

The Bridge

Carlisle
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

DEC '25 | JAN '26 | FEB '26
CARLISLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

THE PROMISE & POWER OF ADVENT

There is a sacred longing that runs through the season of Advent, a yearning for something deeper, truer, and more whole. Advent is not simply about marking time and lighting candles until Christmas. It is an invitation to desire more of God's presence and renewal in our world. It calls us to hold hope in one hand and honesty in the other, to name the brokenness we see, and yet still believe that God's light is coming.

Advent has always been a season of holy restlessness. It reminds us that we live between what has been fulfilled in Christ's coming and what is yet to come in the fullness of God's kingdom. This tension of the already and the not yet can be uncomfortable. Yet it's precisely in this waiting that we discover faith that is alive and expectant.

John Wesley often described the Christian life as a journey of grace. He saw faith not as something static or complete, but as a continual awakening, a growing desire for holiness, love, and the transforming presence of God. Advent echoes this same invitation. It awakens our longing to see Christ more clearly and to reflect His light more faithfully in the world. It reminds us that we were made

to want more - more compassion, more peace, more of God's kingdom taking shape around us.

I have been thinking about what Advent means in our world today.....

It's not difficult to see how deeply our world still needs the message of Advent. In a time when conflict, division, and despair seem to dominate the headlines, we need a season that teaches us to wait with faith and to hope with courage. Our communities long for safety, belonging, and reconciliation. Many of us carry personal burdens, losses, regrets, uncertainties that make waiting even harder.

Yet Advent reminds us that God is not distant from these realities. The miracle of this season is that God chose to enter our world not in power, but in vulnerability, as a child, into poverty, into the fragility of human life. That same God still comes among us, offering peace where we feel anxious, light where we feel lost, and purpose where we feel weary.

Will we slow down long enough to notice where God is already breaking through for us?

At the heart of Advent is a simple but profound promise that we say together each time we gather

at the table of grace: Christ has come, Christ is present, and Christ will come again. This promise gives shape to our faith. It assures us that the story of creation is not spiraling toward despair, but toward redemption.

God's coming in Christ was not a onetime event frozen in history. It continues through the Spirit's quiet work in our hearts, in communities that choose mercy over judgment, and in every act of compassion that reflects God's love. Each small act of kindness, each prayer for peace, each step toward reconciliation, these are signs that Advent is happening again.

We wait not as people in the dark, but as those who already see the dawn.

As we journey through this Advent season, may our waiting become worship. May our longing become prayer. And may our hope become action.

For the One we await is already at work among us, the Light that shines in the darkness, the Prince of Peace who still comes to dwell with His people.

So let us wait, not with fear or impatience, but with open hearts and holy expectation, wanting more, because we were made for more.

~ **Quinton De Beer**



WINTER KIDS MIN

DEC 7 - Christmas Kick Off, begins at 2:30pm

- **No Preteen**

DEC 13 - Caroling, 3pm

DEC 14 - Preteen, 5-7pm

DEC 21 - Kids Worship

Pancakes & Pajamas

- Preteen Christmas

Party, 5-7pm

DEC 28 - **No Preteen**

JAN 4 - Preteen, 5-7pm

JAN 10 - Kids Family Event

Breakfast & Movie, 8:30am

JAN 11 - Preteen, 5-7pm

JAN 18 - **No Preteen**

JAN 25 - Preteen, 5-7pm

FEB 1 - Preteen, 5-7pm

FEB 7 - Preteen Nerf

Battle, 1-4pm

FEB 8 - **No Preteen**

FEB 15 - **No Preteen**

FEB 22 - Preteen, 5-7pm



We had a great fall in Kids Ministry. In Kids Worship we have taken a look at two great people in the Old Testament, Joseph and Moses. The kids have really enjoyed learning about them. In Preteen we kicked off our year with our color battle. It was super messy but super fun. In our Be Bold! Curriculum this fall we have been answering questions about creation and if God cares about how we spend our time. We had a great picnic with our preteen families in October and played an exciting game of kickball of kids vs parents. We also had our Halloween bash, took a trip to the Loudon farm for a bonfire and lots of hayrides and are getting ready for our Late-Nighter. This October we also had our Trunk or Treat. It was such a wonderful evening. The trunks were amazing and the crafts and games were so much fun. The food hit the spot after all the walking around. The new addition of the petting zoo from Double Vision Acres and line dancing in the gym made it even more special. A huge THANK YOU to everyone that helped with our Trunk or Treat!

