



# CENTRAL NEWS

Oct 2023

Vol. 32, No. 2

## From Rebecca

Dear friends, One of the many gifts that Centralites share is sending your senior minister book ideas, poetry, newspaper and magazine articles and essays, clippings, and cartoons that you have found meaningful. (Just so you know, I keep most of these, which makes clearing out my desk drawers ever harder!). Not only do I appreciate these gifts in and of themselves, but they are also valuable as I learn new insights and perspectives that are important to you! So this morning, I am referencing one of the latest missives I have received. It is from a Wall Street Journal review of Wallace Stevens' poetry from about a century ago. At the end of Stevens' poem "Sunday Morning" is this exquisite verse:

*Sweet berries ripen in the wilderness;  
And, in the isolation of the sky,  
At evening, casual flocks of pigeons make  
Ambiguous undulations as they sink  
Downward to darkness, on extended wings.*

The reviewer, Daniel Akst, writes, "Stevens knew full well that religious practice unites faith and belonging, and that the loss of one can mean the loss of the other, along with the meaning and consolation that comes of faith's community. Religion also provides an ethical framework that, once dismantled, is hard to replace. He later said that the 'annihilation' of the gods had 'left us feeling dispossessed and alone in a solitude, like children without parents, in a home that seemed deserted.'"

We are coming through and past such a period of isolation and alienation, with "aloneness" consequences of COVID-19, our fractured political eco-systems, our dependence on social media which daily gains ground over people meeting in person in community, and a widespread decline in communities of faith.

A place like Central offers such community, a place to learn from others, to sometimes agree to disagree – but always to listen, to offer support to those in need, to reach beyond our comfort zones. So we are more than a casual flock, but a CONGREGATION. So our daily patterns are not ambiguous undulations, but rather meaningful pilgrimages toward greater understanding and tolerance for all. So our extended wings may sometimes lead us downward to darkness, but ultimately and most significantly upward to light and love.

Yours in that light and love - *Rebecca*

## Sr. Minister Candidate: Rev. Patrick Faulhaber

The Senior Minister Search Committee has unanimously recommended the Reverend Patrick Faulhaber to become Central Congregational Church's next senior minister.

Patrick has served as senior pastor at North Decatur United Methodist Church since 2017. Previously he was associate pastor and youth minister at other churches.

Originally from Rhode Island, Patrick's family attended Barrington Congregational Church. They moved to North Carolina when he was 12. Patrick received his bachelor's degree from Pfeiffer University and his Masters of Divinity from Emory University. Patrick will pursue dual standing from our Conference and his ordination will be recognized by the UCC.

In a pool of strong candidates, Patrick

stood out. The Search Committee was impressed by his articulation of Christian values, proven church leadership, and personal qualities. As the committee came to know him better, it became clear that Patrick possesses deep empathy and compassion for others. He is a good listener who connects with people and will use a team approach to build consensus and empower Central's congregation.

**Patrick and his wife Susannah will visit from Oct. 12 to 15 to meet with the Central community,** and Patrick will preach that Sunday. After Worship there will be a Special Meeting of the Church to vote on his candidacy. Please plan on being present for this vital decision in our church's present and future! - *Mark McLaughlin, Search Committee Chair*

## OCT EVENTS

1	CCC Youth Brainstorm	9:30 am
	World Communion Sunday	10:30 am
	Church School	10:30 am
	Food Committee: Rebecca	11:45 am
	Planning Committee: Rebecca	11:45 am
2	Children's Choir Rehearsal	5 pm
3	Tuesdays With Scripture	8 am
4	Amos House Volunteers	6:30 am
	Gallery Committee	9 am
5	Board of Deacons	5:45 pm
	Choir Rehearsal	7:30 pm
6	Gallery Opening Reception	5 pm
8	Worship	10:30 am
	Church School	10:30 am
	Planning Committee: Rebecca	11:45 am
	Women Gather	12 noon
10	Tuesdays With Scripture	8 am
	Chapel Hall Design and Steering Committees	5:30 pm
11	Amos House Volunteers	6:30 am
12	Food for Thought Book Group	7 pm
	Choir Rehearsal	7:30 pm
13	Friday Film Fare	7:30 pm
15	Adult Sunday School	9 am
	<b>Worship / Preacher:</b>	
	<b>Rev. Patrick Faulhaber</b>	<b>10:30 am</b>
	Church School	10:30 am
	<b>Special Church Meeting</b>	<b>11:30 am</b>
16	Children's Choir Rehearsal	5 pm
	Technology Committee	7 pm
17	Tuesdays With Scripture	8 am
	Plant & Properties Committee	5:45 pm
	Prudential Committee	7 pm
18	Amos House Volunteers	6:30 am
19	Central Men's Group	7:30 am
	Choir Rehearsal	7:30 pm
22	Adult Sunday School	9 am
	Worship	10:30 am
	Church School	10:30 am
	Angell Society	11:45 am
23	Children's Choir Rehearsal	5 pm
24	Tuesdays With Scripture	8 am
	Inquirers' Meeting	7 pm
25	Amos House Volunteers	6:30 am
26	Choir Rehearsal	7:30 pm
29	Adult Sunday School	9 am
	Worship / Guest Preacher	10:30 am
	Church School	10:30 am
	Membership Committee	11:30 am
	Mission Luncheon	11:30 am
30	Children's Choir Rehearsal	5 pm

