

THE **Central** SENTRY

United Methodist Church

REV. TERESSA M. SIVERS

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Pastor Teresa's Note—Asking Deep Questions of Scripture

³ While Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at the table, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment of nard, and she broke open the jar and poured the ointment on his head. ⁴ But some were there who said to one another in anger, "Why was the ointment wasted in this way? ⁵ For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii, and the money given to the poor." And they scolded her. ~Mark 14, NRSV

I invite you to grab a piece of paper (included in this newsletter) or a journal and a pen. Write down your responses. Spend time with this story. Dwell with it. Put yourself in the perspective of the different people in the story—Jesus, Simon, others at the table, the unnamed woman with her alabaster jar. What do you experience from each perspective?

Now return to the woman and her jar of nard. Who is she? Is she a resident of the village? Is she an unnamed follower in the crowd around Jesus? Is she a woman of disrepute? Is she one of the women who is financially supporting Jesus' ministry? How does each question change how you perceive this story?

What did the nard cost her?

Why does she break all social protocol to enter into another person's house uninvited and pour tremendously expensive nard all over Jesus' head? Don't answer these questions quickly. Dwell with the questions. Let answers form in your mind, jot them on the paper. Do they lead to deeper questions?

All four gospels preserve a variation of this story. This woman is important for us as followers of Jesus. Her actions are important for us. She calls to us. How are we to respond to the love of God poured out without limit and revealed in the person of Jesus?

As we move into this New Year, as we seek to live into God's dream for Central Church, what does this compelling woman with the alabaster jar speak to us? How does she call us to live? How does she call us to give? What does the alabaster jar represent for us? What risk is God calling us to take? Let us follow the example of this scandalous, extravagant, passionate woman in acts of life-altering generosity.

Happy New Year!
Pastor Teresa

Pastor Paul's Note

For the Grinch that I am, Christmas 2024 was beautiful and inspiring for me. Sherri and I spent Christmas Day home alone wrapping presents for the kids and grandkids. We sat by the fire, had our traditional homemade bagels and lox, and watched It's A Wonderful Life (which I thought was Sherri's favorite Christmas movie!).

Lauren and Chris and the boys came the next day and Morgan came home on Friday. We finally had our traditional lasagna, played, opened gifts, played, talked, played, went outside, and played some more!

One day, Sherri and Joseph were sitting on the couch reading a Christmas book while I was on the floor playing with Owen. Sherri and Joseph started talking about Christmas. Joseph, somewhat excitedly, but also with a question, said "So, wait, God is real?!" Joseph attends "Church Mouse Preschool" at a local Baptist church in Ballston Spa and has some understanding of God and Jesus (undetermined about the Holy Spirit—we will tackle that one later!)

"So, wait, God is real?!" Sherri and I both began to talk and share about Jesus: how Jesus is God's son and that God gave us Jesus so we could learn how to be nice to people, how we need to share things with others, how we should do good for others—you know, God stuff. Jesus was a teacher of good things, like Mommy and Daddy and Grandma and Grandpa teach you good things.

Joseph is a thinker, and I could see the wheels in his head turning as we were talking. He asked again, somewhat more determined to get an answer, "So, is God real?" "Yes, buddy" I said, "God is real!" He replied, "Oh. OK." and then went on to read and play some more.

I don't know how much Joseph understood about our conversation, but he got the answer he needed or wanted. "Yes, buddy, God is real!"

Joseph has talked before about God and who God is. I have enjoyed these conversations that often take place as we are walking in the "forest" near our home. He is beginning to question and form a child-like faith. He is starting to understand about helping others and doing for others.

We all have so much to learn about God and the reality of God in our world. May this season of Epiphany bring to light these questions in our hearts and minds and may we get the answers we need!

Pastor Paul

February Worship:

February 2, the 4th Sunday after Epiphany: Luke 4:21-30

February 9, the 5th Sunday after Epiphany: Luke 5:1-11

February 16, the 6th Sunday after Epiphany: Luke 6:17-26

February 23, the 7th Sunday after Epiphany: Luke 6:27-38

March 2nd is Transfiguration Sunday: Luke 9:28-36

Preparing for Lent—Sunday, March 2 following 11:00 Worship

Our Lenten theme will be **Wilderness: State of the Wild** from *A Sanctified Art*, sanctifiedart.org. On Sunday, March 2—Transfiguration Sunday—after morning worship, come to the Fellowship Hall to participate in creating artist adornments for our sanctuary during Lent—tables will be set up with all the materials needed to create Lenten vases: bare branches, rocks, clear glass vases, moss. Join your church family at one of the tables, read the poem and follow the easy directions for creating simple and powerful artist elements for our Lenten worship experience. It is a spiritual experience for all ages. **What to help plan, gather materials and create?** Let Pastor Teresa know!

