

# THE **Central** SENTRY

 United Methodist Church

REV. DR. MICHELLE BOGUE-TROST

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## PASTOR MICHELLE'S NOTES

Having celebrated Central's 185<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with you at Thanksgiving, I am filled with gratitude for each one of you and the blessings we share as a community of faith. And now, as we journey through Advent and approach the joyous season of Christmas, I can feel the holiday frenzy ramping up again. This time of year often pulls us into a whirlwind of shopping, decorating, and festivities that can leave us feeling exhausted rather than uplifted. We are bombarded with messages that suggest the perfect Christmas is found in the latest gadgets, extravagant gifts, and lavish decorations. In the midst of the commercial chaos, the church invites us to rediscover the true meaning of Christmas and find peace in ways that go beyond the material.



The essence of Christmas lies in the quiet moments of reflection, the warmth of relationships, and the profound joy that comes from giving and receiving love. We seem to lose sight of the simplicity that brings lasting peace: Spending quality time with loved ones, sharing stories, and creating cherished memories; reaching out to those who may be lonely or in need, extending the love and compassion of Christ; volunteering to serve, or reaching out to those who may be struggling emotionally--by giving of ourselves, we reflect the true spirit of Christmas and discover a peace that transcends the fleeting pleasures of material possessions. This month, we will be exploring Heifer Project as a means of meaningful alternative giving—check out their website at [heifer.org](http://heifer.org).

In the coming weeks, we are invited to make a conscious effort to refocus our hearts on the message of hope, love, joy, and peace that the Christmas story brings. Along with considering alternative gift-giving opportunities, there are Advent services each Sunday morning, meaningful discussions in Adult Sunday School and the weekly Book Discussion ZOOM, and opportunities to engage in personal reflection to deepen your understanding of the profound gift of Christ's birth. You will find the gift of an Advent calendar in this newsletter, produced by two of my colleagues each year for use as an opportunity to nurture your spirit. Embrace the peace that comes from slowing down and savoring the small, meaningful moments that make this season so special. May this Christmas be a time of spiritual renewal and a rekindling of the peace that surpasses all understanding.

Still in One Peace,  
*Pastor Michelle*

# PASTOR PAUL'S NOTES

The Advent season is upon us and soon Christmas will be here. My mom loved Christmas, and the house was always decorated to the maximum. Santas and trees and snow-people and Christmas scenes were all over the house. Candles were always burning and the house smelled of Christmas. And then, in a special place, was the creche. As a child, I never really thought much about it. I wasn't too sure of the meaning of Christmas; all I knew was that it was the time when Santa came and gave presents to all the good kids...and lots of presents.

Our tree was always filled with so many packages— must be we were always good kids!! I struggled with how Santa could do this for so many good kids! As a teen, I remember attending Christmas Eve worship at a Catholic church with my aunt. It wasn't until then that I realized Christmas was about the celebration of the birth of Jesus.

Then I was really confused! What's with all the buy- buy- buy, if we are celebrating Jesus? What's with all the go- go- go, if we are remembering the Prince of Peace? What's with all the noise- noise- noise, if we are anticipating a new baby? I began to take on a "Grinch" attitude with the holiday (and some of that still continues today— ask Sherri and the kids!). Christmas, for me, had become too materialistic and I saw that we lost focus of the "reason for the season".

The last several years I have really tried to change my focus and look at the real celebration that we are anticipating. I still have a Grinch-like attitude, but I think it is improving. I have shifted my focus to family and friends and living in the moment with calm and peace and love. It is difficult at times, especially when we see hurt and pain and hate and suffering in the world. My challenge for me (and for you all) is to focus on the present moment, focus on family, focus on the love, peace, hope, and joy that Christ provides all people.

Have a blessed Christmas!

*Pastor Paul*



# UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH



United  
Women  
in Faith

# CENTRAL MEN'S GROUP



All men are welcome to join us on Friday December 15 for our monthly get-together.

