

THE CENTRALITE

March 2021



CENTRAL IS A RECONCILING IN
CHRIST CONGREGATION

Central's Staff

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Vicar Ben Nickodemus
Pastoral Intern

Minister to Christus House
& Campus Ministry
Sister Clare Josef-Maier

Organist/Choirmaster
A. ElRay Stewart-Cook

Associate Organist
Lindsey H. Rodgers

Parish Nurse
Sally Diehm

Parish Administrator
Kristi Hoiland

Financial Manager
Cindy Culpepper

Children, Youth & Family
Coordinator Crystal Miller

Church Council

President, Dennis Lindsay
Vice Pres, Larry Sutton
Secretary, Jack Bennett
Treas, Charlotte Bontrager
Matt Haugen
Chris Henry
Lauralie Kallinen
Sonia Macke
Sheri Pyron

CENTRAL LUTHERAN MISSION STATEMENT
TO BE THE HANDS AND FEET OF JESUS BY:

LOVING GOD AND ONE ANOTHER
NURTURING FAITHFUL LIVING
SERVING THOSE IN NEED
SHARING THE GOSPEL

Created for Community:
A Midweek Lenten Series
Central, United &
Emmaus Lutheran Churches



	Lenten Theme	Preacher
2/24 (archive)	In community with creation	Pastor Eric Dull United Lutheran
3/3	In community with all the saints	Vicar Ben Nickodemus Central Lutheran
3/10	In community with our neighbors	Pastor Rachel Langford Emmaus Lutheran
3/17	In community with those on the margins	Dr. Andrew Langford Emmaus Lutheran
3/24	In community with Christ	Pastor Laurie Jones Central Lutheran

These pre-recorded midweek Lenten services will be available on our website each Wednesday by noon. Once posted they will be available for viewing at any time throughout the Lenten season.

Dear Friends and Members of Central,

Nearly a year into this world-wide pandemic and I'm aware many of us are suffering from "COVID fatigue." Not only are we tired of this... but as our Parish Nurse, Sally Diehm, reminded us in our staff meeting earlier today this health epidemic has caused many of the same symptoms as one experiences with grief and loss, especially the grief that comes from the death of a loved one. There's the loss of life, to be sure, but there's also the loss that comes from the rippling effects this pandemic has had on all of us. Now, here we are, a few short weeks from having gone through the complete cycle of a full year since the initial shock of the "death" we all experienced when our communities, nation, and world virtually shut-down, including this sacred place we call our church home. Many of us long to gather in person for worship where we can join in singing and sharing the peace and returning to the way things were BC (before covid). To top it off, we've experienced significant loss from the lack of, or severely limited, contact with our friends, family and faith community. And yet there is hope.

Let's face it. Loss and grief play a huge part in our lives and our faith can play a significant role in dealing with times such as this. In fact, the season of Lent provides us an opportunity to reflect on matters of life and death, and more specifically on matters of death and resurrection. This is, after all, the time of year when we see signs of resurrection all around us—new life bursting forth from bulbs planted in deep soil long ago, barren trees showing signs of new growth as buds begin to sprout, animals coming out of winter hibernation. There is hope.

In the midst of all of our losses, all of our grief, and all of our heavy-laden burdens that come from loss and grief, we're being drawn once again to the cross of Christ and to Christ's triumphant victory over death—once for all. Our focus slowly shifts from loss and grief to healing, and from death and dying to resurrection and new life. Yes, there is hope.

And as the Apostle Paul put it, "...hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us" (Romans 5:5). Let us continue the journey through Lent with the assurance that hope will not disappoint us, nor will God's love 'ere forsake us. Of this you can be sure: Easter is coming... YES! There is hope!

In Christ's Abiding Love,

+Pastor Laurie

From the Desk of Vicar Ben

"For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." 1 Cor 1:23-24

In Lent we gather together and focus upon the cross of Christ. The cross is probably the most universally known symbol for Christianity. My family of origin loved crosses. We had them placed artistically throughout our house, on many articles of clothing, bumper stickers on cars, and the list continues. Some people use the symbol of the cross in popular media in jewelry and other artistic ways without any real connection to Jesus at all. For most of us, the cross has become so ubiquitous that we hardly notice it when we see it, even sometimes when it is very deliberately placed.