*The Church Office will be closed Monday, October 9, for Columbus 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

Tuesday, October 24, 7 pm

### Faith Exploration

Wednesday, November 1, 7 pm

### New Member Sunday

Sunday, November 5, 10:30 am

**WELCOME**

## World Communion Sunday

On the first Sunday in October, Christians around the globe celebrate World Communion Sunday. On this day, we remember that Jesus Christ is Head of the Church and that all denominations that promote Christian unity are one – and we draw faith and inspiration from seeing we are part of a community of billions of believers. Join us as we share in the sacrament with Christians the world over! **Sunday, Oct. 1, 10:30 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 Reverend Rebecca Spencer. We will be offering baptisms on **Sunday, Oct. 15, at 10:30 am**. There will be a gathering for those wishing to be baptized – date TBD – in the Fireplace Room.

## Amos House Volunteers Needed

Please consider becoming an Amos House Breakfast Volunteer! Amos House provides 400 meals every morning. And on Wednesdays from 6:30 to 8 am, Central members meet in the Amos House soup kitchen to help them assemble the pre-packaged breakfasts.

If you can volunteer every week, that would be great. But if you can only come occasionally, we welcome – and need – every extra set of hands. If you can help or need more information, please contact Tracy Baran (tmoorf@gmail.com).

## The Deacon's Bench

October, month of the "Hunter Moon" – an Anglo-Saxon term for the Algonquin tribe's season for hunting and gathering food for the long New England winter – is one of the loveliest months of the year. It's a time that holds cherished memories of apple-picking, hayrides, trick-or-treating on cold October nights, and leaf-peeping on back country roads.

October is also a time of spiritual reflection. In the practice of Judaism, Yom Kippur – the day of atonement and the holiest day of the year – is followed by Sukkot, a weeklong celebration of the harvest and God's forgiveness for past transgressions (Sep. 29 through Oct. 6). Sukkot, also known as the Feast of the Tabernacle, is a joyous religious occasion. Jews recite Psalms 113 through 118 and offer praise for God's deliverance of their souls.

Following September's Gathering Sunday, a joyful reunion as friends returned from summer holidays, October is a time to look forward to the many gatherings that will unfold this coming church year. It will be a season of change as we reflect on Rebecca's able leadership over the years, lighting the way on our spiritual journeys, while we try to envision the future under new leadership.

Change always brings new challenges. But if we focus on gradual improvements leading to growth, we will employ the Japanese philosophy of "kaizen" or "beneficial change" – a concept taught by Satoko Kahihara, Ph.D., professor of language and culture at California State University and used by Toyota Motor Corporation. Kaizen is a four-step process of change that initiates problem identification and ultimately leads to a plan for growth.

Here at Central, our able Search Committee has diligently labored to refine the search process for a new senior minister – a daunting task given Rebecca's 35-year pastorate. She will be leaving us with heartfelt memories of her tenure here at Central.

As we grow through this harvest season of change, and the future slowly unfolds, I pray we will be united and embrace the concept of kaizen. As parishioners, we must continue to grow Central's congregation with the elements of transparency, diversity, and grace – free to embrace change.

"To everything there is season, and a time to every purpose under Heaven"  
(Ecclesiastes 3:1). - Janet Harris

## Be an "Angell"

**You are cordially invited to a meeting / reception of Central's Angell Society on Sunday, Oct. 22, immediately after Worship in the Fireplace Room.** This will be a time to gather with friends as we each think about Central's long-range plans and what we might do to help. All Centralites are welcome.

