

The KEY

A Publication of Central Presbyterian Church
Summit, NJ

Fall 2023

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A Letter from the Pastor: UNDERSTANDING JESUS, THE JEW

I remember years ago listening to a radio talk show host in Pittsburgh talk about how hard it was growing up as a Jew, especially as Easter approached. Other children in school would give her a hard time, making the erroneous charge that she was a “Christ killer.” What she was describing, of course, was a part of the long, very sad and tragic history of Christian persecution of the Jews fostered by the suppression for two millennia of the reality that Jesus was himself a Jewish man. It is a suppression that probably began with the Gospels themselves, but that accelerated rapidly through time as the Church became more and more a movement of Gentiles completely separated from its founding among Jews.

It is that history that makes the scholarship of Dr. Amy-Jill Levine incredibly important. Dr. Levine,

who is Jewish, is also a New Testament scholar, having spent years teaching at the Vanderbilt Divinity School. I first became familiar with her



about fifteen years ago when I heard her speak at the Festival of Homiletics, a yearly gathering of several thousand largely mainline Protestant pastors from across the United States and Canada. She was funny and engaging, but mostly, her lecture challenged me to rethink interpretations of Scripture that I had learned and taught that made Jesus into an opponent of Jewish religious practice rather than a faithful member of that religious community. And connection with her ongoing work has had a profound and continuing impact on how I read the New Testament, particularly the

Gospels.

This fall, beginning Sunday, October 1, and continuing for six weeks through Sunday, November 5, you will have an opportunity to engage with Dr. Amy-Jill Levine when we spend six weeks looking again at Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount through the lens of her recent book, *Sermon on the Mount: A Beginner’s Guide to the Kingdom of Heaven*. The book reads like Dr. Levine sounds—funny in places, passionate, easy to follow. However, we are also going to offer you the opportunity to hear Dr. Levine directly through a DVD that she produced. Details of the study are elsewhere in the Key, but I hope that you will be a part of this, for in focusing on the Sermon on the Mount, we are focusing on some of Jesus’ “greatest hits” as a teacher through which Jesus provided us with a roadmap, of sorts, for how God wants us to live.

--Pastor Don Steele

How to Worship with Central

Central is worshipping in-person Sundays at 8:30 & 10:00 a.m., plus WAVE twice a month at 5:00 p.m. September 3 will NOT have a service at 8:30 a.m.

In addition, watch us live on Summit's **Hometowne TV**, Verizon Fios channel 33, and Comcast channel 36, or live streamed on our YouTube Channel <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPf6KiUHiNNbVwcDuanGt8w/live> at 10:00 a.m. every Sunday starting September 10 through June.

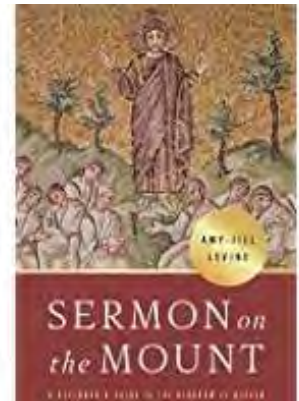
Website:

Visit www.centralpres.org/sermons for links to our recent worship videos.

Sermon on the Mount: A Beginners Guide to The Kingdom of Heaven

Beginning on Sunday, October 1, and continuing for six weeks through November 5, our Sunday morning focus at Central will be on Jesus' Sermon On the Mount found in Matthew's Gospel, chapters five through seven. We will be focusing on the Sermon during Sunday morning worship. And for those who wish to probe a

bit deeper, we will be offering a class following worship each Sunday at 11:15 a.m., using a recent book and adult study by Dr. Amy-Jill Levine. In addition to new print versions of her book available for purchase online, used copies, electronic and Kindle versions are also available. The study is very practical, helping us to understand how



Jesus wanted his followers to live. We hope that you will plan to join the conversation this fall.

WAVE Worship

WAVE, our contemporary, informal worship service, will begin again on Sunday, October 1, at 5:00 p.m. with our annual service of blessing for pets. Bring your dog, cat, rabbit, fish, whatever that evening for a special blessing from Pastor Steele or

Pastor Huggins. We will be outside, weather permitting, or in the Auditorium. And the fantastic Central Worship Band will be providing music.

WAVE will continue on the first and third Sunday of each month at 5:00 p.m. following Oc-



tober 1, meeting on October 15, November 5 and 19, December 3 and 17.

