



FEBRUARY 2026 ISSUE 66

MINISTRY MATTERS

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



CELEBRATING OUR YOUTH AS THEY LEAD US IN WORSHIP

Children and youth have always been a focus at CUMC. From Sunday School, to Vacation Bible School, youth group programs, to Logos and more over our 50-year history we have delighted in guiding our young people and making them an important part of the life of CUMC. We have also enjoyed having them lead us in worship! Sometimes they sang or played various musical instruments, sometimes we have seen skits, and there was one period when puppet shows were a regular feature.

On Sunday January 18th our youth led us in a Celebration of the Fruit of the Spirit —love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness and self-control. Our worship leaders were: Sofi Flanagan-Wells, Luke Weston, Miamour Flanagan-Wells, and Miguel Angel. We thank them for their efforts and we also thank all of the silent helpers who ushered and illustrated the fruits of the Spirit, and we especially thank Rev. Angela for the creative leadership and guidance she gave that made this service possible.

In addition to songs, scripture, and a sermon, the service included the annual presentation of Bibles to our third graders: Miguel Angel and Martin Yung.



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



CUMC YOUTH PRESENT AND PAST!



CLERGY CORNER

Rev. Angela



Black History Month

February is Black History Month, and I'm looking forward to a sermon series focused on African-American Spirituals (see specifics on page 4). Spirituals are folk songs created by enslaved people in the American south, especially in the period of 1619–1860. They blend African musical traditions with Christian hymns, including frequently coded messages for resistance, freedom, and the underground railroad. The musical style incorporates call and response and syncopation (a musical rhythm that accents unexpected beats rather than predictable down beats).

Many of these songs originate in the Hush Harbors, clandestine worship meetings held by enslaved persons in secluded outdoor locations. These songs inspired the later Freedom Songs of the Civil Rights Movement.

While they have been incorporated into Christian hymnals of today, the songs reveal religious syncretism in the early enslaved community—a combination of Christian, Muslim, and native African spiritualities. For example, the well-known spiritual "Let Us Break Bread Together" includes the lyric, "when I fall on my knees with my face to the rising sun." These lyrics reference the Muslim practice of praying towards the holy city of Mecca, which from the southern US states is East—towards the rising sun. As a church that worships in an Interfaith Center, how cool to celebrate the interfaith roots of this beloved hymn!

It is my hope that during this month of focusing on Spirituals we might all gain a greater appreciation for this important musical tradition.



A note of thanks...

On behalf of the CUMC staff, I'd like to thank the CUMC congregation for our generous Christmas gifts received on the last Sunday of December. We are so grateful to serve Christ UMC in our staff positions and give thanks for the congregation's generosity!

--Rev. Angela, Lisa, and Ching-Ju



WORSHIP

February Worship

February Black History Month Sermon Series on African American Spirituals

Each Sunday worship service during Black History Month will have a Justice Minute highlighting a variety of justice issues for Black Americans in our community and beyond. Additionally, each Sunday's service will have an African American Spiritual that Rev. Angela will place in conversation with the scripture text of the day (and of course we'll sing the Spiritual too!) Here are the Spirituals and Scriptures that we'll focus on:

- Feb 1: *Go, Down, Moses* (UMH 448) with Exodus 5:1-9
- Feb 8: *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot* (UMH 703) with 2 Kings 2:1-13
- Feb 15: *Wade in the Water* (TFWS 2107) with Exodus 14:10-29 and Matthew 17:1-9 (Transfiguration Sunday)
- Feb 22: *Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen* (UMH 520) with Matthew 4:1-11

Ash Wednesday is February 18th!

On Ash Wednesday our friends at St. John United will join us for a shared worship service at 7pm in Sanctuary A of OBIC. Come for this service of prayer, reflection, and the receiving of ashes as we begin the Lenten season together.

More Hands Make Lighter Work!

After our Time, Talent & Treasure forms were tallied up, we find ourselves short on volunteers for Communion Set Up, Ushers, and Sunday School Assistants (no lesson planning, just be the 2nd safe adult). It would be most helpful if we could get a few additional volunteers so that no one gets overscheduled and burned out. Not sure what's involved? Talk to Phyllis Kelley or Rev. Angela to learn more about what's entailed in each role. Thank you for prayerfully considering serving in this way!





