



CENTRAL NEWS

Aug 2026 Vol. 34, No. 11

A Good Word From Patrick



Hey folks, In the last week of June, Susannah and I traveled to Quebec for our first vacation devoted simply to spending time together since moving to Rhode Island. We drove so we could bring our dog Mabel, stopping in Maine before settling into a small cabin north of Quebec City on a gravel road called Chemin du Porc-Épic – “Porcupine Trail.”

For a few days, it was exactly what we needed: mountain trails, a beautiful historic city, Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day festivities, good food, and long stretches of unhurried time together.

Then, late one evening, Mabel spotted a porcupine disappearing into a ravine beside the cabin. She lunged after it, the leash snapped, and before I could reach her, she had been struck by hundreds of quills. They were buried in her chest and shoulder, across her face, and inside her mouth. It was horrific and obviously painful.

An emergency veterinarian sedated her and removed what they could. She was returned to us with stitches and staples and a difficult warning: some quills might still be hidden and could continue moving through her body.

They did continue to move. Each day, we pulled out several quills that worked their way to the surface of her skin. Shortly after we arrived home, one punctured her lung. The veterinary team here in Rhode Island removed more than a liter of air from her chest and kept her overnight. She recovered, but the warning remains: other quills may still be hidden.

Since then, I have found myself watching her constantly. Is her breathing normal? Is that swelling new? Is she unusually tired? Is that lump scar tissue or a quill? Some part of me hopes that enough vigilance might prevent the next danger.

I have been thinking about this in other ways, too. I turn 40 this month, and with a new decade before me, I have been thinking more about health, strength, aging, and the body’s vulnerabilities. There is wisdom in tending our lives carefully. We should move, rest, eat well, seek medical care, and pay attention. But attention can easily become anxiety, and care can become an attempt to control what cannot be controlled.

No amount of vigilance can remove every risk. No amount of love can guarantee that those we care about will never suffer. Many of us are caring for bodies and lives we cannot fully control – our own, a spouse’s, a child’s, a parent’s, or a friend’s. We can do what is ours to do, but we cannot secure every outcome.

Faith does not remove this vulnerability. It teaches us how to live within it. We can remain present. We can receive help. We can care faithfully for what has been placed in our hands today, and meet what remains beyond our control with courage, tenderness, interdependence, and grace. - Patrick



On May 31, Central welcomed twelve new members: George Adams, Anne Caldarella, Kacey and Clint Dillier, Holly Hackman, Andrew Heintz, C.J. Johnston-Doucette, Ari Koeman and Colin Swain, Jody and Gary Rits, and Erin Shattuck!

AUG EVENTS

2	Nursery Opens	9 am
	Summer Bible Study	9 am
	Summer Choir	10 am
	Worship / Communion	10:30 am
	Children's Church	10:30 am
5	Amos House Volunteers	6:30 am
9	Nursery Opens	9 am
	Learn to Read Music	9 am
	Summer Bible Study	9 am
	Summer Choir	10 am
	Worship	10:30 am
	Children's Church	10:30 am
12	Amos House Volunteers	6:30 am
13	Food For Thought Book Group	7 pm
16	Nursery Opens	9 am
	Summer Choir	10 am
	Worship	10:30 am
	Children's Church	10:30 am
19	Amos House Volunteers	6:30 am
	MidWeek Open Mic Night	6 pm
20	Central Men's Group	7:30 am
	Newsletter Deadline	3:30 pm
23	Nursery Opens	9 am
	Summer Choir	10 am
	Worship	10:30 am
	Children's Church	10:30 am
	Carousel Sunday	12:30 pm
	Women Gather	12:30 pm
26	Amos House Volunteers	6:30 am
30	Nursery Opens	9 am
	Summer Choir	10 am
	Worship	10:30 am
	Children's Church	10:30 am

Church Office hours in August are 9 am to 4 pm, Monday through Friday.

