
CENTRAL

Lent Issue / 2023 /



A CLEARING SEASON

Central Leadership

The Session of Central Presbyterian Church

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Down Yonder: LaShawn Green, Emmalee Hackshaw, Linda Lehfeldt

Intown South: Brian Bishop, Ben Sutton

Intown North: Tom Leslie, Debbie Miller

Northern Lights: Betty Carroll, Vicki Collier, Ginger Heidbreder, Zac Hilimire

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LENT

A CLEARING SEASON

By Rev. Jasiel Hernandez Garcia

Each of us has a unique understanding of Lent, depending on our family and cultural background, the church we grew up in, and our willingness to engage in a time of penitence and introspection.

I do not know many people who actually enjoy Lent. This season has been transformed into an annual ritual of giving up something we believe we no longer need. Perhaps it is giving up chocolate, Netflix, fatty foods, social media, or even buying new things.

Perhaps this ritual includes giving away unused clothing items and furniture to de-clutter your house. Well, there is a reason why spring cleaning is the most popular practice one adopts during the Lenten season. These changes in our daily lives often lead to grumpiness and dissatisfaction hereby distracting us from the true meaning of this season.

In her Lenten book, “A Clearing Season”, author Sarah Parsons writes that: “Lent is not all about penitence or misdeeds or guilt. It is a time of introspection, true, but its ultimate purpose lies beyond penitence. In essence, Lent serves as our annual invitation to come closer to God. It provides a time to look at our lives and ourselves, not

