

THE **Central** SENTRY

United Methodist Church

REV. DR. MICHELLE BOGUE-TROST

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PASTOR MICHELLE'S NOTES



I have long found a spiritual home in the Christianity of the Celts, a tradition born and flourishing in the islands of northern Europe. It beautifully intertwines the natural world with the divine, emphasizing the interconnectedness of all creation and the presence of God in every aspect of our lives. It invites us to see the sacred in the ordinary, to find the divine in the everyday, and to recognize the thin places where heaven and earth seem to touch. During Lent, in which we have been invited to be intentional about our spiritual practices, the faith of the Celts can offer us a helpful way through the season.

The Celtic idea of *anam cara*, or "soul friend," the notion of seeking spiritual companionship and accountability is deeply helpful. The gift of a community of faith is that we can be soul friends to one another, sharing our burdens and joys as well as our journeys of faith together, in an intertwined practice of prayer, support, and accountability.

The Celtic reverence for nature invites us to take time to appreciate the beauty of God's creation, to see God's work in the budding flowers, the greening grass, and the changing skies. That appreciation can lead us into a deeper connection with the earth and all that is in it.

The Celtic virtue of simplicity invites us to declutter our lives, not just in terms of food, but also in our consumption, our priorities, and our activities. This season can be a time to clear our hearts and minds, making more room for God's presence and peace.

The Celtic concept of pilgrimage invites us into a pilgrimage of the heart, a time of intentional movement towards a deeper relationship with Christ through an openness to the ways God may lead us to new understandings, new growth, and new depths of love.

Your pastors are walking this Lenten journey with you, as *anam cara*, as support, as persons to pray with and for you. Together, let us journey through this soul-searching and spirit-growing season toward Easter. May this Lenten season be a time of profound transformation and deepening faith for each one of us.

Still in One Peace,

Pastor Michelle

PASTOR PAUL'S NOTES

"Do not abandon yourselves to despair. We are the Easter people and hallelujah is our song."

(Pope John Paul II)

As I sit here in my office at the church, trying to come up with an idea to write, I look out and see gray skies and some drizzle falling from the sky. Several days in February have been this way: rainy, gray, windy, melted and dirty snow, ugh. I know— it's winter in upstate NY, but some clean, white snow and bright sunshine would be great! I sometimes feel like the month of February!

But, we are Easter people! We know that there is life in abundance; we know that there is rebirth; we know that there is sunshine and heat coming.

The world is quite chaotic and seems to be going to pieces. Oppression, hate, injustice, war, skepticism, fear seem to be factors in control. We are unsure, we are nervous, we are apprehensive. But, we are Easter people! We know justice will happen; we know freedom is possible; we know calmness and trust can happen.

During my “intentional lent”, I have spent more time listening for the voice of God; I have spent more time searching the scriptures and reading, listening for words of wisdom to help me draw closer to God. It has been a challenge, but I have also tried to embrace Sabbath time more. I have missed walking the Finger Lakes Trail and hiking the Catskills, but have made a point of getting out into the forest and communing with God. As I mentioned in a message a few weeks ago, I like to hike alone, but I have opened myself to hiking with God and letting God lead me to where God needs me to go. Let's see where that takes me!

As we journey closer to the cross, we know death is imminent. We know the story though and we are Easter people! Find hope, sing songs of hallelujah, know joy, teach peace, love all.

Pastor Paul

WHAT ARE “SPECIAL SUNDAYS,” ANYWAY?

The six *Special Sundays* are special connectional offerings across the denomination created to deepen our relationship with United Methodist global mission work. This second-mile giving, or giving outside our regular pledges and offerings, is used to alleviate human suffering, engage in social justice, strengthen various ethnic and minority ministries, and provide scholarships. How will you support each one? This year's dates are:

Human Relations Day- January 14
UMCOR Sunday- March 10
Native American Ministries Sunday- April 14
Peace With Justice Sunday- May 26
World Communion Sunday- October 10
United Methodist Student Sunday- November 24

AN INTENTIONAL LENT

This Lent, Central is introducing a multi-layered approach to the season, offering you the ability to choose one or more practices for spiritual growth that suit you best.

*You'll see that our social media in the next 6 weeks will keep reminding us of Lenten intentionality. Participate by liking, commenting, and sharing!

*The adult Sunday school is walking through John Wesley's ideas about what he called the means of grace—ways to grow closer to God. That meets in hybrid format on Sunday mornings at 9.31am. For ZOOM information, please call the office.

*Investigate our low-key, user-friendly approach to exploring one or more of six spiritual disciplines by checking the board in the welcome center and on our website. You will find some explanatory information and handy cards (or links) for each spiritual discipline that describes it and offers a book to read on your own for a deeper dive.