Faith FORMATION

FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

©LP

Hello Faith Formation Friends. I hope this newsletter finds you well and that everyone had a wonderful holiday season. Our community Breakfast with Santa was extremely successful. It was well attended and I received great feedback about the event. Thank you to everyone that helped with the breakfast. And thank you to Renee for organizing such an incredible team of volunteers.

We are kicking off the new year with our annual Shrove Tuesday pancake dinner on Tuesday, March 4th from 4:30-6:00pm in the Dining Room. This delicious dinner is free (donations will be accepted). Bring your family and friends for a sit down meal and visit with your Central family. All are welcome.

Save the date! Our next event takes place on April 12th from 4:30-6:00pm. The Faith Formation Team will celebrate Easter with a special spaghetti dinner. This will be a free R.S.V.P. event for Central and our local community.

Many volunteers will be needed for the community Easter event. There will be a sign up sheet in the Welcome Center as the date draws closer. These events would not be possible without our amazing volunteers. I am so grateful for all of you. You make a difference in the church and in our local community.

God Bless,
Donna Miller-Kross, Faith Formation Coordinator

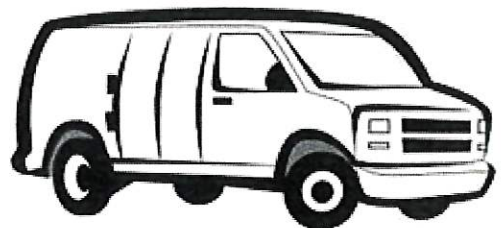
GRAB A FIRST-SUNDAY RIDE IN CENTRAL'S VAN!

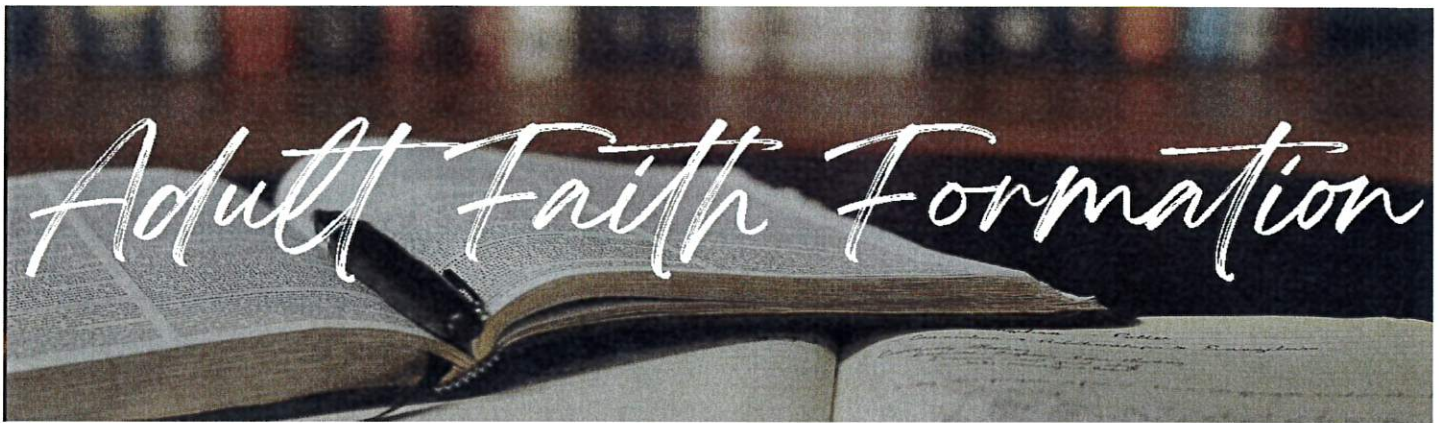
Central offers a monthly First-Sunday van route to the Hilltop and Good Shepherd Village to pick up any who would like a ride to church. Invite a friend and come for Communion Sunday! There will be only one stop (the main building) on each campus. Riders will need to be present at the main building on each campus and ready to board at the listed times.

