

The Beacon

The Latest at **CHRIST UMC** | MARCH 2026



on our relationship with God.

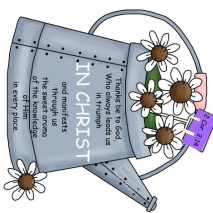
Lent is an invitation to quiet these noises and voices, and recenter our lives by listening to the True Source of faith. We can make time for meditating on scripture, serving those in need, praying, strengthening our relationships with others, fasting from things that have consumed us, etc. By focusing on these acts, our prayer is that we not only increase our connection to God but also increase our ability to live out our calling to follow Jesus. I pray for each of us to hear the True Source of faith, and to accept this Lenten invitation and be blessed.

Blessings,
Rev. Eric Williams


We have begun the season of Lent, the 40 days that we set aside for quiet reflection, repentance, and recentering of our lives. This practice of 40 days reflects the 40 days that Jesus spent fasting and praying in the wilderness before beginning his earthly ministry, which culminated with the cross, resurrection, and ascension. You can read this account in Matthew 4:1-11. The Bible also shares that while Jesus is praying, he is tempted by Satan three times. Each time, Satan asks him to do something that would seem rewarding but is actually contrary to what God desires. While a lot can be unpacked here, I want to focus in on how often we are also bombarded by tempting voices in our lives every day that distract us from our relationship with God. Perhaps we have spent more time listening to other people than focusing

A Season of Quiet

From the Pastor's Desk



March 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 9am The 3rd Day Bible Study 10:15am Worship Service 10:30 Adventure Kids	2 10am The 3rd Day Bible Study 7pm AA	3 3pm Feed the Hungry	4 10am UWF Board Mtg. 10am P/S Character Parade 5:30pm Choir practice	5 9:30am P/S Music 10am Christ Quilters 6:30pm The 3rd Day Bible Study	6 5pm Girl Scouts	7
8 9am The 3rd Day Bible Study 10:15am Worship Service 10:30 Adventure Kids 11:15am Fellowship 12pm Youth Group	9 10am The 3rd Day Bible Study 7pm AA	10 10am Circle One 10am P/S Connection 6:15pm Operations Mtg 6:30pm Freedom Circle	11 10am Hope Circle 10am P/S Chapel 5:30pm Choir practice	12 9:30am P/S Music 10am Christ Quilters 6:30pm The 3rd Day Bible Study	13 5pm Girl Scouts	14 10am CYPFP Training
15 9am The 3rd Day Bible Study 10:15am Worship Service 10:30 Adventure Kids 11:15am Fellowship	16 10am The 3rd Day Bible Study 7pm AA	17 	18 5:30pm Choir practice	19 9:30am P/S Music 10am Christ Quilters	20 5pm Girl Scouts	21
22 9am The 3rd Day Bible Study 10:15am Worship Service 10:30 Adventure Kids 11:15am Fellowship 12pm Youth Group	23 10am The 3rd Day Bible Study 7pm AA	24 10am P/S Connection Chat 7pm R-Coordination	25 10am P/S Chapel 5:30pm Choir practice	26 9:30am P/S Music 10am Christ Quilters 6:30pm The 3rd Day Bible Study	27 4pm Festival Set up 5pm Girl Scouts	28 11am Spring Festival
29 9am The 3rd Day Bible Study 10:15am Worship Service 10:30 Adventure Kids 11:15am Fellowship	30 10am The 3rd Day Bible Study 1pm Congregational Care Mtg. 7pm AA Meeting	31				



COMING SOON

Summer Camp

Warren Willis Summer Camp is July 20 through 25, and we are already looking forward to an incredible week.

Camp is open to rising 4th graders through graduating seniors. It is an unforgettable experience filled with worship, friendship, outdoor fun, and moments where faith grows in powerful ways.

Scholarship applications are available now and are due by April 1. If finances or transportation are a concern, please do not let that stop you. We are

committed to helping every child who wants to go. CUMC loves to support our campers each year and will walk alongside you to make it happen.

Registration and scholarship information are available now.

For more details, contact:
Hanna Thomas
(904) 612-7286



IT'S HERE!

Spring Festival

Join us for our Spring Festival on March 28, from 11 AM to 1 PM. It will be a fun filled day for the whole community with games, crafts, food, bounce houses, and of course an egg hunt. Invite your friends, neighbors, and family to come celebrate with us.

