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VOLUME 5 ISSUE 2

# CENTRAL

Summer issue / 2024

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'General View of Rouen,' by Claude Monet.





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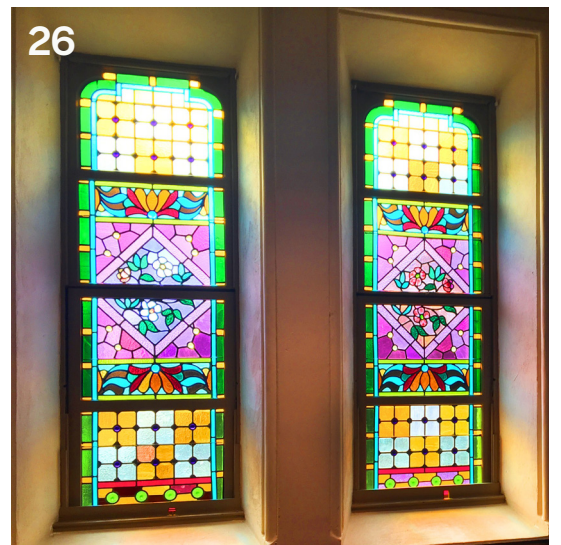
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# Central Leadership

## **The Session of Central Presbyterian Church**

Class of 2025

Robert Catterall  
Philip Covin  
Ann Hunter  
Hannah Palmer  
Anne Sciarrone

Class of 2026

Gary Cornell  
Denise de la Rue  
LaShawn Green  
John Heidbreder  
Adam Seeley

Class of 2027

Becky Battle  
Melanie Bliss  
Anita Carwile  
Sandy Hoke  
Katie Sutton  
Sally Wood

## **The Diaconate of Central Presbyterian Church**

Class of 2025

Betty Carroll  
Ellen Thompson  
Isabelle Werber  
Vanessa Kirk  
Debbie Miller

Class of 2026

Anne Blankinship  
Ed Galloway  
Liz Jaffe  
Martha Kimes  
Rachel Hull  
Terrylynn Pons

Class of 2027

Lucy Baum  
Linda Massengill  
Larken McCord  
Peg Richards  
Anne Watkins  
David York

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## **CENTRAL STAFF**

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from the pastor

# Let us lean into the Light together

BY REV. SHANNON J. KERSHNER

“Leaning into the Light.” This is our theme for this summer magazine. When Mark Wallace (Director of Communications) gave me options for our cover, I was immediately struck by Monet’s depiction of what I see as a cityscape rising above the clouds and chaos. I might even interpret it as a church steeple rising above the clouds and the chaos. And for me, the idea that a church like Central can help us all lift our eyes beyond everything that swirls around us just feels right.

I also appreciate the theme “Leaning into the Light” because it offers an important reminder that we are not the source of the light. I know that Jesus tells us we are the light of the world and to let that light shine, but I always have a bit of healthy skepticism for churches that claim to be the light, because it can be easy to forget the source. Yes – we are to reflect God’s Light of love, mercy, kindness, compassion, justice, etc. for all to see and know. But this light does not emanate from us. It only shines in and through us as we do our best to be faithful to our Source.

“Leaning into the Light” also connotes a journey of sorts. It allows for some breathing room that acknowledges that on some days, we are really good at leaning in, while on others, we might barely be able to tilt. Yet as my father always preached, God never asks us, “Are you there yet?”

Rather, God always queries, “Are you headed in the right direction?” For me, for us, I believe the question “Are we headed in the direction of God’s Light” is a good one as we continue to determine what our priorities will be as a congregation over these next few years. Perhaps every committee, task force, Sunday School class, etc. can use that question as a kind of litmus test. Is this activity, ministry, or mission helping us lean

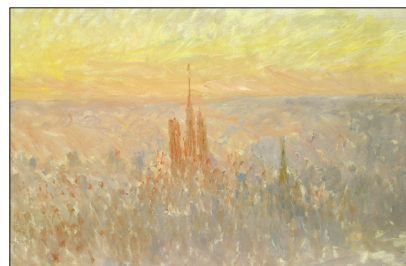


more into the Light and reflect it more fully to one another and to the world? If not, then why are we doing it?

“Leaning into the Light.” It is a lovely way to encapsulate our congregation’s focus as we continue our work of being redeveloped/reformed by the Spirit of God. Let’s lean together.

See you in worship!

Shannon



‘General View of Rouen,’ was painted by Claude Monet and remained ‘hidden’ for many years. It was shown to the public for the first time in Rouen in 1994, on the occasion of the ‘Rouen, Monet’s Cathedrals’ exhibition and was acquired by the Rouen Musée des Beaux-Arts the following year. The painting is in the public domain.



# UPCOMING EVENTS

JUNE 2



Congregational Lunch  
in Tull Hall following worship.

JULY 21

Congregational Picnic  
celebrating Shannon's  
1st anniversary.

AUGUST  
24, 25

Summer Shade Festival!  
Represent Central at our tent,  
wear your church swag, and  
enjoy Grant Park as summer  
weather winds down.

SEPT. 8

Central Fall Kickoff with lunch, fun and more.