*Journey through March by watching *The Chosen*. It's available on several streaming sites, free and subscription ones (so don't give up Netflix for Lent, please)—simply Google "Where can I watch The Chosen" to see all the options. Watch one 45 minute episode a day through March—there are three seasons of eight episodes each currently streaming--and we will have an available informal group ZOOM conversation on Sunday evenings at 7pm (ID: 515 813 9052 Passcode: 042158) to reflect and share the experience.

As we journey through these next forty days, let's be intentional. Let's be present, let's listen, and let's serve together. And let's embrace the joy that comes from knowing that we are part of something larger than ourselves—that we are walking this path together, guided by a God who promises new life and resurrection. With prayers for a meaningful Lenten season, *Your Pastors*

GRAB A FIRST-SUNDAY RIDE TO CHURCH IN OUR VAN!

Beginning **March 3**, Central will offer a monthly First-Sunday van route to the Hilltop and Good Shepherd Village/Endwell campuses to pick up any who would like a ride to church. Invite a friend and come for Communion Sunday! There will be only one stop (the main building) on each campus. Riders will need be present at the main building on each campus and ready to board at the listed times. The Activity Directors at each campus will have a signup process so we know our riders for the day.

The Schedule:

Arrive Hilltop at **10.05**, boarding for 10 minutes.

Depart Hilltop at **10.15**

Arrive Good Shepherd Village/Endwell at **10.26**, boarding for 10 minutes

Depart GSV at **10.36**

Arrive at Central prior to 11.00 service

--ALSO AVAILABLE FOR EASTER SUNDAY, MARCH 31!--



Order Easter Flowers for the Altar Order deadline – March 24, 2024

() In Honor of: _____

() In Memory of: _____

BY: _____ Phone Number: _____

- () Lily Plant (\$18 or more)
- () Tulip Plant (\$18 or more)
- () Daffodil Plant (\$18 or more)
- () Donation Only – Monies will be used by the Guild for altar needs during the year.
- () I will pick up by April 7th.

The above will be recognized in the Easter bulletin. This form along with remittance may be placed in the offering plate or mailed to the church office. Please make all checks payable to Central UMC. For more information call Carla Wood 607.748.3190 or the church office 607.754.6060

FAITH FORMATION NEWS

Hello Friends,

I would like to take a moment to express with great gratitude how thankful I am for all who volunteered at Central's Shrove Tuesday's Pancake Dinner. Our hard-working volunteers made the event possible. The dinner was a huge success and it was wonderful to see everyone gathered together sharing conversation and a meal.

The **Faith Formation Easter Event** will take place on **March 23rd from 1:00 – 3:00PM**. This year we'll be sharing information about the true meaning of Easter through the use of an ESCAPE room here at Central. People will solve clues to progress through the mystery of the Easter story. We'll also have a rabbit for photo opportunities and fun.

Volunteers are needed to help with this event and we'd love to have you join us! Please sign up or call the church office (607) 754-6060. Donations are also welcome. We'll be collecting bags of candy to distribute. Note: Candy must be peanut and tree nut free. No hard candy, please.

May you all have a wonderful and happy Easter. Thank you and God Bless.

Faith Formation Coordinator,
Donna Miller-Kross



CENTRAL MEN'S GROUP

Men Wanted -

Calling all men interested in sharing a meal, fun and fellowship to join our monthly Men's Group meetings.

The March meeting will be held on Friday March 15. We get together at 6:00 for a meal. At 7:00 we bring up a Zoom meeting and meet with our out of town brethren, and locals who prefer to meet in Zoom. We enjoy food, devotions, stories and fellowship. Please join us.

Men's Group ZOOM info

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

Meeting ID: 815 3059 7732

Passcode: 491318



United
Women
in Faith

The installation of the 2024 Officers of United Women in Faith will be on March 10, 2024 at the 11:00am worship service.

Circle Meetings

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

Deborah Circle Tuesday, March 19 at 7:00 pm in person and also on zoom in the library at church. Contact: Pat Breneman, 748-3430

Grace Circle Wednesday, March 20 at noon in the library at church. Please bring your lunch with you. Contact: Pauline Witt, 748-4142

Sarah Circle Tuesday, March 19 at 12:00 in the community room at church. Please bring your lunch with you. Contact: Carole James, 757-2629

Garden Tour - Saturday, June 22

Do you like to garden? Would you like to show your garden? The United Women in Faith (UWF) is looking for people to participate in this year's Garden Tour. We are looking for gardens in the Endicott / Endwell area. If you know someone who has a garden, please contact Pat Breneman (pbrenema@stny.rr.com / 607-321-9834). And please save the date to tour some lovely gardens on June 22nd!



