



The Spire

December 2021

Pastor's Page

Your Session has begun the discernment process, seeking to discover God's will for our future. Under the direction of the Presbyterian Foundation's "Project Regeneration", led by Rev. Joseph Moore, at no cost to our congregation, the Session is first reading Rev. Joan Gray's book, "Sailboat Church: Helping Your Church Rethink Its Mission and Practice." We invite you to get the book and read it along with us. The session will engage a practice of 40 days of discernment, described in the last section of "Sailboat Church." Our goal will be to listen to the Spirit. Part of that process is taking time every day to pray, meditate, reflect on scripture and ask for guidance. Joseph will meet with our Session to launch that 40 discernment process in January. Included in Project Regeneration is an analysis of our church, from budget and giving to membership and demographics. The two aspects of Project Regeneration are both important. The analysis will show the facts and trend lines, but those data alone do not constitute discernment. Importantly, the Session, elected by the congregation to provide leadership to our church will engage that process of discernment in order to listen to the Spirit. Then, collectively, which is the way we Reformed Christians understand that we best hear the Spirit, Session will seek a consensus. Please pray for our session members throughout this process.

As I was reflecting on what this whole process may mean for Central Presbyterian Church, I remembered a passage from Dietrich Bonhoeffer's little book "Life Together." You may know that Bonhoeffer was a German Lutheran pastor, theologian, anti-Nazi dissident, and key founding member of the Confessing Church. When the Lutheran church was co-opted by the Nazi's, Bonhoeffer led an underground seminary in Finkenwalde for training Confessing Church pastors. In his book "Life Together," Bonhoeffer reflects on the nature of the Christian Community from his experience in that underground seminary. He knows that life together is challenging. We all have different perspectives, different histories, and different hopes and dreams for what we could or should be. And those hopes and dreams are what he focuses on as he gives a warning about the very things that can undermine a Christian Community. He calls them "wish dreams."

"Innumerable times a whole Christian community has broken down because it has sprung from a wish dream. The serious Christian, set down for the first time in a Christian community, is likely to bring with him a very definite idea of what Christian life together should be and try to realize it. But God's grace speedily shatters such dreams. ...By sheer grace, God will not permit us to live even for a brief period in a dream world. ...Every human wish dream that is injected into the Christian community is a hindrance to genuine community and must be banished if genuine community is to survive. He who loves his dream of a community more than the Christian community itself becomes a destroyer of the latter, even though his personal intentions may be ever so honest and earnest and sacrificial. ...When the morning mists of dreams vanish, then dawns the bright day of Christian fellowship."

Life Together trans. John Doberstein, (New York: HarperCollins, 1954), 26-29.

Those words need to be read and re-read, in my opinion. This will be the challenge for our Session and all of us: to lay down our own personal “wish dreams” for our congregation, and seek to listen to the Spirit. We believe that we will be led to discern God’s will, insofar as we can place our own personal wishes on the table as no better or worse than anyone else’s different personal wishes. We will listen to each other with openness and humility, and then watch expectantly for what God will do.

Joseph Moore has led numerous congregations through this process. He told us that it is remarkable, time after time, to see a consensus emerge as we, together, seek to discern God’s future for us. As we take this “adventure,” which is how Sailboat Church describes the church’s life, may God bless us.



Deacon's Corner - November marks the season when we start thinking about all we have to give thanks. We need to remember that there is so much for which we should be grateful, such as the family gathering for a meal or spending time with good friends. As deacons we think about our church family and are so thankful for all you do for the church and each other. You should be receiving a card or note from your deacon in the coming weeks introducing themselves. Please be sure to let the deacons know if you have any needs.

It also is that time of year that we gather goodies for our student members who are busy studying for finals. Care packages will be sent to each helping them through long days studying and testing. If you know of a Central college student please advise any deacon or the church office so we can be sure to include all.

Sadly, again this year we do not feel like it is safe enough to gather for Thanksgiving dinner at the church. But as the month continues and the holiday comes nearer, please remember to be thankful and take a moment to reflect on not only the big things but the small as well.

Happy Thanksgiving and Blessings to you all!

Jo Hardy
Central Deacons

Flower List for December

Dec 5 - Betty McSwain

Dec 12 - Karen Williams

Dec 19 - Mike & Janis McClure

Dec 26 - Suzanne Bethell

We now have the 2022 Flower calendar up outside the Fellowship Hall; we have a lot of empty dates to fill.

Online worship videos

We will begin to use our new camera to record he Sunday services, now that we are worshiping in person again. This means that the services will be available to watch online after the Sunday service and not before.

Kathya....

Please keep Kathya, her family and her country in your prayers.

Central's Meal Share



Remember: if a meal is needed for a church member, contact Linda Riley at lriley@cox.net. If you are unable to reach Linda, you can call Debbie at the church office.

. Sweet House Help Needed

The programs at the Sweet House include meals on Friday and Saturday evenings, every other week. is needed in meal preparation, set up (served buffet style) and clean up. you could help with any of those tasks on any schedule that suits you, please let us know. This is an opportunity for our congregation to be directly involved, to meet some of the participants, leaders and parents, and to show love in a practical way. Debbie in the church office know if you can help.

New COVID Masking Guidelines

The Worship Committee has revised our guidelines for mask wearing in church.

We will continue to wear masks as we enter and leave the building.

After taking your seat, if you are at least three feet from others, not in your bubble, you may remove your mask during the service. If you would feel more comfortable keeping it on, you are welcome to.

When we have the Lord's Supper, sealed containers of bread and juice will be available to be picked up on the way in, and may be consumed during worship, or taken out to be received later.

