

The Bridge

MAR '26 | APR '26 | MAY '26
CARLISLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

BEING A GENEROUS CHURCH IN CREATIVE WAYS

NEW LIFE MORTGAGE



On Sunday December 14th, 2025, current and former Leadership Council members along with Pastor Jim and Pastor Jake joined New Life Community Church in worship for a beautiful and spirit-filled celebration as CUMC received the final payment for the former First United Methodist building and gave New Life the deed to the property and a housewarming gift covering the legal fees.

In 2015 CUMC took a creative and spirit-led approach to selling the building. New Life Community Church, a BIC

church plant that had been worshiping in a local theater and was looking for a permanent building. Because New Life was so new, they were not able to get financing from local lenders or their own denomination and they did not have the cash to buy a property outright. CUMC made the decision to finance New Life Community Church by offering them a 10 year, no interest payment schedule negotiated directly with CUMC. The payments for the building all have gone towards our debt on our Spring Garden Campus. This partnership allowed New Life to grow their ministry in a way that would not have been possible otherwise and gave us the opportunity to see the building used for ministry. It also has built trust between our congregations as we share in ministries like Homeless 2 Home together. This partnership is a reflection of the generosity of CUMC and our Kingdom-minded ministry that loves partnering with others in the

community.

As we celebrated this milestone moment with New Life in December, we were amazed at how faithful God is. The leaders of New Life prayed for our leaders and our ministry during the service and we prayed for their leaders and their ministry. It was a beautiful and holy moment connecting two churches across denominational lines that is hard to describe in words. There were barely any dry eyes in the sanctuary. God is good. All the time!

~ Pastor Jake



PASTOR JAKE RENEWAL LEAVE

Pastors in the United Methodist Church are encouraged to take a period of spiritual or educational leave for renewal after every 6 years of serving in full-time ministry. This time apart is meant to encourage pastoral leaders to step off the treadmill long enough to rest, renew, and clarify vision for life and work. The goal is for a pastoral leader to return refreshed, reconnected to Jesus and their calling, healthier, and energized for ministry. Renewal leaves are part of sustaining healthy long-time ministry. Our United Methodist Book of Discipline



allows for this leave to be up to 6 months long, and is approved by the local church leadership council and the District Superintendent.

I'm grateful for the opportunity to take a renewal leave this year. I am finishing 21 years of full-time ministry and have never taken a leave. At the end of last summer, I began to feel God's nudge in quiet times and conversations with others that it was time. At their January meeting, the Leadership Council approved May 25, 2026 - July 20, 2026 as (continued on Page 8)



CARLISLE UMC **KIDS** **MIN**

SPRING KIDS MIN

MAR 1 - Preteen, 5-7pm

MAR 8 - Preteen, 5-7pm

MAR 14 - Grand & Me, 2-4:30pm

MAR 15 - Preteen, 5-7pm

MAR 22 - Preteen, 5-7pm

MAR 27-29 - Preteen Retreat

MAR 29 - NO Preteen

APR 4 - Egg Hunt, 10am-Noon

APR 5 - NO Preteen

APR 12 - Preteen, 5-7pm

APR 19 - Preteen, 5-7pm

APR 26 - Preteen, 5-7pm

MAY 3 - Pancakes & PJs in Kids Worship

MAY 3 - Preteen, 5-7pm 2nd Grade Move Up

MAY 10 - Mother's Day Tea, 9am

MAY 17 - Intro to the Bible for 2nd graders, 3:30-4:30pm

If you would be interested in helping in Kids Ministry, please talk to Christina.

Christina McDermott,
Kids Ministries Director
cmcdermott@carlislepaumc.org

We are so excited about the growth in Kids Ministry. Kids Ministry has grown 33% since last year and has doubled since 2023! One of the places we have felt this growth is Kids Worship at 9:45am. In the fall we plan to re-structure Kids Worship for the 9:45am service. We will still have the lessons the kids love with lots of fun ways to learn the stories from the bible. We will however need some more volunteers to help make that happen. I am inviting you to come join us in Kids Worship. Yes you! You don't need to be a teacher or a parent though you can be either or both! You do not need to have experience working with children. The only requirement is a joy for sharing God's word with children. I asked some of our current Kids Worship team what their favorite part of helping in Kids Worship was and here is what they shared:



