

HOW YOUR
SACRIFICE HAS
CHANGED LIVES

2022

MAKING SPACE
FOR GOD'S GRACE
TO REACH MORE
PEOPLE



REVIEW

STORIES
OF HOPE + LIFE



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What a year we have experienced together at Central!

Could we have imagined God's work over just these last 365 days? Who could forget the 110 recent baptisms, each with its **unique story offering us a fresh encounter with God** at work through our church? How can we measure the impact of so many children engaging with God, thanks to the incredible team of children's, middle, and high school leaders? And a vibrant church now exists in Columbia, Tennessee, which has seen scores of people come to Christ. How can we measure the eternal destiny of 1,500 people being changed over the last year alone?

Just last week, a single guy teared up as he shared how he'd found Christ, found a support group and was making progress in beating a life-threatening habit. All of this was possible because somebody told him about Celebrate Recovery which led him to timidly walk through the doors one Monday night.

Throughout history, **God has been inviting humanity into the story He is writing**, the plans He has already etched across time.

History is full of *kairos* moments – moments of opportunity – where God drew near and invited people into what He was doing. Last year we experienced a significant number of *kairos* moments, and 2022 has been yet another huge year of life change. The stories continue to emerge on how we, as a church, seized the opportunity to **amplify**

the hope and life of Jesus to those who don't know the Lord.

We have challenges. A number of our thriving ministries are out of space; we know that seats are hard to find on a Monday night at Celebrate Recovery. We desperately need that renovated chapel to continue to make room for what God is doing.

We are a church that is making a difference by giving ourselves away. We don't have to invest in seeing churches 'built' across our nation. We didn't have to invest over \$100,000 in supporting believers in war-torn Ukraine. We don't have to invest in seeing broken people being made whole, hurting people finding healing, and bound people being set free. We don't have to do any of this; we get to do all this!

LETTER



We get to do this because of **people like you who generously invest** your time, talents, and treasures into this incredible mission. Thank you. Your investment directly changes lives for eternity. While I do not know who gives what amount, I do know that we, as a church, honor your investment and handle the responsibility with great integrity.

We have a bold goal for the next twelve months that we need God's power to achieve. Year-end giving has always played a massive part in the goals we have. As you read this report, I draw your attention to the pages that explain our goal and how you can **prayerfully discern your part** in this.

Thank you for being such a vital part of Central. **Buckle up for the year ahead!** There'll be plenty more opportunities that we'll need to seize!

~ Craig

FROM CRAIG

05

GOD IS TRANSFORMING LIVES

HI, MY NAME IS BARB, and I'm a grateful, growing believer in Jesus Christ. I'm celebrating recovery from anger and depression. I'm still working on unforgiveness.

I proudly and humbly recite this every week at Celebrate Recovery. I **can testify that I'm not the same woman who walked into CWC in September of 2021.** God has done a great work in my heart and life in the last 12 months.

Through the group meeting, "open share", and because of the love and kindness shown me by the leaders and friends I have made, I have been transformed. I praise God who has used the ministry of Celebrate Recovery to start healing my hurts, habits, and hang-ups.

~ Barb



“ I CAN TESTIFY THAT I'M NOT
THE SAME WOMAN WHO
WALKED INTO CWC IN
SEPTEMBER OF 2021. ”

BEST PLACE TO BE ON A MONDAY NIGHT!



I WILL BE FOREVER GRATEFUL that I was introduced to Celebrate Recovery by my daughter, Tessa, in 2021 and have attended regularly since that time. This program has been life-changing for me and my family. Not only have I met the most amazing men and women at Celebrate Recovery, but I also feel that I have an unlimited amount of support from the CR team.

Although I have had extended periods of sobriety in the past, this is so much different! **I have peace and continued joy that I haven't experienced in a very long time.** I now serve where I can, but could never come close to giving this program what it has given to me. God and Celebrate Recovery have done for me what I could not do for myself. It's the best place to be on a Monday night!

~ Cheryl

“ **I HAVE PEACE
AND CONTINUED JOY THAT
I HAVEN'T EXPERIENCED IN
A VERY LONG TIME.** ”



ONE WEEKEND AT THE START OF COVID, we tuned into Central online, and our kids fell in love with their kids' program. They watched Pastor Ethan each week using his Legos to teach about Jesus-what a creative way to connect with kids!

