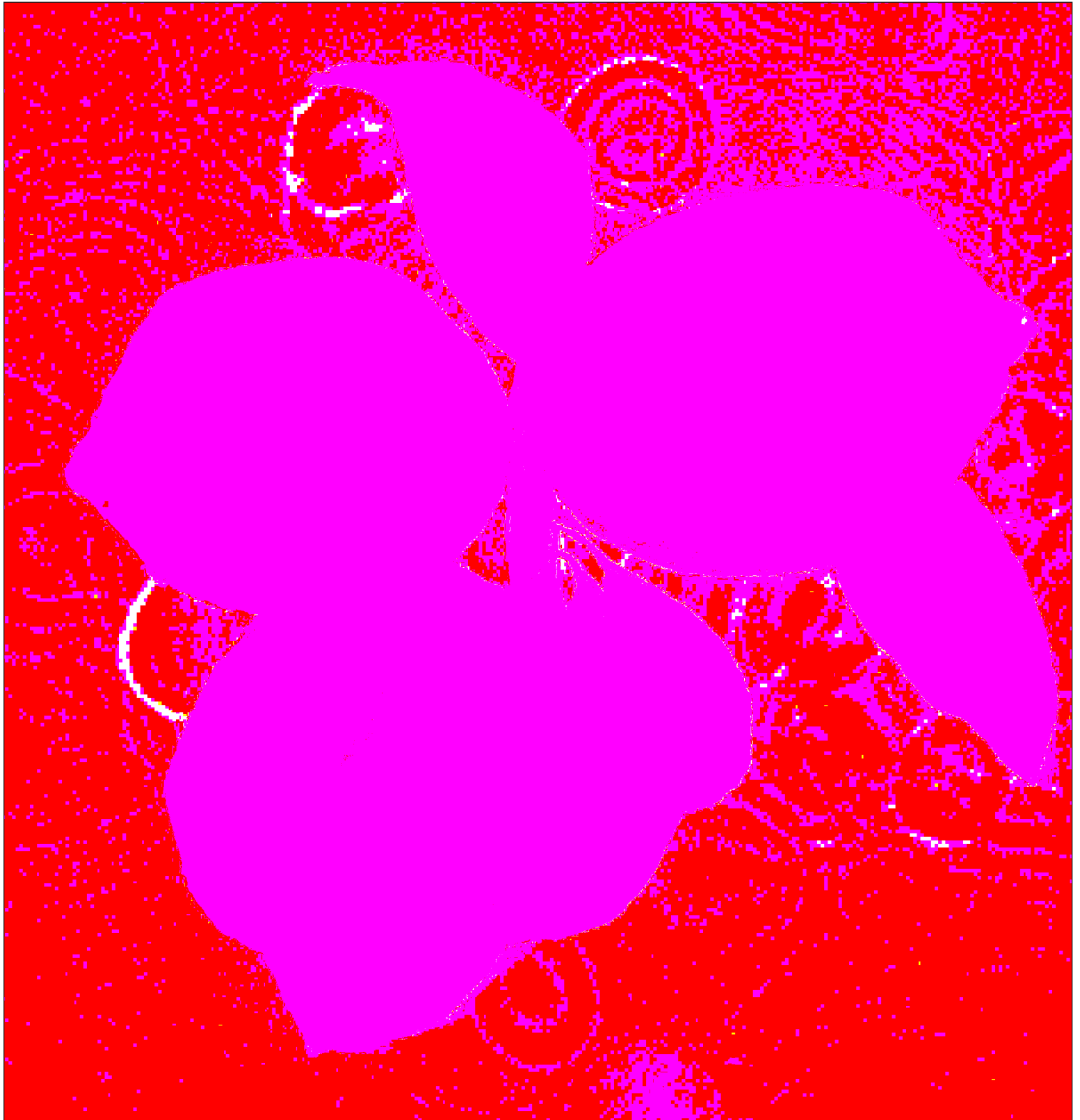


CENTRAL

summer / 2023 /



Bearing Fruit

Central Leadership

The Session of Central Presbyterian Church

Class of 2023

Bessie Green
Kathy Harben
Khaliah Johnson
Susan Landrum
Amy Mast
Mike Sizemore
Beth Webb-Woods
Charles Yorke