Church Family Day: September 17

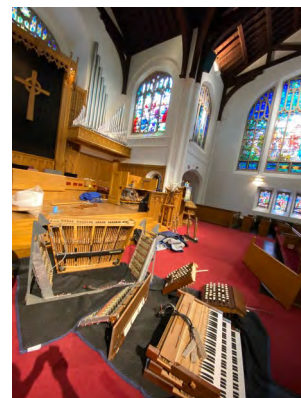
Celebrate your church family and the start of our program year at our annual picnic, planned for Sunday, September 17, following worship. In addition to great food and root beer floats, there will be games and an inflatable for the children, and time to say hello again to your church family.

Organ Fundraiser Raises \$96,000

As we mentioned last spring, our organ was in serious need of repair. That repair work is underway thanks to the generosity of many of you. We were able to raise the \$96,000 needed to fund the repair work needed. We hope to have our organ back in a few weeks better than ever. Thanks to all who contributed!

The control system of Central Pres's Schantz pipe organ dates from the same year that Windows NT, and the first generation Intel Pentium processors were released. So it's no surprise that thirty years later, it needed an update. In addition the mechanical components inside the organ console were tired from three decades of

heavy use. On the last day of July this year, we started a project to take care of all these issues. We'll be installing a new Opus-Two Instrument Control System, along with new parts in the console, to bring the organ into the twenty-first century and provide decades of reliable service.



COVID –19 Remembrance Garden Dedication: September 10

We will be dedicating the COVID-19 Remembrance Garden, newly planted on the Maple Street lawn, on Sunday, September 10, at 5:00 p.m. The garden was planted on the spot where a tree was located that was used by the community as a focal point during the pandemic to remember those who were dying,

especially during those months when we could not gather to celebrate their lives. The tree died, unfortunately, and had to be removed, but the ribbons placed on it during that time period have been collected and are buried in the garden. We hope that you will join community leaders as we set aside this garden as a

place where folks can pause to remember, for years to come, the loved ones who died.



Meet Our Church Lay Leaders: Jeffrey Gaylord



Meet Jeff Gaylord—Central's new Moderator of the Board of Deacons.

Together with his wife of 28 years, Cindy, Jeff first joined Central in 1999, after the birth of their daughter, Virginia, and moving to Summit. Virginia was baptized at Central.



Jeff was very involved in youth ski racing then, and spent most weekends training and travelling to ski races throughout the northeast. While this minimized the time they spent at church, they remained members, and two years ago Jeff and Cindy re-committed and renewed their membership.



Having grown up in a small, rural town in upstate New York, Jeff spent much time outdoors, cross country skiing, hiking, and camping. He became an Eagle Scout and attended Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico. His first job was working summers at a sheep farm in his neighborhood, cutting and baling hay and tending a herd of sheep.

Majoring in English, Jeff attended Hobart College, focusing on American Literature post-1900. He then graduated from Syracuse University College of Law.

Jeff worked as a copy editor and feature writer for a local newspaper, and did a brief stint as a paralegal before law school. He is now a partner at a large national firm and is co-chair of the nationwide directors and officers liability practice.

When Jeff and Cindy recommitted to Central, they jumped in

with both feet. Cindy has joined the Session, and Jeff is moderator of Deacons. They often help out with Take Ten and other food-preparation activities, and Cindy has assisted in the TV Studio on Sunday mornings.

"I wanted to become involved and wound up meeting and helping members, sometimes putting a smile on their faces," Jeff says,

He fondly remembers the Progressive Dinners with Ted Chao held years ago, and enjoyed the cooking involved.

When asked about a recent God Sighting, Jeff says there is something about the sun and the breeze in the Cloister Garden on Sunday mornings, making worship there a divine experience.

CPC Book Group Welcomes All!

The CPC Book Group has met continuously for over twenty years and is still going strong! If you are a reader who loves to discuss books, we'd like to invite you to try us out. Our group meets monthly (except for December, July and August) at the home of one of the members on the 3rd or 4th Friday at 7:30 pm. The 2023-2024 year begins in September and we welcome any potential new members. The dates and books we will discuss for the upcoming meetings are listed below:

Sept. 22, 2023: ***The Great Alone*** by Kristin Hannah: Historical fiction novel about a desperate family that seeks a new beginning in the near-isolated wilderness of Alaska.

