



CENTRAL LIFE

Central Presbyterian Church
December 16, 2020

One of the things I have not had much of during these past nine months has been time to reflect and wonder. Most of this has to do with my steep learning curve of the technology involved in living in this interesting time. Frank would have embraced all of this new technology and conquered it quickly, and well. But for me, I have to spend hours learning how to work with it, and then try to teach others to use it for meetings, gatherings, Bible studies, and for just visiting. Yet, I have learned a lot in these 9 months. Not just about technology, but about what is at the core of who we are as Christians, and as a Christian community.

There is a youth group game which illustrates what life is like in the church. The group stands in a circle, and then a ball of yarn is tossed to each person in the circle. As the yarn is tossed, each person holds onto the string and then tosses the ball to another. This continues until everyone has received the ball of yarn once. What is then created is a web. Different members of the group are then invited to tug on the string to see how the whole web moves and shifts. Then, one person is asked to release the string and we see how the whole web droops. Our web of relationships have drooped at times and have been stretched, but we somehow continue to maintain our connections with one another.

We know that worship is important in the Christian faith, but we have had to embrace new ways of gathering to worship the Lord while staying at home. Human contact is vital for our thriving as people. We have had to adapt our gatherings with each other through parking lot events and Zoom Bible studies. These ‘virtual’ contacts have allowed us to not only see each other, but to be with each other, and this helps to renew our relationships. We have had better Session and committee meeting attendance on Zoom because we do not have to drive anywhere; saves us time. We have learned that our families need to be the center of our Christian discipleship. The life of the church is in our relationships with God through Christ, and with one another. Though we have been separated from each other, there has been on-going care throughout our congregation. Many of you have been calling and checking in on people, dropping off meals, and writing cards and notes. I appreciate everyone’s efforts in remaining connected to one another.

This Christmas will be quite different for all of us. There are more state mandates and requests to remain at home and not to mix with others during the holidays. We put up our Christmas trees and our decorations. We send cards and gifts to family and friends because we desire to continue to have those personal connections that are so crucial for us. I know that I am looking forward to those days after this virus is under control too, but for now, this Christmas is going to be different. Or is it? Maybe we are being invited into the very heart of Christmas. We still celebrate the birth of Christ into our world. We still listen and hear the angels sing and announce the Good news of a baby born in Bethlehem. Maybe we need to hear those words from the Grinch—when he realizes that having taken away all the decorations and presents and lights and trees, that in fact, “Christmas perhaps means a little bit more.”

Yes, Christmas is more. It is about how God chooses to show up and move into our neighborhoods to live among us. That God dares to enter our lives and be with us, even in difficult, uncertain times of life. That God loves each of us and all of creation so much that He would give us the ultimate gift of Life and Love through his son, Jesus Christ.

May this Christmas be a time for us all to pause and realize that though Christmas IS different this year, we are still to celebrate the coming of Christ into our world, to come and bow down before the Lord, and to offer what we have.

Merry Christmas to you, and Happy New Year!

Ann Aichinger



Congregational Joys and Concerns...

At Home: Bob and Becky Ingram, Mary Kay English, Bob Stuart, Bessie Kitts, Jean Bane, Allen Vance, and Bill English.

At Brookdale Bristol: Carol Duhaime and Jean Thomason for rehab and care

At Dominion Senior Care: Hugh and Linda Wise

At Elmcroft: Patsy Wampler, Jackie Phillips

Jim Butcher who had knee surgery this last week;

Gale Thompson got a good report from his six month follow-up;

Paige Thompson's mother as she is dealing with health concerns;

Jean Thomason as she continues to deal with her health concerns;

Bill English is improving and is now home;

Mary Kay English as she continues to struggle with the injury to her back;

Candy Ellis was readmitted to the hospital and is improving slowly;

Becky Ingram as she is dealing with health issues;

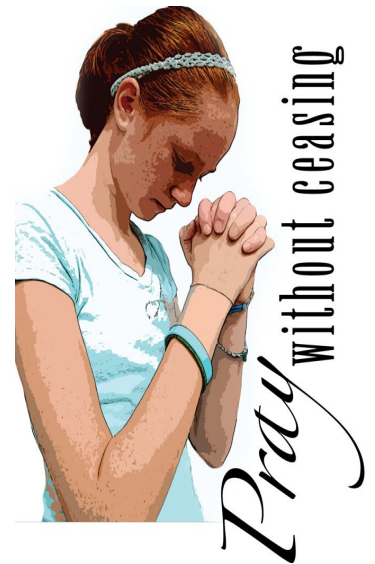
Bob Ingram as he is dealing with pneumonia and other health concerns;

Joy Briggs' husband, Guy, is continuing to deal with health concerns;

Joy Briggs, as she deals with Guy and all that is involved with his care while continuing her portion of work here at Central;

Don Miller, as he continues to deal with health concerns;

Josh and Brie Kite's 13 year old niece, Kiera, is having some heart conditions.