Our guest speaker will be **estate attorney Paul A. Silver**. A partner at Hinkley Allen, Paul's practice is focused on trust and estate planning. He specializes in representation of tax-exempt organizations and charitable gift planning, representing both institutions and donors. Paul also has in-depth expertise in the area of the legal issues related to trust and estate litigation.

There is no better way to support the future growth and strength of Central than with a planned gift ... of any size. Paul will discuss the incentives and benefits for planned giving under current tax laws, as well as the many options available.

Planned gifts can sustain church programs and facilities, establish endowments, and launch new initiatives. Plus, they offer excellent returns for relatively little cost or upfront investment.

The Angell Society recognizes those who have included Central Congregational Church in their wills or estate plans. "Membership" has no minimum level of giving, as each planned gift represents a lifetime commitment to Central.

## Mission Luncheon

On Sunday, Oct. 29, immediately following Worship, the Mission & Action Committee will host a Mission Luncheon in Chapel Hall. The guest speaker will be Ric Wild, Community Outreach and Volunteer Manager from Crossroads Rhode Island.



Ric will discuss Crossroads' current work and programming, the state of homelessness in Rhode Island, how Central has supported Crossroads for more than 35 years, and how we can help going forward. Mission & Action will provide a delicious bread and soup luncheon. **Sunday, Oct. 29, 11:30 am, in Chapel Hall**

## Welcome, Nick!

Please join us in welcoming Nicholas Collins, Central's new communications assistant. You will find Nick at the reception desk during the week, working part-time.

Nick is a life-long New Englander who currently resides in Riverside. He was drawn to Central for the opportunity to better serve the community at large. His background is in customer service and project management. Feel free to ask him for assistance with anything you may need.

Please stop by the office, introduce yourself, and let Nick know how excited we are to have him on the Central team!



## From Claudia

As we enter fall, the air is starting to crisp up like the apples in the trees. Those long, hot nights of late summer seem to be over. In September the peepers and cicadas were the loudest I think I've ever heard them. They were so exuberant that I was talking with someone on FaceTime near open windows, and they asked me about the sound in the background! The cicadas were really loud. Did you know that they can reach 90 decibels? That's as loud as a leaf blower or a shouting match or a lawn mower. I'm guessing the ones outside my windows were approaching that!

They were so exuberant that our grandson couldn't sleep when he stayed over one night. He asked me what that sound was, and I told him. He replied with all the candor of a five year old, "I don't like it!" Smiling, I told him that was just the sound those creatures make. He was unimpressed. "Why?" I said that they are singing because they are happy. He is just five, after all. After another protest and request to "make them be quiet," he stopped asking. Obviously, Grammy doesn't know and doesn't care to do anything about them and their cacophony! I hope to instill awe in him, but maybe a quieter version for now.

Let's face it. God's creation is nothing short of amazing. Think of all the wonders in the world. The inspired awe of a sunrise or a sunset that is aflame with color or the huge breakers from a coastal storm. The astonishing variety of those with whom we inhabit this world – who crawl, slither, fly, swim, run, and play. There is seemingly no end to the divine creativity around us and in us. After all, we are just part of God's amazing creation.

Maya Angelou wrote, "While I know myself as a creation of God, I am also obligated to realize and remember that everyone else and everything else are also God's creation." Indeed it is, and indeed we are. Yes, even noisy cicadas! We are all created beings in a creation that never lacks for inspiring awe at the creation, but also awe for the One who created it. Thanks be to God!

In creaturely love and blessings - *Claudia*

## Accolades

**Noble Brigham** – a senior journalism student at Brown University – has done it again. On Sunday, Aug. 24, he scored his second front-page article in The Providence Journal, "Kids as translators? Non-English speakers lack trained interpreters in local courts." It details Rhode Island's haphazard approach to language interpretation in municipal and probate courts – and how it may violate federal law.

Congratulations are also in order for **Tracy Baran** who received the 2023 New England Legal Award for "In-House Impact, Individual" for her work as in-house counsel at Ocean State Job Lot. The honor recognizes an in-house attorney with significant accomplishments in 2022. The awards were presented on Sep. 21 at the Fairmont Copley Plaza in Boston.

