children as they lay in bed thinking about their first day of preschool in 2020. The Kids Place Director, staff, and board, with the assistance of the church leadership have worked really hard the past several months to prepare for this less than normal school year. And I know we are ready!!!

I am so excited that our church cares so much about the little ones in our community to have a preschool like Kids Place. The school teaches colors and numbers and the alphabet. I have heard compliments from kindergarten teachers on how the children entering school after having graduated from Kids Place are recognizable for their knowledge and social skills. And the school not only nurtures the children, but also their families. Parents are encouraged and our staff truly loves each member.

But the greatest gift Kids Place and the church give students and families is Jesus. The children hear the stories of God and are given a foundation for a lifetime relationship with Jesus Christ. What a blessing.

You know, Jesus thought children were very important... which was extremely counter-cultural in those Biblical days. The Gospel of Luke tells us – “People were bringing babies to Jesus so that he would bless them. When the disciples saw this, they scolded them. Then Jesus called them to him and said, “Allow the children to come to me. Don't forbid them, because God's kingdom belongs to people like these children. I assure you that whoever doesn't welcome God's kingdom like a child will never enter it.” [Luke 18:15-17] Jesus wanted us to know that he longed for all of us to be as eager as children for Jesus' blessings.

So tomorrow morning as we welcome our preschoolers and their families into our church home, I hope you will be praying for a wonderful school year filled with wisdom and growth and safety and health. I hope you will thank God for giving us at Central the opportunity to welcome each little child into God's Kingdom. And I really hope that maybe you and I will lose a little sleep tonight as well, as we, with thankful consideration, eagerly receive the blessings Christ has for us.

Let us pray...

Fawn Mikel

September 10th:

Welcome back, friends, to our Thursday September 10th edition of “Take a Breather”. I'm Danny Buckner and it's my privilege to serve as music director for Central Methodist Church in Shelby, NC.

Sooo...I came home yesterday only to discover that our air conditioning had gone out. Yes, I realize that is totally, as they say, “a first-world” problem and that we were fortunate enough to have it go out when outside temperatures were not in the 90's like a few weeks ago, but still, the humidity made it feel like camping inside the house as we slept. Now don't get me wrong...I love to camp and will absolutely put up with the discomforts that come along with sleeping outdoors while camping, but I don't particularly care to have those same discomforts in my bed at home. Again, first-world problem, I know.

In my line of work, I have the privilege of listening to a lot of folks as they share their thoughts with me...joys, cares, concerns, troubles...and not all problems are first-world problems. They are real problems...heavy problems. It's while we're in the midst of those heavy problems that we can find ourselves shaking our fists at God and shouting, “What do you want from me? I'm doing my best here! Why does this (fill in the blank with your heavy problem) keep happening to me?”

It can also be very easy during those times to wonder what God is doing? Is God still looking after me? I suppose questions like these are human nature, but if we go very far down that road then perhaps we limit God. We make God a bean-counter...a God who has favorites... “You didn't look after me, but you looked after him! What's up with that, God?” But, despite feeling that way sometimes, I don't really believe that's who God is at all.

I came across a really beautiful story today about the nature of God. It's a true story actually and it comes from the book I introduced to you last week, “Barking to the Choir” by Gregory Boyle.

Mr. Boyle writes...

I once gave an evening talk at a private school in Los Angeles. The place was packed with parents and a handful of students. Sitting in the front row was my friend Vivienne. Her husband, Rey, had invited me to speak. Beside her was her ten-year-old son, Diego. Throughout my talk, I kept noticing Diego. Though he was young, he was mature beyond his

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years, bright and articulate, without an ounce of ten-year-old fidget. As I spoke, he hung on every word, laughing at all the right places and dropping his jaw when things got more serious. I finished my talk with a heartbreaking story of Puppet and Youngster, sworn enemies who became brothers while working together until Puppet was beaten to death. Suddenly, Diego was sobbing. Even as I continued to speak on auto-pilot, I kept observing him, astonished at his reaction. Puppet's untimely death had so affected Diego that he was experiencing a full-bodied sorrow, heaving and rocking in his seat. Vivienne turned to him and slowly, sweetly, put her arm around him. What Diego did next is, quite literally, a showstopper. He reared up and at full volume screamed at his Mom: "WHAT?" I stop speaking. Everyone turned and looked. He demurred, but only a little. He leaned in again, and repeated in a fairly loud stage whisper: "WHHHAAAATTTT?" It was clear that he was asking, "What?" as in *WHAT have I done now? HOW have I disappointed you now?*

It could be true that Vivienne simply wanted to settle her kid down, since everyone was looking at him. And yet her expression seemed to ask, *How did I get so lucky to have such a son?* But she is also heartbroken by the very thing that breaks the heart of her kid. She wanted to console him and let him know that he was not alone. This mother did not want "from" him. She only wanted "for" him.

Often enough, we get in the habit of shaking our fists at God and saying, *WHAT do you WANT from me?* We are programmed this way as humans. But I suppose it would be more accurate to ask God this: *What do you want FOR me?* For starters: life, happiness, and peace: My joy yours. Your joy complete. That's it. Nothing less than that.

I think that's a really wonderful way to re-frame my thinking. Though I thought, "Well, crap!" when our AC went out I realize that's not really a big deal at all, but I've had a few things in my life that actually were big deals and I wanted to (truthfully, actually did) shake my fist at God and ask that very question... *What to you WANT from me?!* Perhaps, instead, I need to remember to ask *What do you want FOR me, God?* And, maybe you do, too. Something good to think about...

Let's close our time together with the Prayer of Saint Francis...

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace
Where there is hatred, let me sow love
Where there is injury, pardon
Where there is doubt, faith
Where there is despair, hope
Where there is darkness, light
And where there is sadness, joy
O Divine Master, grant that I may
Not so much seek to be consoled as to console
To be understood, as to understand
To be loved, as to love
For it is in giving that we receive
And it's in pardoning that we are pardoned
And it's in dying that we are born to Eternal Life
Amen

COVID-19 Updates

As per NC Mandate and for the health and safety of our staff and community, effective immediately, we ask that everyone wear a mask while inside the church buildings. We are also asking everyone that enters our facility to sign in with their contact information in order to aid with contact tracing should it be necessary. Know that you are all in our thoughts and prayers and we hope you stay healthy and well. Thank you for your cooperation.

Outside Sunday School

The Saints and Sinners Class will be meeting each Sunday at 9:00 am, weather permitting, on the Court Square (near the information center—the small building on our side of the Earl Scruggs Center). Bring your own chair or blanket and join them for a socially distanced Sunday School lesson.