Looking ahead to the winter in Preteen we will be having a Christmas Celebration on December 21st. We will play some games, have some snacks and celebrate the birth of Jesus. On February 1st we will celebrate



Valentine's Day in Preteen and will talk about God's unconditional love. In February, we will have a nerf battle on the 7th from 1-4pm. Also save the dates of March 27th-29th. We are having a Preteen retreat. Look for more details to coming in the New Year.

We have some fun family events planned for the winter. On December 7th we will be having our Christmas Kick-off starting at 2:30pm. We will be Unwrapping Thankfulness this season with some stations in the gym. Kids can come dressed as their favorite character from the Nativity story. We will have our program in the worship center and then dinner at 4:30pm. On December 13th everyone is invited to join us for an afternoon of Christmas Caroling in the community. We break up into different groups, visiting our LAMS and places in the community starting at 3pm. On January 10th we will have our family breakfast and a movie. In Kids Worship on December 21st we will be having our annual Pancakes and Pajamas. Kids can come in their PJs to Kids Worship at 9:45 and 11:15am. We will have pancakes with a toppings bar. Gary, Kevin and friends will also be there to do a puppet show for us.

Save the date for Vacation Bible School 2026 June 7th-12th

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

Christina McDermott,
Kids Ministries Director
cmcdermott@carlislepaumc.org

WHO CAN YOU INVITE TO WORSHIP DURING ADVENT?

We know that it greatly impacts people if they are personally invited to church. It is easier for many people to attend worship services if they have someone to sit with and show them around the church. A tour from a friend is a gift of time and it is fun to see why someone's church is important to them. We had this experience recently at CUMC's Bring Your One which was held in September. We had 18 regular attenders and members bring 39 first-time guests. A few of the families have returned and worshipped with us on additional Sundays. Advent is a great time to invite people to CUMC. The church will be beautifully decorated, there is familiar music and most importantly Advent is the season of Hope. Whom do you know

that needs to experience Hope? Honoring Jesus's Birthday is a beautiful Celebration, so let's share it.

For whom can you begin praying for, that they will want to attend services with you during Advent? Praying for them is an act of cooperation between you and the Holy Spirit. An invitation plants a seed even if the person chooses not to worship with us.

Celebrate Christmas business cards with the CUMC Christmas website can be found at Info Central. These cards are an easy way to invite someone, the card provides them with the website so they can find information about everything Christmas at CUMC.

~ **Andrea Katz**



GRATITUDE

MY WORD OF THE YEAR

At the start of this 2025, I chose gratitude as my word of the year, one word to help shape how I live more like Jesus. It's been a word that's challenged me, grounded me, and reminded me to notice God's goodness in both the big and small things.

Over the past several months, I've tried a bunch of different ways to practice gratitude, hoping to find a rhythm that really fits my life. I made a gratitude worship playlist for mornings when I need a reminder to start with a posture of gratefulness for all He has done. One month, I wrote down one thing I was thankful for every day. I tried a journal with morning and evening gratitude prompts, took daily photos of something I was grateful for,



and even joined an app with a few students where we each post something we're thankful for every day. (the app has brought great joy and has helped us connect on a deeper level) Some of those practices have really stuck; others didn't fit at all and that's okay. What I've learned is that gratitude isn't about a feeling, it's an action of trust. Trusting that the God who has done it before will do it again, that the God