October 20, 2023: ***Remarkably Bright Creatures*** by Shelby Van Pelt: An exploration of friendship, reckoning, and hope, tracing a widow's unlikely connection with a giant Pacific octopus.

November 17, 2023: ***The Violin Conspiracy*** by

Brendan Slocumb: A "musical thriller" about a classical musician whose family heirloom violin is stolen on the eve of the most prestigious classical music competition in the world.

January 19, 2024: ***Four Treasures of the Sky*** by Jenny Tinghui Zhang: Historical fiction novel about a young Chinese girl who must relinquish the home and future she imagined for herself when she is kidnapped and smuggled across an ocean to America.

Feb. 23, 2024: ***The Dictionary of Lost Words*** by Pip Williams: Based on real events, this novel explores the creation of the Oxford English Dictionary, the misogyny behind it, and its role in our history.

March 22, 2024: ***Maid*** by Stephanie Land: A memoir about a low-income single mother's experience raising her daughter and working as a maid while struggling to get by.

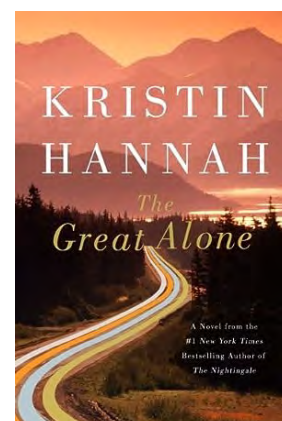
April 19, 2024: ***Horse*** by Geraldine Brooks: Told from the perspective of

six characters, this novel interweaves the story of Black equestrians who made their white masters fabulously wealthy with those of contemporary young professionals.

May 17, 2024: ***West with Giraffes*** by Lynda Rutledge; Part adventure, part historical saga, and part coming-of-age love story, this novel explores what it means to be changed by the grace of animals.

June 21, 2024: ***Into the Wild*** by Jon Krakauer: This mesmerizing, heartbreaking tale is the true story of an enigmatic young man who goes missing in the wild and whose story captured the world's attention.

For further information about the Book Group, please contact Martha Hugué at 908 721-1717 or marthahuguet@yahoo.com.



A Letter from The Connection

On behalf of The Connection, I want to express a heartfelt thanks to the stewards of the Central Church Lena Willis Mission Endowment Fund for supporting The Connection's Scholarship Fund with a \$15,000 grant. This ensures our Preschool and Before and After School Programs are accessible to everyone, regardless of individual economic circumstance.

To say these scholarships are life-changing is not an overstatement. For example, two years ago Samantha*, who

has struggled in school and other organizations' programs, started in our After School program. It was imperative Samantha receive financial assistance as her mother is in and out of the hospital with medical issues and Samantha is being raised primarily by a grandparent. Samantha found a mentor in her Site Director, and both the scholarship and the consistent, trusted care took a considerable burden off her family. She has blossomed socially and now joins us for Summer



Camp. It is your partnership that helped make this possible for families. Thank you again for your ongoing support of The Connection, and students like Samantha.

-Wendy Graeb
Executive Director
of The Connection.

*Name changed for
privacy

Welcome to Our New Members

Central was blessed with three new members this summer.

Emily and Brian Staniszewski, who have two sons – Ben who is 8 and Will who is 6 – joined on June 4. They live in Summit.

Eric Xu was baptized and became a member of Central by Profession of Faith on July 16. He is not married and is 22 years old, and lives in Millburn.

Volunteer Opportunity

We need you!

What a special summer it has been, enjoying lemonade following services, worship in the garden, and welcoming WAVE gatherings with wonderful music! Fall is fast approaching; the Membership & Fellowship Team will have a busy fall and winter. We welcome you to help WHEN you can on various projects. Sundays are our busiest times BUT, there's always more in reaching out.

The organizational meeting was held August 8. Reach out to Mibs Wagner, mibs_wagner@hotmail.com to join and learn how you might assist.

The follow-up meeting will be **Thurs., Sept. 7, at 7:00 p.m.** (so that Choir members can attend for ½ hour!).

We are getting fired up for a busy fall season. Plans must be made for the Welcome Back Picnic, September 17, World Wide Communion Sunday, October 1, and hopefully a Christmas Party the first week in December.

We have many choir members and Deacons who have offered their service but we really need more folks able to assist on the SPECIAL Sundays.