CHRIST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH ENDOWMENT FUND



Small Seeds, Lasting Impact: What a Church Endowment Can Do

At Christ United Methodist Church, we know the strength of a small yet mighty congregation—and the incredible things a faithful community can accomplish together. An endowment embodies that truth. It begins with small seeds—gifts given today—that grow into long-term support for ministry, outreach, and community care.

A church endowment is a permanent fund in which gifts are invested rather than spent immediately. The principal remains intact, while a portion of the investment earnings is used each year to strengthen the church's mission. Even a modest endowment can create meaningful, sustainable impact.

What a Small Endowment Can Do

Even a beginning endowment—like a \$50,000 fund—can generate annual income that supports ministries without increasing the yearly budget. Over time, as gifts accumulate and investments grow, the impact multiplies. A \$50,000 endowment, invested conservatively, could generate \$2,000-\$2,500 each year. That steady support can help:

- **Support Youth and Children's Ministries** – Annual earnings could fund curriculum, retreats, or scholarships for mission trips.
- **Strengthen Community Outreach** – A dependable stream of support can sustain food pantry partnerships, justice initiatives, or local service projects.
- **Care for Our Worship Space** – Endowment income could help improve accessibility or update technology for hybrid worship.
- **Plant New Ministries** – With reliable funding, the church can explore new programs that meet emerging needs in our community.

Just as a mustard seed grows into a tree that shelters many, even small contributions to an endowment become a long-term blessing.

How an Endowment Grows

Endowments grow in three simple ways:

- **Investment Earnings** – The fund is invested carefully, allowing it to grow over time.
- **Ongoing Gifts** – Members can contribute at any time—monthly, annually, or whenever they feel called.
- **Legacy Gifts** – Bequests, memorial gifts, and planned giving ensure that a donor's values continue to shape the church's future.

As the fund grows beyond \$50,000—through gifts, memorials, and investment returns—its annual impact grows right along with it.

Over the next month, our Endowment Committee will offer several opportunities to learn more about how our endowment will strengthen the long-term mission and outreach of CUMC.



CHRIST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH ENDOWMENT FUND



Mark Your Calendar: February 22

On February 22, we're delighted to welcome a representative from the Mid-Atlantic Faith Foundation (MAFF)—a trusted United Methodist partner that helps churches thrive through investment partnerships and stewardship education. During worship, he will share a brief presentation highlighting examples of how endowments have grown and supported ministry in other United Methodist congregations. Following the service, we'll host a Q&A session for anyone who would like to explore the topic more deeply or ask practical questions about giving. Throughout the month, we'll also share additional illustrations of how even a modest endowment can grow over time and create lasting impact. We hope you'll join us as we begin this exciting next chapter in the life of CUMC and consider how you might help plant seeds for the future.

MAFF is a nonprofit organization that helps churches thrive through investment partnerships and stewardship education.

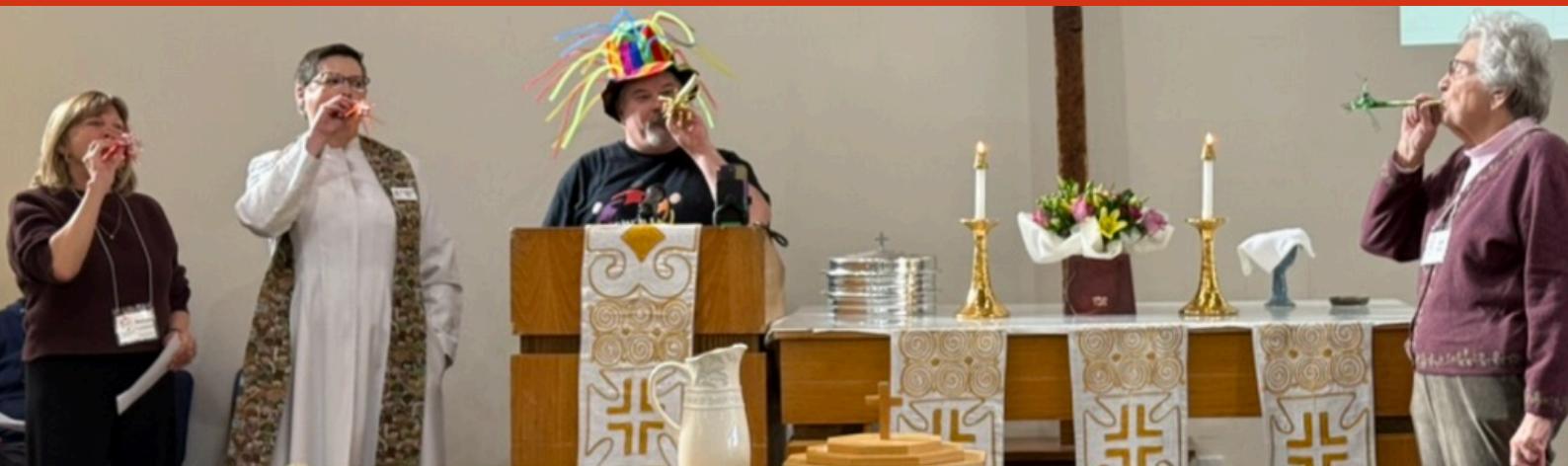
We proudly continue to serve United Methodists throughout our region, but we have recently changed our name to serve more people and more communities throughout the Mid-Atlantic and beyond. You may have known us as:

