

CENTRAL NEWS

JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2025



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Pastor's Message – “Living Stones”

(1 Peter:2:4-6, NRSVUE) *“Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and 5 like living stones let yourselves be built[b] into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 For it stands in scripture: “See, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”*

A “living stone” is a difficult image for modern Christians to wrap their minds around. However, Peter's original audience would have been familiar with several Old Testament references that used the same image. Peter quotes Isaiah 28:16 in verse 6. William Barclay (*The New Daily Study Bible*) helps us understand the original image from Isaiah. That passage provides a contrast between the corrupt leaders of Israel and God, who is always faithful and true to his people. Barclay explains that God as foundation stone represents “God's unfailing relationship to his people which would culminate in the coming of the Messiah.”

When Peter says faithful disciples are to be “living stones,” we are to embody the relationship God has with his people. We are to allow ourselves to be built into a “spiritual house” which we would call the church. So, this says that the church is meant to be all about loving, and good relationships with the community surrounding us. Peter says this will require sacrifice. Giving up some of our own comfort and pleasure to “build up” those around us is participating in the “building” that Christ started.

One place to start may be to support our ministry partners at Central. In the next month, I encourage you to participate in the ministries of Northstar Community or Narcotics Anonymous and let them know we value their mission. The recovery worship service of Northstar Sundays at 9:30 or the Friday & Sunday evening NA groups would be natural options due to their large size. If you do attend any of these groups, let them know you came and that we're praying for the work they do. This is just a start though. I encourage you to be “living stones” the whole year long.

God Bless You, *Pastor Shayne*

Christmas Offering

Traditionally Central has collected a special Christmas Offering. This year, as in the past several, it is being divided between Pinnacle Living (financial assistance for those in Methodist sponsored senior living homes who have run out of funds) and United Methodist Family Services (supports foster care for at risk children throughout Virginia). This year we collected \$655 for these organizations. Thanks to all who donated!

Inclement Weather, etc.

Since winter weather may affect church events, any cancelations will be sent to you via email, so check yours if snow or ice is in the forecast, and make sure Leah has your correct email address. This is a combined January-February newsletter. Any other event changes will be printed in the Sunday bulletin or announced from the pulpit.

Renovation Updates

All the windows in the education wing have been professionally cleaned inside and out. The rooms are much brighter and cobwebs are gone. We're still waiting on the ramp door installation. The door is manufactured out of state. In January, we hope to have the carpet removed in the downstairs hallway and replaced with flooring similar to the fellowship hall, only a lighter color. The same contractor will be repointing some exterior brick to the right of the ramp door. The wall inside has water damage. Fortunately, we have received some donations toward renovations, including an amount from Bill Davis's estate. After the preceding projects are completed, the board will determine if we can proceed with replacement of exterior doors. The main front door, and the one near the annex are damaged and are the first priorities.

Moravian Love Feast in January

Central celebrated the beginning of 2024 in a different type of service. We will do the same on January 26, 2025. Sweets like cinnamon rolls are traditionally served, plus a warm drink. All are invited to share a poem, song, scripture or personal story that relates to your spiritual journey. This informal service will be held in the Fellowship Hall at 11:00, instead of the sanctuary.

Fellowship Lunch

We'll gather on February 16th after the 11:00 service for another yummy luncheon. We always have plenty of food if you aren't able to bring something. Sharing food and conversation is a great way to get to know each other better and provide support in their ups and downs of life. Remember Game Nights too as a fellowship opportunity. The next one is Sat., Jan. 18th at 6pm. February date will be announced in the Sunday bulletin.

Focus on Outreach Mission: Share the Warmth RVA

With the cold weather upon us, we can all appreciate having heat in our homes and a bed to sleep on. Think a bit about those who live outside, perhaps in a tent, or no cover at all. Central began partnering with Share the Warmth RVA last year. This non-profit was started in 2023 by George and Carol Williams, who themselves have been homeless in the past. Their home has become a clothes closet and refuge for many. They mainly serve the area near Hull and Broad Rock streets. Carol has provided essential support for women in sex trafficking situations. Check your closets, etc. for items that might be useful to these people: warm clothing of any kind, blankets, tents, tarps, sleeping bags, etc. Do you have things stashed away that you haven't used for a while, or don't really need? Or, donate new items like socks (not cotton! for they can cause frostbite when wet), hand warmers, or underwear. Water is an essential item for the homeless. Fast food places usually refuse to fill up containers unless the cups were purchased there. This summer, the Williams took big coolers of water and ice to locations where the homeless gather. As a special treat in December, Nancy and Leah made cookies and gift bags of goodies that were handed out before Christmas. "There, but by the grace of God, go I."

January Birthdays

Don Durette 1/2
Janet Tyler 1/11
Sandy Harmon 1/30

February Birthdays

Stacy Swagger 2/14

Upcoming Events

Thursdays @ 6:30 pm weekly Bible study @ St. Francis Home: *Gospel of John*

Jan. 3, Fri. – Northstar packs lunches for the Healing Place

Jan. 18, Sat, 6:00 – Game Night, pizza and snacks

Jan. 26, Sun., 11:00 – Moravian Love Feast

Feb. 16, Sun. – Covered dish lunch after church

Mar. 5, Wed. – Ash Wednesday

Apr. 13, Sun. – Palm Sunday

Apr. 20, Sun. – Easter Sunday

Central UMC Traditional Sunday Worship Service: Sun. @ 11am, All are Welcome!

Narcotics Anonymous meets weekly: Sun. @ 7pm, Wed. @ Noon & at 6pm; Fri. @ 6pm
(Note an additional NA meeting has been added at Noon on Wednesdays. They met Christmas and New Year's Days and had large crowds. Holidays can be stressful times for those dealing with addiction.)

Northstar Community: Sundays, 8:30am – Men's & Women's Groups in classrooms; 9:30am – Healing Service in Wesley Hall; Tuesdays 6:00pm – Recovery Yoga; First Wednesdays 6:30pm – Women's Group