The Tech/TV Ministry is working with the Trustees and the Upgrade Task Force to purchase and install two new hanging microphones for the choir. These new microphones, placed in the vicinity of the bell tables, would be the same as those above the chancel. With them in place, we can eliminate several of the distracting microphone stands at the bell tables.

We are gathering specific information on options to replace the projector at the rear of the sanctuary that provides visuals for the worship leaders. It will take some time to bring to fruition,

but it is good to keep it moving ahead.

The Tech Team Youth/Young Adult Intern Program continues to go well. The young people are becoming increasingly confident and capable. Their improving skill levels enable us to provide more creative broadcasts both in the sanctuary and on line.

As always, we thank the Shalom Fund, 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

ALLOCATIONS NEWS

The Allocations Team continues to work on streamlining the application process and making it as easy as possible for community organizations to apply for grants made possible by the interest earnings on Central's Endowment Funds.

The Spring application opens on February 15 and all applications are due March 31, 2024. Share the application with any organizations or ministries who might be interested in applying!

If you would like to be part of the team that accepts requests and disburses grants, please let Pastor Michelle know!

Central UMC Allocations Grant Application



Applications accepted February 15 - April 1



Neighborhood Mission Hub

Our Neighborhood Mission Hub is active and has already been put into mission work. Our delivery of over 4000 pounds of supplies came on January 30, and with the help of over a dozen people, all the supplies were moved and placed in the Mission Room in about 90 minutes! Great work!! We made a delivery of several cleaning buckets, health kits, and menstrual kits to the UE Family Support Center on February 13 to help with their unhoused population. I am so excited that we are part of this ministry and outreach to our community. *-Pastor Paul*

Donation Station

Located in the vestibule of the Nanticoke Avenue entrance, our "Donation Station" is an active and integral part of our mission program. There are several bins that will accept cans/bottles for redemption; the cash collected goes to Youth Faith Formation. We have a basket for used batteries (all kinds) that will be taken to Wegmans on a regular basis for recycling. There is a box for old eyeglasses that are donated to the Lion's Club.

This area is also where we have been collecting our monthly mission project donations. The UE Family Support Center is looking for good sleeping bags and tents to help their unhoused population as well as personal care products; if you have anything that could help, the donation station would be a great place to put them! Thank you for all your support and participation in these monthly projects!

Mac-and-Cheese Cookoff

The long-awaited Mac-and-Cheese "S'mac Down" will be March 16 at 5pm in our Dining Room. The competition will be intense for the coveted "Big Cheese" trophy. Bring your best macaroni and cheese and put it up against others in this contest of cooks.

If you're not into baking mac and cheese, you are welcome to bring another dish to share or just come for the friendly "s'mac" talk that will happen! Everyone will have an opportunity to vote on the best mac and cheese.

Our mission component for this gathering will be an information session about the RISE Domestic Violence Prevention and Services Center. They will be accepting donations of shelf-stable foods (spaghetti and sauce, cereals, canned goods, cookies, boxed mac and cheese, etc.) this night, so bring your donations as your entrance ticket!



We had an exciting and great discussion about spiritual gifts during our last study sessions. Our next series will be “Five Means of Grace” and will be about the ways John Wesley used to build a deeper relationship with God. The Wesley Five Means of Grace are: prayer, searching the scriptures, the Lord’s supper, fasting, and Christian conferencing. We will do a deep dive of each of these (one per week) and build a deeper relationship with God. Following Easter, our focus will turn to “Imagine No Racism.”

Blood Drives - Help Needed



For months we've been requesting assistance with overseeing the monthly blood drives, but we've received no takers. The good news is that we have had some volunteers for the individual time slots. The not so good news is that we haven't had anyone volunteer to help with overseeing the drives. I have been setting up the room for the drives as well as coordinating the volunteers and getting food. We have Blood drives coming up on May 11 and July 13 and I will not be around to do the coordinating that I normally would do. So the need for another coordinator is urgent. Please contact me if you think you would be interested in supporting these very important events. Thank you. Knud Hansen - (khansen3@yahoo.com; 607-754-0882)

