



CIRCUIT RIDER

VOLUME 56 / ISSUE 1
JANUARY 2025

MLK DAY - OFFICE CLOSED

**WED. NITE LIVE
& SPRING
CLASSES
AVAILABLE**

COOKIES FOR A CAUSE:
MISSIONS LOVE OFFERING

2025 MINISTRY
OPPORTUNITIES - SIGN
UP TO VOLUNTEER
TODAY!

CONFIRMATION FOR
GRAVITY YOUTH
STUDENTS

CENTRALROGERS.COM



Rev. Rob Holifield

Senior Pastor

Happy New Year! 2025 is upon us and as you read this you are moving into all this new year has to offer. As we do, I believe it is important to reflect on the past year; give thanks to God for being with us, learn what we can learn and surrender to God what needs to be put in God's hands. 2024 was quite the year at Central United Methodist Church. I believe as a church we were tested, pressured, encouraged, challenged, and at the end of the year, blessed.

Walk with me through some of the moments that stand out as I reflect on 2024 and Central UMC.

On January 1, we worshiped together in the chapel and began the Bible Recap reading plan. That day was an encouraging start, as we laid out how we would walk through the Bible together. We warned of the hurdles of a yearly reading plan like Leviticus and the busyness of life. We did not think about some of the other hurdles that would come in the reading like Lamentations, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah, which are some of the books people have told me slowed their momentum and excitement. But the plan challenged us to engage with the whole Bible, which was a blessing. If you did not read with us this year or were not able to complete the reading plan, there will be other reading options in 2025. Just jump in and try again. Every time we go to God's Word, He is there to meet us. I look forward to what we will be doing in this new year.

Ash Wednesday was on Valentines Day. Such an early start to Lent was a challenge for the church staff, but it was an interesting combination of culture and church. I believe it taught us something about love. If we are truly going to love someone we will need to humble ourselves and love selflessly. Ash Wednesday and Lent begin the season of seeking God to do that very act in our lives.

In April, denominational changes brought a new level of challenge to the United Methodist Church and Central. We are a church full of deeply committed Christians who have varying views on a topic on which decisions were made. This led to a time of listening, discerning, prayer and what John Wesley called "holy conferencing". I will never forget opening up Bible Recap the day the decisions were made and there was only one reading for the day. It was Psalm 133. I believe this verse was a gift to Central as it has been an encouraging embrace by God throughout the process of going forward.

Psalms 133

"How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity! It is like the precious oil on the head, running down upon the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down over the collar of his robes. It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion. For there the Lord ordained his blessing, life forevermore."

June 1 was one of the most meaningful days of my life. I married my best friend, Sara Henary. We had the service in the chapel and Central blessed us with an incredible embrace. I do not believe you could have welcomed Sara into the life of the church better. Thank you Central Rogers for loving my family so well.

July brought a huge event to Central Rogers. We hosted the South Central Jurisdictional Conference. We had worked with the Arkansas Annual Conference team for a year preparing for the conference to come to Arkansas and Central Rogers. It was a huge undertaking but Central Rogers shined. People kept saying to me, "you are so lucky to be the Senior Pastor at this church". I kept responding, "I know. It's the best church I have ever been a part of"!

October brought our annual Stewardship campaign. We made this a time to look toward the future and ask you to invest in what God wants to do here. I was blessed to have my father, Rev. Tony Holifield, to lead and preach. Your response was huge. During our stewardship series where we continued to reflect on Bible Recap weekly readings, we united around Christ and what God wants to do through us. Thank you Central for leaning in and believing in what God has in store.

We come to the end of 2024 with a lot to reflect on and a lot to be thankful for. God showed up in a big way this past year. God has led us and blessed us. As we get ready to head into 2025 together, I believe God will grow us in our faith, give us a vision for new ministries to connect people to Jesus, and continue to let the world know, "You Matter to God".

Thank you Central for allowing me to be your Senior Pastor. I have never felt more blessed to be able to lead you all in this new year. May God continue to show up and bless your life.

Your Pastor,

Rev. Rob Holifield

Welcome New Central Members!



Danielle Wahlquist has joined by transfer of membership from Elm Springs UMC in Elm Springs AR. Danielle is an analyst and project manager. She lives in Fayetteville, AR.



Carolyn Pryor has joined by transfer of membership from First UMC in Fort Smith, AR. Carolyn is a sales lead with Chiccos. She lives in Rogers, AR.

