



MINISTRY MATTERS

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



IN THIS ISSUE:

Clergy Corner

Worship and Praise

Our Church Family

CUMC Cares

Learning for All

Fellowship

Going Green

Conference Connections

Participation Matters

Business Corner

Calendar

It Takes ALL of Us: Sharing Our Gifts, Building Our Church

What makes CUMC special? We are a small congregation—but we are a congregation that makes a difference in our own lives and in our larger community. Please take a fresh look at the various ways in which you might help to make difference. At CUMC, it really does take all of us!

There are many ways—big and small—to contribute. Responding to the Time and Talents questionnaire (which you will receive soon) doesn't have to mean taking on a major responsibility. You might help with one of our mission projects, visit or write to a homebound member, provide a meal or a ride, help with a special event, teach or assist with Sunday School, or take part in our Justice for All, Caring Connections, or Community Ministries teams. There are also important opportunities in Sunday worship, in leadership, administration, stewardship, and finance. When many people each contribute a little, those contributions become something much bigger.

Volunteering isn't only about getting a job done. It is one of the best ways to make deeper connections with the people sitting next to you on Sunday and to discover talents and gifts you may not have known they possess.

So, as we look ahead, let's each one of us ask ourselves: What can I bring to CUMC? What can we accomplish together?

Our church is built by all of us. Let's keep building it—together--by sharing our time and talents.





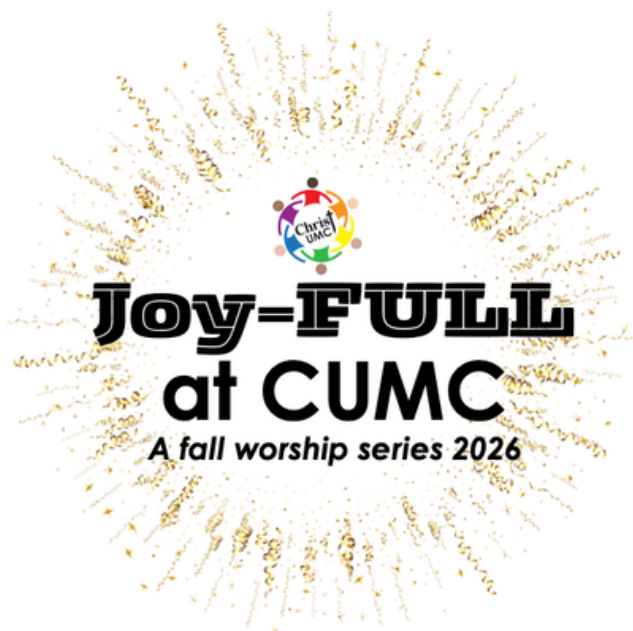
Joy-FULL at CUMC

Just today as I'm writing this newsletter article, there are headlines about another tragic earthquake in South America, the expansion of the war in Iran, dire stats about the economy, and—buried under the headlines in major news outlets—the sickening news of a 21st century lynching of Tasia Fortune in Mississippi. Closer to home, again just today, I'm holding close in my heart and prayers so many in our very congregation who are hurting.

So, why on earth would I preach on joy in the midst of so much pain? It's not to dismiss it. It's not to try to sweep under the rug all that is wrong. In order to preach joy and to remember from where our joy comes, we must actually take quite seriously the pain and suffering of the world and even in our own bodies, families, and congregation. We very well might not be joyful in the secular "happy" sense of the word. Theologically, our joy is not a circumstance but a choice. A choice to lean into the promises of our faith. A choice to embrace the gift of this community. A choice to relish God's love that meets us exactly where we are, even when it's not where we want to be. A choice to re-JOY-ce in the steadfast presence of God with us through the highs and lows and in between of life.

So, this fall we are choosing to be not joyful (one "I") but joy-FULL—full of joy—because God knows the world is full of enough of the opposite. There will be days when we're not feeling it, and that's why we're in this together. I'll hold on to joy when it's too hard for you. Will you hold on to joy when it's too hard for me? Together, we can remember that we serve a God of love, a God who desires abundant life for all of God's beloved children, a God who has given us the gift of one another to sustain us and bring us joy even in—especially in—the little blessings of life, glimmers of love and laughter that peek through even in tough times.

