

# THE **Central** SENTRY

United Methodist Church

REV. DR. MICHELLE BOGUE-TROST

17 NANTICOKE AVENUE, ENDICOTT NY 13760  
WWW.CENTRALUMCENDICOTT.ORG  
607-754-6060

## PASTOR MICHELLE'S NOTES



Happy New Year! The beginning of a calendar year symbolizes the opportunity for renewal, fresh starts; God invites each of us to embrace it. For my part, I am filled with eager anticipation for the new year ahead together with you.

Ecclesiastes 3:1 reminds us that "there is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens." God calls us to embrace the transformative power of renewal in our individual and collective lives.

Each new day is a reminder that even in our most challenging moments, there is hope for a brighter tomorrow. Each of us is invited to bring our unique gifts, talents, and perspectives to the table to make it so. It is that synergy that fills our community with an unmistakable

vibrancy. It is that hope and these gifts that make Central strong.

As we look forward, I pray that the people of Central will be guided by the principles of faith, love, and service, not only within the walls of this building but outward as well, touching the lives of those in our neighborhoods and beyond. We have the amazing opportunity to bear the light we celebrated at Christmas. We get to be God's church by embodying and sharing the hope, peace, joy, and love that live within us as Emmanuel, God-with-us.

May this new year be a season of growth, unity, and unwavering faith—a season that defines us not by what we leave behind but by the exciting journey that is always unfolding before us. May we enter it with hearts full of gratitude, minds open to new possibilities, and a spirit ready to embrace the challenges and joys that lie ahead. I hope we can seek personal spiritual growth but also that we can nurture the growth of our church community. May we be intentional about fostering connections, reaching out to those who may feel isolated, and embracing new persons with open arms. Pray about someone you might invite to church with you some Sunday. Ask God to show you what is next in your journey. Together, we can create a space where everyone feels valued, loved, and embraced by God's love through us. May the new year be a blessing for us and for all whom we encounter through the months ahead. May we sparkle with God's light and life!

Still in One Peace,

Pastor Michelle

# PASTOR PAUL'S NOTES

“For last year’s words belong to last year’s language, and next year’s words await another voice.” (T. S. Eliot, *Four Quartets*)

I know it seems like a trite saying, but what a difference a year makes! I left the comfort of a small country church with a faithful congregation. Nervous, apprehensive, doubting my abilities, anxious about meeting new people— I came to Central UMC.

It has been a great and sincere pleasure journeying and growing with you throughout this past year! The people at Central UMC have such great faith and hope and love for each other and for our community. I have seen your strength and faith in God grow and I have enjoyed helping many of you in that growth. Adult Sunday school has grown greatly and attendance is overwhelming! We are developing skills and knowledge and growing a deeper faith in God. Our mini-mission projects have impacted our church, the community, and the world. Our love for each other is evident each time I am with you. I feel a genuine care and concern that you have for each other and for our siblings in Christ.

You have all been gentle with me. I appreciate the grace and forgiveness that has been offered to me as I move into these new roles for me. I am confident that our ministry together and to the community will grow. I have enjoyed an honest and open relationship with many of you and I look forward to deepening those relationships and developing more relationships that are still young. I am excited about the future that we have together and I expect that you will (gently) let me know if I am not working to my full capacity.

I’m sure that I have unintentionally hurt some people; I’m sure that I have said some things that may have caused disagreement. I’m sorry. I’m working on it. Call me out and let me know. I hope that you feel lines of communication are always open, so please feel free to contact me.

As you know, my favorite Hebrew scripture is from the prophet Micah, “What does the Lord require of us but to seek justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our Creator” (6:8). Central UMC is all about these “requirements” and with those and God as our focus, I see us doing great ministry together.

*Pastor Paul*

## Christmas Undecorating – January 7!



We will be un-decorating the Sanctuary and building on Sunday, January 7 following the 11am worship service. Please plan to stay for a little while and lend a hand—many hands make quick work!

# PASTOR MAGGIE'S NOTES

Greetings, Central Church!

The new year is a great time to reflect on what's happened in the last year - and to dream of hopes for what's to come this year. As you all know, 2023 held some major ups and downs for me on every level. From "We're moving to Turkey!" to "Just kidding - TYLER is moving to Turkey" and all of the madness that ensued - my day job - my M.Div. student life - my candidacy process. As insane as 2023 was though, I'm starting 2024 in a very hope-filled place. Tyler is half-way through his fellowship (so this season of long distance marriage is also half-over). My day job has settled into something I only could have dreamed of a year ago, with an incredible team of staff making the work something I look forward to again. My classwork has been rewarding as I continue to make (slow but) steady progress. And I am excited to be continuing my journey as "Pastor Maggie" - and it is not lost on me how much the community of Central has been an active part of my journey. I am thankful beyond words.