To be honest, the size of Central had me a little worried, but once things opened up, we decided to attend. We were so impressed with how warm and welcoming everyone was, and our kids found community not just on Sundays, but in kids' choir and musical theater camp.

The volunteers who pour into our kids have been amazing and have really gone the extra mile to get to know them personally, teaching them not just biblical truths, but helping them cultivate a personal relationship with Jesus. In fact, this summer our daughter Audrey made the decision to get baptized! I have no doubt this decision was, in part, because of her involvement at Central.

This summer our kids had a lemonade stand to raise money to purchase school supplies for Jefferson Elementary, one of Central's local partners. I love that Central has not only taught our kids about scripture but also how to live it in their everyday lives. Central has had a profound impact on us as individuals and as a family in growing closer to God and each other.

~ Danielle

KIDS FINDING COMMUNITY AND BIBLICAL TRUTHS IN THE ARTS



WHEN OUR CENTRAL FAMILY responded to a need for cafeteria and lunch recess supervision at Jefferson Elementary, God sent exactly who He needed each day. Wiping lunch tables and pushing swings was just the start.

One day while one of our Central volunteers was in the recess yard, she noticed a little girl sitting alone. The volunteer approached the girl and asked her if she was okay. The girl told her she was just feeling sad. Tears were falling slowly down her young face.

The volunteer told her she has days like that, too--where you just feel like crying, and you're not sure why. She chatted with her about how some days are harder than others, and then they spent the recess walking together around the paths of the playground. The volunteer asked some questions and told her some stories about her own life. The little girl brightened up because **she was seen**.

Without a doubt, God knew that girl was going to be having a sad day. He knew. . . He saw. . . He cared. He had someone to be His hands and feet that day. Because Central responded, that girl had someone walking alongside her, amplifying the hope + life of Jesus.

A LITTLE GIRL

SITTING ALONE

GOD SHOWS UP AT SUMMER BBQs



MY WIFE AND I HAVE TALKED about hosting new people from church for years, and this year God made that happen in a very big way. Faye and I shared our thoughts about this with Anna, the Groups Coordinator, and she said she had been praying for something like this. That led to a series of summer BBQs where we had the privilege of hosting families who were mostly new to Central. We knew we would need help, so we asked our small group, and they dove right in--greeting people, listening, and playing games with kids.

We hosted young couples, singles, and families as large as eight. Not only were there games and food, but what impressed us most was how they were able to share and connect, opening up about themselves and how God was working in their lives. **It was so much more than we had hoped or imagined--leave it to God to surprise you!**

And the connection continues--one of these gals has joined our small group; another is leading a small group, and several other couples are leaders as well. If these new people of Central are any indication of who is coming to our church, the future of Central is very bright! We were hoping these dinners would be a blessing to others, but in truth, the greater blessing was ours. We are so thankful for this opportunity and for our church!

~ Ben & Faye

“

**IT WAS SO MUCH MORE
IMAGINED--LEAVE IT**



BAPTIZED AT 96

RECENTLY, I went to Resthaven Nursing Home to visit Dorothy. Dorothy is 96 years old and has loved Jesus for as long as she can remember. She has attended Central for many years. In our conversation, she mentioned a **near-drowning experience when she was a little girl that left her very fearful of water**. In fact, she hasn't been in a large body of water since.

She went on to say this **fear of water has prevented her from being baptized**, something she's always wanted to do. When I told her that believer's baptism is not about the amount of water but obedience through a public celebration, she immediately rejoiced, and we began planning her baptism. On October 7, she gathered her family and was baptized in the Resthaven chapel. She said, "This is one of the happiest days of my life." And then . . . she decided to become an official member of Central Wesleyan.

~ *Pastor Larry*

**THAN WE HAD HOPED OR
TO GOD TO SURPRISE YOU!**

””

Central | Worth the Investment

THE POWER OF PRESENCE



● **WHEN I ARRIVED AT “LUCY’S” SPARTAN**, but tidy, one-bedroom apartment, I found her sitting on her well-worn sofa, the blinds were drawn, the TV was off, and her walker was nearby. I sat next to her, and she wept uncontrollably in my arms as she told me her story.