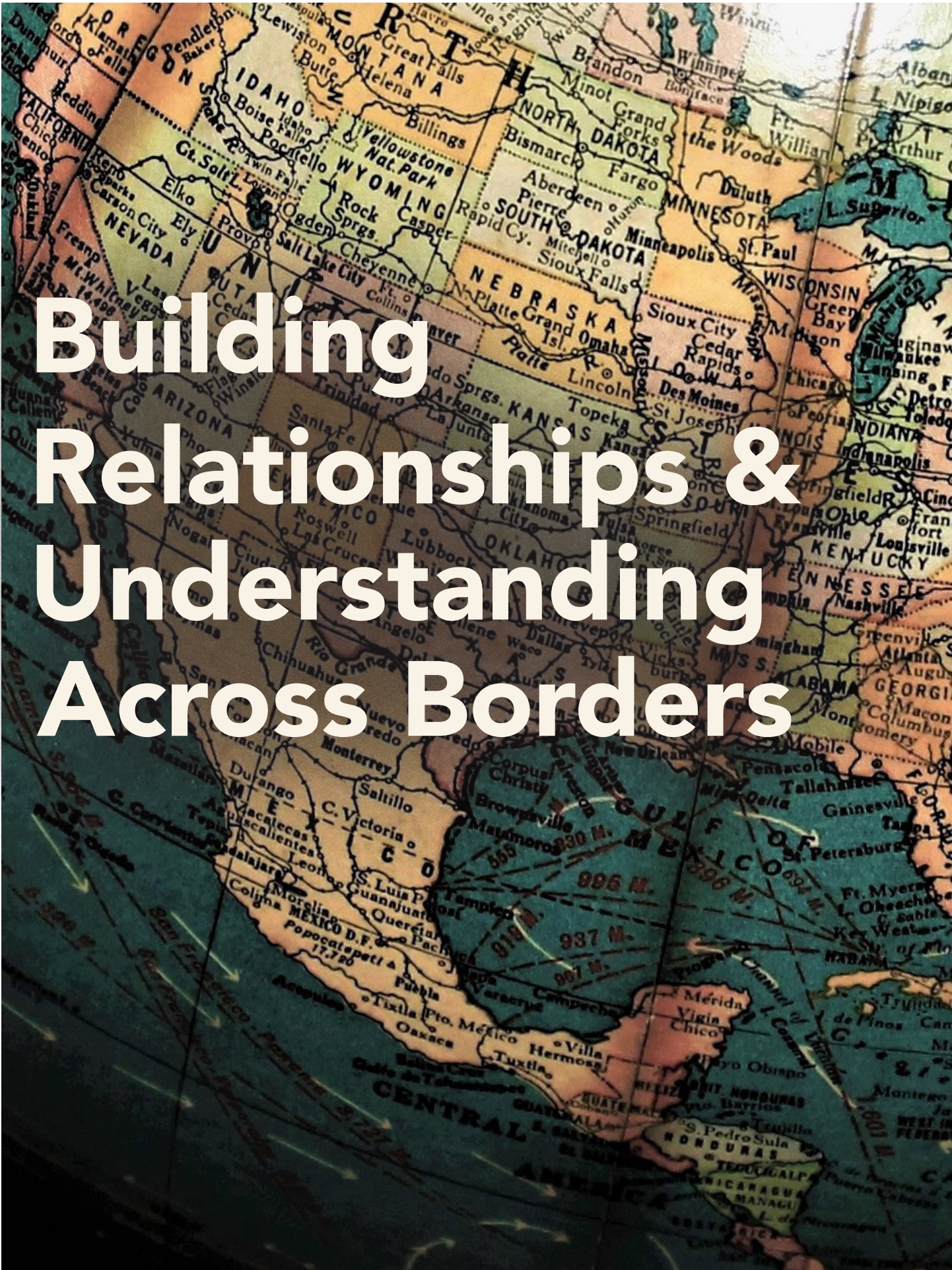


so we may criticize ourselves more harshly, but so we can identify the obstructions that keep us from God.” Lent can serve as the time and space in which we clear out of the way those things that keep us from seeing and feeling God in our daily lives.

Given Parsons’ unique approach to the Lenten season, we will use her book as our Lenten weekly devotional, and our sermon series will be based on her book themes. I had the opportunity to lead a small group using this book during the first months of the pandemic, and it was quite nourishing and transformative for many of us. I hope it will be a meaningful Lenten resource for you as well.

Let us find time, as a church and individuals, to see our current state of affairs in complete honesty, reminding one another that “sitting too long with the guilt and shame of our misdeeds would, in fact, go against the gospel message.” Let us welcome this Lenten season with the fullness of who we are so that we may develop an image of who we would like to be based on the good news that we find as we journey through the wilderness. With God’s help, we will reach the place God wants us to find - a place where we can feel closer to God.

You can read more about Sarah Parsons’, “A Clearing Season” on [Amazon](#) or [Upper Room Books](#) where you may purchase a copy.



Building Relationships & Understanding Across Borders



On Sunday, February 26, Mark Adams and Miriam Maldonado will join us to lead worship and share about the work of their ministry, Frontera de Cristo. We encourage you to stay after worship for a “lunch and learn” opportunity. We are excited to welcome them back!

Frontera de Cristo is a Presbyterian border ministry located in the sister cities of Aqua Prieta, Sonora, and Douglas, Arizona. As one of the four bi-national ministry sites of Presbyterian Borderlands Ministries, they work with churches, presbyteries, and secular organizations on both sides of the border to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God.

Frontera de Cristo seeks to build relationships that demonstrate God’s will and build bridges rather than walls. They address the immediate needs of those who are migrating, seeking refuge, and fleeing extreme poverty and violence. At the same time, they are working to create safe and prosperous opportunities that allow these sisters and brothers to stay in the land they call home, if they so choose.

Through the building of community-driv-



Mark Adams and Miriam Maldonado

en partnerships with ministries and secular organizations in Douglas and Prieta, Frontera de Cristo offers shelter, resources, education, emotional support, medical care, and solutions.

One of these partners is Café Justo, which just celebrated its 20th anniversary. A grower-owned coffee cooperative based in southern Chiapas, Mexico, Café Justo was formed to address poverty in Mexico that forces families to migrate. The coffee is grown in Chiapas, and the beans are roasted and shipped in Aqua Prieta. By creating fair prices for customers in the U.S. and just wages for the coffee growers, this company has developed an alternative to migration for families in Mexico. Central is proud to offer Café Justo coffee for sale during our Alternative Market on certain Sundays.

Please reach out to Bede Campbell or Amy Mast to learn more about the ministry of Frontera de Cristo.

MEET MASON COPELAND



Mason Copeland recently joined Central as our new organist.