Blood Drive - Saturday March 2 - Donors Needed -

Emergency Blood Shortage

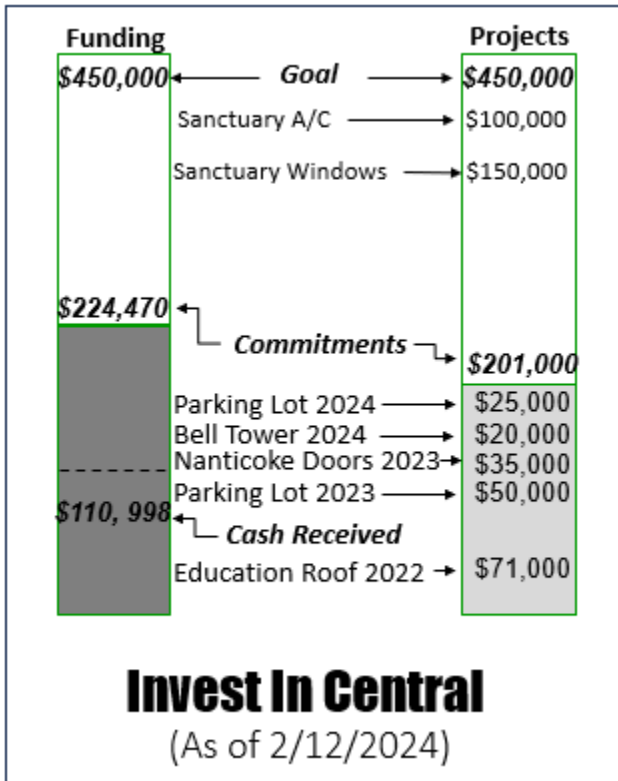
The American Red Cross is experiencing an emergency blood shortage as the nation faces the lowest number of people giving blood in 20 years. Your blood donation is needed now to help alleviate the shortage and ensure lifesaving medical procedures are not delayed.

You can sign up for the Blood Drive at Central or any blood drive at this website - [Schedule a Blood, Platelet or Plasma Donation | American Red Cross \(redcrossblood.org\)](https://www.redcrossblood.org)

INVEST IN CENTRAL UPDATE

A big **Thank You!** to all who have supported the *Invest in Central* campaign with pledges and giving so far. Without your support we wouldn't have been able to do what we've done. In 2022, the Education Building roof was replaced. In the fall of last year, the rear parking lot was excavated and re-paved and the Nanticoke Avenue glass exterior entrance doors were replaced to improve security and energy efficiency. And we will continue to pursue scheduling and completing the bell tower masonry repair this year.

With \$224,470 committed to date, our Invest in Central Campaign continues to accept pledges and complete the priority projects. These projects will consume approximately \$201,000 of the currently committed \$224,470. The remaining balance and any additional commitments will be used for our next priority, stained glass window preservation and protection. Again, **Thanks to all** for your contributions to date. If you would like to Invest In Central and have not yet done so, please contact me or the church office.



CENTRAL EVENTS

(Every) SUNDAY MORNING ADULT FAITH FORMATION

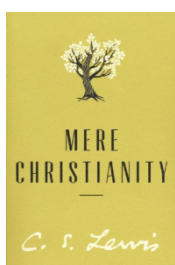
9:31am in the Lounge

March: Wesley's Means of Grace

(Every) MONDAY NIGHT BOOK DISCUSSION 7:30pm

ID:88466303555 Passcode: 051760

Mere Christianity: C.S. Lewis



March 4 preface-Book 1

March 11 Book 2

March 18 Book 3 pt 1-5

March 25 Book 3 pt 6-12

April 1 Book 4 pt 1-5

April 8 Book 4 pt 6-11

RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE

Saturday, March 2nd 8:00am

PARISH VISITORS

Tuesday, March 12 10:00am

MINISTRY NIGHT

Tuesday, March 12

5:30 Administrative teams

6:30 Dinner & Fellowship

7:00 Church Council

WESLEY CLASS

Thursday, March 14

- No Breakfast

7:00 pm ZOOM

CENTRAL MEN'S GROUP

Friday, March 15

Dinner 6:00pm

Meeting 7:00pm (in person & ZOOM)

S'MAC-DOWN

Saturday, March 16

5:00pm Fellowship Hall

UWF CIRCLE MEETINGS

Sarah Circle

Tuesday, March 19

12 noon community room

Deborah Circle

Tuesday, March 19

7:00pm HYBRID/library call the office for ZOOM information.

Grace Circle

Wednesday, March 20

12 noon church library

LUKENS-JACKSON/CAMPING

Pizza party and Camp sign up

Wednesday, March 20

5:00-6:30pm dining room

EASTER EVENT

Saturday, March 23

1:00-3:00pm sanctuary

PALM SUNDAY

Sunday, March 24
Easter Flower Orders Due

EASTER SUNDAY
Sunday, March 31
8:30 and 11:00am services