JUNE 16  
& JULY 28

Be a part of the crew at the  
new Central tent at Atlanta  
Streets Alive. Lunch together  
before heading out to join the  
fun of a closed off Peachtree  
Street.





from the associate pastor

# ISN'T THAT A WONDER?

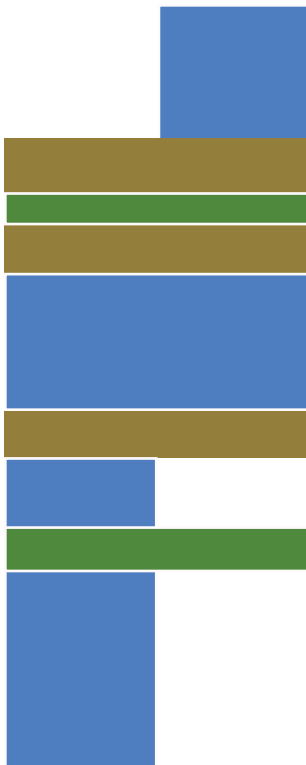
BY REV. KATE CULVER

When I was young, I loved summer. We all did. My friends and I would roam the neighborhood on our bikes, play cards at the pool, and build forts. I had the opportunity to go to summer camp. I remember singing songs, learning archery, and canoeing. There was so much freedom in the summertime, and all I wanted to do when I grew up was to be a camp counselor.

Well, I am not a professional camp counselor, but I still yearn for that freedom and respite my summers used to offer. Once a year, I attend a week-long spiritual retreat in Big Sur, California. I typically attend a workshop, and there is rest, prayer, meditation, silence, and time with my spiritual advisor. Some days are non-stop, and some days have rest built in. While the workshops and structured time are essential, some of the most valuable time is the rest in between. As I have grown into my ministry, I have learned how important it is to take a break and lean into what it means to rest in God.

On a recent visit, I found myself with a free afternoon. A big lawn outside the lodge overlooks the ocean, where I would sit after lunch. As I looked around, I noticed little dirt scattered around the lawn. This retreat center includes an organic farm to spread compost around for fertilization. But after sitting a while, I realized they were gopher holes! They were all around me; one would pop up, grab some grass, and then shoot back in its hole. As





soon as one went back underground, another would come out. And so, this gopher-watching became my afternoon practice. I tried to sneak up on them. I even laid down by one of the little mounds of dirt to see if I could get a closer look. This time, this silly seeming gopher watch became more than just an afternoon of rest; it became an essential part of my rest in God.

Retreat, at its core, is a journey. It is a deliberate stepping away from the world's rush to cultivate a more profound sense of presence and self-awareness. It is a gift, a compassionate space where we create a sanctuary. Here, the echoes of everyday demands and expectations gradually soften, allowing us to hear the gentle whispers of our hearts. This process of slowing down is not just an act of self-care, but a journey toward self-love, a time to nurture and reconnect with ourselves, and to deepen our understanding and acceptance of who we are.

In stillness, the light of presence begins to shine. In this light, we notice our breath, our thoughts, and, yes, even gophers. As we become more attuned to the

world around us, we find ourselves standing at the threshold of connection with ourselves, our community, and God. It is a way of rediscovering what truly matters.

Each year, when I leave Atlanta, I envision shedding the layers of stress and distraction that keep me from being fully present with my community. And I do, for a while, but what sticks with me is the reminder of every day's beauty, the simple joys and wonders that surround us, from the chirping of birds to the warmth of the sun, which gives me hope and reminds me of God's constant presence.

I am so grateful for the time and space because hope, although elusive, is a beacon of light. It's like those gophers; it pops up! Although we can see it, which is exciting and beautiful, we can't capture it. Then it goes away, and we wait a long time, and maybe it won't come up again for a while. Even though hope can be fleeting, it is all around us, just beneath the surface. The overwhelming impermanence of hope is the beauty of hope. Isn't that a wonder?





## 2024 Summer Studies with Central



BY ROBERT CATTERALL

Central Presbyterian's 2024 Summer Series program will be focused on the climate crisis. Over the course of four Sundays in June and four in July, we will examine the climate crisis from a number of perspectives: theological, scientific, architectural and sociological, to name a few. We will also have open and honest discussions about our own culpability regarding the climate crisis, and we will jointly share ideas and practices that can help us to be part of the solution versus being part of the problem. Come, learn, and get equipped to take action to better care for the creation that God so loves.





**JUNE 2**

Dr. Christine Roy Yoder

Dr. Christine Yoder, Old Testament Professor, Columbia Theological Seminary. Dr. Yoder will speak on what the Bible has to say about God's creation, and our place in it and our responsibility towards it.

**JUNE 9**



Dr. Dabney Dixon

Dr. Dabney Dixon, Georgia State University, has a PhD in Chemistry from MIT, and also has a degree in Theology. She will bring both a Christian and a scientific perspective to her talk.



**JUNE  
16**

Ryan Gravel

Ryan Gravel, Central member and well-known city expert on city planning, will talk about ways that cities can be more climate-friendly in terms of how they're laid out, managed and operated.



## JUNE 23



Mike Sizemore & Michael Chanin

Mike Sizemore, Central member and long-time architect, and Michael Chanin (CEO of Cherry Street Energy) will talk about buildings, and how they can impact the climate in positive and negative ways

The series will take a break on June 30.

## JULY 7

Dr. Amy Spring, Associate Professor of Theology at Georgia State University, will provide a sociological perspective on the climate crisis.



## JULY 14



Mary Lillian Walker, left top, a Central member who's gotten very engaged in the climate crisis issue since retiring from her practice of law, will lead a discussion of how we can assess our individual impact on Earth's climate; then, she and Ginger Heidbreder, left bottom, will spotlight one way in which we can make a positive impact: landscaping with native plants.







**JULY 21**



Susan Landrum & Robert Catterall

A group of Central people, including Robert Catterall and Susan Landrum, will facilitate a session in which we engage in “ideation” on ways that we can positively impact the climate crisis. This is planned to be an inter-generational session, with Central youth participating.

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**JULY 28**



Dr. Mark Douglas

Dr. Mark Douglas, Professor of Christian Ethics, Columbia Theological Seminary will take on a big question: If it looked as though our species were really about to wipe itself out via climate change, would God intervene to save us from ourselves?



