



Welcome this morning! We are glad you are here! Remember to fill out your *Connect Card* and put in the offering plate!

Pastor Lanny's Lyrics...



"While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn."—Luke 2:6-7

I love the splendid depictions of the nativity on our Christmas cards, front yards, and various other places this time of year. The wondrous creativity of various artists certainly adds to the joy of this season. But the historical reality of the first Christmas was certainly much less aesthetically pleasing. A young couple was forced by a foreign power to travel to Bethlehem for a census, 90 miles from their hometown. There was no sterile mother suite awaiting them. In fact, there was no room for them at all. Mary delivered her baby without a midwife or mother or any woman that understood labor and delivery to comfort her. How frustrated Joseph must have felt, not being able to provide any better for his pregnant fiancé. And yet, suddenly, the Son of God is born, right there in the dirty hay, laid in a slopping trough for animals.

One thing I have learned in my 55 Christmases, Christ comes whether we are ready or not, whether all the tinsel is hung correctly—or not. Whether all the lights are twinkling—or not. Whether all the perfect presents have been purchased and wrapped correctly—or not. (Just ask my family what a present I wrap looks like, haha!) So, this Christmas, whether we got everything just right or not (and there is no "just right") Christ comes to us. The miracle of Christmas is not that Christ comes when we attain a perfect Christmas Card Christmas. In fact, it is just the opposite. Christ comes in the midst even of a messy Christmas. You are loved! And Christ is born for you and me today! Hallelujah!

P.S. We are pleased to announce that, starting in January, Rev. Harrison Hinson will be serving as our part-time interim associate pastor of pastoral care. We give thanks for Rev. Harrison's willingness to serve in this way. We are pleased that Dr. Kristi Shupe, Nathan Clements, Donna Martel, Anne Kimball and others will be serving in our music ministry in the interim period. Please pray for these wonderful ministers and our church as we move forward in our Vision to Connect with God, Connect with Each Other, and Connect with our Community. Peace,

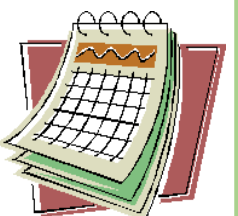
Christmas Eve Communion & Candlelight

Tonight
7:00 pm
in the
Sanctuary



2024 Central UMC Calendars

The Youth and Music Ministries have teamed up to create a 2024 Central UMC Calendar. Enjoy scenes from the life of Central all yearlong while keeping up with important dates of the Liturgical Church Year. Calendars are \$25 each are available between church services, from in the church office during office hours (8:30 am-5:00 pm) or email Julie at julie@centralumcmonroe.org. All the proceeds benefit the ongoing Music and Youth Ministries.



UCCA Ministry Food Pantry Needs List

D
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Baked beans
Black beans
Black Eyed peas
Boxed meals
Canned condensed milk
Canned meats
Canned soups
Carrots
Cereal/Grits/Oatmeal
Cereal bars
Chili Beans
Coffee
Corn
Cornbread Mix
Crackers
Flour
Great Northern beans
Green beans
Jelly
Kidney beans
Kool-Aid drink packets
Lima beans

Macaroni & cheese
Mixed fruits
Mixed vegetables
Pancake mix
Peaches
Peanut butter
Pineapples
Pork & beans
Potatoes
Ravioli
Refried beans
Rice
Spaghetti noodles
Spaghetti O's
Spaghetti sauce
Sugar
Sweet peas
Tea bags
Tomatoes
Tomato sauce
Tuna

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We are continuing to collect food (see list above) for Union County Crisis Assistance for the month of December! We are also collecting monetary donations as well. Please put December Shareback in the memo line for all checks. If there are any questions please contact the church office at 704.289.3186.



Grief & Share[®]

at Central UMC

A new 6-week class will start on
Wednesday February 14th at 6:30 pm

If you are interested in joining the class, contact Bill McKee at 337.288.3539 or bmckee302@gmail.com or sign-up on the sheet at the Crossroads.

