



CENTRAL NEWS

Apr 2024

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A Good Word From Patrick



The Christian narrative is a simple, elegant illustration of the best and worst aspects of our life in community. The same God who set the rhythms of the universe and established the laws of nature meets us in our simple, small lives to push back against the popular narrative that you must be remarkable to be valuable. And, this simple message of God's love for the unremarkable makes the remarkable feel threatened, so they use the power they've gained to dismantle the message and crucify the messenger.

However, when all seems lost – when it seems power can only be held with a clenched fist, Jesus reemerges from the tomb to show the world that cultural powers of religious tradition and politics have no eternal power to stifle a movement of grace, truth, and love.

It's a powerful story that is meant to invite us all to assess how we move through the world. How many people, moments, and experiences do we dismiss as unremarkable that may actually bear eternal significance? How often do we orient our time, talents, and treasures towards impressing someone or establishing rank rather than using them to serve our neighbors and strengthen our community bonds?

The Gospel story is a powerful reminder that God just seems to want humanity to thrive in the garden of abundance, while we seem to obsess over who has the biggest pile of food or the largest farm. So, when Jesus comes into the garden reminding us that the food is meant for everyone and the land wasn't meant to be parceled up, we aren't always ready to hear it. And because we're not always ready to hear God's message of abundance and equality, we have a habit of silencing the message. In the first century, we used state-sponsored crucifixion. In the twenty-first century, we bury the message under bureaucratic interpretative economic policies and hustle culture.

Yet, despite our best efforts, the Gospel message remains steadfast. Even after crucifixion and death, Jesus reemerges from the tomb, year after year, to remind us that it does not have to be this way. We don't need to fight for significance in the eyes of God. We don't need to compete for approval. We don't need to define ourselves by the best parts of our network or the greatest capacity for productivity. We are invited into a perfect freedom, where those of us with resources to share, share willingly, and those of us with need, name it honestly. We are invited into a sacred "kin-dom" where our lives are held by the abundant grace of God in this abundant garden filled with more than we could possibly need to survive well together.

As it turns out, this message and the one who brings it cannot be silenced. Even the grave cannot hold Christ down. Every Easter, we celebrate the very good news that our worst impulses will never be strong enough to silence the gracious and abundant invitation from God to step into a new life in community. Happy Easter, y'all - *Patrick*

Pledges, Trivia, and Thanks!

Central's annual Trivia Day, hosted by the Stewardship Committee, will be **Sunday, April 14, at 12 noon, in Chapel Hall**. It is an entertaining, family-friendly hour of questions and answers – fun for all ages, a great way to get to know each other better, and a celebration of our community of faith!

This event is also a big thank-you to all Central members and friends who have made pledges for the upcoming fiscal year. Your thoughtfulness and generosity are

what keep Patrick and Claudia's sermons inspirational, the choir harmonious, and our global and local missions bountiful.

If you have yet to make a 2024/25 pledge, please do so now. Pledges account for \$420,031 of Central's \$1.02 million annual operating budget– so every pledge counts.

Please prayerfully reflect on what you can give.



APR EVENTS

3	Amos House Volunteers	6:30 am
	Gallery Committee	9:30 am
4	Board of Deacons	5:45 pm
7	Adult Sunday School	9 am
	Stewardship Committee	9:15 am
	Worship	10:30 am
	Church School	10:30 am
	Committee Fair	11:30 am
	Toward Better Christian Politics	1 pm
8	Children's Choir Rehearsal	5 pm
	Technology Committee	7 pm
10	Amos House Volunteers	6:30 am
	Nominating Committee	9:30 am
	Community Strings Concert	12:30 pm
11	Food for Thought Book Group	7 pm
	Choir Rehearsal	7:30 pm
12	Not Just Supper	5:30 pm
14	Adult Sunday School	9 am
	Worship	10:30 am
	Church School	10:30 am
	Family & Friends Trivia Day	12 noon
	Women Gather	12 noon
	Memorial Service: Peg Fletcher	3 pm
15	Children's Choir Rehearsal	5 pm
16	Prudential Committee	7 pm
17	Amos House Volunteers	6:30 am
18	Central Men's Group	7:30 am
	Choir Rehearsal	7:30 pm
19	Newsletter Articles Due	3:30 pm
	Friday Film Fare	7:30 pm
21	Adult Sunday School	9 am
	Worship	10:30 am
	Church School	10:30 am
	Toward Better Christian Politics	1 pm
22	Children's Choir Rehearsal	5 pm
23	Inquirers' Meeting	7 pm
24	Amos House Volunteers	6:30 am
25	Fourth Thursday Book Group	12:30 pm
	Choir Rehearsal	7:30 pm
27	Memorial Service: Mary Staples	11 am
28	Adult Sunday School	9 am
	Worship	10:30 am
	Church School	10:30 am
	Membership Committee	11:30 am
	Toward Better Christian Politics	1 pm
29	Children's Choir Rehearsal	5 pm

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, Patrick Faulhaber, 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 Patrick will get in touch.

