



CENTRAL NEWS

Mar 2026

Vol. 34, No. 7

A Good Word From Patrick



Hey folks! It took the plows three full days to get to the side streets around the church. I know many of you were in the same situation. It was interesting to see how different people responded to the confining reality. Some folks dutifully shoveled their sidewalks and driveways to create a narrow lane for walking and prepare for the eventual arrival of snow plows. Some extended their workload to help shovel out their neighbors. Others rested, waiting for a plow and a work team to come and clear the path.

Once the plow came through Stimson Avenue, they really just opened a single lane of shallow snow in the middle of the road. No worries, I thought – I can connect our driveway to the street. So I finished my cup of coffee and walked out to start shoveling. As soon as I stepped outside, I saw some of the folks from Wheeler drive up with a smaller plow hitched to the front of their maintenance truck. Hoping to clear the road wide enough to get students back into classes, they had just begun pushing the snow back toward the curb. I described the hour-long project I was about to start, and they insisted on helping. They turned the truck around, pushed the snow back from the driveway, and made a small clearing. What an incredible gift!

Just after they drove away, as I started clearing the lingering snow and ice, a neighbor walked up and tried to empathize: “Oh no, they covered up your sidewalks! I wish they would pay attention!” What a kind impulse. We had spent a lot of time uncovering what had just been covered again, so frustration would have been understandable.

And it made me think about how many aspects of our lives – unearned, unexpected, unaccounted for – have the potential to be received either as a blessing or a curse. The snow was simultaneously a blessed display of God’s awesome power and nature’s incredible strength, and it was a major inconvenience. It offered neighbors a chance to show up for one another or to grow frustrated with each other. It invited us to cozy up in the comforts of home, or made us feel trapped. It allowed us to slow down from the chaotic expectations of life, or kept us from doing the things we care deeply about.

As we settle into the heart of Lent, I am trying to receive this blizzard not as interruption, but as invitation. An invitation to notice what rises up in me when my plans are disrupted. An invitation to pay attention to whether I instinctively reach for frustration or gratitude. An invitation to accept help when it comes, even when I’m prepared to do the work alone. Lent is, in many ways, a season of holy interruption. We loosen our control just enough to see what God might be clearing, uncovering, or reshaping beneath the surface.

Be well, friends - *Patrick*

Unpacking Christian Nationalism

Central’s second Community Care Conversation is an ideal follow-up to the 2026 Darrell West Lecture featuring Kristin Kobes Du Mez, best-selling author of “Jesus and John Wayne: How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith and Fractured a Nation.”

Attorney **Kristin DeKuiper** will discuss the politics and policy of Christian nationalism from its historical roots to evangelical Christian nationalists’ current intentions for the U.S. **Bill Kole**, Axios contributor and author of “In Guns We Trust,” will explore the relationship between white evangel-

icals, politics, and guns in America.

Central senior minister **Patrick Faulhaber** will

lead table discussions about the messy intersection of practicing faith and loving our country – and the complicated dynamic in advocating for diversity.

Please RSVP to the Church Office (401.331.1960 / info@centralchurch.us) so we have adequate food and seating.

