



H E I S
N O T
H E R E



He has risen



J U S T
A S
H E
S A I D .



MATTHEW 28:6



THE CORE OF OUR Faith

John Wesley describes the core of our faith in Jesus Christ as the “essentials” – the elements of faith that enable us to experience salvation and be in union with Christ. These are the beliefs that connect us with Christ and guide our relationship with Christ. As Wesley said: “*In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; and in all things, charity.*” So what is essential, we are in unity; and in the things that may be important but not essential, we have freedom to discuss, learn, and disagree as guided by the Holy Spirit; and in all things, we treat each other with charity or love. I find these words helpful as I live out my faith as a United Methodist Christian. But what exactly is essential – the core of our faith that grounds our faith journey with Jesus Christ?

I believe Wesley’s essentials are summed up best in the very vows we take when we enter into membership (that are also echoed in our baptismal vows). So allow me to quote paragraph 217 of the Book of Discipline (the book that guides us as United Methodists in our life together and as a United Methodist Church) entitled “Membership Vows:”

When persons unite as professing members with a local United Methodist church, they profess their faith in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth; in Jesus Christ his only Son; and in the Holy Spirit. (Using the Apostle’s Creed as members take their vows of membership) Thus, they make known their desire to live their daily lives as disciples of Jesus Christ. They covenant together with God and with the members of the local church to keep the vows which as a part of the order of confirmation and reception into the Church:

- 1. To renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness, reject the evil powers of the world, and repent of their sin;*
- 2. To accept the freedom and power God gives them to resist evil, injustice, and oppression;*
- 3. To confess Jesus Christ as Savior, put their whole trust in his grace, and promise to serve him as their Lord;*
- 4. To remain faithful members of Christ’s holy church and serve as Christ’s holy church and serve as Christ’s representatives in the world;*
- 5. To be loyal to Christ through The United Methodist Church and do all in their power to strengthen its ministries;*
- 6. To faithfully participate in its ministries by their prayers, their presence, their gifts, their service. And their witness;*
- 7. To receive and profess the Christian faith as contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.*



So our membership vows describe the core of our faith – what is essential for our union with



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Christ. These vows both profess what we believe as followers of Jesus Christ and what we promise we will do as we faithfully follow Jesus Christ throughout our lives. I am grateful to be part of such a community of faith where together we can support, encourage, and challenge one another as we serve our Lord Jesus Christ with clarity, courage, and humility. Thanks be to God for each of you that accompanies me in this season on this life changing and life giving journey.

Peace,
Pastor Doug

What is your *soul* saying to *you*?

Think about it: when is the last time that you deliberately took a full day of rest? What would that look like? All day with no scheduled activities, no productivity, doing only what you want, peace for your mind and body, and time for recreation? What if you began the day with a leisurely, morning walk outside, or sitting and creating, or brewing a hot beverage while snuggling up with a book / film? In the last year, have you given yourself permission to stop pushing and pushing, and just live for a moment? I suggest that you plan to do this, possibly during the Lenten season. It's a perfect time to start something like this.



The idea of Sabbath comes from the first book of Genesis in the first chapter that honors the seventh day when God rested from creating the world. The seventh day is actually the fourth one of the Ten Commandments, which instructs us that the seventh day is to be deemed as holy and to be used for rest. Sabbath (or Shabbat) is still observed by traditional Jews on Saturdays, while a number of Christians regard Sundays as their rest day. Other religious traditions stress the importance of a day of rest as well as those who are not religious.

The idea of taking a rest is often a lofty one to most of us, because there is always so much to do or so much to catch up on that didn't get done. Weekly tasks that we do not finish naturally get pushed to the weekends, especially things like laundry, running errands or cleaning the house. Many times, it is not others who are pressuring us in this regard, but it is ourselves. In this case, we have the option to say to ourselves and those around us that God has set forth the seventh day as a day of Sabbath, because God alone knows what is good for us. Will I make the decision to follow God's command for the betterment of my life? After all, it's only on one day a week. - Blessings, Carla Gillespie



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Lenten PRAYERS

Dear Friends,

Happy Lent! Here are some examples of Lenten prayers to guide us through this beautiful season. Feel free to pray them on your own journey! - Blessing, Pastor Ashley

Creator of my Life,
renew me: bring me to new life in you.
Touch me and make me feel whole again.
Help me to see your love in the passion,
death and resurrection of your son. Help
me to observe Lent in a way that allows me
to celebrate that love. Prepare me for
these weeks of Lent as I feel both deep
sorrow for my sins and your undying love for
me.

Dear Lord,
I know you receive what is in my heart. Let
me be inspired by your words and by the
actions of your son, Jesus. Guide me to
make sacrifices this Lent in the spirit of
self-denial and with greater attention to
you and to those around me. Help me to
believe that you will grant me this because
of the sacrifice Jesus made for me.