An alumnus of Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, with a dual Master's degree in choral conducting and organ performance, Mason studied choral conducting with Dominick DiOrio, and organ with Janette Fishell. In 2012, the Jacobs School of Music awarded Mason an Associate Instructor position in the choral department after he served as a Graduate Assistant in the organ department.

Prior to attending Indiana University, Mason began his formal education at the Interlochen Arts Academy in northern Michigan under the tutelage of Thomas Bara. Mason has performed multiple organ recitals throughout the Southeast and Midwest.

He has also sung in the Pro Arte Singers with William Jon Gray.

Mason also serves as the Choral Music Director at Northview High School in Johns Creek where he has built a strong culture of choral excellence.

Prior to joining Central's staff, Mason served as the Organist/Choirmaster at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Newnan and Morningside Presbyterian Church, Atlanta.

We sat down with Mason for a few minutes for a Q&A to gain a closer look at our new organist.

Q: If you could have dinner with anyone, dead or alive, who would it be?

A: My Uncle Tim Copeland had a profound influence on my life. My father is the oldest of five children (Catholic) and was always serious. My Uncle, on the other hand, could make anyone laugh. People were drawn to him. He could give someone a hard time yet make them feel like the most important person in the world. He also had an infectious laugh. Uncle Tim had a natural talent as a musician. He played both piano and guitar. He could hear a song on the radio one time and play it in the key, with the guitar licks just as it sounded. He, most likely, had perfect pitch and could recognize any note out of thin air. My uncle is the reason I became a musician. He passed away when I was 16 and never saw my musical journey. I can only imagine the stories and jokes we would tell today. In many ways, I owe love of music to my Uncle Tim.

Q: Did you always plan on being a musician?

A: When I was a young boy, I really wanted to be a Blue Angel pilot. My father took my brother and I to air shows and to the Scott Air Force Base in Illinois. When I was fitted for my first pair of glasses at age six, I knew that dream would never come true. At some point, I remember wanting to be an English teacher. I love talking and sharing knowledge with people. I think music found me. I was a self-taught pianist and had many angels in my life guide me to music. My sixth grade chorus teacher, Mrs. Judy McGill, first discovered my talent and that's when I started accompanying choirs at school and then began lessons



with my late piano/organ teacher, Mrs. Charlotte Herren. My high school chorus director, Mrs. Anne Davis, encouraged me to go to Interlochen. The rest is history. The moral of the story is: God has always led to this path and it chose me.

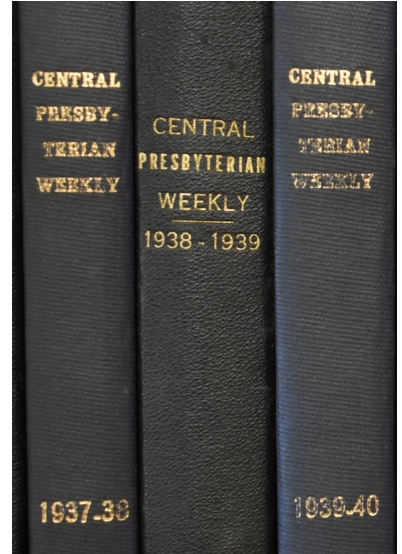


Q: What are your hobbies?

A: I love to fish and be out on the lake in my boat. I love water! If I am not fishing, and near water, I want to be scuba diving. I hold advanced certifications in wreck diving, deep diving, navigation, night/limited visibility, and nitrox. This spring, I'll complete my dry suit certification and dive Sulfra, Iceland.

Q: What excites you the most about Central?

A: I am most excited about the role Central plays in the greater community. I've been working for the church since I was 15. I have never seen a parish with so much outreach. Of course, I am also excited to work with the amazing choir and their director, the talented Dr. Jennifer Sengin. I'm excited to play organ repertoire that I haven't played for some time. It all excites me, really.



By Lee Carroll

New Life for Central's Archives

Central Presbyterian Church is at a critical juncture in our long and storied history. And the question that we face now—as in all times—is, “How do we understand the mission of God at work in the world today?”

One very obvious answer is that we discern God's mission through shared worship, study, prayer and fellowship. But we also discern the mission of God by looking at the many ways that God has been active among us in the past.

