



# CENTRAL NEWS

Feb 2022

Vol. 30, No. 6

## From Rebecca

On All Saints' Day, the first Sunday of November, we sing the hymn, "I Sing a Song of the Saints of God," as the children process into Worship.

That hymn's lovely last stanza assures us that "you can meet them in school, or in lanes, or at sea, in church, or in trains, or in shops, or at tea, for the saints of God are just folk like me, and I mean to be one too."

The words of this hymn are a favorite for many of us, and its tune is a catchy one too!

During these bleak and cold winter days, I've been thinking about the words, "and I mean to be one too." Each of us would like to be a saint, and we tend to think, okay, then let's go do saint-like things! But I think the stanza also urges us to do more ... to find ways to strengthen our relationship with God ... wherever we might be in our journeys of faith.

The hymn makes a wonderful beginning for us. We don't have to do anything especially heroic ... just listen to others at school or at work ... just remember to offer thanks for ordinary gifts, like eating or drinking tea with others, having good work to do, forgiving and keeping on going ... remembering God is with us even as we may cry or laugh.

Each of these actions has a place in our relationship with God ... because God is in each of these ordinary actions. We simply need to be patient, knowing God is working for our mending, our strengthening. God is as involved in these experiences as much as we are.

So as I walk to feed my chickens, I thank God for their feathers keeping them warm. (I confess I am having trouble thinking positively about the hawk that finds them easy prey.)

When I'm driving in traffic, I remember the Central bumper magnet on the back of my car, reminding all that "Kindness Matters." (I confess that remembrance makes a real difference when I am not as patient as I might be!)

And when I meet one of you, I realize, once again, I am in the presence of a saint. And I thank God for that remembrance.

Yours in the love of Jesus Christ - *Rebecca*



## Car Signs Celebrate Central!

Getting the word out about the causes and organizations we care about is a lot harder than it sounds – not to mention expensive.

That's why the Board of Deacons' new grassroots approach to promoting Central and its values is so ingenious. They've come up with an easy, and cost-effective way not only to celebrate our wonderful and welcoming church, but also to invite others to join us: car signs.

These car signs show your support for and pride in Central Congregational Church. Put one on the back of your car – and

every time you stop at a stop sign or stop light, people will see Central. You can also display one on your laptop, cooler, refrigerator, and even bike helmet.



There are two designs, each bearing Central's website address: "CCC and "Kindness Matters." They are available both as magnets and stickers. You can

pick up one – or more – in Chapel Hall after Sunday Worship or in the Church Office during the week. We welcome donations to help cover costs. And, many thanks to George and Sandy Delany for shepherding the design process!

## FEB EVENTS

1	Faith Exploration	7 pm
2	Endowment Trustees	4 pm
6	Stewardship Committee	9:15 am
	New Member Sunday	10:30 am
	Church School	10:30 am
	Confirmation Class	11:30 am
7	Women's Retreat Group	7 pm
8	Tuesdays with Scripture	8 am
	Board of Deacons	5:45 pm
10	Nominating Committee	5:30 pm
	Food for Thought Book Group	7 pm
13	Adult Sunday School	9 am
	Worship	10:30 am
	Church School	10:30 am
	Bylaws Committee	11:30 am
	A Time of Service	11:30 am
	Women Gather	11:45 am
15	Tuesdays with Scripture	8 am
	Play Group	10 am
	Plant & Properties Committee	5:45 pm
	Prudential Committee	7 pm
16	Mission & Action Committee	6 pm
17	Central Men's Group	7:30 am
18	Friday Film Fare	7:30 pm
	Newsletter Deadline	3:30 pm
20	Adult Sunday School	9 am
	Worship	10:30 am
	Church School	10:30 am
	Confirmation Class	11:30 am
22	Tuesdays with Scripture	8 am
24	Rebecca's Book Group	12:30 pm
27	Adult Sunday School	9 am
	Worship	10:30 am
	Church School	10:30 am
	WORD	11:30 am
	Special Service of Music	4 pm
28	Technology Committee	7 pm

*The Church Office will be closed on Monday, Feb. 21, for President's Day.*

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



## Seeking a Church Home?

If you are looking for a church – or know someone who is – we would 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 call the Church Office at 401-331-1960, and Rebecca will get in touch.