Lucy had nursed her husband through lung and brain cancer before he died a couple of years ago, and then her only child (a son) died from Covid last Christmas. Various other factors had led to her current isolation--she'd loaned her car long-term to her granddaughter, she had tremendous knee pain, but mostly, she was frozen in her grief and aloneness. We talked, and I prayed and reminded her that God sees her. The second visit was entirely different. The blinds were open, she'd made fruit salad and muffins, she'd lit a candle, and she was smiling. **She told me she felt like she has someone in her corner for the first time and what a huge difference it had made.**

Many things have happened since then; I've had many hours of conversation with Lucy, and now I have a volunteer who will be meeting with her regularly. Lucy has her car back and was able to drive to Kollen Park for the first time since her husband died. She recently had a procedure to relieve her knee pain, and she's starting to build her life around her losses. She's talking about going to the library and back to her exercise class at the Aquatic Center. She wants to come to Sunday services and regularly attend her Central bible study.

Lucy still has lots of hills and valleys, but she's slowly moving forward and feels some hope again. I've been reminded that this is the power of presence, **and I'm grateful that we're a church that encourages us to find the "Lucys" among us, hold their hearts, help them find connection, and point them to the true Healer and Giver of hope.**

~ Jennifer

“ SHE TOLD ME SHE FELT LIKE SHE HAS SOMEONE IN HER CORNER FOR THE FIRST TIME AND WHAT A HUGE DIFFERENCE IT HAD MADE. ”



WHILE WE WERE PRAYING FOR UKRAINE

In spite of the grief and war in Ukraine, Transformation Church had a special event on September 3. We had the second baptism of the year and were blessed with ten more people who were willing to be baptized, six of those people started attending Transformation Church during the last six months of the war. These are stories from that day:

Lena: "I have been walking by this church daily for 20 years. I have seen the church construction; I have heard the singing and music. **Yet for all those years I was afraid to come in.** Once the war happened, I managed to come inside the church, and it became the place where I found salvation in Jesus Christ, as well as, a new family of God."

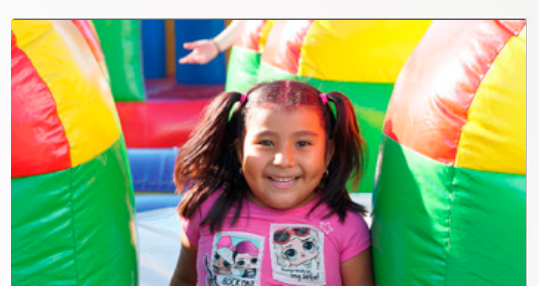
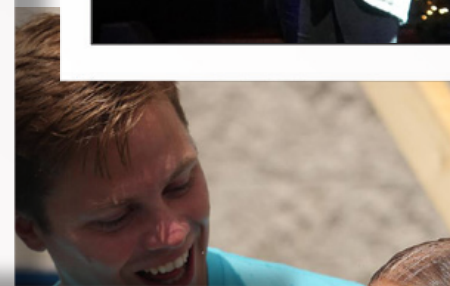
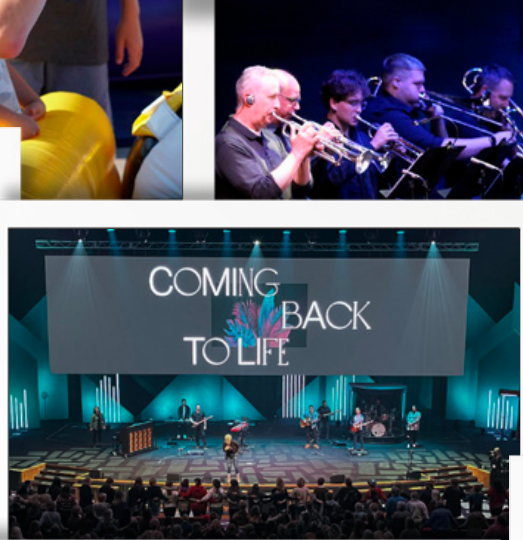
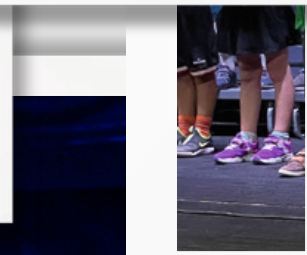
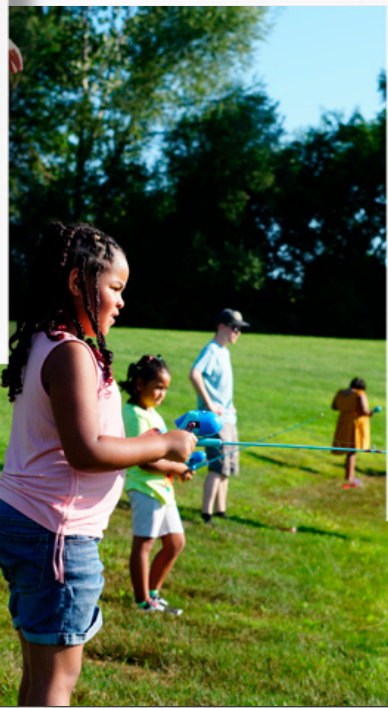
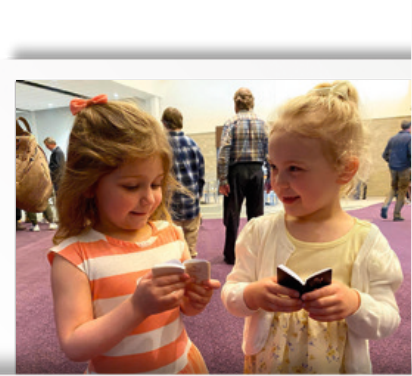
Ludmila: "My daughter and granddaughter have attended this church for a while. They were already baptized here and started to serve in the church. However, I didn't have faith and could not believe. Then when the war started, and they started bombing Kyiv with missiles, I came to the basement of the church to hide from the bombings. **Here I heard the Word of God and believed in Jesus Christ.**"