Class of 2024

Janet Abercrombie
Lewis Amos
Julie Boggs
Kelly Bray
Sarah Cook
Mary Sidney Harbert
Tom Holcomb
Ximena Leroux

Class of 2025

Robert Catterall
Philip Covin
Ann Hunter
Hannah Palmer
Anne Sciarrone

The Diaconate of Central Presbyterian Church

Brookwood Hills: Ben Evans, Rob Forbes,
Ellen Thompson

Decatur: Ed Carwile, Eleanor Dake,
Vanessa Kirk, Isabelle Werber

Down Yonder: LaShawn Green,
Emmalee Hackshaw, Linda Lehfeldt

Intown South: Brian Bishop, Ben Sutton

Intown North: Tom Leslie, Debbie Miller

Northern Lights: Betty Carroll, Vicki
Collier, Ginger Heidbreder, Zac Hilimire

CENTRAL STAFF

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ON THE COVER: Central member Betti Rosszer contributed this piece of art she created for us to use on the cover of this issue. The painting is named, "Limes 2021." It is a watercolor and is hanging in Tull Hall and available for purchase. Thank you Betti for lending your talent to Central!



Preparing to bear good fruits

The Rev. Jasiel Hernández García

Central friends,

Looking back at the last five months, I celebrate all your hard work. We all have done an outstanding job at keeping Central's ministries active, vibrant, and engaging during our latest transition. It surely takes a village!

I also congratulate all of our Central students who have finished their school year, especially those who have graduated from high school. May you all and your parents find some rest and recreation this summer - you all deserve it!

Year after year, many of us look forward to summer since it brings a slower pace of life. Many of our responsibilities take a break. And suddenly, we find more time to do the things we love with the people we love. Summer invites us to maximize our time, not by adding more meetings or chores to our schedules, but by enjoying the good things in life that God has given us.

Friends, it is time to recharge our batteries! Make sure to take time this summer to renew your heart and spirit. I truly love how we are all committed to making Central a home for all people. But don't forget to take care of yourself and your own home. More so now as we anticipate an exciting and busy new season in the life of Central.

We will welcome the Rev. Shannon Kershner as Central's new pastor on July 1. This momentous occasion will



certainly bring positive changes that will require the participation of this whole community. Each and every one of you bring gifts and talents that Central needs. You are an essential part of who we are as a church.

In this Summer issue, we are focusing on our service to the church through the work of the various committees we have at Central. We all can bear good fruits when we join together and serve in mission, worship, stewardship, engagement, learning, and administration. The future is indeed bright, so become part of the change we would like to see in Central! Say yes!

JOIN US JUNE 11 FOR A FAREWELL RECEPTION

On Sunday, June 11, Central will bid a fond and grateful farewell to our Associate Pastor, The Rev. Jasiel Hernández García. We will toast Jasiel and Jessie at a reception in Tull Hall following worship.



ALL CHURCH RETREAT

SEPTEMBER 2 TO 4 MONTREAT, N.C.

Sign up via Realm for this special gathering



It's time to sign up for the Labor Day church retreat!

Our new pastor, Rev. Shannon Kershner, will help lead us over the weekend as well as host a Sunday evening campfire with s'mores and outdoor games at Blueberry Grove's 5-acre organic blueberry farm along Flat Creek in downtown Black Mountain (just down the road from Montreat).

The weekend will include small group activities led by Central members, the return of last year's popular art station, and plenty of free time for exploring and adventures. Registration includes Saturday and Sunday dinner as well as housing in a rustic Montreat lodge. Register now for fellowship and fun!

Registration fee waivers are available. To learn more, ask questions, or request a waiver, please contact M.E. Davis at maryelizabeth.pope@gmail.com.





