

# Upcoming Sermon Series

The Month of January

**4 JAN** Bible Study Made Simple: Part 1  
Pastor Scott

**11 JAN** Bible Study Made Simple: Part 2  
Pastor Melissa

**18 JAN** Life in Four Quarters: First Quarter  
Pastor Scott

**24 JAN** Life in Four Quarters: Second Quarter  
Pastor Scott



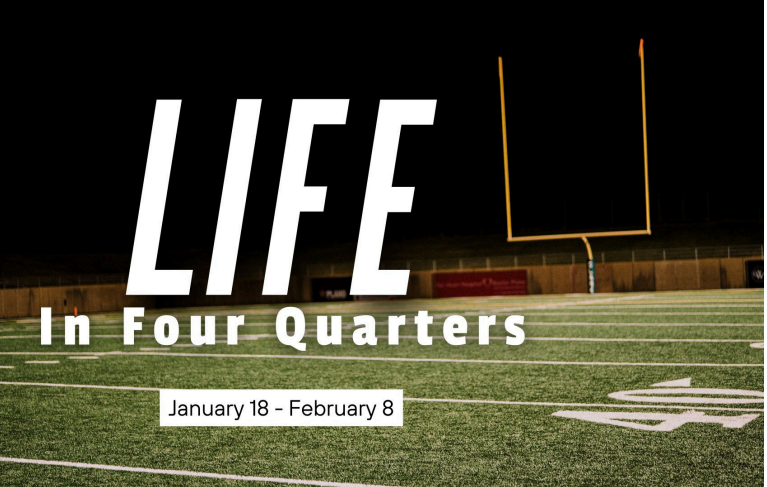
## Bible Study Made Simple Sermon Series ~ January 4-11

Studying the Bible doesn't have to feel confusing or overwhelming. In this two-week series, we'll explore the basics of why Scripture matters and how it shapes our lives, and then learn practical, simple tools that help the Bible come alive.

Whether you're brand new to Bible study or looking for a fresh approach, this series will help you to read God's Word with confidence, clarity and joy.

## Life in Four Quarters Sermon Series ~ January 18-February 8

Life comes to us in seasons—each one with its own joys, challenges and opportunities to grow. In this four-week series, we'll explore the “four quarters” of life and uncover the practical, timeless wisdom Scripture offers for every stage. From laying a strong foundation in the early years, to navigating midlife with purpose, to embracing maturity with strength, and finishing well with hope, this series will equip you to live wisely, faithfully and fully—no matter where you are on the journey.



## Central Contributions

	2-Nov	9-Nov	16-Nov	23-Nov	30-Nov	Online
<b>Worship Attendance</b>	377	336	334	372	382	
<i>* worship attendance includes online</i>						
<b>Sunday School Attendance</b>	151	120	154	131	140	
<b>Contributions</b>	\$ 17,820	\$ 10,059	\$ 13,545	\$ 7,146	\$ 8,682	\$ 15,477
<b>Faith Promise</b>	\$ 720	\$ 20	\$ 175	\$ 55	\$ 440	\$ 1,498
				<b>Received YTD</b>	<b>\$50,391</b>	

## Updated Website

Our website is getting a fresh, new look! You might've noticed our homepage is little different now and that's just a little teaser of what's on the way. We're excited to share a fully updated, easy-to-use site with you later in January. *Stay tuned -- great things are coming!*



# THE CONNECTION

Monthly Newsletter of Central United Methodist Church

JANUARY 2026 ISSUE

## 30 DAYS



Scan the QR to join your church family in this 30-day Bible plan!

### 30 Days Bible Plan Beginning January 1

Whether you're exploring the Bible for the first time or simply looking for a fresh perspective, this plan offers a compelling overview of the world's best selling book.

Journey from creation to cross through 30 key messages, exploring both the Old and New Testaments, with practical insights from Nicky Gumbel. The plan starts January 1, 2026.

### Starting the Year Right A Letter from Pastor Scott

Our vision at Central is to help people find and follow Jesus. Take advantage of the opportunities provided to grow in your faith as you start out 2026. Whether it's a small group, a Bible plan, serving on a ministry team or making a financial commitment, I invite you to take a step forward in putting Christ first in your life! Cheering for you!

## Winter Small Groups

Find a group that meets your needs and invite a friend to join you!

**Men's Group: Head, Heart & Hands**  
*Begins January 6 // Tuesdays 6:30-7:30pm*  
**Leader:** Steve Abercrombie

**Elijah**  
*Begins January 12 // Tuesdays 10:00-11:30am*  
**Leaders:** Brenda Reeder & Kara Scheetz

**The Gospel of Luke**  
*Begins January 21 // Wednesdays 10:30am*  
**Leader:** Pastor Scott Layer

**GriefShare**  
*Begins January 21 // Wednesdays 11:00am-12:30pm*  
**Leaders:** Pastor Melissa Smith & Jeannine Martin

**Music & Message**  
*Mondays // 6:30pm Cinco Amigo's*  
*Thursdays // 6:30pm Casa Fiesta*  
**Facilitators:** Pastor Melissa Smith & Various Church Leaders

**Younger Adult Home Group**  
*Wednesdays Bi-Weekly // 5:30pm Collins' Home*  
**Leader:** Hannah Collins

**Coffee & Conversation**  
*Thursdays // 9:30am Riverside Coffee Shop*  
**Leader:** Pastor Melissa Smith

## 60+ Luncheon & Games

Wednesday, January 21 // 12:00pm

If you're 60 years old or up, you're invited to a special time of fellowship, food and fun! Enjoy a lunch provided by the church and a time of exciting games. RSVP in the Gathering Area by Thursday, January 15.





