



**GRADUATE SUNDAY 2022
WORSHIP SERVICE**

**Central United Methodist Church
Rev. Dr. Vance P. Ross, Sr. Pastor
501 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, SW
Atlanta, Georgia 30314**



Brought to you by:

CUMC Higher Education Ministry

Our Vision

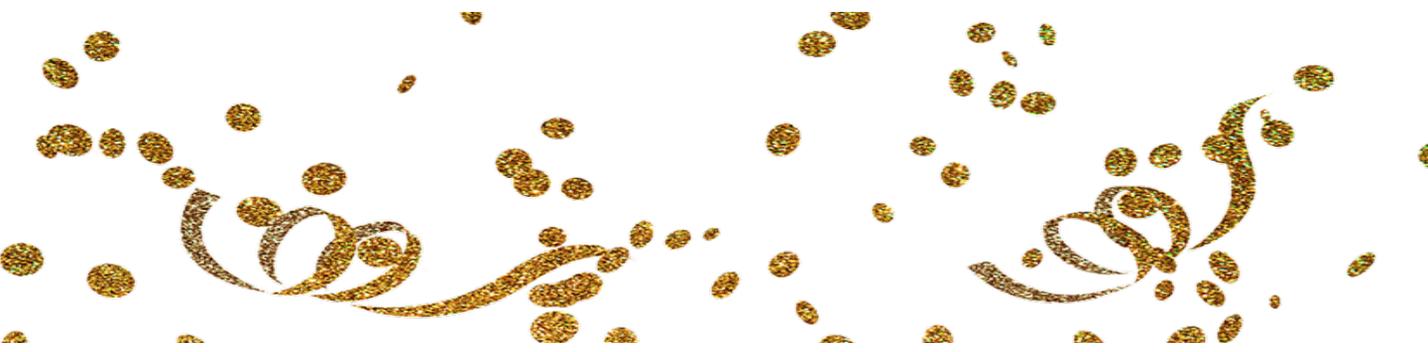
A Christ-Centered, Radically Inclusive, Intergenerational congregation that uses its Spiritual Gifts to meet the needs of our unique surrounding Community.

Our Purpose

Exalt the Lord ... Equip the Saints ... Embrace the Community

Our Mission

To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.





Here's wishing you
happy memories,
bright beginnings
and all the success
you so deserve!

*Congratulations
on Graduating!*

*From your
Central
United Methodist Church
Family!*



Senior Pastor's Charge to Graduates

June 2022

Dear Central Graduates,

As this season of viruses (both health and racial injustice) has continued, your latter years of college and high school resembled those of the 2021 graduating class—ones that displayed the underside of our society in clear view. And, yet, you maintained your focus and met the moment with faith and hope.

Your awards, accomplishments, honors, and triumphs prove the sacred worth of Isaiah 40:31 (NIV): "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." You stayed the course and believed that this day was within your reach—your grasp.

So, we thank you. Thank you for your relentless effort. Thank you for your perseverance. Thank you for the fresh, bold power to achieve in and beyond graduation. You now commence to a new chapter of life, with novel challenges and incredible opportunities. God brought you through this time. God will yet bring you through whatever you face.

I join Central in being enormously delighted in you! Congratulations!

Rev. Dr. Vance P. Ross
Senior Pastor
Central United Methodist Church



A Word from Pastor Angie

June 2022

Graduates of 2022,

You are AMAZING! You have made it through four years of classes, exams, sports, clubs, jobs, and so much more. And, of course, you, too, have the unique distinction of finishing strong during a global pandemic! Again, YOU ARE AMAZING!

As you prepare for the next phase of your journey (college, graduate school, military, work), I encourage you to remember Joshua 1:9. "Be strong and courageous! Do not be terrified or dismayed (intimidated), for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." There will be many firsts and through them all, God is with you. There will be times when things are hard, God is with you. There will be times of joy, God is with you. You are NEVER alone. Not only is God with you; your Central UMC family is with you too! We will continue to pray with and for you. We are here to celebrate and encourage you. We are your safe place.

My final piece of advice is to "Dream big, work hard, stay focused, and surround yourself with good people." And...HAVE FUN!

