



CENTRAL NEWS

Oct 2026 Vol. 35, No. 2

A Good Word From Patrick



A few weeks ago, our church leadership – Board of Deacons, Prudential Committee members, and committee chairs – gathered at the Providence Preservation Society for a conversation about Central’s future. Our consultant asked us to reflect on two challenging questions: What is Central Congregational Church here to do? And what do we hope Central might become?

Each group approached those questions differently, but the answers were aligned. People talked about our relationships with God and with one another. They described a community where people are welcomed without condition. They imagined faith, not as possessing all the right answers, but as a journey of questioning and learning. We talked about how important it is for Central to be rooted in God and the teachings of Jesus while looking beyond ourselves – putting faith into practice through service, justice, compassion, and engagement with the world around us.

As a church oriented toward devotion rather than productivity, it can be hard to know what tells us we are doing “right.” One group offered a perspective that has stayed with me: our product is our people – not a Sunday service, program, or event – people oriented toward something sacred and hopeful as we gather, worship, serve, and learn together. We often talk about church as a place we go. We talk about the church we attend, or about joining or visiting a church. But church is not just a place we go. Church is something we practice.

We practice worship. We practice prayer. We practice generosity. We practice asking difficult questions and having difficult conversations. We practice making room for people whose experiences, perspectives, and lives are different from our own. We practice forgiveness. We practice telling the truth when it’s inconvenient. We practice staying in a relationship when it gets hard. We practice seeing a hurting world and asking what God-given gifts help us respond in love. Slowly, imperfectly, patiently, those practices shape us.

That is why I think faith is essential right now. Modern life allows us to surround ourselves with people, ideas, and experiences we already align with. Church offers something different: a community in which people of different generations, backgrounds, beliefs, doubts, experiences, and perspectives choose to belong to one another anyway.

One question from the retreat is worth sitting with: What does it mean to be a beloved community today? On October 14, our first MidWeek gathering of the fall will continue this conversation. With our consultant, Jessica David, we will gather around tables and ask what it means to be a church – and to live a life of faith – in community. I hope many of you will come.

I’ll see you Sunday ~ Patrick

OCT EVENTS

1	Board of Deacons	5:45 pm
3	Sewing Circle	10 am
	DW Lecture Reception	5:30 pm
	Darrell West Lecture	7 pm
4	Adult Sunday School	9 am
	World Communion Sunday	10:30 am
	Children’s Church	10:30 am
	Mission Luncheon	11:30 am
	Blessing of the Animals	2 pm
6	Tuesdays with Scripture	8 am
7	Amos House Volunteers	6:30 am
	Gallery Committee	9:30 am
	Children’s Choir Rehearsal	6 pm
8	Food For Thought Book Group	7 pm
11	Adult Sunday School	9 am
	Worship	10:30 am
	Children’s Church	10:30 am
	Women Gather	12 noon
13	Tuesdays with Scripture	8 am
14	Amos House Volunteers	6:30 am
	MidWeek at Central	6 pm
	Kids’ Table at MidWeek	6 pm
	Children’s Choir Rehearsal	6:30 pm
15	Central Men’s Group	7:30 am
	Gallery Reception	5:30 pm
	Music Committee	6:30 pm
	Choir Rehearsal	7:30 pm
16	Rebecca L. Spencer Lecture	6 pm
18	Adult Sunday School	9 am
	Worship	10:30 am
	Children’s Church	10:30 am
	Better Christian Politics	12 noon
19	Mission in Action Committee	6:30 pm
	Technology Committee	7 pm
20	Plant & Properties Committee	5:45 pm
	Prudential Committee	7 pm
21	Amos House Volunteers	6:30 am
	MidWeek at Central	6 pm
	Kids’ Table at MidWeek	6 pm
	Children’s Choir Rehearsal	6:30 pm
22	Fourth Thursday Book Group	12:30 pm
23	CCC Women’s Retreat	5 pm
	Friday Film Fare	7:30 pm
24	Sewing Circle	10 am
25	Worship	10:30 am
	Children’s Church	10:30 am
	Inquirers’ Meeting	11:30 am
	Special Service of Music	4 pm
28	Amos House Volunteers	6:30 am
	MidWeek at Central	6 pm
	Kids’ Table at MidWeek	6 pm
	Children’s Choir Rehearsal	6:30 pm

The Church Office will be closed Monday, Oct. 12, for Columbus/Indigenous Peoples’ Day.

