



# CENTRAL NEWS

Jan 2021

Vol. 29, No. 5

## From Rebecca

Dear Friends,

Happy New Year! This is the two thousand twentieth! The three hundred and eighty fifth for the city of Providence. The one hundred and sixty ninth for dear Central Church! Never mind which for some of the rest of us!

Nostalgia is the risk in counting, and the boon! Your pastor remembers long ago nights staying up and watching TV to see the ball drop in Times Square...that was a big deal!! And then there were First Nights downtown with small children and then dinner parties and quiet evenings...all good...all different. The thing is, after the celebration of Christmas, God keeps coming to us, where we are, whatever we are doing...all of us...each of us...

We have a fresh start...maybe a fresh snowfall, but no matter what, a new chance to begin. To look at our lives in a different light. To see people with fresh perspectives. To make resolutions --some of which will stick...some of which won't... But the important part is the 'resolve' of resolutions...to resolve to better reflect God's love.

This new year of 2021 is for all of us, and it is the reason for Christ's birth, that splendid gift to us. Because all God's children are here sharing this earth with each other. Because we all are why He came in the first place, and come to think of it, in the last place, too.

This year, we will see the end of the pandemic and all the loss it has brought. And we will see a new chapter in our country, and a fresh start for each of us.

This new year may just be a beginning of God's answer to our and all people's prayers for peace and joy and love to prevail....throughout this whole wide world....

May it be so.

Yours, in hope, Rebecca

## JAN EVENTS

<b>3</b>	Stewardship Committee	9:15 am
	Church School	9:30 am
	Middle School Class	10:15 am
	Worship	10:30 am
	Confirmation Class	11 am
	Adult Sunday School	6 pm
	NEOS	6 pm
	WORD	7 pm
<b>4</b>	Technology Committee	7 pm
<b>5</b>	Spiritual Companionship	6 pm
<b>6</b>	Gallery Committee	9:30 am
	Budget Proposal Meeting (All Committee Chairs)	7 pm
<b>7</b>	Rebecca's Book Group	12:30 pm
	Religious Education	7 pm
<b>10</b>	Church School	9:30 am
	LDC All Committee Chair	9:30 am
	Middle School Class	10:15 am
	Worship	10:30 am
	NEOS	6 pm
	WORD	7 pm
<b>12</b>	Deacons Meeting	5:45 pm
<b>13</b>	Mission & Action	6 pm
	Finance Committee	7 pm
<b>14</b>	Chapel Hall Design Committee	5 pm
	Food for Thought	7 pm
<b>17</b>	Church School	9:30 am
	Middle School Class	10:15 am
	Worship	10:30 am
	Confirmation Class	11 am
	NEOS	6 pm
	WORD	7 pm
<b>19</b>	Prudential Meeting	7 pm
<b>20</b>	New Year's Mini Retreat	7 pm
<b>21</b>	CCC Men's Group	7:30 am
	Caring & Sharing	7 pm
<b>24</b>	Church School	9:30 am
	Middle School Class	10:15 am
	Worship	10:30 am
	NEOS	6 pm
	WORD	7 pm
<b>26</b>	Inquirers' Meeting	7 pm
<b>28</b>	Rebecca's Book Group	12:30 pm
<b>31</b>	Church School	9:30 am
	Middle School Class	10:15 am
	New Member Sunday	10:30 am
	Confirmation Class	11 am
	Budget Approval Meeting	11:15 am
	NEOS	6 pm
	WORD	7 pm

## Stewardship Moment

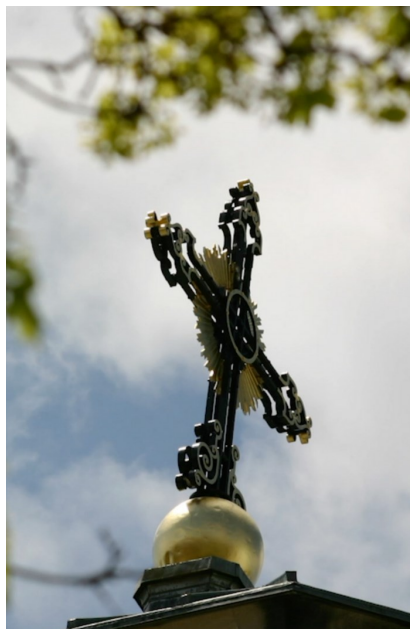
As we reflect on the year 2020, we thank all of you for giving during these difficult and unprecedented times. Our pledges allow us to keep the lights on, to pay the musicians who inspired us so beautifully for the Carol Service, to reach out to our local mission partners and to the clinic in Haiti....