We also need your help to make this event a success. Volunteers are needed in the following areas:

Bounce House: 4 volunteers

Craft Area: 4 volunteers

Games: 4 volunteers

Food Area: Volunteers to assist Pastor Eric and help operate the popcorn, cotton candy, and Sno Cone machines

As always, we welcome church ambassadors who can greet guests, help where needed, and share about our church.

Egg Hunt

The egg hunt will take place inside Wilson Hall and requires several volunteers. We also need plenty of filled plastic eggs. You may fill donated eggs with small treats or prizes of your choice.

Filled eggs are due to the church by Thursday, March 26 at 1 PM, when the church office closes. Collection bins will be available in the sanctuary lobby and church office.

If you would like to volunteer or have questions about the Spring Festival, please contact:
Hanna Thomas (904) 612 7286

MESSY UPDATES

Messy Church in March

Our next Messy Church takes place March 25!

Each month, we gather for Messy Church and it truly is for **everyone**. This is not just a family event; it is multigenerational, which means you are welcome no matter your age or family status. Bring neighbors and friends, or come on your own. We would love for you to enjoy an evening of good food, fun,

and fellowship.

This month, we will explore Jesus' journey from Palm Sunday to the cross. Dinner begins at 6 PM, and rumor has it Pastor Eric has a hand in the menu this month!

We will follow with prayer, a short lesson, hands-on activities, and close the evening with praise music. We wrap up by 7 PM. Think

it cannot all happen in one hour? Come see for yourself.

For more information, contact:
Sally Ogburn (904) 703-3424
Kathy Scott (904) 612-4361
Brittani Laski (402) 305-2748

Thank You!

Thank you to everyone who helped to make Night to Shine a "Shining" success! We made several new friends this year who just put us in awe of God's great world. We are all in this together to show the love of Christ to everyone in all that we do. Get ready for next year, February 12, 2027!

Thank you again! Hanna Thomas & Cathy Klein

SECURITY CORNER

All Systems Go

The Security Task Team's Sunday morning live security camera viewing is now one month old. You have likely seen a member of this team in the Narthex on Sunday mornings, looking at an iPad. Here's what they are doing.

They are monitoring our live security cameras placed around the CUMC campus, looking for specific activities. Working with the outside greeter, who also has a walkie-talkie, the camera viewer is looking for both hospitality-related events and security threats.

For example, the cold and windy conditions we experienced in early February created a potential health issue for one of our members. The person viewing the cameras observed someone struggling against the conditions using a

walker. Before any action was taken by the viewer, the usher at the side sanctuary doors noticed this person and came to assist. Had the usher not noticed this situation unfolding, the camera viewer would have contacted the outside greeter for assistance.

The hospitality function begins at 9:40 and continues until 10:15 when the outside greeter comes into the church. During this time, the camera viewer is also looking for any security issues. The sole function of viewing the cameras after the service begins is security. Eyes are on all access points of CUMC and the surrounding areas. The person viewing the cameras has a cellphone with emergency numbers readily available. The security camera viewer continues these duties until all who are leaving the

campus in their vehicle directly after the service do so without incident, by 10:30.

The Security Task Team also has a member checking all doors on campus to ensure they are locked, preventing access to our buildings and sanctuary during services.

We can't guarantee that nothing bad will ever happen at CUMC, but we continue to refine our practices to make Christ United Methodist Church a less likely target.

Stay alert, Stay alive
Security Task Team
Christ United Methodist Church

SHOPPING FOR A CAUSE

Sunday Morning Fellowship

The end of the worship service doesn't mean the end of our Sunday morning together!

Each week after the service, we gather in Wilson Hall for fellowship, conversation, and simple refreshments like coffee, oatmeal, and sweet treats. It is a wonderful way to connect and ease into the week with your church family.

Would you like to help support this

time of fellowship? You can:

- Leave a small donation in the jar on the fellowship table
- Pick up an item from the shopping list when you are at the store
- Bake or purchase freezer friendly snacks to share

Fellowship Shopping List:
Ground coffee, flavored creamers, chocolate chips, and freezer friendly snacks such as muffins or

cookies.

Please label donations "Fellowship" and leave them in the church office or kitchen. You may also sign up in Wilson Hall to sponsor a Sunday with fresh fruit or baked goods.