Darrell West Lecture on Religion and Politics 2026

Saturday
October 3
7:00 pm

Rev. Dr. Gary Mason



The Making of Peace Today
Lessons from the Northern Ireland “Troubles”

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

Adult Sunday School
American poet Mary Oliver (1935 to 2019) has been described as an “unlikely contemporary mystic.” Join us as we delve into this Pulitzer Prize winner’s life and works. Questions? Ask Claudia. **Sundays, Oct. 4, 11, and 18, 9 am, in the Fireplace Room.** (No class on Oct. 25)

Mission Luncheon
Don’t miss the Mission Luncheon with guest speaker Melissa Cherney, CEO of the Rhode Island Community Food Bank. Melissa will discuss the state of food insecurity in Rhode Island and the challenges in meeting the needs of its partner agencies. Lunch will be served. RSVP at the membership table in Chapel Hall. **Sunday, Oct. 4, immediately after Worship, in Chapel Hall**



New Member Potluck / Reception
Welcome new members to the Central family during Worship and then stay for a Potluck Luncheon. The Membership Committee provides main dishes, but you can enliven the fare by sharing a side dish, casserole, salad, or dessert. **Sunday, Nov. 1, after Worship, in Chapel Hall**



Amos House Breakfast Volunteers
Please join Central’s Amos House Breakfast Volunteers as they assemble pre-packaged breakfasts. (Amos House serves 400 every day!) 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

Lately, if someone asks me how I’m doing (and I think they really care about the answer), I tell them that my household is in a season of deferred maintenance. Starting with a long-overdue renovation of our century-old downstairs bathroom and continuing through a new car, multiple appliance repairs and replacements, not to mention some personal health issues, it has been a year full of taking care of things that probably should have been addressed sooner rather than later.

The September 13 scripture lesson and sermon looking at the story of Noah also struck me as an exploration of how to take care of the things that you value. In the story, God is so distraught about the state of the world that the slate gets wiped almost completely clean, with only one family and one breeding pair of each type of animal preserved to start over again. We can wonder how and why that extreme step became necessary in God’s eyes, but the story concludes with God’s promise that such a cataclysm never will be used again.

I’m taking that promise as encouragement to pay attention to matters in my own life before they get out of hand, since it is often easier to anticipate and head off problems than to wait for a catastrophic failure and start from scratch. I may not always follow through, but I can gain satisfaction by thinking back to the story of The Flood and recognizing the things I do today that might save me from major disruptions down the road. ~ *David Moss*

MidWeek at Central!

MidWeek at Central returns in October with a special evening guided by **Jessica David of Good Worth Working For** (jdnri.com). Jessica, a consultant who helps organizations bridge the gap between intention and impact, recently facilitated a leadership retreat for Central’s Deacons and Committee Chairs.

Over a shared meal, we’ll gather around tables for conversation about what it means to be a church together in Providence – how we live our faith in community, what we hope for one another and our city, and what kind of church we are becoming together.

Everyone is welcome! Whether you have just started worshipping with us at Central or you’ve been here for more than 50 years. Your voice is vitally important to this discussion! So bring your friends, as well as your questions, experiences, hopes, and appetite! Dinner will be served. (Donations are welcome, but never required!)

Kids and teens – including the Children’s Choir – will hang together for dinner at their own kid-friendly table in Chapel Hall. At 6:30 pm, choristers will move to the Choir Room for their weekly rehearsal, while the others remain in Chapel Hall for crafts, games, and other activities.

Wednesdays beginning Oct. 14, from 6 to 7:30 pm, in Chapel Hall. RSVPs are helpful so we have enough food. Please email Patrick Falhaber at patrick@central-church.us to let us know you’re coming.



*Jessica David
Good Worth
Working For*

World Communion

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. 4, 10:30 am**



Blessing of the Animals

This month, we will celebrate the Feast of Saint Francis with a blessing of the animals. The love we give to and receive from our pets is a valuable reminder of God’s love for us all. All interested pets, great and small, on leashes or in carriers – and their human companions – are invited. **Sunday, Oct. 4, 2 pm, on the West Lawn**



LAST CALL!

women's
**FALL
RETREAT**

CCC Women’s Retreat is Oct. 23 to 25 at the beautiful Episcopal Conference Center in Pascoag. The cost is \$175 for five meals, lodging, and materials. Questions? Contact Claudia. **Reserve your Space by Oct. 4!**

From Claudia

When I was a kid, I had a teacher who was determined that our class would stand straight and tall. I mean this quite literally. There was no slouching in her presence. We stretched every morning and sometimes in the afternoon before school was let out for the day.

As I started to write this article, I realized that today is the autumnal equinox. This is the day when the axis of the earth stands straight and tall. Un-tilting neither toward nor away from the sun, giving us pretty much equal amounts of day and night. The sun cooperates in this display by rising and setting directly east and west that day. No slouching for the sun! Fall has officially begun.