### Inquirers' Meeting

Wednesday, January 26, 7 pm

### Faith Exploration

Tuesday, February 1, 7 pm

### New Member Sunday

Sunday, February 6, 10:30 am

### Guest Preacher: Rabbi Sarah Mack

On New Member Sunday, we will welcome guest preacher, Rabbi Sarah Mack, senior rabbi of Temple Beth-El. Rabbi Mack sits on the executive committee of the Rhode Island Interfaith Coalition to Reduce Poverty and on the board of the Center for Reconciliation. She is also one of the founders of the Rhode Island chapter of Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom and has worked with community partners to encourage interfaith dialogue among Jewish, Muslim, and Christian teens. **Sunday, Feb. 6, 10:30 am.**

### New Member Reception

Welcome new members to the Central family during Worship and then stay after for an informal reception. We're hosting a stand-up potluck buffet, so it will be easier to stay masked and socially distanced, as well as to mingle with our new members. See if you can meet them all and check out Chapel Hall construction. Please help the Membership Committee by bringing wrapped finger foods. **Sunday, Feb. 6, 11:30 am, in Chapel Hall**

### Spring Church Clean-up

Leadership Development is inviting all Central committees and members to suggest clean-up projects to prepare our building and grounds for Lent and Holy Week. You've probably noticed and even talked about "problems" that have accumulated since Covid-19 got in the way. Please send your project ideas and supply needs to Antonia Greco, church administrator (401-331-1960 / antonia@centralchurch.us). We'll have more details next month. And mark your calendars for **Saturday, Apr. 9, 9 am to 12 noon.**

## The Deacon's Bench

It is a simple message: Kindness Matters. A few weeks ago, you might have seen me in Chapel Hall with a basket of car magnets and stickers, half of which had the simple message "Kindness Matters." The Deacons, including me, thought it would be a great idea to promote our wonderful church with simple car magnets. One design is "CCC," Central Congregational Church, and the other is "Kindness Matters."



I chose "Kindness Matters." But when I thought about putting it on my car, I wondered if my driving reflected the message. Would someone want to go to church with a person who drove like me? Maybe not. I consider myself a careful driver, but I have to admit I do not have much patience for other driver's foibles. My blood pressure skyrockets when a driver veers slowly into my lane clearly looking at something other than the road, or sits at a green light while obviously finishing a text. I sometimes tap my horn or offer a hand signal that is clearly not the peace sign a little quicker than I would like to admit.

I might be overthinking a simple magnet on my car, but I decided to see if I could drive as if "Kindness Matters." So today on my commute to work, I imagined that the car speeding by me had a family emergency and the person sitting at the green light was praying and not texting. I have to say it took some self-control, but there was no beeping or "peace signs" on the rides back and forth to work. I do have to add that it is only five miles to my workplace, but this was a victory.

I think I am ready for the "Kindness Matters" magnet. And I hope you are too. I promise if I see you on the road with a Central Congregational Church message on your car, I will flash you what is most definitely the peace sign. - Beth Cotter

## Stewardship Sunday is March 13

Who helps keep the lights burning brightly at Central? You do.

Who helps support the work of Central's ministers and staff? You do.

Who is vital in maintaining Central's outreach to the community? You are.

Your pledge makes it possible for Central do all of these things and more.

The past two years have been challenging for all of us. Yet Central has provided ministry, mission, and support throughout these uncertain times. The only way we can preserve our church's strength and outreach is with your financial support.

Annual pledges are the financial foundation of our church, our single most important source of funding. Your pledge enables us to create a viable budget – something random giving cannot. The budget determines our year's activities and what we can accomplish as a church.



If you consider Central your church home – whether or not you are a member – we hope you will express your support by pledging. So our worship, mission, and ministries may continue and grow.

You can submit your pledge electronically using the secure online form on our website or fill out a paper pledge card. Then choose one of many ways to fulfill your

pledge. Recurring donations provide a steady stream of support to Central throughout the year. You set the frequency, amount, payment method, and never miss an installment!