Mid-Atlantic
**Faith
Foundation**

We help churches attract, structure and manage larger financial gifts such as endowments and other types of planned giving.

The financial performance of our investment partners at Fulton Financial Advisors is competitive with the nation's leading investment firms.

MAFF investments may be structured to follow United Methodist principles and values.



OUR CHURCH FAMILY

Many in our church family are walking through tender seasons right now—some facing long-term illness or major life changes, others carrying shorter-term worries like job concerns, college decisions, financial stress, or relationships that feel out of balance. In these moments, simple acts of care mean so much. CUMC prayers, cards, phone calls, and visits are a quiet but powerful reminder that no one walks alone—and they are deeply appreciated.

*Happy
Birthday!*

Brandon Hammond
Austin Duggan
Raymond Burtnick
Lucie Pelgrim
Tom Curry



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



Celebrating the Baptism of Heidi and Cody Johnson and New Member Lisa Johnson!



CUMC CARES

Missions and Community Ministries Matter

Community Ministry Update: A Growing Partnership with CRES

Over the past year, CUMC's Community Ministries Team has built a strong and meaningful partnership with Cradlerock Elementary School (CRES), serving students, families, and staff in practical and caring ways. The relationship began with conversations between Dea Atkins, Kevin Swanson, and Stephanie Dobbs, CRES Community Schools Site Coordinator. By April, CUMC became an official Community Partner of CRES, with a clear sense of how we could best offer support.

One of our first ongoing commitments was caring for staff bathrooms at CRES. Beginning in June, CUMC began supplying four—and later five—staff restrooms with drawer units, toiletries, fresh flowers, and other thoughtful touches. Similar support was also extended to Lake Elkhorn Middle School. These small gestures have been deeply appreciated by school staff.

CUMC also began collecting “Rock Resources,” providing students with needed items they may not have access to at home. During the summer, volunteers delivered cool treats to the CRES staff break room as a simple thank-you. Volunteers now serve weekly in the CRES Media Center, and we continue supporting staff through donations, supplies, and encouragement.

Beyond the school building, CUMC renewed its role as a CRES PTA Community Sponsor and participated in major events, including the August Block Party (serving over 250 families) and Halloween Trunk or Treat (reaching about 300 community members). CRES staff also joined us for Blessing of the Backpacks Sunday, strengthening our shared connection.

Community Ministries supported several family-centered events throughout the year, including an Easter Egg Hunt, Santa’s Workshop, and the Unrehearsed Christmas Pageant, each welcoming almost 50 children and families. In May, five CUMC members also supported the Legacy weekend, serving 40 participants. We are grateful for the congregation’s continued support of this ministry. Opportunities to serve—such as assisting with hearing and vision screenings—will continue to arise. To be notified, contact Kevin Swanson. Donations of garden or altar flowers for staff bathrooms are always welcome; please contact Karen Ohlrich.

Together, we are making a difference—one relationship and one act of kindness at a time.