Our ancestors knew that seasonal changes were sacred times. They didn't need pumpkin spice flavoring to make them special – even though it is delicious. All they needed were the sun, moon, and stars to welcome the new season all around them. Something basic in humanity counts the seasons by a deep knowledge of that which is more than just our individual selves. In “Song for Autumn,” poet Mary Oliver wrote:

*Don't you imagine the leaves dream now
how comfortable it will be to touch
the earth instead of the
nothingness of air and the endless
freshets of wind?*

*... And don't you hear
the goldenrod whispering goodbye ...?
... The wind wags
its many tails. And in the evening
the piled firewood shifts a little.*

There is sacredness in the air in these moments of time when one season yields to the next. My prayer for us all is that we carry these sacred moments forward deep within us as we move from each holy season into the next.

Blessings, dear ones, as we do so! ~ Claudia

Musical Notes

The Central Congregational Church Choir invites you to a **Special Service of Music** – featuring works by contemporary American composers – on **Sunday, Oct. 25, at 4 pm.** Organist / choirmaster Patrick Aiken directs, and a fall harvest reception follows with apple pies and cider of all varieties! The Choir will perform:

- **“Chichester Mass,”** by composer / organist William Albright (1944 to 1998), featuring haunting contemporary harmonies sung by a cappella choir;
- **“My Lord, What a Morning,”** by composer / baritone Harry T. Burleigh (1866 to 1949), a traditional African American spiritual transformed for concert performance with rich choral writing;
- **“Psalm 90,”** by modernist composer Charles Ives (1874 to 1954), an expressive text painting for what is rather austere text, ending with bells and chimes ringing throughout the church;
- **“Chichester Psalms,”** by composer / conductor Leonard Bernstein (1918 to 1990), a classic favorite – for choir, organ, harp, percussion, and boy soprano – written for the Southern Cathedrals Festivals at Chichester Cathedral.



Gift Baskets Needed!

The Gift Basket Auction will once again be a special part of the Christmas at Central shopping experience.

We are looking for at least 20 baskets, each valued at more than \$50. Bidding will open at \$50 and then proceed in \$5 increments to ensure that we meet our fundraising goals.

To make this possible, we need your help. We are once again asking each committee to donate a gift basket. However, we would love it if some (all?) of Central's amazing groups would donate baskets as well. (Think Central Men's Group, Food for Thought Book Group, Fourth Thursday Book Group, Not Just Supper, Sewing Circle, Toward Better Christian Politics and Women Gather.) Sharing the cost makes the donation manageable, plus putting together a themed gift basket can be a lot of fun.



What if you're not a committee member or in one of Central's groups – or maybe you're new to Central? We would welcome

your help! Just donate a gift basket of your own creation – or purchase the items for a basket, and we will assemble it for you.

If you have questions or need ideas for gift basket themes, just contact Cheryl Ludwig at cleeludwig@gmail.com.

And, if you have any fresh thoughts for improving our Christmas at Central fundraiser, please get in touch with Claudia.



SAVE THE DATE

Monday • Nov. 9 • 6 pm • Chapel Hall

Community Conversation

“Finding Agency in a Conflicted World”

Tuesdays With Scripture

Think of this as a weekly community devotional. 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. 6 and 13, 8 am, via Zoom**



Sewing Circle

Central's sewing circle repairs, upcycles, and repurposes items – for ourselves and charity. We have mending projects, sewing machines, ironing board, and supplies – or bring your own. All skill levels are welcome. An experienced seamstress is on hand to help. Contact Amy Hebb. **Saturday, Oct. 3 and 24, 10 am, in Chapel Hall**



Food For Thought Book Group

This month, Claudia's book group will discuss “Vanderbilt, The Rise and Fall of an American Dynasty,” by Anderson Cooper and Katherine Howe. The son of a ferryman, Cornelius Vanderbilt built a fortune in shipping and railroads, becoming the richest man in America. That fortune, fought over by his heirs, helped create an American dynasty that redefined the meaning of excess in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. **Thursday, Oct. 8, 7 pm, in the Fireplace Room.** Coming up: Nov. 12 – “North,” by Brad Kessler



Women Gather

Boo! Halloween is coming. So this month, Central's women's fellowship will share favorite “All Hallows' Eve” memories, whether from childhood or more recent times. Questions? Ask Claudia. **Sunday, Oct. 11, 12 noon, in the Fireplace Room**

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, Oct. 15, 7:30 am, in the Fireplace Room**

Volunteers Still Needed

We need six more volunteers to work with Hope High School's community volunteer initiative. Three to staff Hope Street Fashions, the school's thrift store (**Thursdays, 10 am to 1 pm**) and three to help launch a life-skills / job-training program for special needs students (**two hours per week**). Contact Michael Fournier if you can help (mfournier0816@gmail.com).