- How did we come to be the people we are today?
- What values have shaped us over the past 165 years?
- What parts of our story do we now see to be misguided?
- What have been significant turning points in the life of the congregation?
- What historical values must we cultivate so that we can join God in bold, imaginative ways?

Many members will be familiar with Central's history from reading, “The Church that Stayed,” (John Robert Smith, 1979) and, “On Our Way Rejoicing,” (Martin Lehfeldt, editor, 2007)—two essential guides to understanding Central's identity. But these books can be richly supplemented by exploring the many resources available in Central's Archives.

To encourage this approach to equipping ourselves for God's mission, a small team of Central members has been at work for over a year, organizing and updating the congregation's archives.

For many years, Don Robinson (1925-2014), beloved Ministers of Music, and other volunteers worked to organize the church's written records, photographs, recordings, and artifacts.

But with Don's passing, the collection gradually fell into disarray. The former room where the archives were housed (just outside the sanctuary on the second floor of the Oglesby Building) was needed by our

Media Services leaders as a strategic place where large, bulky equipment could be stored.

So our archived materials gradually faded into the background of a packed, dark room.

Faithful staff members maintained the records as time allowed, but there was no longer a team to manage the collection.

Central's archives have now been relocated to the Library (second floor of the Oglesby Building, across from the elevator). Today, a well lit, comfortable room is home to both a small library of critical biblical and theological books, and the archives.

While renewing the archives remains a work in progress, Central's archives are far more functional as a result of several actions:

- Central's Session minutes (1969-2022) are being cataloged and prepared for transfer to the Columbia Seminary Archives--one of two off-site locations where Central's early records are already housed. (Other early records are on file with the Atlanta History Center's Archives.) This move will locate these minutes in a safe, climate-controlled, accessible facility.
- A computer was installed for cataloging and accessing the contents of the Archives.
- A massive number of historical records and photographs have been reorganized into vertical files.
- Large, older scrapbooks of past church activities have been placed in protective containers.
- Hundreds of 4X6 and 5X7 photographs of church members and activities are being identified and dated for cataloging.
- Audio recordings of past worship services and sermons have been filed in new drawers .

As the Archives team continues its work, additional goals have been established:

- To recommend to Session a set of policies for the Archives so that records, photos and artifacts will be accessible but properly protected.
- To chronologically arrange and file past copies of The Weekly and The Epistle.
- To complete cataloging all of our historic records and photographs.
- To collect and display photographs of previous Associate Pastors, as well as members of our current staff, to complement the existing display of our former Pastors currently located just outside Tull Hall.



- To develop an interesting and attractive timeline of large photographs that will tell Central's story and portray historic buildings, past groups, key leaders, and major events.

It is especially important to understand that the purpose of renewing Central's Archives is not to create a shrine of congregational history or to worship our Central ancestors. Rather, the purposes of our Archives are to help us discern ways that God has worked among us throughout our history, and to inspire and equip us for participation in that mission.

Current members of the Archives team are Betty and Lee Carroll, Ed and Anita Carwile, Mary Jane Cornell, Rod Hunter, Martha Kimes and Linda Massengill.

If you are interested in working with them on the unfinished projects and goals listed above, you are cordially invited to do so. Or, if you have records, photos, or artifacts from Central's past that you want to contribute to our Archives, let us know. To know more or to volunteer, please contact Lee Carroll, 404-634-7513 or LCarroll@ix.netcom.com.

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• **STAY TUNED!** Central will have a video
• interview with Lee Carroll on this project
• coming soon! Check the E-News for updates!
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BY KIMBERLY PARKER
Executive Director of Central
Outreach and Advocacy Center

Each day, guests walk to our front gate and wait patiently for the opportunity to connect with one of our Supportive Services staff members. Sometimes they are seeking help with securing identification, housing, job training, or are simply looking for a smile and a snack.

Because transportation is often out of reach due to cost, walking quite literally moves our guests between opportunities. Walking can even provide protection, as some guests will walk throughout the night to avoid unsafe sleeping conditions. On average, a person experiencing homelessness can walk 10 miles in a single day.

To better educate our supporters about this reality and to encourage them to share in the work of our organization, COAC is hosting the 10 Mile Challenge, a virtual walk kicking off February 19 and culminating with a group one-mile walk and celebration at Central Presbyterian on Sunday, March 19 after the worship service.

