

Steeple Notes

Central Church, Huntington, NY
Where Jesus Is Lord and All Are Loved!
February – March 2025

An Abiding Meditation



Happy New Year, everyone! Have you ever felt like you are going through a **spiritual desert**, and could use some guidance in navigating your way through?

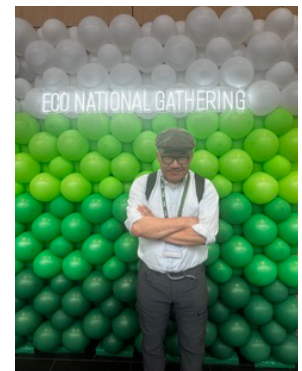
During our ECO National Gathering in Dallas, Texas, the Rev. Tish Harrison Warren, a wife, a mom to young children, as well as a renowned Christian author, a NYT columnist, and (on top of everything else) an Anglican priest, shared how the way that God lays out for His people to make our way through the spiritual desert is to **ABIDE** with Him, trusting in both God and His process.

Warren laid out her problem this way. She was living a full life, who between authoring books about God, was writing regularly about the Lord for the NYT. She was also a young mom, zoom-schooling her young children, all during Covid. And somewhere along the way, Warren realized that she no longer had her sense of intimacy with the Lord. And that is when she realized that she was in a spiritual desert. But cutting to the chase, this is when Warren offered a most illuminating note: although we might suppose that such experiences are unique to our post-modern culture, *the desert experience* (in one form or another) *has dogged the Christian Church from the beginning*.

So what to do? And this is where ABIDING is key.

One such early Christian “desert” father, St. Anthony, described a crisis he was experiencing which he called “**boredom and irritation**.” The result, unfortunately, was the temptation to perhaps leave the life-long pursuit of God to which he had devoted himself—maybe to see if life would be better outside.

But that is when he experienced a vision that changed his trajectory. In that vision, an angel of the Lord gave him a surprising message: “stay in your cell,” the angel said to him (the small rooms they stayed in were called “cells”). In essence, the angel reminded him that “doing good” sometimes is arduous—indeed, it may be called a side-effect. But, as one modern psychologist notes, all of us have to contend with what he calls, “The Weary” (the inordinate weight of daily weariness). And that is essentially the vision relayed to St. Anthony—that the work of seeking



after God is not easy, but it is so worth it. Anthony, afterward, reported that this vision restored his confidence. And I wonder whether we might benefit from this as well.

I say this because this National Gathering really hit a necessary note for me as well! We all go through ups and downs, and the key always will be to ABIDE in Jesus and listen for His direction. So if you are going through a similar time in the desert, here are three actionable recommendations from the Rev. Warren that I want to share. She encourages us to...

1. *KEEP GOING*—in 2025, God has His good work for us to carry out!
2. *HOPE*—fall into the hands of a loving God, who knows us!
3. *FRIENDS*—and seek those who helps you ABIDE in the Lord

That is what I want 2025 to be for Central, as well—a community of faithful friends who ABIDE in the Lord together!

As a side note, one way we could do this is to join together for *The Chosen* watch parties. Starting on February 3, join us at 7PM!

See you at church, or around. But in all things, let us ABIDE in Jesus!

Blessings!


Pastor Paul



The Deacons have been busy the past few months:

In October, we started thinking about another sit-down Thanksgiving dinner at church on Thanksgiving Day and HI-HI.

In November, preparations were made for the Thanksgiving meal. Over 100 meals were served. We had help from the youth group children and from within the neighborhood.

HI-HI was discussed, and we will be cooking for the 40 men in the program in February and March.

In December, we took care of our military personnel, college students and our shut-ins with small gifts. With the help of the generous donations from our congregation, we were able to help Polo secure a new apartment.

Looking forward to 2025 and the help we will be able to supply to our church family and community.