BE FILLED WITH LIGHT AND

SHINE



Growing up,  
there was a tree outside of  
my bedroom window that  
tracked each season for  
me like a reliable friend.  
Its branches stretched up  
and near the second floor  
of our house.

In the fall, it did its best outfit change and then would shed those bright colors to rest during the winter. Spring would roll around and the leaves would start to re-emerge with small buds, expectantly and patiently. As the days started to grow longer and we all sprang forward, the leaves would burst forth and all of a sudden, we'd have a canopy of shade on the back side of the house.

I remember spending a lot of time gazing at the leaves on the tree as I fell asleep in the spring and summer when the light was still dancing around our backyard. My early bedtime meant that I went to sleep most often before the sun. It all felt terribly unnatural, if I'm being honest. In some ways, spring and summer meant this transition into longer days that I never got to see all the way through. As an adult, I have absolutely no qualms about an early bedtime or drawing my shades to the bright sun for an afternoon nap. But as a child, I wanted to be a part of the fullness of every day.

I am reminded of this desire to live fully and into the corners of each day from Central's children and youth. I can see it in the ways that our youngest worshipers bound down the aisles to make it to the front of the sanctuary for our Time with Children. I can see it in the

BY SUSAN LANDRUM



youth group asking when we'll all get to be together again. I can see it in Sunday School lessons when hands shoot up and big thoughts and big questions come tumbling out. I can see it in the willingness and desire to lead us in worship on those special Sundays where we highlight young voices.

As we transition into this season where there is more light to live into, I hope we all rejoice in the vivacity of our children and youth, praying for them as they transition to new schools, graduate, go off to camp for the first time and so much more.

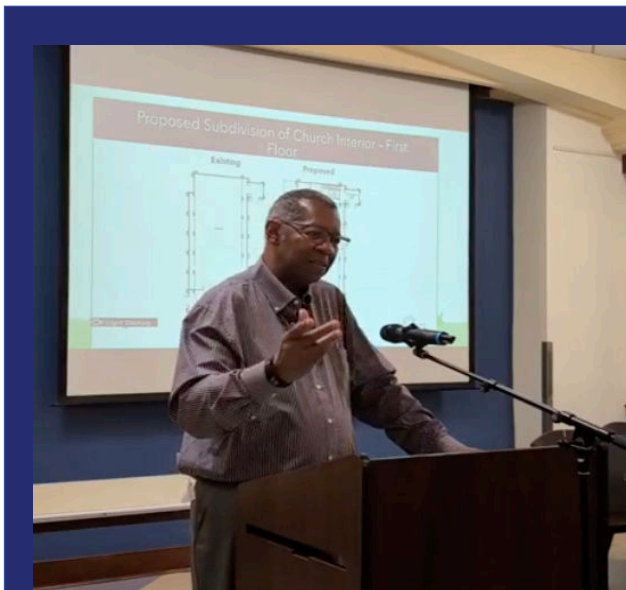
And in the words of Mary Oliver, may we let trees that we are surrounded by, that grow much slower than the children we love, remind us [we] too have come into the world to do this, to go easy, to be filled with light, and to shine.”



# CENTRAL IN THE CITY STAYS ENGAGED

BY JERRY MILLER

Central in the City continues its work to keep Central Presbyterian Church responsive to and engaged with our neighborhood and the downtown area. Our principal activities have included the following:



Fostering our relationship with the Atlanta Downtown Neighborhood Association (ADNA). We toured the City's Melody project with ADNA. The Melody is the City's most recent effort to house folks experiencing homelessness in a fascinating community of FEMA trailers housing 40 previously homeless individuals. The Melody is in South Downtown along Forsyth Street. We will be discussing ways in which Central and ADNA may provide joint volunteer activities to the community as well as other volunteer efforts. Central also hosted the ADNA's monthly meeting in May in Tull Hall, left.

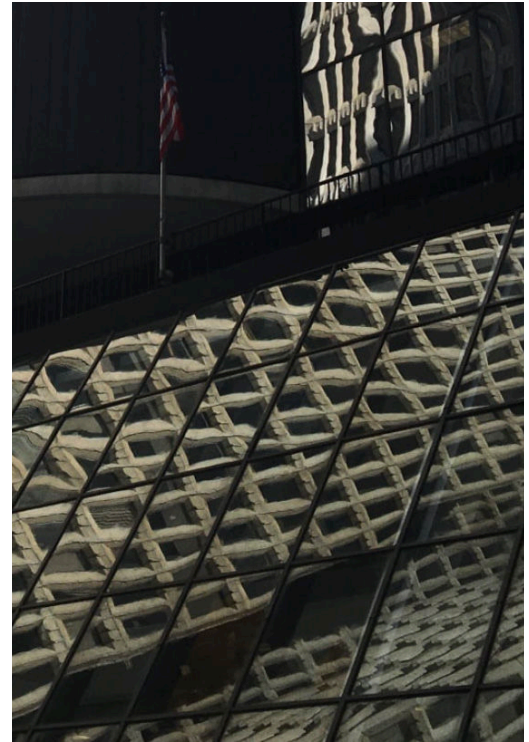




Our relationship with Central Atlanta Progress (CAP) has provided an opportunity to showcase our longstanding and ongoing commitment to the downtown area. It provides a conduit to outreach services for our unhoused neighbors sponsored by the Atlanta Downtown Improvement District. CAP incorporated our input on the design of pedestrian and bicycle friendly improvements to south downtown.

Our advocacy in partnership with others led to the successful passage of a bill, now law, providing additional tenants' rights. Those efforts also protected the State Low-Income Housing Tax Credit in support of future affordable housing.