Monday, Mar. 2, 6 pm, in Chapel Hall



MAR EVENTS

- | | | |
|----|----------------------------------|----------|
| 1 | Adult Sunday School | 9 am |
| | Stewardship Committee | 9:15 am |
| | Worship | 10:30 am |
| | Religious Education Committee | 12 noon |
| | Makers’ Day | 2 pm |
| 2 | Community Care Conversation | 6 pm |
| 3 | Tuesdays with Scripture | 8 am |
| 4 | Gallery Committee | 9:30 am |
| | Lenten Meditation | 6 pm |
| | Lenten Mission Supper | 6:30 pm |
| 5 | Board of Deacons | 5:45 pm |
| 6 | Gallery Opening | 5 pm |
| 7 | Sewing Circle | 10 am |
| | Art as Sanctuary | 10 am |
| | Memorial Service: George Delany | 11 am |
| 8 | Adult Sunday School | 9 am |
| | Worship | 10:30 am |
| | Women Gather | 12 noon |
| | CCC Kids & Youth: Curling | 12:45 pm |
| | Ramadan Interfaith Iftar | 5:30 pm |
| 9 | Off of Hope Interfaith Gathering | 7 pm |
| 10 | Tuesdays with Scripture | 8 am |
| 11 | Lenten Meditation | 6 pm |
| | Lenten Mission Supper | 6:30 pm |
| 12 | Music Committee | 6:30 pm |
| | Food For Thought Book Group | 7 pm |
| 13 | Friday Film Fare | 7:30 pm |
| 14 | Art as Sanctuary | 10 am |
| 15 | Adult Sunday School | 9 am |
| | Worship | 10:30 am |
| | Flower Committee | 12 noon |
| 16 | Mission & Action Committee | 6:30 pm |
| | Technology Committee | 7 pm |
| 17 | Plant & Properties Committee | 5:45 pm |
| | Prudential Committee | 7 pm |
| 18 | Lenten Meditation | 6 pm |
| | Lenten Mission Supper | 6:30 pm |
| 19 | Central Men’s Group | 7:30 am |
| 21 | Art as Sanctuary | 10 am |
| | Sewing Circle | 10 am |
| 22 | Adult Sunday School | 9 am |
| | Dedication Sunday | 10:30 am |
| | Dedication Sunday Luncheon | 12 noon |
| | Membership Committee | 12 noon |
| 25 | Lenten Meditation | 6 pm |
| | Lenten Mission Supper | 6:30 pm |
| 26 | Fourth Thursday Book Group | 12:30 pm |
| 28 | Art as Sanctuary | 10 am |
| 29 | Adult Sunday School | 9 am |
| | Palm Sunday | 10:10 am |
| | Easter Egg Decorating | 11:30 am |
| | Better Christian Politics | 12:15 pm |

HOLY WEEK BEGINS MARCH 29 • COME WORSHIP WITH US!



The Deacon's Bench

If you had ever had the singular experience of traveling with my dad, you would have returned home exhausted. An endlessly curious professor, he wanted to see everything. As a travel companion, he was merciless. We'd have to wake up early, cover a minimum of ten miles a day, and pack in endless museum visits.

His one non-negotiable: always enter every church you pass.

I think he thought that when you experience places of worship in another culture, you gain a deeper understanding for their history and traditions. But they're seldom practical undertakings from a modern standpoint. Many took generations to build, and one cathedral was so tall that part of it had collapsed.

But for those of us lucky enough to gather at Central, you start to appreciate the way church buildings can capture your imagination and your senses. Each time we enter our church, the sanctuary transforms the light around us and bends it into something sacred. The sounds around us – from the occasional baby's voice to a soaring chord from the choir loft – reverberate differently.

We come to church, into worship, much like tired travelers, wandering through a transactional world that sees us as employees, consumers, caregivers, or colleagues. Our faith has the power to transform space around us and connect us to what is sacred in each other. In a world of distractions, our faith demands presence. In a world where we see violence and injustice, our faith demands that we act with love. Our world is driven by logic and data, but our faith calls us to build something enduring and transformative, brick by brick. - *Laurel McLaughlin*

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, May 17, 11:30 am

New Member Sunday

Sunday, May 24, 10:30 am

Adult Sunday School

In March, Adult Sunday School begins a new study of "Roger Williams and Religious Freedom," discussing how people of faith relate to governance. Puritan



Roger Williams struggled to define "soul liberty" and created the concept of separation of church and state here in Rhode Island – a unique and revolutionary idea for the world. Questions? Ask Claudia.

Sundays in March, 9 am, in the Fireplace Room

Support Rhode Island Refugees

Central is working with Dorcas International to create Refugee Restart Kits that help refugees start new lives in Rhode Island.

The needed items – all new, please – include home and school supplies. Follow this link for details: <https://tr.ee/eCmaQj>.

Or check out the sign-up sheet in Chapel Hall. Monetary

contributions are also welcome. The deadline for contributions is Sunday, Mar. 8.

**Restart Kits
for Refugees**

Amos House Breakfast Volunteers

Join Central's Amos House Breakfast Volunteers as they assemble pre-packaged breakfasts. Even if you can only come occasionally, we welcome every extra set of hands. Questions? Contact Tracy Baran. **Wednesdays, 6:30 am, in the Amos House Kitchen** (460 Pine Street, Providence)

Your Neighborhood Food Pantry

Every Sunday during Worship, Central collects non-perishable food items for Your Neighborhood Food Pantry (www.ynjfp.org), a local organization that serves Providence neighbors experiencing food insecurity. Please place your donations in the baskets at the front of the church during the second verse of the first hymn.



