

Message from our Bishop, Paul Leeland:

Families across our state in North Carolina have started school. For those of us that have children needing to return to school, or family members who are teachers, we know this is an anxious time. Is it possible for our schools to be open and our loved ones to be safe from a virus that is unpredictably attacking someone's self? Some persons who have been infected have recovered. Some spend weeks if not months in the hospital. Some die. This is a frightening time. Public school officials are divided in suggesting the best way forward. Our local and state officials have been uncertain about when to open our communities or how to do it safely.

Most have relied upon the recommendations of the medical community to practice social distancing. Limiting our contact with others, washing our hands, and wearing protective masks, until we see a decline in the hospitalizations and infections. All of us have witnessed the urgent cry to open our communities, places of worship, and work. This week was reported that after a few weeks of students returning to our colleges and universities, there has been an increase in infections. As a result, some of our largest universities are eliminating campus classes. Most all have decided to offer online classes this semester. Our conference strongly recommended that churches follow The Center Disease Control's guidelines before reopening.

As Bishop, I've agreed with our conference leadership in recommendations against returning to indoor worship, particularly as long as we continue to see our outbreaks in our communities. And when we do openly gather again we want to do it safely. Yes, we've had some of our clergy who have tested positive for COVID-19. There was one week when we had six of our clergy that tested positive. It is so important that we are mindful of how we might lower the rate of infection and protect our children, families, and community members.

I realize that a person can become infected in any number of places. So, when you open your churches, please take careful attendance records because after an infection everyone present will need to be tested and quarantined. Hopefully, none of those infected will incur the enormous medical bills that some families are now struggling with. But if they did it would be natural for them to ask how often and by what means you cleaned and disinfected your facilities to protect your congregation.

I cannot wait for us to be in worship again. I long to hear the great hymns of the church, the scriptures read in public, and praising God together with the larger Christian community. So, I want to take this moment to share a word with our clergy and church leaders. You've been in a difficult place trying to be the pastor of your church in this moment. First, we had the tension related to sexuality, something our denomination continues to address, and how it will impact our local churches. Second, we've had to make decisions about the use of our church facilities for worship. In the many ways we've offered support to families and communities by the use of our church buildings. Third, we've spoken a word into the racial trauma tensions of this moment. Finally, we now have a very divisive election that is having an impact on the way people feel. All of that is a lot of responsibility and pressure. Thank you for your faithfulness.

This has made it very difficult to be a spiritual leader among people within our own churches that have different views over what should be done. To wear a mask or not, to open our church facilities earlier, when the church down the street is meeting, how to stay focused on our mission to make disciples of Jesus when too many people want to talk about the political agenda of each National Party.

I'm taking a few minutes to address you because I'm worried about our ministers. I want to give thanks to each of you, along with our strong lay leadership, for continuing to be the church in this moment. Jeremiah the Prophet spoke to the people of faith by saying "pray to God to show us the way we should go and what we should do." This is our prayer as well, "God show us the way to go and what to do. If we are making a mistake, let us make it with the welfare and safety of our children and families in mind."

Let me suggest this to all of our clergy. First, cast a strong vision in the mission of the church. We have a unique vision to remind each other of the importance of working to foster inward holiness in our compassion, personal holiness, and social holiness in the face of these current challenges. The pandemic, racism, and intense divisions in our society and our church. remind your people that we're moving to being shaped into the image of Christ. It is not just what we should do but the way we should be, and that is filled with the spirit of God which produces love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, kindness, goodness, and self-control, that's first.

Second, regardless of what others are doing, we've chosen to act in ways that do not put our people in danger. We've chosen to act responsibly for ourselves and for others. We've chosen to do no harm. We've chosen to do all the good we can. Here is where partnership in addressing tension or discord in a positive manner is so important. We work together as church leaders to guide our congregations. This is not about one person deciding what to do. This is about working together to address what is happening throughout the world.

Third, and finally, let's lead as spiritual Christian leaders toward that which brings hope and brings us together. This is real hope. This is a reminder that our presence, and our voices as clergy, is not only about worship at 11:00 on Sunday morning. We are about hope. We are about worship every day. Feeding our communities, sharing our facilities safely, offering our resources to help children. We worship every time we pray for those who are sick. Every time we serve others to meet their basic needs. Every time we console those who are grieving, we worship. What we know about effective ministry is that is not just about the minister, we are training other leaders to serve in the name of Christ. We've received a new command from Jesus, to love God and to love others. We want more leaders like you who are living fully into their calling to serve God. Keeping our minds on what is good, right, and lovely as Ephesians 4:8 reminds us. If we're living fully into our calling, will be serving God and we'll be fruitful. God does not know any other way to be, but faithful. Let us be in God, to serve the world, not simply living in the world trying to serve God. Thank you for your ministry. Let us pray for each other, pray for me, I need your prayers.