CUMC CARES

Missions and Community Ministries Matter

Second Sunday Stock-up on February 8, 2026

HELPING OTHERS HAVE a "SOUP"ER MEAL!

From fun to formal, soup fits right in! ANY time is the RIGHT time for soup! The varieties of soup are almost endless! Say the word "soup" and you can almost smell the aroma of classic soups like bean, chicken rice and chicken noodle. Add a little imagination and you now have Thai curry noodle soup, pozole rojo soup, and more!

There are almost as many soup brands as there are varieties of soup! Campbells, Progresso, Amy's, Pacific Foods, Rao's, Heinz, Healthy Choice, Trader Joe's, and many more!

Soup has vitamins, fiber, and protein, which makes it a great healthy choice. Soup is shelf stable and non-perishable, so easy to store. It is budget friendly, so a great way to donate without breaking the bank, and a little goes a long way.

Best of all, there are so many varieties to choose from. This gives lots of options, so people don't receive the same soup choice repeatedly. And companies like Chunky Soups offer "complete" meals, like stews and chili, which are more filling than broth-based soups.

The Howard County Food Bank thanks you in advance for your "SOUP-er" and generous donations!

Lilian Lehnert: Missions Team



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

Our six-session journey into the meaning and power of Community is well underway with 12 participants meeting on Sunday afternoons. Together we are exploring Robert Putnam's concept of social capital, what brings people closer, what holds us together, and how we can help build the kind of beloved community God intends for us. Our culminating session will include a discussion of explicit implications for our CUMC community.

Here are some of the resources that we have explored during the first three sessions. You are welcome to explore any that might be of interest to you! Questions to think about are also included.

SESSION 1 – Why Community Matters: *Join or Die*, Part 1 (*Join or Die* is available on Netflix.)

- What is your reaction to Putnam's finding that it is strong social connections that allows a society to flourish?
- What kinds of communities have you been part of, and how did they shape you?
- Are there barriers to joining community today?
- What do you think about the counter arguments from George Will and Robert Samuelson who said Putnam was wrong—people are connecting that are just doing different things.

SESSION 2 – *Join or Die*, Part 2 (*Join or Die* is available on Netflix.)

- What social media accounts do you have?
- Has the Internet reversed the the decline of social capital?

SESSION 3 – David Brooks – How to Know a Person: The Art of Seeing Others Deeply and Being Deeply Seen (Click on the title to view this video.)

Key Ideas:

- Many people feel unseen; deep attention is a powerful gift.
- Good listening is an act of love.
- We are called to be "illuminators," not "diminishers."

Questions:

- When have you felt truly seen by another person? What made that possible?
- What helps you feel safe enough to be honest about who you really are?

FELLOWSHIP

Matters

FIRST FRIDAY

First Friday is coming up! Join us on **Friday, February 6**, beginning at **6:30 pm**, at the Lindbergs' home. Come relax, enjoy good conversation, and spend time visiting with your church family—no agenda, just fellowship. Please **RSVP to Lisa by Monday, February 2**, so they know how many to expect. We hope you'll come!



FEBRUARY LUNCH BUNCH

February Lunch Bunch will be at the home of Sissy Plank, on Thursday, **February 12th at 12:00**.

We'll be celebrating Chinese New Year so plan to bring one item from your favorite Chinese carry out menu to share, or your own Chinese cooking! Dessert and drinks will be provided.

Please text your response to Sissy by Monday, February 9th.



JUSTICE FOR ALL

Matters

Healthcare Disparities: When “One Size Fits All” Doesn’t

We’re all basically the same...right? Yes—and no. While we share far more in common than not, differences in genetics, skin tone, lived experience, and socioeconomic realities can lead to very different healthcare outcomes. For many non-White Americans, those differences can be a matter of life and death.

Take a simple medical tool like a pulse oximeter—the device clips to your finger to measure blood oxygen levels. It turns out that higher levels of melanin in the skin can interfere with how these devices read oxygen saturation, often overestimating oxygen levels in people with darker skin. During the COVID-19 pandemic, this flaw gained national attention, as dangerously low oxygen levels were sometimes missed. Awareness has grown—but fixing the problem will take time, research, and accountability.