"Central is Giving, Giving is Central"

Keep your eyes open for information on our "virtual" Community Dinner that will take place on February 21! Will be a wonderful opportunity to catch up with one another.

Happy New Year,

Alex Arnold, Co-Chair,  
Stewardship Committee



**JOIN US FOR SUNDAY WORSHIP AT 10:30 AM!**



## Seeking a Church Home?

If you're looking for a church – or know someone who is – we'd love to talk with you about it at our Inquirers' Meeting. It's very informal. You'll meet with our senior minister, Rebecca Spencer, and others like you who think Central may be the right church home. No commitment necessary. To join us, fill out a pew card during Sunday Worship or phone the Office at 401-331-1960 and Rebecca will get in touch.

### Inquirers' Meeting\*

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 7 pm

### Faith Exploration\*

Wednesday, Feb. 3, 7 pm

**New Member Sunday:** February 7

### LDC Meeting

All committee chairs are invited to share in updates for the initiative to re-imagine Chapel Hall...the goal of our all church visioning for Growing Central for Tomorrow. Contact Sandi Connors for Zoom invitation. **Sunday, Jan. 10, 9:30 am.**

### Help Amos House

Whether personal care items, food, or a pair of winter gloves, your in-kind donation makes a difference. Please note that in-kind donations are only accepted Monday - Friday, by appointment. If you are able to help, the office phone number is 401-272-0220 to schedule a date best for you.

### The Zero Waste Project

Save the date for a Zoom presentation by Kevin Budris, Attorney at the Conservation Law Foundation on *The Zero Waste Project*. This presentation originally to be held at Central and hosted by the Perennial Planters Garden Club, will still be available to you via Zoom. Watch for details in the coming bulletins!

**Tuesday, Feb. 9, 7 pm.**

### Virtual Community Dinner

Even though we cannot be together in person this year, we are holding a Virtual Community Dinner, where we can cook and eat together over Zoom. There's no better way to beat the February blues than to share a meal, create meaningful connections, and simply have a great time. Save the date: **Sunday, Feb. 21.**

## The Deacon's Bench

"When one door closes; God opens another", and so it is with Camp Street Community Ministries' (CSCM) food pantry during the time of the COVID pandemic. God has opened many doors!

On March 17, 2020, following guidance from the R.I. Department of Health, the food pantry shuttered its door. However, through the networking of the CSCM Executive Director, several community agencies and the city council person a plan was developed for distributing food to the community's residents in need. The Executive Director of Mount Hope Neighborhood Association (MHNA), working in concert with CSCM, gathered together volunteers who filled bags with the shelf stable foods that we continue to order from the RI Community Food Bank. Since MHNA has a van, they are able to deliver the food (curbside) to residents, particularly seniors, in the neighborhood. Additionally, MHNA set up a table on the sidewalk and anyone who needs food is given a bag. As is the custom of communities, the "grapevine" went to work and soon, people began calling from many zip codes for deliveries. The list of callers grew to beyond our capacity. In one day, we had 50 callers; the majority of whom spoke Spanish. So, with RICFB's list of pantries in hand, I called my Spanish-speaking sister and together we wrote a script I could use directing callers to a pantry "más proximo" to their home.