This time of year when the days start to get a little longer and I am so tired of being cold, that my heart longs for summer. Ever since I was little the summer always meant one thing... summer camp. When I was 5 years old my Mom started bringing my brother and me to family camp and I was hooked. I counted down the years until I was old enough to go to sleep away camp by myself and then until I was old enough to work there. Camp is where I learned to climb rocks, tie-dye t-shirts, paddle canoes, sing camp songs, sail boats and of course

"The relationships and connections we form with the children. I also love getting to watch them grow in their faith". - April Butler

"Seeing them grow and expand their knowledge of the bible. The excitement of coming to church each week." - Melissa Greenwood

"It's fulfilling to see the kids retain what they have learned from week to week and to see them excited about learning about God"

- Kelly McCarty

"Seeing the kids Build relationships with God through the lessons and discussion with their peers and group leaders"

- Mark Lemon

"We get to watch the kids grow. I really like helping. It is fun" - Hope Sale

"I love the kids reaction to stories and seeing the kids learn. Having the kids know Jesus is the reason I do it" - Gary Ankabrandt

(continued on Page 6)

perfected the art of making a s'more. Camp is also where I made lifelong friends. It is also where I experience God in big ways as a child out in nature. Camp is also where people first saw the calling in my life to work in ministry before I even saw it in myself. I know how life changing camp can be for a young person because it changed my life. It still does. It has been years since I have worked at camp but I am still counting down the weeks until I get to go back to camp. If you would be interested in summer camp, you can find more information at [www. https://suscrm.org](https://suscrm.org). The church does offer to pay for ½ of every young person that goes to camp. If you would be interested in donating towards a camp scholarship please contact Christina at cmcdermott@carlislepaumc.org.



GENERATION ALPHA

Often we notice differences in generations by what media is showing us.

Headlines and social feeds can make it easy to assume the worst about the youngest among us. Recently, though, I attended a training where the Barna Group shared new research specifically about Generation Alpha & faith and the findings were deeply encouraging. If you're not familiar, **Barna Group** is a respected research organization that studies trends in faith, culture, and the church. For decades, they've helped church leaders understand how people of different generations think about God, spirituality, and community.

You may have heard some of the Gen Alpha slang floating around lately (I'm sure "6-7" has come up in your house or on your screen!), but I'd love to share some things that matter much more.

Generation Alpha includes children born between 2010 and 2024. Today, they range from **toddlers to about 14 years old**. The majority of our students in student ministries fall into this group as well as all of our Kid's Ministry.

Here are a few powerful insights from Barna's research:

- Many Gen Alpha students **worry about being judged by adults**. They are looking for adults who will listen without jumping to conclusions.
- They believe faith communities could do a better job of being **welcoming and less judgmental**.

- Gen Alpha **craves relationships with consistent adults**—people who listen, follow through, and show up over time.

And here's the really hopeful part:

- **1 in 4** Gen Alpha kids considers themselves **very or extremely spiritual**.
- **1 in 3** attends a religious service or gathering **once a week or more**.
- **Young men** are about as religious as young women.
- **Over half** of nonreligious young people may be open to faith.

When these students talk about churches where they feel highly engaged, they say things like:

- "I feel like adults here really get what I'm going through."
- "Adults talk about stuff I care about."
- "Adults ask questions instead of just giving answers."
- "We regularly talk about real-life topics."

What an incredible picture of what the church can be for this generation.

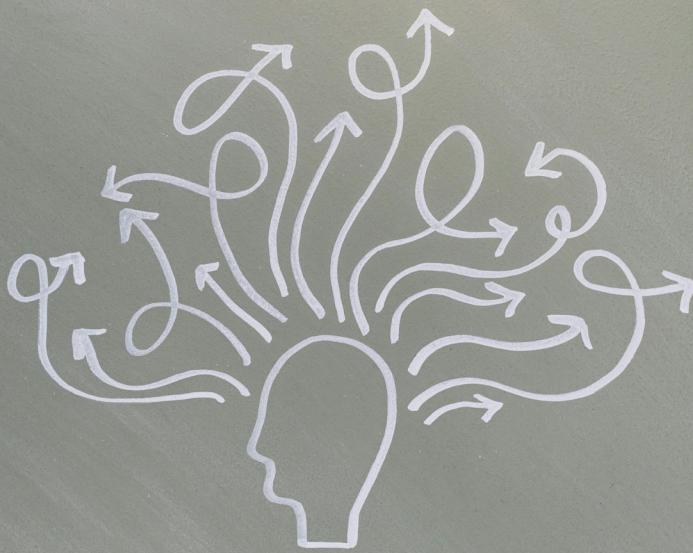
As we continue to strive to **live like Jesus** and share His love with everyone, including Gen Alpha, let's keep praying for this generation. Encourage them when you see them. Ask them questions. Listen well.