We have a lot of fun sharing a devotion, jokes, stories and general discussion.

In Person - 6:00 in the Kids Space room for a meal. 7:00 in person or on Zoom for the meeting time. Hope to have some new faces join the meeting. Men's Group ZOOM info:

Join Zoom Meeting  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81530597732>  
Meeting ID: 815 3059 7732

The Circles will not be meeting in December.

The United Women in Faith is sponsoring their annual Christmas concert Sunday December 3rd at 3:00pm in the Sanctuary. This year the program will be presented by Sean Stafford and Roger Richards.

Everyone is invited to attend this program of Christmas music either in person or via Central UMC on YouTube.

Refreshments will be served after the concert.



# THANK YOU FROM THE CLOTHING CLOSET

Thank you to everyone who donated socks and underwear to the clothing center.... Amy

# TECH MINISTRY

TV Ministry continues to go well. So far, the equipment is functioning as it should and if that continues, we anticipate no major purchases in the near future.

The Youth/Young Adult Intern Program is strong. A good core group of young people participate. The older youth are growing their ability to mentor and teach new team members. Likewise, a good number of adults support the Interns and offer their skills and gifts in the booth and in post-editing and preparing the weekly broadcasts for Spectrum Cable.

With the help of Director of Web and Media Engagement Martina DiRose we recently purchased Tech Team shirts. All of the shirts have a common logo. Team members (Interns and adults) chose their preferred color and whether polo or tee. In addition to fostering a sense of esprit de corps, the shirts will help guests identify Team members when they are providing support for special services and outside events (i.e. wedding, funerals, etc.).

We thank the Shalom Fund, Board of Trustees, and the congregation members and friends who, in giving and in prayer, undergird this outreach and support ministry.

*Mark Marino*

# FINANCE UPDATE

We're quickly coming to the end of another year (although the days are all of the same length, they just seem to go by faster as we approach the holidays). Central has had a good year financially thanks to the faithful giving of you all.

It's only with all of our financial support that Central can continue with all the ministries, programs and missions. Just a reminder to ensure we're all caught up to our planned giving to Central in 2023. There are many ways to give in addition to checks. Central accepts donations through the Central Website as well as through Electronic Fund transfers. Please contact the church office if you'd like to set that up.

Qualified Charitable Donations can also be made directly from your IRA, if you're over 70 1/2. These must be made directly to Central, and by doing so, avoid taxes on the amount of the distribution. Thank you all for your support of Central in 2023. Wishing you a very Merry Christmas and Happy and Healthy 2024!

*The Finance Committee*

# FAITH FORMATION



Good Tidings to everyone! The holiday season is upon us and we spent last month focusing on things we are thankful for. This month we shift our focus to the hustle and bustle of the Christmas season.

As I look back on my life and traditions I'm reminded of how I celebrated this season with my family. My dad always picked up extra work as a door to door salesman to make extra money to buy me and my 6 siblings Christmas gifts. My mom enjoyed decorating the house inside and out, setting up a beautiful nativity scene, putting up lighted houses, and decorations in our yard. I remember the smell of the delicious food that was baked in our kitchen and laying under the Christmas tree looking up at all the lights daydreaming about wonderful things.

As wonderful as those memories are, I remember something far more important about how we celebrated Christmas. My mom always invited those who didn't have a family to the table. She made everyone feel included as if they were family. It made me feel like our house was the inn that Mary and Joseph found refuge in to deliver the true meaning of Christmas, Jesus Christ.

Christmas can be either a stressful or peaceful season. We have the choice to either be consumed with finding the perfect gift, attending every holiday event, and spending over our budgets on Christmas activities, or we can shift our focus on creating memories with the ones we love and telling others about the true meaning of Christmas. Whatever you chose to do, try to keep Jesus as the reason for the season.