That kind of ubiquity would have been shocking to the writers of the New Testament. In fact, before the fourth century, it was very rare to use the cross in Christian art at all. A cross upon which people were crucified was such a shocking and horrible thing that it was hard for early Christians to view. These were people who had seen real crucifixions. Paul in 1 Corinthians points out that Jesus on the cross should be a shocking thing. The word translated "stumbling block" here is the Greek *skandalon*. This word means that it is something that causes people to stumble and sin, an obstacle. That, for Paul, is what the cross is. He also says that it is "foolishness." Paul finds Jesus on the cross to be hard to understand.

For Paul the *point* is that it is hard to understand. Jesus dying on the cross doesn't make the kind of sense we would like. How could the Son of God do that? Paul embraces this hard question. It is an opportunity to cause us to reevaluate what we are sure we "know." Rather than relying on our own wisdom or our own expectations, the cross is the place to look to Christ rather than ourselves. That is a space where there is great power and great wisdom – but not the kind of wisdom we would have expected. It is something altogether new. That wisdom can be found in our relationship with Christ.

There are, of course, ways to logically make sense of why Jesus died specifically on a cross (rather than another way), but that is not really the point according to Paul. Instead, the goal should be to recognize our own limits in what we understand, and then look to Christ and recognize that maybe it isn't all about just ourselves individually. The wisdom and power of the cross is in how we relate to it as a community together. Paul is writing to a community in Corinth who was in conflict and had even broken into factions, particularly among those who felt they knew everything as compared to others. He responds in many ways, but the first thing he says here in chapter one is to recognize our own limits of what we can know. The cross is a place to come together and recognize that it is not about what we know but about who we are as a people of God gathered together before God. Paul did not ask different people of the community to become like everyone else so that they would all be "the same." Instead, he says that the wisdom and power of God in the cross is wide and it allows all people from very different places to be united together in community by focusing on who God is for us all.

During this season of Lent, I therefore invite you to join me in looking for those crosses we see in various places in our neighborhoods, in our houses, and at church. Then, when we see them, take a moment and remind ourselves of their significance and what a powerful thing they can be for our community together.

In Christ's love, Vicar Ben

STEWARDSHIP IN THE PANDEMIC

Contributed by Gary Wolfe

It has been over one year since the pandemic started. Because of the pandemic, lives have changed. Most everything we do is different. Some things continue like stewardship. Faith leads us to stewardship once we say "I believe." Time, talent, and other gifts are abundantly provided by God. It is our choice what to do with these gifts. During the pandemic, stewardship continues. In each issue of the Centralite, we are going to tell stories of stewardship in action. Today's story is about FISH.

FISH or Friends in Service to Humanity is a totally volunteer organization supported by over twenty-one local churches that provides emergency food boxes, purchases propane, and provides financial assistance for prescriptions for people in need. The only means of qualification to receive support from FISH is to ask. Central Lutheran Church has been a longtime and major supporter of FISH through generous giving, from food donations and financial contributions to Central Lutheran Foundation support. In fact, because of all of these contributions, Central makes up about 20% of the entire FISH budget. Stewardship at work!

FISH has no paid staff and is totally operated by volunteers including people from Central. Central FISH volunteers include: Steve and Norma Edman, Patty Bangsbo, Linda O'Rourke, and Gary Wolfe. Volunteers either work preparing food boxes or in the office answering the telephone. I work in the office answering the telephone. I feel excitement in this volunteer activity because it is a real way of showing God's love to people in need. It is a way of being the hands and feet of Jesus. In each encounter, I want the person to feel God's love for them. Sometimes a person calling has needs we cannot meet. Although we have an extensive list of community resources, sometimes the community resources are simply not enough, so I always tell the person to go to a nearby church and talk to the pastor. After I hang up the telephone, I offer a prayer for that person in need. Even in the pandemic and perhaps especially in the pandemic, FISH is needed.

Stewardship never goes away! We are helping those who have less by showing God's love!

P.S. Thank you for your ongoing generosity to support the Mission and Ministry of Central through the faithful stewardship of your time, talents, and financial gifts.



WE KEEP IN OUR PRAYERS

Ed Anderson; David Beckstein; Sally Bethel; Lou Berg; Terry Chap; Nicole Christie; Richard Cook; Greg Foote; Ilona Johnson, Doug and Jodie Martin; Marie Miller; Bob Reed; Sean Wagoner and Richard White. Please keep the family and friends of Carol Haggerty in your prayers. Carol died at age 102 on February 24, 2021.