Prayer Requests

(All prayer requests will be kept on for 2 weeks unless otherwise requested)

Our Bishop Paul Leeland
 District Superintendent Laura Auten
 The Family of Ken Dickens
 Oscar Ervin
 Dean Davidson
 Our President & Vice President
 Our Pastors
 Ricky Black
 Ron Williams
 Joan Haynes
 Larry Shell
 Koy Dawkins

Weekday Children's Ministries
 Teachers, Administrators, Students & Parents
 The Family of Pat Antonucci
 The Family of Jane Golden
 Wint & Mary Lou Holtzclaw
 The Family of Dr. Jerry Surratt
 Arthurine Rivers
 Frances Hunley
 Unspoken
 Jason Hill
 Bob Sullivan
 Maxine Wally
 Judith Rogers
 Ellie Walden

Please call the Church Office 704-289-3186 or email skeesler@centralumcmonroe.org to add your prayer requests. If you have a confidential prayer request, please email llancaster@centralumcmonroe.org or smottram@centralumcmonroe.org.



MedAssist event totals are in! **509 bags** of over-the-counter medication were passed out to people in our community at the recent drive thru MedAssist event held in Central's parking lot! Praise God for working through all who served in this vital outreach opportunity!



DRIVE-IN
Church with Holy Communion
This Sunday, September 6, 2020
 @ 9:00am
 Celebrate Christ with Central
Please stay in your cars Transmitting on FM 87.9 *Building will remain closed*

Our Faithfulness

Week of August 30, 2020

Tithes & Offering	MTD	YTD
Received	\$ 49,536	\$ 445,874
Expenses	(34,781)	(456,761)
Difference	\$(11,834)	\$ (10,887)

NOTE: Numbers in **RED** indicate the Church is experiencing a shortfall in Finances.

We are excited to offer Drive-In Worship Service at Central this Sunday at 9am! During the Drive-In Worship Service we will be offering Holy Communion and for those of you who participate in the Online Worship Service. Please see the main page of the Constant Contact for the SignUp link.

If you would like to sign up for the Drive-In Worship Service and do not have an email address please give Pastor Sigrid a call at 704-635-8685 and she can sign you up.

We will offer Drive-Up Communion at 9:45am at the Weekday Children's Portico. Please enter the parking lot at Barden St. and drive up to the portico to receive the elements. The elements will be distributed in individual pre-packaged sanitary containers.

There are 3 ways to give

- Text to Give (instructions below)
- Give online (click on link below)
- Mail to the church (see address below)

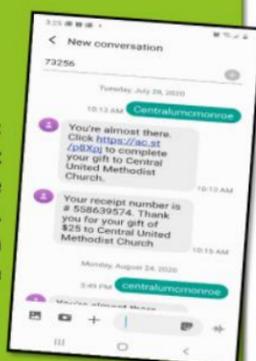
The best way to give your tithes and offerings is to give securely through "Text 2 Give" or online @ "centralumcmonroe.org" (please see main Constant Contact page for link to instructions). If you would rather mail your tithes and offerings our address is 801 S Hayne St, Monroe, 28112, Attention: Debbie. We appreciate your faithfulness to your church in these times as our bills and expenses are ongoing.

TEXT 2 GIVE INSTRUCTIONS

See link on main Constant Contact Page

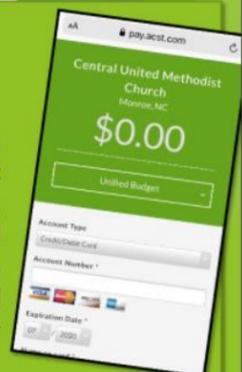
1

For recipient/number type: 73256 at the top of text message. In the message type in: centralumcmonroe. Press send. You will get a text message back with a link to click. Click on link.



2

Enter Amount, Select Fund you wish to contribute to, Account Type, Account Number, Expiration Date, Name on Card or Account, Address, City, State, Postal Code, and email address. Click Give at the bottom of the screen.



3

Once completed you will receive a text message acknowledging. You will also receive an email receipt for contribution. Please contact Debbie Eggleston if you should have any questions at deggleston@centralumcmonroe.org or at the office at 704-289-3186.