*Donna Miller-Kross*

JOIN US AT CENTRAL UNITED  
METHODIST CHURCH FOR OUR

# CHRISTMAS EVENT

WED. DECEMBER 20TH  
5pm-7pm

STORY TIME, FOOD,  
GOODIE BAGS,  
ARTS AND CRAFTS,  
TAKE YOUR OWN  
PHOTOS WITH SANTA

**Event is by RSVP only**  
Please call church office  
by Dec. 13th to reserve a spot

**(607)754-6060**

**Or text (607)427-3684**



# MISSIONS TEAM

Our mission project for December is Heifer International. Over 820 million people go to bed hungry each night. Heifer International is working to change that by providing resources and education to people across the globe. They also help provide animals and seeds so people can become self-sufficient. There will be order forms and information in the Welcome Center. We are asking congregation members to consider “purchasing” animals or other resources in memory of or in honor of people on your Christmas list! More information can be found at <https://www.heifer.org/>.

*Pastor Paul*

# ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

Our Advent study series will be “Almost Christmas: A Wesleyan Advent Experience”. We will begin this series on December 3<sup>rd</sup> the first Sunday of Advent. In 1741, John Wesley preached a sermon titled “The Almost Christian” in which he talks about following Christ with all our heart and being focused on God at all times. This study continues with that theme and helps us break down barriers that prevent us from wholeheartedly experiencing the love, peace, joy, and hope of Advent. There is a book that goes with the study, but is not necessary. Consider joining us!

*Pastor Paul*



# BLUE CHRISTMAS

Sunday, December 17 at 7:00pm

For many people, Christmas is not “the most wonderful time of the year”. Some people are facing the sadness of a first Christmas without a loved one, while others are battling loneliness and depression. Central’s Blue Christmas service offers a time of quiet worship and reflection – time to acknowledge these hurts, to seek God’s healing presence, and to rediscover the hope that is Christmas. There will be special music featuring soloist Emily (Sorber) Travis, scriptures, and prayers. Attendance in-person is welcome, and the service will also be livestreamed. Consider making this service a part of your Advent preparation.

## ALTAR GUILD POINSETTIAS



Once again, we have the opportunity to dedicate altar poinsettias to the honor or memory of loved ones. Clip and send this form with your check or bring it in to worship with you by December 12th.

In Honor of       In Memory of

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

From: \_\_\_\_\_

\$15 (or more) for a Poinsettia Plant

- Pick up after the second Christmas Eve Service, 12.24.23 through 12.30.23
- Donation only (Monies will be used by the Guild for alter needs during the year.)

The names above will be recognized in the December 17th Sunday bulletin. Please place this card with your check or cash in the offering plate or mail to the church office.

Please make all checks payable to Central UMC  
For more information call Carla Wood at  
607.748.3189 or 607.754.6060

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_



## KETTLE BELL RINGING

Once again, Central will be supporting the Salvation Army's largest fund raising effort of the year, by ringing their kettle bell at the Vestal Walmart on Mondays during Advent. The local need is greater than ever, and since the money collected stays in the area, it's important to support this program. There will be sign up sheets in the Welcome Center for one hour time slots between 5:00 and 9:00 PM each Monday from November 27 through December 18. Please sign up for as many times as you can. Or contact Knud Hansen (khansen3@yahoo.com) to check for available slots.



## MUSIC TRIVIA

The CUMC Fellowship event for December is Christmas/Winter Trivia on Zoom. This will be a great time to sharpen your Christmas knowledge. Each question will have a Christmas or Winter theme, and have a musical clue to help you with the answer. For example - In the movie "It's a Wonderful Life" what happens every time a bell rings? Musical Clue - 'On the Wings of Angels' - Judy Collins... Answer - An Angel gets its wings. (They all won't be this easy)  
Hope you will join us -

Join Zoom Meeting  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89781049826>  
Meeting ID: 897 8104 9826  
Passcode: 356992





