



CENTRAL NEWS

Aug 2025 Vol. 33, No. 11

A Good Word From Patrick



Hey folks, If you've missed worship the past few weeks, we've been diving into the book of "Revelation" – a book that often intimidates people who only know it by reputation, or who encounter it without good guidance. It's full of vivid, mythic symbolism and was written to early Christian communities facing real and dangerous challenges to their faith in God's presence through Christ.

At its core, "Revelation" is a pastoral letter. It draws on apocalyptic and prophetic language from across the Hebrew scriptures and speaks a word of hope to struggling churches.

Unfortunately, it's also been misread; some authors have made fortunes writing speculative fiction rooted more in fantasy than biblical scholarship. That's why we need thoughtful tools to read "Revelation" responsibly.

So here are the highlights: Apocalyptic literature – like parts of "Daniel" and all of "Revelation" – is not about predicting the future. It's about revealing ("apocalypse" means unveiling) the spiritual truth beneath present circumstances. It uses rich symbols and imagery to offer hope in the midst of chaos.

"Revelation" was written to churches in Asia Minor (modern-day western Turkey) near the end of the first century. These communities were asking a question we still ask: How do we stay faithful to Christ when the world feels ruled by powers that oppose grace, love, and justice? The stakes were high for them; they faced violent persecution. That's why the imagery is so intense: when it feels like a beast is devouring the world, they needed to hear that God's power is stronger still.

That's the good news of "Revelation" – not fear or doom, but the final victory of God's love over all that harms and destroys.

It's one of my favorite books of the Bible, but it can't be read in isolation. It echoes more than half the books of Scripture and deserves thoughtful engagement. So, if you're curious to learn more, I recommend two great resources: "Reversed Thunder" by Eugene Peterson – a beautifully pastoral reflection – and "Reading Revelation Responsibly" by Michael J. Gorman – a solid, accessible commentary that takes both history and hope seriously. Let me know if you pick one up; I'd love to hear what stands out to you.

We'll continue our exploration of "Revelation" through August. And I hope to see you Sunday! ~ Patrick

Save The Date for *Block Party Central!*

Central has always kicked off the new year of worship and fellowship on **Gathering Sunday (Sep. 7)**. But this year, we're doing even more: We're inviting the whole community – friends and neighbors – to join us for **Block Party Central on Saturday**,

Sep. 20, from 12 noon to 3 pm.

This fabulous – and free – community event will be specially designed for children, families, and college students. But we promise fun for kids, teens, and adults of all ages. There will be games, activities,

and a petting zoo – as well as food trucks, local vendors, and more. So save the date, and spread the word!

Stay tuned for details, as well a list of materials and supplies we will need for a successful party. And if you're interested in helping plan or work the event, please sign up in Chapel Hall.



AUG EVENTS

3	Nursery Opens	9 am
	Summer Bible Study	9 am
	Summer Choir	10 am
	Worship	10:30 am
	Children's Church	10:30 am
	Carousel Sunday	12:30 pm
6	Amos House Volunteers	6:30 am
10	Nursery Opens	9 am
	Summer Bible Study	9 am
	Summer Choir	10 am
	Worship	10:30 am
	Children's Church	10:30 am
	Women Gather	12 noon
13	Amos House Volunteers	6:30 am
	Summer MIDWEEK	6 pm
14	Food for Thought Book Group	7 pm
17	Nursery Opens	9 am
	Summer Bible Study	9 am
	Summer Choir	10 am
	Worship	10:30 am
	Children's Church	10:30 am
	Lunch at Aleppo Sweets	12 noon
	Providence Children's Museum	2 pm
19	Prudential Committee	7 pm
20	Amos House Volunteers	6:30 am
	Newsletter Deadline	3:30 pm
21	Central Men's Group	7:30 am
24	Nursery Opens	9 am
	Summer Choir	10 am
	Worship	10:30 am
	Children's Church	10:30 am
	Better Christian Politics	12:15 pm
27	Amos House Volunteers	6:30 am
31	Nursery Opens	9 am
	Summer Choir	10 am
	Worship	10:30 am
	Children's Church	10:30 am
	CCC Youth Lunch Out	11:30 am



The Church Office will be closed on Monday, August 11, for Victory 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, 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
Sunday, October 26, 11:30 am