Our partner Capitol Hill Neighborhood Development Corporation (CHNDC) has moved its 218-unit affordable housing project into the design and costing phase and has opened discussions with HUD on financing. CHNDC and its partner, Radiant Development, hope to break ground late this year or early in 2025.



We are currently working to make our zoning ordinance more friendly towards Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) while also being an incentive for affordable housing development.

Central has more than 1.2 million square feet of TDR, but changes to the ordinance we are proposing could make millions more available.

We nurture our relationship with Hope House and its 70 guests through improvements to their courtyard and involvement on their board.





**T**he clock is ticking toward the opening of the 226th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) beginning June 25 to July 4, 2024, and like the two prior assemblies, this one will be like no other. The Office of the General Assembly is working on this year's new format which will include online committee meetings and in person plenaries.

The theme of GA226, "Live into Hope", is based on the hymn of the same name by Jane Parker Huber. Daily themes have been chosen based on verses of the hymn. The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly chose the theme as an opportunity to charge the denomination after being in a space of lament and hope. We are now being charged to live into that hope.

"Every two years the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) gathers. It is an event where profound and prophetic things can happen . . . For some, the assembly may not seem relevant to the daily work of their congregation. For others, it may feel like a familiar friend who has always been there," said Kate Trigger Duffert.

In the article "Rooted and grounded in God," Ruling Elder Kate Trigger Duffert, Director of General Assembly Planning, introduces the theological roots of the PC(USA) General Assembly and shares preparations for GA226. This work, this theology, is for the whole church.

The resources you can find at the link below have been gathered to help in-person and online observers learn more about the PC(USA)'s polity and





## Proposed Docket for the 226th General Assembly (2024)

### Online Committees. Plenary in Salt Lake City, Utah.

*All times listed are Mountain Time (MT).*

SUN.	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THURS.	FRI.	SAT.
June 23	June 24	June 25	June 26	June 27	June 28	June 29 <i>Live Into Hope</i>
		8:00 am Brief Opening Plenary Online Committees	Online Committees	Online Committees		YAAD Training  6:00-8:00 pm Opening Reception Hosted by Presbytery of Utah <i>Meet (Co)Moderator Candidates</i> <i>Meet the Agencies</i>
<b>June 30</b> <i>...and hear God's word</i>	<b>July 1</b> <i>...of captives freed</i>	<b>July 2</b> <i>...the right to be</i>	<b>July 3</b> <i>...the end of greed</i>	<b>July 4</b> <i>...to faith, hope, joy, and peace</i>	July 5	July 6
Worship in area congregations  1:30 pm <i>Meet the Agencies</i> 2:30 pm Worship 3:00 pm Plenary 5:30 pm Dinner <i>Meet the Agencies</i> 8:00 pm Moderator Election	8:30 am Worship  9:30 am Plenary 12:00 pm Lunch 1:30 pm Plenary 5:30 pm Dinner 7:00 pm Plenary 9:00 pm Adjourn	8:30 am Ecumenical Worship 9:30 am Plenary 12:00 pm Lunch 1:30 pm Plenary 5:30 pm Dinner 7:00 pm Plenary 9:00 pm Adjourn	8:30 am Worship 9:30 am Plenary 12:00 pm Lunch 1:30 pm Plenary 5:30 pm Dinner 7:00 pm Plenary 9:00 pm Adjourn	8:30 am Worship 9:00 am Plenary 12:00 pm Closing Worship 1:00 pm Assembly Adjourns	<div> <b>Deadlines</b>  <b>180 Day-</b> Dec. 28, 2023            - Commissioner and Advisory Delegates Names Submitted  <b>120 Day-</b> Feb. 26, 2024            - All Reports from Committees/Agencies            - Overtures with Constitutional Implications  <b>60 Day-</b> Apr. 26, 2024            - Overtures with Financial Implications  <b>45 Day-</b> May 11, 2024            - All Overtures and Concurrences         </div>	

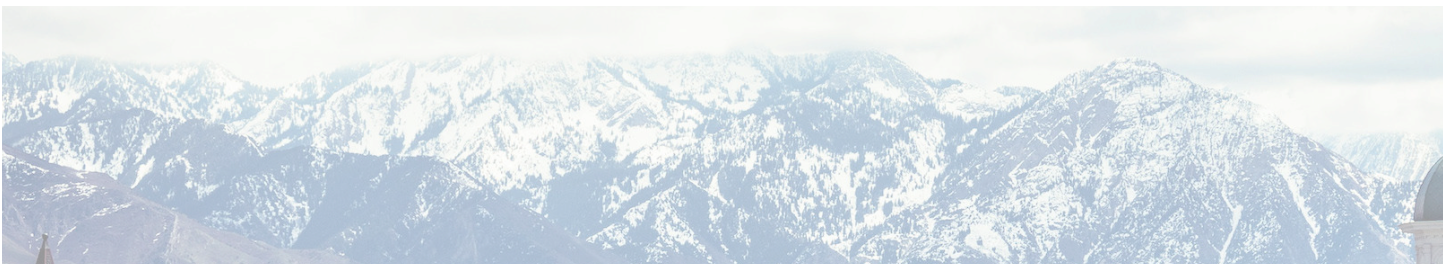
processes that ground the church in relationships with God and each other.

Here are a few of the topics you can find on the website: Presbyterian Identity, The Motion of an Overture on the way to GA, Can Equitable Representation and Participation Be Achieved Despite our Demographics?, and Practicing Inclusion.

Registration is open for those planning to participate in the 226th General Assembly as an in-person or online observer. The benefit of registering as online observer is that registration is FREE and

your MyGA account will provide online observers with access to many of the same resources available to commissioners and other official participants. Committee and plenary meetings will be live-streamed on the GA226 website and registration is not required if you are only interested in viewing the livestream.

