



The CENTRAL WORD

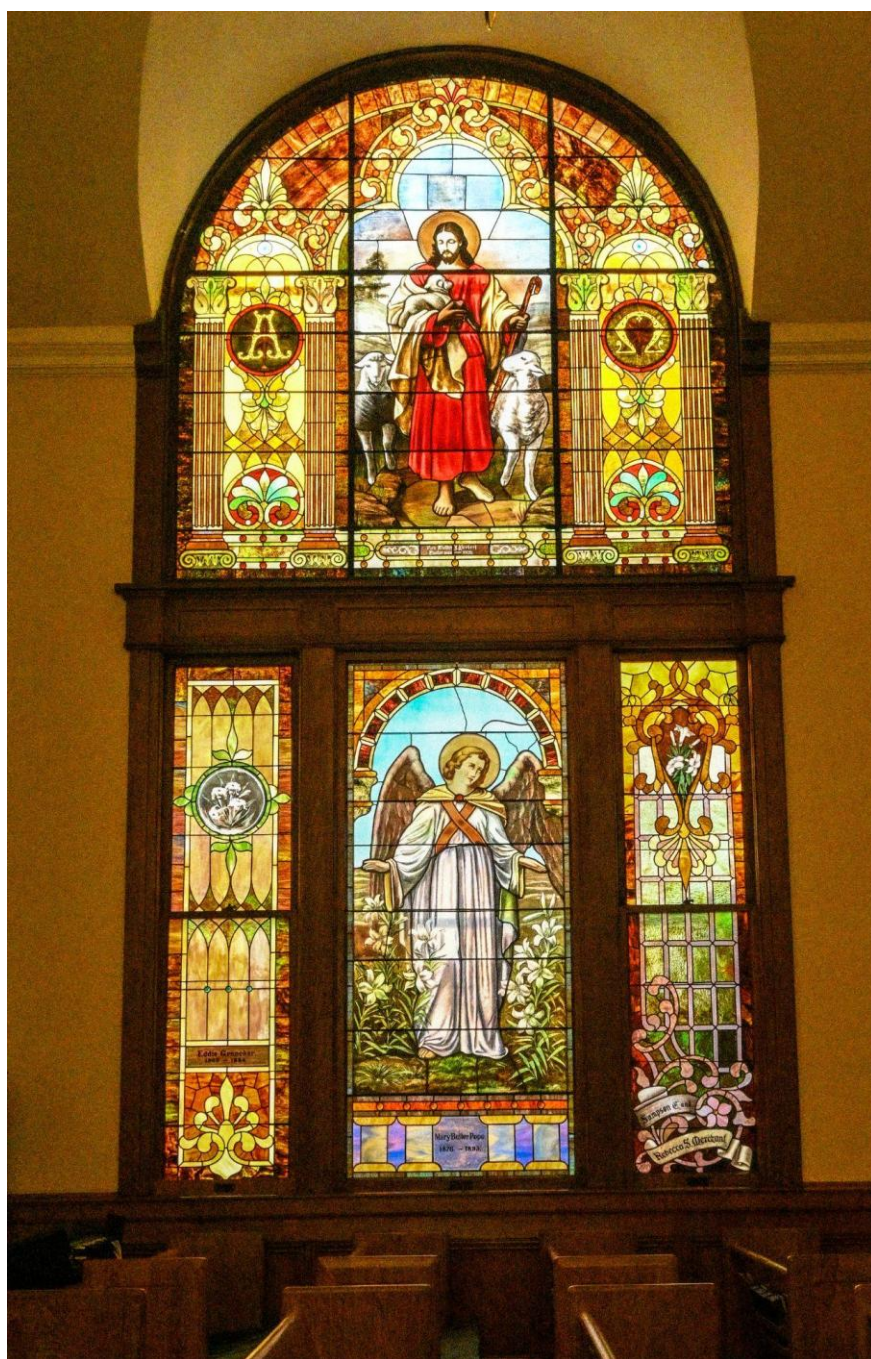
— News, stories, and reflections from Central United Methodist Church —

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The Word From the Pastor:

Finding the Right Front Door

When I first pulled up to the corner of Friend and College Street on my very first day as your pastor, I stood on the sidewalk and looked at our beautiful building. It is a striking, historic space right in the heart of downtown Newberry. But truth be told, if I hadn't spotted the "Pastor Parking" sign, I wouldn't have had the slightest clue where to park. It actually took me a few weeks of being here to realize our building has 13 different doors! Thank goodness for those big glass double doors, because otherwise, I would have been completely lost trying to figure out how to get inside.

My own experience finding my way into the church reminded me that what feels familiar to us may be confusing to someone visiting for the first time. We want everyone who comes through our doors to feel welcome and find their way with ease.

For decades, United Methodists have shared a beautiful invitation: **Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors**. It's a wonderful motto. But an "open door" doesn't mean much if people can't find the right entrance. Over the last five months, we have been working hard to change that. We aren't changing who we are as a United Methodist church, we are simply making it easier for our community to see the hospitality and love that have always lived inside these walls.

You may have already noticed some of these changes. This Sunday, October 18, 2026, we are officially launching our brand-new website and introducing a church bulletin designed with guests in mind. Inside this week's bulletin, each member will receive a church car sticker to put on their vehicle, offering another wonderful opportunity to share our message out in the community. Our members are playing a vital role in these new changes, helping us carry our welcoming spirit outside of our walls.

In about 4 to 6 weeks, you will also see new directional signage installed across our property, making it crystal clear where to go, where to park, and exactly which entrance to use.

In our United Methodist tradition, we talk a lot about prevenient grace, the beautiful belief that God's love is actively pursuing us, welcoming us, and working in our lives long before we ever realize it. God is always opening doors for us. Our job as a congregation is to make sure we are standing at those doors ready to welcome people through them.

Opening our doors also means leaving the comfort of our building to meet our neighbors exactly where they are. We had an incredible time connecting with so many of them at downtown Oktoberfest on October 3rd, and our team is already gearing up to hand out candy at Newberry High School on Friday, October 30th. There will be approximately 1,000 kids there, which is a great opportunity for us to be present and plant seeds of faith in our community. You'll also see us lining the streets for the Christmas Parade this December.

Whether you are looking at our new logo, browsing this website, reading our updated bulletin, or passing our new signs in a few weeks, the message remains exactly the same: **We have a door open for you, and we cannot wait to welcome you home.**

In Christ,

Pastor Keith

Around Central:



On this page we will share ways that Central UMC is shaping one another as Disciples of Jesus!

The Word in Action:



As soon as Pastor Keith finishes pulling this cruise ship away from the dock and out to sea, he and Jackie will get busy filling this page with photos and descriptions of the ways that Central UMC leaves the dock (the church building) and goes out to serve our community!