Even more sobering are disparities in maternal health. In recent years, Black women in the U.S. have experienced pregnancy-related death rates more than three times higher than White women (about 50 vs. 15 deaths per 100,000 live births). While Asian and Hispanic women generally experience lower rates, American Indian/Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander women face some of the highest risks of all. These numbers persist despite medical advances—and they raise urgent questions.

Why does this happen? Is it economic inequality? Unconscious bias within healthcare systems? Lingering myths—such as the false belief that Black women feel less pain? The answer is likely “all of the above,” and the work of education, examination, and reform continues.

The good news is that medicine is beginning to confront these inequities. The challenging news is that the disparities remain. They tell a story we cannot ignore—one that calls us, as people of faith, to seek justice, advocate for equity, and affirm the dignity and worth of every body God has made.

What can we do? We can start by learning and listening—especially to the voices of those most affected. We can advocate for equitable healthcare policies, support organizations working to reduce health disparities, and encourage culturally competent care in our own communities. We can also pray—for wisdom, for justice, and for healing—and commit ourselves to ensuring that compassion and fairness are not optional extras, but essential parts of caring for one another.

Wendy Newton





CONFERENCE CONNECTIONS

Matter

Bishop Easterling's Statement on Continued Violence & Death

Posted on Dec 15, 2025

"How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and day after day have sorrow in my heart? How long will my enemy triumph over me? But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. I will sing the Lord's praise, for he has been good to me."

-Psalm 13: 1-2, 5-6

Beloved of God,

Once again our hearts are heavy with the reality of loss. The drumbeat of violence reverberates across nations, claiming lives, shattering families, and unsettling communities. We just laid our beloved Bishop Violet L. Fisher to rest. We are still grieving the shooting of National Guard members. We lament violence erupting on our college campuses. We mourn the tragic loss of beloved lives whose absence leaves a silence that words cannot fill. The geography changes, the headlines shift, but the tragedy feels achingly familiar.

With the news cycle constantly reporting stories of heinous acts, the danger is not only the violence itself, but what it can do to our very souls. We risk growing numb, mistaking emotional distance for survival. We risk cynicism, convincing ourselves that nothing can change. We risk surrendering hope, quietly accepting cruelty as the permanent condition of the world. Scripture names this temptation and refuses to bless it as it teaches that weeping may endure for a night, but joy always comes. The Word of God does not invite us to harden our hearts. It calls us to keep them open, even when they are breaking.

The psalmist asks with unflinching honesty, "How long, O Lord?" That question is not a failure of faith. It is an act of faith. It assumes God is proximate. It assumes God is listening. It assumes the story is not finished. Lament, in the biblical sense, is not resignation; it is protest rooted in trust. We cry out in our pain and distress because God affirms our humanity and hears our need for shalom.

As followers of Jesus, we are living in the season of Advent, a season uniquely suited for a world such as ours. Advent does not rush us past grief into cheap celebration. It teaches us how to wait without giving up, how to hope without denying reality. Advent names the darkness honestly. Isaiah 9:2 tells us, "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light." Notice the tense. The darkness is real, but it does not get the final word.



CONFERENCE CONNECTIONS

Matter

Bishop Easterlings Statement on Continued Violence & Death, continued

Advent reminds us that God's response to a violent world was not distance, but incarnation as Christ took on flesh and walked with us. In Jesus Christ, God chose vulnerability over vengeance, presence over power, compassion over condemnation. From the cradle to the cross, God chose love. And resurrection is God's refusal to let violence have the last word.

So beloved, we process the violence swirling around us not by looking away, but by looking toward God and toward one another. We address it by praying with honesty, by grieving with those who grieve, by continuing our work for justice, and by loving without condition. We need the disciplines of our faith now more than ever.

Beloved, Advent assures us that God is with us, Christ is among us, and the Spirit is still at work through us. The world does not need our numbness or our cynicism. It needs our witness. It needs a people who dare to believe that light still shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. Even now, especially now, let us bear hope. Let us be love.

