

CENTRAL CHIMES

Central United Methodist Church, Arlington, Virginia



What happens when our world falls apart? How do we press onward when our tightly-knit plans unravel into loose threads? What do we become when our identity—or the path we're on—comes undone? What if all of this is not the end we fear it will be?

In our unraveling, sometimes life surprises us with unexpected joy, love, and hope—with a new beginning we couldn't have imagined. Sometimes we need God to unravel us, for we long to be changed. Our new worship series, "Unraveled" explores Biblical stories of unraveled shame, identity, fear, grief, dreams, and expectations. These are stories where God meets us in the spiraling, unraveling our plans—and us—into something new. To get a copy of the study journal that accompanies this series please contact the office at 703-527-8844 or office@cumcballston.org.

September 13

"Unraveled by Uncertainty" Matthew 14: 22-33

September 20

"Unraveled by Grief" 2 Samuel 3:7; 21:1-14

September 27

"Radical Unraveling of Vocation" Luke 19: 1-10

Church Conference

All Central UMC members are invited to attend an online Church conference via zoom at 7:30 p.m. on September 24 to vote on contracts related to our building project. To get advance reading materials and register to attend contact the church office at office@cumcballston.org or call 702-527-8844.

Charge Conference

Central's annual Charge Conference for the Leadership Board to meet with the district is scheduled for September 26 at 10 a.m.

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Worship God

UMC churches in the Virginia Conference each created a "Healthy Church Team" (HCT) at the Bishop's direction in response to the Covid-19 public health crisis. CUMC's Healthy Church Team Members are: Pastor Sarah Harrison-McQueen, Pastor John Conway, Barbara Kieffer, Gene Cross, Tricia O'Hara, Dainty Ignacio, and Nancy Mount. The HCT's mission is to provide advice and counsel to the Clergy and the Leadership Board. The HCT coordinates with the clergy, staff, volunteers, and the District Superintendent on a number of issues associated with creating a safe plan for in-person worship that complies with the requirements set forth by the Bishop of the Virginia Annual Conference. (For details on all involved in these plans please visit <https://vaumc.org/return/>) CUMC's HCT met most recently via zoom on August 17, 2020.

Future plans for in-person Worship For the remainder of 2020 and into early 2021 at the earliest, CUMC will continue worshipping each Sunday via zoom and facebook. This means we do not anticipate being able to safely hold Christmas Eve worship services in our building. The HCT's decision is driven by current data and the current science available to us. Both predict a bad flu season and high potential for a second wave of Covid-19 during this time frame. HCT will continue to review and evaluate the data. "As of today, we continue to err on the side of caution, not because we are fearful but because we are faithful. We believe that the health and lives of congregations across the U.S. are more important than any single act of [worship]. God calls us to love and care for our neighbors." (<https://congregational song.org/covid-19-singing-an-update-based-on-current-research/>) If the situation changes drastically and we can safely gather inside for worship sooner than expected we will re-evaluate our options. We will always comply with any Executive Order for the Commonwealth of Virginia, requirements from the Bishop of the Virginia Conference, and direction of the Arlington District Superintendent.

Distribution of Communion Elements The worship survey completed in June indicated that communion is one of the top three elements of worship that are meaningful for our congregation. So, our HCT is working to submit a plan to the District Superintendent that would allow for the distribution of communion elements on World Communion Sunday, October 4, 2020. Pastor Sarah will consecrate the elements during worship on live video from the sanctuary as part of our virtual worship service that morning. After the worship service is over we will be able to "extend the table" and invite people to come to the church that afternoon to receive the consecrated elements.

Reservations are required for drive-ins to our parking lot. (Details for the reservation process will be in our October newsletter.) The schedule is as follows:

12:00 noon-1:00 p.m.: Reservations up to 10 cars.

1:00-2:00 p.m.: Reservations up to 10 cars.

People will remain in their cars and every other parking space will be blocked to adhere to social distancing. A tray will be used to bring the elements to each vehicle and will be sanitized between each use. We will need a greeter for cars to park and assist people entering and exiting the parking lot.

Pedestrians/Walk-ups do not require reservations. Elements will be distributed in the courtyard at the covered porch from 12:00 noon - 12:30 p.m. Social distancing markings will be placed throughout in the event people need to form a line.

Meetings in the Parlor HCT determined that up to 8 people can safely meet in the parlor, while social distancing, and while wearing masks. A TV and computer is set up to allow people to join a meeting via zoom and see and hear the people in the parlor.

GOD IS EVERYWHERE. WE CAN BE, TOO.