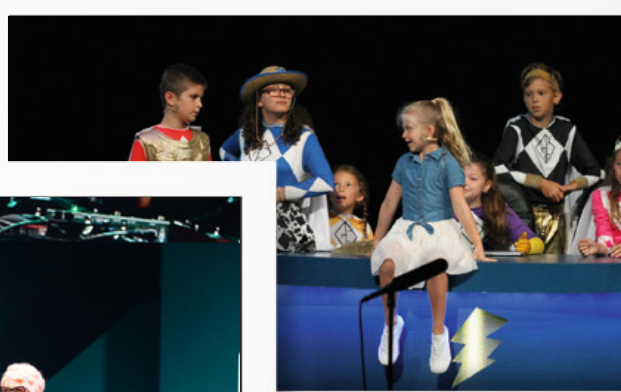
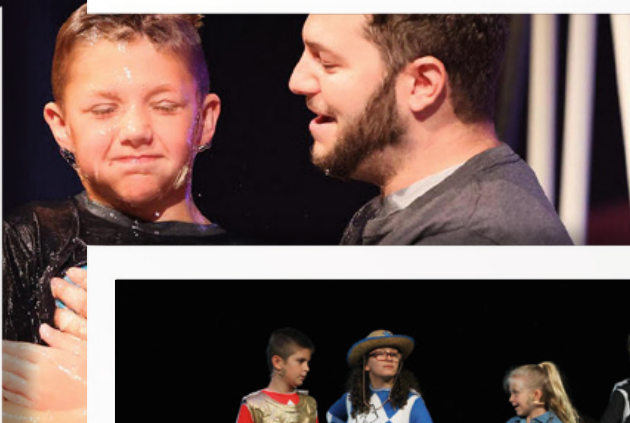
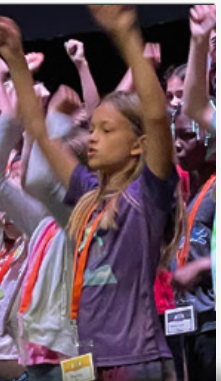
Victoria: "I came to the church to receive humanitarian aid-- some groceries and clothes-- and here I heard a sermon and an invitation to attend the Bible class. I began studying the Bible with pleasure, and while I was studying it, God touched my heart, and I repented. Now I can praise God together with you. I am so glad I will be baptized soon."