Yours in Christ,
Liz Stuyvesant
Deacons Co-Secretary





FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 01 Lois Cowie
- 06 Chris Silvia
- 07 Gabriella Devine
- 09 Donna Periana
- 10 Joseph Garofola
- 13 Bill Russell
- 13 Aaliyah Gonzalez
- 13 Felipe Gonzalez
- 14 Shakayah Boyle
- 15 Janet Byler
- 16 Lynn Watkins
- 18 Jennifer Bradley
- 20 Jordan Rolle
- 24 Nancy Clous
- 26 Laura Tiemann
- 28 Pastor Paul Lee

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

- 04 Ken Chin
- 05 Lauren Lewis
- 06 Kevin Reilly
- 07 James Sutherland
- 09 Evelyn Brodbeck
- 11 Seth Lee
- 14 Ken Roman
- 15 Sophia Swanson
- 17 Doral Hardy
- 17 Kari Reilly
- 19 Henry Grill
- 19 Andrea Hines-Sterling
- 20 Cayden Fernandez
- 21 James D. Clous
- 24 Paige Pollaccia
- 25 Mariah Wilson
- 26 Kassidy Reilly
- 29 Beverly Vandergoot



February at a Glance

Tuesday – February 4
10:00 am – Board Meeting

Tuesday – February 11
10:30 am – Circle Meeting

Looking Ahead to March

Tuesday – March 4
10:00 am – Board Meeting

Tuesday – March 11
10:00 am – Circle Meeting

Watch for more details in the Sunday bulletins.



Prayers of comfort to the family of long-time Central member Harry Tobiassen, who passed away peacefully on January 8th surrounded by his family. He was 98 and had been living in New Hampshire since 2012.

Harry grew up in Norway and came to the US at age 21. He married his wife Olaug in 1935 and they raised two daughters on Long Island. In addition to family, God and church played important roles in his life.

Harry was predeceased by his wife and was the proud father of Ann Roach and Susan Lauer. He also leaves behind five grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. Please pray for the family.



Praise God for the arrival of Jacob Ryan Byler on December 3rd, 2024! Parents James and Mary, and grandparents Phil and Janet, are delighted, grateful, and blessed ~ and sister Natalie is ready to teach Jake all that she knows!



Minutes of the Central Church Session Meeting on January 7, 2025:

- The meeting opened with prayer and devotions at 7:00 pm. The minutes of December's meeting were approved, and the Consent Agenda was approved as was the moderator's report. The Clerk's Report indicated that the communion count for December was 82 members, and the January communion count was 76. Clerk Valerio indicated that she would have our Elder of the Month assignments within a few days.
- All members of Session were in attendance except for Elder Byler who was excused. Jamie Clous arrived shortly after we began the meeting and explained that the 2025 budget was going to need more work before it can be finalized. The end of the year 2024 showed a shortfall of almost \$20,000.00 but was miraculously resolved by monies that came in that we had not expected. This has been a pattern with Central Church that makes us believe that God is protecting us.
- Jamie came into the meeting with copies of the 2025 projection which needed to be whittled down if we are to be financially responsible. He gave out handouts that explained why we need to know about our capitol and cash reserves. Because we had some unexpected expenditures in 2024, we did burn through more cash than was expected. Though we have a growing membership, we need to pare down as much as possible our projected 2025 budget.
- He encouraged us to come up with ways of increasing Central's income by 1. Growing the membership more; 2. Cutting whatever can be cut from the 2025 budget; and 3. Finding ways to increase the use of the building to outside groups in turn for a reasonable donation. Jamie also offered to give a monthly update to the congregation.

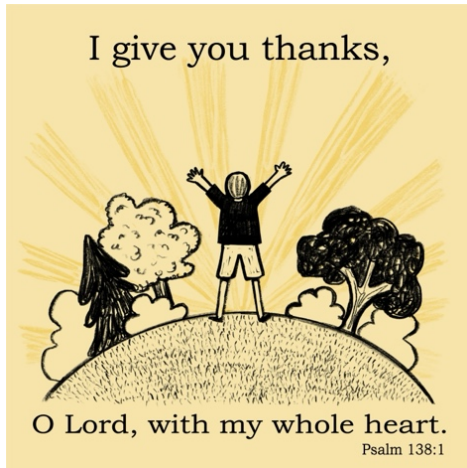
• Since we knew we had much more work to do on the budget, we agreed to meet again on the 14th of January to focus solely on the budget. Pastor Paul offered the closing prayer and the meeting ended 9:15 pm.