If you would like to register to be an online observer you may visit the site below or click the QR code, right:  
<https://ga-pcusa.org/observer-ga226-info/>



BY THOM DIXON

## *Dear Central Family,*

I'm so excited to be "back home" with you all at Central Presbyterian Church! My time here as a music intern was incredibly formative and afforded so many opportunities for musical growth. After graduating in May 2023 from Georgia State, I began doctoral study in Choral Conducting at the University of Georgia. During that time, I was also serving as Music Director at Oconee Street United Methodist Church, a wonderfully inclusive congregation in downtown Athens. The skills and repertoire I learned at my assistantship here at Central served me well as I began this new leadership role, and I'm certainly thankful for the time I had serving in that congregation.

However, I couldn't be happier to be back serving as your Director of Music & Worship Arts! The music ministry here is truly special - filled with wonderful people who are talented, kind, and collaborative. If you're lucky enough to have a friend you might not see very often, but always can "pick up where you left off," you may understand how I was feeling as I walked into the choir room on the evening of my first rehearsal with the Chancel Choir. I was greeted by smiling, friendly faces ready to make music together.

The choir will begin a summer break after Pentecost Sunday, May 19, at which point we will welcome many guest musicians to our Sunday worship services. Vocalists and instrumentalists both from our congregation and the larger Atlanta community

will offer anthems and special music during June, July, and August.

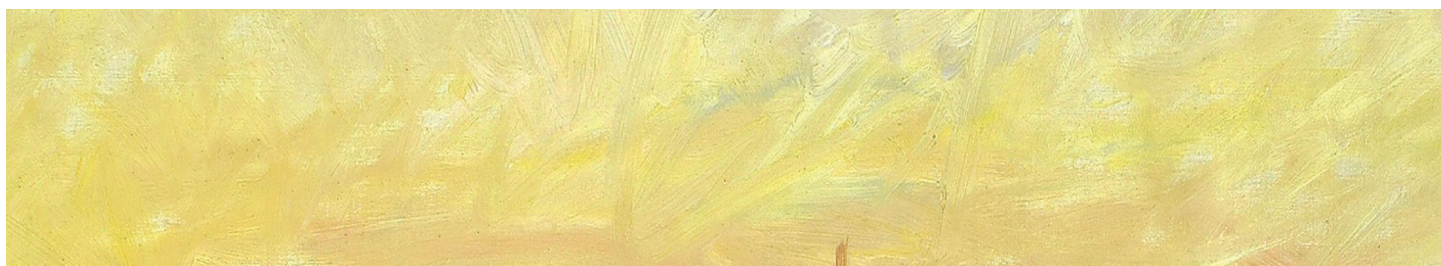
During this time, Mason and I will be working to plan anthems and special musical events for next year. We hope to include some special extended musical programs in December, concerts and events throughout the year, and collaborative offerings with musicians from several Presbyterian congregations.

Of course, I'm going to take this opportunity to invite you to join the choir when we resume at the end of August. We'll begin with a two-day choir camp retreat planned for the weekend of August 16 to 17, with rehearsals and fellowship both here at the church and at Columbia Theological Seminary. We'll resume our regular Wednesday night rehearsals from 7 to 9 p.m. on August 21 and our first Sunday in worship will be August 25. We'd love for you to join and become part of the choir family!

As you've probably already gathered, the theme of our summer issue of CENTRAL is "Leaning Into The Light." It's my prayer this summer that a slower pace and time to "dream about what's up next" will allow for a relaxed reassurance that God is near and is in every aspect of our community at Central Presbyterian.

*Faithfully,*

Thom









# Belonging to God

## Sharing our Blessings



As we enter summer, longtime members Norm and Kathy Kohn reflect on their time at Central and what the church means to them

BY KATHY KOHN

**T**his story begins more than 100 years ago with a young couple and their little son who lived at 275 Washington St. Neighbors invited the little boy to go with them to Sunday School at Central Church. He wanted his Mommy and Daddy to go with him, which they did, and thus my family's life at Central got its start. Those were my grandparents and the little boy, my father.

They joined and served this church, my father married, and I was born into what literally became my second family and home. My earliest memory at Central is of Miss Belle Simpson, a spinster lady who wore a long, brown print dress which touched her sturdy lace-up shoes. She taught me in Sunday School when I was about three or four, greeting me each week with a warm hug. There followed a series of wonderful and dedicated men and women who taught me in the changing methods of their day.

I learned hymns, memorized scripture, heard stories of the Bible, and learned that we give to help

others when we are at church. Miss Belle had a glass milk bottle, and we dropped our pennies into that to "help the poor children." Another special container was used to receive coins to help our missionary who was far, far away across the world. As I grew older, I was proud to have my own pledge envelopes into which I would place a dime each Sunday. Of course, as another huge part of my spiritual growth, I have been blessed to hear the Word preached by all of those gifted pastors from Dr. Stuart Oglesby to Rev. Shannon Kershner today.

Through the years, this church family has encouraged me to lead in such ways as heading the Women of the Church, teaching Sunday school, serving as a deacon and elder, chairing a council; and just after Norm and I were married 66 years ago here at Central, by being advisors for the junior high fellowship. ("Little" Charlie Richards and Linda McCord can tell you more about that).

Where else but at Central would I have been able to accompany my grandmother as she volunteered





Kathy and Norm Kohn in the sanctuary by the baptismal fount. The base of the baptismal fount was created in 1988 with funds given in memory of Kathy's father, Dr. Wilborn E. Upchurch, that little boy, Kathy mentions, who began this family's journey at Central.





in the Baby Clinic; to have my first paying job as a teen day camp counselor for six weeks in the summers, as we served the children of the neighborhood; to help host those from around the world who were here to mourn the death of MLK, Jr.; to wash feet in the foot clinic; sleep in the night shelter; and for 20 years to be a part of the OAC – a new passion after my retirement.