**Personal Checks:** Place your check(s) in the offering basket during worship or mail them to the Church Office.

**Online Banking:** Set up pledge payments for the year (weekly, monthly, quarterly).

**Automatic Bank Payments:** Contact the Church Office (401-331-1960), to set up automatic withdrawals from your bank.

**On the Website:** Go to eGiving and click on the "Give" button.

**Tithe.ly:** Manage your pledge from your computer or cell phone. The app generates a receipt for each donation and tracks your giving history. (Please note that Central incurs a fee of \$0.30 plus 1% to 2.9% for for each transaction.)

Complete details and directions are on the website under "Give." **Thank you for your generosity!**

### In Memoriam

Our prayers and sympathy are with the family and friends of Henry Magendantz ... with Kristin DeKuiper and her family on the death of her brother ... and with Tanya Solberg and her family on the death of her father. *Requiescat in pace*



## From Claudia

The seventeenth century poet Anne Bradstreet wrote, "If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant. If we did not sometimes taste of adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome." Winter has its upside, but it also has a downside. Come to think of it, that is true of many things. The same with adversity. Like winter, it can stretch us and strengthen us for whatever comes our way. When the sunny rays of spring and of well-being arrive, we warm our faces in the sun and realize that the comfort and security we have found in our friends, our faith, and our families have made all the difference to us.

Life is full of much to celebrate and much we do not celebrate. Seasons and circumstances come and go. This is as true for us as it has been for people from the beginning of time.

Bradstreet was the first woman published here in the colonies. She knew all the joys and sorrows that life had to offer. Mother of eight and both daughter and wife of early governors of Massachusetts, she endured the deaths of loved ones, a fire that destroyed her home and her beloved books, ill health, tuberculosis, paralysis, and so much more.

Throughout all of this, her faith shines through in her poems. Bradstreet understood adversity and wintry times. She also knew the warmth of spring in her life. She wrote poetry about a wide variety of subjects even though not everyone acclaimed her poetry. She faced harsh criticism in her own time for daring to write – because it was "unwomanly" to do so! And yet, her poems and her life story have survived.

Anne died in 1672 at the age of sixty. We don't know where she is buried. Even so, we can celebrate what she has exemplified in her life, and this inspires us all to move through the good and the not-so-good times with grace and faith. Hymn writer Natalie Sleeth wrote, "In the cold and snow of winter, there's a spring that waits to be; unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see."

No matter where we are in our life journeys, God is present with us. The past, the present, and the future may be a mystery to us, but not to God. Therein lies our strength and our comfort and our security. How grateful I am that my life journey entwines with all of yours!

With thanksgiving ~ *Claudia*

## Musical Notes: Special Service of Music

On **Sunday, Feb. 27, at 4 pm**, the Central Congregational Church Choir will present a special service of music: the Solemn Vespers of Mozart – featuring soprano, alto, tenor, and bass soloists – accompanied by a string quartet. A reception will follow in Chapel Hall, contingent on the safety protocols required at that time.

The traditional vespers service and service of evening prayer contain a series of prayers and scripture. Mozart set five Psalms – 110, 111, 112, 113, and 117 – and a canticle (Magnificat) to music for liturgical use in Salzburg Cathedral in 1780, when he was 26 years old. Each movement concludes with the familiar "Gloria Patri," using the words we sing each week in Worship, in response to the assurance of pardon.

The first three psalms showcase Mozart's inimitable joyful style: skillful writing and

### MOZART SOLEMN VESPERS



playful lines you can't help but love! The fourth movement uses a classical fugue structure in its many variations, creating a powerful statement of faith in God.

The most famous movement is the fifth, "Laudate Domine" – "Praise the Lord" in English. The elegant soprano solo states the theme, which is echoed by the choir. It ends quietly with a short "Amen."

The Solemn Vespers conclude with the Magnificat – the song Mary sings when she learns she will bear the Son of God – which appears in the vespers service. Mozart uses it to bring this inspiring work to a thrilling close. Musical fireworks open the movement, and it ends with a satisfying conclusion solidly in C Major.

The choir hasn't sung in concert for nearly two years. We are excited to lift up our voices (masked though they be) and spread our musical wings. Please come – and invite your friends – not only to share in this musical feast, but also to show off our reimagined Chapel Hall, which should be in its final stages of renovation.