Good Shepherd Village residents can sign up at the front desk in the Village Center, and Hilltop residents should speak with Reverend Lea Harding.

Van Schedule: Sunday, February 2nd 2025

Arrive Hilltop at **10.05**, boarding for 10 minutes
Depart Hilltop at **10.15**
Arrive Good Shepherd Village at **10.26**, boarding for 10 minutes
Depart GSV at **10.36**
Arrive at Central prior to 11.00 service





Adult Sunday School

Here is the schedule for the next few weeks:

- February 9 through March 2-
A series titled "Prayer: Does It Make Any Difference" by Philip Yancey.
- March 9 through April 6-
A series titled "John: The Gospel of Light and Life" by Adam Hamilton.

Both series have a companion book. The books could enhance our discussions, but are not necessary. (I have some copies of the John book. See me if you'd like to borrow a copy.)

We gather about 9:30AM in the Lounge (near the Welcome Center) for some very good discussions along with some very good questions (sharing is optional). Everyone is welcome!

Pastor Paul



The Super Bowl is Sunday, February 9th. Our mission project for February is collecting cans of soups for Shepherd's Supper and the CHOW pantry. Cans of soup can be donated in Pastor Paul's space or offered at a special time during worship on Sunday.

We will have a Souper-Bowl tailgate party after worship on Sunday, February 9th to celebrate our donations and the Bills' winning season. Bring a tailgating snack to share and join us in Fellowship Hall after the 11am worship service. (Go Bills!!)



The TV Ministry has been blessed by the donation of two flat screen TVs. One was donated by a church member and the other was from an anonymous donor. We are grateful for them both and thank the donors. Both donated TVs are compatible with the sanctuary A/V system. One of the TVs is a bit larger than the one above the piano in the sanctuary rear overflow area. The plan is to install this slightly larger one there and move the existing TV to a new location on the accordion door closet. Together, these two screens will provide increased visibility and readability for worshipers in the rear of the sanctuary. This project is well underway and may be complete by the time the February newsletter is published. Several ideas for placement and use of the other TV are under consideration.

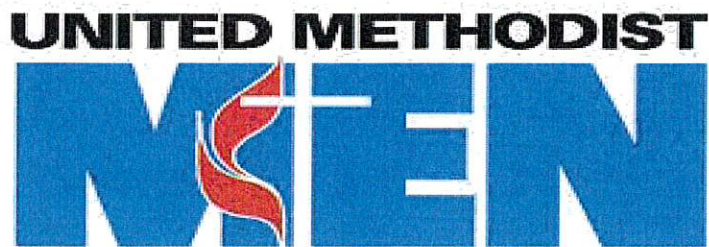
Additional updates include the installation of peripheral equipment to address occasional flickering in one of the screens, the reinstallation of the choir loft monitor adjacent to the organ, and the placement of new microphone cords for easier and less obtrusive usage. Finally, custom brackets were built for the stands used to hold the microphones that record the handbells. These brackets allow the stands to be placed more easily and also free up the front pews for worshipers.

The Youth/Young Adult Tech Intern program, funded by the Shalom Fund, continues to work well. Thank you to the adults that work with and support the interns. The interns that participate regularly are becoming increasingly skilled at using the audio, video, and computer support equipment.

We'd welcome more adults to assist with services and to provide at-home support through pre-service preparations and post-service follow-up. Contact me through the office or at the booth on Sunday mornings to find out more.

TV Ministry is thankful for the support of Central's member and friends. Their support enables the production of quality and watch-able recordings and Livestreams.

-Mark Marino



Men's Group ZOOM info:
Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82631320966>

Meeting ID: 826 3132 0966
Passcode: 092623

Men's Fellowship Group – All are Invited

The Men's group has added a monthly breakfast meeting to our schedule. Meet us for breakfast on the first Tuesday of the month. The monthly breakfasts have been well attended and some new men have joined. We continue our monthly evening meetings on the 2nd or 3rd Friday of the month.

February breakfast: Tuesday, 2/4 at 8:00 AM Broadway Diner, Watson Blvd, Endwell

Friday evening fellowship: Friday, 2/21 at 6:00PM in person in the Lounge for a meal and dessert. 7:00 PM in the Library or on Zoom. We're looking forward to having some new attendees join us.