An Invitation from Central's Prayer Ministry Team

Submit a prayer request!

If you would like to submit a prayer request, you can do so by sending an email directly to prayers@welcometocentral.org. Please tell us your name and the reason for your request. If you are asking on behalf of someone other than yourself, please seek their permission first. Prayers can be for thanksgiving, health, struggles, guidance, support, or anything else you desire. Central's Prayer Advocates are committed to keeping your prayer concerns and thanksgivings in our daily prayers.



Walking and Praying Together!

In addition, if you would like to join friends from Central in a prayer walk, Ruth Vettrus has started a walking & praying group that meets in the church parking lot on Thursdays from 4-5pm to pray while walking around the neighborhood. Contact Ruth for more information at Ruth.Vettrus@gmail.com.

News from Central's Book Club



The CLC Book Club will meet on **Monday, March 8, 2021, at 7:00om** via Zoom to discuss ***American Dirt*** by Jeanine Cummins. This novel is about a family living in Acapulco, Mexico. The wife owns a bookstore; the husband is a journalist; they have an eight-year-old son. The husband does investigative journalism about the drug cartel in Acapulco. The head of the drug cartel shops at the wife's

bookstore and falls in love with her although they have never dated, only talked in the bookstore. An article published anonymously exposes the drug cartel, but the head of the cartel knows who wrote the article. A few days later, thirteen members of the couple's family are murdered at a family gathering. The wife and son hide in the closet and escape. The wife realizes they must leave Mexico or be killed. The wife has an uncle in the United States. They are forced to flee and become migrants going north to the United States. This novel is the story about their journey. The book is filled with poignancy, drama, and humanity. It is an exploration into the inner hearts of people willing to sacrifice everything for a glimmer of hope. The discussion will be led by Gary Wolfe.

The ZOOM link will be sent out closer to the meeting date.

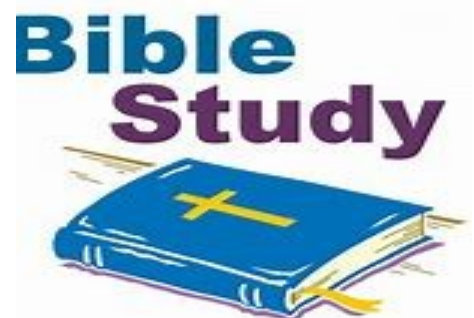
New members are always welcome! If you are not on the CLC Book Club email list and would like to join the discussion, please email Betsy Berg < rb24berg@aol.com >.

Looking Ahead: **The CLC Book Club** will meet on **Monday, April 12, 2021, at 7:00pm** via Zoom to discuss ***A Pilgrimage to Eternity: From Canterbury to Rome in Search of a Faith*** by Timothy P. Egan. The discussion will be led by Elizabeth Uhlig.

Wednesday Bible Study via Zoom at 11am.

No preparation needed. All are welcome. If you'd like to join Vicar Ben as we study portions of Paul's letter to the Galatians, email [here](#) for the Zoom link.

Also: The Men's Bible Study is meeting in person (masked and socially distanced) in the Parish Hall on Wednesdays at 1:00pm.



Central Lutheran Church
Jan 2021 Compared to Jan 2020 Income:Expense Summary

	Jan-21	Jan-20	Difference
Regular Envelopes	\$ 56,666.39	\$ 38,856.00	\$ 17,810.39
Other Offerings	-	\$ 623.30	\$ (623.30)
Holiday Offerings	-	-	-
Other Income *	(211.52)	\$ 2,465.91	(2,677.43)
Departmental Income	\$ 4,621.74	\$ 465.36	\$ 4,156.38
Total Income	\$ 61,076.61	\$ 42,410.57	\$ 18,666.04
Total Expenses	\$ 53,464.90	\$ 52,363.49	\$ 1,101.41
YTD Net Income	\$ 7,611.71	\$ (9,952.92)	\$ 17,564.63

* Other Income: 1842 University Adjustment

*Thank
You*

Central Lutheran Church received a thank you note from the ELCA thanking the membership for the gift of \$7,000 to Lutheran Disaster Response earmarked for the Upper McKenzie Fires.

Address change

Arline Fors: 455 Alexander Loop #328
 Eugene 97401



CENTRAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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