Blessings and peace,
Bishop LaTrelle Miller Easterling
Baltimore-Washington and Peninsula-Delaware Episcopal Area
The United Methodist Church





PARTICIPATION MATTERS

February 2026

Date	Events
2/1	Sunday Service* 10:00 a.m. Community Study Group 1:30 p.m. at the Messengers
2/4	Prayer Meeting* 8:15 p.m.
2/5	Justice for All* 7:00 p.m.
2/6	First Friday 6:30 p.m. at the Lindberg home RSVP by Feb. 2
2/8	Sunday Service* 10:00 a.m. Community Study Group 1:30 p.m. at the Messengers
2/11	Prayer Meeting* 8:15 p.m.
2/12	Lunch Bunch 12:00 p.m. hosted by Sissy Plank RSVP by 2/9
2/12	SPRC* 7:00 p.m.
2/18	Prayer Meeting* 8:15 p.m.
2/19	Ad Board Meeting* 7:00 p.m.
2/22	Sunday Service* 10:00 a.m. Endowment Campaign Speaker from Mid-Atlantic Faith Foundation
2/23	Newsletter Deadline
2/25	Prayer Meeting* 8:15 p.m.
2/26	Community Ministries Team* 7:00 p.m.
1/25	Sunday Service* 10:00 a.m. Community Study Group 1:30 p.m. at the Messengers

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

February 2026

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>

	Feb 1	Feb 8	Feb 15	Ash Wed 2/18	2/22/2026
Liturgist	Miamor	Lee Klinkenberg	Katie Weston		Lee
Reader	Cristin Messenger	Katie Swanson	Mike Plank		Jeanetter Rosenbe
Acolyte	Daniel	Emily	Miamor		Luke
Altar Flowers			Pam Wilt		
Tech					
Ushers 1	Warren	Rob	Lillian	Kevin Swanson	Lillian
Ushers 2	Becky Nicodemus	Jeanette	Dennis	Warren Kelley	Hilda Gomez
Altar Set-up	Messenger	Kelley	Klinkenberg	Kelley	Ohlrich
Communion & Set-up	Duggan	Kelley	James		Hilda Gomez
Counters 1	Becky Nicodemus	Natalie	Phil		David Burtnick
Counters 2	David Burtnick	Cora	Kevin Swanson		Mike Plank
Nursery Volunteer					
Refreshments	Kelley	Atkins	Pittman		Becky Nicodemus
Sunday School Assist MS	Kevin	Karen	Lisa		Kevin
Sunday School Assist ELEM	Don James	Don James	Don James		Don James

BUSINESS CORNER

Financial Information - December 2025

Year-to-Date	Actual	Budget
Revenue	\$ 118,799.75	\$ 105,598.00
Expenses	\$ 115,426.69	\$ 125,132.48
Surplus or (Deficit)	\$ 3,373.06	\$ (19,534.48)
Surplus or (Deficit) Per Week	\$ 64.87	\$ (375.66)

Ad Board Minutes: January 21, 2026

Council of Ministries Minutes: January 14, 2026

UPDATE TIME

One tool that the CUMC Communications Team provides for all CUMC folks is a Directory of members and friends names and contact information. It is updated annually and will only be accurate if YOU review your entry and make changes.

Please see the directory on the side counter of Sanctuary A and make any changes in red; or review the electronic edition sent to you recently and submit changes as described.

"You have only one way to convince others, listen to them."

—George Washington

STAFF OFFICE MOVES

Rev. Angela moved to the lower level Interfaith Commons area in OBIC and now our Administrative Coordinator, is also located in that area. This area is opposite the lower level main entrance. Inside the glass doors you can find Mailboxes for either Rev. Angela or Lisa.

CUMC will retain the upper level office (Rm. 215, formerly Rev. Angela's office and across from Sanctuary A and the kitchen) as a small meeting place, work area for offering counters and storage location of tech equipment.





CALENDAR

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

< > Feb 2026

SUN Feb 1	MON 2	TUE 3	WED 4	THU 5	FRI 6	SAT 7
● 10am W ● 1:30pm			● 8:15pm I		● 6:30pm	
8	9	10	11	12	13	14 Valentine
Second S ● 10am W ● 1:30pm	● 7pm Co		● 7pm Co ● 8:15pm I	● 12pm Lu ● 7pm Sta		
15	16 President	17	18 Ash Wedr ● 8:15pm I	19 ● 7pm Ad	20	21
22 ● 10am W	23	24	25 ● 8:15pm I	26	27	28

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