The Church Office will be closed on Monday, August 10, 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 25, 11:30 am

New Member Sunday
Sunday, November 1, 10:30 am



Summer Bible Study

Summer Bible Study’s examination of the Book of Revelation comes to an end this month with two new topics. Remember, you don’t have to have attended any previous weeks to take part.

- Aug. 2: “God is in Control”
- Aug. 9: “All Things New”

Sundays, 9 am, in the Fireplace Room

Summer Choir



Singers of all ages are invited to gather before Worship for warm-up exercises and a brief rehearsal of the service’s hymns and occasional introit. Try out your singing voice and help lead the music during Worship! **Sundays, Aug. 2 to Sep. 6, 10 am, in the Sanctuary Chancel**

Your Neighborhood Food Pantry

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



Amos House Breakfast Volunteers

Please 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)

The Deacon’s Bench

It’s okay to make mistakes.

Playing and creating music is not my day job, but it is a passion. At the end of June, I had the pleasure of going into a studio with my guitar to record music I’d written with the idea of releasing an album in the not-so-distant future.

Over the years, I have been in studio settings with various bands. This was my first time as a solo musician. Playing with a band always felt easier. It was similar to playing live, in my mind anyway. I was always comforted by the idea that little mistakes were masked by being part of a collective whole. Solo, I am held accountable for every note played.

Recording in a studio changes my performance. I grow tense, hyper-focused. I play too quickly. Notes get fumbled. My hope that each musical track will be recorded perfectly in one take is quickly broken. But as with most things in life, taking a moment to slow my mind, take some deep breaths, and forgive myself, my muscles are able to relax. My performance slows and feels more natural, free of mistakes.

But without those initial mistakes, I would not have had mindful moments. I wouldn’t have stopped to look at my hands slightly trembling above the guitar’s fretboard. I wouldn’t have taken the time to think about what I was trying to express through these collections of notes. After all, I had arranged them in a certain order to create a specific mood ... and a reflection of my innermost self.

This all makes me think of the old idiom “To err is human, to forgive is divine.” And similarly, Ephesians 4:32: “Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”

I hope that you all are able to find ways to forgive and be compassionate ... to yourself and others. - Erik Wohlgemuth

MissionWorks

Crossroads Rhode Island: On Sunday, June 14, Ric Wild – Crossroads’ community outreach and volunteer manager, one of Central’s long-standing mission partners – joined the annual church picnic to present a certificate recognizing our partnership of more than 30 years! Established in 1894, Crossroads is Rhode Island’s leading provider of housing and homeless services.

Hope Circle

- In our first year partnering with Hope Circle, Hope High School’s community volunteer initiative, Central volunteers dedicated each Thursday from 10 am to 1 pm to staffing **Hope Street Fashions**, the school’s thrift store. The boutique provides high quality, age-appropriate clothes to Hope students – as well as job skills training for the teens who work there. For the 2026/27 school year, we need two to three additional volunteers who can help expand these opportunities when we open the store in November.
- Hope Circle is also looking to provide a **life-skills / job-training program** for its special needs students ... in the form of a laundry room. To help get this initiative off the ground, Central is seeking two to three new volunteers willing to commit to two hours once a week. Timing is flexible.

If interested in either opportunity, please contact Michael Fournier (401-641-4417 / mfournier0816@gmail.com).



Mission Partner Spotlight

The Mission in Action Committee has announced five new mission partners for 2026/27.