The Rebecca L. Spencer Lecture Series

Advancing Opportunities for women and girls

Friday
October 16
6:00 pm

Eugenia Mazurenko
CEO of Global Fellows in Courage
moderates a panel of
international speakers



Founded and endowed by Lorne Adrain to honor minister emerita Rebecca Spencer's 30th anniversary

Poetry Corner

My New Word

My new word is Adapt
Adapt to the vagaries of aging
No complaints, no regrets
Gratitude that I am here
To love and learn and play
To give and laugh and pray
And find joy in some way every day

- Charrell Maxwell

Friday Film Fare



Friday Film Fare is back with **The Father** (2020), a challenging, at times even baffling, depiction of advancing age and deterioration, but also a deeply moving human drama of both loss and

caring. Anthony Hopkins delivers a staggering Oscar-winning performance as the father (also named Anthony) whose daughter (Olivia Colman) struggles to care for him as he insists on his independence even as his failing abilities make it impossible. Hopkins delivers a performance, as the saying goes, for the ages. You will long remember this one. Challenging? Yes. Moving? Enormously. [97 minutes; color; PG-13]

Join host Jim Silverthorn **Friday, Oct. 23, at 7:30 pm, in the Fireplace Room.**

Look for these coming attractions:

- Nov. 13** Of Human Hearts (1938)
- Dec. 18** My Left Foot (1989)
- Jan. 22** Rear Window (1954)
- Feb. 19** The Outrage (1964)
- Mar. 19** The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie (1969)
- Apr. 16** Titanic: The Musical (2024)

In the Gallery

This October, the Gallery at Central presents "Inter:Intra Personal," by **portrait / fine art photographer Rebecca Zilenziger**.

Rebecca is known for her conceptual manipulation of light. She has spent decades refining ways of using light and shadow to play with the foundation of her visual vocabulary. Her work often navigates themes of connection and human experience, as in "Inter:Intra Personal."

This exhibit is a visual and conceptual meditation on the dynamics of empathy, resilience, and the human condition in a polarized world. It reminds us that there is more that connects us than separates us – and that empathy and the ability to dream the world into a shared, more harmonious experience remain within our power, if we make it our aim.

Rebecca studied at The Parsons School of Design, both in Paris and New York City. After graduation, she worked with world-renown photographers Richard Avedon and Arnold Newman. She has operated a studio in Old San Juan, Puerto Rico, for more than 25 years.

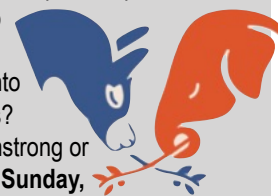


Clockwise from left: *Freedom of Movement: Victoria, Women Holding Heavy: Basket in Hand, and The Dreaming: Willy*

Meet the artist at the **Gallery Reception** – also Providence Gallery Night – on **Thursday, Oct. 15, from 5:30 to 7:30 pm, in the Gallery.**

Toward Better Christian Politics

This 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, Oct. 18, 12 noon, in the Fireplace Room**



Fourth Thursday Book Group

This month, the Fourth Thursday Book Group will discuss "London Falling: A



Mysterious Death in a Gilded City and a Family's Search for Truth," by Patrick Radden Keefe. Email Ann Scott (eann-scott56@gmail.com) for a Zoom invitation. **Thursday, Oct. 22, 12:30 pm, via Zoom**

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. The organization also accepts donations for pets: food, treats, supplies, toys, and pet clothes that are clean and in good condition.

Please place your contributions in the baskets at the front of the church during the second verse of the first hymn. Thank you!

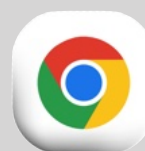


Be The Church

Plan now to join Central's newest group. Outsiders recognized the early church as people who took care of each other. Over lunch, Be the Church will discuss how we can support one another and serve as a haven for those in our congregation who are going through difficult times! Questions? Ask Claudia. **Sunday, Nov. 8, 12 noon to 3 pm, in the Fireplace Room.** Lunch will be provided.

Leave a Google Review

You can help Central reach more people who are searching for a new place to worship! Just write a Google review. It's easy. Click on Google Chrome, and type in "Central Congregational Church." On the right-hand side of the screen, you'll find key info about the Church. Scroll down ... just a little ... until you see "Google Reviews," and click on the "Write a Review" button. Then simply add a sentence or two – and a star rating – about why you chose Central as your church home. Thanks for your help!



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