# CENTRAL CHURCH EVENTS:

## CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup> 3pm Church Sanctuary

**WESLEY CLASS -**  
No Dec. or Jan. Breakfast

**WESLEY CLASS ZOOM**  
December 14<sup>th</sup> - 7pm

## BLUE CHRISTMAS

December 17<sup>th</sup> 7pm

## CHRISTMAS PARTY

December 20<sup>th</sup> 5-7pm  
rsvp by December 13<sup>th</sup>

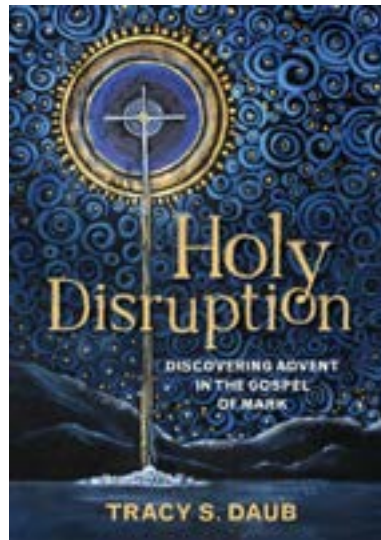
## CANDLE LIGHT SERVICE

December 24<sup>th</sup>  
7pm online and in person

11:30pm in person only

## MONDAY NIGHT BOOK DISCUSSION

7:30pm each week












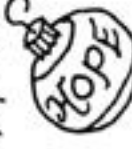









Holy Disruption: Tracy Daub  
Dec 4 Intro, Chapters 1-2  
Dec 11 Chapters 3-4  
Dec 18 Chapters 5-end

*No Book Study December 25,  
Christmas Day*



## CHARGE CONFERENCE DATE

The Annual Meeting of the congregation (Charge Conference) was scheduled for Saturday, November 4, but has been moved to Sunday, January 14 following 11am worship. This event is open to all members of Central, and is an important component of our connectional life in the Upper New York Conference. Please plan to attend!

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
LIGHT ONE CANDLE.  MK: 13:24-37	LISTEN. 4 SHALOM PEACE SALAM PS. 85: 8,9	BE STRONG.  1 COR. 1:3-9	GIVE SECRETLY.  ST. NICHOLAS MT. 6:3-4	SHINE LIGHT.  HANUKKAH EX. 27:20	CREATE. 8  IS. 64: 8	VISIT SOMEONE.  2 JN. 12
LIGHT TWO Candles.  MK. 1:1-8	FOLLOW. 11  IS. 40:1-11	WAIT. 12 I, I, I, I, I NEW HEAVENS AND NEW EARTH. A / I / I / I / I 2 PET. 3:14, 15a	FEEL SAFE.  PS. 91	HOPE 14 (ANYWAY)  ROM. 8:24	HOLD FAST Rejoice. Pray Give thanks 1 TH. 5:16-24	PLANT 16 FOR PEACE.  IS. 2:1-5
LIGHT THREE Candles.  JN. 1:6-8, 19-28	FEEL 18 CONFIDENT.  JOB 11:13-19	IMAGINE. 19  LK. 1:37-38	SEE NEW 20 GROWTH.  IS. 61:11	BELIEVE 21 IT. O  WINTER SOLSTICE LAM. 3:21-24	MAKE 22 ROOM.  LK. 2:1-7	HEAR 23 SINGING.  LK. 2:8-14
LIGHT FOUR Candles.  JN. 1:5, 14	<h1>ADVENT</h1>					