One element of my hope for 2024 is to be more active in my role as "Pastor Maggie" - both physically at Central and in continuing to develop our online ministries. One very tangible way you all will see this coming about is a new weekly installment in the Central Newsletter called "Pastor Maggie Recommends". Over the last several years, I have amassed quite a list of authors, artists, content creators, and resources that have been of great help to me as I formulate my theology, engage in discourse, and speak about the Gospel to others. Some of these have been personal care - music that brings me calm or authors who revitalize me. Some of these have been things that inspire me to action. My hope with this installment is to share some of these resources with Central. I don't expect that everyone will love every recommendation I make, but I hope there will be something that connects with you. You'll also be seeing me in the churchhouse, at the pulpit, and in some new video series and other content being generated in behalf of Central. I'm still developing some of these ideas, but I'm excited to get things rolling and to share them all with you.

May this new year be one of peace for you, this community, and this world.

Grace & Mercy,  
Maggie Wolford, Student Pastor



## CHARGE CONFERENCE

Everyone is encouraged to attend Central's Annual Charge Conference **following the 11am worship on Sunday, January 14<sup>th</sup>**. This event is open to all members of Central, and is an important component of our connectional life of the Upper New York Conference. Please plan to attend!

# UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH



United  
Women  
in Faith

## Circle Meetings

All women are invited to attend one of the United Women in Faith Circles. Please contact the leader for more information about each circle.

**Deborah Circle** Tuesday, January 16 at 7 pm in the church library and on zoom. We will be watching "Be a Dongle". Contact: Pat Breneman, 748-3430

**Grace Circle** Wednesday, on January 17 at noon in the community room at church. Please bring your lunch with you. Contact: Pauline Witt, 748-4142

**Sarah Circle** Tuesday, January 16 at 12:00 in the community room at church. Please bring your lunch with you. Contact: Carole James, 757-2629

## United Women in Faith 2024 Officers

President	Lisa Richards
Vice-President	Barbara Parcels
Secretary	Renee Sersen
Treasurer/Pledge Secretary	Pat Hansen

## Mission Coordinators

Spiritual Growth	Donna Spearman
Social Action	Suzette Marino
Education/Interpretation	Marie King
Communication	Martha Petrush
Members/Outreach	Shelley Lobevero
Allocations	Shelley Lobevero
Program Resources	Carole James
Church Women United	Alice Trost

## Nominations Committee

Chairperson	Carla Wood
	Cyndi Tedeschi
	Jackie Hotchkiss

## At Large Members

Bonnie Harvey	Jackie Hotchkiss
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Remember! January UWF Leadership Meeting: January 10<sup>th</sup> 1pm

# CENTRAL MEN'S GROUP

## Men's Fellowship - January 19

We continue to invite all men, either in person for a meal, or remotely via zoom. While we have a solid group that meets in person for a meal at 6:00, we'd really like to have more join the monthly fellowship. The Zoom aspect is great too, because we have steady attendees from Florida and Michigan and would love to add to our geographic reach!.

Basically the schedule is 6:00 meet at Central for a meal and at 7:00 we move to the Lounge for devotions and fellowship with those who can't attend in person. We would love to have some new participants.

Men's Group ZOOM info:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81530597732>

Meeting ID: 815 3059 7732 Passcode: 491318



## TV/TECH MINISTRY

TV Ministry looks forward to serving and providing technical support for the church in 2024. We will investigate replacement of the rear projector used by the worship leaders. While working well, the projector is aging. When it fails, it will be difficult and expensive to service. An appropriately-sized LCD screen- such as the two in the front of the sanctuary and the one in rear overflow section- will provide a better image, be more reliable, run more efficiently, and be compatible with the three current screens.

We also will evaluate the Youth & Young Adult Intern Program, review its effectiveness, determine if it should be extended, and- if so- for how long, and what new funding would be needed. The young peoples' involvement has been critical in providing reliable, capable tech support in the sanctuary and when Livestreaming. We appreciate the United Women in Faith giving a Christmas gift to each of the young people. They appreciated it.

The Tech Team also thanks Pastor Michelle for taking time during the December 10 service to recognize its contributions. Tech Team members like to "labor in obscurity," but it still is important to be acknowledged.

As always, we thank the Shalom Fund, the Board of Trustees, and the congregation members and friends who, in financial support and in prayer, undergird this outreach and support ministry of Central Church. -Mark Marino



I am truly blessed to be working with such a caring and mission-oriented congregation! Thank you for all the support these last several months with our “mini-mission projects”.