God of Love,
through this Lenten journey, purify my
desires to serve you. Free me from any
temptations to judge others, to place
myself above others. Please let me
surrender even my impatience with others,
that with your love and your grace, I might
be less and less absorbed with myself, and
more and more full of the desire to follow
you, in laying down my life according to
your example.

God of infinite love,
I thank you for this reminder of your love
and your call that we be more patient,
gentle and compassionate with others.
Here in the middle of Lent, I turn to you to
beg for your help. Please soften my heart.
Help me to let go of judging others.
I ask you this, in Jesus' name.

Joyful praise in Lent?
I'm not sure I always feel that. I ask you to
help me prepare to understand and
embrace the paschal mystery in my life. I
don't always see the beauty and mystery
of this season and often I run from the pain.
Help me to see how your saving grace and
your loving touch in my life can fill me with
joyful praise of the salvation you have sent
to me.

My loving Lord,
it's so hard to love the world sometimes
and to love it the way Jesus did seems
impossible. Help me to be inspired by his
love and guided by his example. Most of
all, I want to accept that I can't do it alone,
and that trying is an arrogance of
self-centeredness. I need you, dear God,
to give me support in this journey. Show me
how to unlock my heart so that I am less
selfish. Let me be less fearful of the pain
and darkness that will be transformed by
you into Easter joy.



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Exploring Bach's "O Lamm Gottes, unschuldig" BWV 656:

A JOURNEY THROUGH MY FIRST LENTEN REFLECTIONS

As someone experiencing her first Lent, I understand the Lent season as a sacred period marked by penitential preparation for Easter. It's a time to reflect on one's shortcomings, embrace humility over pride, and seek spiritual grounding. As the faithful receive memento mori in the form of ashes, the vanitas of life and mortality are vivid reminders of the need for repentance and renewal.

Accompanying me through this introspective journey is Johann Sebastian Bach's chorale prelude "O Lamm Gottes, unschuldig" ("O Lamb of God, innocent") BWV 656. It is based on the Lutheran hymn by Nikolaus Decius dating back to the early Reformation. The hymn encapsulates the essence of penitence and redemption. Its profound text beckons worshippers to delve into the depths of their faith:

*O Lamb of God, most stainless!
Who on the Cross didst languish,
Patient through all Thy sorrows.
Though mocked amid Thine anguish;
Our sins Thou nearest for us,
Else had despair reigned o'er us:
Have mercy upon us, O Jesu!
Grant us Thy peace today, O Jesu!*

Bach's masterful incorporation of the hymn as a cantus firmus in the opening movement of another work, the famous St. Matthew Passion, BWV 244, attests to the enduring significance of the hymn.

As the chorale prelude unfolds, its music weaves a tapestry of hope and anticipation, echoing the imminent resurrection of Christ. Amidst the intricate harmonies and intricate imitations, a sense of triumph emerges, foreshadowing the joyous culmination of Easter. Despite its solemn themes, the music resonates with an undercurrent of optimism, guiding believers through the Lenten season with renewed faith and determination. Revered as a "marvel of profoundly religious art" by music historian Philipp Spitta, this tripartite chorale stands as a testament to Bach's unmatched ability to evoke spiritual grandeur and contemplation.



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As one delves into the depths of BWV 656, the music unfolds like a sacred journey, culminating in a crescendo of reverence and awe. Through its resounding chords and earth-shaking vibrations, Bach's chorale prelude serves as a beacon of hope and redemption, guiding believers on their path towards Easter's promise of eternal peace and salvation.

Though originally composed for the organ, the piano transcription by Carl Tausig offers a captivating rendition. I am exploring and learning both the organ and the piano versions of BWV 656, in the hope of sharing the music with those embarking on their Lenten journey to open a gateway to spiritual introspection.

Blessings,
Shiyu

ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE

we are here for you.

As we move forward enjoying all God has provided, we need to make sure that all of our bases are covered.

Do we have a will that clearly spells out our desires?
Do we have proper insurance? Home, auto, and health?
Are our investments in line with our needs now and in the future?

If you have any questions or concerns your Endowment Committee is available to meet with you.

Planning: Do it for yourself, do not leave it to others.

Funeral Planning: Have you established plans?

Advanced Directives: Medical instructions in case of incapacity.

Banking: Are you getting the best rates on your accounts.



March UWF Meeting

The next UWF meeting will be on Thursday, March 14th at 1pm in fellowship hall. We will be learning more about the Community Food Pantry. All women are invited and we ask that everyone bring a non-perishable food item! We can't wait to see you there.



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LET'S JOIN TOGETHER IN PRAYER

Did you know that Central has multiple ways to join you in prayer? Through the scriptures, we are taught that God will always hear our prayers and will answer them if we address Him with faith and real intent. As we come together in prayer, we want to support each other in whatever challenges or joys life may bring.

Women's Prayer Group: Mondays at 12:00pm

Facebook Prayer Space: Every Wednesday

Check out our Facebook post every Wednesday as we come together with our community in prayer.