INTERESTED IN JOINING CENTRAL?

If you would like to learn more about membership in this AMAZING faith family, please contact Carole Baker at cbaker@centralrogers.com or 636-1630 (ext 610).



Complete Your
2025 Ministry Opportunities
form today!



IT'S NOT TOO LATE! If you haven't had a chance to complete your Ministry Opportunities card for 2025, please do so by getting a hard copy at the information station and returning to the church office OR by filling out electronically on the website centralrogers.com/resources/media/detail/2025-stewardship-campaign--599375/ If you aren't sure about all the incredible ways to connect and serve at Central, please review the Ministry Guide and take a step up for Christ and His church in 2025!



WED. NITE LIVE IS BACK ON JANUARY 8TH

Wednesday Night Live will "Ring in the New Year" on January 8, 2025 with plenty of fun and food! The Young Disciples, Gravity Midweek, choir and adult classes/groups will be offered again this spring as well as other adult classes during the week. Sign up online or in the bulletin insert on Sunday Mornings. For more information on the classes check our website or call 479.636.1630.

DivorceCare

Wednesdays - 6:00p, January 15 - April 16, In-Person
Facilitator: Kelly Turnbow, Room 221

God's Mission...Our Journey

Wednesdays - 6:00p, January 15 - March 12, In-Person
Facilitator: Karen Anderson, Room 105

GriefShare

Wednesdays - 6:00p, January 15 - April 16, In-Person
Facilitator: Kerry Turnbow, Parlor

Mayberry Bible Study

Wednesdays - 6:00p, January 15 - April 16, In Person
Facilitator: Clay Cutten, Theater Room

The Case for Christ

Wednesdays - 6:00p, January 15 - April 16, In-Person
Facilitator: Alex and Elise Lake, Room 206

Basic Caregiving Skills

Sundays - 5:00p, January 12 - April 13, In Person
Facilitator: Kerry Turnbow, Room 205

Deborah- Unlikely Heroes and the Book of Judges

Wednesdays - 6:00p, January 15 - March 12, In-Person
Facilitator: Niki Williams, Room 104

Disciple 2 Bible Study

Wednesdays - 6:00p, January 15 - April 16, Hybrid
Facilitator: Molly Pickering and Carole Baker, Room 202

Disciple 3 Bible Study

Wednesdays - 6:00p, January 15 - April 16, In-Person
Facilitator: Randy Godsey, Room 208



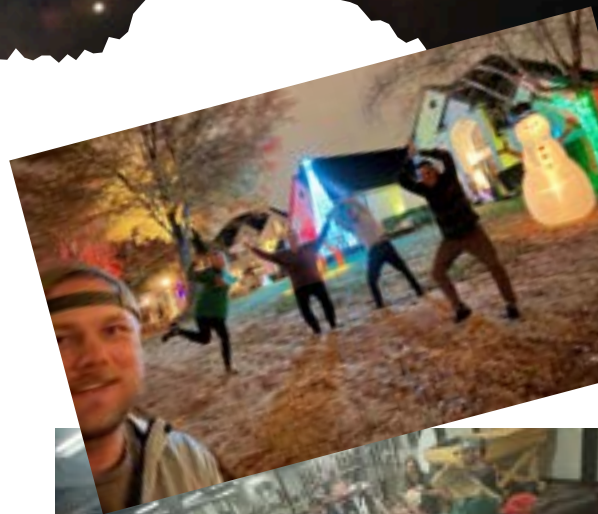
Gravity

YOUTH MINISTRIES

December came and went by IN A JIFFY – but not without some proper celebration of Christmas in Gravity. We opened the month with our annual Christmas party; this year’s theme – Gravity THRIFTMAS! Students and parents alike dressed in their most festive wear (bonus if thrifted) and participated in a Christmas photo scavenger hunt. Following the scavenger hunt, parents enjoyed hot cocoa and cookies while students gobbled down cookies and milk, followed by their white elephant gift exchange. The fun didn’t stop there – the leaders had their Christmas party the following Sunday. Throughout the night, there were fun little competitions for leaders to earn “Gravity Bucks,” including the Instagram painting challenge (leaders drew a name and then had 15 minutes to paint that leader). At the end of the night, our very own auctioneer, Carole Baker, auctioned off a variety of gifts. The catch – they didn’t know if it was a leftover white elephant gift from the week before or a nice gift. A fun night to celebrate our AMAZING leaders who make Gravity Youth Ministries what it is!