Hospitalization

	Day of Week	Week of 12/5	Week of 12/12	Week of 12/19	Week of 12/26	
Mercy	Monday	Margaret Sparkman	John Spain	Margaret Sparkman	John Hale	
	Tuesday	John Spain	Margaret Sparkman	Debi Wilkinson	Debi Wilkinson	
	Wednesday	Gary Simpson	Ruthie McRae	Suzanne Bethell	Margaret Sparkman	
	Thursday	Ruthie McRae	Gary Simpson	Cissy Rose	Suzanne Bethell	
	Friday	Cissy Rose	Sandy Barron	John Spain	Cissy Rose	

	Day of Week	Week of 12/5	Week of 12/12	Week of 12/19	Week of 12/26	
Baptist	Monday	Suzanne Bethell	Debi Wilkinson	Gary Simpson	John Spain	
	Tuesday	Sandy Barron	Cissy Rose	Ruthie McRae	Gary Simpson	
	Wednesday	Mike McClure	Sandy Barron	John Hale	Ruthie McRae	
	Thursday	John Hale	Mike McClure	Sandy Barron	Mike McClure	
	Friday	Debi Wilkinson	John Hale	Mike McClure	Sandy Barron	

Donations for New Vision Home

Children of all ages are in need of hats and gloves and socks and underwear. We are asking for donations of these items for the children of the New Vision Home. The last day for donations to be made is December 12th. You may leave your donated items in the clothes closet where the Presbyterian Women mission items are collected. Thank you.

Officers of Central Presbyterian Church After Forthcoming Installation

Session

Class of 2022	Class of 2023	Class of 2024
Sandy Barron	Debi Wilkinson	Cissy Rose
Mike McClure	Margaret Sparkman	John Spain
John Hale	Suzanne Bethell	Ruthie McRae

Deacons

Class of 2022	Class of 2023	Class of 2024
Renda Cook	Brian Pokornik	Martin Hyatt
Jo Hardy	Betty McSwain	Suzanne Spain
Linda Riley	Larry Hall	Jackie Franklin
Roberta Elliot		Robert MacAfee

Trustees

Class of 2022	Class of 2023	Class of 2024
Ken Cowan	Carl Rose	Stanhope Wilkinson

December Birthdays



Sydney Oliver	12/08
James Olienyk	12/10
Sheryl Ghan	12/11
Preston Evans	12/12
Tom Parker	12/12
Roberta Holder	12/17
Bruce Rice	12/19
Seth Shull	12/19
Clifford Lyon	12/22
Margaret Sparkman	12/22
Rodney Naucke	12/27
John Hale	12/31
Levi Rockford	12/31
John Spain	12/31

Stewardship Sunday, December 26

Please join us in dedicating our stewardship commitments on Sunday, December 26.

The Stewardship Committee



Care Committee

Every 3rd Tuesday of the month, a group of caring individuals meet at Sweet Bay at 12:00 over lunch, we discuss visiting the shut-ins of our church. We team up and then go to visit those who aren't able to come to church. Please join this important mission of our church.

Help Wanted

We need to build a crew of people who can operate the camera to film the worship service. It's all done by a remote control. If you can operate your TV remote, you can operate this camera. It's totally simple! The remote has a number pad, like your TV. Each number moves the camera to a different location: the pulpit, the choir area, the lecture, etc. So if you are willing to be on the team that can operate the camera, please let us know.

Central Presbyterian Church- Fort Smith, AR
Minutes of Stated Session Meeting Oct. 19, 2021.

The regular meeting of the session was called to order at 6:10 pm by Pastor Steven. The devotional was given by Debi Wilkinson.

Present

Pastor Kim, Pastor Steven, Margaret Sparkman, Suzanne Bethell, Sandra Barron, Debi Wilkinson, Cissy Rose, John Hale, Mike McClure, Ruthie McRae. John Spain was excused.

The docket and minutes were approved, and a quorum was declared.

Clerk Report

First Presbyterian Church is requesting a letter be submitted to receive money from the Moody account for building maintenance. Pastor Steven will send that request as he did last year.

Joseph Moore presented an explanation of the Project Regeneration by Zoom. The Sailboat Church will be provided for us to read. We must commit to 3 in person meetings which will include 40 days of prayer during the process. We will start in November.

Pastor Report

A summary of the pastor's activities was included with session packet.

Committee Reports Building & Grounds: Water faucet in flower bed was found on again. May get a lock to keep transits from using the water. Some clean-up on landscaping needs to be done around the New Vision Home. A cost will be requested from our lawn company.

Christian Education: Cissy explained a new chart designed by Jo Hardy which details the different activities in and outside of church our members are involved with. A motion was passed to accept Feed My Sheep as our mission design.

Outreach: Frozen Food Ministry is almost on board.

Worship: The choir will start back this Sunday.

Personnel, Stewardship, and Visionary: No report

New Business

Extending elders terms by 2 months was approved. Mike will have a motion come from Personnel next month about approving the pastor's terms of call for 2022. Ruthie made a motion to approve Pastor Steven's involvement in the 1001 New Worshipping Communities project and was passed. John Hale made a motion to approve Pastor Steven's application of a 1001 NWC seed grant to pay for coaching and program supplies and was passed. Next month's devotional will be given by Margaret Sparkman. The meeting was adjourned with prayer by Pastor Steven Kurtz at 8pm. Nov. 16 is our next meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret Sparkman,
Clerk of Session

FLOWER CALENDARS

The Flower Calendar (or both this year and next) have been returned to the bulletin board, across from the choir room on the east side of the building. Please help fill in the empty dates.

FOOD CART

While we no longer enjoy the sights and sounds of the food cart going down the center aisle, we still need to bring non-perishable food items every Sunday. The Clearinghouse has a need for food that is greater than ever.