

THE **Central** SENTRY

☪ United Methodist Church

REV. TERESSA M. SIVERS

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PASTOR TERESSA'S NOTES:

37 "Don't judge, and you won't be judged. Don't condemn, and you won't be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. 38 Give, and it will be given to you. A good portion—packed down, firmly shaken, and overflowing—will fall into your lap. The portion you give will determine the portion you receive in return."

~Luke 6:37-38

In the early years of our marriage, Doug and I moved to Baton Rouge in Louisiana. We knew that the Deep South would be a new experience for us, but we had no idea how foreign Louisiana was to our northern ways. Louisiana is different than the rest of the southern states, especially the areas around Baton Rouge and New Orleans. The French and African influences are deep and rich. Cajun and Creole are languages you encounter week to week. Words from Cajun and Creole had made their way into the everyday conversations of all residents of Louisiana. One of these beautiful words—*lagniappe* (lawn-yaup)—has become part of my spiritual and life journey.



Lagniappe means, according to the Cajun who first introduced me to it, “a little something extra.” I had stopped at a shrimper’s truck to buy fresh shrimp he had caught that morning. As he weighed out the pounds I had requested, he reached back into the cooler and threw an extra handful of shrimp on my order. As he did so, he said, “And the *lagniappe*.” I had never heard the term so I questioned what he meant. “It’s the something extra,” he said. “It’s a thank you to you for your business.” *Lagniappe* is a practice of gratitude, giving more than is expected, or even warranted. As I experienced ‘*lagniappe* giving’ in Louisiana, I came to understand that it is an act of joy as well as gratitude and generosity. Many times the *lagniappe* was given even to difficult customers and neighbors. The practice was about the giver and the generosity and gratitude they felt more than it was a thank you to the receiver.

I was delighted when I began studying Luke in seminary a few years later and discovered the *lagniappe* within scripture. “A good portion—packed down, firmly shaken, and overflowing...” In chapter six of Luke, Jesus preaches the Sermon on the Plain, Luke’s version of Matthew’s Sermon on the Mount. Luke takes great care to lift up Jesus’ message of equality and justice-living. Instead of Jesus climbing the mount to deliver the heavenly message, Luke’s Jesus comes down from the mountain where he has been praying and choosing the 12 disciples, to stand on a level place to teach and preach. In this Sermon on the Plain, Jesus lays out in clear terms what Kingdom-living looks like, what it means to live lives of equity and justice. We don’t judge. We don’t condemn. We practice forgiveness. We live *lagniappe*. We don’t just give what is expected—we pack the measuring cup (the weighing scales), we fill it to overflowing so it spills into the lap.

As we all move into September and the busy days of Autumn, it is easy to become too distracted to think of our giving and living. Jesus calls to us from the Gospel of Luke to commit to intentional living; living that accepts,

loves, and gives generously to the world as a sign of our gratitude. Even in the midst of your busy-ness, Jesus asks us to make time (even just a minute or two) to consider what you are grateful for each day—life, family and friends, work, the beautiful Southern Tier region, your church, each breath. And commit to allowing lagniappe living to move from intentional practice to life habit. How can you 'give a little extra' into each day as you encounter family, friends, and strangers? How might God be calling you into lagniappe giving with your church family, sharing time, talents and resources? How might packing down the measure and filling it to overflowing change even the pace of your living each day?

Grace & Peace!

-Pastor T

(Pastor Teresa)

FINANCE UPDATE

After starting the year in great shape, our finances are no longer that way. We had extremely low giving months in May and July, among the lowest giving months ever. As a result, we've had to take money from the Endowment to support all the ministries and programs as Central. We are hoping that giving will pick up in September and through the Fall once vacations are over and we start the program year.

Please try to catch up if you've fallen behind in your commitment.

The generosity of the Central congregation has always been amazing. It's only with the contributions of all of us that we can continue to maintain the excellent programs, ministries and missions of Central.

-Finance Committee

PASTOR PAUL'S NOTES

"Each one of us has a body with many parts, and these parts all have different uses. In the same way, we are many, but in Christ we are all one body. Each one is a part of that body, and each part belongs to all the other parts. We all have different gifts, each of which came because of the grace God gave us." (Romans 12:4-6, NCV)

I would use bits and pieces of scripture when I taught my students in school. This piece (along with 1 Corinthians 12:12-27) was one I used often. As part of my physiology lessons, I would talk about disease and dysfunction of various body systems. Your body is made up of so many parts and each part has a specific job to do. When a certain part of your body begins to fail, your body "knows" and feels that, you get sick, you hurt, you don't sleep well...you get the idea! This prompted many discussions about physiology, but also about scripture!