New Member Sunday
Sunday, November 2, 10:30 am

Summer Choir

With Central’s Church Choirs on hiatus, don’t miss your chance to “make a joyful noise.” Every Sunday morning, singers of all ages are welcome to gather at 10 am for warmup exercises and a brief rehearsal of the service’s hymns and the occasional introit. The Summer Choir will lead the singing during Worship and then be seated among the congregation. “Regulars” and newcomers alike are welcome! **Sundays in August, 10 am, in the Sanctuary Chancel.**

Summer Bible Study

This summer, Claudia’s Bible Study Group will continue to explore The Gospel of Luke, the third of four New Testament Gospels relating the origins, birth, ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus – taking on a different topic each week. Aug. 3: Costs and Joys of Discipleship. Aug. 10: Jerusalem. Aug. 17: The Gospel. Come to one session or to all of them. Contact Claudia for more information. **Sundays, Aug. 3, 10 and 17, 9 am, in the Fireplace Room**

Summer MIDWEEK

Join us in Chapel Hall for Central’s special Summer MIDWEEK program for kids, teens, and adults alike. We will share a meal at 6 pm as usual and then turn our attention to a story of our faith from the Bible. We’ll end the evening on the West Lawn, making s’mores around the fire pit. Yum! If you like, bring a chair or blanket for comfier lawn seating.

**Wednesday,
Aug. 13, 6 pm,
in Chapel
Hall.**



The Deacon’s Bench

What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun. ~ Ecclesiastes 1:9

I am recently back from a trip to Arizona with my family. In 2004, my wife and I honeymooned in Scottsdale, Ariz. But one night, we stayed right on the South Rim of the Grand Canyon. After our son was born in 2007, we said we would take him there to experience the awesomeness of it all. It only took us 18 years, but I am happy that we followed through and gave him the chance to see this natural wonder.

While in Arizona, we also spent time in Sedona, Flagstaff, and Phoenix. We visited old, preserved cliff dwellings of Walnut Canyon and Montezuma Castle, as well as natural landscape features like Sunset Crater Volcano and Meteor Crater. They made me think about that verse from Ecclesiastes: “There is nothing new under the sun.” A familiar one, I’m sure. But I feel it should be revisited often.

Thinking about the cyclical nature of things – civilizations rising and falling, one’s own birth and death – I easily got caught up in my own fears and anxieties and worry. “Am I nearing the beginning of my own downward arc of existence? Is there nothing new under the sun? Is everything meaningless?” Then, sitting on a warm rock on the South Rim of the Grand Canyon, I took a breath and thought some more.

We can look at human history and see civilizations that have come and gone. We can look at the historic record of the earth and see major natural events that have occurred. And we can see that some things take a long time to show any change. But I think that is the key. I may get fearful in one moment. But if I sit and give myself some time, I can change my thinking and be less anxious.

So when things look like they are going in the wrong direction, sit, renew your outlook on life, and find the strength to change what you can. World struggles and society’s growing schisms are hardly new. But if no one rose to challenge or change these downward cycles, there would be no upswings, flourishing, or growing of society.

Take a moment to revive yourself and help those around you experience what can be the awesomeness of life. ~ *Erik Wohlgemuth*

Courtyard Renovation

Dedicated in 1993, Central’s Memorial Courtyard includes an underground columbarium with 60 concrete niches for the interment of ashes. Above ground is a beautiful garden with a monument proclaiming Jesus’ words, “I am the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25). It is a sacred space where families can enjoy quiet reflection.

Three years ago, the Courtyard Committee learned that all 60 niches were used or reserved for future use and began researching the potential for increasing capacity so the columbarium may continue to be available to Central members and their families.

Working with the original project designer – landscape architect Sara Bradford – as well as excavation, garden design, and landscaping professionals, the committee has arranged to add 48 niches – next to the originals, to the right of the walkway, below Wilson Chapel’s north wall window.