Memorials...



To the Backpack Fund in Memory of Frank Sikora, given by Jean Thomason and Daphne McCord.

To the Backpack Fund in Honor of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Binder, given by Archer Parsons.

To the Backpack Fund in Honor of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Norris, given by Archer Parsons.

To the Backpack Fund in Honor of Mrs. Carol Griffith, given by Archer Parsons.

To the General Fund, in Memory of Casey McComish, given by Jean Thomason, George and Beth Parks, Nancy Kiser, Robert W. Smith, and Ralph and Terri Davis.

To the General Fund in Honor of Casey McComish, given by Archer Parsons, Patricia Harenberg, and Joy Briggs.

To the Memorial Fund in Memory of Casey McComish, given by Boone's Creek Dentistry.

To the Service Fund in Memory of Casey McComish, given by Bob and Becky Ingram.

To the Service Fund in Memory of Richard Lee (cousin of Jim White), given by Bob and Becky Ingram.

Continue in Prayer for renewed health and strength for...

John and Linda Barker and their family, Daphne McCord, Bobby Davis, Alice Owenby, Coleen Wheeler, Randy Broyles, Jim Matson, and Heather Kiser.





God is calling us to continue to serve in this community, and to be a shining light on this hill. Together we can make a difference, and God is able to use our gifts to further hope, mercy, justice, and love.

Thank you to everyone who has made a commitment to financially support the work of Central Presbyterian Church in 2021. We are greatly appreciative of everyone's gifts. We also know that many of our church family are struggling with financial uncertainties and difficulties due to the pandemic, with the economic downturn, and the unknown of what 2021 holds. We hope that 2021 will be a better year for everyone, but it means that we must all seek to care for one another and continue to maintain our church family connections. Part of how we do this is to continue our financial support to the work of the church.

Central continues to support agencies and organizations that care for the least among us. These include, but are not limited to:

- * The Session continues to provide valuable insight, leadership, and direction.
- * The backpack program continues to fill bags for hungry children.
- * Our staff members continue to keep the communications going in the church family.
- * Pastor Ann, with Robert Campbelle and Ed Updyke, record worship and make those available online.
- * Joy Briggs is providing music for the recorded worship services.
- * Josie Russell is connecting weekly with our youth and plans events, even online, for them to participate in together.
- * Lynn Gilbert and Mary Moffatt continue to keep the office and finances in order.
- * Trish James continues to work on providing refreshments for our parking lot gatherings.
- * Barbara Mann and Thais Sikora, although they are "retired" from the Parish Nurse program, continue to keep in touch with, and care for those who are ill, who are coming home from the hospital, who are in care facilities, as well as assisting our church members to make good decisions about medical care.
- * Becky Widner and the Apple staff have been able to continue with the Apple Academy for 62 preschoolers and families.
- * We have developed new ways to stay connected with each through the Wednesday evening Bible studies, *RightNow* Media, the Presbyterian Women monthly gatherings, and much more.

To-date, we have received 74 commitment cards for a total of \$235,169 towards the 2021 Stewardship Campaign. We have had several new pledges, and 27 of those have met, or exceeded, the \$20 a month challenge. However, at this time, we are about \$35,000 below last year's giving, and the Session will be working on adjusting committee budgets to reflect this decrease in pledged support.

If you are still planning to make a financial commitment, and can make an end-of-the year gift, we ask that you please do so as soon as possible. Mary Moffatt, our Finance Director is available to answer any questions about your giving statement and to receive your gift. If you should have any questions about the work of the church, please contact Ann Aichinger or any of the Elders.

Even in a very strange year, the work and ministry of Central continues. We are hoping to be able to resume some of our favorite events and activities as soon as the virus has gotten under control. But until that time, we will continue to seek to work together as a church, sharing the Good News of Jesus in our community, and in our world through our commitments and our service.





The Session met on Tuesday, December 14 for their monthly stated meeting.

