

The Beacon

The Latest at **CHRIST UMC** | MAY 2025



Restoring Faith

From the Pastor's Desk



On Easter Sunday, we began a new series called Restoring Faith. In the last 25 years, research has seen a dramatic decrease in persons claiming to be a part of organized religion. In fact, Christians who claimed membership in a church has decreased from 70% to 45% since 2000. There are multiple reasons for this but all seem to be rooted in wounds committed by the church or feelings that the church does not reflect Jesus. In other words, the church has lost its relevance, like a piece of old furniture that is falling apart. However, I don't think all hope is lost. It's just time for a renovation.

While this may be difficult to do, we need to lean into these

difficult conversations to seek Christ's renewal of the church and our faith once again. Over the next several weeks, we will tackle perceptions and issues that people have with church. As we do this, I hope you will join me in prayer and humility as we seek to not only live faithfully to Christ's calling but hope to regain the trust of our communities around us. This is a great time to invite someone who has had issues with the church in the past. They may find this series opens the door for healing. I do believe that God will use this season to fulfill Revelation 21:5 - "See, I am making all things new."

Blessings,
Rev. Eric Williams

May 2025



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Thank you mom						
4 9am Heavenly Hash 10:15am Worship Service 10:30am Adventure Kis 11:15 am Fellowship 12pm Youth	5 7pm AA Meeting	6 3pm Feed the Hungry	7 10am UWF Board Mtg 10am Preschool Chapel 5:30pm Choir Practice	8 10am Mother's Day Brunch 10am Christ Quilters	9 5pm Girl Scouts	10 11am VBS Vol mtg
11 *** Mother's Day *** 9am Heavenly Hash 10:15am Worship Service 10:30am Adventure Kis 11:15 am Fellowship	12 7pm AA Meeting	13 10am Freedom Circle 10am Preschool Connection 6:15pm Operations Mtg 6:30pm Freedom Circle	14 10am Hope Circle 10am Preschool Chapel 3:30pm Worship Design 5:30pm Choir Practice 6pm Messy Church	15 10am P/S Graduation 10am Christ Quilters	16 5pm Girl Scouts	17
18 ** Beam ** 9am Heavenly Hash 10:15am Worship Service 10:30am Adventure Kis 11:15 am Fellowship 12pm Youth	19 5:30pm Possibilities Plus 7pm AA Meeting	20 8am Life Line Screening	21 10am Preschool Chapel 10am UWF Mission Study 5:30pm Choir Practice	22 9:30am Preschool Singing 10am Christ Quilters	23	24 11am End of School Bash
25 9am Heavenly Hash 10:15am Worship Service 10:30am Adventure Kis 11:15 am Fellowship	26 ** Office Closed ** 7pm AA Meeting	27 10am Preschool Connection Craft	28 10am Preschool Chapel 10am UWF Mission Study 5:30pm Choir Practice	29 10am Christ Quilters 1pm Church Book Club	30 April Showers Bring May Flowers	31

CHRIST United Methodist Church
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FROM YOUR LAY LEADER

Thanks to all of the Volunteers!

We are thankful for all the volunteers who take time on a regular basis to make this church the special place it is. So many people went above and beyond during Holy Week and the Saturday before, and I want to recognize their efforts. (See photos on page 5)

There was a crowd of volunteers of all ages helping to make the Spring Festival a great success. The choir spent extra hours working on the cantata for Palm Sunday. We had members helping with the Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services, too.

Unseen by most of us were the members of the Sunrise Service team who met Saturday to test all the equipment and load up the trucks. They were up early Sunday Morning, setting up at the beach and packing everything up again when the service was over.

Volunteers set up for communion at the beach and in the sanctuary, decorated the flower cross, and arranged for the lilies by the altar and tulips by the pulpit. And, where would we be without the ushers, liturgists, and fellowship time preparers who are there faithfully?

There are volunteers in the office, working in the yard, maintaining our buildings, managing teams, providing leadership and expertise, teaching, straightening up the pews, cooking and cleaning.....they are everywhere!!! So be sure to thank those you see volunteering around the church, and, if you are looking for a place where you can help, contact Pastor Eric or me, and we will steer you to the contact people for the work you'd like to do.

Nancy Russell, Lay Leader

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Meet Rick Terry

Rick has been part of our operations team for over two years. He began on Staff Parish Relations (SPR) and is now part of the Trustees team. He has quietly maintained and made the grounds around our church sign look beautiful for years, along with his giving wife Teresa. Rick has even stepped in many times to mow the church lawn! We are so grateful for the way Rick (and Teresa) love not only the *people* of the church, but the building too!

UWF FELLOWSHIP

Love in Action

I want to express my deep gratitude to so many of you who encouraged me through meals, cards, calls, thoughts and prayers while I was recovering from recent open heart surgery. You made a difference! It was a joy to participate with you in worship on Easter. Since I have additional health issues to recover from, I plan to be with you as much as possible in the future. Thank you again for sharing God's love and your love so abundantly.

Carmen Johns

CUMC FAMILY

May Celebrations!