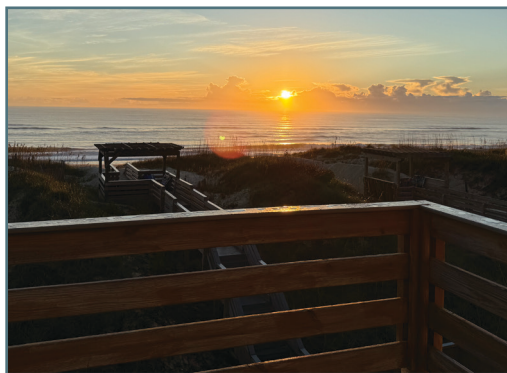
who has given me so much has a greater plan than I can imagine.

This fall, our student ministry spent time Sunday nights walking through our four rhythms of life here at CUMC: worship, connect, serve, and grow. Each week, we talked about practical ways to live more like Jesus through those

rhythms. One of the personal challenges is to find a daily gratitude practice.

If you'd like to grow in gratitude, steal one of the things I tried or write down one thing big or small daily.

It doesn't take long, but over time, this simple rhythm can change how you see your day and help you notice how faithfully God is showing up in it.



GROW - THE JOURNEY OF FORGIVENESS



Over the past month, a group of us here at Carlisle United Methodist Church have walked a sacred and deeply personal journey together, a four-week exploration simply called The Journey of Forgiveness. What began as a class quickly became something more: a space for grace, courage, and healing. Each week invited us to move a little closer toward freedom, from learning what forgiveness truly means, to

finding strength to forgive others, to discovering how to extend that same mercy to ourselves. Forgiveness, we discovered, is not a single moment. It's a process sometimes slow, sometimes surprising that invites us to trust God with the parts of our stories that still ache. As one participant wrote, "I wrote my letter and was at total peace. I had already forgiven the person, but putting my feelings on paper allowed me to fully let go. Full release brought a peace that I had never felt."

That's the heart of this journey, allowing grace to reach places we've held tightly for too long. In our final week, we gathered around the cross, bringing letters we had written to those we needed to forgive, or to ourselves. We placed them at the foot of the cross,

trusting Jesus to hold what we could finally release. It was a holy moment of surrender and renewal, and we ended the evening sharing Communion, the meal that reminds us we are all forgiven and made new.

Forgiveness is part of every person's story. It doesn't erase the past: it transforms it. Another participant shared, "My journey has been long and painful, especially with those I have loved and lost. However, I know God is with me, providing me with strength every day to push forward."

For others, the gift of this class was found in community: "I enjoyed getting to know new people and was able to relate to some of their experiences of hurt and pain. I'm fortunate to have met new friends and appreciate the support that CUMC offers."

That's what the Church is meant to be, a place where we learn and GROW together and learn how to live forgiven and forgiving lives. The journey of forgiveness never truly ends; it becomes the way we walk through the world, lighter, freer, and filled with peace.

~ Quinton De Beer & Andrea Katz

STANDING TOGETHER AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

As part of our SERVE ministry focus, we were honored to host Domestic Violence Services of Cumberland and Perry Counties (DVSCP), one of our vital community partners. Their work provides safety, advocacy, and hope for individuals and families affected by domestic violence, people who often feel unseen and unheard.

As we gathered for worship the gathering was displayed by the silent presence of the "Red Ladies", life-sized silhouettes representing women in our community who have lost their lives to domestic violence. Each

one bore a story. Their quiet witness reminded us that behind every statistic is a name, a face, a family, and a future that was stolen. It was a moving and sobering moment of awareness.

Representatives from DVSCP shared about their mission to empower survivors, educate communities, and advocate for lasting change. Their services range from emergency shelter and legal advocacy to counseling, safety planning, and educational outreach. Each year, they serve hundreds of individuals seeking safety and the chance to rebuild their lives. Their message

was clear: domestic violence can affect anyone and every act of compassion and awareness makes a difference.