We are in need of office volunteers from time to time. Would you be interested in filling in for a couple hours, half a day or even a whole day to cover a vacation day? Please call the church office 704.289.3186 or you can email [Shannon skeesler@centralumcmonroe.org](mailto:skeesler@centralumcmonroe.org).

Attendance

Week of 12/17/23-740

8:45 am Service-32

Sunday School-73

11:00 A True Gift-119

11:00 am Online-377

Youth-20 | Jr. Youth-7

People, Look East-50

Dinner Church-62

December & January

Beth Hargett &

Libby Helms



Lay



12/31

Reader

Eric Shupe

Ushers

10:00 am Christmas Eve Service

12/24 (am)-Jack & Jackson Hargett and
Dale & Shelley Loberger

7:00 pm Christmas Eve Service

12/24 (pm)-Robert & Linda Hinson
and David & Kalli Clements

8:45 am Contemporary Service

12/31- Cheri Barker & Erica Kirby

11:00 am Traditional Service

12/31-David & Kalli Clements and
James & Grace Clements

United Women in Faith

Lessie Anne Circle meets next on
Tuesday, January 2nd. Call Mary Engel
with any questions at 704.226.1176.

Faith, Hope & Charity Circle's next
meeting is on Monday, January 8th.
Call or text Nancy Gustafson for more
information 704.733.8686.

New Beginnings Circle will meet
again on Monday, January 15th.
Contact Linda Deese 704.219.7199
for more info.

Grace & Mercy Circle please contact
Donna Young 704.226.5954 if you
have any questions or need info.

Central Squares Men's Group

Central Squares Men's Group will
meet next in January on Saturday
the 6th. We start cooking breakfast
at 7:30 am with a devotion at 8:00
am. Come join us for breakfast,
fellowship, and devotion. For any
questions or for more information
contact Eric Shupe at
803.370.3693 or Gabe Febus at
704.774.0342.

Soul Food Bible Study starts
back on Thursday, January 4th.
We will continue with the series
Twelve More Women of the Bible.

Prayer Requests

Betsy Griffin | Charles & Judy Sanders | Betty Lathan | Ivil Porter | John & Kim Cattie | Cynthia Smith
Shan Reeder | Carol Reeder | Pam Majewski Family | Jamie Bryson | My Church | Roman Zavaleta
Janet Holden (Fred Duncan's sister) | Shirley Alexander | Joey & Jonda Buchanan | Jon Lundin
Sue Brown | Caregivers | Lonely | Those that don't know the true meaning of Christmas | Bill Phifer
Mike Taylor | Melony Cordero Matthew Burnette/Family | Jodie & Family | Joe Blanton
Mark & John Patrus | Children of St. Jude/Shriners Hospitals | Victims of War/Disasters
|| Family of Helen Scarpantoni (Ruth Wall's sister) | Scott Foley | Linda Burris
Rev. Sigrid Mottram in her new endeavor | Unspoken Staff | Charles Magee | Linda Thomas
Lori Romolo | Our Church | Ruth Creech | Emily & Family

(Prayer Request's stay on the above list for 2 weeks unless requested to be put on the "ongoing prayer requests")

Ongoing Prayer Requests

Glenda Moon | Phyllis Matthews | Donna Cranford | Carolyn Kindley | Dillon Brantley | Addie Laney
Shauna Leonard (Kallie Clement's sister) | Jonathan Mackay | Sandy Deskins | Nancy Snyder
The Matson Family | Barbara Pfau | Martha Rollins | Betty Harkness | Margaret Furr
Barbara Klutz (Elaine Hall's sister) | Elaine Lambert | Andrew Lanier | Brian Outen | Kelli Whitaker
Dixon & Elaine Hall | Rosey Olsen | Mary Jones | Mitchell Taylor (Carolyn Kindley's nephew)
Chris Wiggins | Ruth Mackay | Vanessa Deese & Family (Linda's daughter in law) | Jimmie Hargett
Joel Kurtz | Kappy Giblin | Darlene Childers (Doris Campbell's sister)
Barbara Horack (Shelley Loberger's mother) | Eldoris Loberger (Dale's mother)
Our President | Our Governor | Our Military | Our Country
Bishop Ken Carter | DS Rev. Beth Crissman | Central Staff