Thank you, Central family, for always reaching out to others.

In this place I have sung in choirs; participated in drama; eaten countless meals with family and friends and have been surrounded with love and caring in times of deep personal sorrow. I have seen my own boys grow in their faith and have observed the baptism of two of our grandchildren with water from

the font that has my father's name at the base. I have watched in amazement as Central has struggled through tough times and come out again and again as a forward-thinking, stimulating, inclusive, safe and loving place to be for all.

When Norm and I married, we knew that we wanted to give something each month to this church, and we have done so in very lean and in good times. And while thinking back to those first pennies dropping into the milk bottle, we pledge each year during stewardship season, at our age a true act of faith, because we want Central's pulpit to be filled, our wonderful choir to sing, the many missions to continue, and the lights to stay on for my second family in this, my second home.

It is hard to believe it was over a year ago that Central received the long-awaited news of the name of our new Senior Pastor. July will be Shannon's one-year anniversary of being with us in body as well as spirit. She has been with Central in spirit for a long time. In that year, we put forth a successful pledge campaign, reengaged our members, staff, and community, and welcomed new members to the church. It will only continue to grow from here. Not long after Shannon joined us, we were blessed to call Kate who has also been a wonderful addition to our leadership with a heart for missions.

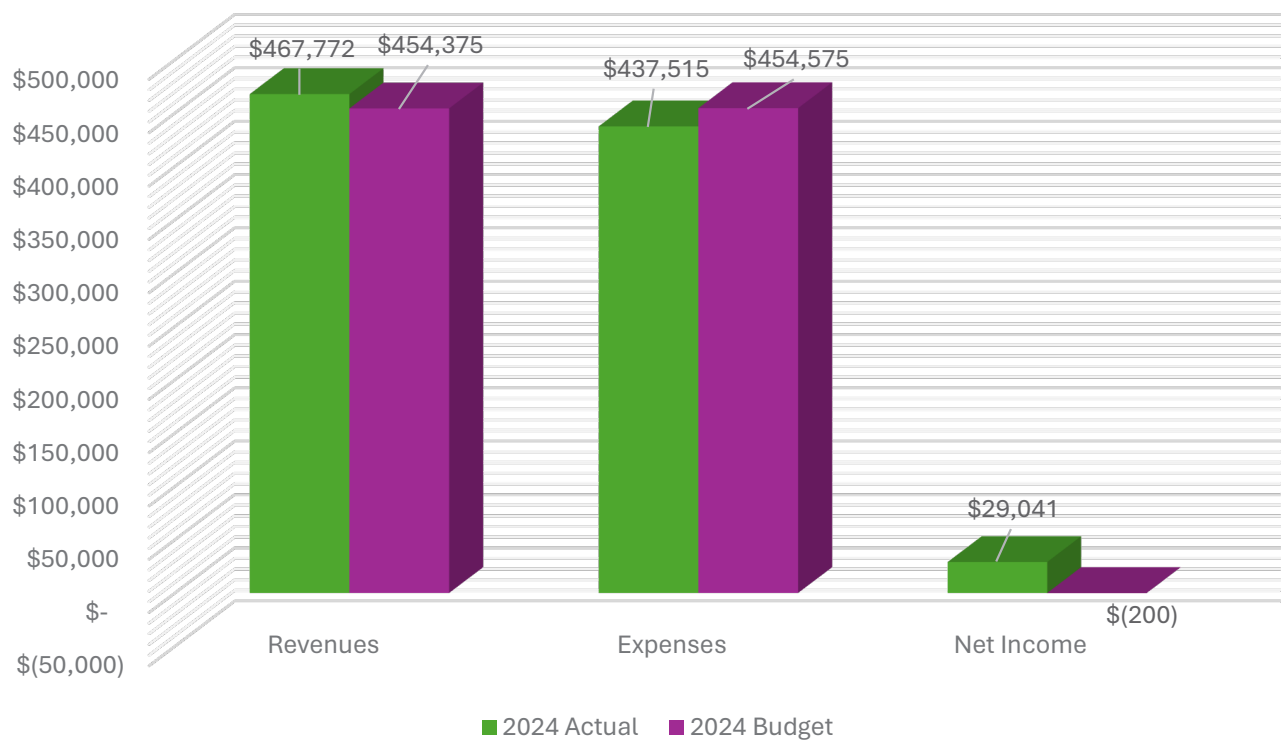
Then, in October, Melissa joined the Central staff to handle all things administrative. She hit the ground running during the legislative season and has never looked back. Josh joined the audio/visual team, working with Mark Wallace, Patrick, and Dean to bring our worship sound to a new level. Watching Central take on renewed energy and purpose is a blessing.

The first quarter of 2024 is moving along steadily with our numbers in terms of both revenues and expenses staying close to budget, with our overall income being better than budgeted for this point in the year. Thanks to many of our members fulfilling their pledges early in the year, we are able to invest those funds wisely to increase the impact of those gifts, allowing for even more opportunities for Central.