Our CUMC family responded in a simple but meaningful way. After worship, we hosted a "Pop-Up Serve" activity where we prepared 1,000 chapsticks each inserted with the DVSCP emergency hotline number and resource information. These small items will be distributed throughout our community in schools, churches, health centers, and public spaces, a quiet way to put hope directly into someone's hand.

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SAFETY & SECURITY UPDATE

In 2024 we took advantage of one of the many services offered by our PA State Police by inviting Trooper First Class Matthew Pavone to tour our entire building and property for a Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (RVAT). The extensive resulting 41-page report contains detailed recommendations covering every aspect of our campus from physical exterior and interior security to video surveillance, cyber security, lighting and communications. In 2025 we have begun to implement these recommendations, some of which you have likely already noticed. All of our exterior doors have been numbered both inside and outside as a means to help our staff

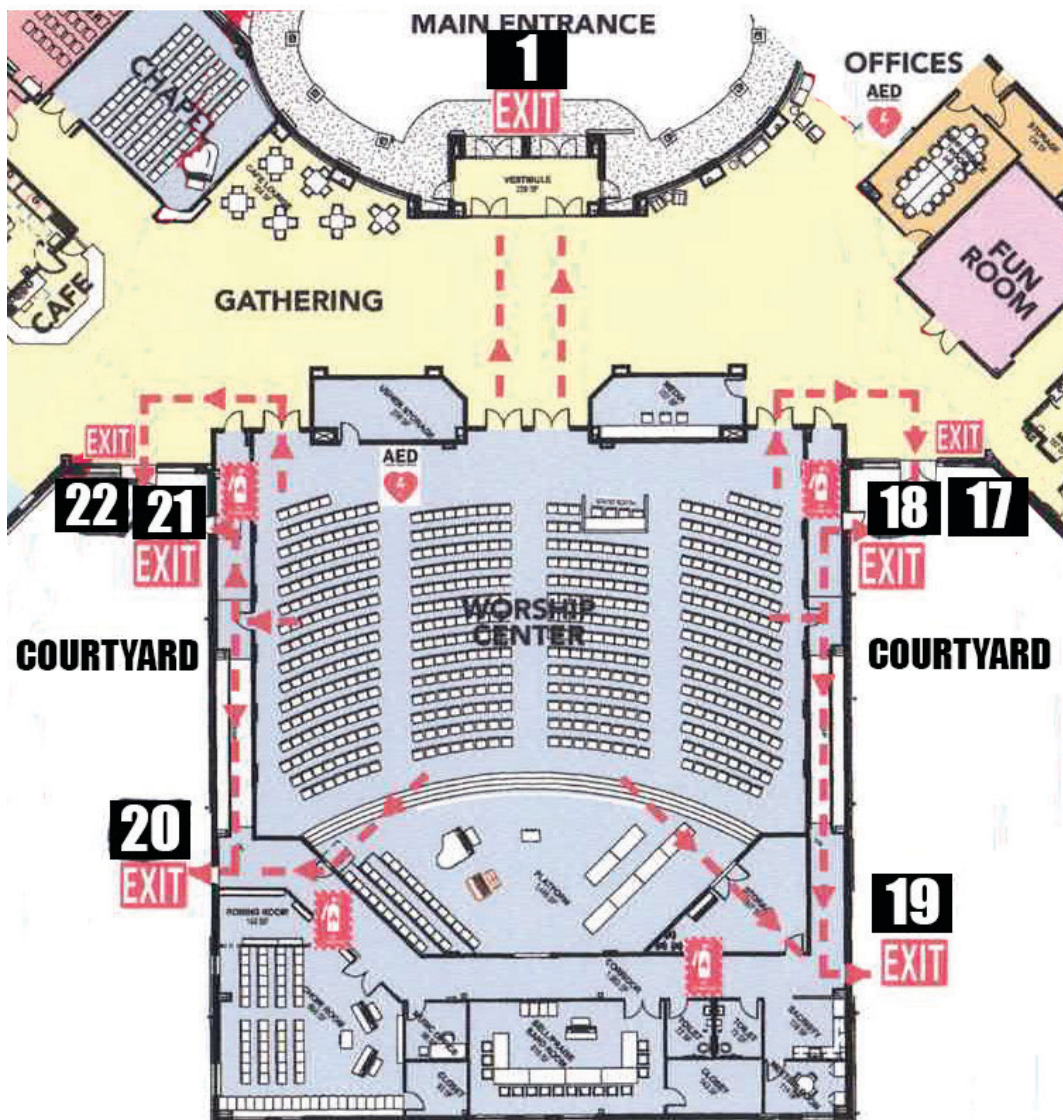
and/or first responders come to the portion of the building which may be affected by an incident such as a fire, break-in or security threat. Where double door handles previously existed at our entrances we have had one of the handles removed to prevent anyone from stopping access through those doorways by chaining the handles together or even using something as simple as a broom handle to do so. Bleeding control kits have been added to all AED locations, and the waste /