Worship with us from home. Sundays at 10:30 AM.

For details on how to connect with worship online visit cumcballston.org

Serve Others

Thursdays & Fridays Fellowship Hall and Kitchen continue to be used weekly by a very small number of volunteers under supervision of Jeanie and Gene Cross to continue preparing bag lunches and shelf stable food for distribution to our neighbors experiencing homelessness and hunger. We serve between 45-50 people each week.

School Supplies The mission team thanks those who contributed to the school supply collection for Carlin Springs Elementary School. We delivered almost \$400 worth of supplies the first week of August. They very much appreciated all the items. Thank you for helping with this worthwhile cause!

Crop Walk This year's Crop Walk organized by Church World Service is going "virtual." Walkers will choose their own routes and walk safely on their own or with others safely. Steve Barham will participate in the virtual CROP WALK on October 17. The goal of the crop walk is to end hunger in our community and donations made help to support AFAC and other organizations combatting hunger. To donate write a check to "CWS/CROP" and mail to Steve Barham at 6020 Fairview Place, Falls Church, VA 22041.

Free Little Pantry Canned goods are needed for our pantry. We particularly need items with pop tops that can be opened without a can opener. Congregation members and friends as well as neighbors are helping to stock it and it is still often empty. Demand is high. Tish and Lane make sure the pantry is stocked at least once a day, but our supplies to refill are running low. You're welcome to stop by and fill the pantry directly, or make arrangements with Tish to drop them off during office hours. (Call 703-527-8844). Thanks to our congregation, friends and neighbors for contributing food to fill the little pantry.

30 days of Anti-Racism Habits The UMC General Commission on Religion and Race invites you to spend the month of September practicing anti-racism. Each day we will engage in an activity that helps us to become more anti-racist in the ways we think and act. Share your progress with a picture or a reflection using the hashtag #30DaysAntiRacism. To download the calendar of daily practices visit www.gcorr.org/30-days-of-anti-racism/

The CUMC Book Club met in the church Parlor on Sunday, August 30 at 2:00 p.m. wearing their masks and safely seated with the new set up in compliance with social distancing, to discuss Kathryn Cushman's, "Another Dawn". What would you give for a second chance to make things right? Be sure to have a box of tissues handy when you read this "tear-jerking page-turner." Thank you, Pat Barham for recommending Cushman's novel.

For September 27 we're reading "Outliers: The Story of Success" by Malcolm Gladwell. Looking ahead to October 25 we're going to read, "Be the Bridge: Pursuing God's Heart for Racial Reconciliation" by LaTasha Morrison. Contact Pastor Sarah to join the discussion.

September Small Groups

Starting **September 13 on Sundays at 1 p.m.** Pastor Sarah will lead a small group "Looking Deeper" exploring the sermon text and Unraveled themed art from A Sanctified Art.

To join via zoom contact Pastor Sarah (pastor@cumcballston.org).

Starting **September 16 on Wednesdays at 7 p.m.** Pastor John will lead discussion inspired by the previous Sunday's sermon text in conjunction with the "Unraveled" study journal.

To join via zoom contact Pastor John (jconway@cumcballston.org).

White House Ornaments This year's White House ornament features John F. Kennedy, our 35th President. Pat Barham is accepting orders for White House Ornaments from October 3 to Oct. 16. Each ornament costs \$23.00. Make your check out to Central UMC and write, "ornament" on the memo line. Please mail your check to Pat Barham at 6020 Fairview Place, Falls Church, VA 22041. We must have payment with your orders. For each ornament purchased \$3.50 is tax deductible. All proceeds of this sale will go to the new church building. These are a great Christmas present. Ornaments will be available for pick-up from the Church in November by making arrangements with Tish Van Patten (703-527-8844). Questions? Contact Pat Barham at Zipcoder45@cox.net or 703-578-4935.

Finance Update It's fair to believe that the U.S. is facing significant social, political and economic unrest. And in the midst of all this turmoil, we must stay steadfast knowing that Jesus is omnipresent, omnipotent, is a beacon of hope and ultimate savior. As we go through our personal trials and tribulations, we must know that light will conquer darkness, and our everyday earthly troubles will inevitably fade, with the assurance of heaven awaits us. On a lighter note, our office staff recently discovered that the emailed quarterly Giving Statements have not been reaching the 68 recipients, while those who had opted to use USPS have successfully received their invoice. The church will print and mail via USPS all Giving Statements until the technology glitches can be resolved.

Submitted by Ali Azimipour, Leadership Board Member