Circle Meetings - February

All women are invited to attend one of the United Women in Faith Circles. Please contact the leaders for more information about the circles.

Deborah Circle Tuesday, February 18th will meet on Zoom only at 7:00pm. Contact: Pat Breneman 607-748-3430

Grace Circle Wednesday, February 19th at noon in the Library at church. Please bring your lunch with you. Contact: Pauline Witt 607-748-4142

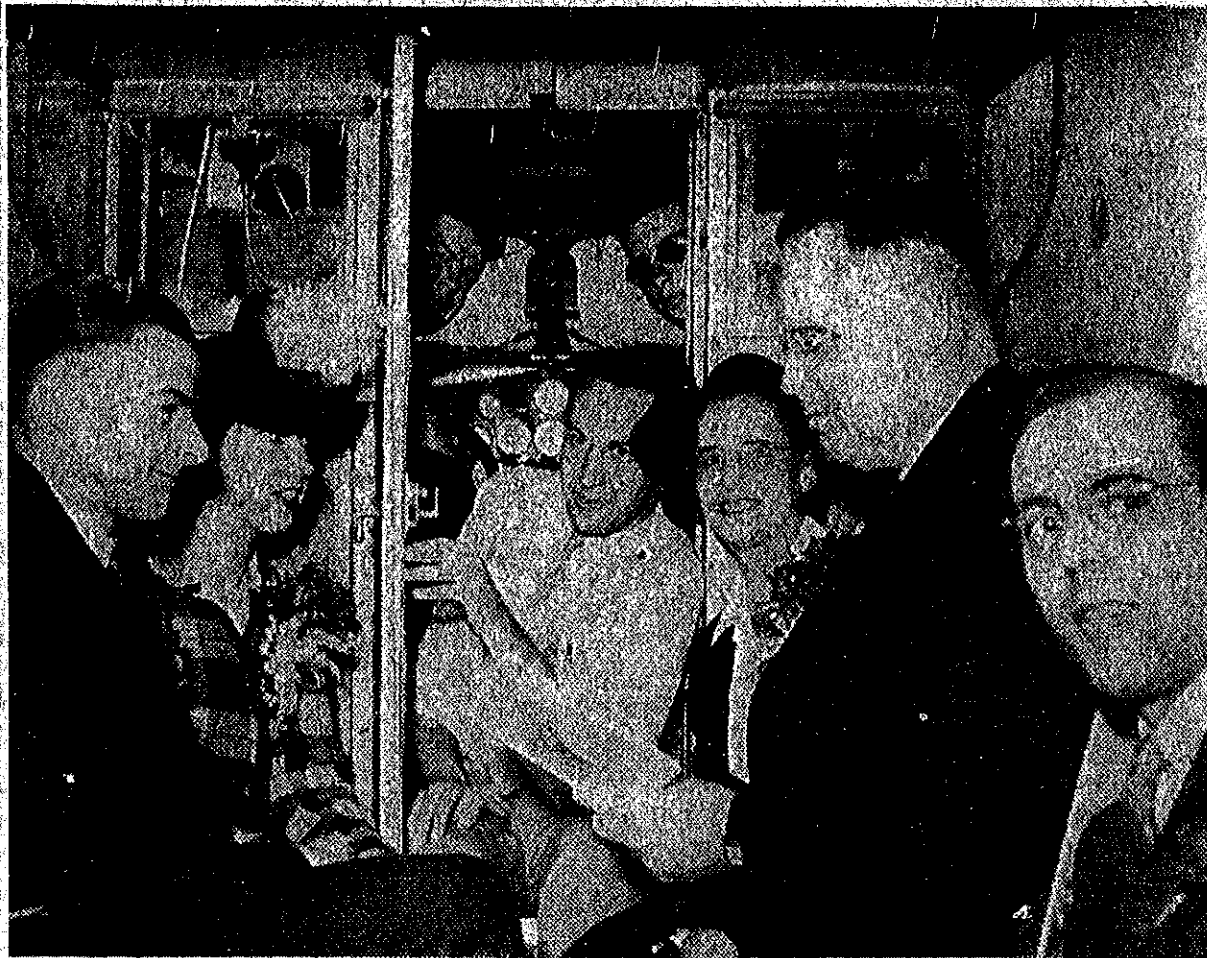
Sarah Circle Tuesday, February 18th at 12:00 in the Community Room at church. Please bring your lunch with you. Contact: Carole James 607-757-2629



