



DECEMBER 2025 ISSUE 64

MINISTRY MATTERS

The Newsletter of Christ United Methodist Church
Owen Brown Interfaith Center, Columbia, Maryland



MEMORIES OF WONDER, FACES OF FAITH

Looking back at pageants from years past, we see more than costumes and halos – we see the lasting light of God's love alive in our community.

IN THIS ISSUE:

Clergy Corner

Worship and Praise

Our Church Family

CUMC Cares

Learning for All

Fellowship

Conference Connections

Participation Matters

Business Corner

Calendar



Dec. 24, 2025: 5:00PM The Unrehearsed Christmas Paegent

7:00PM Traditional Christmas Eve Candlelight Service



CHRIST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Owen Brown Interfaith Center, 7246 Cradlerock Way, Columbia, MD 21045
Phone: 410-381-6329 Email: admincumcobic.org Website: cumcobic.org
The Reverend Angela Wells (she/her), Pastor



CLERGY CORNER

Rev. Angela



*You have shown strength with your arm;
you have scattered the proud in their conceit;
you have deposed the mighty from their thrones
and raised the lowly to high places.
- Luke 1:50 (Inclusive Bible)*



For Advent this year, I will be using a worship series "What Child IS This? Beyond the Lullaby," planned by Dr. Marcia McFee, a renowned United Methodist worship planner. The series is shaped around the book *The First Advent in Palestine: Reversals, Resistance & The Ongoing Complexity of Hope* by Kelley Nikondeha. What does it mean to use a worship series? Well, Dr. McFee provides the liturgy and suggestions for worship while I write the sermons to go with it.

Read what Dr. McFee has to say about the series:

"In 1865, William Chatterton Dix penned a poem that would become the beloved Christmas-time favorite, "What Child Is This?" During Advent, we will dive into this question that is much more complicated than the lilting lullaby tune, "Greensleeves," conveys. We will see the story of the time leading up to the birth of Christ in its historical trauma-informed fullness. The story of humanity and its recurring themes of oppression and corruption run right through history and into our own narratives. Yet, we can rely on the assurance of the carol to confirm that God is "present with us" in powerful ways that continue to be the Word of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love even and especially in the midst of hard times."

And this:

"Advent is usually about waiting. But we cannot wait to have hope; it is essential now. We cannot wait to work for peace; lives are at stake. We cannot wait to embrace joy, even and especially when it seems in short supply. We cannot wait to love, most of all, because we are the ones who follow the saving love of Jesus Christ, God-With-Us."

I look forward to journeying together through this Advent season exploring these urgent themes of hope, peace, joy, and love both in the story of Jesus' birth and in our own story in this day and age.

And side note: I'd love to hear what you think of the series as it's trying something new for me so we'll try it out together!

Advent Blessings+
Rev. Angela



WORSHIP

Advent at CUMC

This Advent we're asking the question along with the beloved carol: "What Child IS This?" We'll be exploring different aspects of Jesus' identity as put forward by the famous carol as we prepare for his coming birth.

November 30: Our theme is "King of Kings" as we light the candle of hope. How can we hope for that which we don't see?

December 7: Our theme is "The Silent Word" as we light the candle of peace. What does peace even mean in a world of empire and power?

December 14: Our theme is "Son of Mary" as we light the candle of joy. What does it mean that God chose to be born to this particular human in her own particular socio-political context?

December 21: Our theme is "Enthroned by Love" as we light the candle of love. We often say that Jesus is God's love made flesh—what does that mean exactly?

Special Music Sundays

Harp & Piano Sunday will be December 7th!

The Mosaic Chorus who CUMC co-sponsors will sing in worship on December 21st!

Christmas Eve at CUMC

5pm Service: The Unrehearsed Christmas Pageant! Come join in the fun for all ages as we take part in the story of the birth of Jesus. No practice or experience necessary. Just show up, grab a costume and join in the holy chaos. Please invite friends, neighbors, family to this special service. Invitations are available on the side counter.

7pm: Traditional Christmas Eve Service of Candlelight! Join us as we dive deeper into the song "O Holy Night" exploring how it sheds light on the night of Christ's birth. We'll of course have carols, candlelight, special music, and more. Please invite friends, neighbors, family to join us for this holy night. Invitations are available on the side counter.