Anyway, the point I wanted to make is that we are all like various parts of the body. Each part has a specific function, and if that part begins to fail or decides it isn't important, the entire body begins to hurt. Unlike the body, however, we can change and be different "body parts" if we want to! Can you imagine a stomach turning to being a brain?! Maybe at times my stomach is my brain, but that's a different story!!

Do you feel like you are part of a body? Part of a larger functioning system? Do you feel as if you have a function in this larger system? The church can be intimidating at times...it is a large system and difficult to navigate at times!

There are so many "body parts" you can become: Shepherd's Supper help, Clothing Center help, card ministry help, trustees, SPR, children's Sunday school teacher, parish visitors, phone calls, tech booth, delivering materials to our local schools and organizations...You get the idea (I hope!). If you're interested in helping someplace, but aren't sure where, stop by and chat with Pastor Teresa or me. If you have an idea of a "new" body part that needs to be built, we will listen!

God has given each of us gifts to use, may we use those gifts to spread God's love and peace to our world!

Six Week Worship Series Starting September 8

Our world seems to be consumed with division—often typified in the colors red and blue. Rather than stay in our monochromatic silos, the Golden Rule in scripture challenges us to engage in conversation and seek to create whatever common good we can with our relatives, friends, and neighbors who we might consider to be on the “other side” politically and ideologically. As we attempt to come together, the idea is not that we are obliterating either one or trying to change each other, but rather we discover the beauty that can be created when we work together to make the world a better place. The “purple space” is where we cultivate kindness, compassion, humility, respect, and love for one another and for the good of all the world, no matter what.



- **September 8—Kindness. Luke 6:31-36**
- **September 16—Compassion. Isaiah 11:6-9**
- **September 22—Humility. Ephesians 4:1-6**
- **September 29—Respect. 1 Corinthians 12:1-26**
- **October 6—Love. Matthew 22:34-40—World Communion Sunday**

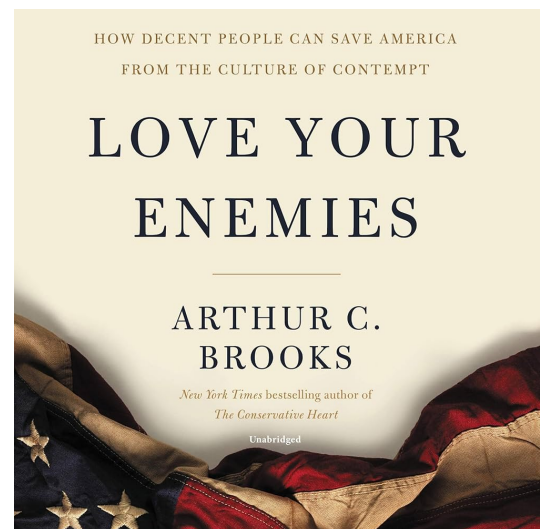
Monday Night Book Group

7:30 pm ZOOM ID: 88466303555 Passcode: 051760

Starting Monday, September 17, the book group will be reading through Arthur C. Brooks’ book, *Love Your Enemies: How Decent People Can Save America from the Culture of Contempt*. This book was recommended to compliment the worship series, Do Unto Others.

Arthur Brooks is a person of faith, although this book is not written specifically for faith communities. He is a Harvard professor, social scientist, and columnist who brings the highest and latest levels of science and philosophy to bear on various topics.

This is what a description of this book says: “Brooks’ prescriptions are unconventional. To bring America together, we shouldn’t try to agree more. There is no need for mushy moderation, because disagreement is the secret to excellence. Civility and tolerance shouldn’t be our goals, because they are hopelessly low standards. And our feelings toward our foes are irrelevant; what matters is how we choose to act.”



Mark your calendars! September 1st is the final 9:30am worship service. We're kicking off the new school year with a community event on 9/7 and a return to two worship services on Sunday, 9/8 along with the return of Adult Faith Formation and Cafe Central. Join us!

CENTRAL’S WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Central Church will return to two worship services on Sunday, September 8th
8:30AM in person
11:30 AM in person and online on Central's YouTube channel

FAITH FORMATION NEWS

We have an exciting community event coming up! Our "Welcome Back to School Bash" will replace our block parties of the past. We will have a great time with games, bounce houses, food, fun and fellowship. We will need lots of volunteers (at least 12) so that everything runs smoothly. Mark your calendars now for September 7th from 12pm-3pm. Due to the weather in Broome County not always cooperating our rain date is scheduled for September 14th.