I could not be prouder of you. CONGRATULATIONS!

Blessings,

Pastor Angie

Rev. Angela Johnson
Associate Pastor
Central United Methodist Church



A Word from Higher Education Ministry

June 2022

You've made it! Regardless of whether you are graduating from Secondary, or Post-Secondary school, this can be both an exciting and uncertain time in your life. The good thing is you did not have to make it on your own. God will always help you carry your burdens. It could be through emotional and financial support from your parents, prayers of a grandmother, sage wisdom of a grandfather, bonds shared between friends, or encouragement from your Central UMC family. You will never be alone.

Yes, it is an exciting time; you are off to a new phase in your life. There is so much promise ahead of you. If you did not like the way you were perceived in the last chapter of your journey, you can reinvent yourself going forward. However, I hope that you were satisfied and continue striving to be the best you that you can be.

Undoubtedly, it is also a time of uncertainty. With that comes anxiety, apprehension, anger, and doubt. While I don't want to give those feelings power, I also don't want to pretend they may not exist. Your feelings are real, don't deny them, but it is best to work through them. You are not alone. You made it before, and you will make it again.

A new chapter in your journey can mean leaving old friends behind, but it can also mean so much more. You have the chance to move on from that bully that gave you grief. You have the chance to make that team of which you always wanted to be a part. You have a chance to capture that superlative title that you "deserved." You have the chance to meet that special someone with which you may spend the rest of your life. You have a chance to design your future. And "yes," you have a chance to "get right with God" if that has been heavy on your heart.

We tend to look towards "pomp & circumstance" as symbolism of graduation, however, in its original context, it was intended as a "coronation of a king." Let us look at this moment as your coronation of who you are meant to be. We are with you on your journey.

With Love and Pride,

C. Wayne Copeland, Ph. D.

Krystal Evans (Chairperson)

Christy Garrison, Ph. D.

Natalie Hope (Co-Chairperson)



To the Graduate

I hereby command you:

Be strong and courageous
do not be *afraid*; do not
be *discouraged*, for the
Lord your God will be
with you *wherever you go*.

Joshua 1:9



Graduate Sunday Worship Service

June 26, 2022
10:00 AM

Third Sunday after Pentecost
Color: Green

Welcome/Lord's Prayer Affirmation of Faith	Jason Thrash
Song	"Inside Out"
Presentation of Graduates and Grace Grissom West Kemp Book Fund Tribute	John W. Southall George Kevin West, Jr. "Greatest Love" Soloist: Maesa Anderson
Scripture	Jayla Thrash
Prayer	Rev. Angela Johnson
Introduction of Guest Speaker	Jayla Thrash
Song	"He Wants It All" Soloist: Kai Kellum
The Preached Word	Michael Browning, Jr. Principal, Ithica Elementary School
Remarks/Benediction	Rev. Dr. Vance P. Ross



Graduate Sunday 2022 Speaker

Michael Browning, Jr.

Michael Browning is a native of Central United Methodist Church. He was raised in Central and has served in many capacities to support the upbuilding of Central and the Kingdom of God. Through Central, and other experiences, Michael's love of learning, energetic leadership and passion for people led him to pursue a career in education.

Michael Browning has been an educator for eight years. He is passionate about teaching, learning, and leading. After graduating from the University of West Georgia (UWG), Michael began his teaching career at Bowdon Middle School teaching sixth-graders social studies and English language arts. After two years, his passions led him home to Henry County to teach at his former middle school, Austin Road Middle.

Mr. Browning has served in many capacities. He has served as teacher, instructional lead teacher, coach and professional learning developer. His work in Henry County not only led him to be named Teacher of the Year in 2018, but also led to his promotion to personalized learning lead teacher, where he was charged with supporting teachers in creating student-centered learning environments.

In March of 2019, Michael moved back to Carroll County to serve as assistant principal of Temple High School. Michael's work as an educator earned him recognition from his alma mater, UWG. He received the "Thriving under 30" UWG leadership award. As his first year as assistant principal ended during the pandemic, Michael accepted the call to serve as the county's virtual learning administrator, where he managed the virtual learning program for Carroll County. Michael worked diligently to support the county's families, teachers and leaders in providing a serviceable learning option during a difficult time.