We have some exciting news to share! Central UMC has been selected to be a “Neighborhood Mission Hub” for the Binghamton region. We will be the first point of contact for disaster needs in our area. We will be accepting flood buckets, health kits, and menstrual kits from the Upper New York office in January 2024. They will be stored in the Mission Room in the basement. In addition to those, we will be helping to organize the mission programs in the area, working on Asset Based Community Development, and creating “new” mission kits unique to our area.

Our mini-mission projects for January will be collecting packages of Valentine cards for the U-E elementary schools. In February we will celebrate “Souper-bowl Sunday” with a collection of canned soups and money to support CHOW and Shepherd’s Supper. -Pastor Paul



## **ADULT FAITH FORMATION**

Thank you all for your time and energy and excitement! I have really enjoyed the discussions that we have been having; I am learning so much about my people and their theology. I appreciate the sharing and honesty and trust that we have built in this group. I can’t wait to dig deeper!

In January, we will begin a study series titled "Understanding Spiritual Gifts". This is a six week study and will take us to the season of Lent. As part of this series, there will be weekly guide sheets on various methods/ styles of prayer. I look forward to discussing prayer and spiritual gifts with you all!

If there is a topic you would like to dive deeper into or if there is something you'd like to study- please talk with me. As always, questions and comments are invited! -Pastor Paul



## **CENTRAL'S FIRST CHILI COOK-OFF**

**Saturday January 27 - 5:30 PM**

The first Fellowship event of the year will be a Chili Cook-Off. We're hoping to have multiple people cook and bring their favorite chili to be sampled and judged by all the attendees. While we're hoping for a lot of chili entries, you don't need to cook to come. We also need judges. What better way to spend a cold Saturday evening in January other than being with your

Central family sampling chili. Since we'd like to know how many will bring chili or cornbread ahead of time, either call the church office or sign-up on the sheet in the Welcome Center. Beverages and cornbread will be provided.

We're hoping this will be the first of many fellowship events in 2024.

## **BLOOD DRIVE – JANUARY 6**

Central is hosting the first blood drive of 2024 on January 6th. As you may know volunteers are needed to help with this. We need to provide someone to sign in the donors, and Central's tradition is to provide bagels and pastries, which is a bit more than the Red Cross provided snacks. We also need volunteers to serve these food items to the donors. We have four dedicated volunteers: Marsha Doupe, Bill

Carmine, Shelley Lobevero, and Renee Sersen, but when one of them is not there, it puts more on the others. We really need some additional volunteers to help. The time slots are only 2 3/4 hours on the days of the drives: 7:45 - 10:30 or 10:15 -1:00. Please let Knud Hansen ([khansen3@yahoo.com](mailto:khansen3@yahoo.com) or 607-759-3378) know if you'd be able to volunteer for the January drive or future drives.

***EMERGENCY NEED FOR BLOOD DONORS***

Why is there an emergency need for blood? The American Red Cross is experiencing a national blood shortage. Fewer donors than needed gave in 2023 drawing down the national blood supply and reducing distributions of some of the most needed



blood types to hospitals.



You can give by signing up at the Red Cross website and searching for the drive at Central on Jan 6-

[www.redcrossblood.org/give.html/find-drive](http://www.redcrossblood.org/give.html/find-drive)

continue to be the hands and feet of Jesus in Endicott. we proceed with faith that the ministries of Central will be financially supported. We wish the Central family a happy and healthy 2024! -The Finance Committee

## FINANCIAL UPDATE

There's vitality and energy at Central, as well as an amazing congregation committed to supporting Central with their gifts of time, talents and finances. While it's too soon to know how Central finished the year financially, we do know that thanks to all of our commitments to Christian stewardship and financial generosity, Central will finish 2023 with a positive balance.

What makes this even more noteworthy is that in the middle of 2023 Central conducted a significant Capital Campaign. You've already seen results with new roof, parking lot and entrance doors. So, in addition to supporting the ministries, programs and missions of Central in 2023 the congregation committed an additional \$212,000 for 5 years and have already given over \$100,000. This is an amazing feat. It's so wonderful to report on the finances in such a positive way. That's thanks to the giving of all of us.

As we enter 2024, we begin the way we have for many years. There's a significant gap between the committed giving from the recent pledge drive and the budget. This is nothing new, and past history has proven to us that we can enter the year with faith that the gap will close during the year and we will finish the year positively.

Knowing that the Central congregation will

About five years ago we began discussions about the need to have a 501c(3) non-profit organization that would support Central but not be Central. We recognized that there are opportunities for grants that are not provided to religious organizations, even if it's for similar activities. Three years ago we began working to obtain full 501c(3) status.