recycling dumpster fencing enclosures are now locked. A system has been added to our office receptionist desk that can be activated to immediately

ular location, we have also created an Emergency Diagram (copies available in the office) that shows the location of all exterior exits, fire extinguishers and

AED's (defibrillator). A portion of that diagram focused on the Worship Center is included herein and of particular importance in that it depicts all 7 of the available routes to exit that space in an emergency.

Note that 4 of these exterior exits are located in the perimeter hallway that surrounds the Worship Center. Many of us may be unaware that this hallway even exists, so when you have a moment we suggest you take a walk and familiarize yourself with the location of these available emergency exits and



lock down the entire building exterior. Protective bollards will be added to the exterior of the Little Lights Learning Center entrance as well as our picnic pavilion to prevent a vehicle from driving into those areas. And a silent panic button system will be added to the receptionist desk to notify other staff assistance is needed should that become necessary. While every room in our building already has a drawing posted to define the quickest exit route from that partic-

the quickest route to reach them. Our recent Safety & Security Seminars led by Eric Sands and Jason Weeber were well attended and quite informative. We will continue to offer these seminars annually and continue to implement recommendations from the RVAT report as well.

~ Jeff Barnes

THE WOMEN OF CUMC



What do Miriam, Rahab, Deborah, Jael, Ruth, Esther, Elizabeth, Mary, and Martha all have in common? If you answered somewhere along the lines of them being faithful women who were strong and courageous who trusted and served the Lord, then I would say you are correct. Although we don't have any women who are spies, prophets, or queens (at least I don't think we do), here at CUMC, we certainly have strong and faithful women who serve wholeheartedly and display what it means to live like Jesus daily. This summer, I am grateful that I got to serve alongside many of these remarkable and faithful women, primarily in the office

and kitchen. If you were not aware, the CUMC office relies heavily on our women volunteer receptionists, who dedicate a portion of their day to serve doing different tasks for the church. I had the pleasure to come in throughout the week and work alongside them. Little would I know that coming in to work alongside the receptionists would turn out to be one of my favorite things I did this summer. It was more than just work, in fact I would say that it was more talking than working (don't let the pastors know), but it was a time of meaningful connection. Whether it was talking about music or about how college life was treat-

ing me to putting tiny QR codes on little Jesus figurines, I enjoyed every second of it, getting to connect, laugh, and learn from these amazing women who volunteered their time. Through our discussions and their actions, I was able to see how each one strived to live like Jesus and do whatever task that was laid before them faithfully and exceptionally. I even saw a small portion of myself in each of the ladies, which made the time even more special. It was also nice to hear some of their life stories and perspectives and advice for me to take with me out into the real world. I would like to thank Marian Gobble, Chris Fisk, Debbie Washinger, Carolyn Roller, Debbie Messina, Barb Birmingham, Sue Barnes, Shelly Comp, Barb Harpel, Nancy Schoeps, Sue Simmons, Bonnie Ankabrandt,

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HELPING OUR COMMUNITY THROUGH KIDS SERVE

Last Christmas Eve, our congregation gave a Love Offering to support our local communities. Two thousand dollars went to Kids Serve, a ministry that assists homeless families in the Carlisle and South Middleton School Districts. Working with school social workers, Kids Serve provides gift cards and supplies for groceries, hygiene items, clothing, cleaning products, and transportation—help that meets families where they are and restores a sense of stability and dignity.