Be sure to check out the Worship page of this newsletter to learn more about our 10-week series, Joy-FULL at CUMC! There will be several fun and creative surprises sprinkled throughout this series—you won't want to miss it!



Special Notes from Rev. Angela

Please note that my day off is in the process of changing.

- My usual in office OBIC days for the fall will be Tuesday and Friday.
- I will be less accessible by email on Wednesdays and Thursdays.
- I will continue with my usual evening meeting schedule.
- As always, call or text for a pastoral emergency. Thank you.

CUMC'S INTERN

Emily Murphy-Lyons



Hi, CUMC Family.

I'm so excited to share with you that I'll be an intern at CUMC this fall! This will be my second full-time year as a Master of Divinity student at Wesley Theological Seminary, and I'm so thankful you've been supporting me along the way! This fall, I'm looking forward to serving at CUMC in ways that both prepare me for my ministry and also in ways that enrich our collective ministries as a community.

In the UMC, Elders have a fourfold ministry of Word, Sacrament, Order, and Service. I truly take the many responsibilities of this ministry to heart—and so, how special it is to be growing in these responsibilities with a church who has such a tremendous heart! Through Rev. Angela's guidance and with your support, I'm hopeful for the ways in which I can grow and learn beneficial skills for pastoral administration, preaching, teaching, and providing care.

As many of you know, I have been preparing for ministry as an Army National Guard Chaplain Candidate. While I was originally set to commission earlier this year, I was unable to commission and enter the candidate program due to circumstances far beyond my control. Though this has been a significant disappointment (both personally and how it plays into the larger picture of oppressive forces at work), I'm still living into the hope that remains steadfast due to God's promise and infinite love for us. My heart remains directed towards extension ministries and meeting people in love where they are, exactly as they are. The first time I walked through CUMC's doors, you welcomed me exactly how I was and where I was. I continue to be inspired by the love and hope that lives within CUMC. What a privilege to continue serving with you in love and through resilient hope!

Emily Murphy-Lyons



WORSHIP

Joy-FULL at CUMC

A Ten Week Worship Series - September 13-November 15

Every Sunday, you'll be given a joy challenge to complete during the week! Yes, homework for church! But it's fun homework, I promise! Together we'll be on a journey throughout this series to re-discover the gift we have in our faith and one another.

September 13: Joy in Baptism

It all starts at the baptismal font! Our joy flows out of the waters of baptism in which we are named and claimed by God. This is who we are! We are made for this! Come remember your baptism—not in some serious, somber way. Instead splash and play in the joy-FULL waters of God's love!

Calling all baptism pics!! Yes, that's right. Whether you were a newborn or an adult, all ages of baptism welcome. Send a digital/scanned photo from your baptism to Rev. Angela by Sept 9 for use in our Joy in Baptism service on 9/13.

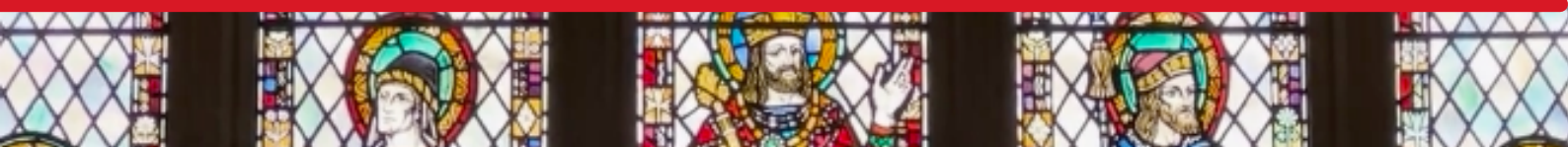
September 20: Rainbow Joy

This week we celebrate the 29th anniversary of CUMC becoming a Reconciling Congregation (i.e. an intentionally LGBTQ+ affirming congregation). Bishop Karen Oliveto, the first out queer bishop of the UMC, always says, "our [queer] joy is their kryptonite!" Our joy is resistance to all that works against God's love and light. Our joy strengthens our resolve to be God's faithful rainbow people we were created to be. We celebrate that CUMC has been a place where that rainbow joy has been celebrated for 29 years! This Sunday we welcome our fall intern and CUMC ministry candidate, Emily Murphy-Lyons into the pulpit to share in worship leadership with Rev. Angela!