United
Women
in Faith

Something Fun from the Church Archives

Did you know that one of Central's pastors performed a wedding in an airplane? The photo below from *The Binghamton Press* from August 25, 1941, shows Rev. Milton F. McKenney performing the ceremony in the air above the Tri-Cities Airport. According to the accompanying article, "The spectators [on the ground] were indirect witnesses to a wedding ceremony in the giant three-motored plane... The audience on the ground was informed of the ceremony by Assemblyman Orlo M. Brees who received signals from the plane, Federal Communications Commission officials having refused permission for use of radio equipment to broadcast the event." Rev. McKenney was pastor of Central UMC between 1937 and 1947.



WEDDING IN THE SKY is performed by the Rev. Milton F. McKenney, marrying Charles G. Seaver and Miss Evalyn E. Packer in a plane flying above Tri-Cities airport as a feature of the model airplane meet Sunday. Left to right are Mr. Seaver, Miss Packer, William G. Davies, Miss Clarice Grippen, Mr. McKenney and Perry Baumlin. Looking back at top are, left to right, Wilbrod J. LePine, pilot, and Edgar Roper co-pilot.

*Central welcomed new and returning members on
Sunday, January 12, 2025*

8:30

Cheryl Davis
Mark Parker
Caleigh Parker

11:00

Martina DiRose
Bill Finch
Rob Barnhart
Megan Barnhart
Nancy Harvey

We're so excited to welcome you into the Central Church family!

Shepherd's Supper Update

Shepherd's Supper had an outstanding year in 2024, serving a total of 11,664 meals, averaging 224 meals per week—an impressive 18% increase from 2023. We were able to obtain free food from Broome Bounty (CHOW), along with discounted food and financial grants from the Food Bank of the Southern Tier, reducing the cost per meal to just 76 cents. Contributions through Harvest Home were also instrumental in supporting our efforts.

This achievement wouldn't have been possible without our dedicated cooking teams: Martha Weber, Nicole Derick, Teena Cargill, Bob Cargill, Art Felton, Linda O'Neill, Pat, and Knud Hansen and weekly support from Maggie Hungerford. We also acknowledge and extend our gratitude to the volunteers who show up each week to serve and clean up. On average, 10 volunteers contribute 36 volunteer hours each week. Our partnership with Our Lady of Good Counsel, which provides volunteer youth, is essential in allowing us to serve so many people each week. Often, the number of OLGCC volunteers surpasses those from Central. Thanks to Pastor Paul and Shelley Lobevero's initiative, volunteers have arranged to pick up bread and pastries from Good Neighbors each week. These bakery items are either used for the meals or made available for clients to take home.

The ongoing support from the Central congregation plays a crucial role in making all of this possible. The generous financial donations throughout the year help supplement our budget and ensure we have the resources to purchase the food needed to prepare meals each week.

We are deeply grateful to all who contribute to this effort. Central is truly making a significant impact in 'feeding the hungry' in our community.

Finance Update

We highlight the generosity and strong spiritual giving of our congregation whenever we provide an update on Central's finances. 2024 was no exception. Throughout the year, we mentioned the gap between the budget and committed giving, but we remained confident that the stewardship of the Central family would prevail by year-end. And true enough, as it has happened in the past, significant contributions from the faithful in the last quarter helped close the gap. As a result we are entering 2025 with a positive balance. We extend our gratitude to everyone for their financial support of Central's programs and ministries.

As we enter 2025, our situation is slightly more challenging than in previous years. Although we received a strong response to our Stewardship campaign, and the giving from those who pledged increased from last year, we lost many contributors due to death and relocation. Even with a positive balance to start the year, we face a gap between pledged giving and the budget. The budget has been adjusted to reflect this, but not as much as the decrease in giving.

This gap is familiar to us. Each year, we start with this knowledge and, through faith and your continued generosity, we finish the year successfully. So, we boldly enter the new year with strong spiritual pastoral leadership, Christian community and fellowship, and a deep commitment to be the hands and feet of Christ in our world. We will continue to grow Central's ministries and programs with the committed support of all of us.

Pastor Teresa's Thai Chicken Chili

On January 5th, Pastor Teresa contributed a Thai Chicken Chili for lunch that many enjoyed. Many have also asked for the recipe. Here it is! Enjoy!