BY ADVENT'S LIGHT WE HOPE TO SEE A NEW AND BETTER WAY AND THEN ISAIAH'S VOICE PROCLAIMS THE COMING PROMISED DAY. THIS WORLD IN WHICH THE SWORD AND SPEAR, THE RIFLE AND THE GUN HOLD SWAY AS IDOLS OF OUR FEARS WILL ONE DAY BE UNDONE. WHEN ALL THE WEAPONS OF OUR HATES WILL SURELY BE RECAST AS TOOLS TO PLOW AND PLANT THE SOIL WHERE PEACE WILL REIGN AT LAST. A DISTANT DREAM, YET WE WILL DARE BY ADVENT'S LIGHT TO FORGE WITH CHRIST, NEW HEARTS AND HANDS WITH WHICH TO STUDY WAR NO MORE.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<h1>DECEMBER</h1>						
<b>3</b> 1st Sunday in Advent 8:00am Worship TV 8:30am Worship 9:30am Adult Ed 11am Worship 3:00pm Christmas Concert	<b>4</b> 5:00pm Bell Ringing Vestal Walmart 5:30pm Worship TV on TWC 5:45pm Girl Scouts 7:30pm ZOOM Book Discussion	<b>5</b> 12:00pm Clothing Center 5:00pm Girl Scouts	<b>6</b> 10:00am ZOOM Soul Care 12:00pm Clothing Center 1:00pm UWF Leadership 7:30pm AA	<b>7</b> 4:30pm Shepherd's Supper 6:30pm Cappella Ringers 7:30pm Choir rehearsal	<b>8</b> 5:30pm Girl Scouts 7:30pm AA	<b>9</b> 3:00pm I Am She event 7:00pm Trivia ZOOM
<b>10</b> 2nd Sunday in Advent 8:00am Worship TV 8:30am Worship 9:30am Adult Ed 11am Worship	<b>11</b> 5:00pm Bell Ringing Vestal Walmart 5:30pm Worship TV on TWC 5:45pm Girl Scouts 7:30pm ZOOM Book Discussion	<b>12</b> 10:00am WIC Clinic 10:00am Parish Visitors 12:00pm Clothing Center 5:00pm Girl Scouts 5:30pm Ministry Night 7:30pm AA	<b>13</b> 10:00am ZOOM Soul Care 12:00pm Clothing Center 6:00pm Lion's Club 7:30pm AA	<b>14</b> 4:30pm Shepherd's Supper 6:30pm Cappella Ringers 7:00pm Wesley Class ZOOM 7:30pm Choir rehearsal	<b>15</b> 5:30pm Girl Scouts 6:00pm Men's Group Dinner 7:00pm Men's Group ZOOM 7:30pm AA	<b>16</b>
<b>17</b> 3rd Sunday in Advent 8:00am Worship TV 8:30am Worship 9:30am Adult Ed 11am Worship 7:00pm Blue Christmas onsite and online	<b>18</b> 8:00am WIC Clinic 5:00pm Bell Ringing Vestal Walmart 5:30pm Worship TV on TWC 5:45pm Girl Scouts 7:30pm ZOOM Book	<b>19</b> 12:00pm Clothing Center 5:00pm Girl Scouts	<b>20</b> 10:00am Zoom Soul Care 12:00pm Clothing Center 5:00pm Christmas Event 7:30pm AA	<b>21</b> 4:30pm Shepherd's Supper 6:30pm Cappella Ringers 7:30pm Choir rehearsal	<b>22</b> 5:30pm Girl Scouts 7:30pm AA	<b>23</b>
<b>24</b> 4th Sunday in Advent CHRISTMAS EVE 8:00am Worship TV 8:30am Worship 9:30am Adult Ed 11am Worship 7:00pm Candlelight Service onsite & online 11:30pm Candlelight Service in person only	<b>25</b> CHRISTMAS DAY 5:30pm Worship TV on TWC 5:45pm Girl Scouts	<b>26</b> 12:00pm Clothing Center 5:00pm Girl Scouts	<b>27</b> 10:00am Zoom Soul Care 12:00pm Clothing Center 6:00pm Lion's Club 7:30pm AA	<b>28</b> 4:30pm Shepherd's Supper 6:30pm Cappella Ringers 7:30pm Choir rehearsal	<b>29</b> 5:30pm Girl Scouts 7:30pm AA	<b>30</b>
<b>31</b> NEW YEARS EVE	8:30am Worship	9:30am Adult Ed	11am Worship			

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

RSVP DEADLINE FOR DEC. 20 EVENT