Minutes of the Central Church Session Meeting on January 14, 2025:

- This meeting began at 6:30 pm in the White room and on Zoom. All the elders were present at this meeting except for Phil Byler who was excused. Pastor Paul began with a devotional from the book of Timothy about nobility. It spoke of a man who keeps the counsel of the Lord and is not pulled off course in managing his household.
- Then we were each directed to write the 3 most important matters to us where the Church is concerned. Pastor Paul compiled from our responses a profile of what is important to us. From this, he and Jamie Clous (who had arrived and was waiting for us) went slowly through the 2025 projected budget and trimmed it down where it was possible to do so without causing harm (i.e., there had been monies projected in prior years that were not used, so we cut them out for 2025).
- This process went on for the rest of the meeting. We did stop in the middle to corporately and individually pray out loud for God's guidance in this effort.
- After an exhausting couple of hours, we reached a reasonable document to present to the congregation at the February 9th meeting.
- The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 pm. The next meeting of Session will take place on February 24, 2025.

Humbly submitted,
Suzanne Valerio
Clerk of Session

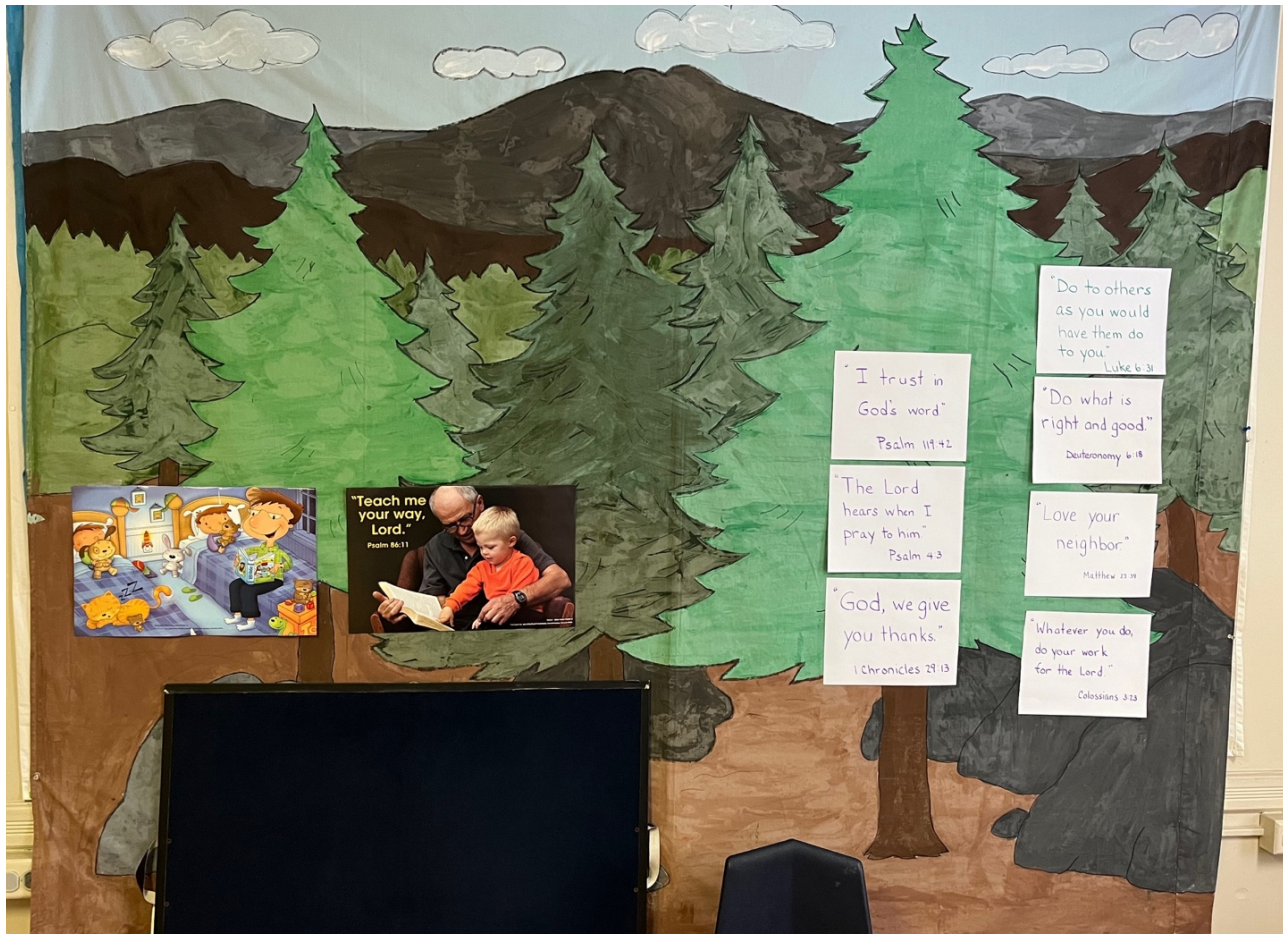







MELISSA SHARED THE STORY OF JOSEPH WITH THE KIDS :)

God is LOVE.
1 JOHN 4:16



February

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
 central church HUNTINGTON, NY	OFFICE HOURS: TUES TO FRIDAY, 8:30 AM TO 1 PM					1 AA GROUP 9:00 AM
2 WORSHIP 10 AM BIBLE STUDY 11:30 AM NA GROUP 7 PM	3 THE CHOSEN 7:00 PM OFFICE CLOSED ON MONDAYS	4 WCC BOARD MTG 10:00 AM DEACONS MTG 7:00 PM	5 WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY 10:00 AM STAFF MTG 11 AM YOUTH 7:30 PM	6 KIDS CENTRAL 4:30 – 6:00 PM	7	8 AA GROUP 9:00 AM