MissionWorks

Central's 2025/26 benevolences have been determined and gifts distributed to Amenity Aid,

Amos House,

Better Lives Rhode Island, Church Beyond the Walls, Crossroads Rhode Island, Dorcas International, Edesia, Haiti Task Force, Loaves & Fishes Rhode Island, Mt. Hope Learning Center, Non-Violence Institute, Rhode Island Community Food Bank, Sojourner House, Your Neighborhood Food Pantry, and Youth Pride Inc.

In addition, the Mission & Action committee recently allocated funds to Community Libraries of Providence to purchase refrigeration for their growing food pantry needs.

And, please mark your calendar for our **Annual Week of Service: May 11 to 17**. Sign-up opportunities will be available in early April.

New Church Software

Central has launched its new online membership directory and mobile phone application! Instructions on how to set up your password and download the app were emailed to you in February.

Throughout March, we will be adding more information to the church website, including instructions for managing your profile and setting up online giving. As a Central member, your profile is already in the system, so **do not use the "create account" feature.**

Instead, please request an email invitation from the Church Office. Click here for a copy of the instructions:

https://mailchi.mp/centralchurch/new_system_onboarding_instructions

Dedication Sunday

As we are now fully rejoicing in the Holy Season, Central members and friends are not only looking forward to Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday, but also to Dedication Sunday – on **March 22** – the day we dedicate and celebrate our 2026/27 pledges.

Your annual pledge supports everything we do at Central: our mission and ministries at home and abroad, upkeep of our historic church building, the hands-on experiences – and so much more – that bring our Children's Church to life, and salaries of our ministers and staff. Moreover, your gifts keep our beautiful sanctuary alive with worship, music, and fellowship.



Please prayerfully consider what you can give financially for the coming fiscal year, and make your pledge to Central on or before Dedication Sunday. Then following Worship on Mar. 22, join the Stewardship Committee in Chapel Hall for a celebratory luncheon, catered by Amos House.

Thank you in advance for helping Central grow into the future!

March 29

Procession
10:10 am

Worship
10:30 am



From Claudia

It is only a few days after Ash Wednesday as I write this. Most of you know that one of my practices is to read a daily devotional during Advent and Lent. This year I looked in my shelves and picked out not one, but three books! So, my early morning practice this season is to contemplate Pádraig Ó Tuama's Lenten prayers of meditation, Sister Wendy Beckett's pairings of great works of art with reflections, and ending with Jan Richardson's blessings for Lent. I've read all of these books before, but thought it might be helpful to use them together. So far, so good!

This season gives us time to slow down and take a step back from the clamor of this world. There's good reason why our ancestors in faith came up with the liturgical cycle. It grounds us in a world that can seem to stand on shifting sand at times. The 40 days of Lent give us a chance to breathe, reflect, take in the world around us, deepen our faith.

Part of Ó Tuama's first prayer reminds us to "embrace possibility, respond graciously to disappointment, and hold tenderly those we encounter – and to be fully present to the day." Beckett's first reflection – on "The Great Wave Off Kanagawa" by Katsushika Hokusai – captures how uncertain life can be. The stylized wave curls over three small boats. Do they survive or not? Richardson reminds us that though we may "feel like dust," don't we "know what the Holy One can do with dust?" Lent is the time to contemplate our mortal existence and to recommit ourselves to becoming the people God calls us to be. To show forth "what God can do within the dirt, within the stuff of which the world is made ... and the galaxies that spiral inside the smudge we bear."

May God bless our Lenten journeys! And, may our reflections be deep and our contemplations be nourishing. ~ Claudia

Tuesdays With Scripture

Our early morning community devotional continues!



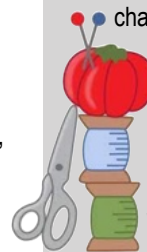
Each week we'll

discuss a short Bible passage. The session is self-contained. Come to one, or come 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, Mar. 3 and 10, 8 am, via Zoom

Sewing Circle

Central's sewing circle repairs, upcycles, and repurposes items – for themselves and



charity. There are mending projects, sewing machines, ironing board, and supplies – or bring your own. All skill levels welcome. A seamstress is on hand to help.

Questions? Contact Amy Hebb.

Saturday, Mar. 7 and 21, 10 am, in the Fireplace Room

Women Gather

Do you have a favorite book? One that lifts your spirits, makes you laugh, or inspires you? Grab a cup of coffee and join Central's women's fellowship in the conversation!

