



## Can I Get A Witness?

I enjoy being a person of faith. I don't apologize for it and I proudly share that I am a Christian. Why? I love – actually *love* – my relationship with the Triune God. My journey has not been all hearts and roses. Sometimes, letting go of the old me to embrace the me that is intended has even been painful. But the transformative process God has provided through the redemption of Christ and the power of the Spirit brings me joy, even when that transformation becomes hard. I hope everyone is joyful about the relationship they have with the Triune God and see the journey as beneficial to them personally. The journey is more than salvation and getting to Heaven. Most of you have heard me say salvation is the starting block, not the finish line. My passion for my personal journey overflows into bringing the possibility of a journey to those that have yet to come to know (or marginally know) the God of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. While I know their journey will be different, the journey starts the same: **an introduction through our witness to what God has done in us through Jesus and the Spirit.**

**Witnessing is called *evangelism*.** Christians evangelize through our words and how we live our life, or showing and sharing the Good News. So important is evangelism that it is included in the baptismal vows of the United Methodist Church: *I promise to uphold the church with my prayer, presence, gifts, service, and witness.*

It is important to foster a church family atmosphere for people that have yet to come to know the joy of the journey, that has a culture that creates a safe space for them to BELONG before they BELIEVE. Surprisingly, the number of agnostics, atheists, and “nones” (those religiously unaffiliated) is growing in the United States, with “nones” increasing much more quickly than the other two categories.

*“The percentage of Americans without religious affiliation is around 20-29%.*

*Most of the increase in the unaffiliated comes from people that had a weak or no commitment to religion in the first place, not from people who had a religious commitment.”<sup>1</sup>*

Today, most churches are facing lifespan issues. Not only are congregations aging physically, churches are dying rapidly. The desire to live rather than die has caused some churches to shift their priorities to platforms based on entertaining people to keep them or lure people from other churches to build numbers. Crowds gather but evangelism efforts to those who have yet to begin their faith journey are weak. Other churches just continue doing what they have always done, attempting to believe that everyone goes to church and believes in Jesus. Many congregations have traded evangelism for passionate service and justice work rather than for the passion of sharing Jesus. It is a path of least resistance Christianity. No one is uncomfortable so long as we serve as Christians who don't have to share our witness.

Jesus told us as the church what to do as he ascended: “*You will receive my power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my **witnesses** in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*” (Acts 1:18) As followers of Jesus Christ, transformed by that very same Spirit, we are called to utilize that power to propel us to others, drawing lost people to Christ. According to a Barna survey, 46% of Christians feel it is culturally inappropriate to evangelize while at the same time stating it is part of Jesus’ mission for us. In other words, “I don’t like to push my religion on others; that is not polite, but I know that is what Jesus said to do.” It reminds me of when my grandmother said don’t talk about politics or religion when guests are over for dinner. But what if one of those guests had not met Jesus? Yet, in America, it seems as if our witness has been reduced to creating laws to push Christian values rather than be of Christian value ourselves.

Our evangelical audience isn’t those already filled with the power. It is those who have yet to encounter the saving grace, love, and redemption of Jesus Christ. Those of us filled with the power gather to recharge and go out. But as we gather, our space also needs to be welcoming and ready for those that come with others, drop in, or wander in lost. The Greek word for that type of love is “*storge*.” We must approach people with that type of hospitality and empathy. People need to be heard and loved along the way of their spiritual journey, even when we don’t agree. As I wrote earlier, create a safe space for people to BELONG before they BELIEVE.

I challenge you to honestly ponder these questions this week and the weeks to come:

- Am I passionate about Jesus, so much so that I yearn for others to know Jesus like I do? Better than I do?
- Why do I *really* come to church? What do I seek from church? Community? Friends? Fun? The opportunity to be open to those coming and seeking?
- How do I offer hospitality and passionate evangelism to those that need Jesus inside the church and out in the community?
- Have I become part of a “holy huddle” – a small group of friends with little concern for the brokenness around me?
- Am I willing to ask God to give me a weekly opportunity to evangelize others in a safe, empathetic, and loving way that gives them an open door to Jesus Christ?
- Am I willing to go first?