Birthdays

- 4 Claudia Young
- 5 Henry Spruance
- 7 Shirley Church
- 8 Jerry Ferguson
- 10 Ann Marie McCurdy
- Edith Jenkins
- 11 Nancy Russell
- 12 Mary Muratore

Terry Stuart

- 18 Lota Maness
- 19 Yvonne Hitch
- 20 Ken Walker
- 24 Sally Dajero
- 25 Mimi Ames
- 26 Dick Galphin
- 28 Thomas Pavlick
- 31 Christine Mezza

Anniversaries

- 1 Bruce and Cindy Smith
- 6 Mike and Sonni McEvoy
- 22 David and Kathleen Stephens
- 26 Bob and Shirley Van Duzer Strachan

HIT YOUR READING GOALS FOR 2025

Come for the Stories, Stay for the Conversation

Our monthly book club continues to explore powerful stories that inspire meaningful discussion. Whether you've been attending for years or are brand new, all are welcome—even if you haven't finished the book!

May 29: Small Things Like These by Claire Keegan
Set in a small Irish town just before Christmas, this quiet but powerful novella explores themes of conscience, courage, and the moral cost of doing what's right—especially when it isn't easy.

June 26: The Berry Pickers by Amanda Peters
A gripping debut novel that follows the intertwined lives of a Mi'kmaq girl who goes missing and a boy raised in a family with secrets. It's a moving story of identity, loss, and the search for belonging. We meet at 1pm on the fourth Thursday of each month in the church library. Join us for great books, warm fellowship, and thoughtful conversation.

WE DID IT!

Gratitude Under This Roof

We are thrilled to share that the Under This Roof campaign has officially come to a close—and not only did we meet our goal, we surpassed it! Thanks to your generosity, faith, and commitment, we raised an incredible \$105,202 toward the replacement of our church roofs. This campaign has always been

about more than just fixing what's above our heads. It's been about honoring the life that happens beneath them.

Our celebration potluck was a beautiful reflection of that spirit. With favorite recipes, full tables, and heartfelt conversation, it reminded us just how much life

happens when we gather together in gratitude.

From the very first gift to the final tally, we've witnessed what's possible when a church comes together with a shared purpose and an open heart. We are so grateful for our Church Family!

CALLING ALL WOMEN

This Month: United Women in Faith

All are invited to attend the United Women in Faith Mission Study on Wednesday, May 21 and 28, 10-11:30 am in Wilson Hall. Come join us as we study "The Practice of Hope," led by Teddy Broeker. Bring a bag lunch and we can continue our discussion after the study. Drinks and dessert provided.

May Circle Meetings
Circle One – Tuesday, May 13 at 10 am in Wilson Hall
Freedom Circle – Tuesday, 13 at 6:30 pm in the kitchen
Hope Circle – Wednesday, May 14 at 10 am in Wilson Hall

HAVE A PRINTER AT HOME? Recycle Ink Cartridges

Don't Throw Ink Cartridges in the Trash!
It's estimated that 375 million printer cartridges end up in US landfills each year. That's more than a million cartridges a day! Help save our earth and bring your used or unused to Wilson Hall. Drop them off in the box on the counter by the kitchen.

Help support UWF Missions
Questions: Karen Lagitch – (904) 318-0773

TRANSFORMING LIVES

Mission Highlight: Methodist Church of Cuba

Our Mission Highlight this month for May is the Methodist Church of Cuba. Our mission is..."for the equipping of saints, for the work of service, to the building of the body of Christ." Eph. 4:12

The Methodist Church in Cuba is:

- Transforming people's lives in Cuba with the Gospel of Jesus Christ
- Growing at around 10% each year and has been for 20+ years
- One of the largest and fastest growing denominations in Cuba with now over 450 churches

God is doing an amazing work on the island of Cuba through the Methodist Church in Cuba that you will never see on the news. Those who have seen it with their own eyes know how astounding

this is and the joy we receive from being a part of it. Donation dollars go a long way in Cuba. For example:

- A \$20 donation will provide salary supplement for a month for one pastor.
- A \$50 donation will support the Fund for Cuba retired pastors.
- A \$150 donation will cover expenses for a pastor to attend Seminary for a full year.
- A \$250 donation will support the Methodist House for the Elderly.
- A \$500 donation will help purchase a House Church for a new church planting.

Christ UMC will be supporting this mission with our conference wherever there is the greatest need.

FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

Messy Church

The Messy Church team wants you to come and experience the hype!

What's Messy Church, you ask?

Messy Church is a multi-generational (that means everyone of all ages) evening filled with food, fun, and music, all centered around Christ. We start each evening with a blessing and delicious free dinner at 6pm.

There are several activities for everyone to enjoy, and a brief, relevant message about how much

you are loved by Christ. This Messy Message is all about new life and growth. We end the evening with music that anyone can sing along to, and finish up by 7pm.

Yes, it's true; we do it all in one hour!

So come and see why everyone keeps coming back, month after month! May 14, from 6-7pm, in Wilson Hall.

If you would like to volunteer or have any questions contact: Sally Ogburn: 904-703-3424 OR Kathy Scott: 904-612-4361.

SECURITY CORNER

Door Locking (Again)

Why are we so strict on this? Here's why.