Calling all guitarists!

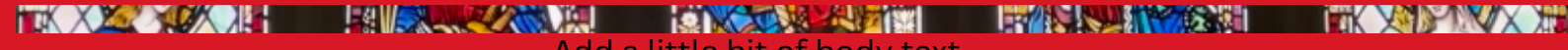
Each year on Christmas Eve at the 7pm service we enjoy Silent Night—a carol originally written for the guitar—with special guitar accompaniment. Do you play the guitar? Join in the fun! Contact Pam Wilt or Rev. Angela to learn more.

Breakfast Potluck & Carols in Christmas Pajamas!

The celebration continues the Sunday after Christmas (12/28) with a special worship service where we will gather around tables and share in a breakfast potluck as we sing favorite carols and hear the familiar words of scripture once more. Wear your Christmas pajamas (yes, pajamas in church!) and bring a breakfast dish to share for this fun holiday celebration! Contact Phyllis Kelley or Rev. Angela for more info.

Epiphany

On January 4th the Magi will arrive at the manger following that yonder star. Come to this special service where we'll receive Star Words—a word to guide your prayer and meditation for the coming year. We'll also stay after church to take down the holiday decorations in the sanctuary—your help is greatly appreciated!



Locust UMC Dec. 16, 2025 at 7:00PM



Blue
Christmas
Worship Service
Tues. Dec. 16th at 7pm
at Locust UMC
(8105 Martin Rd, Columbia)

All around us our culture is presuming that everything is "merry" and "bright," but not everything is joy-filled this time of year. If you're struggling this holiday season--for whatever reason--this is a quiet, contemplative service for you.

Service led by clergy of the Columbia-Highland hub of the Baltimore Washington Annual Conference of the UMC



CUMC Dec. 24, 2025 Services 5:00PM 7:00PM

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

- As we mourn the deaths of **Joanne Piersall**, **Barbara Heydt** and **Emma Angelo**, we extend our prayers and support to their families. All were active CUMC members at various times.
- **Randolph Bogda** has been visiting CUMC in recent months and is now returning to his home in Indiana. While we only got to know him briefly, his wonderful voice added to our weekly music. He attends West Newton UMC if you'd like to explore the website to hear Randolph with his home choir click [here](#).
- Welcome to new members **Eduardo Llano Mosquera** and **Miguel Angel**.



Happy Birthday!

Lee Klinkenberg
Darren Hornbeck
Kevin Swanson
Clara Fitzgerald
Shelby Lederman
Phil Lindberg
Dennis Atkins
Elena Lederman
Lori Hammond
Darwin Perry
Paul Meyer

The CUMC Members and Friends Photo Directory is available on the CUMC Website under [Archives Documents](#).



CUMC CARES

Missions and Community Ministries Matter

Second Sunday Stock-up on December 14

Before suggestions are given for December's donation request, it is important to express the deepest gratitude for a RECORD donation of 96 pounds of food for the November donations! This was not a contest but highlights the scope of your generosity. This was a bounty of hope and kindness passed along to others, and a profound thank you goes out to you!

The December request fits in with the holidays and the spirit of goodwill, but the food donations take on a more urgent tone with rising food insecurity due to recent events, whether holidays are observed or not. High demand non-perishable foods that can be used to create holiday meals or daily dinners such as **canned vegetables, canned yams, canned fruits, instant potatoes, pasta, canned beans, fried onion rings, stuffing, gravy mix** are useful. Don't forget **canned chicken, beef or pork which can be added to stews and casseroles.**

This season is notoriously stressful, and taking some pressure off food insecurity goes a long way in helping remove some pressure for individuals or families.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Lillian Lehnert.



Santa's Workshop

This Christmas season we are reaching out to our larger community to celebrate together! On December 6th from 10am-12pm we'll join in the fun of Santa's Workshop providing free photos with Santa, free Christmas themed family portraits perfect for Christmas cards, and free snacks, crafts, music and more! This effort is organized by the Community Ministries Team but involves the whole congregation. Here are the asks:

1. **Are you willing to volunteer on December 6th?** Wear your CUMC t-shirt and Santa hat and help! Contact Kevin Swanson if you're willing to help out.
2. **Spread the word!** This event only serves our community if we tell our community about it. Paper invitations will be available on the side counter as we approach this fun event and the digital copy ready to text/email to folks will be available in the Wednesday email. Together we can make this community event a success!