Wear The Rainbow! Yes, that's right on September 20th wear your loudest rainbow apparel for our Rainbow Joy celebration!

September 27: Joy in Service

This Laity Sunday we'll hear from three (of the many) lay members of the church who joy-FULLY serve on a regular basis in a range of ministry and community opportunities. Our bishop, Bishop LaTrelle Miller Easterling, always says the church doesn't need volunteers, we need disciples. So often our service becomes another thing on our to do list, a duty to fulfill rather than a joy-filled privilege to celebrate. Together we'll remember why it is we do what we do and rekindle the joy of serving God and neighbor!





WORSHIP

Joy-FULL at CUMC

A Ten Week Worship Series - September 13-November 15

Stay tuned for the next newsletter because the series continues...

October 4: Joy in Food

October 11: Joy in Justice

October 18: Joy in Music

October 25: Joy in Play

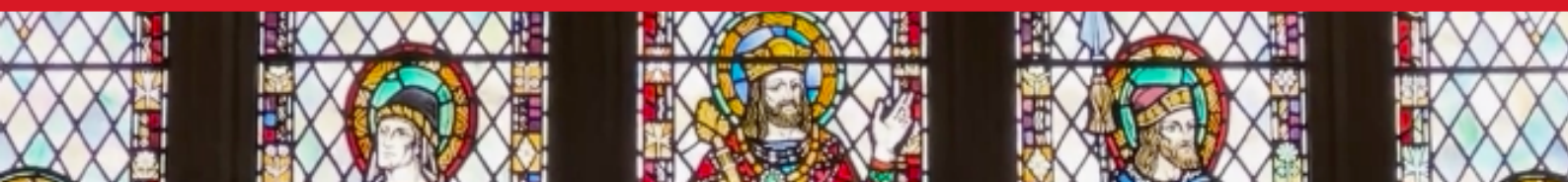
November 1: Eternal Joy

November 8: Joy in Generosity

November 15: Abundant Joy



The Worship Team wants your feedback!! That's right. Fill out this [short survey online](#) to help us know what is most meaningful in worship to you.

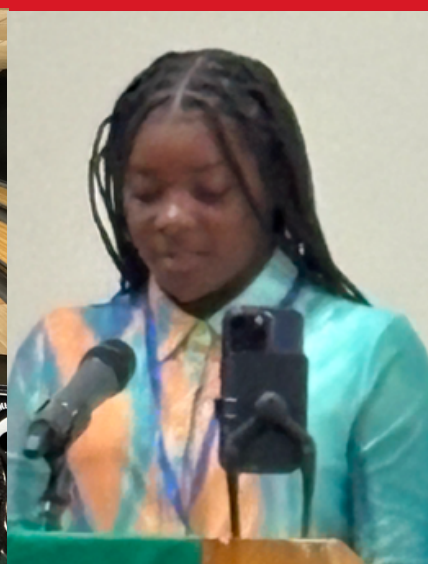


OUR CHURCH FAMILY

- Continued prayers for the **Plank family** as they mourn the death of **Mike Plank**.
- Remember **Hilda Gomez** as she recuperates from knee surgery.
- Share prayers and good wishes to **Andris Salter** as she recuperates from knee surgery.
- Prayers of comfort for **Clara Fitzgerald and family** on the death of Clara's father.
- Best wishes to **all returning students of every age** for a happy, successful school year!



Emily Walker
Jillian Kelley
Siah Johnson
Hilda Gomez
Wendy Newton



CUMC CARES

Missions Matter

HELP YOURSELF WHILE HELPING OTHERS

Time to clean out those closets and go through the drawers to eliminate clothing that you don't use...BUT would be welcomed at the Day Resource Center of Howard County. Eligible residents who live outdoors or in limited housing can obtain much needed clothing through these donations.

The CUMC Missions Team is asking you to please bring both women's and men's clean, wearable jeans, sweatshirts, sweatpants, sweaters, and light weight jackets throughout the month of September. This no cost donation will be helping those in need and help YOU reorganize your own clothing!

Lillian Lehnert



COLLECTING...DONATING IS ONGOING!