Betsy Fund (Providence Animal Rescue League) *covers the cost of advanced diagnostics, urgent medications, and specialized or life-saving surgeries, ensuring that rescued animals will never go without the care they need.*

Copley Chambers Project (Adoption Rhode Island) *provides housing for youth who have aged out of foster care and are at risk of homelessness. It also supplies job training and other services that help with a positive transition to independent living.*

Hope Circle (Hope High School): *While not new to Central’s mission work, Hope Circle is now an official mission partner. See “MissionWorks” (left) for details.*

The Refugee Dream Center *is a grassroots, Providence-based, refugee-led organization that provides resettlement support – case management, youth mentoring, cultural orientation, and language classes – to help newcomers integrate into the community.*

The Rhode Island Free Clinic *mobilizes vital health resources to treat Rhode Island’s uninsured, low-income adults – providing patients with the most efficient and cost-effective alternative to expensive emergency room and urgent care visits.*

In Memoriam

Our prayers and sympathy are with the family and friends of Kazeem Balogun on the death of his wife, Rita ... and with the family and friends of Irene Cloutier. *Requiescat in pace*

From Claudia

There is just something about these last languid days of summer. When I was a kid, summer seemed endless right up to the moment when I would realize that school was starting in only days, and the party really truly was over. Suddenly the nighttime temperatures would drop, and I could definitely feel the promise of fall in the air.

It's no different these days. All the plans of summer may or may not have been realized. But that's okay. Time and the season are moving on and so should we. We are poised on that edge of already and not yet.

I propose that we take a collective breath – maybe even two or three deep breaths – and then contemplate this in-between time as we enter more deeply into summer and August reveals itself to us. Leo Tolstoy once wrote, “As August unfolds, it is a reminder that time is fleeting, urging us to savor every moment and make the most of our days.”

Frankly, when it's hot and humid, I just want to get through such days! I look forward to seeing at them in the rearview mirror. However, the gift of each day is just that – a gift. And gifts are meant to be accepted in gratitude.

I wonder what might happen if we all tried to see and name whatever gifts each day has to offer us – even the stinking hot and miserable ones! (My default on that one is to remind myself, “It could be snow and ice!”) I admit that when I'm miserably hot, my default is crankiness. However when the day is over and done, I always try to find what has happened in that day for which I am sincerely grateful. Sometimes the gifts are too many to count, sometimes I struggle to come up with even one or two things.

To paraphrase Tolstoy, sometimes savoring and making the most of each day is easy ... but then again sometimes it's hard. Nowhere were we promised that it wouldn't be hard. The important thing is that we travel this road together, and for that I am eternally grateful!

Late summer blessings, dear ones! ~ Claudia

Bye-Bye, Book Cellar

It's sad, but true. Christmas at Central will no longer include the popular Ye Olde Book Cellar booth. Our annual bazaar is a fundraiser, and Ye Olde Book Cellar simply makes too little money for all the time it takes to sort and set up – and then dispose of the many, many books that don't sell. So this year, the space will be put to better use, hosting additional vendors and ... Blind Date with a Book!

Blind Date
with a book!

We tested the Blind Date with a Book concept last year. Sales of ten Blind Date books earned as much as all of the other Book Cellar sales put together!

For Blind Date with a Book – we will be accepting VERY gently used, highly giftable books in hardback or paperback. These will be pre-wrapped with a few fun extras: a blank Christmas card, bookmark, name plate, teabag, candy cane, etc. The Blind Date tag will provide a hint to the type of book inside.

If you have questions or a book you'd like to contribute, please contact Ellen Miller (401.487.0944 / esmiller@cox.net).

SAVE THE DATE

Sunday • September 13 • 10:30 am

Gathering Sunday

*We'll kick off a new year of
Worship and Fellowship!*

Darrell West Lecture

Central's 18th Darrell West Lecture on Religion and Politics has been scheduled for **Saturday, Oct. 3 at 7 pm.** The featured speaker



will be the **Reverend Dr. Gary Mason.**

Dr. Mason is a Methodist minister who not only founded and directs the Belfast-based conflict-transformation nonprofit Rethinking Conflict – but also played an integral role in peace process in Northern Ireland. He will discuss “The Troubles” and the conflict-resolution lessons learned during this almost 30-year struggle.

To prepare for his talk, Dr. Mason suggests reading “Say Nothing: A True Story of Murder and Memory in Northern Ireland,” by Patrick Radden Keefe.