— GOD WAS MOVING

Central | Worth the Investment

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I HAVE BEEN ATTENDING Central Wesleyan Church for about 38 years and have been a believer in Jesus Christ since I was 19 years old. After my retirement from a career in Law Enforcement, I felt the calling to help others who were dealing with difficulties and struggles in their lives. This calling led me to the program of Celebrate Recovery here at Central.

I soon discovered that everyone, including myself, has issues that need to be dealt with. Personally, I found that I had anger issues that had led to hatred and unresolved resentment which caused damaged relationships

that needed healing. The things I've learned in my journey of recovery from anger have **given me the courage to ask and receive forgiveness, heal relationships, and find new freedom, joy, and peace in my heart, soul, and mind.**

Celebrate Recovery offers hope to the hopeless, new life through Jesus Christ and as a bonus, many new friendships. The word about Celebrate Recovery has been spreading to our community and beyond so much that we see **new people coming each week, and as a result, we are overflowing** in our current location. What an exciting thing to witness. Thanks for letting me share what God is using to change my life and the life of so many others.

~John

**SO MANY
OF US FINDING
RECOVERY**

YOU NEVER KNOW HOW GOD WILL USE YOU



THIS MORNING, I dropped my grandson off at the Boys and Girls Club for his day program. The receptionist there looked familiar to me, so I asked her if I looked familiar to her, too. It took us a while to figure out that we knew each other when I worked at the church in the late 90s.

She lived at Harbor Village Apartments and came to a class I led at the time called Spice for Life! She told me still has the recipe book from the class, and her favorite recipe to this day is the Peruvian cheesecake recipe. It was wonderful to talk to her and bring up the memories from 25 years ago. Those things that the church did for her were wonderful for her and her kids. They influenced her family's lives and the family has continued to attend a local church!

We seldom hear how a church's outreach programs have influenced people and, like this one, changed the trajectory of their lives. It was powerful to hear this story and be reminded that the seeds we plant now take root and produce real change over time.

~ Sybil

“ BE REMINDED
THAT THE SEEDS WE PLANT
NOW TAKE ROOT AND PRODUCE
REAL CHANGE OVER TIME. ”



LIFE IS BETTER CONNECTED

WE HAVE 20 CLASSES spread over 30 weeks, but one class, Women of Faith, has navigated from one study to the next, all the while pressing into their relationship with God and one another. Women of Faith recurs every week and has taken the **classroom model and turned it into a vehicle for grace, love, and the pursuit of truth.** While remaining available to any woman at any time, each participant in this Sunday School Class looks for opportunities to make an impact, whether in their own life or the lives of others.

“**A VEHICLE FOR
GRACE, LOVE,
AND THE PURSUIT
OF TRUTH.**”

With the tagline, Living Out Our Faith Together, **they've met in the gazebo, at church, online, at Christmas Desserts, at homes, and at the waters of baptism.** Not only do they learn and gather together, but they bring their faith with them.

Life is better connected. The ladies of Women of Faith have exemplified how pursuing God faithfully can lead to so much more.



WHEN WE SENT OFF over 34 graduating seniors, it left us with the daunting task of filling the shoes of a graduating class that was so large and very involved. At the beginning of this school year, two students, Jordan and Olivia, began inviting friends and going out as a group after FUEL on Sunday nights. What started as just two students has ballooned into a solid group of 8-12.

God has used students like Jordan and Olivia to create a culture of invitation that is spreading. Each week we have seen more of our students inviting their friends. These students have started group chats with other students at FUEL and text one another every week to remind and encourage them to attend.

Since our high school ministry meets on Sunday evenings, that means many of our students are going to church in the morning and come back again for our student ministry. We believe that we are witnessing students at Central take ownership of the ministry they are a part of.

In my years as a student pastor, whenever students take ownership like this, I've always seen an influx of life change as students come to "check out" what is going on in their friends' lives.

~ *Spencer*



STUDENTS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

A HOME FOR ALL ABILITIES

GOD IS GROWING our Special Needs Ministry! Perhaps you have seen our students dancing before the Lord during worship or noticed more wheelchairs. From Buddies to assist all ages to participate in Central ministries to The Friendship Class for older students and adults with cognitive disabilities to Night at the Playland – there are many opportunities for those with unique abilities and their families.