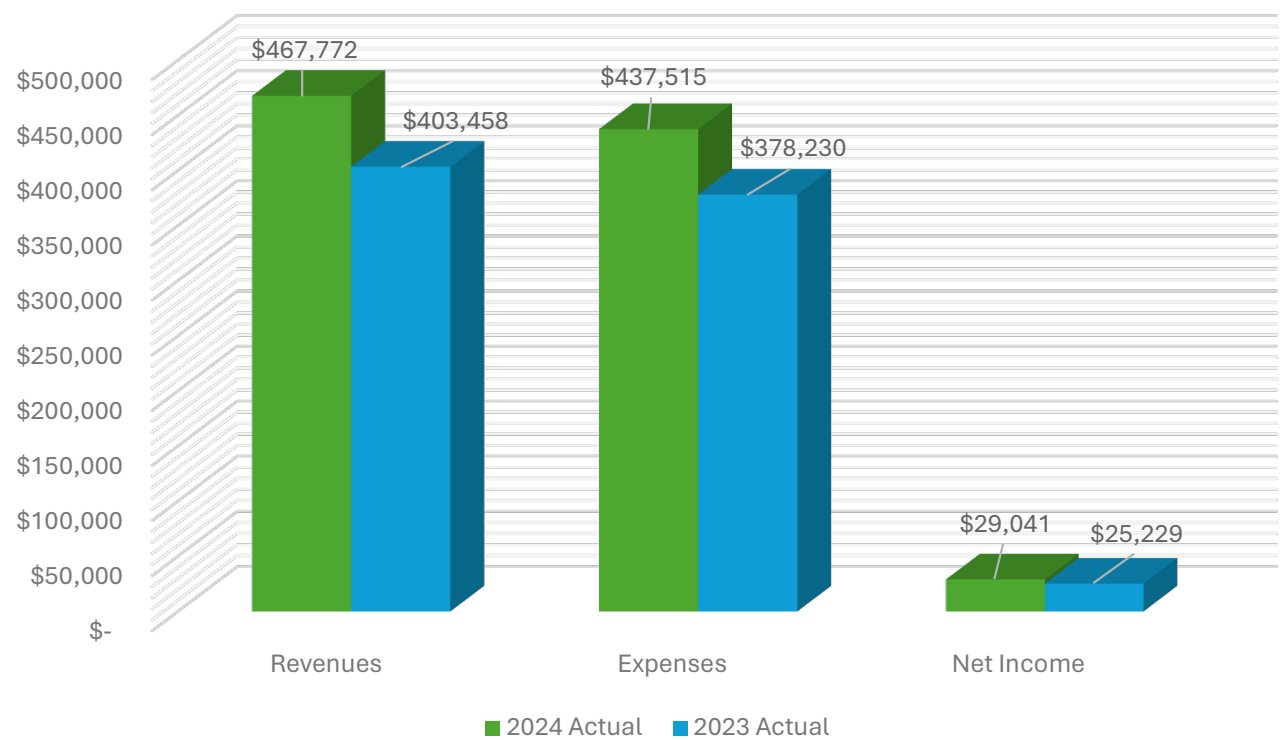
Thank you, Centralites, from our stewardship and finance teams for continuing to support Central's missions with your whole heart. - **Kristie Johns, Central Business Administrator**



## 2024 1st Quarter Actual vs. 2024 Budget



## 2024 1st Quarter Actual vs. 2023 Actual



# Out of the basement,

# LIGHT

BY KIMBERLY PARKER  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CENTRAL OAC

It's kind of funny! A lot of nonprofit organizations that have been founded by a church are located in the basement of the church. Central Outreach and Advocacy Center is no exception! It was founded as a ministry of Central Presbyterian Church and eventually was moved to the basement of the church. I have visited a number of other nonprofits that are so very similar.

A basement often tends to be associated with dark, dank, musty terminology. It's not very appealing in my humble opinion. I was thinking about that recently and also thinking about our guests. Sometimes our guests themselves are in dark places in their own lives. They may be battling addiction or struggling with mental illness. Many get robbed and beat up. Some have lost their families. A myriad of things may be happening in their lives that creates darkness.

My hope each day is that if our guests are in a dark place when they walk through our doors, they leave carrying some light with them. I often pray in our morning circle, "May we do one thing, even a small thing, that will bring a smile to someone's face or will ease their burden just a little bit." I truly want that for our guests and I do see it happen; not every time, but sometimes!

When it does, it brings light to my life as well.

As our "In Their Shoes" committee was debriefing the event this year, one of the members talked about how much is going on downstairs in the







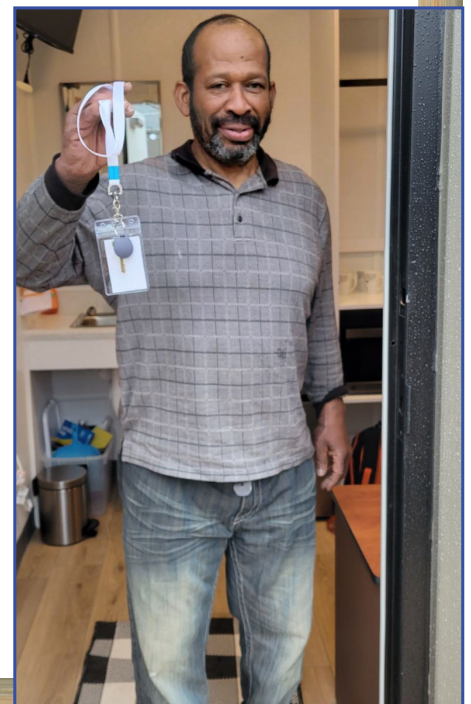
basement; about how much has changed even in one year.

She said, “You all are housing people. Guests are going to Alison’s Boutique and walking out with their heads held high because they look good. Advocacy is back as one of the essential programs. There are a lot of good things happening down in the OAC!”