Inquirers' Meeting

Tuesday, April 23, 7 pm

Faith Exploration

Wednesday, May 1, 7 pm

New Member Sunday

Sunday, May 5, 10:30 am

Central Committee Fair

We have 18 committees and sub-committees to thank for the amazing things Central Congregational Church is able to accomplish – from our small-group fellowship and CCC Youth, to our vibrant music program and mission and action both here and abroad, to unique experiences like the Gallery at Central and the Darrell West Lecture Series on Religion and Politics.

All of this work is run by Central members and friends who understand that "church" is a verb. How we use our talents and time makes Central more than just a special place of worship, but a wellspring of true community. You can be part of it. Check out our Committee Fair and see how you can make a difference! **Sunday, April 7, 11:30 am, in Chapel Hall.**

Join the Audio Reserves!



The Technology Committee is seeking volunteers who are interested in learning how to operate Central's sound equipment during worship services and other special events – when Jim Silverthorn isn't available. If you are interested, we will set up one-on-one training at your convenience. Contact Tom Viall, Bob Stout, or Don Wolfe to learn more!

Adult Sunday School

This month the Adult Sunday School continues its study of the Reconstruction Era, which challenged our nation to live up to the ideals of democracy and equality after the Civil War. This transfer from slavery to political liberty set in motion civil rights and other notions of equality that our society is still wrestling with today. Contact Claudia with questions. **Sundays, April 7, 14, 21, and 28, at 9 am, the Fireplace Room.**

The Deacon's Bench

April has always been a difficult month for me. I spend much of the winter months looking forward to spring, the season of new life. Spring brings more hours of daylight, warmer temperatures, and more opportunities to be outside. April begins with April Fool's Day. The origins of April Fool's Day are unclear. According to Wikipedia, some experts trace the origins of April Fool's Day back to Noah. "The mistake of Noah sending the dove out of the ark before the water had abated, on the first day of April, and to perpetuate the memory of this deliverance it was thought proper, whoever forgot so remarkable a circumstance to punish them by sending them upon some sleeveless errand similar to that ineffectual message upon which the bird was sent by the patriarch."

Are we not all like Noah? We have a hard time sitting still, enjoying where we are, the people we are with, and listening for God's voice to help guide our lives. Take time this month to sit quietly and listen for God to reassure you in your Christian walk.

April also brings us "tax day" on April 15. This is not a day many look forward to, but I think it gives us a chance to evaluate where our priorities lie. We may not agree with the policies and budgetary priorities of the current administration, but we must fulfill our responsibility as citizens and pay our taxes. In Mark 12:17 Jesus said, "Give back to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's." If you disagree with the current administration's fiscal policies, write a letter to your national or local representative, write a letter to your local newspaper, testify at a legislative hearing about legislation you are passionate about, but most importantly VOTE! Encourage your friends to vote! If you have children 18 years or older, encourage them to vote! - *Bob Griffith*

April should not be the cruelest month!

Not Just Supper

Not Just Supper, Central's social group for people who are single, keeps growing and growing. On Sunday, Feb. 25, the group – with its largest turnout ever – gathered to attend the Central Congregational Church Choir's musical tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. – and then enjoyed authentic Indian cuisine at Not Just Snacks on Hope Street.



Friday Film Fare



In 1980, three young men – who were total strangers to each other – discovered at the age of 19 that they were identical triplets, separated at birth.

Instant celebrity followed as news articles, talk shows, special appearances, and eventually a restaurant / nightclub in Manhattan showcased the personable trio and their increasingly lavish lifestyle.

And, then came the questions. And, then came the disturbing discoveries. And, then things became very strange indeed.

"Three Identical Strangers" is a riveting and remarkable documentary, recounting a story that will surprise, astonish – and then really pull the rug out from under you. Like the boys themselves, just enjoy the ride and don't even try to guess what lies ahead. [98 minutes; color; rated PG-13, 2018]

Join host Jim Silverthorn on Friday, April 19, at 7:30 pm, in the Fireplace Room.



From Claudia

As I write this, we are poised at the edge of Holy Week. And, that made me think about a trip I took shortly after Easter in 2010. We flew into Egypt and went directly to Lebanon, then Syria (at the very beginning of the conflict there – we were warned away from that country by the State Department), then Jordan, Israel, and back to Egypt.

I remember walking down the Mount of Olives. It was paved and very steep and slippery. Sometimes there was a rail to grasp in the tall wall beside the narrow road, but the rest of the time the people in my group simply held onto one another and hoped to stay upright.

In some ways that must have been the disciples' experience, too. After all that they had witnessed leading up to Jesus' resurrection and His appearances that continued after Easter, they must have felt the need to steady one another as they moved forward.