Michael's work through the pandemic spoke volumes of his resilience, determination and drive to support students. He was honored by the *Times Georgian Newspaper* as "One of Carroll County's Thriving Leaders 40 under 40." Through the height of the pandemic, Michael also led the worship team at Central to develop the church's online worship service--that Central utilizes today as its "second campus."

Michael served this year as Ithica Elementary School's assistant principal, where he shares his passion for student agency, sharing personalized learning strategies and making teaching and learning attainable for all students. This coming school year, Michael looks forward to serving Ithica Elementary, a school with a 91.1 % CCRPI state rating, as its first Black principal.

Of all the titles, Michael is most recently blessed to be called. "Dad" by his newest and coolest boy, Noah, whom he and his fiancé Candy welcomed in October of 2021.

In all things, Michael gives honor to God and praises the Lord with boldness for all the things God has done to allow him to be where he is today.



Class of 2022

Graduate: Nia Anderson

Parents: Max and Aungelique Anderson

Grandparents: Eleanor Brayboy Proctor and Dr. Catherine King Clarke

Siblings: Asha and Maesa Anderson



Graduated: **Howard University** Nia graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science and a minor in Legal Communications. She is part of the fifth generation of the Wade-Brayboy family to attend Central United Methodist Church.

Awards/Honors/Activities

- Pi Sigma Alpha Political Science Honor Society
- Phi Alpha Delta Law Society International
- Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated

Nia plans to enroll in **law school** in the fall and become a real estate attorney/developer with an emphasis on affordable housing and projects for the underserved in our community. She also dreams of opening her own Afrocentric Charter School.

Class of 2022

Graduate: Courtney L. Brightharp

Parents: Herman and Wilma Brightharp

Siblings: Heather and Megan Brightharp

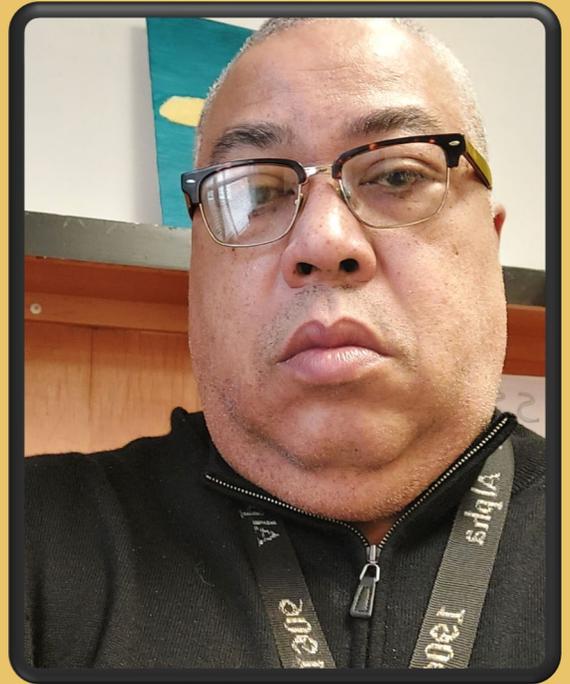


Graduated: **Drexel University** Courtney graduated with a Doctor of Health Science degree.

Courtney is employed as a program evaluator with the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control's Division of Diabetes and Heart Disease Management.

Class of 2022

Graduate: Landrum Davenport



Graduated: **University of Phoenix** Landrum graduated with a Masters of Business Administration in Education (Special Education).

Class of 2022

Graduate: Tariq Murphy

Parents: Dr. Saied Murphy and the late amazing Wendy Murphy

Family: Uncle & Aunt Couties and Edith Hollis, Aunt June Hollis



Graduated: **Georgia Southern University** Tariq graduated with a Bachelors degree in Multimedia Film and Production.

Tariq is keeping his options open as to his next steps.