Please call the Church Office at 704.289.3186 or email skeesler@centralumcmonroe.org to add or remove prayer requests. If you have
confidential prayer request, please email llancaster@centralumcmonroe.org or smottram@centralumcmonroe.org.

**THE CHURCH OFFICE WILL BE
CLOSED FOR THE CHRISTMAS
HOLIDAY ON MONDAY,
12/25 & TUESDAY, 12/26!**

Sanctuary Counseling Group

Here at Central
Specializing in Marriage
& Family Therapy

Todd R. Matson, D. Min., LMFT
704.375.5354, ext. 407 or
704.242.3694 | www.mccsvs.org



FREE ONE-ON-ONE CONFIDENTIAL CARE

PROVIDED BY TRAINED CAREGIVERS

Your Stephen Minister will walk with
you, listen to you as you search
through the pieces of your heart. To
connect with a Stephen Minister
email Pastor Sigrid Mottram at
smottram@centralumcmonroe.org
or call/text 980.240.2370.

**Our Stephen Ministers are
ready to care for YOU!**



Christ caring for people through people

**STEPHEN
MINISTRY**



**Connect
at Central**

God • Each Other • Community



704.289.3186

801 S Hayne Street
Monroe, NC 28110



centralumcmonroe.org



[cumcmonroe](https://www.facebook.com/cumcmonroe)



CENTRAL CALENDAR

SUNDAY 12/24 Christmas Eve

8:45 am Contemporary-Central Hall

11:00 am Traditional Worship-Sanctuary

11:00 am Livestream Worship-Online

7:00 pm Communion & Candlelight Service-Sanctuary

MONDAY 12/25 Christmas Day-Happy Birthday Jesus!

ALL DAY CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED

ALL DAY Pastor Lanny on call

TUESDAY 12/26

ALL DAY CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED

6:00 pm Dinner Church (Team 3)-FLC

THURSDAY 12/28

8:00 am Men's Breakfast Group-The Derby

7:00 pm Union Big Book-Scout Hut

FRIDAY 12/29

ALL DAY Pastor Sigrid on call

SUNDAY 12/31 New Year's Eve

8:45 am Contemporary-Central Hall

9:45 am Sunday School

11:00 am Traditional Worship-Sanctuary

11:00 am Livestream Worship-Online

MONDAY 1/1 Happy New Year 2024!

ALL DAY CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED

ALL DAY Pastor Sigrid on call

TUESDAY 1/2

10:00 am Lessie Anne Circle-Library

6:00 pm Dinner Church (Team 1)-FLC

WEDNESDAY 1/3

6:00 pm Celebration Singers-Room 112

6:00 pm InnerChange-Choir Room

7:00 pm Chancel Choir-Choir Room

THURSDAY 1/4

8:00 am Men's Breakfast Group-The Derby

6:30 pm Outreach/Missions Meeting via Zoom

7:00 pm Union Big Book-Scout Hut

FRIDAY 1/5

6:00 pm Apprentice Basketball-FLC

SATURDAY 1/6

8:00 am Central Squares-Upstairs Kitchen/Hospitality

SUNDAY 1/7

8:45 am Contemporary-Central Hall

9:30 am **Blood Mobile**-FLC Parking Lot

9:45 am Sunday School

11:00 am Traditional Worship-Sanctuary

11:00 am Livestream Worship-Online

3:30 pm Central Youth

4:00 pm Jr. Youth