Thank you for all you do to create a place where they can **worship Jesus, grow in their faith, find community, and serve the world**.



MENTAL HEALTH MINISTRY

A CALL TO FAITH, HEALING, AND COMMUNITY



At Carlisle United Methodist Church, living like Jesus means loving people and building community where all are welcome and all means all - no exceptions. Over the past year, there has been a growing commitment to mental health ministry through many people inside and outside of CUMC. What began in prayer and God's nudging has become a movement of education, partnership, and presence in our church and community.

Many sit quietly in worship carrying unseen burdens—anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, and other diagnoses that affect them and their families. For too long, these struggles stayed hidden behind shame or silence. At CUMC, we are choosing a different path, one marked by compassion, knowledge,

and hope, where mental health is not separate from our faith but reflects how we love our neighbors and care for ourselves.

As a result of making community connections in mental health, CUMC is hosting NAMI Cumberland & Perry Counties' free NAMI Family-to-Family and Peer-to-Peer courses this spring. CUMC's commitment is to provide those who attend these classes a safe and respectful space where they can learn new life skills. NAMI Family-to-Family provides trained facilitators who offer practical education, communication tools, and support for family members and caregivers of those living with mental illness symptoms and diagnoses. NAMI Peer-to-Peer educational programs are also led by trained

facilitators for adults with mental health conditions who are looking to better understand themselves and their recovery.

This partnership is about changing the narrative and culture as much as the classes themselves. We aim to reduce stigma, affirm that prayer, faith, and professional care can work together, and ensure every person feels seen and valued. When someone enters our building for a mental health program, they enter a community that honors their dignity and sacred worth.

Scripture reminds us that God draws near to those who are hurting. "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit" (Psalm 34:18). We also carry one another's burdens, as Galatians 6:2 teaches, fulfilling the law of Christ through shared compassion. Mental health ministry reflects these truths. When we create space for honesty, support, and healing, we live out the call to love our neighbors as ourselves. In doing so, we trust that Jesus meets us in our weakness, strengthens us through community, and brings hope even in the midst of struggle.

If you or someone you know needs immediate support or has thoughts of suicide, call 988. More information about NAMI of Cumberland and Perry Counties: <https://namicppa.org/>

~ **Michelle Williams**

47 NEW FACES: GROWING THROUGH INVITATION & LOVE

We had many things to celebrate in 2025 one of which is that we welcomed an average of 47 first time guests in worship. This includes people of all ages, individuals, couples and families. There are a few reasons people join us in worship.

The first is that someone invites them.

Please be praying and thinking about who you can invite. It is

common for people to worship with us online prior to joining us in person. Another reason is that our guests have responded to the Holy Spirit nudging them to worship and they arrive at our church. All of these reasons are super cool. And I thank God for sending people our way.

First time worshippers are great but those that return are very important.

Our pastors provide excellent sermons, our music at all the services is great, our kids ministry is excellent. Dan Reiland, a pastor mentor/coach who supports congregations experiencing growth stated in April that after the above mentioned areas the following is the next most important thing that occurs in growing congregations. (continued on Page 7)

LET YOUR LITTLE LIGHT SHINE

WELCOMING JOCELYN OMARI AS LITTLE LIGHTS DIRECTOR

We are thrilled to introduce Jocelyn Omari as the new Director of Little Lights Learning Center!

Jocelyn brings with her over 10 years of leadership and supervisory experience across healthcare, residential, academic, and childcare settings, with a strong background in behavioral and mental health. She joins our Little Lights family not only as a skilled professional, but as a mom to a inquisitive 5-year-old boy, which means she understands firsthand the hopes, worries, and deep love parents carry for their children.