## SAVE THE DATE

Saturday, March 5 • 5 pm

### Stewardship Community Dinners

Share a meal • Create meaningful connections • Relax and have fun • Details to come

### Women's Retreat Group

The women of Central are invited to gather in solidarity to pray and check in the first Monday of every month.

**Monday, Feb. 7, 7 pm, via Zoom.**  
Contact Claudia for an invitation.

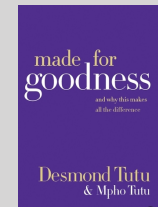
### Tuesdays with Scripture

Every Tuesday morning, we'll look at and discuss a short Bible passage. Think of this as a community devotional to rev up your week. Each session is self-contained. Come to one or to all of them! Contact Claudia for an invitation. She'll also send you the reading and questions to consider ahead of time. **Tuesdays, Feb. 8, 15, 22 and Mar. 1, 8 am, via Zoom.**

### Food for Thought Book Group

We'll discuss "Made for Goodness," by Desmond Tutu and Mpho Tutu.

The late Nobel Peace Prize winner



was often asked where hope and goodness can be found in the world. This book is his answer. **Thursday, Feb. 10, 7 pm, via Zoom.** Contact

Claudia for an invitation.

Coming up: No meeting in March.

**Apr. 7:** "Firekeeper's Daughter," by Angeline Boulley

### Adult Sunday School

We'll continue to focus on "The Story of the Jews." This compelling argument about distinctiveness and difference, separation and isolation, tolerance and prejudice is also a celebration of the ways in which Jewish thought, imagination, and achievement have transformed the world. Questions? Ask Claudia.

**Sundays Feb. 13, 20, 27 and Mar. 6, 9 am, in the Fireplace Room**

### Women Gather

In honor of Valentine's Day, our women's fellowship group will share dating and romance stories ... funny, poignant, disastrous, and everything in between! And as we do, we'll get to know each other on a whole other level. Contact Claudia for more information. **Sunday, Feb. 13, 11:45 am, in the Fireplace Room**

### Central Men's Group

Open to all ages, Central Men's Group is a monthly breakfast gathering – held on the third Thursday of each month – for fellowship and spirited conversation on topics ranging from current events and ethics to trends and shared experiences. Questions? Contact Ed Bishop at 401-274-4666. **Thursday, Feb. 17, 7:30 am, in the Fireplace Room**

### Lecture Postponed

The Darrell West Lecture originally scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 26, has been postponed. We still plan to host journalist Krista Tippet at a later date. Stay tuned for details.

# Church School News

Every week at the beginning of Church School, when all of the classes are gathered together, Central children sing. Their favorites include “This Little Light of Mine,” “Peace Like a River,” and “I’ve Got the Joy, Joy, Joy, Joy Down in My Heart.” They are also learning hymns and other music they hear during Worship – like “Glory to the Creator” (“Gloria Patri”) – and will soon tackle the “Doxology.” We discuss the meaning of each composition to help the children more fully understand and participate in our Worship service.

Music is a very important part of our faith. It touches us in places the spoken word cannot reach and is something we have in common. Music helps to bring us together. The more our children learn, the more they can join in and feel part of our faith community.

A big thank-you goes out to all of the adults and teaching assistants in the Church School who join in and sing with us. And, we are especially grateful to parent Christine Noel for doing so much of the actual teaching, as well as accompanying us on the piano!

This spring, older Church School children will take on a somewhat similar project: learning and exploring the meaning of the Lord’s Prayer. We’ll discuss the different phrases, helping the children understand what is actually being prayed for. They will also learn the context in which Jesus taught the Lord’s Prayer and where it is found in the Bible. Finally, the children will think about words Jesus might use if he were teaching this prayer to us today.

Peace and blessings - *Judy*

*Office Hours: Judy Martowska is available to discuss any issues, concerns, or questions you may have about children, teens, and faith. She is at the church all day on Tuesdays, but can also meet at other days and times. Contact Judy via email, phone, or text to set up an appointment: 781-718-0202 / judy@centralchurch.us*

## Mission Trip

Our summer mission trip to Appalachia will be **July 16 to 22**. Our consultant for the trip is Praying Pelican Missions (praying-pelicanmissions.org). We encourage all Central teens to sign up – including those who will enter high school in the fall, as well as 2022 high school graduates. Mission trips are rewarding, life-changing experiences, filled with adventure, fun, work, and fellowship. Please clear your teens’ schedules now so they will be free to come!