Living Into Our Mission as a Matthew 25 Church Focus on Mission Work

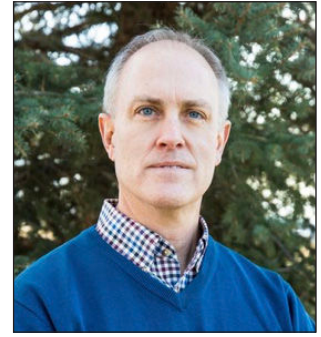
BY ROBERT CATTERALL

The Central Presbyterian 2023 Summer Series program will be focused on mission work, particularly in light of Central's commitment to be a Matthew 25 church. We will examine the topic from a holistic perspective, learning about the ethical and theological aspects of mission work. We will also hear from leaders of several organizations, engaged in various types of mission work, with which Central has partnered. Central members will lead discussions about past mission trips, as well as ways in which Central's space is being used, and could be used, by organizations working for the common good. God's grace is given - we don't earn it; but, when we're right with God we want to DO something. That's the essence of mission work. Let's talk about it.

Classes will take place June 4, 11, 18 and 25 and July 9, 16, 23 and 30. All classes will take place in the atrium of the Oglesby Building also known as the Central OAC space. If you have any questions, please contact Robert Catterall.

June 4

Mark Douglas, Professor of Christian Ethics at Columbia Theological Seminary, will speak on mission work from an ethical perspective.



Mark Douglas

June 11

Raj Nadella, New Testament Professor at Columbia Theological Seminary, will lead a close examination of the 25th chapter of the Gospel According to Matthew.



Raj Nadella

June 18

David Roth, Executive Director of Memorial Drive Ministries, will speak on meaningful mission work.



David Roth

June 25

Rohit Malhotra, Founder and Executive Director of the Atlanta-based Center for Civic Innovation, will speak on a holistic approach to mission work.

July 9

Brandon Martin, Founder and CEO of Atlanta-based Close Ties Leadership Program (our Callie Day concert raised money for that organization), will speak on Close Ties Leadership Program's work and his journey to where he is in life.

July 16

A panel of Centralites will lead a discussion on mission trips - past experiences and future ideas.

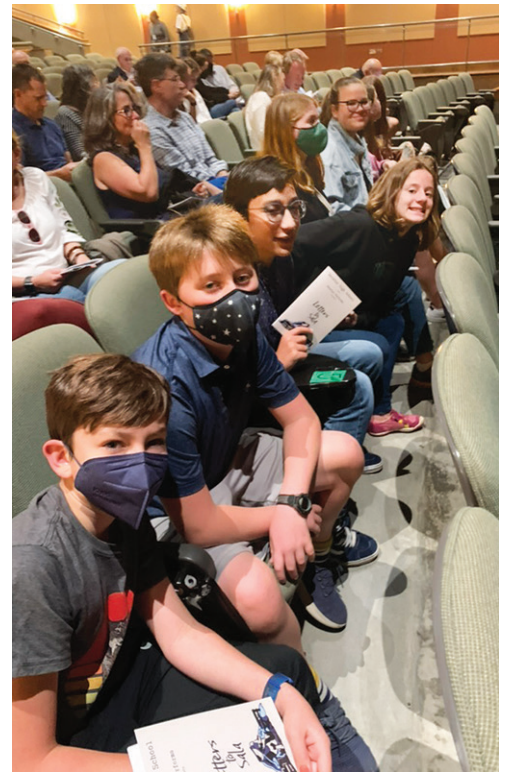
July 23

Irene Wong and Rebecca Arayan, Executive Directors of AMIS Atlanta and Atlanta-based Villa International, respectively, will jointly speak on the "welcoming the strangers in our midst" work in which their organizations are engaged.

July 30

We'll talk about ways in which Central's space is being used, and could be used, by various groups and for various purposes for the common good.