What was it like for them to become Easter people? All must have been chaotic and uncertain for those first believers. Sometimes it's not so different for us these days. On the Sunday after Easter, our Easter Lessons and Carols worship always reminds us that those first believers and all who came after them have had to live into what it means to follow Christ.

They had to trust one another and do their very best to let people know what had happened. They had to lean on each other to follow in the Way which Jesus' life and resurrection pointed them.

Every part of the story points out to us that we follow the Risen Christ. What does that mean? The meaning continually unfolds before us.

Holding tight to each other lets us move forward as we live our lives through the mystery of resurrection remembering Jesus' words, "I am the resurrection and the life."

Alleluia! Christ is risen indeed! - *Claudia*

Poetry Corner

A New Beginning

The snow has ended
The streets are clear
But the wind howls around corners
And makes us long for Spring

When days are longer
And sun warms our faces
Flowers burst forth in beautiful array
Giving us hope for a new beginning

Would it be so for our world
We pray that we will love our neighbor
We pray for peace
And for God's World born anew

- *Charrell Maxwell*

SAVE THE DATE

Sunday • May 5 • 10:30 am

New Member Sunday

Please bring a dish to share at the Reception / Potluck Luncheon after

New Discussion Group



THE AFTER PARTY TOWARD BETTER CHRISTIAN POLITICS

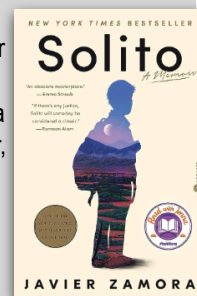
Did you attend the recent Darrell West Lecture where New York Times columnist David French discussed the Christian response to political polarization in America – and leave with more questions? Are you wondering how Christians should act in our sharply divided world of partisan politics? Do you have your own ideas about how we got here and where we should go? Then Central's new discussion group is for you!

This month, Central will launch a discussion group on the topics raised by Mr. French. To help focus our discussion, we will use a study/discussion guide – entitled "The After Party: Toward Better Christian Politics" developed by Mr. French; the Reverend Dr. Russell Moore, editor-in-chief of "Christianity Today," and author Curtis Chang, consulting professor at Duke Divinity School and Senior Fellow at Fuller Theological Seminary. A light lunch will be served.

More details will follow soon. But if you are interested in participating or would like more information, please contact Kristin DeKuiper. **Sundays – April 7, 21, and 28; May 19; and two June dates TDB – at 1 pm, in the Fireplace Room.**

Food for Thought Book Group

This month, Claudia's book group will participate in Reading Across Rhode Island's "One Book, One State" community reading program. We will discuss "Solito," by Javier Zamora, telling of his 3,000-mile journey from a small town in El Salvador, through Guatemala and Mexico, and across the U.S. border at age nine. Zamora's story is that of millions who had no choice but to leave home. **Thursday, April 11, 7 pm, in the Fireplace Room**



Not Just Supper

Central's singles' group will attend the Rhode Island Philharmonic's open rehearsal of Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 2. Tickets are \$20. Reserve yours by calling the box office (401-248-7000) and mention you are part of Janet Harris' party. After the concert, we'll have dinner at Gregg's. RSVP to Janet Harris via text (401-952-5178), who will coordinate carpooling. **Friday, April 12. Concert: 5:30 pm, at Veterans Memorial Auditorium. Dinner: 8:30 pm at Gregg's (1303 N. Main Street, Providence)** If you can't make the concert, come for dinner!

Women Gather

Central's women's fellowship will join the Stewardship Committee's Family Trivia Day. We should have enough people to make up a couple of teams. And, we challenge Central Men's Group to form a team of its own and see who emerges victorious! **Sunday, April 14, 12 noon, in Chapel Hall**

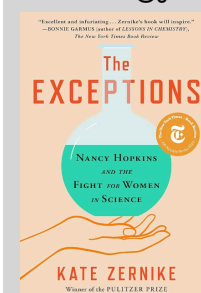


Central Men's Group

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, April 18, 7:30 am, in the Fireplace Room**

Fourth Thursday Book Group

This month, the Fourth Thursday Book Group will meet to discuss "The Exceptions: Nancy Hopkins, MIT, and the Fight for Women in Science," by Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Kate Zernike. It is the inspiring account of the 16 female scientists who forced MIT to publicly admit it had been discriminating against its female faculty for years, sparking a nationwide reckoning with the pervasive sexism in science. If you would like to join, please email Ann Scott at eannscott56@gmail.com for a Zoom invitation. **Thursday, April 25, 12:30 pm, via Zoom.**





The Nominating Committee
invites you to the new and improved

2024 Committee Fair

Sunday • April 7 • Coffee Hour

- Talk with Central committee members
- Learn how Central operates and keeps giving to the community
- Find a place for your unique talents

Be the one who makes a difference!

“It is clear to me that God is doing something beautiful through our church.... I hope you will join me in taking some time to prayerfully discern what you can offer to the work of our congregation.”

~ The Reverend Patrick Faulhaber