Participants can complete the 10 Mile challenge at the pace and location of their choosing. We encourage friends, neighbors, youth group, Scouts and others to participate together and help us raise \$100,000 for COAC support services and outreach programs.



HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

When: February 15 to March 19.

Where: Anywhere! Celebration on March 19 at Central Presbyterian.

How: www.centraloac.org/in-their-shoes/

Central, Synergy, & The Center for Civic Innovation

By Rev. Jasiel Hernandez Garcia

At the beginning of last year, the Pollard and Covenant Committee engaged in a fruitful discernment process regarding the future of the excess funds from the Pollard grant that were traditionally distributed to the Central Child Development Center. After various conversations with local ministry partners, the committee decided to explore a potential partnership with the Center for Civic Innovation (CCI) Atlanta after attending CCI's annual Civic Innovation Fellowship presentation.

The Civic Innovation Fellowship identifies, invests in, and amplifies the work of existing community leaders, entrepreneurs, and movement builders in Atlanta with brilliant ideas to address social and economic inequality in their own communities. CCI Fellows work in areas such as education, housing, justice, the arts, journalism, agriculture, and healthcare.

The committee was inspired by the stories and presentations shared by these fellows. Therefore, the committee recommended the Session invest \$75,000 in these organizations through CCI. These funds were awarded to 11 different organizations through a non-traditional philanthropic model created by a selection committee put in place by CCI. Nevertheless, CCI respected the stipulations set by the Pollard grant founder.

The Pollard and Covenant committee did

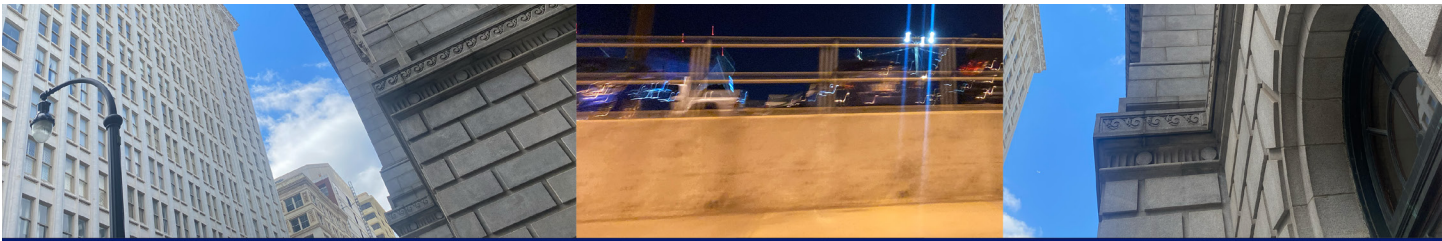
not have any input in the selection process, thus teaching us how to let go of control by trusting the leaders in our community who have more experience and relationships with those individuals and grassroots organizations that are changing the Atlanta landscape.

If you want to read the final report, you may request a copy by contacting Rev. Jasiel Hernandez Garcia.

The Pollard and Covenant committee is proud to share the 11 awardees from this new partnership with CCI. We encourage you to look them up and learn more about how they transform our community through their ministry.

- Historic Westside Gardens, led by Rosario Hernandez.
- Umi Feeds, led by Erica "Umi" Clahar.
- Learning in Color, led by Carol Bowman
- Swim Life Fitness, led by Adrienne Wesley.
- SAVE Institute, led by Atiba Jones.
- College AIM, led by Sam Aleinikoff
- HEY, Inc., led by Kacey Venning
- Athleaders 360, led by Cordero Tanner
- Close Ties Leadership Program, led by Brandon Martin.
- Jared's Heart of Success, Inc., led by Sharmaine Brown.
- 3D Girls, Inc., led by Raioni Madison.





CENTRAL IN THE CITY



By GARY CORNELL

In 2023 Central in the City will lead members of CPC as we advocate for housing justice, quality of life, and compassionate options for our neighbors who experience homelessness. We do this by helping to make the congregation aware of housing justice issues and by building bridges with partners in the community who are working on these issues with us.