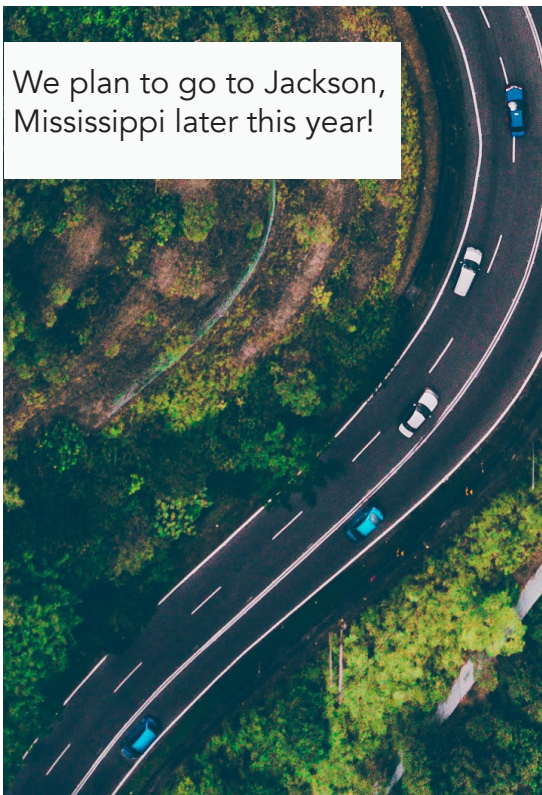




BY SUSAN LANDRUM

SOARING *into* SUMMER

Update from Central's Youth



What an amazing year it has been! I've had the absolute joy of supporting youth programming at Central and getting to know an imaginative, creative, brilliant and hilarious group of people who make God's kin-dom a much brighter place. Here's a little recap of some highlight moments:

We started the year celebrating Central's return to Montreat! We got to stay together in Georgia Lodge, participate in all of the fun of the retreat and travel into Asheville on a rainy afternoon to create pottery. The mug I made continues to be my new favorite!

We are grateful for the consistent, flexible and loving support of our Sunday School teachers - Hannah Palmer, Gayle Knight, Anne Sciarrone and Ted Brothers - for showing up and supporting thoughtful conversations around Scripture, powerful questions around faith and lots of energy around games and of course, donuts!



We soaked up the fun and joy of PRIDE with a picnic and viewing the parade.

We ate ample cheese dip and tried many ice cream flavors on outings to Decatur.

We supported Izzy Wood at The Children's School production of Once On This Island and filled an entire row with her devoted fans!

We made sandwiches for the OAC, snack packs and served in the Courtyard Ministry in the fall and winter.

We participated in worship through singing, being narrators in the Christmas pageant and are writing our own affirmation of faith for Children & Youth Sunday as we write this update! We're so grateful for Thom for supporting our voices in choir!

A group of our juniors and seniors got to spend an afternoon on Arabia Mountain and we talked about what it means to be a Sabbath people.

And last but not least - we resumed youth group on Sunday evenings at Central, playing round after round of sardines, dining on the finest of snacks and enjoying fellowship in the youth suite.

There are so many other wonderful things that happened each time we came together and we couldn't have done it without the faithful support of Lucy Baum, youth advisor extraordinaire! We are so grateful for all of our volunteers and of course our families who coordinate, support and ensure that our youth are able to stay connected in meaningful ways.



This summer, we'll be taking a group to the Montreat Youth Conference in June! We'll also be scheduling regular meet-ups to stay connected while people are enjoying their summer. Lastly, we're looking forward to planning a series of one-day excursions to places around Atlanta and Georgia to sneak a peek at our rich Civil Rights history to prepare for a trip to Jackson, Mississippi later in the year. And guess what? You're invited to those! These day trips will be intergenerational and we'd love to have you join. Please stay tuned for more updates, photos, postcards and ways to plug into youth programming this summer and beyond.



Rev. Shannon Johnson Kershner joins us this summer

Rev. Shannon Johnson Kershner was voted in Sunday, April 16 to be Central's new Senior Pastor/Head of Staff at a congregational meeting which took place following worship.

Kershner will join the staff at Central on July 1. Her first Sunday preaching is slated for July 16.

Kershner has more than 20 years of experience in ministry with PC (USA) at multiple churches throughout the United States.

Most recently, she has served as the Senior Pastor/Head of Staff at Fourth Presbyterian Church in Chicago, a position she began in May 2014.



From Shannon to the Congregation

Central has a deep commitment to the city and desires to be of use for the repairing of God's world. You value the centrality of worship and the proclamation of the Word that both embraces tradition but is also willing to be shaken up by the Spirit. You, too, want to be a congregation that walks alongside its staff and listens for God's hope together. I have admired the vulnerability and the authenticity you have shown throughout this call process, as well as the good humor. I firmly believe that together, we will discern what parts of Central's rich legacy we want to carry forward with us, what parts we might need to set aside, and how all of us can be reformed and rejuvenated by God's wildly creative Spirit set loose in our midst.