Men's Prayer Group: Wednesdays at 12:00pm

Prayer request cards are also available in the pews during Sunday worship. Fill out the card and place it in the offering plate or hand it to an usher.

Pastoral Visits

Do you know someone who could benefit from a visit? Let us know! We do our best to connect with all of our members but sometimes miss important information. If you know someone in the hospital, has had surgery, or could just use a home visit, call the church office at 765-962-8543.

Want to get involved with worship? Contact the church office at 765-962-8543 and we will get you started!

March Communion Helpers

Doug & Tara Jamison

Sunday Greeters

3/3 GREETERS NEEDED

3/10 David & Becky Shaw

3/17 **GREETERS NEEDED**

3/24 **GREETERS NEEDED**

3/31 **GREETERS NEEDED**

Sunday Ushers

3/3 USHER'S NEEDED

3/10 Electa Berk & Jim Robinson

3/17 Electa Berk & Jim Robinson

3/24 Phil & Jackie Scott, Rick Eyer

3/31 Phil & Jackie Scott, Rick Eyer

Worship Scripture Readers

3/3 Kathy Eyer

3/10 Mary Alice Bolser

3/17 Ann Cashner

3/24 Pat Heiny

3/31 Jan Hibner

Living Water Children's Church

3/3 BJ Toms & Carol Robinson

3/10 BJ Toms & Carol Robinson

3/17 Kathy Robinson & Beth Hartsough

3/24 Kathy Robinson & Beth Hartsough

3/31 No Children's Church

Thank you for your commitment in serving God and Central!



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Creative Hands

Creative hand meets on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month at 9:00am in Fellowship Hall. Join us for Fellowship, Fun, and Food and stay for the March UWF Meeting on March 14th!

The March UWF Meeting

The next UWF meeting will be March 14th at 1pm in fellowship hall. We will hear a presentation about The Community Food Pantry. PLEASE BRING A NON PERISHABLE FOOD ITEM!!

Wisdom Study

Pastor Ashley leads a bible study group every Friday at 12pm. This group is focused on taking biblical wisdoms and applying them to our everyday lives. Are you interested in the study but can't make the time? Let us know! We are happy to expand this study into more sessions or to a time that works better for everyone! You can contact the church office at 765-962-8543 or email Pastor Ashley at ashley@richmondcumc.com for more information.

A Message from our Administrative Council Chair, Ann Cashner

The Administrative Council meets the fourth Thursday of each month at 6:30pm, except in March when we will meet on the third Thursday, due to a conflict with the Maundy Thursday service. I will be bringing you a report of the important aspects of each meeting, on the Sunday following each of our monthly meetings. You are welcome to attend our meetings or you can express your concerns to one of our board members ahead of time. The names of the Administrative Board members are in your bulletin every Sunday. We have recently expanded your representation on the board by expanding the size of the board from 9 people to 15. I want to thank our 2024 board members for taking on a leadership role in our church. I would also like to thank those who served on the board last year, but have now gone off the board, especially Leanne Backmeyer, who led us with strength and grace through a tough time in the life of our church. At this February meeting the Council looked at, discussed in length, and unanimously passed the CUMC 2024 Budget, which you are also welcome to have a copy of, simply by asking in the church office. Secondly, you have probably already noticed that doors have been installed in the Central Early Learning Center. These doors will provide much needed security for the Early Learning Center children and staff. The doors were requested by the Early Learning Center parents and were paid for by a grant which was secured for us by Christin Hampton, our business coordinator. Each parent and staff member will have a fob, which they can use to open the doors when they drop off their kids or pick them up. The doors will be left unlocked on Sunday mornings for the convenience of the parents who use our nursery during the worship services and the Sunday School hour. Lastly, the Council is aware that many of you may be wondering what will happen to the smaller parsonage after the Flores family moves into the Glen Hills parsonage, right after Easter. We will be discussing this topic at our March board meeting and would welcome your input, as we make this difficult decision.



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MARCH 2024



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					1	2
3	4	5	6	7 Low Vision Support Group 10:30am	8	9
10 Food Pantry Sunday	11 Mon. Morn. Connection 9am	12	13	14 Creative Hands 9am UWF Mtg 1:00pm	15	16
17	18	19	20	21 Ad Council 6:30pm	22	23
24	25	26	27 LL Assembly 10:00am Lunch Bunch 11:30am	28 Creative Hands 9am	29 Good Friday	30
31 Easter Sunday						

Sundays

Adult Sunday School: 9:00am
Worship & Living Water
Children's Church: 10:00am
TRIBE Youth Group: 5:00pm

Mondays

Women's Prayer 12:00pm
Brianna's Hope 6:45pm

Wednesdays

Men's Prayer 12:00pm
Wesley Ringers 5:30pm
Chancel Choir 6:30pm

Fridays

Wisdom Study 12:00pm



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We can't wait to see you on Sunday!

Central UMC

Adult Sunday School: 9:00am

Worship & Living Water Children's Church: 10:00am

TRIBE Youth Group: 5:00pm