When Jocelyn isn't working, you'll likely find her gardening, cooking, listening to music, or spending quality time with family. And a fun fact you might not guess, she has traveled to over 10 countries in Europe! Jocelyn shared that she is "elated to join this team" and is excited to be part of a community where children are encouraged to let their little light shine.



Her heart aligns beautifully with the story and mission of Little Lights.

For years, Little Lights has been more than just a childcare center, it has been a place of safety, growth, and belonging for children and families in our community. At Little Lights, we believe every child is special and uniquely created by God. Children are gently introduced to Christian values through daily rhythms of care, kindness, and community.

We take great pride in our staff and the way we work together to create an en-

vironment that is both nurturing and stimulating, a place where children can grow intellectually, emotionally, socially, physically, and spiritually. Our days are shaped by meaningful routines that include joyful learning, creativity, and plenty of play. We honor research that reminds us how essential play is in early childhood development, and we follow Keystone STARS guidelines, ensuring children receive healthy amounts of free play every day.

Little Lights continues to be a happy and life-giving experience for children and parents alike—and Jocelyn's leadership will help us build on that strong foundation as we look ahead.

Please join us in welcoming Jocelyn Omari to the Little Lights and CUMC family. We're excited for this next chapter and grateful for the care, vision, and warmth she brings to our children, families, and staff.

HOLY SWAG: CHURCH MERCH IS ON THE MOVE!

A screenshot of the website for The Carlisle UMC Collective. The header features the Bonfire logo and navigation links for 'MENU' and 'Cart'. The main title 'THE CARLISLE UMC COLLECTIVE' is centered, with the tagline 'THE COLLECTIVE. GEAR THAT CONNECTS.' below it. The page shows three items for sale: a tan baseball cap with the 'Carlisle UMC' logo, a grey t-shirt with a circular 'Carlisle' logo, and a black t-shirt with the text 'DO ALL THE GOOD YOU CAN'.

A screenshot of the Carlisle UMC website. It features the church's logo and a brief description: 'Located in Carlisle, PA, faith-based gifts, church gear, and resources to Live Like Jesus.' Below this are social media links for Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube.

We're excited (and honestly a little amazed) to share that we've sold over 70 items from our Church Merch store so far! That's 70 shirts, sweatshirts, hats, and more heading out into the community as walking billboards for faith,

hope, and comfy cotton.

Apparently, we are a congregation that loves Jesus and a good hoodie.

Whether you've picked up something cozy to wear on Sunday mornings, a gift for a friend, or your new favorite "runs to

the grocery store but still looks presentable" shirt – thank you! Every item worn is a small but powerful way to spark conversations, show church pride, and maybe even answer the question, "Hey, where did you get that?"

If you haven't checked out the store yet, consider this your gentle nudge (with a smile). There's still time to grab something for yourself or someone else. And who knows? Maybe we'll hit 100 items next. Triple digits feels very biblical.

Thank you for supporting this fun ministry in such an enthusiastic way. You're helping spread the word – one sweatshirt at a time!

~ Rhonda Dyson

DID YOU KNOW? BiA (Believers in Action)



This article is the first in a series from Believers in Action (BiA), a CONNECT ministry of CUMC focused on creating a more just and equitable society. BiA focuses on listening to, learning about, and loving all people as Jesus taught, and one of its key goals is encouraging honest conversations about racism and justice. Along with scripture, BiA's ministry is a shared commitment based on the Constitution of The United Methodist Church (UMC)—a document many members don't realize exists.

Like the U.S. and Pennsylvania, the UMC has a Constitution that guides how the church is organized and how it lives out its beliefs. It appears in The Book of Discipline (2020-2024). First adopted in 1808, the Constitution established the church's structure, doctrine, and Social Principles. Although it has been updated over time, its core ideas remain the same.

When someone joins the UMC, they

(Kids Min...continued from Page 2)

"Hearing the conversations between the kids and having conversations with them is pretty amazing. I also enjoy re-learning the stories of the Bible with the kids." - Carol Lemon

"The best part of helping in Kids worship for me is watching the children's faith grow especially during those moments when their eyes light up and they get a huge smile on their face after they can answer a question or when they gain a key concept of understanding.

promise to "be loyal to Christ through the UMC and do all in our power to strengthen its ministries and be faithful disciples." The Discipline teaches that faithful disciples speak the truth in love and address conflict with forgiveness and reconciliation.