Yes, CUMC asks for many things. Some like food bank items cost money; but some surplus items for specific collections don't cost donors a penny! As a congregation that has been so blessed with material resources, it seems sharing is part of our practice. Containers are available every Sunday so please consider donating:

- Used batteries: Staples gives CUMC credit for office supply purchases.
- Metal tabs from canned beverages: Ronald McDonald House gets gas credit for their vans transporting guest families to the hospital.
- Prescription Eye-Glasses: Lions Club distributes to those who cannot afford needed glasses.

Special Note: We are NOT currently collection pill bottles.

CUMC CARES

Community Ministry Matters

September Back-to-School Collection SUPPORTING CRADELROCK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Despite the continuing heat and humidity, fall is in the air—and that means it's time for **CUMC's Back-to-School September Sunday Collection** supporting Cradlerock Elementary School's Rock Resources program!

Thanks to your incredible generosity last year, Cradlerock still has a good supply of many of the items we collected. **Way to go, CUMC!** This year, we're focusing on items that are currently needed:

- Mini deodorants
- Kid' socks
- Chapstick
- Mini hand lotions
- Hairbrushes
- Mini hand sanitizers

You can help by **purchasing these items at the store, ordering online, or providing a gift card** so the Community Team can purchase needed supplies on your behalf. Gift cards are especially helpful because they allow us to respond quickly to the school's changing needs—and make the most of your generosity. We suggest that gift cards should be for small amounts so that they can be more easily used.

We're also continuing our support of Cradlerock's teachers, custodial staff, and administrators by providing needed supplies for staff restrooms. Since we have needed items for staff left over from last year's generosity, we are requesting financial contributions to purchase fresh flowers (about \$20 a month) for the staff bathrooms and front office. Garden flowers are used when we can. Please designate your gift by placing it in an envelope.

But our partnership with Cradlerock is about more than supplies. **Our time and talents matter, too.** CUMC volunteers can help in the library, assist the art teacher, escort students to dental appointments, or simply show up to cheer students on at Field Day.

Every donation, every volunteer hour, and every word of encouragement helps demonstrate that **CUMC cares about the children and families of our community.** Let's make this another year of strong support for Cradlerock Elementary!

Please bring your donations any Sunday in September. And if you'd like to volunteer or become more involved with our Cradlerock partnership you can sign up to find out about volunteer opportunities at the side counter on Sunday.

Kevin Swanson

LEARNING FOR ALL

Education Matters

FALL SUNDAY SCHOOL for STUDENTS Beginning September 13



Two of the hallmarks of our Sunday School program through the years and into the present are love of kids and flexibility! As a small congregation, the attendance varies and teachers and helpers have been wonderful about adapting from week to week. The Education Committee has planned our 2026-27 children's educational program with ways to expand as others join us and with the understanding that, on a particular Sunday, teachers and helpers may not be needed and can remain in worship.

On September 13th, we will once again have a joint nursery with the UUs for infants through 3 years of age. Also on September 13th, Sunday School classes will begin for preschool through middle school kids. With our current attendance, one class will be 4-year-olds through 3rd grade; a second class will be for kids 4th grade through 8th grade. Student Registration Forms will be available on the side counter for the next few weeks. Children are also always welcome to attend worship. There will not be a high school class and those youth will remain in worship.

Suzanne James



SPECIAL VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

We are indebted to those in our congregation who share their love of God through teaching and assisting. We are looking for additional volunteers as nursery helpers and class assistants. Rev. Angela and/or Kevin Swanson can help get individuals started on the background check process.

Suzanne James



FELLOWSHIP

Matters

NEXT FIRST FRIDAY IS OCTOBER 2ND

FIRST FRIDAY will not be held in September as we enjoy the holiday weekend. Save Oct. 2 for the next gathering!

SEPTEMBER LUNCH BUNCH

ALL CUMC WOMEN are invited to our monthly Lunch Bunch on Sept. 10 at the home of Tracy Klink. Plan your dish to share and we will meet at 12pm to enjoy good company and a great potluck meal. Please let Tracy know of your participation by Tues. Sept. 8.

SOME HIKING EXERCISE AND CUMC FUN!

The Hiking Summer Social has been rescheduled to Sat., Sept. 12th at 9 am. Join Karen Ohlrich and other CUMC friends for a 2 mile or 4 mile hike on forest trails in Wincopin Park, 9299 Vollmerhausen Rd, Jessup, MD 20794. Please sign up at church or let Karen know you'll be coming. We'll be hiking by the Little and the Middle Patuxent Rivers. Bring water and a snack.