Questions? Contact Laura Williams by text or call at (904) 614-1485.

SPECIAL GATHERING

Church Women United

Who are Church Women United? They are an ecumenical movement that brings together Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox, and other Christian women across the nation in prayer and service.

We have a local Church Women United group at the beach that meets several times a year. One of their annual gatherings centers on World Day of Prayer.

What is World Day of Prayer?

In 1887, Presbyterian women called for a day of prayer for home missions, and Methodist women organized a week of prayer and self denial for foreign missions. A Baptist day of prayer for foreign missions began in 1891. By 1897, women from six denominations had formed a committee for a united day of prayer for home missions. From these beginnings, World Day of Prayer grew into a global movement.

The first Friday in March is traditionally observed as World Day of Prayer.

Christ UWF will host this year's celebration on March 6 for Church Women United. The focus this year is Nigeria. All women are invited to attend. You do not need to be a member to participate.

We will meet in Wilson Hall at 10 AM. Refreshments will be served.

Thank You!

Circle One would like to thank everyone who pre ordered and purchased Chicken Tetrazzini. Your support of this project was a great success. Because of your participation, funds have been raised to help make summer church camp possible for our youth. We are grateful for a church family that continues to support opportunities for our young people to grow in their faith.

COMMUNITY YOUTH GROUP

Upcoming Youth Group Gatherings

The community youth group at Christ UMC is going strong.

We are grateful for the amazing youth who are learning and growing in their faith as they explore what it means to live a life in Christ.

We meet every other Sunday from 12 to 1:30 PM. March meeting dates

are March 8 and March 22.

Save the Date!

The youth group invites you to a Dinner and Movie Fundraiser on April 18, from 5 to 7 PM, (more details coming soon). Following the fundraiser, the youth will have a lock in beginning Saturday evening, April 18, and ending

Sunday, April 19.

If you have a student who will be entering 5th grade next year, we would love to welcome them to the lock in.

For all things youth, contact: Hanna Thomas (904) 612-7286

MISSION PARTNER FOR MARCH

Residing Hope

Our March Mission Partner is Residing Hope, a ministry serving children and families across Florida through foster care, residential care, and family support programs. Their work provides safe homes, compassionate care, and long term stability for children who have experienced neglect, abuse, or difficult circumstances. Through dedicated staff and faith centered support, Residing Hope helps children heal, grow, and move toward brighter futures.

On March 29, we will receive our Fifth Sunday Offering in support of Residing Hope. Be sure to look for more information and a designated offering envelope in your bulletin. Your generosity directly supports the ongoing care, education, and resources these children need each day.

Following this article, you will find updates and additional information recently shared by the President and CEO of Residing Hope, Kitwana McTyer.

Day of Hope at Residing Hope

Residing Hope will host Day of Hope on Thursday, March 19. This special event offers an opportunity to connect more deeply with the ministry, learn about the impact your support is making, and engage with the youth they serve.

Day of Hope offers an opportunity to connect more deeply with the ministry, learn about the impact your support is making, and engage directly with the youth they serve. The event will include breakout sessions, walking tours of cottages and campus sites, hands on volunteer style projects, and a closing program featuring youth performances. Activities for younger guests will also be available, and a box lunch will be provided. Guests are encouraged to wear comfortable shoes for the walking tours. Golf carts will be available for those with mobility challenges.

Please scan the QR code or visit their website to RSVP so they can plan appropriately for lunch and sessions.



The above information has been condensed from the President and CEO's monthly update for space.

FROM CONGREGATIONAL CARE TEAM

New Soup Ministry

Soup makers unite! Join the Congregational Care Team in making soups that can be stored, then readily delivered to those who are experiencing health issues, such as chemotherapy, surgeries, treatments, or illness.

One-quart containers are available, and no amount of soup is too little. Simply prepare your soup at home, then label and date the soup and bring it to church. We will store it in the Wilson Hall freezer. To participate in this important ministry, contact Sonni McEvoy at (904) 699-9772. Read below a suggested tried and true "chemo-friendly" soup.