Ideas for WAVE refreshments need to be

suggested. Your thoughts for outreach are also important; pew card suggestions will be discussed.

We invite all to join in who would like to be involved in our activities. Many volunteers have difficulty ASSISTING on Sunday morning but can easily help with preparations. We need both types!

Remember Thurs., Sept. 7, at 7:00 p.m. in the North Classroom, rear entrance. Please RSVP to Mibs!

NOTE: We pride ourselves on organized timely meetings!

-Mibs Wagner, Elder



New Wildflower Garden

Upon learning that the city was not maintaining the strip of grass between our parking lot and the municipal lot, Central member Francie Cho had the brilliant idea to plant a

wildflower garden in that untended spot. With the help of Bill Harrison, Jeff Lowman, and Francie's sons John, William, and James, Francie orchestrated the

planting of wild flowers to create a lovely retreat for butterflies and bees. Thank you to the crew for the added beauty!



Photo Gallery



Choir Sunday, June 4, 2023



Pick-Up Choir on Sunday, June 11, 2023



Ordination and Installation of Officers, June 11, 2023



Kevin Hill being interviewed on HTTV

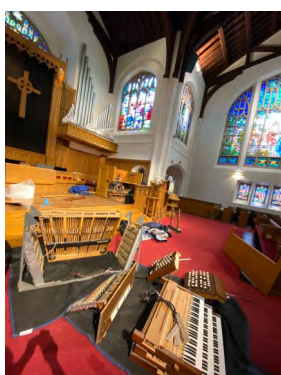


Youth Mission Trip to rural New York State

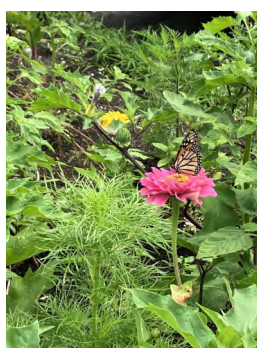
Photo Gallery



Summit CommUNITY Camp (VBS)



Organ Repairs



New Wildflower Garden along the parking lot

Finance Report

CENTRAL QUARTERLY FINANCIAL REPORT TO THE CONGREGATION

ALL \$000

	JUNE YTD 2023	% OF 2023 BUDGET	JUNE YTD 2022
INCOME			
REGULAR GIVING	\$328	55%	\$316
TOTAL INCOME	\$395	57%	\$352
EXPENSES			
PERSONNEL	\$459	51%	\$402
BUILDING AND GROUNDS	\$104	55%	\$83
ALL OTHER	\$73	6%	\$95
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$636	47%	\$580
SHORTFALL IN EXCESS OF BUDGETED 4% DRAW COVERED BY UNRESTRICTED ENDOWMENT	\$-104	28%	\$-86
VALUE OF UNRESTRICTED ENDOWMENT	\$6,559		\$6,363
MISSION DISBURSEMENTS FROM RESTRICTED ENDOWMENT	\$300		\$283
VALUE OF MISSION ENDOWMENT	\$3,293		\$3,392

TREASURER'S COMMENTS

Total income is better than plan through the first half of the fiscal year. This is from regular giving, i.e. pledge donations, Sunday collections as well as other income such as per capita collected and building use (which is primarily from WNSK).

Expenses continue to be managed well and are also below budget in total. Expenses have increased over the same period as last year. This is due to a return to normal church programs and activities. Costs have also increased in general over the same period as last year.

Central expects to require additional funds from the unrestricted endowment above the budgeted draw of 4% to fund regular operations during the year.

The Mission Endowment continues to exceed \$3 million even with distributions through the second quarter.

Central Develops Youth Leaders Via After-Camps

Youth Leadership in the church is critically important - not only because our churches will not exist if we do not engage in leadership development at all ages, but because leadership in the church is one of the most powerful ways that people know that they belong in a faith community. If we can develop and support programming for children and youth that builds capacity for leadership - in the child, in the community of children, and in the community of adults, which nurtures to accepts them—then we have a chance of nurturing not only fantastic leaders who will reach and serve the community in the name of Christ, but also a community of young people who know that their skills and passions matter to God and their church. Young people who lead know that they belong to God.

Central has developed specialty “after-camps” scheduled to run in the afternoons following Summit’s CommUNITY Camp VBS, held at Central each July. The after-

camps are run by youth leaders.