Class of 2022

Graduate: Jayla Ronae Thrash

Parents: Ronald and Joi Thrash

Grandparents: Sherole Thrash and the late Maurice W. Thrash and Bettye Brewer and the late Alonzo F. Brewer

Siblings: Jason, Jasmyn and Kalyn Thrash



Graduated: **Alabama A & M University** Jayla Ronae has continued to serve as a positive role model for others, placing an emphasis on community service and academic excellence. This Biology major graduated with honors and assisted in several campus health fairs, community youth events and new student orientations and mentoring programs. As a member of Gamma Mu Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Jayla continues to use her leadership ability and commitment to service to help others..

Awards/Honors/Activities:

- National Honor Society (all four years),
- AAMU Girls Soccer Team,
- Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.,
- Chemistry Club,
- Pre-professional Health Association (team leader)

In the fall, Jayla will continue her academic studies at **Augusta Medical College**, where she plans to pursue a degree in dentistry. She hopes to one day open her own dental office and provide quality dental care services to children and families in low-income communities.

Class of 2022

Graduate: Derek Xavier Walker, Jr.

Parents: Derek and Katrina M. Walker

Grandparents: Mrs. Normarene Culver Merritt and the late Hope Merritt, Jr.
Mrs. Deborah Wingfield and the late Joseph Wingfield, Sr.

Siblings: Jordan and Maya Walker



Graduated: **University of Georgia** Derek graduated cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts in Entertainment and Media Studies with a minor in Film

Awards/Honors/Activities

- President of the Society of Students in Animation
- Tech lead and member of the Sharkwing Sketch Comedy Troupe
- Media Manager for Center for Latino Achievement and Success in Education
- Writer, director, editor and crew member on various short films and web series
- Cosmic Clash: nominated for the Best Short Film Award at the 2019 Georgia Shorts Film Festival. It won Best Animated Short at that same film festival.
- Poor Connection: won the Judges' Choice Award at the 2021 Elevate Minority Student Film Festival.

Class of 2022

Graduate: Nya D. Harrison

Parents: Christy Garrison-Harrison and David W. Harrison

Grandparents: Sidney Garrison Jr. and the late Evelyn Garrison and the late Lynwood Harrison and Janie Harrison



Graduated: **Ursuline Academy** Nya graduated with honors in the top 10% of her class. (She also matriculated at Atlanta Girls' School for more than half of her high school years.)

Awards/Honors/Activities

- Model United Nations Club (member); Student Government Association (senior representative); Diversity of Women Club (member); Elite Hurricane Choir (member); Theatre Club ("Aida" and "The Little Mermaid" school productions); "Seussical Jr." ensemble; volleyball team
- Carleton College Summer Liberal Arts Institute (senior year)
- Louisiana High School Rally Association (placed first in Civics at both District and State Rally)
- Central United Methodist Church youth choir, youth usher board, youth ministry, Sunday School
- School community service activities, as well as CUMC and at the Betty Shabazz Delta Academy through the Atlanta Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.
- Nya's photography has been published twice in a teen empowerment magazine called Geaux Girl.

Nya was awarded the Legislative Scholarship, under Senator John Bowie Jr., for a full scholarship to **Tulane University Honors' College**. Nya plans to major in Film, with a double minor in Linguistics and Sociology.

Class of 2022

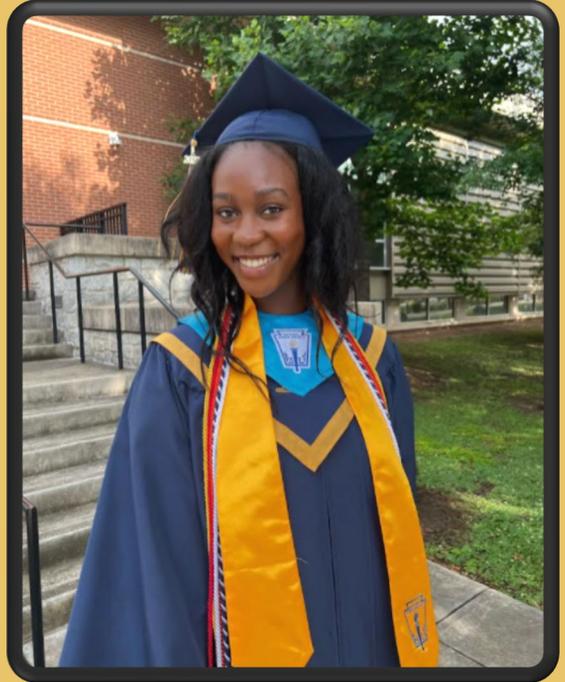
Graduate: Maya Sophia-Elise Walker

Parents: Derek and Katrina M. Walker

Grandparents: Mrs. Normarene Culver Merritt and the late Hope Merritt, Jr.