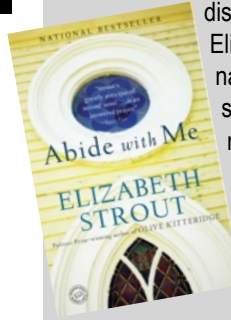


This New York Times bestseller and National Book Critics Circle Award winner provides a gripping and somewhat disturbing account of an IRA kidnapping that epitomizes Northern Ireland's conflict. A nine-episode docudrama based on the book is available on Hulu.

In September, a week before the Darrell West Lecture, Central will host a pre-lecture discussion that will cover “Say Nothing” as well as a packet of additional readings that will be available at a later date. For more information, contact Paul Armstrong (armstrong.paul.b@gmail.com).

Food For Thought Book Group

This month, Claudia's book group will discuss “Abide with Me” by Elizabeth Strout. This national bestseller tells the story of a New England minister who struggles to hold together his life, family, and town while dealing with his personal anger, grief, and loss of faith.



Thursday, Aug. 13, 7 pm, in the Fireplace Room

Coming up: Sep. 10 – “Cat and Bird,” by Kyoto Mori

Central Men's Group

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, Aug. 20, 7:30 am, in the Fireplace Room**



Women Gather

Okay, ladies. This month when someone gives you the run around, let it be on the Loeff Carousell in Crescent Park. See details below. **Sunday, Aug. 23, 12:30 pm, at the Crescent Park Carousell** (700 Bullocks Point Avenue, Riverside)

Carousell Sunday

Let's meet after Worship at the amazing Crescent Park Carousell, a National Historic Landmark built in 1895 by the famous designer Charles Loeff. Whether you ride or watch, it's 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. 23, 12:30 pm, at the Crescent Park Carousell** (700 Bullocks Point Avenue, Riverside)

Fourth Thursday Book Group

The Fourth Thursday Book Group won't meet this month, but you can get a head start on September's discussion by reading “Trust” by Hernan Diaz, the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel about money, power, intimacy, and perception. Email Ann Scott (eannscott56@gmail.com) for a Zoom invitation.

Thursday, Sep. 24, 12:30 pm, via Zoom.





Scenes



from Summer



Learn to Read Music

Reading music is like learning a new language ... only a whole lot easier!



How to Read Music

What's With All Those Lines and Spaces?

Organist / choirmaster Patrick Aiken will

teach you how to read the notes in our hymnal – and other music, too – in a fun, no-pressure setting. You'll be surprised at how quickly you will pick up the fundamentals. No previous music experience is necessary. Join Patrick on **Sunday, Aug. 9, 9 am, in Chapel Hall.**

MidWeek Open Mic



MidWeek this month is Open Mic Night! Do you have a talent (hidden or otherwise) that you'd like to share? Juggle, sing, play, tell a joke or a story, recite a poem, or perform a dramatic

reading. You can do any sort of act – as a solo or in a group – as long as it's five minutes maximum. **To participate, contact Patrick Faulhaber with all the details.**

If you're not performing, come anyway and enjoy the show! We'll be serving pizza and drinks. And if you'd like to bring a side dish or dessert to share, that would be great.

Wednesday, Aug. 19, 6 pm, in Chapel Hall

Poetry Corner

Air

At dawn we threaded our way through shifting planes of blue islands, across a roiling canvas of wave textures.

The opening up seemed to take ages. By noon the Broads lay before us, shimmering within sight.

We had nowhere to go but here and there we were, out in it, depth in all directions.

There was no word for it, really. A little company felt good and then we went home together.

~ Jon Wolston

Central Congregational Church

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



(From top to bottom) *"The Sound of Music"* • *Ed Bishop's Birthday* • *Ice Cream Sundae Sunday* • *Patrick's White Board Sermon* • *Rhode Island PrideFest* • *Five Minutes of Music with Ricky Delfino* • *Crossroads' Presentation in honor of Central's 30-year partnership* • *Summer Choir*