Following tradition, CSCM had to find a way to continue to distribute Thanksgiving "baskets". With the closing of our partner churches and temple, we lost a significant source of thanksgiving foods. However, the students and faculty of Moses Brown School took up the challenge and donated hundreds of pounds of thanksgiving foods, and made a significant cash contribution to purchase turkeys. Through the advocacy of Redeemer Church, CSCM is the recipient of an Episcopal Charities donation. Temple Beth El made a cash donation since they were not able to collect food during their High Holy Days this year. In partnership with Rebelle Bagels we were able to purchase turkeys at a competitive price, and Make A Difference donated 175 turkeys again this year. People signed up in advance and on Monday and Tuesday of Thanksgiving week, 396 guests (with masks) went to the door of the Clothing Closet and were handed a bag of shelf-stable Thanksgiving foods, then proceeded 6 feet apart to the pantry door and were handed a turkey.

And of course, dear Central members, your ongoing support of CSCM through Mission and Action's budget and your contributions of turkeys, thanksgiving foods and cash donations every year, makes feeding the "least of these" possible.

Mary Francis Bishop

## Member News

Dr. Kathleen Cornely, member of Central, and professor at Providence College for more than 25 years, has been appointed the Robert H. Walsh '39 Endowed Professor in Chemistry and Biochemistry, the College's first endowed chair in the sciences.

The professorship was created through a multi-million bequest to the College from Robert H. Walsh '39 & '66 Hon.

Kathleen's research specialty is mycobacterial phage - bacteria-killing viruses commonly found in soil. In 2017, a phage isolated from soil at PC and modified by Kathleen was successfully used to treat a young woman in England. It was a worldwide medical breakthrough - the first successful use of a genetically modified virus to treat a drug-resistant infection.

Both students and colleagues can agree,

Kathleen exemplifies excellence in teaching, and is well-deserving of her appointment. Central extends a heartfelt congratulations on your achievement, Kathleen!

*Every day, members and friends of Central Congregational Church achieve new heights, make a positive impact on our community, or demonstrate random acts of kindness. If you know someone whose accomplishments should be recognized, please contact the church office.*

### In Memoriam

Our prayers and sympathy are with the friends and family of P. Patricia Rusk.

*Requiescat in pace.*

## From Claudia

About this time last year I read this poem by Wendell Berry filled with gentle images for the first time. I could feel the frozen air hanging in front of me. I was instantly transported to the dairy farms of my childhood that were all around our home and I remembered the warmth of the cows being milked at "Uncle" Irving's in the cold of winter in those chilly barns.

We humans have lived, are living and will continue to live "in the world it happened in when it first happened." And, the holiness of that first place continues whether we know it or not! All because "it happened once." Nothing can change that.

*Remembering that it happened once,  
We cannot turn away the thought,  
As we go out, cold, to our barns  
Toward the long night's end, that we  
Ourselves are living in the world  
It happened in when it first happened,  
That we ourselves, opening a stall  
(A latch thrown open countless times  
Before), might find them breathing there,  
Foreknown: the Child bedded in straw,  
The mother kneeling over Him,  
The husband standing in belief  
He scarcely can believe, in light*

*That lights them from no source we see,  
An April morning's light, the air  
Around them joyful as a choir.  
We stand with one hand on the door,  
Looking into another world  
That is this world, the pale daylight  
Coming just as before, our chores  
To do, the cattle all awake,  
Our own white frozen breath hanging  
In front of us; and we are here  
As we have never been before,  
Sighted as not before, our place  
Holy, although we knew it not.*

Like Joseph, may we, too, stand in belief we can scarcely believe as we contemplate God's gift to us of Jesus the Christ, the Light of the World!

New Year's blessings,

Claudia

## From Tom and Monica Liddle

What a year it has been! As I sit writing there is snow on the ground here in Duluth, Minnesota. A far cry from where we were a year ago, in Lospalos, East Timor: on the brink of the rainy season, hot and muggy all day long as we made Christmas preparations.