*Blessings,*

*Pastor Monica*

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<sup>1</sup> Pew Religions Landscape (2014). This will be updated by mid 2024. Projections are that the numbers will be increased.

# THE CUMC CATCH-UP

## CHILDREN'S MINISTRY NEWS

### Happy February, Friends!

Blessings from the Children's Ministry! This is the month of love in the commercial world, so we wanted to share a couple of ways for you to show love this month.

**We will resume Wednesday Night Fellowship on Ash Wednesday (February 14th) and will be needing volunteers to assist and also to help provide meals.** We will also begin a mission project to raise funds for needs in our community and will be asking for donations of mason jars and spare change to help. Please contact me with how you want to help.

We are working on upcoming plans for the year, so please be on the lookout for details and ways you can join in.

As always, thank you for being a church that loves and supports the children. You are truly appreciated!

**Nicole Harriman, Director of Children's Ministry**

# THE CUMC CATCH-UP

## YOUTH MINISTRY NEWS

### February Fun + Fellowship

Hi CUMC family and friends! February is jam-packed with opportunities for fellowship and fun that you won't want to miss.

#### EVENTS + UPDATES

Our **Wednesday Night Gathering** returned to its regularly scheduled programming last Wednesday at 6:00PM with our latest series, *A Word For Moments When*. This series will discuss how the Word of God has been a source of wisdom, encouragement, correction, and comfort to the people of God and continues to be for us in the course of our everyday lives. **Adults will be needed again to sit in on our sessions this semester to comply with Safe Sanctuary regulations, so keep a lookout for a text from me with available dates!**

Friendly reminder that **no Wednesday Night Gathering will be held on February 14 in light of Ash Wednesday. Instead, we hope to see you at CUMC's Ash Wednesday service!** A meal will be served at 5:15PM prior to the 6:00PM service.

As for events, our first is the much-anticipated **Mardi Gras Breakfast on Sunday, February 11 at 8:45AM!** Chef Kristi and our Youth will be cooking up some Big Easy specialties, so come hungry.

At the end of the month, I will be leading a short devotional for members of FCA at Smith County High School with breakfast provided by Chef Kristi, of course! If you're a member, stop by at 7:20AM on February 27 for God and good eats.

#### UPCOMING TRIPS

YG at CUMC will be hitting the road for the **Youth Leadership Conference at Lakeshore Camp + Retreat Center on February 17-18**. Spots for this overnight trip are still available but must be submitted no later than February 1. The fee is \$25.

If y'all have any questions, feel free to email or text me at your convenience. As always, thank you for what you do to make YG at CUMC a place where godly growth and good times collide!

**Tucker Huseh, Director of Youth Ministry**

# THE CUMC CATCH-UP

## FINANCE COMMITTEE NEWS

### Greetings, Church Family!

We're already a month into the year and that just doesn't seem possible.

The Finance Committee did not present a budget for approval at the January Church Council meeting. As we reviewed 2023, we felt it necessary to meet with each of the leaders in our church about our 2024 budget to put together a plan that allows us to be responsible spiritual and financial stewards for our church. In 2023, we came in under our budget; however, our giving did not meet our budget. Because of that, it was necessary for us to not rush into passing a budget.

Be on the lookout for a **narrative budget** that will be distributed in the next few weeks. **A narrative budget will tell the story of how our money is used to make an impact.** We will also begin to share our needs, as well as how well those needs are being met by posting it in the monthly newsletter.

Thank you for being a giving church all year. Your gifts are what allows us as a church to preach the gospel, guide disciples, and reach out to our community.

As a reminder, you can make contributions via our weekly offering, drop off at the church office, or via eGiving ([www.carthagetnumc.org/give.html](http://www.carthagetnumc.org/give.html)). I personally do eGiving and have found it to be a blessing. I pray for our church each Sunday when the plate is passed at offering time, but I also pause to pray for our church when I see my auto-withdrawal come out of my checking account each Friday.