“Our son hasn’t been able to participate in church for 7 years and we didn’t even realize the psychological effect it was having on our family going to church every Sunday without our son. We’re so grateful to have a place where our whole family can feel part of a faith community. Central has done a fantastic job of adapting to our son’s needs and **simply not giving up on him being a part of the church.**”

“This ministry is the reason our family of seven is able to worship together on Sunday mornings. Our daughter is severely cognitively delayed. Without the reliable, safe, loving, and intentional care the team faithfully offers Lexi and others each week, we’d be unable to participate in community as we do. **We praise God that families of all different types can engage at Central, knowing that our kids (of all ages and stages) are safe!**”

“SIMPLY NOT GIVING UP ON HIM BEING A PART OF THE CHURCH.”



FINDING FREEDOM

A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO, I was introduced to the Wellsprings of Freedom ministry at Central. Our family was going through some struggles, and someone suggested we should each have a session.

During my first three hour prayer and inner healing session, the Holy Spirit led me to a hurt in my past, which was affecting how I handled a situation in my life. From there, the team led me through a powerful time of healing. This included forgiving others, God, and myself.

In addition, I found spiritual healing as I learned to distinguish the voice of the enemy from the voice of the Lord. Through this process, I **uncovered the lies that kept repeating in my head and replaced them with the truth of God's Word**. Over time, as I learned to walk in this freedom, the chatter in my head finally stopped. It was replaced with peace and joy. I have found lasting freedom and am forever changed.



I WAS INVITED BY TWO FRIENDS to attend the women's Bible Study Fellowship program at Central. I had never really been in a comprehensive Bible study before. **Well, that was 16 years ago, and I'm still a part of BSF today!**

I love that BSF is intergenerational and international-- a discussion group could have women from all over the world of different ages, denominations, and spiritual levels studying the same passages at the same time. My faith has matured and grown through all the different studies that I have completed - some of them repeat studies.

I am truly grateful for BSF and how God has used the studies to shape me and stretched my faith.

TEACHING GOD'S WORD TO THE NEXT GENERATION AT BSF

I became a children's leader for BSF about 10 years ago. I now get the privilege of teaching God's Word to the next generation. God never ceases to amaze me in my classroom. When God's Word is being taught, the children are attentive and ready to absorb the lesson. Seeing little ones lay their hands on the Bible and telling them, "God's Word is true, and it is true for you", is a highlight of each week. And knowing that some of my grandchildren are involved in the BSF children's program is truly a joy.

~Kathy

“ I AM TRULY GRATEFUL
• FOR BSF AND HOW GOD
HAS USED THE STUDIES TO SHAPE ME AND
STRETCHED MY FAITH ”. •

CENTRAL CHAPEL



MULTI-GENERATIONAL, vibrant worshippers who love worshipping God with great hymns of the faith and songs of worship will enjoy this traditional worship that often features a full choir and orchestra along with an organ and piano.

Our dream for Central Chapel is traditionally blended music and live sermons. On any given Sunday, we might highlight a men's or ladies' ensemble, children's choir, rhythm section and saxophone, brass quintet, woodwind quartet, or string ensemble.

Central Chapel does not **compete** with Big House worship but **completes** it, thereby offering everyone an opportunity to invite people to partner with us as we amplify the hope and life of Jesus to all people.