Rev. Lui Tran, Ph.D., a respected United Methodist scholar, notes that the Constitution is more than a set of rules. It is a covenant shaped by John Wesley's vision for making disciples through shared values, responsibilities, and decision-making. It is the key link that connects United Methodists in their faith and mission around the world. One important part of the Constitution is Article 5, titled "Racial Justice." It states that every person is a beloved child of God and that the church is committed to healing and wholeness for all. It acknowledges that racism has harmed the church throughout its history and continues to divide and marginalize people. The UMC pledges to confront and eliminate racism in every part of church life and society, working with others to advance racial justice everywhere.

The UMC has wrestled with issues of

It's in these moments my faith grows too." - Christa Basset

Looking Ahead in Kids Ministry We have a family event planned for March 14 from 2-4:30pm called Grand and me. Kids are invited to bring a grandparent and spend some quality time at church. We will have some games, crafts and snacks. April 4 is our annual Egg-citing Egg Hunt from 10am-noon! Please sign up online by April 2. On Sunday May 10 at 9am we will celebrate Mother's Day with a tea for kids

race since the days of John Wesley, from slavery to the long-term effects that followed. Debates about racial justice have shaped the church's history, sometimes causing division and later reconciliation. This work is ongoing. While laws have helped address racism, the church recognizes that deeper change must happen within people's hearts and minds.

BiA shares this information to invite open, non-political conversations about racism. The call to confront inequality comes from Jesus, from John Wesley's teachings, and from the UMC Constitution—not from any political agenda. BiA encourages us to continue these discussions with love, humility, and a commitment to our shared faith.

~ Jay Layman, BiA member

Constitution of the United Methodist Church:

umchurchlaw.com/constitution-of-the-united-methodist-church/

United Methodist Church Social Principles

www.umc.org/en/who-we-are/what-we-believe/our-social-positions

and their moms and/or grandmas. We hope you will join us in the kids' room. In Preteen we are getting ready for our retreat on March 27-29 at the Bongiorno Center. Money and forms are due for the retreat by March 8. We will have our celebration for our 5th graders on April 26. Fifth graders will move up to Student Ministries and we will welcome second graders into Preteen on May 3.

**~ Christina McDermott
Kids Ministry Director**

ALL THE GOOD WE CAN - TOGETHER



Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can.

-John Wesley

This quote has always spoken to me when it comes to giving. First and foremost, I love that it challenges us as Christians to "give" in such a broad sense. All of us have different gifts that we can give, and what makes for a vibrant and successful congregation is when everyone brings those varied gifts to the table. At CUMC, we are so fortunate to see all types of giving from our members and attendees.

Some of us provide our time and service to the Church - whether it's being a greeter, a worship tech, a member of the prayer team, a volunteer with our Children or Student groups, an usher, a communion server, a member on

(New Faces...continued from Page 4)
"The volunteers and congregation express authentic love and care. Genuine love and care are unmistakable and irresistible. When people encounter it, it's truly transforming. The source is God's love, but the expression and experience come from the people in your congregation, both from your volunteer leaders and regular attenders. It is humbling to encounter faithful church volunteers who continue to serve others, even sacrificially at a consistent

one of our many church committees, a shepherd for our LAMS, or just offering a friendly smile to someone new at a worship service (among MANY other ways), making the effort to serve our church with our time (which we all know is a highly coveted commodity) is an incredible act of giving. Look no further than the CUMC website for a list of all the various ways you can give of our time to our own church and congregation - you'll be amazed at how many opportunities there are for anyone to give!

Others give by serving as volunteers with our many community partners and programs - whether its Samaritan Fellowship, Starlights, Community Cares, My Brother's Table, Project Share, Supportive Partnerships for Youth (SPY), Domestic Violence Services, Refugee Assistance, and others - serving through these many community groups is yet another way that we can answer John Wesley's call to give. Some also give by participating in missionary trips or special giving events that support people well beyond our community and out into the world. These varied programs ensure that we are giving to all the people we can, in all the places and all the ways that we can - not just to those within our walls, but in our community and beyond.

Another way people give is through

level and with joyful hearts. Those who visit your church catch that spirit!"