The state legislature is a prime target for our housing justice advocacy efforts due to its poor track record on housing justice issues. Our voices are needed on several controversial bills because:

- We are in the midst of an affordable housing crisis; a shortage of affordable housing production has led to a spike in costs. Over 50% of households are housing cost burdened because they are paying 30 percent or more of income on housing.

- Inflation housing vouchers from HUD won't cover market rents. As a result, landlords refuse the housing vouchers of low- and moderate-income persons who cannot afford market rents.

- Meanwhile, the federal funding for emergency rent relief during Covid has expired.



- Due to the expiration of federal emergency rent payments a spike in evictions is inevitable. Georgia has some of the highest eviction rates and eviction filing rates of any state.

- Last year the General Assembly proposed to

criminalize homelessness and confine persons who are homeless to live in state designated tent camps without any provisions for their health or safety. Our partners urged them to fund supportive housing that would be more effective and less expensive than public encampments and blocked the 2022 bill. This year we see SB62 that brings back some of the same onerous provisions.

■ Many citizens are living in poverty and are homeless while the state records a \$6.6 billion budget surplus – the largest in our history. The Governor wants to refund taxes for people who are already well-off but these funds could be used to address unmet housing needs.

Consider the following ways you can take action to help our city take steps toward justice, as a follower of Christ and a member of Central.



1. Attend Housing Day on February 22 at 8:30 a.m. at the Atlanta City Hall.
2. Attend Lobby Day at Central on March 14 at 8:15 a.m. in Tull Hall, then go with us to the State Capitol to say:

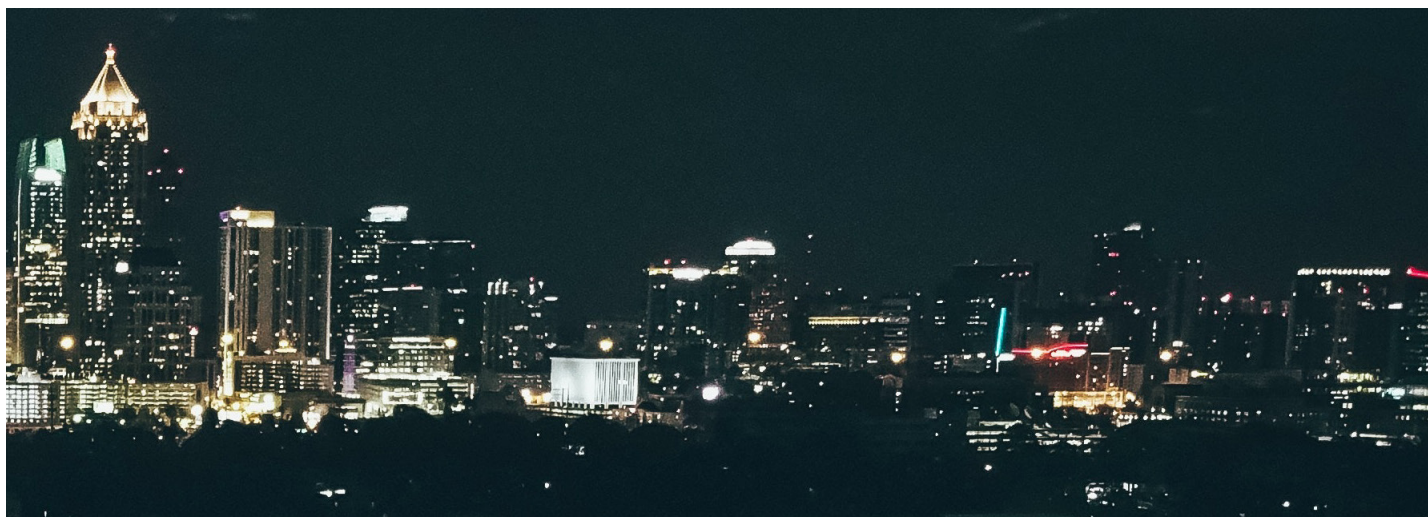
We oppose SB 62 that would criminalize homelessness and direct homeless funding away from supportive housing into public encampments. Work for strong supportive housing policies and funding to help the same people live in decent housing.

We support housing policies that create a continuum of affordable housing options for vulnerable persons who are lower income, or elderly or are experiencing homelessness.