We write to you to offer our sincere thanks for your support, both financial and prayerful, of our family during four years in East Timor as we served as doctor and pastor to our community in Lospalos. Global Ministries open the door for this opportunity, and your support made it real for us. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

If we were to sit down and share a cup of coffee, we would love to tell you a story. We could tell you about Linda, a woman about 50 years old, who wanders the roads in Lospalos, homeless, mentally ill, and both abused and cared for - fed and housed - by the people in town. We would love to tell you about Leyla, the 20-year-old young woman who, as the eldest of seven siblings, role models commitment to her younger siblings. Her parents have a fourth grade education; she will be the first college-educated midwife in her family. We would love to share with you, too, about Alberto, a young man who recently

finished a Master's in Theology. He returns to his hometown, Lospalos, to help his family, to participate in the leadership of Immanuel Church, and to use his education to address issues of poverty that keep so many Timorese from life's opportunities Americans are privileged to have.

We come back to the USA at a strange time. On reflection, we see how Timor's government has managed to keep the Covid-19 pandemic in check: as of writing, only 30 cases and NO deaths at all. This is a testimony to East Timor's growing capacity as a nation to protect its people.

It is our family's hope that some seeds that we planted will grow on in the lives of people we touched. We ourselves have been changed forever by these years in a land far, far from our own, and we all hope to someday return. Global Ministries opened the door for us; YOU sent us to East Timor. Thank You for making a commitment to bring the world a little bit closer together by supporting us, the Liddles in East Timor. Your brothers and sisters in Christ in the Protestant Church of East Timor know you care about them.

May you find peace this winter season,  
Tom and Monica Liddle

### Adult Sunday School

#### *Incarnation: Epiphany...*

#### *Falling to our knees*

Incarnation comes from the Latin for embodiment/become flesh. We will explore the meaning of incarnation and what it means for us as Christians in these days. Ask Claudia for the Zoom invitation. **Sunday, Jan. 3, 6 pm.**

### Spiritual Companionship Group

Where is God in our lives? Spiritual companionship is a very ancient tradition. It is a way to offer ourselves a holy spaciousness by listening for God in our lives. We encounter our own inner wisdom as we seek where God is found in our daily living. Through the companionship of others, participants often find new possibilities in their spiritual life and practices. RSVP to Claudia. **Tuesday, Jan. 5, 6 pm.**

### Food for Thought Book Group

Join us for a lively discussion of "The Library Book" by Susan Orlean. Contact Claudia for the Zoom invitation. **Thursday, Jan. 14, 7 pm.**

Looking ahead... Feb. 11: "American Dirt" by Jeanine Cummins.

### A New Year's Mini-Retreat

"Year's end is neither an end nor a beginning but a going on, with all the wisdom that experience can instill in us." (Hal Borland) Start 2021 off well by giving yourself the gift of time for contemplation in the company of CCC friends! Ask Claudia for the Zoom link. **Wednesday, Jan. 20, 7 pm.**

### Caring & Sharing

Join women of all ages who come together in supportive fellowship and activities. This month, we'll connect virtually and share where we are in our lives. Give Claudia a call for the Zoom invitation. **Thursday, Jan. 21, 7 pm.**

### Rebecca's Book Group



Take part in a lively discussion on The New York Times best-selling book, "The Radium Girls (The Dark Story of America's Shining Women)" by Kate Moore. Contact Rebecca for the Zoom invitation. **Thursday, Jan. 28, 12:30 pm.**

### Women's Retreat Group

The women of Central are invited to gather in solidarity to pray and check in every Saturday - until we no longer need to meet like this! Ask Claudia for the Zoom link. **Saturdays throughout January, 7 pm.**

## Church School News

The church school has been very busy, meeting via Zoom each week. In December, there was the additional separate Zoom middle school class. While this has taken a little while to get going, it continues to grow stronger each week.

December of course was a busy month. Each week we lit our Advent candles, learning what they meant. The younger class heard a piece of the Christmas story each week. The middle school class looked at the book of Isaiah and people's exile in Babylon. We talked of the presence of God in all of life - the good and the not so good parts. We discussed the importance of our decisions and how they affect our lives.

Looking ahead, in the month of January we'll look to what the gospels of John and Mark say about Jesus. We'll also hear the story of Samuel's call to be a priest. The focus for the month will be listening for God.

Hopefully soon the church school will meet in person on Sunday morning while continuing to provide online support for families who choose not to attend in person.