*"As yesterday is history
And tomorrow may never come,
I have resolved from this day on,
I will do all the business I can honestly,
Have all the fun I can reasonably,
Do all the good I can willingly
And save my digestion by thinking pleasantly."*

Robert Lewis Stevenson

GOING GREEN

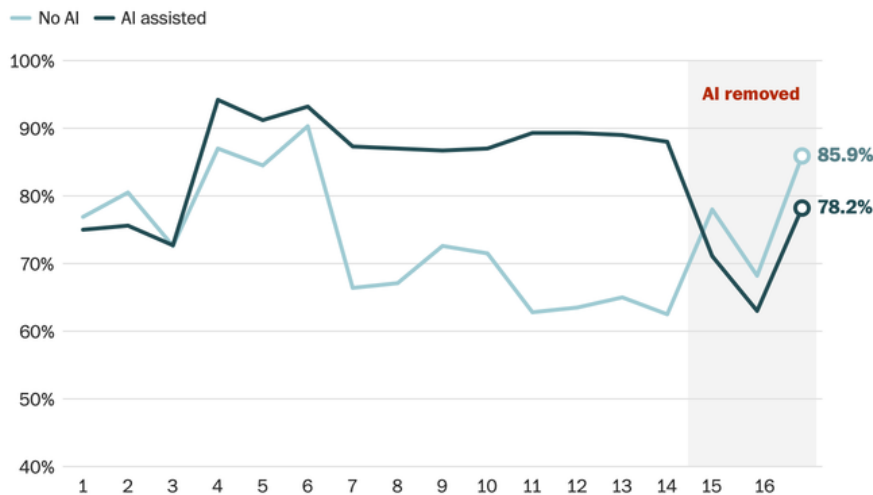
Matters

How to stop ChatGPT from ruining how you think

The following is a summary from the Washington Post's Climate Coach--Michael J. Coren July 7, 2026

After using AI, people got worse at solving problems without its help

In a study where some people got AI help with math problems, losing access to the tool led them to perform worse than those who never had AI help.



Raw participant averages from the full sample of 585 students (308 AI, 277 control). The AI group could use an assistant on the learning problems (4–14); it was removed for the final test problems (15–17)

Source: Liu et al., "AI Assistance Reduces Persistence and Hurts Independent Performance" (2026): author-provided participant data

MICHAEL J. COREN / THE WASHINGTON POST

Michael J. Coren argues that although artificial intelligence can dramatically improve our productivity, relying on it too heavily may weaken our ability to think independently. He compares excessive AI assistance to hiring a personal trainer who lifts the weights for you: the results may be impressive, but you never develop your own strength.

Research cited by Coren shows that people using AI often complete work faster and produce better results. However, the benefits can come with hidden costs. When AI makes mistakes, people may accept its answers without questioning them. One study found that people became more confident even when following incorrect AI answers—a phenomenon researchers call "cognitive surrender." Another study found that students who relied on AI for mathematics performed worse when the technology was removed, sometimes even below the level of people who had never used it.

Coren emphasizes that AI itself is not necessarily harmful. The important question is how we use it. He recommends understanding what AI does well and where human judgment remains superior. AI can be especially useful for generating ideas, synthesizing information, testing arguments and handling tedious tasks. But people should preserve activities that help them develop knowledge, creativity and judgment. The researchers Coren interviewed generally avoid using AI to generate their initial ideas or first drafts. Instead, they do their own thinking first and then use AI as a critical partner to challenge, improve or stress-test their work.

The same principle applies to learning. Asking AI for explanations and follow-up questions can deepen understanding, while simply asking it for answers can eliminate the productive struggle necessary for learning.

Coren's central message is that we should use AI to strengthen our thinking, not replace it.



CONFERENCE CONNECTIONS

Matter

Building Beloved Community

The Beloved Community
Where Injustice Ceases and Love Prevails



Building Beloved Community: What Does It Mean?

What do we mean when we talk about creating a **Beloved Community**? Over the next three months, we will explore this important vision from our Baltimore-Washington Conference (BWC) and consider what it might mean for us at Christ United Methodist Church.