Each of you should give what you have decided  
in your hearts to give, not reluctantly or under  
compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

*2 Corinthians 9:7*

Heather Gammon, Chair of Finance

# THE CUMC CATCH-UP

## FACILITIES + ADMIN NEWS

### Church Housekeeping Reminders

Below are a few friendly reminders and updates about our sanctuary and other shared spaces:

- **At the end of service, please remove all items brought in with you from the pews as you leave, such as used bulletins, tissues, cough drop and candy wrappers, and children's artwork, and dispose of them properly.** Small trash cans are available outside both sanctuary doors and the choir loft.
- **Please do not dispose of liquids in the trash can.** Liquids should be poured down the sink in the kitchen.
- **Bags with coloring books and crayons are available for children in the sanctuary narthex (i.e., vestibule entryway).** Please use these rather than offering envelopes for artwork.
- **If you have a spill anywhere in the building, please wipe it up.** If further cleaning is required, please let someone know.
- **Please return all items used during gathering times, including tables, chairs, writing utensils, and books.**
- **Printed newsletters are now available in the Gathering Area and outside both sanctuary doors.** You are welcome to take a printed copy home with you if you wish. Emailed copies will continue to be sent. If you read it and no longer want it, please return it to the basket it was taken from for others to read and enjoy.
- **If you put personal food in the main kitchen refrigerators, please label it with your name and the date if it will be there for more than a day.**

Thank you for your cooperation and commitment to stewarding Carthage UMC well!

### 2023 Contribution Statements

Contribution statements for the year ending 2023 are now available in the church office. **For questions, contact Deanna.**

# THE CUMC CATCH-UP

## COMING UP AT CUMC

### A Night In Uganda Celebration Dinner February 1 | 5:30PM

Join the CUMC RTRA Mission Group for an evening of fun and reflection as they share stories and photos from their recent trip to Uganda over a delicious meal of traditional East African fare.

### Scout Sunday February 4 | 10:00AM

Join us for a special Sunday service led by members of Cub Scouts Pack 367 and BSA Scouts Troop 367! The 32 Scouts currently registered come from Smith County, as well as Macon, Wilson, and Trousdale counties, with one Scout living in McMinnville. Each unit is self-funded and has its own leadership. All registered leadership are fully background checked and receive periodic retraining in youth protection. CUMC provides no direct money to the units but does provide a place to meet and oversight by David Bass.

**PACK 367 LEADERS**

RONNIE BUTLER, JR. (CUBMASTER)  
JEREMY FLYNT  
ASHLEY SCARBROUGH  
JOHN PARTRIDGE  
MATTHEW INYART  
VIVIAN REYNOLDS  
SCOTT PENFIELD  
DAVID BASS

**TROOP 367 LEADERS**

JOSH PEDIGO (SCOUTMASTER)  
AMBER JETTON  
RICHARD JETTON  
ERIC MANNING  
MICAH NEWBERRY  
KAREN PEDIGO  
EVAN PENFIELD  
HALEY PENFIELD  
MATTHEW PERDUE  
AMANDA POWERS  
VIVIAN REYNOLDS  
STACEY RODENBACH  
TRACEY RODENBACH  
GREG STARK  
DAVID BASS

**2023 SCOUT OF THE YEAR**

EPHRAIM RODENBACH  
*Ephraim is the first Scout from Troop 367 to receive this prestigious award from the Middle Tennessee Council (28 counties) for his commitment to live out the Scout Oath and Law.*

**NEW EAGLE RANK RECIPIENT**

COLEMAN PEDIGO  
*For his community service project, Coleman constructed a much-needed storage shed and donation box for The Emmanuel House in Carthage, a transitional living facility where homeless women and children can find temporary housing, spiritual mentorship, and access to recovery programs.*



### Mardi Gras Church-Wide Breakfast February 11 | 8:45AM

The Big Easy Feast you’ve been waiting for is *back!* Hosted by the CUMC Youth, this breakfast will feature classic creole dishes full of flavor. Offerings will go to benefit Youth programming for 2024.

### Ash Wednesday February 14 | Service at 6:00PM

Start your Lenten journey of penance and reflection with us at our Ash Wednesday service. Dinner will be served at 5:15PM in the Gathering Area.

### Youth Leadership Summit February 17-18

YG at CUMC is headed to Lakeshore Camp + Retreat Center for a day full of opportunities to explore different areas of ministry, build community with youth from all over the conference, and grow as leaders in the Methodist church.