Join in the fun of...

SANTA'S WORKSHOP

Free fun for the whole family!

- Picture with Santa
- Family portrait
- Crafts
- Snacks
- Storytime

SAT DEC 6 2025

10AM-12PM

Owen Brown Interfaith Center
2nd floor
7246 Cradlerock Way

*** SPONSORED BY:**
CHRIST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
www.cumcobic.org



CUMC CARES

Missions and Community Ministries Matter

CUMC in the COMMUNITY: Showing Up, Serving, and Shining Bright

The Community Ministries Team has been busy building relationships, strengthening partnerships, and raising CUMC's visibility throughout Owen Brown. Here's how we've been connecting with our neighbors this fall:

Trunk or Treat at Cradlerock ES – October 25

Karen Ohlrich and Kevin Swanson represented CUMC at this beloved event—and the kids loved us right back! Huge thanks to **Lillian Lehnert** for the eye-catching decorations and **Katie Weston** for providing treats. Our booth drew crowds, and the ever-popular Skeleton Beanbag Toss was a hit all evening. This annual tradition continues to boost our presence in the Owen Brown community.

Helping with Free Dental Screenings – November 5

Cradlerock ES, in partnership with the Howard County Health Department, offered free dental exams and cleanings for students. CUMC Team members helped escort children from classrooms to the cafeteria and back again throughout the day. A highlight: several students recognized us from Trunk or Treat—a wonderful reminder that our presence truly matters.

Cheering at the CRES Turkey Trot – November 13

On a cold, windy morning, Community Team members bundled up to cheer on students at the annual Turkey Trot—including our own CUMC kids! Spirits were high, and as always, this no-losers-all-winners event brought big smiles to everyone involved.

Ongoing Volunteer Support at CRES

Our volunteer presence at the school continues to grow. **Karen Ohlrich** and **Sissy Plank** serve regularly in the Media Center, and **Kevin Swanson** helped escort students during the dental exams. If you feel called to invest your time in the lives of local children, contact the Community Team—we'd be thrilled to get you connected.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Santa's Workshop– December 6 at OBIC 10am - 12pm. Pastor Angela is creating a Facebook event, and flyers will go out to the Unitarian congregation. We're promoting this widely so that it becomes a major invitation point for our Christmas Eve celebrations. Help us spread the word to neighbors, friends, and family!

Unrehearsed Christmas Pageant – December 24, 5pm at OBIC

Plans are shaping up for a wonderfully spirited Christmas Eve Pageant. Many roles are already filled:

Karen – Star, **Kevin** – Angel, **Emily** – Shepherd, **Katie Weston** – Magi

Invite your friends and neighbors! This is one of our most joyful, community-friendly worship services of the year.

Kevin Swanson, Chair Community Ministries



LEARNING FOR ALL

Education Matters

SUNDAY SCHOOL



Sunday School for preschoolers thru HS age:
Each class has 2-3 adults and leaves for class approximately 15 minutes into our regular worship service and returns near the end of our worship time. In addition to their Biblical story and discussion, the younger children usually do a craft activity.

SOMETHING NEW FOR THE NEW YEAR

NEW STUDY SERIES: EXPLORING COMMUNITY

Time: Sunday afternoons 1:30 to 3:00 beginning January 11

Place: The Messengers' 7661 Sweet Hours Way, Columbia 21046

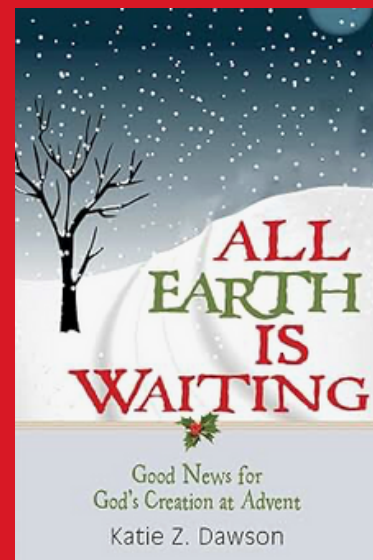
Join us for a six-session journey into the meaning and power of Community. Together we'll explore what brings people closer, what holds us together, and how we can help build the kind of beloved community God intends for us.