Recently, there was a man sitting on our property drinking more than iced tea. One of the Preschool Directors saw this person, took pictures, and called Neptune Beach Police. The man was arrested and taken away by the authorities.

We have a homeless problem

that comes up from time to time. Usually, the police find people camping in the woods behind the Preschool or walking through the parking lots. Our security cameras have captured folks trying multiple doors to gain entry.

We have a strict door locking policy to keep intruders out. No one knows what's on the minds of unauthorized people trying

to gain access to any of our buildings.

The next time you feel frustrated that the doors are locked at all times, remember the reason and that adage: it's better to be safe than sorry.

Stay Alert Stay Alive
Bob Strachan Chair, CUMC
Security Task Team

CALLING ALL SNACKERS!

Sunday Morning Fellowship

Who loves to fellowship, drink coffee, and have a quick bite with friends after the Sunday service? Spending a few extra minutes with our church family is a great way to kick off the week, but we need a little help to make it happen. The church provides an oatmeal bar with all the fixings, but we'd love to have some baked goods and fruit to supplement our weekly treats. Items can be dropped

off in the kitchen by 10am on Sunday mornings. Sign up on the bulletin board in Wilson Hall, or right here on our new online sign-up. Just use your phone's camera to scan the QR code on the right, and after you sign up, you'll even receive an automatic reminder email!

Also, if you love to bake (or bargain hunt) we're always grateful for goodies to put in the freezer to pull out as needed!

No need to sign up, just bring them by the kitchen on Sunday mornings.

Thank you for helping to make our fellowship time EXTRA SWEET! Questions? Call/text Laura Williams at 904-614-1485.



HELP US CELEBRATE MOTHER'S DAY

Submit Your Photo

We're creating a special video to honor the incredible moms, grandmothers, and mother figures in our lives—and we'd love your help! If you'd like your mom to be included, please send one photo, along with the full name of the mother and the first names of her children, to Pastor Eric at UMCPastorEricWilliams@gmail.com by Tuesday, May 6.

Please note: Even if you submitted a photo in a previous year, you'll need to submit it again this year in order to be included.

Photos can be sweet, silly, or sentimental—whatever best reflects the love and joy your mom brings. Let's celebrate all the amazing women who have shaped our lives with love!

SUMMER FUN

VBS 2025 – Maker Fun Factory Needs You!

This year’s Vacation Bible School program will be extra exciting with new experiences and formats for the whole family.

There is a job for everyone: kitchen help with cooking and serving dinner, activities and crafts, set up and clean up, working the registration table, and the list goes on!

At CUMC, we believe it’s important to remind kids every day that they are created by God, deeply loved by God, and never alone. This year’s VBS is all about celebrating that truth through fun, friendship, and faith-filled adventures. Come be part of the joy! There will be a volunteer meeting on Saturday, May 10, beginning at 11am. If you would like more information about the program and where you can help, stop by Wilson Hall or contact Hanna Thomas 904-612-7286 or Brittani Laski 402-305-2748

COMMUNITY YOUTH GROUP

Know a Rising 5th Grader?

If you have a 4th grader moving up to 5th grade in the next school year, they are invited to join our youth group this summer!

We have several fun activities planned, including a lock-in, bowling, swimming, and more. The youth group meets on Sundays from 12:00–1:30 PM, with lunch provided and a meaningful message about growing in their life with Christ.

Upcoming Youth Meetings are May 4 & 18, and June 1 & 8. We’ll take a break from regular Sunday meetings during the summer, but we’ll still have group activities and special events until we resume meetings in August.

Our youth group is open to all students from 5th grade and up—they do not need to be members of CUMC to join.

Know a youth who might be interested? Contact: Hanna Thomas at Helpfulhannajax@gmail.com or 904-612-7286.

BE THERE OR BE SQUARE
End-of-School Celebration

Come celebrate the end of the school year and the beginning of Summer on Saturday, May 24, from 11a-1p! This event is for everyone to come together for fun and fellowship. Enjoy free food (Pastor Eric on the grill), games, music, and a bounce house water slide! Bring your friends and neighbors, and let’s show them the love of Christ like we always do so well.

Looking to serve?

We could use your help providing sides to go with the meat. Do you have a favorite recipe for pasta or potato salad? Chips, fruit, sweets... any side is appreciated. If you would like to help or provide a side, contact Hanna Thomas to sign up: 904-612-7286 or Helpfulhannajax@gmail.com

Recognition and Appreciation
Neptune Beach Christ United Methodist Church

In sincere appreciation
for meeting your goal of giving

Total Giving in 2024
\$4,761.91

Residing Hope

Kitwana McTyer
President & CEO

Andrea Reardon
Chair, Board of Trustees

We Did It!

When we give to Residing Hope, our goal is to give \$12 for each person who calls Christ UMC their church home. And thanks to your generosity and faithful giving, we surpassed that goal! So this certificate is yours too! We are grateful to do life beside each of you!

TAKE A LOOK...

Our Easter Services

We are so grateful to all who made Easter a true resurrection celebration! Be sure to read the thank you letter from our Lay Leader, Nancy Russell, on page 2.