- * Each person was asked to share what he or she is watching and waiting for in this Christmas season.
- * Pastor Ann shared how she has been involved in the life of the church, community and Abingdon Presbytery. She reminded everyone about the *Service of Lessons and Carols* sponsored by Abingdon Presbytery on Sunday, December 20 at 4 p.m. by Zoom. Central will be one of the participating churches.
- * Each committee chair was invited to share what has been going on in their work. The main business of the meeting was in looking at the 2020 actual giving, and then at the 2021 proposed budget in light of the 2021 pledges received. Each Committee is asked to revisit their budget and return to the 2020 budget numbers or to find other areas to trim.
- * The Session approved the pastor's housing resolution.
- * A gift from the Session, honoring Ann Aichinger, will be given to the charity of Ann's choosing.
- * There are some tools from the **Carpenter's for Christ** trailer that are for sale in the Session room. These include a circular saw, a table saw, and other items. If you are interested, please speak with David White about what is available, and for pricing information.
- * John Barker will be attending the January meeting of Abingdon Presbytery on January 14, 2021 by Zoom. The next Session meeting will be on Tuesday, January 19, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. by Zoom.

Reminder to all donors:

The general rule is that a contribution is effective when delivered. A check deposited in the church offering in January of 2021 cannot be deducted in 2020, even if it is backdated to 2020. One exception - checks that are mailed and postmarked in 2020 are deductible in 2020, even if they are not received until 2021. We hope that this will be helpful to you.

Do not to file your federal income tax return before you have received your contribution summary from the church. Donors may not be able to deduct individual contributions of \$250 or more if they file a tax return before receiving a qualified contribution receipt from their church.

Extending Christmas Greetings in the Church Family

Because we cannot connect in person this Advent season, we are asking that our Church friends and family create a short video to be combined with others to share the Advent spirit and to send Christmas greetings to each other. If you would like to participate, please create a **15-30 second** video of your family sharing any family updates or season's greetings. Please email this video to Pastor Ann Aichinger at annaichinger@gmail.com and we will combine all of the videos for a larger church posting for all to enjoy!

In order to have all videos compiled by December 27th, please send your video to Pastor Ann no later than **Wednesday, December 23rd**. **Remember to:**

- * Record your family sharing any family news or Christmas greetings, and feel free to be creative!
- * Record in landscape mode (phone turned sideways)
- * 15-30 Seconds
- * Email to Pastor Ann by Wednesday, December 23rd at annaichinger@gmail.com



Reminders...



Central Life

Christmas Eve Communion and Candlelight Service

December 24th at 7:00 p.m.

This worship service will be held in the church parking lot. You will be invited to park your car and crack open the window so we can all worship together. This will be a chance to sing the carols and hear the story. We will also be celebrating the Lord's Supper and having a Candlelight service at the end.

You are invited to begin arriving at 6:40 p.m. and the service will begin promptly at 7:00 p.m. As you come to the church, enter the parking lot and you will be directed to park facing the building. There will be a table with candles (real and electric) as well as a carols sheet and your communion kit. Please designate someone from your car to come to get your items, or indicate by flashing your lights for a greeter to come and bring your items to your car. This service will be approximately 30-40 minutes. After the service, you can put all of your worship items in the bag provided and return them to the greeters.

We do ask that we maintain physical distance from one another, and to wear a mask or face covering if you prefer to be outside of your car.

If you would be willing to be a greeter for this service, please contact Ann Aichinger.

Shining the Light of Christ in the World

You are invited to shine the light of *Christ in the World* on Christmas Eve night. Churches in the Bristol area have been invited to join in this time of fellowship. . If you want to do it at a different time, that is fine. Feel free to pass this on to friends and family around the nation and world.

At 8:30 p.m., your household is to go outside and with a lit candle, sing a verse of Silent Night and a verse of Joy to the World. Prior to this, you are encouraged to invite your neighbors to join them in this. We can shine the light of Christ in our neighborhood and in the world together.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact Ann Aichinger

Never has there been a more pressing need for churches to reaffirm the meaning of Advent and Christmas. Although the pandemic has been limiting what we can "do", the good news is that we don't have to do it alone.

Several churches in Abingdon Presbytery have come together and prepared for a service of "**Lessons and Carols.**" We would like to invite all in the Presbytery to this online celebration via Zoom. The joy will be to gather to anticipate God's holy gift of Jesus as the scriptures are read, Carols are sung, and plays presented.