Our conversations will draw on ideas from Martin Luther King Jr.'s vision of the Beloved Community, the Hidden Brain podcast episode "Relationships 2.0," the documentary "Join or Die," and James Rouse's dream for Columbia, Maryland. The sessions will include short readings, videos, and plenty of time for open, thoughtful discussion. We'll also practice good listening, deepen our understanding of one another, and consider how Christian community can thrive in today's world.

All are welcome—whether you're new to church life, a long-time member, or simply curious about what community can mean at its best.

Please speak to Mary Jo or Scrib to sign up!

ADVENT STUDY: Our Green Team is hosting a 4 week discussion on "All Earth is Waiting: Good News for God's Creation at Advent" beginning Dec 1st. Sign up at church on the side counter and indicate if you would prefer Sundays at 11:30am or Mondays at 7pm on ZOOM. The book can be ordered thru Amazon or by contacting facilitator Katie Weston. Click on the book to go to Amazon.



FELLOWSHIP

Matters

FIRST FRIDAY

First Friday is always a holiday treat as we meet at the "House of Many Trees " i.e. Lillian Lehnert's home on Dec.5 at 6:30pm. Her five trees (at least), many, many decorations, player piano and the great potluck meal all contribute to make it a special way to kick off the holidays. Lots of furniture moving and rearranging, so please let Lillian know if you plan to attend no later than Tues. Dec. 2.



DECEMBER BRUNCH BUNCH

Lucky Ladies will enjoy a **Brunch Bunch** on Dec. 11 at the home of Mary Jo Messenger. Arrive at 11am with quiche, fruit, French toast and breakfast casseroles, muffins, grits, ham and other favorites to contribute to a great meal! Contact Mary Jo by Tues. Dec. 8 so she sets a place for YOU!



FELLOWSHIP AND SERVICE





PLEASE JOIN US!

*Cookies
and
Carols*

SUNDAY,
DECEMBER 21
AT 7:00PM

AT THE MESSENGERS' HOME

PLEASE BRING YOUR
FAVORITE COOKIES TO
SHARE



CONFERENCE CONNECTIONS

Matter

November 18, 2025 | Making a Difference in the Life of a Child

Everstand (formerly the Board of Child Care) is a comprehensive, multi-faceted regional ministry that seeks to bring healing and wholeness to children and families. While its name changed in 2024, it continues to be a beacon of hope. Each year, Everstand turns to its United Methodist roots, inviting partners in ministry like you to help ensure that every child in its care can experience the joy and wonder of Christmas.

In 1874, Thomas Kelso, at age 93, founded the Kelso Home for Girls in Baltimore, creating an orphanage that became the foundation for what is now the Everstand campus in Randallstown. In 1954, Methodists began the Red Stocking campaign, empowering Methodist children to collect dimes for the orphans. That first year, 60,000 stockings were gathered across Maryland.

Today, Everstand walks alongside youth and families facing tremendously difficult circumstances. Many children and teens have endured emotional, physical, and psychological trauma and carry deep wounds of abandonment and loss. Everstand's mission is to surround them with safety, compassion, and support so that they may experience joy, connection, and a sense of belonging, especially during the holiday season.

Each young person at Everstand thoughtfully creates a holiday wish list, totaling approximately \$150. When you sponsor a wish list, your monetary contribution allows staff to purchase exactly what a child has requested, giving them a tangible reminder that they are seen, valued, and loved. It also gives the gift of autonomy, an intangible that is often absent from the lives of the vulnerable.

In order to fulfill these wishes, monetary gifts are needed by Friday, December 5. You may give online by visiting everstand.org/christmas and following the instructions for the Christmas Gift Sponsorship program, or by mailing checks to:

Everstand
Attn: Development Office
3300 Gaither Road
Baltimore, MD 21244

Please write "Christmas Drive" on the memo line so that your gift is properly credited. Details on additional ways you can give are available at everstand.org/christmas.