Thai-Style Chicken Chili


2 Tbsp. sesame oil
1 lb. boneless, skinless chicken thighs, cut into 1-inch pieces
1 medium carrot, diced (Pastor T usually adds in 3-4 carrots)
1 celery rib, diced (Pastor T adds at least 2 celery ribs)
1 tsp. minced fresh gingerroot (a heaping teaspoon)
1 large garlic clove, minced
1 can (28 oz.) diced tomatoes
1 can (13.66 oz.) light coconut milk
1 Tbsp. red curry paste (Pastor T uses Thai Kitchen brand—a tiny little jar of red paste)
¾ tsp. salt
¼ tsp. pepper
1 cup frozen, shelled edamame, thawed
2 cups fresh baby spinach (or more)
1 green onion, minced (or more)
1 lemon—zested and juiced
Fresh cilantro leaves
Dry roasted peanuts
Greek yogurt for garnish (optional)

1. In a large saucepan, heat sesame oil over medium heat. Add chicken, carrot and celery; cook and stir until vegetables are slightly softened, 3-4 minutes. Add ginger and garlic; cook 1 minute more.
2. Stir in tomatoes, coconut milk, curry paste, salt and pepper. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer, covered, for 10 minutes. Add the edamame, cook 5 minutes more. Stir in the spinach, green onion and lemon zest and juice until spinach is wilted. Remove from heat; top with cilantro, peanuts, and a dollop of yogurt

FEBRUARY 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 COMMUNION SUNDAY FIRST SUNDAY VAN 8a Worship cable 1301 8:30a Worship 9:30a Adult Ed 11a Worship	3 5:30p Worship cable1301 5:45p Girl Scouts	4 12p Clothing Center	5 10a Soul Care (ZOOM) 12p Clothing Center 7:30p AA	6 4:30p Shepherd's Supper 6:30p Cappella Ringers 7:30p Chancel Choir	7 5:30p Girl Scouts 7:30p AA	8
9 8a Worship cable 1301 8:30a Worship 9:30a Adult Ed 11a Worship 12p Souper-Bowl Tailgate Party	10 5:30p Worship cable1301 5:45p Girl Scouts	11 10:00a Parish Visitors 12p Clothing Center 5:30p Ministry Night	12 10a Soul Care (ZOOM) 12p Clothing Center 6p Lions Club 7:30p AA	13 4:30p Shepherd's Supper 6:30p Cappella Ringers 7:30p Chancel Choir	14 5:30p Girl Scouts 7:30p AA	15 9a AGO documentary showing
16 8a Worship cable 1301 8:30a Worship 9:30a Adult Ed 11a Worship	17 5:30p Worship cable1301 5:45p Girl Scouts	18 8a WIC Clinic 12p Clothing Center 12p Sarah Circle 7p Deborah Circle (ZOOM only)	19 10a Soul Care (ZOOM) 12p Clothing Center 12p Grace Circle 7:30p AA	20 1:20p Grief Group 4:30p Shepherd's Supper 6:30p Cappella Ringers 7:30p Chancel Choir	21 5:30p Girl Scouts 6:00p Men's Group Dinner 7:00p Men's Group Meeting 7:30p AA	22
23 8a Worship cable 1301 8:30a Worship 9:30a Adult Ed 11a Worship	24 5:30p Worship cable1301 5:45p Girl Scouts 7p Ahwaga Canoe	25 12p Clothing Center	26 10a Soul Care (ZOOM) 12p Clothing Center 6p Lions Club – Library 7:30p AA	27 4:30p Shepherd's Supper 6:30p Cappella Ringers 7:30p Chancel Choir	28 5:30p Girl Scouts 7:30p AA	

Central

 United Methodist Church

Pastor: Rev. Teresa M. Sivvers
Associate Pastor: Paul Reed
Web & Media: Martina DiRose
Bell Choir Director: Denise Johnson
Organist: Sean Stafford
Music Director: Jaron Johnson
Treasurer: Teri Mahonski, CPA
Parish Visitors: Nancy Jones,
Carole James, Ron & Elaine Platt



**Central UMC is a fully
inclusive church that
seeks, embraces,
educates, worships, and
serves, all in God's love.**

OFFICE HOURS:

Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.


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Alicia Howard, Admin Secretary

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Central

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