We're beginning to think about our Halloween and Christmas events. These events sometimes draw as many as 300 people. We've learned it's best to have plenty of volunteers on site to ensure a successful event. Watch for more information and details in the coming weeks.

Our community events depend on the support and help from everyone. There are different opportunities to help including donating candy, handing out candy, standing at a table playing a game, or doing a craft with the kids. If there is a certain area you prefer to be in just let us know. These events are a great way to see all the smiling faces on the kids that live in the local neighborhood and community.

Speaking about the smiles on kids' faces - take a look at the back of the sanctuary. Pastor Paul did an amazing job reorganizing the kids' space to be a bit more functional for the kids we have. The kids are loving it. Thank you Pastor Paul for everything you do. This new space allows the kids to have their own place to learn about God while creating crafts. Another positive about this area is it only requires one adult to lead the kids. As God brings more kids to fill that space we will need more volunteers, but for now we are enjoying the beautiful new space with plenty of room.

If you are interested in volunteering for any event, the kids' program, or if you want to be a part of the Faith Formation Committee please call the church at (607) 754-6060 or reach out to me at (607) 427-3684. As always thank you and God bless.

Faith Formation Coordinator,
Donna Miller-Kross



Adult Sunday School

I am excited to be starting a new Sunday school year! I have missed all our discussion and questions! The first five weeks will be a study from Marcu Borg called "Embracing an Adult Faith" where we will examine the questions: Who was Jesus? Who is God? What is salvation? How do we practice our faith? And How do we live in community? Part of this will be video based with a talk from Marcus Borg followed by our own discussion. This will be a great series!

Retreat

Sky Lake Retreat: We are trying to plan a day at Sky Lake (possibly early October). Some structured time and then also some free time to explore. If you are interested, please let Pastor Paul know. We may take the van if enough people would like that option also.

GRAB A FIRST-SUNDAY RIDE IN CENTRAL'S VAN!

Central offers a monthly First-Sunday van route to the Hilltop and Good Shepherd Village to pick up any who would like a ride to church. Invite a friend and come for Communion Sunday! There will be only one stop (the main building) on each campus. Riders will need to be present at the main building on each campus and ready to board at the listed times.

Good Shepherd Village residents can sign up at the front desk in the Village Center, and Hilltop residents should speak with Reverend Lea Harding.

2 Worship Service Van Schedule:

Arrive Hilltop at **10.05**, boarding for 10 minutes

Depart Hilltop at **10.15**

Arrive Good Shepherd Village at **10.26**, boarding for 10 minutes

Depart GSV at **10.36**

Arrive at Central prior to 11.00 service



Wesley Class

Thursday, September 12 at noon at Good Shepherd Village for lunch



Mission News

September is National Hunger Awareness month. Did you know that over 40 million people in the United States are still hungry or food insecure, yet we throw away over 133 billion pounds of good food each year? (data from Society of St Andrew). Each edition of the weekly Sentry will feature daily scripture readings and action items you can do at home.

Our “Heel and Soul” sneaker collection was a great response! We delivered 27 pairs of sneakers (donated by the congregation in the Nanticoke entrance) to Butcher Boys at the end of the drive. I know several other people took their shoes on their own, so I would assume we donated probably 40 pairs of shoes. What a great community mission you all responded to! Thank you for your support of this and other mission projects.

Mission Hub News

Our Mission Hub has provided close to 60 flood buckets to the people of Westfield PA, one of the hardest hit communities from the rains of Tropical Storm Debby. These flood buckets, originally housed at UNYAC offices, were delivered to us in February (along with health kits and menstrual kits) and are stored in the Mission Hub room (downstairs in the “multipurpose room”). We have already handed out several boxes of health kits and menstrual kits to our community. This is a great resource that we are able to provide for emergencies.

Central Serves News

Central Serves was awarded a \$1500 grant from the United Women in Faith of the Upper New York Annual Conference. This grant will help us fund the Never Be Absent program at Jennie F Snapp. We will also purchase bike helmets for our bike ministry and personal hygiene products to share with our community.

Central Serves was also awarded \$1000 from the Auchinachie Cares program. This money will be used for personal hygiene products and other supplies as needed.



TV MINISTRY

TV Ministry has made good progress on several upgrade projects. The replacement of the protector on the sanctuary rear wall (that provides video for the worship leaders) is complete. A large-screen LCD TV is in place and working well. The smaller TV for scrolling announcements and news at the corner where the office and ramp door hallways meet is installed and meeting expectations.