The initial excavation phase should be completed by mid-August. Landscaping will begin in September. Old and overgrown shrubs will be replaced, and new perennial plantings added. However, the renovation will be respectful of the Courtyard’s original design and intentions in every way. This contemplative, fresh-air space will retain a green and tranquil quality – welcoming those who intentionally seek it out, as well as those passing through who may linger for a moment in meditation or prayer. ~ *Wendy Abelson, Memorial Courtyard Committee Chair*

Flowers and Fellowship

You may know that the Flower Committee is responsible for the flower arrangements on our communion table during Worship. But you may not know that the committee has another, equally important, mission: building community! **There are vacancies on our committee, and we need your help.**

You see, those flowers have afterlives. After services, committee members bring them to Centralites who can no longer join us on Sundays or who have lost loved ones.

While it is a pleasure to arrange flowers in the chancel to glorify Jesus’ birth and resurrection, I see these little missionary jaunts as ways to reach out to those unable to congregate, but who are still growing with us toward the light. We might occasionally get lost on an unfamiliar road, but the gratitude of the people receiving these tangible reminders that they are not forgotten has moved me in the most unexpected ways.

Please join us in this work. Just contact the Church Office or chat with Cheryl Ludwig or me during coffee hour. Meanwhile, may your garden flourish! ~ *Beverly Haviland*

In Memoriam

Our prayers and sympathy are with Organist / Choirmaster Patrick Aiken on the death of his brother, Timothy. And with the family and friends of Anne Giraud who passed away at age 106.
Requiescat in pace

From Claudia

Summer is still stretching before us, albeit not quite as far as it stretched when I wrote my June article! It will already be August by the time you read this! The flowers in my cutting garden are heavy with blooms. The deer are not content to have eaten all the flowers off our hostas and are now working on the leaves, too. Many of the bird nests around us are filled with second or third nestlings. It is the height of summer resplendent in its beauty and sleepy promise. That made me think of a quote from “Tuck Everlasting” by Natalie Babbitt:

The first week of August hangs at the very top of the summer, the top of the live-long year, like the highest seat of a Ferris wheel when it pauses in its turning. The weeks that come before are only a climb from balmy spring, and those that follow a drop to the chill of autumn, but the first week of August is motionless, and hot. It is curiously silent, too, with blank white dawns and glaring noons, and sunsets smeared with too much color. Often at night there is lightning, but it quivers all alone. There is no thunder, no relieving rain. These are strange and breathless days, the dog days....

Babbitt’s book explores the question of immortality. It asks its readers what we would choose given the choice. It’s a classic children’s novel, but the question is not just for children, is it? Our faith tells us that death is not the final word. All around us is the constant “book” of nature, teaching us about the cycle of seasons and growth. We are also participants in that growth – our own and that of those around us. We see that vividly in the cycle of nature of which we are a part.

My hope for us all is that we are green and growing. However, if we feel that we are in a dry, hot and fallow stretch, there is always hope within us and around us. Throughout time, people have often felt the need for rest – a time to contemplate who we are and whose we are.

No matter where we are in our spiritual growth cycle, there are seeds planted deep within us. Seeds of hope and renewal. Seeds that need some time and space and, yes, a little water, in order to burst forth from roots that are deep and sure. And along the way, we have one another. For we are all on this journey through life together, and it is my privilege and honor to have such companions along the way!

With love and blessings ~ Claudia

Summer Scenes at Central



Summer Choir



Summer MIDWEEK



Summer MIDWEEK



Summer MIDWEEK



PrideFest

Carousel Sunday



Let's meet after Worship at the amazing Crescent Park Carousel, a National Historic Landmark built in 1895 by the famous

designer Charles Loeff. Whether you ride or watch, it is a piece of Americana – and fun for both children and adults! Bring a snack or picnic lunch, if you like. Questions? Ask Claudia. **Sunday, Aug. 3, 12:30 pm, at the Crescent Park Carousel** (700 Bullocks Point Avenue, Riverside)

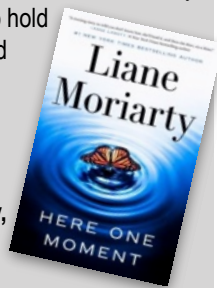
Women Gather

In August, Central's women's fellowship will meet – and make new friends – over a “picnic” lunch. Bring an entrée, dessert, or beverage to share as you enjoy the wonderful company this group offers!