The BWC describes the Beloved Community as an attainable state **“where injustice ceases and love prevails.”** It is a community that is inclusive, diverse and equitable; one that recognizes our interconnectedness and is rooted in love of God, neighbor and self.

The idea has deep roots. The philosopher Josiah Royce coined the term “Beloved Community,” and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. used it to describe his vision of a society characterized by justice, peace, harmony and nonviolence. Dr. King envisioned a world where poverty, hunger, homelessness, racism and discrimination would no longer be accepted as inevitable parts of life.

That may sound like a very large vision—and it is! But every great change begins with people willing to imagine something better and then take steps toward it.

The BWC has made **Building Beloved Community** one of its priorities. Their resources invite us to learn, engage and take action.

This month, we begin with learning. We invite you to visit the BWC's [Building Beloved Community webpage](#) and explore the resources available there.

Next month: We will look at ways the BWC encourages us to engage with one another in building a more inclusive and loving community.



PARTICIPATION MATTERS

September 2026

Date	Events
9/2	Prayer Meeting* 8:15 p.m.
9/3	Justice for All* 7:00 p.m.
9/6	Sunday Service* 10:00 a.m.
9/9	Council of Ministries* 7:00 p.m. Prayer Meeting* 8:15 p.m.
9/10	SPRC* 7:00 p.m. Lunch Brunch 12:00 p.m. at the home of Tracy Klink. Please RSVP by 9/7
9/13	Sunday Service* 10:00 a.m.
9/14	Community Ministries* 7:00 p.m.
9/16	Prayer Meeting* 8:15 p.m.
9/20	Sunday Service* 10:00 a.m.
9/23	Prayer Meeting* 8:15 p.m. Newsletter deadline
9/24	Ad Board* 7:00 p.m.
9/27	Sunday Service* 10:00 a.m.
9/30	Prayer Meeting* 8:15 p.m.

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

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

https://cumcobic.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/volunteer-instructions_updated-6.2026.pdf

2026	Sept 6	Sept 13	Sept 20	Sept 27
Liturgist	Phil Llinberg	Kevin Swanson	Lillian Lehnert	Katie Weston
Reader	David Burtnick	Karen Ohlrich	Delvin Daniels	Cristin Messenger
Acolyte	Miamor F-W	Heidi Johnson	Luke Weston	Sophie F-W
Altar Flowers				
Tech				
Ushers 1	Fred Mueller	Jeanette Rosenber	Warren Kelley	Hilda Gomez
Ushers 2	Kevin Swanson	Eduardo LLano	Tyler Rosenberger	Becky Nicodemus
Altar Set-up	Messenger	Klinkenberg	Kelley	Ohlrich
Communion & Set-up	Karen Ohlrich	Pam Wilt	Kelley	Duggan
Counters 1	Becky Nicodemus	Delvin Daniels	Cora Duggan	Phil Lindberg
Counters 2	Greg Swirdovich	Warren Kelley	Natalie Swirdovich	Lee Klinkenberg
Refreshments	James	Gomez	Weston	Rosenberger
Sunday School Assist MS	Kevin Swanson	Deadra Atkins	Karen Ohlrich	Lisa Lindberg
Sunday School Assist ELEM	Don James	Don James	Don James	Don James