Questions? Ask Claudia. **Sunday, Mar. 8, 12 noon, in the Fireplace Room**

Food For Thought Book Group

This month, Claudia's book group will discuss "James: A Novel" by Percival Everett, the 2025 Pulitzer prizewinner for fiction. It reimagines Mark Twain's "Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" from the perspective of the enslaved character Jim – here called James. **Thursday, Mar. 12, 7 pm, in the Fireplace Room.**

Coming up Apr. 9: "Beneath the Poet's House" by Christa Carmen

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, Mar. 19, 7:30 am, in the Fireplace Room**

Fourth Thursday Book Group

This month, the Fourth Thursday Book Group will discuss "The Sisterhood: The Secret History of Women at the CIA" by bestselling author Liza Mundy. This thrilling new history of the CIA reveals how women have always played crucial, often unacknowledged roles in American spycraft. Email Ann Scott for a Zoom invitation. **Thursday, Mar. 26, 12:30 pm, via Zoom**

Coming up Apr. 23: "Hamnet" by Maggie O'Farrell

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 DeKuijer. **Sunday, Mar. 29, 12:15 pm, in the Fireplace Room**

Interfaith Gatherings

Central Congregational Church is invited to a **Ramadan Interfaith Iftar** celebration. Come and join our Muslim friends and neighbors in breaking the fast as a community – and get an inside look at one of Islam's richest socio-cultural traditions. RSVP to Saira Hussain (401-405-6482) by Mar. 1. **Sunday, Mar. 8, 5:30 pm, in Chapel Hall**



In addition, seven Providence congregations will come together for **Off of Hope: A Gathering of Interfaith Partners** – a special event designed to

build community with care and compassion. Courtney Nicolato, president and chief executive officer of United Way of Rhode Island, will be the guest speaker.

The event is sponsored by Central Congregational Church, Community Church of Providence, Congregation Beth Shalom, First Baptist Church in America, First Unitarian Church of Providence, St. Martin's Episcopal Church, and Temple Beth-El. **Monday, Mar. 9, 7 pm, at St. Martin's Episcopal Church** (50 Orchard Avenue, Providence).

RESCHEDULED!

Sunday • March 15 • 4 pm

Special Service of Music

Litaniae de venerabili altaris Sacramento
by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Reception follows in Chapel Hall

Lenten Speaker Series



Lenten Meditations:

Lent is a time for self-reflection and prayer, a chance to draw closer to God. This is the goal of our Lenten Meditations,

held every Wednesday in the days leading up to Palm Sunday. Each week, a member of Central will share his or her journey of faith. These brief, meditative services let us contemplate our spiritual paths, share in another's journey, and find connections in common ideas, concerns, questions, and experiences. And, we come to know one another in thoughtful and faith-filled ways. **Wednesdays, Mar. 4, 11, 18, and 25 – 6 pm, in Wilson Chapel**

Lenten Mission Suppers:

Please stay after the Lenten Meditations for a simple soup-and-bread supper in Chapel Hall and our Lenten Speaker Series:



Mar. 4: Gun Violence – **Representative Jason Knight**

Mar. 11: Food Insecurity – Melissa Cherney, chief executive officer, **Rhode Island Community Food Bank**

Mar. 18: Gaps at Hope High School – Lucia Gill-Case, Founder, **Hope Circle**

Mar. 25: Environmental Action – Tina Munter, Rhode Island Policy Advocate, **Green Energy Consumer Alliance**

The series – which was to launch on Feb. 25 with Teddi Jallow, Executive Director of Refugee Dream Center, speaking about immigration and resettlement – was canceled due to snow. We hope to reschedule.

Reception follows in Chapel Hall

Return

Lent is a season that invites us to return. For families, life moves quickly: school, activities, work, practices, and endless to-do lists. In the middle of all the busyness, it's easy for our attention to drift and for our faith to take a quiet place in the background. Lent gives us a gentle opportunity to slow down and come back to what matters most.

The word "return" means coming back, to God, to our faith, and to the simple practices that help us notice God's love in our everyday lives. The good news is that God is always ready to welcome us. No matter how busy, distracted, or overwhelmed we feel, God's love never moves away from us.

This month, families might practice returning together in small ways. You might share one thing you're grateful for at dinner, say a short prayer before bedtime, read a simple Bible story, or look for ways to show kindness to a neighbor, classmate, or someone who needs encouragement. These small moments help children and adults alike remember that God is present in ordinary life. Email me for a weekly guide of small things you and your family can do to return to God together this season.

