



**Central United Methodist Church
Lay Leadership Report
November 14, 2018
Johnny Crouch, Katri Skinner**

This is a great time to be in leadership at Central United Methodist Church. We are an active, vibrant church, acknowledging our faith through worship, fellowship and service to our fellow man.

I continue to be impressed with Senior Pastor Will Malambri's leadership. We all know what a great preacher and pastor he is, but he has continued to grow into his role as CEO of a large and growing church. As Co-Lay Leader with Katri Skinner, we work closely with Reverend Malambri on all committees. We are fortunate not to have a lot of disagreements, but when one arises, he is one of the best I have ever worked with at conflict resolution. Having owned and run a business for 40 years, I recognize the difficult position he is in. He handles it with grace and strength. He is the perfect fit for the needs of our church and congregation. His leadership ability was recognized when he was named to the Board of Trustees at Wofford College.

Associate Pastor Derrick Cattenhead continues to serve us well at Central UMC. He is very important to the life of Central as an inspiring preacher as well as an energetic leader. His pastoral leadership in our casual service is excellent, and we hope to continue growing that group by bring in more young families.

Associate Pastor of Congregational Care, Reverend Tom Pietila, is doing a great job of making sure that our members as well as our community are being served. He has organized a group of volunteers to visit the sick and shut in people. He is also head of our Stephen Minister program. It has grown in number since he took it over last year. Reverend Pietila served us for many years as Senior Pastor before his retirement. He then took the position of Head of Pastoral Services for McLeod Regional Medical System. With that background, he is a perfect fit for the job of tending to the needs of our congregation. We also love when Reverend Pietila delivers a sermon, which he does once every two months or so.

Reverend Meg Jiunnies, our Minister of Faith Formation & Discipleship is a strong leader and encourager in our midst. Meg has been with Central for many years, and we are proud of her dedication and hard work to achieve this position of leadership.

Our two traditional worship services continue to provide the formal church experience that is preferred by so many of our church family. As always, the liturgy, music and sermons are of the highest quality. Don Grice, our Director of Music, along with Beverly Hazelwood, Music Associate/Director of Handbells, and our pastors do a terrific job of planning these services.

Under the leadership of Sharon Tanner, The Well, our alternate casual worship service has shown steady growth. Along with Reverend Cattenhead, she has been able to connect with the large group of members and non-members that are attracted to this genre. Many of our younger families attend this service together. It is great for them to be in worship with their children.

Nate McMurphy, our Director of Youth Ministries, continues to do a fantastic job of leading our young people. Under his guidance we have shown growth in the numbers of young people attending youth and UMYF programs. He has also been able to recruit an impressive group of adult volunteer leaders.

We had over 20 confirmands in the 2017/2018 class.

Jennifer Walters, Director of our Preschool, along with members of our Preschool Board, accomplished an enormous task by getting us fully licensed by the South Carolina Department of Social Services. Along with all of the building improvements that were necessary for licensing, that enabled us to extend the hours of the Preschool to four o'clock in the afternoon. We are still looking at becoming a full day operation, eventually serving the day care needs of our community to six in the afternoon. Eighty percent of the students in our Preschool are not Central members, so as we hoped, this has become a great outreach program for the church.

The best thing that I have to report is that Central's ministries continue to be alive and well in Florence, the United States and the world.

Five years ago, with the leadership of Art Justice, we started a Beds Ministry at Central. With the help of Florence School District One, we have made and delivered over 200 beds to local young people who don't have their own bed to sleep in. Next month the BEDS Ministry will expand. In partnership with St. Luke Lutheran Church and Johnsonville UMC, we will distribute 48 beds in Lake City and Johnsonville.

We are feeding the hungry and helping the homeless in our community through a bi-monthly hot meal at a local parking lot ministry. Members of our Central family have formed "The Bread Brigade", and they are at the parking lot every Saturday morning handing out bread and other food items, as well as clothing, blankets and a lot of other badly needed items. Anyone in need is welcomed to come and receive.

We also continue to make Florence homes warmer, safer and dryer every year with a program we call Santahatchie. Almost 100 youth and adults from our church as well as Pisgah UMC come together the week after Christmas to improve the homes of needy people in our community. Last year's Santahatchie program was successful in building a new house from the ground up for a lady whose home had become unlivable. We also have a group of men, women and youth who take a Saturday once a month to build wheelchair ramps for people in need.

Central has been involved in a community wide service project named Helping Florence Flourish. Once again this year, a group of Central adults and young people participated in cleaning up and repairing local elementary schools with this group.

We had a group of youth and adults participate in Salkahatchie this summer.

Every year we send a team of adults and young people to Costa Rica to work on an orphanage.

This sounds like a lot of activity, but believe me when I say that I am just touching the surface of Central's outreach. We continuously pray for the Holy Spirit to show us ways we can grow in service to others.

Respectfully submitted,
John Crouch/Katri Skinner
Co-Lay Leaders