# THE CUMC CATCH-UP

## CHURCH + COMMUNITY NEWS



 **Habitat**  
for Humanity

**Smith County  
Habitat for Humanity  
PROUDLY PRESENTS**

# FATHER-DAUGHTER SWEETHEART NIGHT

**Saturday, February 24, 2024**  
**6:00-8:30 p.m. • Ag Center**

**Tickets \$60 Per Couple  
\$25 for Each Additional Daughter**

**Dinner & Dancing**  
*Tickets are available at the following locations:*  
**Smith County Drug Center & Bass and Bass Attorneys**  
**or on-line at Smith County Habitat for Humanity**  
**Carthage, Tennessee Facebook page or GOOGLE the words Eventbrite Smith County Habitat**  
**Ticket Deadline: February 21, 2024**



# THE CUMC CATCH-UP

## CHURCH + COMMUNITY NEWS

### Church Directory Photo + Contact Info Submissions Due by Friday, March 15

Carthage UMC is in the process of creating a new church directory! **Please send a photo of you/your family to Kristi at [media.carthagetnumc@gmail.com](mailto:media.carthagetnumc@gmail.com).** If your personal information has recently changed, **please contact the church office or send the updated information via email to Deanna at [carthageumcsecretary@gmail.com](mailto:carthageumcsecretary@gmail.com).**



### Lights, Camera, Worship!

To continue providing a wonderful worship experience to those who join us in-person and online, assistance in the following media areas are needed:

1. **SLIDE COORDINATOR (8:00AM + 10:00AM)**
2. **LIVE-STREAM CAMERA OPERATOR (10:00AM)**
3. **SOUND ENGINEER (8:00AM + 10:00AM)**

If you are interested in learning more or lending your skills, contact the church office or Pastor Monica.



### Volunteers Needed for Sweetheart Night Sponsored by Habitat For Humanity

Help is needed to make this year's Father-Daughter Sweetheart Night on Saturday, February 24 one to remember! **Contact David Bass for additional details and sign-up.**

Volunteer options include:

1. **PROVIDING DESSERTS**
2. **SET UP AND DECORATING (8:00AM-12:00PM)**
3. **SERVING (5:00PM-8:00PM)**
4. **CLEAN UP (8:30PM-10:30PM)**



# THE CUMC CATCH-UP

## CHURCH + COMMUNITY NEWS

### A Note From Shawl Ministry + Notables

Through small, handmade gifts and cards sent in sympathy, celebration, and consolation, Shawl Ministry and Notables aims to spread the love of God to members of our church family and local community. Shawl Ministry meetings are held on the second Saturday of every month at 9:00AM in Room #203 in the CLC. **If you know someone who could use an extra “hug” through a card or cozy creation, please notify any of the following Shawl Ministry or Notable members or contact the church office.**

NOTABLES MEMBERS		SHAWL MINISTRY MEMBERS	
SUZANNE GAMMON	PHYLLIS ECKEL	BENITA LANE	JOANN JAMES
SUZETTE LONG	LINDA PASCHAL	LIZ CARVER	JUDY KRUZAN
JUDY KRUZAN	JANE DELONG	SARAH TINSLEY	JANE DELONG
		DOROTHY MOYERS	



### The Spot Restaurant Fundraiser at Nobel’s February 2 | 7:00PM-11:00PM

Join us for a night out at Nobel’s in support of The Spot, a local non-profit dedicated to serving, supporting, and positively shaping 7-12th graders in our community. (CUMC is proud to host members of The Spot on Monday nights at 5:00PM for recreation time.) **Simply mention The Spot to your server and 15% of your receipt will be donated.**



### The Passion Song Easter Musical Rehearsals on Wednesdays at 7:00PM

CUMC Choir is back for the spring season! Preparation for our Easter musical, *The Passion Song*, will begin on Wednesday, January 31. If you are interested in joining the ensemble, **contact Jennifer Perry.**



# THE CUMC CATCH-UP

## CELEBRATE + CONNECT

### FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Leann Lavender	02/01
Tynleigh Upchurch	02/03
Lisa Flemmons	02/08
Lauren Carlyle	02/09
Ella Dixon	02/09
Marie Roberts	02/10
John Donaldson	02/13
Kristi Hoopes	02/14
Nina Morris	02/15
Jorja Summers	02/17
Nancy Carter	02/18
Tina Jenkins	02/18
Melanie Lancaster	02/18
Rebecca Paschal	02/18
Rachel Kemp	02/19
Holleigh Upchurch	02/19
Augusta Long	02/22
Ronnie Russell	02/23
Monica Mowdy	02/24
Salter Rackley	02/26
Jack Sanders	02/27