Special kudos to Central's dedicated **Senior Minister Search Committee**, for their considerable time and diligence: Tracy Baran, Barry Bayon, Rob Edwards, Mike Hopkins, Caroline Hunter, Larry Kellam, Janice Libby, Torin Mathieu, Mark McLaughlin, Charley Rardin, Teri Sonubi, Elizabeth Roberts, and Tom Viall.

## SAVE THE DATE

Sunday • November 19 • 10:30 am

### Festival Service of Thanksgiving

*Bring a Friend – and share this warm, wonderful, musical Service of Worship*

## Join the Band!



Organist / choirmaster Patrick Aiken is looking for a few – actually, several – good instrumentalists to form an **All Saints Band** that will join Central's church school children in the All Saints Day Parade on **Sunday, Nov. 11**. The band will play "When The Saints Go Marching In" in the key of F. Please help us make a joyful noise as we remember and celebrate saints – past and present – who have touched our lives as Christians. All musicians are welcome!

## Coffee Hour 2023/24

The Social Committee has made the 2023/24 committee assignments for providing Coffee Hour refreshments.

- Sep: Social Committee
- Oct: Mission & Action Committee
- Nov: Calling and Flower Committees
- Dec: Prudential Committee
- Jan: Membership Committee
- Feb: Music Committee
- Mar: Religious Education Committee
- Apr: Care of Interior and Technology Committees
- May: Gallery Committee

From June to August, this schedule will repeat on a weekly basis.

## Tuesdays With Scripture

Our weekly community devotional resumes this month!



Every Tuesday morning, we'll discuss a short Bible passage. Each session is self-contained. Come to one or to all of them! Contact Claudia for a Zoom invitation. She'll also send you the reading and questions to consider ahead of time.

**Tuesdays, Oct. 3, 10, 17, and 24 – 8 am, via Zoom**

## Women Gather

We were rained out last month, so let's try again to meet outside for good conversation – this time with a pizza lunch! If you have questions, contact Claudia. Join us **Sunday, Oct. 8, 12 noon, on the front garden patio at Hamilton House.**

## Food for Thought Book Group

All are welcome to join Claudia's book group for a discussion of "Yellen: The Trailblazing Economist Who Navigated an Era of Upheaval," by Wall Street Journal reporter Jon Hilsenrath. This powerful study of Janet Yellen – the first woman to lead the Federal Reserve and currently Secretary of the Treasury – unfolds into a slice of American economic history. As he portrays Yellen's significant role in American economics, Hilsenrath also depicts her pursuit of the idea that "markets can fail and sensible government action can improve people's lives." **Thursday, Oct. 12, 7 pm, in the Fireplace Room**

Coming up on Nov. 9: "The Hero of This Book," by Elizabeth McCracken

## Adult Sunday School

We will reconvene our learning community in mid-October to learn about C.S. Lewis – beloved author of "The Chronicles of Narnia" and other fiction and nonfiction – and his journey from avowed atheist to a "most reluctant convert" whose faith profoundly affected his work. Contact Claudia now to get on the e-mail list.

**Sunday, Oct. 15 and 22, 9 am, in the Fireplace Room** (No class on Oct. 29)

## 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 John



Trevor. **Thursday, Oct. 19, 7:30 am, in the Fireplace Room**

## Rebecca's Book Group

Rebecca's Book Group will meet on **Thursday, Oct. 26, 12:30 pm, on the West Lawn**, weather permitting. The book is TBD.

## Guest Preacher



On Sunday, Oct. 29, Central will welcome guest preacher the Reverend Dr. David Mitchell, senior pastor of Mount Gilead Baptist Church in Durham, N.C. Dr. Mitchell became a friend of Central – and senior minister Rebecca Spencer – when he was the senior pastor of Congdon Street Baptist Church here in Providence from 2003 to 2009.

Originally from Thomasville, Ga., Dr. Mitchell received his bachelor's degree in business management from Troy State University, and a Masters of Divinity degree from Emory University where he was the first African-American to win the John Owen Smith Preaching Award. He received his Doctor of Ministry degree in theology and ethics from Claremont School of Theology.

Dr. Mitchell has extensive training as a counselor and has designed religious education curricula and courses on spiritual growth, cultural awareness, self-esteem, and more. He is also the author of "Black Theology and Youths at Risk" (2001).

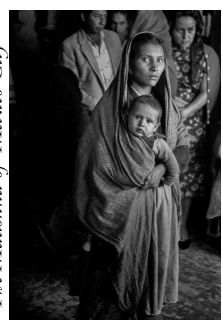
Perhaps above all, Dr. Mitchell is a community activist, creating programs to educate and inspire youth to pursue their goals and get involved in the ministry of the church, cooperative initiatives with Duke University, annual health fairs offering free medical screenings to the Northeast Central Durham community, and more.