With December in the rearview mirror, we are BUSTING into January. We kick off January on the 4th with our Gravity Girls Night In, a fun night, where we celebrate being a girl and build relationships with girls in Gravity and women in the church, all while wearing our pajamas. *please note, limited tickets and girls MUST register ahead of time. We will resume Sunday nights on Sunday, January 12 with our 2nd Sunday Worship – and PARENTS AND STUDENTS competing in “Are You Smarter Than a Gravity Student.” Also coming in January is the RETURN of Gravity Midweek. This will be a Wednesday evening offering for Gravity students (6-12th grade) that focuses on building community through fun, engaging competitions and activities. That will OFFICIALLY kick off on January 15th from 6-7p in Youth Room.

Another class of Confirmation will be beginning in January. If you have an 8th grade student or above and interested in going through Confirmation, the process in which a student explores his/her faith in preparation for making a public profession of faith, and therefore, becoming a full-fledged member of Central, please contact Lucy at lswanson@centralrogers.com.



@GravityYouthMinistries



January 2025

Wed. Nite Live – Young Disciples

Wed. Nite Live will kick back off on Wednesday, January 8 with a Ring in the New Year dinner. While there will be no kids, youth or adult programming/classes that night, we will have a chance to catch up with each other. Then on the 15th we will be back to our regular schedule, dinner from 5:30-6, and Young Disciples from 6-7. We can't wait to see you there!

GET TO KNOW YOU LUNCH

The KidsMin Advisory Board would like to invite your family to our first Get to Know You lunch. This will be held in the Atrium right after church services on Sunday, January 26th. This will be incredibly informal, just a chance for families to meet each other and connect. There will also be activities for the kids. So that we can order the correct amount of food, we are asking for families to register. We hope you'll be able to join us.

GALENTINE'S TEA

Join us on Saturday, February 15th for our second annual Galentine's Tea, hosted by the Central Women's Board. We will gather in the Atrium at 10:30am for a proper tea, complete with finger foods. There will be entertainment, a devotional and of course a goodie bag to take home.



SUNDAY SCHOOL

CAMP BELIEVE IT: A 4-Week Series from the Gospels on Jesus' Early Life

SERIES OVERVIEW:

People love camping, and for good reason! You can take in nature, practice special skills, or just take time to relax in a new environment. And when it comes to camping, no one loved it as much as John the Baptist. In this 4-week series, kids will hear about John the Baptist's special role in preparing the way for Jesus and his ministry. John's story will help kids to say their camp motto, "I believe God gives me purpose. I believe God can speak to me. I believe God is powerful. I believe God's words are true."

DOWNLOAD THIS MONTH'S PARENT DEVOTIONAL

http://sycu.org/CampBelieveIt_PDevo_V8





HAPPINESS IS RINGING HANDBELLS

You are invited to come and try ringing handbells on Tuesday, January 14th, at 6:00pm at Grace UMC. This will be a “no obligation” time to come and check out what ringing is all about.

Come learn a new instrument!
Come meet new friends!
Come play for a season!
Come serve God!



Nearly 20% of Arkansans face hunger, including 24% of children in Benton County. Central UMC is proud to partner with the Grace Community Meal, serving 200+ free meals every 3rd Sunday. This year, the Missions Team will bake cookies January 12th and collect a love offering to help support this vital ministry. Together, we can feed our neighbors and make a difference!

Church Wide PRAYER

Last Sunday of the Month
5:00p - Chapel
Child Care Provided





MINISTRY OF THE TOWEL

by Rev. Kerry Turnbow

As we come to the end of 2024 and begin the new year, for whatever reason we tend to become a bit nostalgic. We contemplate the various things that we have persevered throughout the last year, and we begin to look with either anticipation, dread or maybe a little bit of both in the new year. We put the stockings away the Christmas tree away and all the decorations and prepare ourselves for what we know is coming next, which is tax season! No one likes to think about taxes but it's a part of life and something that we must deal with year after year.

Taxes remind me of a story we find in Matthew 17:24-27. A tax collector asks Peter if Jesus pays the temple tax. Peter responded with a yes. Jesus told Peter to go to the lake, catch a fish and take the coin from its mouth to pay the tax for both. Jesus goes on to say that it was not necessary for him to have to pay the temple tax but to avoid offense, he chose to make the payment.