Greek Lemon Soup

- Bring 6 cups of chicken broth to a boil
- Add 1/2 cup of long grain rice
- Simmer covered for 25 minutes (stir occasionally)
- Whisk 3 eggs yolks and 1/4 cup of lemon juice
- Slowly temper eggs and stir into soup
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Fresh chopped parsley to garnish (optional)

SERVE THE BEACHES

Community Kitchen Meals

A big thank you to everyone who delivered Community Kitchen meals in January, even with late notice and some very cold weather. Your willingness to step up made a real difference for our neighbors who rely on these meals each week.

Community Kitchen is one of the simple but powerful ways we live out our faith in action, sharing care, compassion, and practical support with those in need. A warm meal can mean more than just food. It can be encouragement, dignity, and a reminder that someone cares.

Our next opportunity to deliver meals will be the week of April 6, on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. If you would like to volunteer or learn more about how you can help, please contact Sally Ogburn at (904) 703-3424.

Thank you for being the hands and feet of Christ in our community.

Church Book Club

Our Church Book Club will gather on March 26, at 1 PM to discuss *The Briar Club* by Kate Quinn. Set in 1950s Washington, D.C., this richly layered novel weaves together the lives of women drawn together by secrets, suspicion, and unexpected friendship. With intrigue simmering beneath polite society and relationships unfolding one revelation at a time, it promises plenty to talk about.

Whether you have read every page or are just curious, you are welcome to join us for thoughtful conversation and warm fellowship. We would love to see you there!

MEET-UPS IN MARCH

United Women in Faith

The United Women in Faith are looking forward to hosting the March 6 prayer gathering of Church Women United. We hope you will join this special group of women representing many churches throughout our area. Additional information can be found on page 6.

Our Circles will meet as scheduled:

- Circle One: March 11, at 10 AM
- Freedom Circle: March 11, at 6:30 PM
- Hope Circle: March 12, at 10 AM

All are welcome to attend.

Please note there will be no Unit Meeting in March. Our next Unit Meeting will be held on April 22, so mark your calendars now.

CUMC FAMILY

March Celebrations!

Anniversaries

23 Randy and Cindy Kalar

Birthdays

1 Joann Easterday

Jim Ransom

2 McKinley Muratore

3 Victor Cymbalski

4 Daniel McHugh

6 Richard Wallace

7 Karen Hughes

13 Alessandra Card

19 Aaron Brunner

20 Eula (Mae) Jones

21 Ann DeVane

24 Karen Lagitch

Kathy Wallace

26 Becky Osborne

29 Mary Laseter

31 Donald Dodds

Join Us

Christ UMC, Neptune

Holy Week

CELEBRATE EASTER

Holy Week at Christ United Methodist Church

Called to More: New Life. Join us for the final week of our Called to More series as we journey through the most sacred days of our faith. From table to cross to empty tomb, we move together toward the promise of New Life.

We would love for you to be part of this holy week with us. Each gathering tells part of the story, and together, they lead us from remembrance to reflection to resurrection. Come walk the journey with us.

Maunder Thursday: Last Supper Experience

When: Thursday, April 2, at 6:30 PM

Where: Wilson Hall

On Holy Thursday, we gather for a Last Supper experience. This meaningful service invites us to remember Jesus' final meal with His disciples, His command to love, and the humility of servant leadership. Come reflect, pray, and prepare your heart as we begin the walk toward the cross.

Good Friday: Tenebrae Service

When: Friday, April 3, at 6:30 PM

Where: Sanctuary

Our Good Friday Tenebrae service is a solemn service of shadows. Through Scripture, reflection, and the gradual dimming of light, we remember the depth of Christ's sacrifice. This powerful and contemplative time allows us to sit in the weight of the cross before the joy of resurrection morning.

Easter Sunrise Service

When: Sunday, April 5, at 6:30 AM

Where: On the Beach at the end of Atlantic Boulevard

Join us for one of our most beloved Easter traditions. Each year, hundreds of people from across our community gather on the beach at the end of Atlantic Boulevard to celebrate the risen Christ. We are grateful to partner with other local churches for this powerful, united time of worship.

As the sun rises over the ocean, we proclaim the good news together. Bring a chair, invite a friend, and come experience the joy of Easter at daybreak.

Easter Celebration Service

When: Sunday, April 5, at 10:15 AM

Where: Sanctuary at CUMC

Join us for our Easter celebration at 10:15 a.m. as we rejoice in the good news of New Life. This final message in our Called to More series reminds us that because of God's great love and grace, the story does not end at the tomb. Resurrection changes everything.