Central's 1st Quarter Finance Update for 2023

The church finances are trending in a pretty stable direction overall; however, we have had a few things come up that could potentially impact our deficit budget and which the Finance Committee and Session are watching. Our trend of total revenue coming ahead of schedule in 2023 continued in March. We are up about \$51,000 over what the budget is at this point. Our budgeted expenses are also still running \$5,000 lower than we anticipated, which is also positive.

The Finance Committee, with the Session's approval, has budgeted for an overall deficit of \$118,000 for 2023. We are optimistic we will end 2023, with less or hopefully no deficit. We believe this is possible if our various ministries continue to maintain careful budgetary spending, and also, if we continue to receive gifts from Central members and friends who have not pledged, as well as those who have the financial resources to increase to their annual giving.

The real estate closing on the new Pastor's home is completed. As a reminder, the church contributed \$500,000 in cash and the endowment contributed \$466,000 in cash. The impact of this is twofold. First, this takes a large

amount of cash (\$500,000) and ties it up in a real estate investment. While we will be receiving interest payments on the investment, and the overall impact on the budget is only slightly negative, it does reduce funding the operating budget receives from unrestricted endowment funds.

Secondly, it also reduces the amount of money that we will receive from the endowment in subsequent budget years. The estimated impact is about \$26,000 less endowment income per year.

Lastly, the Finance Committee has entertained an inquiry from the Facilities Committee on funding a contractual proposal for the Building Condition Assessment project. We anticipate this project will provide very important information which will be beneficial for long-term planning of building use and major maintenance needs. The Finance Committee is actively working with the Facilities Committee to find a way to fund the cost without stressing church finances and to avoid putting our overall financial status at risk. We hope this is helpful information. For more details, including budget specifics, please contact Kelly Bray at kelly.bray@gmail.com.

What Stewardship means to me:

Beth Johnson Paulsen shares her thoughts

James Iley McCord, longtime president of Princeton Theological Seminary (everybody called him Jazzeye because he signed his name "Jas. I."), used to joke that his favorite stewardship text was Psalm 150:3, "praise [God] with the lute." Everybody always laughed at the thought of using "loot" to worship the Almighty. I think Psalm 24:1 is better, though: "The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it." The truth is that all we are and all we have already belongs to God, and we are merely caretakers of it. The notion that we could ever give God something God doesn't already possess is foolish.

When we talk about stewardship we are using a very old concept. The steward in antiquity is the overseer of someone else's property, the manager rather than the owner of the estate. The steward was most often a slave. Today, the only time we use the word "steward" very much generally has to do with wine stewards in fancy restaurants—or in church during stewardship (uh, fundraising) season.



That's a problem for us sometimes because we are tempted to think we're raising funds for a good cause, just like the United Way only for Jesus instead. We think about how much we ought to be paying for services rendered, like great youth groups and terrific choirs and marvelous preaching and tender pastoral care and brilliant Christian education and ministries of justice and compassion.

The truth is, though, that we are not paying for anything when we commit ourselves and the money God has entrusted to us to the church of Jesus Christ. We are acknowledging that we and our money do not belong to us in the first place. Our financial resources — every bit as much as our time, our energy, our labor, our advocacy - When we make a pledge we are managing God's resources and using them to further God's saving agenda in the world. God does not need our money. God already owns it. God does not need us. God already owns us and by the cross of Christ has rescued us, again and again, from ourselves and from our acquisitive, commodified culture. Central does not ask us to give generously but to be faithful stewards of God's great mercies.

-Beth Johnson Paulsen

Central Financial Snapshot Q1 (January – March) 2023

Income: The year-to-date member & visitor received gifts total is \$283,670, which is \$41,670 higher than the 2023 year-to-date budget of \$242,000. March member giving of \$115,383 was approximately \$16,492 higher than February member giving of \$98,891 and \$24,716 higher than the March budget at \$90,667.

Expenses: 2023 year-to-date actual expenses are \$378,230. This is \$5,103 lower than 2023 year-to-date budget of \$383,333.