Currently underway is removal of microphone cables on the floor by the bell tables. New cables are being routed under the floor where they will terminate at flush, recessed mic jack boxes. The 32-channel "snake" and other related equipment that currently sit below the Lectern are being relocated to an adjacent unused closet. This will eliminate the unsightly mass of boxes and cables in that location as well as remove trip hazards and wear and tear on cables.

The Tech Team Youth/Young Adult Intern Program is seeing some young people move out of the program and some new ones come in. Younger and less-experienced interns continue to improve as they gain more experience. Older interns are taking on increased duties and responsibilities. We are grateful for the adults who shepherd these young people, and could use more.

TV Ministry's funds- despite heavy use- are adequate at the moment. Conversations have begun about securing additional funds so the ministry can continue uninterrupted. As always, we thank the Shalom Fund, Board of Trustees, and the congregation members and friends who, in financial support and in prayer, undergird this outreach and support ministry of Central Church.

-Mark Marino

Words of Gratitude

From Michelle, Nate, and Alice – We cannot thank our family at Central enough for all the kind wishes, gifts, time, and love you offered to us as we moved into our new chapter in Rochester. We keep you in our prayers, and love you all right back! We wish you all the best in your ministry with Pastor Teresa and we know that mighty things will happen!

Thank you for all the cards and "care" since my lengthy hospital stay. It's so nice to be a part of such a loving church family.

- Jan Layer

American Red Cross Blood Drive: Saturday, 9/28:00 AM - 1:00 PM.



Volunteers are needed for Check-in and to serve snacks to the donors. Central's tradition is to provide bagels and pastries (which is a bit more than the snacks the Red Cross provides). Please consider if you'd be willing to volunteer for a few hours that day. The time slots are only 2 3/4 hours - 7:45 - 10:30 or 10:15 to 1:00. Please contact Knud Hansen if you're able to volunteer (khansen3@yahoo.com – 607.754.0882).

Blood donors are needed to offset the emergency need for blood. Why is there an emergency need for blood? The American Red Cross is experiencing a national blood shortage. Fewer donors than needed gave in 2023 and donations are

typically low in the winter months.

You can give by signing up at the Red Cross website and searching for the drive at Central on Sept 28- www.redcrossblood.org/give.html/find-drive

Deborah Circle Tuesday, September 17 at 7:00 pm (HYBRID) in person and also on zoom in the church

library. Contact: Pat Breneman, 748-3430

Grace Circle Wednesday, September 18 at noon in the library at church. Please bring your lunch with you. Contact: Pauline Witt, 748-4142

Sarah Circle Tuesday, September 17 at noon in the community room at church. Please bring your lunch with you. Contact: Carole James, 757-2629



United
Women
in Faith

All women are invited to attend one of the United Women in Faith Circles. Please contact the leader for more information about each circle.



Men's Group - Friday Sept 13 - 6:00 PM -

Calling all Men

The first Men's Group of the program year will be on the second Friday, Sept 13.

Meal in person at 6:00pm in the Lounge/Zoom - in person or remote starting at 7:00pm.

Please plan to join us. We're always looking for men to take part in this monthly time of fellowship.

Men's Group ZOOM info:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81530597732>

Meeting ID: 815 3059 7732

Passcode: 491318

Save the date...

International Day of Peace - Saturday, September 21^s

Be on the watch for some activities to do at home or in your community in celebration of this day. A symbol of peace is the origami crane. There will be instructions in the Welcome Center on how to fold these cranes; there will also be some paper for you to use. Let's make paper cranes and hand them out to people in recognition of this Day of Peace.

Blessing of the Animals - Sunday, October 6th

St. Francis of Assisi is known for his love of animals. He often preached to the birds of the air and the animals of the forest. His saint-day is October 4th and many places offer a blessing of the animals in honor of him and his passion for nature. Central UMC Endicott will hold a blessing of the animals on Sunday, October 6th at 2:00 pm in the church parking lot. Feel free to bring either your beloved animal family member or a picture of them for a brief time of blessing.

UWF Fall Take-Out Luncheon – Saturday, October 12th

Support our community through the church missions by placing a PRE-ORDER for the wonderful foods that will be made for just for you. The menu and Pre-Order form will be included in the September and October newsletters. Saturday, October 12th, 2024 from 11:00am – 1:00pm. “Pre-Order, Park and Pick Up”