We urge lawmakers to increase funding for affordable housing development and homelessness prevention.

We support HB 18 and HB 19 to increase funding for the State Housing Trust Fund for the Homeless and increase funding for the Emergency Housing Voucher Program for people with serious mental illness.

We support Source of Income protection that prevents landlords from discriminating against those using Housing Vouchers.



LENT

A CLEARING SEASON

We have a meaningful Lenten season ahead. We invite you to join us on Sundays, during the week via zoom, and at various social gatherings for the next six weeks.

worship schedule

Ash Wednesday - February 22

Chapel worship at 12 p.m.
Sanctuary worship at 7 p.m. (livestreamed)
The Rev. Jasiel Hernández García preaching

Lent 1 - Sunday, February 26, worship at 11 a.m.

The Rev. Mark Adams and Miriam Maldonado leading worship
"Lunch and Learn" with Frontera de Cristo following worship
Fair Trade Marketplace

Lent 2 - Sunday, March 5, worship at 11 a.m.

Communion Sunday
The Rev. Jasiel Hernández García preaching

Lent 3 - Sunday, March 12, worship at 11 a.m.

Worship with Columbia Theological Seminary
The Rev. Dr. Victor Aloyo preaching

Lent 4 - Sunday, March 19, worship at 11 a.m.

Worship with the Central Outreach and Advocacy Center
Kimberly Parker preaching

Lent 5 - Sunday, March 24, worship at 11 a.m.

The Rev. Jasiel Hernández García preaching



Rev. Dr. Victor Aloyo



Kimberly Parker

learning opportunities

On Wednesdays at noon via zoom

Weekly devotional led by the pastoral staff and diaconate using "A Clearing Season," by Sarah Parsons.

You may order it on Amazon.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89301024181?pwd=dStuV1I4R054c-m5yR3VYN3NSL3ZCZz09>

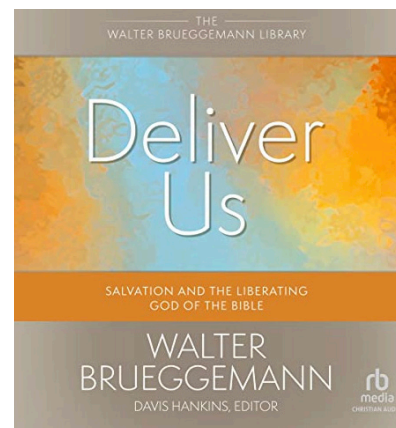
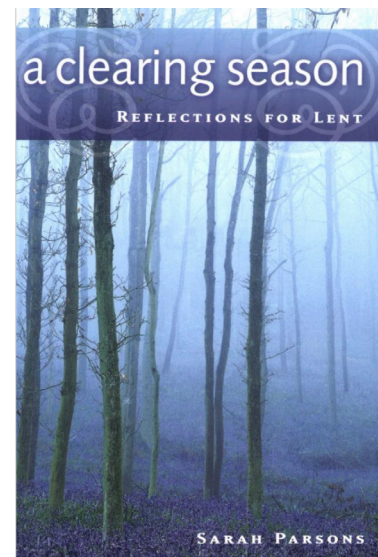
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On Sunday mornings at Central from 9:45 to 10:45 a.m.

The Issues in Theology class will reflect on "The Providence of God: A Polyphonic Approach" by David Fergusson. Rod Hunter leads this class.

The Sojourners Class class will reflect on "Deliver Us - Salvation and the Liberating God of the Bible," by Walter Brueggemann. Ed Carwile and Robert Catterall lead this class.



Holy Week

Palm Sunday - Sunday, April 2, worship at 11 a.m.

The Rev. Jasiel Hernández García preaching
Downtown procession with the Catholic Shrine
and Trinity UMC

Maundy Thursday - April 6 at 6:30 p.m.

Worship with communion and
foot-washing by parish
Led by the Central Diaconate

Good Friday - April 7 - worship at 7 p.m.

Lessons and Anthems at Morningside
Presbyterian Church
A collaboration between
Central and Morningside

Easter Sunday - April 9, worship at 11 a.m.

The Rev. Jasiel Hernández García preaching
Congregational breakfast at 10 a.m.



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