As I contemplate this story a few thoughts come to mind. First, it would be wonderful if only I could go down to the river or the lake and cast my fishing line into the water and the first fish I catch has enough money in its mouth to pay my yearly taxes. Now that would be an amazing miracle.

The second thought that comes to my mind is this story raises an issue about doing the proper thing and not causing offense. Whether we believe in paying taxes or not it is our duty as citizens of the United States to participate in a tax system that supports a variety of different government programs.

I know that for many of us, we don't always agree on the way our government utilizes the taxes that are withdrawn from our income base. I think Jesus' action demonstrates to us that doing something for the right reason is a responsibility of His followers.

As I think about the ministry of the towel or our ministry of congregational care here at Central United Methodist Church, I believe it is the responsibility of the entire congregation to be involved to some degree in supporting the needs of those members of our church. We may not agree with all the ways we utilize the offerings we receive but that should not deter us from making a commitment to participate with our time, our finances, and our energy in all areas of congregational care. I encourage all of you as we start this new year to contemplate what it means to be involved in the life of our local church so that the ministries of congregational care can thrive as we support the various needs that exist among us.



January

- | | |
|----|--|
| 1 | New Years Day - Church Office Closed |
| 4 | Gravity Youth Girls Night In |
| 5 | Gravity Youth Student Leadership Meeting |
| 6 | Wed. Nite Live Kickoff Event |
| 12 | Missions Cookies for A Cause Event |
| 12 | Gravity Youth Freezer Meal Fundraiser |
| 12 | Gravity Youth Family Worship and Kickoff Event |
| 15 | Spring Classes & Choir Kickoff |
| 17 | Confirmation Retreat |
| 18 | Men's Fellowship Meeting |
| 20 | MLK Day - Church Office Closed |
| 26 | Confirmation Kickoff |
| 26 | KidsMin "Get to Know You" Event |
| 26 | Church Wide Prayer |
| 27 | Church Council Meeting |



From Angel's Pen

I can't believe 2025 is here! Christmas 2024 is still on my mind and I wanted to share a praise for an event that happened on the first Friday of December. Most of you know about the Annual Rogers Christmas Parade, but you may not know that Central had a float in the parade this year! It has been many years since we have had a float, but our amazing Evangelism Committee, (headed by Molly Pickering and J.R. Shaw), thought it would be a good way to spread our message of "You Matter To God" in the community. After several meetings things just took off and we were on our way to building a float! Many people stepped up to help who are not even on the committee (but may be this year), such as Phil Lewis who loaned us the trailer, Rick Jones and Brian Carroll who built an awesome stable for the nativity, a life-size, lighted nativity, loaned to us by Central, a generator loaned to us from Rick's neighbor, decorations, donated candy, and bracelets with YMTG, and Amy Penny who created flyers and sent email blasts to communicate the event. We had a "build night", headed by J.R. and Molly, helped by the Community SS class, as well as Rick Jones, Karen Hembree, Martha Sell, Gary Riegel, Sandy & Terry Dellinger and John Mounts. Parade night was full of joy with several riders on the float: Elise, Eloise, as an angel, and Mary Caroline Lake, Melissa Szczepanek, as an angel, with her boys Charlie and Thomas as shepherds, Grace Shearin as a "star" and Angel Shaw as a sheep! We needed people to walk along-side the float and we had many volunteers: Alex Lake, Kevin Szczepanek, Katie and Naomi Emery, Carole Baker, Lorna Miller, Natalie Greene, Cathy McHaney, Susan Harp, Pastor Kerry and Kelli Turnbow, Pastor Rob and Sara Holifield, Jax Trombley, Julie Shearin, Molly Pickering, and J.R. as the church van driver with Pastor Dawn Spragg riding shotgun! The children on the float were waving and telling everyone "Merry Christmas, You Matter to God". What a blessing they were and what an example of Evangelism. Here is a quote from Molly P.: "This" is Evangelism. Showing our Community how much Central loves each other and Rogers! The message You Matter to God just takes on many meanings as we share that message. I can't wait till next year!!



It was LOST and is now FOUND! Please come to the office to identify.

- an earring
- a gift card
- a child's shoe (3)
- 2 mugs
- glasses