This Christmas, you have the opportunity to give the gift of belonging, wholeness, and hope. On behalf of the children, youth, and families whose lives will be brightened by your generosity, thank you for giving as you are able and for standing with Everstand in this vital ministry.

Blessings and peace,

Bishop LaTrelle Miller Easterling



PARTICIPATION MATTERS

December 2025

Date	Events
12/1	Advent Study* 7:00 p.m. "All Earth is Waiting"
12/3	Prayer Meeting* 8:15 p.m.
12/4	Justice for All* 7:00 p.m.
12/5	First Friday 6:30 p.m. at Lillian Lehnert's RSVP by Dec. 2
12/6	Santa's Workshop 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
12/7	Sunday Service* 10:00 a.m. "The Silent Word"
12/8	Advent Study* 7:00 p.m. "All Earth is Waiting"
12/10	Prayer Meeting* 8:15 p.m.
12/11	Brunch Bunch 11:00 a.m. hosted by Mary Jo Messenger RSVP by 12/9 SPRC* 7:00 p.m.
12/14	Sunday Service* "Son of Mary" Second Sunday Stock-Up: Items for Xmas Dinner
12/15	Advent Study* 7:00 p.m. "All Earth is Waiting"
12/17	Prayer Meeting* 8:15 p.m.
12/18	Ad Board Meeting* 7:00 p.m.
12/21	Sunday Service* 10:00 a.m. "Enthroned by Love"
12/21	Cookies and Carols at the Messengers' 7:00 p.m.
12/22	Advent Study* 7:00 p.m. "All Earth is Waiting"
12/23	Newsletter Deadline
12/24	The Unrehearsed Christmas Pageant 5:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Candlelight Service 7:00p.m.
12/25	Merry Christmas to all!
12/28	Sunday Service* Christmas Pajama Sunday with Breakfast

*To join services or meetings connect through Zoom link on the front page of the CUMC Website: cumcobic.org

December 2025

Please find the new updated Worship Volunteer Instructions on the CUMC website at this link:

<https://cumcobic.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/volunteer-instructions.pdf>.

December 2025

Position	Dec 7	Dec 14	Dec 21	12/24/2025 5:00	12/24/2025 7:00	Dec 28
Liturgist	Lydia Munoz	Don James	Katie W	Suzanne James	none	Phil Lindberg
Reader	Toni	Kelli Wells	Phyllis	none	Judy	Nadia
Acolyte	Luke	Mi Amor	Miguel Angel	none	Daniel Klinkenberg	Luke
Altar Flowers	Klinkenbergs			Pointsettias	Pointsettias	
Tech						
Ushers 1	Greg	Dennis	Jeanette		Lillian	Phyllis
Ushers 2	Natalie	Waren	Rob		Kevin	Warren
Altar Set-up	Mary Jo Messenger	Toni Klinkenberg	Kelleys	none	MJ/Kelleys	Karen Ohlrich
Communion & Set-up	Duggan	Mary Jo	Kelleys			Gomez
Counters 1	Kevin	Phil	Greg		Becky	Warren
Counters 2	Warren	Lee	Warren		Kevin	Phil
Nursery Volunteer						
Refreshments	Gomez	Duggan	Weston	XXX	XXX	Cristin
Sunday School Assist MS		Karen Ohlrich		XXX	XXX	Kevin Swanson
Sunday School Assist ELEM	Don James	Don James	Don James	Don James	Don James	Don James

BUSINESS CORNER

Financial Information - October 2025

Year-to-Date	Actual	Budget
Revenue	\$ 102,091.81	\$ 87,998.33
Expenses	\$ 95,444.44	\$ 104,277.07
Surplus or (Deficit)	\$ 6,647.37	\$ (16,278.73)
Surplus or (Deficit) Per Week	\$ 127.83	\$ (313.05)

Ad Board Minutes: November 20, 2025
Council of Ministries Minutes: November 12, 2025

*"When physical
eyesight declines, spiritual
eyesight increases."*
—Plato



Thank you to the contributors for the Memorial Plaque name plate order for Joanne Piersall: Deadra Atkins, Ching-Ju Cheng, Sara Cochran, Lillian Lehnert, Mary Jo Messenger, Judy Pittman, Jeanette Rosenberger, Natalie Swirdovich, Trudi Wynne.