9 WORSHIP 10:00 ANNUAL GATHERING 11:15 NA GROUP 7 PM	10 THE CHOSEN 7:00 PM	11 WCC CIRCLE 10:00 AM WORSHIP COMM 7:30 PM	12 WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY 10:00 AM STAFF MTG 11 AM YOUTH 7:30 PM	13 KIDS CENTRAL 4:30 – 6:00 PM	14	15 AA GROUP 9:00 AM
16 WORSHIP 10 AM BIBLE STUDY 11:30 AM NA GROUP 7 PM	17 THE CHOSEN 7:00 PM PRESIDENTS' DAY	18 TRUSTEES 7:30 PM	19 WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY 10:00 AM STAFF MTG 11 AM YOUTH 7:30 PM	20 KIDS CENTRAL 4:30 – 6:00 PM	21	22 AA GROUP 9:00 AM
23 WORSHIP 10 AM BIBLE STUDY 11:30 AM NA GROUP 7 PM	24 THE CHOSEN 7:00 PM	25 SESSION MEETING 7:00 PM	26 WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY 10:00 AM STAFF MTG 11 AM YOUTH 7:30 PM	27 KIDS CENTRAL 4:30 – 6:00 PM	28	



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9 WORSHIP 10 AM BIBLE STUDY 11:30 AM NA GROUP 7 PM	10 THE CHOSEN 7:00 PM	11 WCC CIRCLE 10:00 AM WORSHIP COMM 7:30 PM	12 WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY 10:00 AM STAFF MTG 11 AM YOUTH 7:30 PM	13 KIDS CENTRAL 4:30 – 6:00 PM	14 STEEPLE NOTES ARTICLES DEADLINE	15 AA GROUP 9:00 AM
16 WORSHIP 10 AM BIBLE STUDY 11:30 AM NA GROUP 7 PM	17 THE CHOSEN 7:00 PM	18	19 WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY 10:00 AM STAFF MTG 11 AM YOUTH 7:30 PM	20 KIDS CENTRAL 4:30 – 6:00 PM	21	22 AA GROUP 9:00 AM
23 / 30 WORSHIP 10 AM BIBLE STUDY 11:30 AM NA GROUP 7 PM	24 / 31 THE CHOSEN 7:00 PM ON 3/24 (LAST EPISODE THIS SEASON)	25 SESSION MEETING 7:00 PM	26 WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY 10:00 AM STAFF MTG 11 AM YOUTH 7:30 PM	27 KIDS CENTRAL 4:30 – 6:00 PM	28	29 AA GROUP 9:00 AM