2026  
AT A GLANCE

January 4 & 11  
Adopt a Bible Buddy!

February 25  
All Church Birthday Bash

March 29  
Palm Sunday Family Event

April 5  
Easter

April 25-26  
Missions Weekend

May 10  
Mother's Day

June 8-12  
Camp in the Community (CITC)

July Date TBD  
Family Fun Night

August 2  
Movin' on Up, Bible Dedication & Prayer Pals

September 27  
Kid & Student led Worship Sunday

October 25  
FALLoween, 4-6pm

November 6  
One Team Party

November 18  
Love Feast

December 24  
Kids Christmas Eve Program, 4pm

## CENTRAL KIDS

Hannah Collins, Director of Children's Ministries

Children's Ministry Program

[hannah@centralmethodist.com](mailto:hannah@centralmethodist.com)



### Sunday School - Jesus Heals Series

Sunday Mornings // 10:00-10:45am

*Trust. Hope. Faith.* These are such lovely values, but are so hard sometimes. Miraculous things can happen even in the midst of difficult, gritty and desperate situations. For the next two month's Sunday school study, our children will dive deep into the story of the healing of Jairus's daughter and will be reminded to trust Jesus in their time of need. Through games, cooking, art, storytelling, science and more, our children will be reminded of the wise words in Mark 5:36, "Don't be afraid; just keep trusting."



JANUARY 23-25, 2026  
LeConte Center ~ Pigeon Forge, TN

Scan the QR code to register!



Resurrection is an annual weekend retreat filled with worship and spiritual growth for youth and youth mentors. Each year thousands come together in Pigeon Forge, TN, to celebrate the God of The Resurrection. Through inspirational words and music led by nationally-known speakers and musicians, young people encounter the Lord in new and deeper ways.

If you're a 6th-12th grader, we'd love for you to join us and experience the life-changing power of Jesus Christ—the One who is The Resurrection and The Life. Register at [www.centralmethodist.com/rez26](http://www.centralmethodist.com/rez26) by scanning the QR code above and attend the Rez26 meeting on January 4th.

## CENTRAL STUDENTS

Student Ministry Program

Michelle Garcia, Director of Student Ministries [michelle@centralmethodist.com](mailto:michelle@centralmethodist.com)

### Sunday School - The Way Series

Sunday Mornings // 10:00-10:45am Room A134/5

All 6th-12th graders are invited to learn more about their life with Christ in our new series called *The Way* where we'll discuss what it means to deny ourselves, take up our crosses and follow Jesus.

### Youth - Teens & Tech Series

Sunday Nights // 5:00-7:00pm Room A134/5

Our series, *Teens & Tech*, will help us explore our relationship with technology and how to have healthy relationships with people.

## UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

Women's Ministry Program

Contact the church office at [cumc@centralmethodist.com](mailto:cumc@centralmethodist.com) or 865-986-7329 for additional information about UWF.

All women in our church family are invited to UWF events. *You do not need to be a member of UWF to attend our meetings.*

### Ruth Circle

January 15 // 1:00pm Room A134

Report on Wesley House Community Center by Sandy Dunsmore.

### Hope Circle

January 27 // 6:00pm

Gather for dinner and meeting.

### Martha and Ruth

February 3 // 1:00pm Room B125

Circles to have a joint pledge service (Weather Date ~ Feb. 19).

Martha Circle does not meet in January.



## CONFIRMATION

Class of 2025

Our 2025 Confirmation class had students ranging from 6th-11th graders. The class met from August to December and dove deep into understanding what Christianity is all about. We studied about the Trinity, what God made, what Jesus said and did, the fruits and gifts of the Holy Spirit, salvation and its requirements/benefits, the Church and what we do at church, Methodism & church history, our hope and our future. We're so proud of the hard work and dedication our students put forth during this class!



## January Birthdays

*Happy birthday to all our wonderful church family celebrating in January! May God bless each of you with joy, good health and a year filled with His favor!*

- 1 Kyle Hensley
- 3 David Willocks
- 4 Gail Sterchi
- 5 Beth Platfoot
- 9 Jim Wilburn
- 9 Martha Cook
- 10 Eric Good
- 11 Judy Fleming
- 11 Marlene Timmerberg
- 12 JR Hill
- 12 Sue Berger
- 15 Steve Abercrombie
- 16 Gary Ubben
- 17 Diane Rogers
- 20 Katie Gillman
- 20 Alan Jay
- 20 David Ridner
- 20 Amanda Clark
- 23 Jeff Hancock
- 26 Rick Harvey
- 26 Sarah Stockham
- 26 Lea Ann Sparks
- 28 Willard Summers
- 28 Riley Pickett
- 28 Vicki Janikula
- 30 Becky Evans
- 31 Peg Weber