One of the real negatives with teaching on Zoom is that I don't get the chance to see parents and hear your thoughts and concerns. Simply put, we're not getting to know each other. As a way to resolve this, I'll be hosting times on Zoom when parents and/or grandparents can spend some virtual time together. Mark your calendars - the first one is Wednesday, Jan. 6 at 6:00 p.m. I'll be sending the link to all the parent email addresses I have. If you are not sure if I have your email, please send it again.

Blessings,

Judy

## Budget Meeting

This year's Tentative Budget Approval Meeting is Sunday, January 31, immediately after Worship - and your presence and input are crucial whether it's in-person or on Zoom.

This is because the budget determines what we can accomplish as a Church during the coming fiscal year to keep our beautiful sanctuary lively with worship, music, fellowship, mission and outreach. In 2021/22, we'll take our next steps to "Grow Central for Tomorrow."

On January 31, we'll share updates on the renovation of Chapel Hall, a plan that will serve our thriving congregation as well as the surrounding community. This meeting will most likely be a hybrid of in-person and virtual, but will be determined according to state guidelines and regulations. Please stay tuned for more information as the date!

We thank you in advance for your attendance and participation!

## SAVE THE DATE

### Sacrament of Baptism

January 10, 2021, during Worship

If you'd like to celebrate the sacrament of Baptism with Central please contact the Rev. Rebecca at the church office.

## Central is Giving

At Central, our faith inspires us to help those in need, and undeterred by the COVID-19 pandemic, we've continued to build a foundation of giving for future generations.

This was all too clear with our 2020 "Angel Tree." It certainly didn't look like our tree from years past. But that doesn't mean that Central didn't open its heart to the children of DCYF (Rhode Island's Department of Children, Youth & Families). In fact, church members donated 65 gift cards - worth more than \$1,700 - to help make Christmas brighter for the youngest in our community.

In addition - while the Capital Campaign to Reimagine Chapel Hall is just getting underway - everyone involved felt it was essential to donate ten percent of the monies already committed to our partner agencies ... now, when the need is greatest. Thus, we have given \$45,000 - \$15,000 each - to three agencies that are on the front lines of pandemic relief: Amos House, Crossroads RI, and Rhode Island Community Food Bank.

*During this time of social distancing, many Central committees and groups are meeting via Zoom or GoToMeeting. To be notified about any of the following virtual meetings, contact the church office.*

### Confirmation Class

Central ninth graders begin their journey of spiritual discovery, investigating Christian faith, making personal decisions about their religious lives, and experiencing what it is to be a vital player in a Christian community. **Sunday, Jan. 3, 17 and 31, 11 am.**

### The Sacrament of Baptism

Baptism is the beginning of Christian faith and life - and a vital part of our worship together. If you would like to be included in this celebration of love and acceptance into the care of Christ's church, please speak to the Rev. Rebecca Spencer. We will next be offering Baptisms on Epiphany Sunday **Jan. 10, 10:30 am during worship.**

### Parents Social

Learn what your children are doing in Central's youth groups and confirmation classes - while sharing faith and ideas with other parents. Please contact Judy for Zoom invitation. **Wednesday, Jan. 13, 6 pm.**

### NEOS

Our NEOS fellowship for sixth to eighth graders is new and improved - and fun! We're always brainstorming amongst our youth of ways we come together for fellowship. Contact Judy to join virtually. **Sundays throughout Jan., 6 pm.**

### WORD

Don't miss the first meeting of WORD Fellowship (for ninth to twelfth graders). The new year brings new start for this very important fellowship. Get in touch with Judy for the Zoom link. **Sundays throughout Jan., 7 pm.**

### Grief Support

Central member Robert Iovino-Zuniga volunteers at Hope Health where he facilitates a support group (via Zoom) for LGBTQ people who are grieving the loss of loved ones. The group is open to anyone in need; you do not need to be associated with Hope Health. If interested, contact Robert at 401-826-2643 or go to the website - [hopehealthco.org](http://hopehealthco.org) - and click on Services / Find A Grief Support Group.

## Central Congregational Church

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