### MARCH BIRTHDAYS

Luke Wyatt	03/01
Missy Baker	03/04
Maxwell Long	03/05
Carol McDonald	03/05
Jude Summers	03/05

### ANNIVERSARIES

#### FEBRUARY

Dennis and Tracy Banka	02/14
Phillip and Valerie Upchurch	02/16

#### MARCH

Don and Phyllis Eckel	03/01
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**RECENTLY MOVED?**  
**JUST MARRIED?**  
**NEW MEMBER?**

**Contact the church office to  
have your info updated!**



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P.O. Box 241  
Carthage, TN 37030



[www.carthagetnumc.org](http://www.carthagetnumc.org)



615-735-0343



[carthageumcsecretary@gmail.com](mailto:carthageumcsecretary@gmail.com) (General Inquiries)  
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Carthage United Methodist Church  
Livestream, Facebook + YouTube

# CARTHAGE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

## FEBRUARY 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				<b>1</b> 5:30 p.m. Uganda Thank You meal <b>12 Noon Zoom</b> Bible Study <b>DEANNA COWAN - VACATION</b>	<b>2</b> 8:30 a.m. Pickleball/CLC <b>DEANNA COWAN - VACATION</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>4</b> <b>COMMUNION</b>  <b>SCOUT SUNDAY</b>  3-4 p.m. Pack 367 4-5:30 p.m. Troop 367	<b>5</b> 8:30 a.m. Pickleball/CLC  5-7 p.m. The Spot	<b>6</b> 6 p.m. Pickleball/CLC  <b>PASTOR MONICA - C/E</b>	<b>7</b> 8:30 a.m. Pickleball/CLC  6 p.m. Youth  7 p.m. Adult Choir  <b>PASTOR MONICA - C/E</b>	<b>8</b> <b>PASTOR MONICA - C/E</b>	<b>9</b> 8:30 a.m. Pickleball/CLC  <b>PASTOR MONICA - C/E</b>	<b>10</b> 9 a.m. Shawl Ministry  <b>PASTOR MONICA - C/E</b>
<b>11</b> 3-4 p.m. Pack 367  Mardi Gras Church Breakfast 8:45 a.m.	<b>12</b> 8:30 a.m. Pickleball/CLC  5-7 p.m. The Spot	<b>13</b> 6 p.m. Pickleball/CLC	<b>14</b> <b>VALENTINE'S DAY</b>  ASH Wed.: 5:15 p.m. Meal 6 p.m. Worship Svc	<b>15</b> 12 Noon Zoom Bible Study	<b>16</b> 8:30 a.m. Pickleball/CLC	<b>17</b>  Youth Leadership Summit Trip
<b>18</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday in Lent  Youth Leadership Summit Trip  3-4 p.m. Pack 367 4-5:30 p.m. Troop 367	<b>19</b> <b>PRESIDENTS' DAY - CUMC OFFICE CLOSED</b>  8:30 a.m. Pickleball/CLC	<b>20</b> 6 p.m. Pickleball/CLC	<b>21</b> 8:30 a.m. Pickleball/CLC  6 p.m. Child. Min.  6 p.m. Monica's Bible Study  6 p.m. Youth  7 p.m. Adult Choir	<b>22</b> 12 Noon Zoom Bible Study	<b>23</b> 8:30 a.m. Pickleball/CLC	<b>24</b> <b>Pastor Monica's Birthday</b>
<b>25</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Lent	<b>26</b> 8:30 a.m. Pickleball/CLC  9 a.m. March Newsletter Deadline  5-7 p.m. The Spot	<b>27</b> 6 p.m. Pickleball/CLC	<b>28</b> 8:30 a.m. Pickleball/CLC  6 p.m. Child. Min.  6 p.m. Monica's Bible Study  6 p.m. Youth  7 p.m. Adult Choir	<b>29</b> 12 Noon Zoom Bible Study		