Lent is not about being perfect or adding more pressure to already full days. It's about making space – space to pause, to notice, and to reconnect with God and with one another. As the signs of spring begin to appear, may this season be a time for your family to return, to love, to hope, to gratitude, and to the steady reminder that wherever we go, God is always with us, ready to welcome us home. - *Cristina*

Makers' Day

The children of Central are asking the entire congregation to join them for Makers' Day, which launches their newest charitable endeavor.

They'll be making bookmarks and friendship bracelets in Chapel Hall – and sweet treats in the church kitchen. All supplies will be provided. The kids just need more "human resources" to get the job done properly.

Ultimately, they will be selling all of these handmade goodies to benefit a charity of their choosing.

Please come and lend a hand!
Sunday, Mar. 1, 2 pm, in Chapel Hall



Friday Film Fare



In the desolate landscape of 1925 Montana, sensitive widow Rose (Kirsten Dunst) and her quietly devoted teenaged son Peter (Kody Smit-McPhee) move to a ranch co-owned by her gentle, new husband (Jesse Plemons) and his brother Phil (Benedict Cumberbatch). A tense battle of wills erupts between the new family members and the brutish Phil, whose volatility and coarseness stem from deep torment and repressed desire.

Based on Thomas Savage's enigmatic novel, **The Power of the Dog** (2021) is subtle but unrelenting in exploring the motives and depth of the male psyche and how one might "deliver my soul from the sword, my darling from the power of the dog" (Psalm 22:20). [126 minutes; color; rated R]

Join host Jim Silverthorn **Friday, Mar. 13, 7:30 pm, in the Fireplace Room.**

In the Gallery

This March, the Gallery at Central presents **Robert W. Easton: Colors and Contrasts.**

Robert's photography career began in an unlikely place: the U.S. Army Signal Center & School. He was trained as a "crash damage analysis" photographer, shooting "busted-up" helicopters, ceremonies, public service projects, and visiting generals and congressmen. All the work required was clear focus and good exposure. Studies at Clark University and Worcester Art Museum added the missing ingredient of creativity, and he developed a lifelong interest in photography as an expressive medium.

After a career in education, retirement has given Robert time – and digital technology has given him the opportunity – to redevelop his creative life. Documentary street photography, portraiture, patterns, texture, and color are regular themes in his work.

Many of his photographs – characterized by rich, saturated color – are deliberately ambiguous, encouraging close scrutiny and inviting viewers to create their own narratives. Abstract color studies often feature colors and textures without identifying contexts. Architectural studies feature detailed building facades with shadows and textures that create juxtapositions and ambiguities.

Meet the artist at the opening reception on Friday, March 6, from 5 to 7 pm.



Spectrum 1

Visit the Virtual Gallery:
www.centralchurch.us/the-gallery-at-central/

Curling ... and Youth Lunch Out!

The sport of curling has exploded in popularity in recent years, so we've reserved two lanes downtown. If you're not familiar, curling is a blend of shuffleboard and bowling ... on ice. Plus it's fun, social, and



accessible to all. So bring your friends! We'll meet at Track 15 and afterwards enjoy a meal together at the new food hall. Check out menus at track15ri.com. Please RSVP to Cristina. **Sunday, Mar. 8, 12:45 pm, in front of Track 15** (1 Union Station, Providence)

Easter Egg Decorating

Let's hang out together and decorate Easter Eggs! Just bring some eggs – regular or blown-out – though we'll also have some on hand. We'll provide all the supplies, so everyone can have fun and paint up a storm. This lovely event is in memory of Ann Bliven, a 50-year Central member, whose technique makes blown-out Easter eggs durable enough to use year after year. **Sunday, Mar. 29, 11:30 am in Chapel Hall**



Art as Sanctuary



Central's newest group, led by artist Robert Ramspott, tested the waters in February and now will become a weekly get-together for people of all skill levels. Every Saturday, you will be invited to slow down, breathe, and recon-nect with your inner life by creating art – without judgement or pressure – so creativ-ity can become an act of faith, presence, and shared humanity. **Saturdays, 10 am to 12 noon, location TBD**

Poetry Corner: "March"

Outside Rick's Roadhouse
four birds in a wheel
will dodge the cold rain.

- *Jon Wolston*



Use this QR Code to access
all Central links!

Central Congregational Church

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