## Friday Film Fare



In “**First Reformed**,” the Rev. Ernst Toller (Ethan Hawke) is pastor of a historic New England church that resembles a museum more than a place of worship. When a member of

his dwindling congregation (Amanda Seyfried) comes to him for help with her possibly suicidal husband and her own fear of bringing new life into a troubled world, the solitary, middle-aged minister must confront his own doubts and guilt before knowing how to help others. Writer-director Paul Schrader has crafted a meticulous portrait of a troubled soul – with a troubled soul – leading to a shattering climax that will both amaze and perplex. [113 minutes, color, rated R, 2017] **Friday, Feb. 18, 7:30 pm, in the Fireplace Room**

## CCC Youth

**Confirmation Class:** This year’s confirmands are stepping up their participation in Sunday Worship. Starting in February, a confirmand will serve as scripture reader one Sunday each month.

**WORD and NEOS:** WORD has decided to continue meeting on the second and fourth Sundays of the month, but has moved its meeting time to immediately after Sunday Worship. NEOS will join them when it is appropriate. We are still looking for a convenient time for NEOS’ monthly meeting. Please contact Judy with ideas!

**Improving Communications:** Communicating with CCC Youth via email has proven to be ineffective. As one teen said, “Let’s just have a group chat. No one checks their email.” So Judy is asking NEOS, WORD, and the Confirmation Class to send her their cell phone numbers for texts, as well as group chats – and requesting that parents remind them to do so, if necessary. Adult communications will continue via email.

**Teen Tuesdays:** Judy is at Central every Tuesday, morning and afternoon. Teens are welcome to drop by – to say hi, talk sports, “speak geek,” study, share whatever is on their minds, or just hang out.

If you know someone who would enjoy NEOS or WORD activities and being part of our church community, contact Judy (781-718-0202 / judy@centralchurch.us), and we’ll add them to our group chat and email lists.

## Confirmation Class

The confirmands will meet twice this month at 11:30 am. On **Sunday, Feb. 6**, the topic will be confirmands’ choice. On **Sunday, Feb. 20**, the topic will be “living as a Christian.”

## A Time of Service

CCC Youth will lead the entire church community in A Time of Service. We’ll meet after Sunday Worship to make and write cards for those in need of connection; assemble hygiene bags for people living in shelters; use recycled materials to create piggy banks, prayer boxes, and other containers; and more. **Sunday, Feb. 13, 11:30 am, in Chapel Hall**

## Play Group

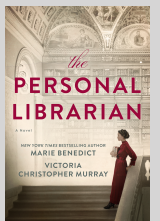
At Central’s new play group for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, the children will enjoy a variety of creative activities – games, crafts, music – and snacks. As they play together and become more comfortable in the church setting, parents and grandparents can talk, share experiences, and support one another in the journey of parenthood. **Tuesday, Feb. 15, 10 am, in the Church School Wing**

## Homelessness Awareness Sleep-out

As of press time, CCC Youth’s annual Homelessness Awareness Sleep-out is tentatively scheduled for **February 18 or 19**. Stay tuned for details.

## Rebecca’s Book Group

Take part in a lively discussion about “The Personal Librarian,” by Marie Benedict and Victoria Christopher Murray – the little-known story of Belle da Costa Greene, J. P. Morgan’s personal librarian, who became one of the most powerful women in New York despite the dangerous secret she kept in order to make her dreams come true. **Thursday, Feb. 24, 12:30 pm, via Zoom**. Contact Rebecca for an invitation.



## WORD

WORD will enjoy an outing to an Escape Room or Virtual Reality Arcade. Details to come. **Sunday, Feb. 27, 11:30 am**

## Spring Yard Sale

We’re planning a yard sale! Ten percent of the proceeds will benefit Central’s mission outreach with the balance going to supplement the church budget. As you clean out your closets and basements this winter, please set aside those items that have just been waiting for a good cause. **Tentative date: Saturday, May 21, on the West Lawn**

## Central Congregational Church

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