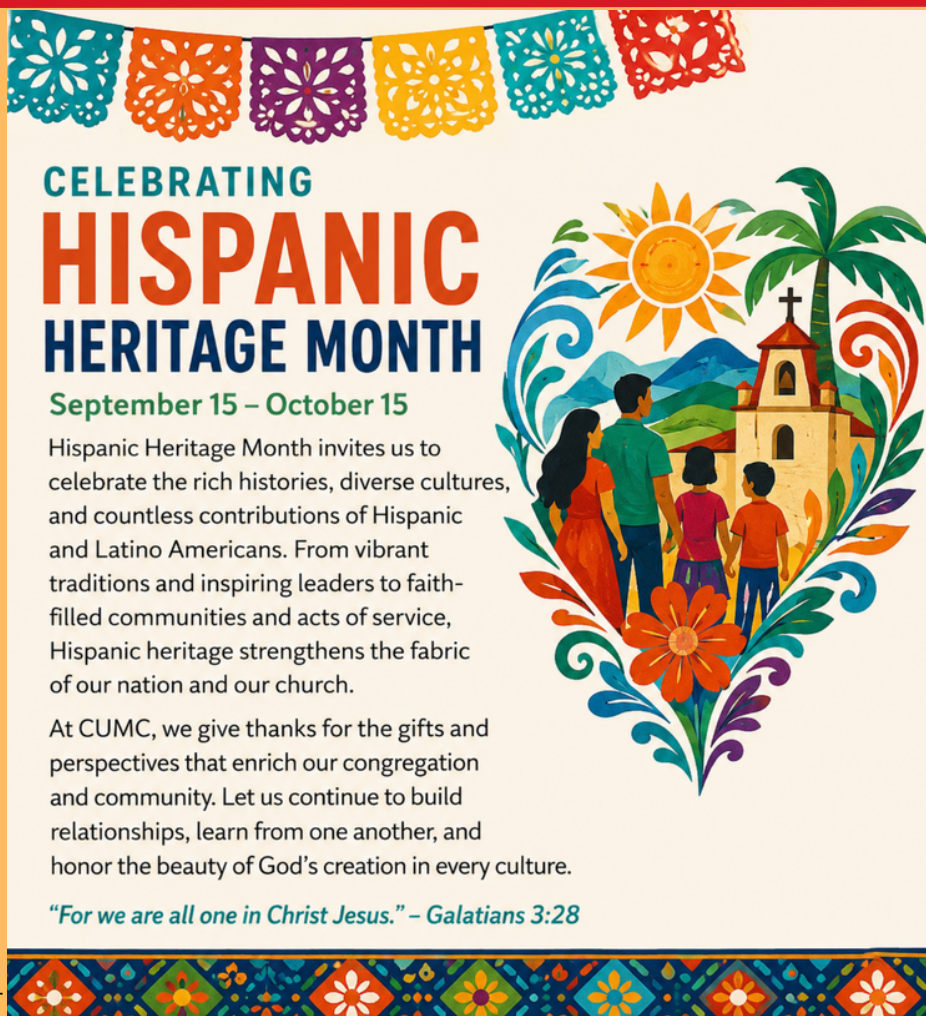
BUSINESS CORNER

Financial Information - July 2026

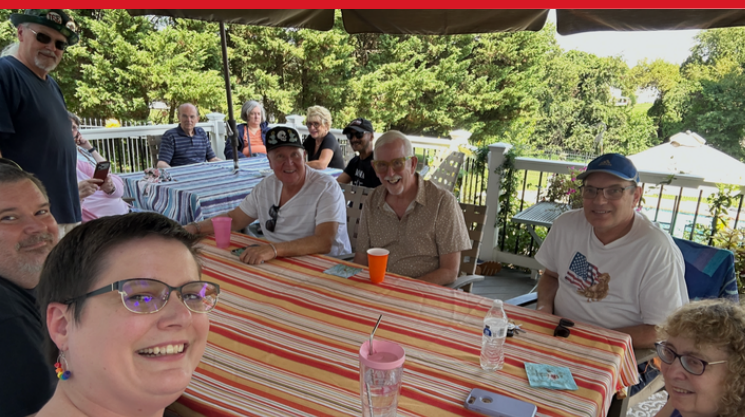
Year-to-Date	Actual	Budget
Revenue	\$ 70,916.51	\$ 64,202.83
Expenses	\$ 69,869.47	\$ 76,238.10
Surplus or (Deficit)	\$ 1,047.04	\$ (12,035.27)
Surplus or (Deficit) Per Week	\$ 20.14	\$ (231.45)

Ad Board Minutes: Aug. 20, 2026

Council of Ministries Minutes: July 15, 2026



Created by ChatGPT





CALENDAR

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

< > Sep 2026 ▾							📅	🗓️
SUN 30	MON 31	TUE Sep 1	WED 2	THU 3	FRI 4	SAT 5		
• 10am W			• 8:15pm					
6 • 10am W	7 Labor Da	8	9 • 7pm Cc • 8:15pm	10 • 12pm Li 2 more	11	12		
13 Second S • 10am W	14 • 7pm Cc	15	16 • 8:15pm	17	18	19		
20 • 10am W	21	22	23 • 8:15pm	24	25	26		
27 • 10am W	28	29	30 • 8:15pm	Oct 1	2	3		
Christ United Methodist Church, Columbia, MD GMT-04							+	

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