The need continues to grow. With the delay of WIC and SNAP benefits, many families are losing access to affordable nutrition.

get this year to continue meeting these urgent needs and to respond when emergencies arise. Behind every statistic is a child. In the Carlisle district, 44% of homeless students are in elementary school, 22% in middle school, 28% in high school, and 8% in alternative settings. Most (67%) are living with friends or relatives, 20% in hotels, 10% in shelters, and 3% in campgrounds. None of these situations provide true stability. Without it, children struggle to make friends, keep up with studies, or participate in normal school life. Transportation is also a critical need. Uber cards allow children to attend medical appointments, sports practices, music rehearsals, and art activities—things that give

them a sense of belonging and hope. Without reliable transportation, many would have to give up the activities that help them dream beyond their circumstances.

Thanks to your generosity, Kids Serve has been able to provide coats, air mattresses, and other essentials that bring warmth and comfort to young lives. A warm coat, a safe bed, or even a ride to practice may seem small, but they carry a powerful message: you are seen, and you are cared for.

Your continued giving transforms more than circumstances—it transforms hearts. As John Wesley wrote, *"Whatever is given to Christ is immediately touched with immortality."*

~ Robin Turner

STEWARDSHIP, RETIREMENT, & CHARITABLE GIFTS



As God's people, we are called to be faithful stewards of all He entrusts to us—our time, our talents, and yes, our financial resources. For many in our congregation, that stewardship includes managing retirement savings in a way that honors the Lord and blesses others.

What is an RMD?

If you have a retirement account, you may have already heard about, or taken, a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD). This is the amount the government requires a retiree to withdraw from a retirement account each year. This is taxed as ordinary income at your income tax rate. This is a requirement for any owner of a tax deferred retirement account once they reach the age of 73. For those who were born in 1960 or later, the required distributions will begin at age 75.

What is a QCD?

For those who are led by God to

give to a charity, such as Carlisle United Methodist Church, the law allows these distributions to be given directly to the church tax free. This tax saving method is what's called a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD). This allows the retiree to allocate some or all of their RMD from an IRA to go directly to the charity of their choice, tax free. This directly reduces the overall taxable income of the retiree.

Qualified Charitable Distributions are allowed prior to RMD age. Once a retiree reaches age 70 ½, they qualify for a QCD. If charitable giving is part of your financial plan, a Qualified Charitable Distribution can further both your philanthropic goals, as well as reducing your taxable income once you have to start taking RMD's.

The "Big Beautiful Bill"

Additionally, in addition to the RMD/QCD options, you may have heard about some recent changes to retirement rules through what's being called the "Big Beautiful Bill" (officially, H.R.1). This was signed into law July 4, 2025. This made some changes to the rules regarding charitable gifts

and tax deductions for all tax filers (no age requirements). Previously those who took the Standard Deduction were not able to deduct charitable gifts. Non-itemizers are now able to deduct up to \$1,000 (\$2,000 MFJ). For those who itemize, there is now a "floor" (0.5% of AGI) they must reach prior to deductibility of their charitable gift. For further information on these and other changes included in H.R. 1, please contact your tax professional.

Next Steps

As Proverbs 3:9 reminds us, "Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops." Every dollar we manage is an opportunity to reflect God's goodness and invest in His kingdom. If you have questions about RMDs, QCDs, or how to give wisely, we encourage you to reach out to a member of the Legacy Team at CUMC. If you have specific questions about your own situation, reach out to your tax professional and financial advisor. As always, we ask you to pray about how God is calling you to use what He's given you for His glory.