Mrs. Deborah Wingfield and the late Joseph Wingfield, Sr.

Siblings: Derek, Jr. and Jordan Walker



Graduated: **Decatur High School** Maya graduated as an International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Candidate with a 4 .6 GPA

Awards/Honors/Activities

- Varsity Volleyball player (four years), senior-year captain; DeKalb Second-Team All-County (2022); Most Valuable Player (2021); Offensive Player of the Year (2019)
- Student Body Co-President (2021-22); Student Government Association (SGA) Member (four years)
- National Honor Society (NHS) Secretary (2021-22); NHS member (two years)
- Musical Theater member (four years): Agatha Trunchbull in Matilda (Fall 2021); Mama understudy in Chicago (Fall 2019)
- Chorus member (four years): All State Chorus Member (three years); Service to Chorus Award (Spring 2022)
- Girl Scout Gold Award Candidate; Girl Scout Bronze Award and Silver Award Recipient

Class of 2022



Graduate: Dr. Robert AA Rowe

Parents: Dr. Brenda Rowe and the late Robert Rowe, Sr.

Graduated: [University of North Carolina](#) Robert, in addition to having already earned a medical degree from Wake Forest School of Medicine and an MBA from UNC's Kenan-Flagler Business School, earned a Masters of Public Health in Population Health, conferred in May 2022, to further develop his interests in improving health care availability, outcomes and cost effectiveness, particularly for vulnerable populations.

Dr. Rowe is a preventative medicine resident in the department of family medicine at the University of North Carolina School of Medicine.



Grace Grissom West Kemp Book Fund

Grace Grissom West Kemp was born October 27, 1921. She was the daughter of sharecroppers who moved to Atlanta from Inman, Georgia when she was very young. Grace became one of Central's beloved Storytellers and was a faithful and loving member all of her life, serving in many capacities. When her children were young in the 1950's, she served in the Women's Society of Christian Service and worked with the Youth Fellowship. Later she was an usher and always helped to hide eggs for the annual Sunday School Easter Egg Hunt. It seems she was in the Cathedral Choir forever, and when she was in her 70's, she was a member of the Central Players. That gave her so much joy!

Grace attended Clark University (now Clark Atlanta University), but she only had enough money for barely a year of education. Nevertheless, she valued education and worked extremely hard, sometimes under very challenging circumstances to support her children and grandchildren in their college matriculation. She was unable to achieve her dream of a college education, but she found her joy in seeing all of us excel in our academic pursuits. She was very proud of our achievements and the degrees and honors we received, and we are grateful for her dedication to our pursuits.

In her last 10 years, when her health began to fail, she moved to Columbia, Maryland to live with her daughters. She still kept up with her Central family through cards, tapes, calls and CDs of the services, and she continued to give whatever she could to support Central's ministries. This book fund is established in her memory, by all of us, to annually award **\$100** to each high school graduate of Central.

We are as proud of you as she was proud of us!

Children

Jean West Lewis, B.S., M.S.
George W. West, Jr., former student, Clark College
Jennifer Moy West, B.S., M.A., Ph. D.

Grandchildren

George K. West, former student, Georgia State University, Electrical Engineering Certification
Caya Lewis Atkins, B.A., M.P.H.
Rogers L. Lewis Jr., B.A., J.D.
Traci West Blanchard, B.A., M.A., MBA
Imani Grace West, Hampton University Sophomore

Great Grandchildren

George K. West, Jr.
Jada Blanchard, Straight A 6th-grade student
Curtis Blanchard, Jr., Straight A 3rd-grade student

We are *Thankful* to God
for your successful

Graduation.

It's the result of your

Sincerity, Hardwork

and Patience.



Congratulations!