THE CONNECTION

Monthly Newsletter of Central United Methodist Church

DECEMBER 2026 ISSUE



SERMON MESSAGES

The Month of December

6 DEC *Christmas at the Movies: Elf*
Pastor Melissa

13 DEC *Christmas at the Movies: The Grinch*
Pastor Scott

20 DEC *Christmas at the Movies: Home Alone*
Pastor Scott

27 DEC *Christmas at the Movies: It's a Wonderful Life*
Pastor Melissa

Christmas at the Movies: Finding the Gospel in the Stories We Love

Sermon Series // November 29 - December 27



What is it about Christmas movies that keep us coming back year after year? Often it's the humor, the heartache, the happy endings, but there's something more.

This Christmas, we're going to look beyond the screen and discover how the movies we love point us to the gospel we need. Sometimes, the message of Christmas is hiding in plain sight.

Christmas Office Hours

Office Closed
Thursday, December 24 - Thursday, January 1

Office will resume regular hours on Monday, January 4.

Central Contributions

	6-SEP	13-SEP	20-SEP	27-SEP		ONLINE
WORSHIP ATTENDANCE * worship attendance includes online	347	325	266	342		
SUNDAY SCHOOL ATTENDENCE	121	121	144			
CONTRIBUTIONS	$ 7,546	$ 10,962	$ 8,227	$ 28,278		$ 18,580
FAITH PROMISE	$ 20	$ 240	$ 395	$ 540		$ 3,120

Promised 7/1/26 to 6/30/27: $10,429

Christmas Missions Offering

Each year, our Christmas Mission Offering gives us an opportunity to look beyond ourselves and share the love of Christ with others, bringing a little extra light and hope into the world during the Christmas season. This year, your generosity will support **two important missions**: providing food for Christians facing hunger in Sudan through our 20-year partnership with the Holston Conference, and bringing joy and opportunity to children in Costa Rica through Rice & Beans Ministries, with backpacks filled with school supplies and toys.

Every gift makes a difference! The more we give, the more people we can feed and the more children we can bless. Thank you for sharing the love of Christ and bringing hope to others this Christmas!

Christmas at Central

DECEMBER 2
Hanging of the Greens
5:30pm

DECEMBER 3
Lenoir City Christmas Parade
6:30pm

DECEMBER 6
Many Voices, One Story
Music Concert
Central UMC
201 E. Third Ave, Knoxville
3:00pm

DECEMBER 13
Advent Tea
4:00pm

DECEMBER 20
Combined Worship
10:30am

Central Kids & Students
Drive-Thru Living Nativity
5:30pm

DECEMBER 24
Christmas Eve
4 & 7pm

The season of Advent is an exciting time of preparation as we get ready for the arrival of Jesus, our Savior. Throughout the month, we'll have plenty of opportunities for you and your family to slow down amidst the hustle and bustle of this time of year to truly experience the joy and wonder of Christmas. Scan the QR code above to learn more about each event offered.



Bible in a Year

Beginning Friday, January 1, 2027

Have you ever closed your Bible and thought, "What did I just read?" Beginning January 1st, you'll need just 15 minutes a day and you'll be able to read the Bible in a year and actually understand it. Get to know God better and understand the story of the Bible. Join members of your church family by scanning the QR code to sign up on the YouVersion app or sign up on the sheet in the Gathering Area. **Join us for a prep session on Wednesday, January 6 at 6:00pm.**



CENTRAL KIDS

Children's Ministry Program

Hannah Collins, *Director of Children's Ministries* hannah@centralmethodist.com

Hanging of the Greens

Wednesday, December 2 // 5:30pm

This event is a fun way to ring in the Advent season and get the church ready for Christmas! Join us for snacks, a short devotion and then decorating fun.

