

Dear church family,

Happy Thanksgiving! We are so thankful for each and every one of you. The purpose of this letter is to keep you informed about the ministry that we (your Session) continue to do. We met this month on Monday, November 15th. Below please find a summary of key highlights from our meeting. Thank you for your ongoing prayers!

Pastoral devotion: Pastor Clay recently introduced us to the book “Gentle and Lowly”, a book that takes an up-close look at the shepherding nature of Jesus. The theme verse of the book is Matthew 11:29 where Jesus describes himself as being gentle and lowly at heart. At this month’s meeting, we discussed our observations about the early chapters of the book and what we are learning. We exhorted one another to reflect Jesus to our flocks as we shepherd. Some of the ways in which that can be done are by being good listeners, showing sincere empathy, praying regularly, and becoming as approachable as possible. We are so grateful to be able to serve the church in these ways.

New Officers: We joyfully received the candidates for new officers at our meeting this month. As part of the process, each candidate is interviewed by a group of elders to confirm their sense of calling and fit with our ministry. This year’s candidates include four elders and two deacons. Each candidate was unanimously affirmed to move forward and will be presented to the congregation for formal vote at our annual meeting of the congregation in December (scheduled for Sunday, December 19th – time and format yet to be determined). If elected, their service will begin in January 2022.

Belonging to God’s Mission: Our mission as a church is robust. We have dozens of ministries and missionaries down the block and around the world who are proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ with power and fruitfulness. Sharing those stories with you is important, because it helps you to both understand what we are doing as well as to get excited about being a part of it. To that end, we are exploring new and innovative ways to share more such stories with you. At our meeting, we had a great discussion about how we might begin to use video projection in the sanctuary to share these stories with more of our congregation, more often. To be clear, this tool would not change our worship style. It would, however, provide ways in which to better tell the story of what God is doing in us and through us. We were generally very favorable to this idea, provided that it did not compromise the architectural integrity of our sanctuary.

Belonging to God’s Family: One important aspect of our ministry as a “family” is caring and serving one another when the Lord calls one of us home. Memorials at Central are a beautiful facet of belonging to God’s family. Earlier this year, you may remember that we shared information about our consideration of a columbarium at Central, a resource that would enhance our ability to serve families who have lost loved ones. Since then, we have studied various options for how a columbarium might be integrated on our campus. Based on those studies and our subsequent conversations, we are not certain that a columbarium at Central is a good idea to pursue. The options on our campus are somewhat limited and not inexpensive. At present, we are not prepared to move forward with this idea.

Caring for Our Pastors: Our denomination (EPC) is hosting a weekend retreat for pastors of the denomination in January 2022. We are encouraging all of our pastors to consider attending as a way to find encouragement and refreshment. Additionally, we approved a sabbatical for Pastor Clay to take place during the summer of 2022. This is a proactive effort on our part to invest in him and to ensure he remains healthy for many years to come as he serves us. Please join us in continuing to pray for all of our staff as they joyfully serve us in their respective roles.

Seasonal Generosity: As we enter the final weeks of 2021, we are praying for another wonderful season of generosity at Central. This has become a regular part of our life as a church, and it is a joy to be able to be part of God’s mission through our collective generosity. Our theme this year is “Lift Our Eyes”, a concept that we saw in the Daniel sermon series. When God lifts our eyes to see him on the throne, we realize the amazing mission that we are a part of. Keep an eye out for more information on how you can partner with us financially between now and the end of the year, and let’s finish 2021 strong together by lifting our eyes and our tithes to him.

In closing, please know of our continued prayers for you. You can send a prayer request to us any time at prayer@centralpres.com. We take these seriously, and confidentially. It is a joy to pray for you! Thank you for praying for us, too. We do not take our responsibility lightly, and your prayers for our protection and discernment are invaluable.

With gratitude for each of you, in Christ -

Elder Gary Smith
Chairman, Flock Oversight
Team

Elder Larry Kindbom
Chairman, Governance
Commission

Pastor Clay Smith
Session Moderator