The camps originated in Central’s Confirmation classes, growing from the confirmands’ passion projects. The first was Theater Camp, an off shoot of Anna Jeffries’ passion project and her Girl Scout Gold Award project. When Theater Camp turned out successful and popular, more camps were added, with Anna continuing for three more years, and handing over the reins to her younger sister Abby this year.



Will Gawronski and Anderson Wise developed Sports Camp, leaning on their love of sports to share with children who might not be able



to otherwise afford to attend a specialty sports camp.

Bessie Huggins created a Cooking Camp as her Girl Scout project, and is now, after three years, training a new youth leader to take over once she leaves for college next year.



Pastor Deborah Huggins, who oversees Central’s Child and Youth programs, said, “I love that kids start volunteering with us in Middle school, and by the time they are in high school they are developing content, and leading sections, and finally taking on a whole camp. I love that the kids mentor each other as leaders. We are delighted to give youth in our community the chance to really lead something - to try something out - to fail, to do better, to find success in an authentic, but also pretty low stress environment. Our youth have lots of support.”

Children and Youth

What's the best part of summer? Fireflies? Long beautiful evenings full of laughter, bird song, and splashing water? Butterflies sipping nectar from flowers? Enjoying the beauty of God's creation?



At Central, it's spending time with our amazing young leaders and children. From the minute school gets out, to the last long days before school bells ring, and kids are back to study and practice, we get to build, teach, and lead together.

Our annual mission trip this year was to Bath, NY. Many thanks to our youth leaders Lydia Moore and Catherine Huggins, to our chaperone Thea Moore, and our leadership team of the Gawronski, Moore

and Huggins families, who worked with our local partners Ryan construction, Joyce Ryan, Longwell's Lumber, Jamie and Bessie Tyrrell, and the Van Gorder family to rebuild the back of their home and to make their home safer, warmer, and more comfortable. Our Summit-Bath partnership was amazing, and we were in awe of what God could do with our time and resources.

As we moved into our Youth-Led aftercamps and commUNITY VBS, it was awesome to see God's love and care for Summit's children. Many of our families are facing financial hardship, and we saw an increase in both scholarships and food assistance - but they are definitely not facing hardships of joy, faith, and generosity. Our commUNITY VBS was amazing - with singing, and dancing, and crafts. Lydia Moore led a special station to address mindfulness and grounding, and then on Friday everyone en-

joyed a day of giving back to the community with a packing event for Bridges.

In the afternoons, Abby Jeffries, Bessie Huggins and Will Gawronski led camps with Dahlia Valdez, Zoey Karelis, Fiona and Caroline Kelder, Zoey Espinal, Connor Gawronski, Daniel Flaim, Sarah Flaim, Catherine Huggins, Lydia Moore, and Logan Fallon. It was amazing to see our young people share their gifts and talents with the community.

Thank you all for supporting an amazing Summer at Central! We can't wait for our Fall Kick Off Sunday on September 17, 2023. We will have an inflatable, balloon animals, root beer floats, and a fantastic lunch for everyone. We can't wait to see you there!



CPC Weekday Nursery School and Kindergarten

Summer at CPC
Weekday Nursery
School & Kindergarten

Summer camp at CPC is an opportunity to extend the school year. Our current families and families enrolled for the following year were invited to enroll in summer camp that was held for three weeks in June with approximately 60 children joining for the first two weeks and 40 children the last week. We were happy to welcome so many children to experience summer camp at CPC!

The children traveled the world, visiting a different country each day. Each week the children created a Passport that guided their travels. The children engaged in fun, hands-on learning experiences that immersed them in the culture of the country. They also visited the library for lessons on the traditions, music and dance of each country.

Summer camp pro-

vides our children an opportunity to continue to interact in their school community and engage in experiences that extend their learning and growth into the summer months.

28th and the school year begins on Tuesday, September 5th for children.

Rachel Diekman
CPC WNSK Director



We are looking forward to welcoming 169 students for the 2023-24 school year! We are able to increase enrollment numbers to pre-pandemic class size once again. 28 staff members will guide our children this school year. Teachers return the week of August





70 Maple Street
Summit, NJ 07901

Return Service Requested



THE KEY

Fall 2023
The publication of
CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
centralpres.org
Editor: Jeanne Thiemann

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

8:30 & 10:00 a.m.
*Central is worshipping in the Sanctuary on Sundays.
The 10:00 a.m. services are broadcast on HTTV and will
be live streamed to our YouTube channel resuming
September 10.*