BUSINESS CORNER

CUMC Approves Gift Acceptance and Endowment Policies

On November 20, 2025, D.S Dr. Lanther Mills presided over a special Church Conference for Christ United Methodist Church, where members unanimously approved both a Gift Acceptance Policy and an Endowment Fund Policy.

This decision marks the culmination of work that began earlier in 2025, when the Administrative Board set a goal of establishing an Endowment Fund. The vision was to create a permanent resource where bequests and contributions could be carefully invested, generating income to sustain and expand CUMC's programs, outreach, and ministries for years to come.

The Endowment Fund Policy establishes how gifts are invested, protected, and distributed to support long-term mission and ministry. The Gift Acceptance Policy provides clear guidelines for the types of donations the church may receive and how they will be managed.

The Endowment Fund offers members and friends an additional way to make charitable gifts. Combined in a permanent endowment, these contributions serve as a living memorial while supporting a wide range of mission and outreach projects that advance CUMC's core principles of love, justice, and community.

By design, the principal of the endowment remains intact, while a percentage of the investment earnings is used to support ministry and mission outreach not covered by the annual operating budget, while also supplementing existing programs and ministries. A small percentage of the investment interest earnings will be used annually to support a broad variety of activities and projects related to mission and outreach.

Our 2026 Endowment Fund kickoff will share educational insights and invite everyone to help build the future while establishing a personal legacy. Stayed tuned for more details in 2026.

Natalie Swirdovich, Finance Chair

CUMC Now Has On-Line Giving! Use QR Code or click on the photo to the right to mke a contribution.



The advertisement features a blue background with the text "GIVE. ANYWHERE. FROM ANY DEVICE." in large, white, sans-serif font. To the right of the text is a QR code. Above the QR code is the CUMC logo, which consists of a circular arrangement of colorful dots forming a cross shape, with the text "Christ UMC" in the center. To the right of the QR code is a hand holding a smartphone displaying the CUMC giving app interface. The app shows a "GIVE" screen with a "\$50" amount, a "Give This One Time" dropdown, a "Give by Credit/Debit Card" dropdown, and a "Continue" button. Below the "Continue" button is a link to "Sign In / Create Account". At the bottom of the app screen, there is a disclaimer: "This secure giving process is managed by CUMC and is governed by our Gift Acceptance Policy and Statement of Financial Practices." The website address "cumcobic.org" is displayed in the top right corner of the advertisement.



CALENDAR

Click on the calendar to go to the interactive calendar on the website.

< > Dec 2025							📅	🗓️
SUN 30	MON Dec 1	TUE 2	WED 3	THU 4	FRI 5	SAT 6		
• 10am Wor			• 8:15pm Pi	• 7pm Just	• 6:30pm F	• 10am Sar		
7	8	9	10	11	12	13		
• 10am Wor			• 7pm Coui • 8:15pm Pi	• 12pm Lun • 7pm Staff				
14	15	16	17	18	19	20		
Second Sun • 10am Wor		• 7pm HUB	• 8:15pm Pi	• 7pm Adm				
21	22	23	24	25	26	27		
• 10am Wor • 7pm Cool	• 6:30pm C		Christmas 2 more	Christmas				
28	29	30	31	Jan 1	2	3		
• 10am Wor			New Year's • 8:15pm Pi	New Year's • 7pm Just	• 6:30pm F			
Christ United Methodist Church, Columbia, MD GMT-05								+

At Christ United Methodist Church, all are invited to experience God's love, build beloved community, and pursue justice for absolutely everyone. We welcome, celebrate, and affirm the sacred worth of people of every race, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, ethnicity, nationality, physical and mental ability, level of education, family structure, and every economic, immigration, marital, and social status. As followers of Jesus, we commit ourselves to stand in solidarity with all who are marginalized and oppressed; as such, we have committed to being an Anti-Racist church. At CUMC, believers, seekers, and doubters join together to grow in our love for one another, creation, and the Divine through worship, small groups, advocacy work, and mutual support as we strive to be the church God calls us to be!



Christ United Methodist Church
Love. Justice. Community.
Black Lives Matter