Net Operating Surplus/(Deficit): Our 2023 year-to-date budget surplus is \$25,229 (Total income less expenses).

-Faithfully Submitted, Kelly Bray, CPC Finance Committee Chair

BY
GAYLE
KNIGHT

Join a Central Committee

Many of the fellowship, outreach, and educational activities of Central are organized by standing committees. Central currently has nine committees that welcome all members with more than 75 members involved. Each committee has a chair or co-chairs and meets on a regular basis. Some meetings are on Zoom, and some are in person at church, at a committee member's home, or at a convenient gathering spot.

In this season of new beginnings, June is an ideal time to join a committee! Central's leadership year is on an academic calendar. Elders and Deacons recently elected to the Class of 2026 will be ordained and installed on June 4, and we welcome new committee leadership as well.

Committee participation is a great way to make new friendships, share your ideas, and support our

staff and members. No matter your age or stage, there is a way for you to be involved in a committee. Vibrant committees bring fresh ideas and volunteer support to our ministries. We need your energy and spirit.

How do you join a committee? By letting us know your interests. Look for a Time and Talents bulletin insert to be distributed in late May and June inviting you to share your areas of interest with committee leaders. After worship on June 4, committee representatives will be in Tull Hall to answer questions and encourage you to join. You can always email me with any questions you have as well at gsk-night1952@gmail.com.

Thank you for considering committee membership!

Adult Education – Chair, Robert Catterall

To promote spiritual transformation within the congregation by developing, implementing, and supervising the educational ministry for adults -- providing opportunities for growing in faith and deepening theological and biblical reflection. This committee helps plan adult Sunday School, special education programs, and small group activities that involve learning.

Engagement – Chair, Marcia Catterall

To identify, invite, and fully integrate members into the life of the church. To facilitate fun, strengthen individual connections, and encourage group and intergenerational fellowship in our congregation to help every person who enters our church be part of the family of God. Engagement plans activities such as church picnics, lunch outings, and the recent Sip N' Paint.

Facilities – Chair, Gayle Knight

To care for the physical and virtual properties of the congregation so that these resources may be put to the greatest possible use in the mission of the church. This committee works with the Facility Manager to care for and improve our campus and supports staff in responding to immediate and long-term maintenance needs.



Family Ministry - Chair, M.E. Davis

To provide for the spiritual nurture, theological education and church instruction of the children and youth of the congregation and to provide for fellowship and support among families. The Family Ministry Committee helps organize Sunday School, youth group, trips, holiday activities, and works with the Director of Family and Youth Ministry.

Finance – Chair, Kelly Bray

To lead oversight of financial management consistent with sound business practices, legal and Presbytery requirements, and Christian stewardship work. Finance Committee members work with our pastors and business staff to monitor church revenue and expenses and assist other committees with funding requests.

Mission – Co-Chairs, George Brown and Gary Cornell

To coordinate the congregation's expression of the love of Christ through concrete actions of service, justice, mercy and advocacy in our downtown neighborhood, the greater Atlanta community, and outside of Atlanta. Within the Mission Committee, members are actively engaged with both local and global mission partners.

Personnel – Co-Chairs, Denise de la Rue and Ximena Leroux

To provide oversight of personnel matters, such as policies and procedures, budget, hiring and staffing processes, terms of employment, and annual performance evaluations, as well as to provide Head of Staff with support regarding staff needs, relationships, and functions. The Personnel committee helps support Central staff through recognition and regular check-ins.

Stewardship – Chair, Ann Hunter

To develop and conduct a creative and comprehensive stewardship program, to educate members about giving in support of the operating budget and endowment, and to support pastoral staff with ongoing donor relationships. The Stewardship Committee works closely with the Finance Committee and business staff to establish goals and implement an annual stewardship campaign.

Worship & Arts – Chair, Janet Abercrombie

To provide regular opportunities for congregational worship where the word is proclaimed in scripture, sermon, prayer, music, and other art forms, where the sacraments are regularly administered, and where the congregation participates and responds with prayer, song, remembrance, and offering. The Worship & Arts Committee works closely with the Director of Musical Arts as well Central's Hospitality Team.