Kids will make ornaments for the Central Kids Christmas tree that will be displayed in the Gathering Area. You'll also be able to take them home after Christmas! **Please let Hannah Collins know if you plan to join so we have enough ornaments/activities.**

Singing for Christmas Eve

Thursday, December 24 // 4:00pm Service

We invite all children Pre-K through 5th grade to help make our Modern Christmas Eve service extra special by joining together to sing "Away in a Manger." It's a fun opportunity for your child to be part of the Christmas celebration, make special memories and share the joy of Jesus' birth with our church family. We hope your children are able to join us!





Let's celebrate Christmas together! All 6th-12th graders are invited to our Youth Christmas Party. Enjoy Christmas games, a delicious meal, building your own gingerbread house and an Advent devotion called "Faith for Christmas." Be sure to wear cozy Winter PJs and bring a $5 gift wrapped for a gift exchange. This is a great time to invite a friend to join you!

December AT A GLANCE

DECEMBER 2
Hanging of the Greens
5:30pm

DECEMBER 3
LC Christmas Parade
6:30pm

DECEMBER 6
Confirmation Practice
10:00am
Early Church Experience
10:00am
Youth
5:00-7:00pm

DECEMBER 13
Confirmation Sunday
Youth Christmas Party
5:30-7:30pm

DECEMBER 20
No Sunday School
Serve at Living Nativity
Arrive 4:45pm

DECEMBER 28
No Sunday School or Youth for Christmas

CENTRAL STUDENTS

Student Ministry Program

Michelle Garcia, *Director of Student Ministries* michelle@centralmethodist.com

Sunday School - *Imitators* Series

Sunday Mornings // 10:00-10:45am Room A135

What does it look like to live like Jesus? All 6th-12th graders are invited to find out in our series ***Imitators*** as we study 3 John.

Youth - *Faith-Full* Series

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

Enjoy fun games, good food, Christmas activities and discussing faith as we prepare for Christmas in our December series called ***Faith-Full***.

UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

Women's Ministry Program

All women in our church are invited to participate in United Women in Faith programs. For additional information contact Sandy Dunsmore at 865-271-7426.

United Women in Faith

Christmas Luncheon

Thursday, December 3 // 11:30am

- **Barbara Williams' home**
- **Donation of $5 day of**

Cry Room at Good Shepherd UMC

A team from Central came together to refinish a dedicated cry room for young families at Good Shepherd UMC.

We are grateful for opportunities God gives us to help our neighbors and support families in our community. Way to go, Central team!









Living Nativity

Sunday, December 20 // 5:30pm Front Lawn

Central Students and Kids will present a drive-thru living nativity for the community. Cars will be welcomed onto Central's campus from 5:30-6:15pm to take 5-10 minutes to experience that first Holy Night.

Please RSVP to Hannah or Michelle by December 1st if your child would like to participate so we can assign roles and prepare costumes. Participants will need to be able to do a run-through at 9:30am the morning of (before the combined service) and arrive at Central at 4:45pm to get into costumes. All kids and students will enjoy hot chocolate and cookies afterwards at 6:30pm.

Save THE DATE

Martha and Ruth Circles Joint Pledge Service

Tuesday, February 2
1:00pm Room B125

(no January meetings scheduled for Martha & Ruth Circles)

December Birthdays

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

1	Mason Messler
1	Carol Ann Williams
3	Barbara Williams
4	Ruth Ann Wampler
5	Lisa Worner
6	Logan Hope
8	Martha Fox
8	Carolina Lyle
8	Francie Jones
11	Lilly Borders
11	Evie Gillman
12	Sascha Hill
14	Rebecca Moses
15	James Platfoot
16	Carol Taylor
17	Laurie Davis
17	Mary Platfoot
18	Rebecca Smith
19	Carol Clark
20	Emily Hensley
20	Matthew Davis
23	Rich McMillen
25	Jeanette Sixour
25	Susanna Platfoot
26	Rose Langefeld
27	Ryan Janikula
29	Michael Langefeld
31	Garry Hudson