Knowing this, we ask everyone to engage with the people around you before or after worship. It doesn't have to be a long interaction a simple "Hello, I am not sure we have met, my name is ..." Then the next time you see them say hello again and try to remember their name. Ask if they received a welcome cup. Walk them to the information desk after worship and hand them one. Recently, a long-time member

their talents. Whether its sharing musical gifts (through the adult choirs, bell choir, Sparks, Sunbeams, Worship Team, and other special music moments at Worship or other special events), serving with our hospitality teams, reading the scripture lessons at Worship or leading a Sunday School class, the act of giving of your talents in furtherance of God's Word is yet another way for us to do all the good we can for as long as we can.

Finally, our gifts through generous and joyful monetary giving allows us to use all the means we can to give in the way that we are called to give. Although amounts may vary depending upon your circumstances, joyful giving to the Church helps support the many missions, services, programs and administrative needs of the Church. When you think of all the amazing gifts that our Church provides to those within our congregation, our community, and beyond, it actually feels like a gift to ourselves when we joyfully give of our time, our service, our talent and our monetary offerings to meet the call of John Wesley to do all the GOOD we can, by all the MEANS we can, in all the WAYS we can, in all the PLACES we can, at all the TIMES we can, to all the PEOPLE we can, for as LONG as we can.

~ Kate Deringer Sallie

saw that I was having a conversation with a first-time worshipper so she got a cup for another worshipper who sat near her. This was the first time she had done so and was surprised how natural it felt. Everyone is capable of making our first time guests feel welcome.

We need more greeters, if you think you would be interested in greeting please contact me.

**~ Andrea Katz,
Welcoming Coordinator**



HOLY WEEK AT CUMC

CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW? WHY COMMUNICATION MATTERS (A LOT!)

Communication in a church is more than just announcements and reminders. It's how we stay connected. It's how we celebrate what God is doing. It's how we invite others into community. And sometimes, it's how we make sure you know there are donuts in the lobby (priorities matter). We work hard to communicate clearly and consistently. Every week we share information through:

- The Sunday Bulletin Wrap
- The Midweek Minute email
- Sunday announcement slides during worship
- Our Facebook page
- Our Instagram account
- Our church website

That's a lot of ways to get the word out! Whether you prefer reading something in print, checking your email midweek, scrolling social media, or visiting the website for details and sign-ups, we're trying to meet you where you are.

But even with all those communication

(Jake...continued from Page 1)

my leave dates.

During the time I am planning to do several silent retreats, participate in regular spiritual direction, read John Wesley's standard sermons, spend lots of time in nature and reconnect with my physical health. I will also spend time with family and mix in our family travel and vacation for the summer.

I am grateful for Pastor Quinton and

tools – there's still one method that outperforms them all.

You.

Word of mouth is the best advertisement. Before there were bulletins, email lists, websites, and social media platforms, there were people simply saying, "Come and see." The early church didn't rely on announcement slides. They relied on conversations. They shared stories. They invited their neighbors.

And it worked.

When you tell someone, "My church is doing this great event," or "You should come with me this Sunday," it carries weight. When you share how a message encouraged you or how your child loved an event, that's not marketing – that's personal experience. And people trust personal invitations far more than polished posts.

The reality is, we can publish it in the Sunday Bulletin Wrap, send it in the Midweek Minute, post it on Facebook and Instagram, put it on the website, and show it on the

the Leadership Council who are busy making sure that everything is covered during my leave. One aspect I'm excited for is the opportunity for the congregation to experience a variety of preaching voices during those weeks along with Pastor Quinton.

We will be sharing more about the leave as we approach the time. Please feel free to ask me or Leadership Council any questions that you might have.

slides... but nothing replaces a genuine invitation from someone who cares.

So here's the gentle challenge:

Read the Sunday Bulletin Wrap. Open the Midweek Minute. Check the website for details. Follow and share our Facebook and Instagram posts. Pay attention to the slides on Sunday morning. And then – talk about it. Mention it at work. Bring it up at lunch. Invite a neighbor. Forward an email. Share a post. Personally invite someone to sit with you.

Communication in the church isn't just about distributing information. It's about participating in the mission. Every time you share what's happening here, you're helping extend the invitation. You're making sure no one misses out – not on worship, not on fellowship, and not on the Good News.

Because the message we carry was never meant to stay on a website.

It was meant to be shared.

~ Rhonda Dyson

I'm excited for all the future ministry at CUMC and looking forward to the way in which God will use this time in my life for our ministry together.

~ Pastor Jake



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