BY DR. JENNIFER SENGIN

SUMMER SOUNDS

Greetings, Central Family!

We are so excited for the summer in the music area as we work to support the worship services! Throughout the summer, you will hear from some of our very own members as they offer solos, duets, and small groups. The summer is a great time to collaborate with individual members and visitors within our congregation as they offer their musical gifts to God. In addition, we are already slated to engage with some local musicians to highlight different voices and instruments from the greater Atlanta area.

One of the areas that is really important to our music ministry is the opportunity for evangelism and community engagement. On June 11 at 3 p.m., we will be co-sponsoring The Atlanta African American Music Society organization's annual organ recital featuring some of Atlanta's most prominent black organists.

The mission of this organization is to provide scholarships for black organ students to pursue organ studies in higher education. During the recital, we will have an opportunity to provide a love offering to support their mission. We hope to engage in a few more programs at the intersection of music, arts, and mission this during the 2023-2024 year!

Speaking of the upcoming year, we have already started exploring our Arts of the Spirit series including an organ recital from Central's new organist, Mason Copeland! The summer also provides time to reflection and plan for the year ahead. We hope to share the dates for all of these events in the next few months as we finalize the plans with the Worship and Arts Committee.





Sunday 6/4 / 12:15 p.m. / Tull Hall

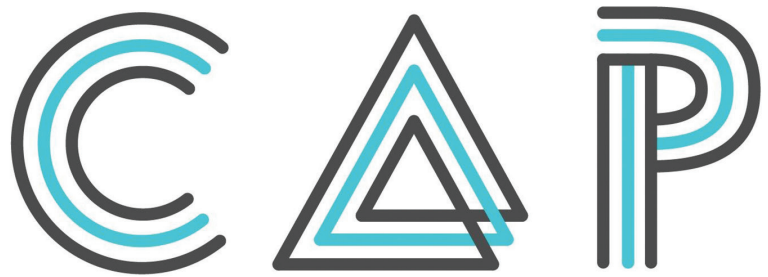
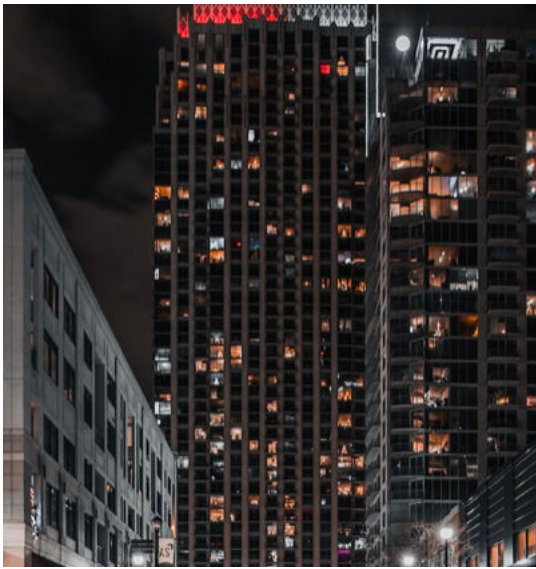
Come learn about the stunning array of new real estate development and infrastructure coming around us in downtown Atlanta so we can think about our expanding ministry opportunities on Capitol Hill!

Following worship on Sunday, June 4, Jennifer Ball, Chief Operating Officer at Central Atlanta Progress (CAP), will make a special presentation on the Future of Downtown and Our Ministry Opportunities. The presentation will be in Tull Hall at Central Presbyterian Church, 201 Washington Street. Our friends from Trinity UMC and the Catholic Shrine are invited to join with members of Central Presbyterian for this exciting presentation. Lunches will be provided for \$8.

After the visual presentation we will go on a brief walking tour outside the church (weather permitting) to places where change is taking place.

Please make plans to join us for this event. We are grateful for Jennifer's willingness to share the news about the changes that are coming to downtown Atlanta, so our three churches can continue to be well-informed, positive agents for renewal and compassionate action in our community.

To reserve a lunch, please email Gary Cornell by June 1 at gary.cornell01@gmail.com.



Central Atlanta Progress

Jennifer Ball, Chief Operating Officer at Central Atlanta Progress (CAP)





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