When: Sunday, December 20th, at 4:00 pm

Zoom link: [Service of Lessons and Carols](#) or phone: 1-929 205 6099

Meeting ID: 977 920 640



Please DO invite your friends. Encourage them to be prepared with a candle and matches for we will end our time together singing "Silent Night" and "Joy to the World!" Let us open our hearts to be willing, and surprised, by how He comes to us this Christmas.





“In Jesus, we receive the perfect gift of God being with us. Even when we are apart, we are together in spirit, in faith, and in mission.

By supporting the Christmas Joy Offering, you honor God’s gift of Jesus Christ by providing assistance to current and retired church workers in their time of need, and developing our future leaders at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.”

50% of your gifts to Christmas Joy provide assistance for current and retired church workers and their families with critical financial need and 50% of your gifts make it possible for students to learn and grow in faith at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.

To contribute to Christmas Joy, please visit pcusa.org/christmas_joy or call 800-728-7228, x5047, to learn more about assisting our leaders—past, present, and future. You can also visit presbyteriangifts.org for the Presbyterian Giving Catalog.

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Upcoming Sermons...

December 20:	Advent: Sing with Joy	Luke 1:26-38
December 24:	The Christmas story	Luke 2:1-20
December 27:	Christmas Revealed	Luke 2:22-40
January 3:	Christmas Observed (Epiphany)	Matt 2:1-12



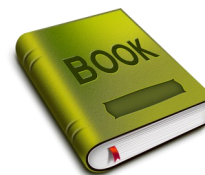
Miniature Nativities

There are miniature French nativities (varying prices for each set) available now in the Church office. The Blue Folk Nativity (pictured), Modern Nativity, and Classic Nativity are \$25 each, and the Vibrant Nativity is \$30.

Central Presbyterian Church Facemasks

We will be offering CPC Face Masks for sale in the church office. The cost is \$5 for each face mask. The masks will be blue with a white logo. Get them for yourself, your friends, and your family members. These will make a great stocking stuffer!

Cleaning out books and need a place to put them? Why not bring them to the Little Library at the top of the Parking lot. This was Peter Morison’s Eagle Scout project and it is well used by people in the neighborhood. All kinds of books are welcome to be shared. And, if you see a book you want to read, feel free to take it and enjoy!





CHRISTMAS JOY
SPECIAL OFFERINGS
CHURCH LEADERS—PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE



Illustrated Ministry LLC



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Bristol, VA 24201-4013
Phone: 276-669-3157
E-mail: office.cpc@bvuv.net
www.CentralPresBristol.org

CENTRAL LIFE

How to Keep in Touch:

www.facebook.com/CPCBristol: You do not have to sign-in or log on. Just click “not now” and the site will pop up. Scroll down to find the latest message.

www.CentralPresBristol.org: Click on “View Sermons” then scroll down to see Pastor Ann’s videos for each day.

Options for giving to the work and ministry of Central Presbyterian:

- * You can give in a check, or cash, in the offering plate, dropped by the office, or mailed to:

Central Presbyterian Church
301 Euclid Avenue
Bristol, VA 24201-4013

- * You can give through your online banking to Central.
- * You can set up an automatic deposit from your account; please talk with the Finance Director on how to do this.
- * You can TEXT to **CentralPres** (no spaces and Capital C and P) to **73256**. You will be directed to make your donation through Realm.
- * You can give one time, or regularly, through your **Realm Connect** profile.



Reminder: Please continue to send in your pledges and financial support for Central Presbyterian. Although the church building may not be fully operational, the work and ministry is still happening.

How to contact us:

Ann Aichinger, Pastor	ann.cpc@bvuv.net
Robert Campbelle, Music Director	robertcampbelle@gmail.com
Joy Smith-Briggs, Organist	gvbjoyb@btes.tv
Josie Russell, Youth & Young Adult Dir.	josieannrussell@gmail.com
Lynn Gilbert, Admin. Asst. Newsletter Editor	office.cpc@bvuv.net
Mary Moffatt, Finance Director	finance.cpc@bvuv.net
Trish James, Food Service Director	tjames1234@charter.net
Becky Widner, Dir. of APPLE Academy	applepreschool@yahoo.com
Barbara Mann, Volunteer Parish Nurse	barbar632002@gmail.com

Office Hours:

The current office hours are 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., Monday-Friday. Please call 276-669-3157 for office hour changes and updates.