Central Serves' mission is to provide community support and guidance to the greater Endicott area through service and education. Central Serves also supports the community outreach and missions of Central Church. Central Serves has already received 2 grants, both of which have supported Central Church. A \$1,000 grant was received in early 2023. Central Serves gave \$500 of this to the Trustees for refurbishment of the flood damage in the Education building, with the expectation that Central will eventually use the building for outreach to the community. The other \$500 was donated to Shepherd's Supper. This past summer, with your voting support, Central Serves was awarded a \$2,000 grant from Adam Weitsman and Southern Tier Tuesdays. The awarded funding was used to completely refurbish the kitchen pantry.

Central Serves is currently working with Central missions on the Bike project. We



support Jennie F Snapp with an attendance incentive program and supported the U-E teachers with the purchase of new equipment.

Currently the Central Serves Board of Directors include: Knud Hansen, President; Denise Johnson, Secretary/Treasurer. Paul Reed and Alicia Thoennes are board members. We are in

need of a Vice President. Please let any of the members know if you are interested in filling that position or joining the Board. Central Serves is always looking for donations to support existing and future projects.

## SHEPHERD'S SUPPER PANTRY PROJECT



Thanks to a team effort, a much-needed face lift was provided for our pantry! Shepherd's Supper volunteers identified the need, and an application was submitted to Southern Tier Tuesday grant by Central Serves 501 (3) (c). It was awarded due to the many people who voted for our nomination. Thank you for voting! A special thanks is extended to Adam Weitsman for his generous funding of the Southern Tier Tuesdays program and Central's \$2,000 grant award!

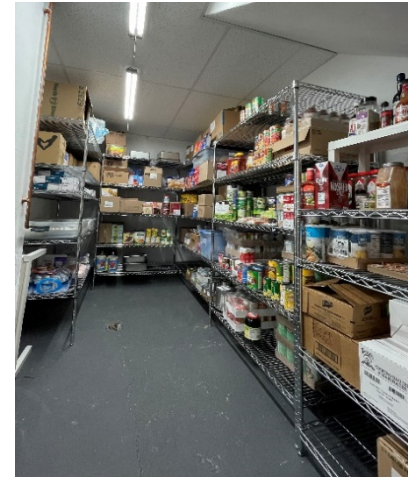
The work began with choosing, ordering and picking up materials, emptying the pantry, dismantling and removing the old shelving, cleaning, prepping, painting, installing the new lighting, drop ceiling and new shelving, and then refilling the pantry! Thank you to volunteers who provided approximately 75 – 80 hours of labor for the project including Doug & Pat Breneman, Charlie Brinser, Art Felton, Knud Hansen, Denise Johnson and Gregg Wood. Expenses did exceed the grant award by \$400 and we thank Central Church's Trustees for the additional financial support.

The renovated pantry has received very positive reviews. Nicole Derick, current volunteer cook, stated, "The renovation of the pantry has been a game changer! Being able to house food staples in a clean, well-lit space allows the Shepherd Supper team to assess what can be used, or still needed for dinners. We are more efficient this way. It is a cook's dream pantry!" Martha Webber agreed, "It makes meal planning much easier!" Art Felton stated, "It is a lot more convenient and organized. You can see what is in there now." Sharon Carmine, previous volunteer agreed, "It's absolutely gorgeous. The layout of the shelving, is neat, efficient, has much better lighting and is cheerful. I'm not afraid to go in there now. It's worth a peek for everyone."

This project is an example of how Central Serves and Central Church connect and serve together!

BEFORE

AFTER



## NOTES OF THANKS

### ***From LaVon Hausamann:***

*Thank you, my Central Family, for your love and concern during my on-going health problems. With the Lord's help, I will soon "get my life back." Pray for Peace!!*

### ***From Shepherd's Supper:***

Shepherd's Supper has had an amazing year. Through the second week of December we have served 9,878 meals. For the entire year of 2022, 8218 meals were served, so we have experienced an increase of 2000 meals, a 26% increase. This is due to the excellent teams we have preparing and serving the meals. Through the midpoint of December we've received 1,860 volunteer hours. Thanks to the generosity of the Central congregation, \$4,625 has been donated as well as many pounds of food items during our Harvest Home food offering. While Shepherd's Supper is in the Central budget, it does not cover all the expenditures we've had this year, so all donations are appreciated.

Additionally, huge thanks to our friends from Our Lady of Good Counsel. especially to Teena and Bob Cargill. Teena is the cook for Week 3. Bob and the confirmation youth are always present to help on weeks 3 and 4. We wouldn't be able to do this without their support.

Thanks all!

Knud



The staff at Central wish you all the blessings  
of a Happy New Year!