Sunday, Aug. 10, 12 noon, in the Fireplace Room

Food For Thought Book Group

This month, Claudia's book group will discuss “Here One Moment,” by Liane Moriarty. The intricately plotted novel, with the wonderful wit for which Moriarty has become famous, looks at friends and family and how we manage to hold onto them in our harried modern lives, asking “What if you could see life's twists and turns coming?” Questions? Ask Claudia. **Thursday, Aug. 14, 7 pm, in the Fireplace Room**



Lunch at Aleppo Sweets

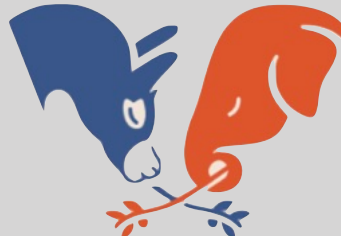
Join Central friends after Worship for an authentic Syrian repast. Check out the café menu (www.alepposweets.com/cafe-menu). And, don't forget to save room for the baklava! Please RSVP to Claudia. **Sunday, Aug. 17, 12:30 pm, at Aleppo Sweets** (107 Ives Street, Providence)

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. If you have questions, contact John Trevor. **Thursday, Aug. 21, 7:30 am, in the Fireplace Room**

Toward Better Christian Politics

Central's popular discussion group not only explores the Christian response to political polarization in America, but also how we can turn Christian views into action. Questions? Contact Paul Armstrong or Kristin DeKuiper. **Sunday, Aug. 24, 12:15 pm, in the Fireplace Room**



REwake: Being the Light

CCC Youth's mission trip to West Virginia not only offered an opportunity to serve others, but also to rewake our faith. Nestled in the Appalachian hills, far from the noise and distractions of daily life, our group had space to reconnect – with God, creation, each other, and the deeper calling placed on our hearts. "Rewake" became more than just a word in my prayers; it became a movement of the Spirit.

Many of us arrived in Appalachia weighed down by routines and responsibilities. But something powerful happens when we step outside our comfort zones into communities that welcome us with open arms and open hearts. Through hard work, sharing meals with "strangers," and listening to locals' stories, we saw lives and perspectives begin to shift.

Jesus said, "You are the light of the world ... let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:14-16). These words echoed through our week. Each time we did our best to show up with joy in unfamiliar territory ... each moment we prayed together before a long day of service and shared our gratitude at the end ... each person we waved to or gave much needed water to ... each person who stopped to talk with us. These were sparks of light in places that needed hope. And in giving light, we found ours constantly rekindled.

"Rewake" means remembering the flame that God has already placed within us. It means choosing to live alert, alive, and aware of the needs around us – not just on mission trips, but every day. It means believing that our small acts of love, when rooted in Christ, can pierce through even the darkest places. As we return from West Virginia, our prayer is that this reawakening doesn't fade. That the lessons learned on hot hillsides and loud gymnasiums carry into our classrooms, churches, and neighborhoods. That our youth continue to be the light – in their words, kindness, and courage to serve. We invite our church family to join us. Ask yourself: Where is God calling me to be the light? How can I renew my faith and share it in ways that matter? Let us continue to rise each day with purpose and passion, carrying the light of Christ into every corner of our world.

With reawakened gratitude - *Cristina*

Summer Drive for Better Lives RI



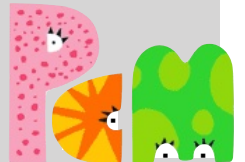
According to CCC Youth, our church is truly amazing! Shortly after returning from their Mission Trip, Central teens began collecting hygiene supplies for Better Lives Rhode Island. Their Amazon Wish List sold out in four days, enabling them to collect even more than they'd hoped. Thank you!

CCC Youth Lunch Out

All Central middle and high schoolers are invited to meet up at Coffee Hour on the Chapel Hall stage before walking over to a nearby restaurant for food and fellowship. **Sunday, Aug. 31, 11:30 am.** Locale TBD.

Providence Children's Museum

Families with children of all ages are invited to play, create, and explore at the Providence Children's Museum. There's so much to do! You can explore the swirling ways of water, learn about plants, take a time-traveling adventure, and even create a blue-block world that goes beyond the imagination. Admission is \$17 each – but only \$14 for groups of five. So invite some friends, RSVP to Cristina, and let's have some fun together! **Sunday, Aug. 17, 2 pm, at Providence Children's Museum** (100 South Street, Providence).



CCC Youth's Appalachia Service Project



Central Congregational Church

296 Angell Street
Providence, R.I. 02906
401.331.1960
www.centralchurch.us