She’s right! Through our partnership with Intown Cares, guests are moving off of the streets and into a place of their

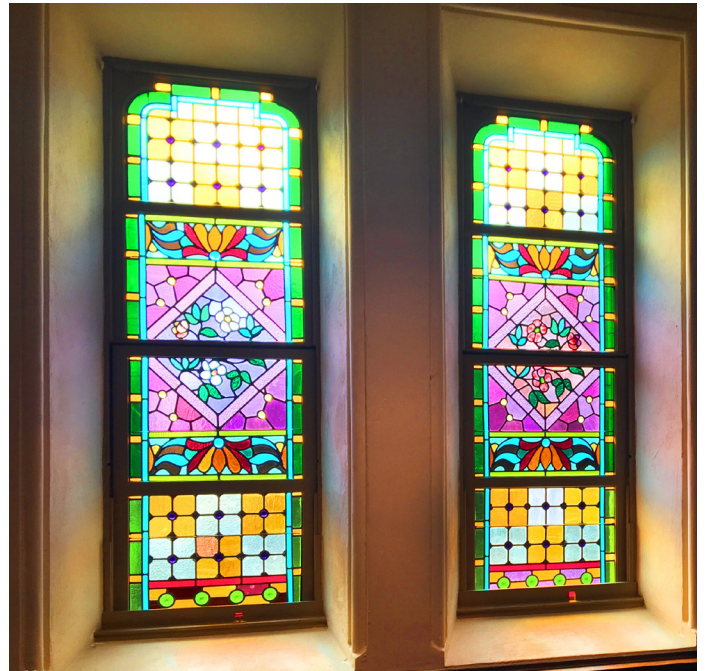
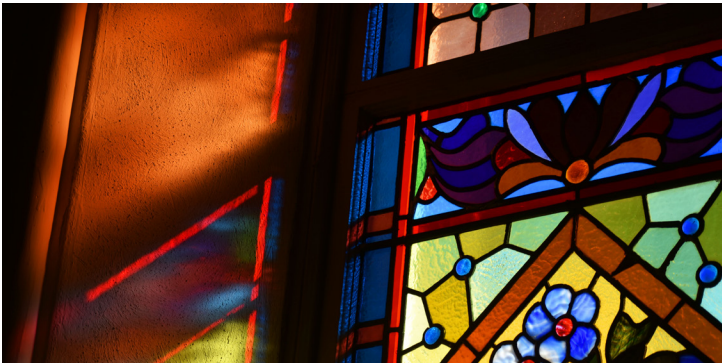
own. People walk into Alison’s Boutique with nothing but the clothes on their backs and leave with a couple of outfits to go to an interview or begin a new job. They look good. They feel good. Through advocacy, we are trying to be a voice for our guests who often are not heard, even if they try to speak.

I believe we are helping people move from darkness to light in the basement of Central Presbyterian Church and I am grateful to be a part of it all!





# from the clerk



BY JANET ABERCROMBIE

Every cat I've owned shares one common trait. It doesn't matter what pillows, blankets, or beds I provide for them to nap on. They will always opt for the same thing—the sunbeam peeking through the window. Every. Single. Time.

How can an animal, who is presumably unaware of Biblical metaphors, just...know to lean into the light? Shoes and laundry can be strewn everywhere. And maybe a vase got knocked over, while a pot boils over on the stove. Chaos may reign. But as long as they can find that sliver of warmth, all is right with the world.

Arcollab, the firm who is evaluating Central's space, presented some of their findings at the most recent Session meeting. As they went through, slide by slide, we saw a lot of dark corners, and a lot of nooks and crannies, basement rooms and attic spaces I, for one, never knew existed. Arcollab has meticulously documented every aspect of

our physical campus, utilizing state-of-the-art technology to capture textures and 360-degree views of each area.

In the same presentation where we learned about HVAC and drainage systems, we also saw our beautiful

sanctuary through the lens of an impartial third party. Light shone through the stained glass windows and, even on a computer screen, it was instantly recognizable and innately familiar.

Each Sunday, from the choir loft, I find myself admiring those rainbow-tinted sunbeams throughout our sanctuary. Leaning into that light both renews and refreshes me.





All are invited to enjoy fellowship with Central members at the annual Labor Day retreat. Our theme for this year, 'In Times Like These,' reflects our conversations of lament, finding strength, and is a call to action. We will be lead by The Rev. Dr. Kimberly Wagner, who serves as the Assistant Professor of Preaching at Princeton Theological Seminary, and is a long-time friend of Central.

Registration costs include housing, program, Saturday lunch and evening meal and Sunday evening meal as well as housing in a traditional Montreat lodge.

This year, we are trying something new and optimizing capacity to reduce expenses. Lodges available for adults and families will be Reynolds and Winnsborough. We will not have Glen Rock Inn or Apartments. The cost cap for

families will be \$415.

Also new this year, we will offer an "a la carte" Premium Option. There will be no cost cap available for this category. We have provided for a non-subsidized lodging category by reserving 15 rooms at William Black Lodge (located behind Assembly Inn). There is a maximum two adults per room at William Black Lodge. If you select this option, please contact Vanessa Hunter to confirm details.

Registration fee waivers are available. To learn more, ask questions, or request a waiver, please contact Vanessa Hunter at [veegabriele@gmail.com](mailto:veegabriele@gmail.com). You may sign up via Realm or the QR code, right.



## In times like these

*Central Presbyterian Church All Church Retreat 2024*



-We are planning the dancing Beth Gunn at Blueberry Grove for Sunday evening.

-We will most likely do a variety show on Saturday night, as well as the fire and smores. Also have Sunday afternoon free time options as in previous years.

## Meet Our Speaker

The Rev. Dr. Kimberly Wagner serves as the Assistant Professor of Preaching at Princeton Theological Seminary. Though she has served among the Lutherans and was educated among United Methodists, Dr. Wagner is ordained as a Minister of Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Her current writing and work focus on preaching and ministry in the midst and wake of trauma, particularly thinking about collective trauma, the role of the preacher, and the resources of our scriptures and faith to respond to these moments.







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