Dr. Mitchell enjoys reading, golf, and cultural studies – and is committed to helping others find happiness, meaning, and fulfillment through Christ.

## In the Gallery

This month, the Gallery presents "Richard Benjamin: Photography 1957 to 2023" – from his days as an Art History major at Brown University, through 32 years as a newspaper photojournalist, and now as a fine art photographer.

Richard has always found inspiration in his own backyard, photographing people on the street, as well as hundreds of Rhode Island venues – at different times and in different seasons – to capture the magic of our state.



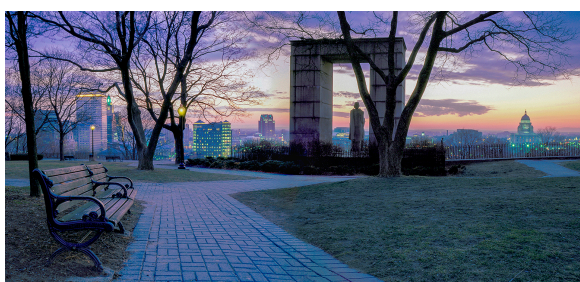
The Madonna of Mexico City

Richard received his first camera for high school graduation. His first front-page photo appeared in the Brown Daily Herald his freshman year. In 1959, he hitchhiked to Mexico City to

photograph people on the street. Three months later he returned to Brown and soon had his first photo exhibit.

While in the Army, Richard built a portfolio of published photos that led to his first newspaper job in Rochester, N.Y. After a stint at Newsday, he returned to Rhode Island, where he worked at the Providence Journal for 27 years. Upon retiring, Richard shifted from photojournalism to fine art – and was among the first to leave traditional wet-lab photography for digital.

Meet the artist at the Gallery opening reception on Friday, Oct. 6, 5 to 7 pm



Winter Sunset at Prospect Park

## Friday Film Fare



It wasn't the crime; it was the response that jolted the nation. We remember today the 1955 murder of 14-year-old Emmett Till not because it was a lynching in Mississippi, but because his mother

Mamie (played by an astonishing Danielle Deadwyler) said, "I want them to see what they did to my boy." Though not sparing us the brutality of the killing, "Till" focuses on a mother's love, a mother's grief, a mother's courage, and most of all, a mother's determination for justice. "Till" is not only an unforgettable chronicle of an outrage, but also a portrait of a remarkable woman – Mamie Till-Mobley. [130 minutes; color; rated PG-13, 2022] **Friday, Oct. 13, 7:30 pm, in the Fireplace Room**

## Poetry Corner

### Gifts of Kindness

Gifts of kindness  
Come unannounced,  
Unexpected.  
Just moments, like letters  
That ease anxiety,  
Soften fear,  
Bring us closer together,  
Make us feel useful,  
Not forgotten.  
May we bring moments  
Of kindness to others.  
May they feel life is worth living,  
Find peace in their hearts.

~ Barry Bayon (2022)  
Central Poet Laureate

save the date

CELEBRATING

The Reverend Rebecca L. Spencer

ON HER RETIREMENT

NOVEMBER 19, 2023 • 11:45 AM



CENTRAL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
PROVIDENCE • RHODE ISLAND

### CCC Youth Brainstorm

Help rebuild NEOS and WORD, our youth groups for middle schoolers and high schoolers, with ideas that will engage them in mission, faith formation, and friendships! All ideas and people are welcome. If you can't attend the brainstorm, just email your thoughts to the Church Office. **Sunday, Oct. 1, at 9:30 am in Chapel Hall**



### Recycle • Repurpose • Reuse

Have you wondered what happened to those beautiful, old, velvet curtains that adorned the Chapel Hall stage? Thanks to Heidi Iliano, they have found a new home at Franklin School for the Performing Arts – in Franklin, Mass. – where they are used in the Drama Studio.

### New Sunday Sexton!

We are thrilled to welcome **Lenneth Albaneise**, our new Sunday sexton, to the Central family. Lenneth will be opening and preparing the church for Sunday worship and assisting with coffee hour and other after-church activities. Look for her on Sunday mornings, introduce yourself, – and be sure to let her know how much we've needed and appreciate her hard work!

### Central Congregational Church

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