~ Stephanie Baity

2026 LEADERSHIP COUNCIL



Chair: Kathy Charette; Finance: Hilton Wood; Facilities: Jeff Barnes; Give: Stephanie Baity;
Pillar 1: Kerm Leitner; Pillar 2: Stacy Centi; Personnel 1: Jeff Harpel;
Personnel 2: Barbara Druck; Leadership Development: Megan Wardle

(together...continued from Page 4)

It was a tangible expression of what it means to serve with both heart and purpose.

Moments like these remind us that service is ministry. When we partner with organizations like DVSCP, we are living out Christ's call to stand with the vulnerable, to listen to those who have been silenced, and to act in love. As the prophet Micah reminds us, "What

does the Lord require of you but to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God."

We are deeply grateful to our SERVE Volunteer Team and to everyone who participated in preparing the chapsticks, and to those who continue to lift up this ministry in prayer. You are helping us embody the Gospel in practical and powerful ways.

Domestic violence thrives in silence,

but when a community stands together, awareness leads to safety, and compassion leads to change. We give thanks for the partnership of DVSCP and for the faithful volunteers of CUMC who remind us that love, when put into action, is stronger than fear.

May we continue to be a church where all are safe, all are seen, and all are loved.

~ **Quinton De Beer**



**Shirley Garrison
Peanut Butter
Cracker Queen**

(women...continued from Page 6)

Donna Ludwig, Beverly Miller, Betty Kleinle, Paula Lamason and Doris Trostle for their dedication as volunteer receptionists and for helping to show me what it means to have a servant's heart and live like Jesus this summer in the office.

I not only worked on my office skills this summer, but I also had the opportunity to put on my apron and serve alongside our women in the kitchen this summer. Stephanie Cornwall, Elissa Henderson, Deb Johnston, Jan Chipriano, and I served many times together over the summer in the kitchen. Like the receptionists, these ladies filled my day with joy as we talked about everything and anything and prepared food. I could see how they wholeheartedly served and did their best to provide top tier hospitality in all circumstances. Even though we would goof around, we would always have plenty of time left before the food was needed to be put out

and were able to talk even more. I do have to say that I was able to learn from them how to properly prepare a cheese plate and how to add decorative kale to spruce up our platters. However, there was one other lady that I got to spend some time in the kitchen with this summer, the Chocolate Peanut Butter Cracker Queen herself, Shirley Garrison. If you have never tried her peanut butter crackers hand dipped in chocolate, you are missing out! I was honored to have been shown by her the process of making the crackers. She didn't share it exclusively, but it was clear that the secret ingredient she put in them was a little love. Her servant's heart and gentleness were on full display as we dipped crackers and talked about anything and everything. It was nice to step away from the chaotic world and dip some crackers and talk with Shirley. I have to say from working in the kitchen this summer, we have so many talented ladies who can cook and bake!

As I sit back and reflect, at CUMC we are truly so blessed to have wonderful women who show what it means to love, connect, and serve one another, wholeheartedly. Now the women that I mentioned, are only a fraction of the remarkable women we have here at CUMC. We have remarkable and talented women who

run our kid's, adult, and bell choirs (Sara Billman, Connie Leitner, and Jane Boley), outstanding women who faithfully lead our Kid and Student ministry (Christina McDermott and Erin Fleet), Rhonda Dyson our virtuoso communications director who designs our bulletins, Sunday morning slides, emails, and this article. Our office manager Heidi Heberlig (my mother) who serves as the backbone of the church's office operation in making sure everything runs smoothly and efficiently, and so many more amazing women who lead and serve. In fact, if I mentioned every remarkable woman, I suppose that this article would not be able to contain every woman and would extend from one side of the church building to the other. Regardless, on behalf of not just the men but from everyone at CUMC, thank you women for all you do to keep our church thriving and in all the ways that you serve not just our church but the community. You truly all have shown me what it means to live like Jesus, and I could not be more grateful and proud to be a part of CUMC. Thank you, women of CUMC!

~ **Parker Heberlig**



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