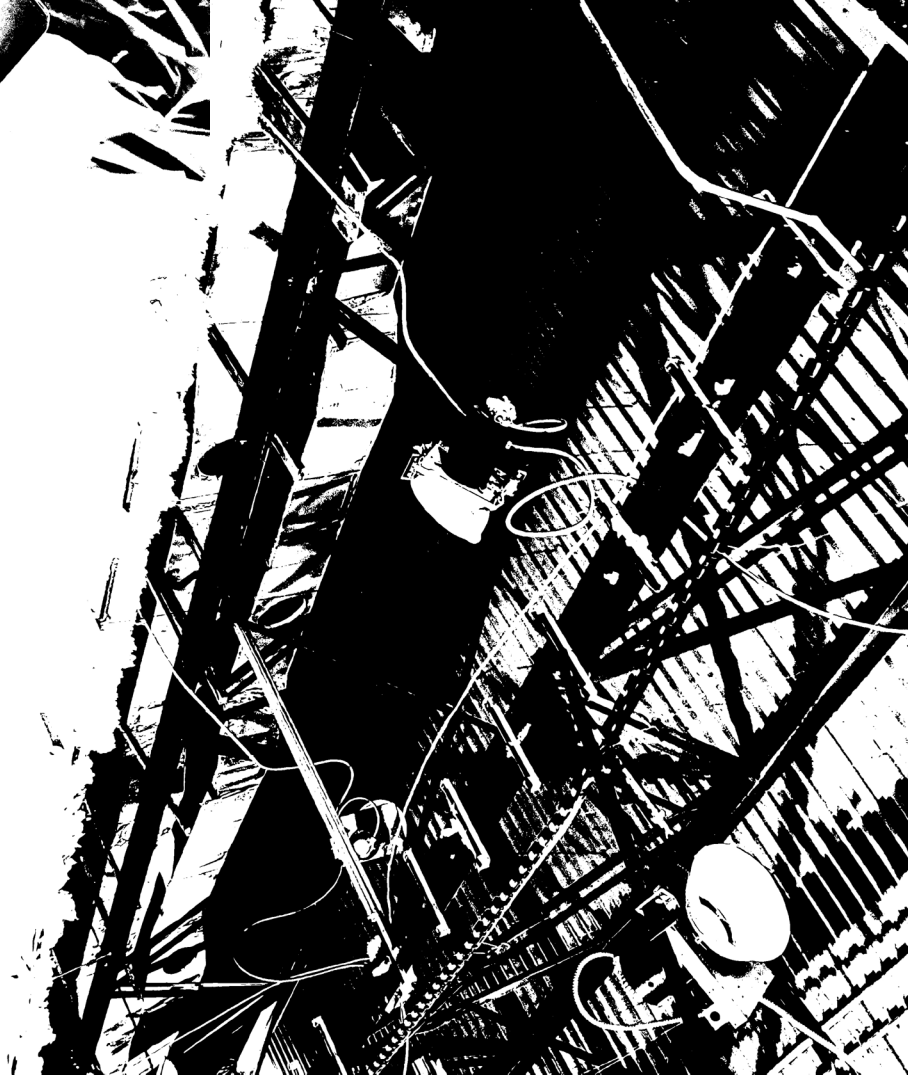
Aren't we passionate about people, not buildings? A facility's purpose, by definition, is to facilitate the work of those who use it.

Our facilities are both the hub and the engine of our ministry. They should communicate who we are and what we are about.

Our facility currently gives mixed messages. We say we want diverse ministries, but critical spaces are inflexible spaces that force conformity to a fixed expression. We say we care about growing our ministries, but ministries that grow beyond two hundred have nowhere else to go.



WORTH THE INVESTMENT



We want to **facilitate diverse, innovative, and flourishing ministries**. To that end, we are compelled to refurbish the chapel.

Forty-seven years ago, we were led to this beautiful campus and told to reach Holland and beyond. **We have done just that.** Through countless expansions, these facilities have served us well. The world we now live in, the state we now live in, and the town we now live in have all changed. To continue to reach Holland and beyond, we must retool our facility to meet very different challenges. A major part of **our ability to meet the global challenge is to retool the facility that houses our ministries and springboards us into the world.** Only then can we look at those who are yet to sit in the seats we now occupy, and say, "Reach Holland and beyond again."

Central | Worth the Investment

A PLAN TO GIVE



Lynn Bruce
CFO + Executive
Pastor of Operations

We believe the Bible teaches us to honor the Lord through our giving. **Giving is an act of worship, an expression of gratitude, an investment in the Lord's after work and it is an act of obedience.** For all of us – it reflects our relationship with Jesus because where our treasure is our heart will be there also, and giving is one step toward putting Jesus as a higher priority than our possessions.

Although the Bible teaches the concept of tithing, honoring the Lord with the first 10% of our earnings, not everyone is there. Our advice is to begin where you are and take a step closer toward that obedience goal. It is a spiritual journey and the Bible is clear, we cannot out give God. Giving is like planting seeds, God will bless our giving far more than we can imagine.

Central Wesleyan is right now following a vision the Lord has given us for the coming year that will require many of us to give above and beyond our normal giving. This year we need to raise \$1 million beyond our General Budget to help fund the Chapel renovation project, a project that is critical to the call God has put on us for the coming season.

Regardless of where you are in giving, we ask everyone to do the following:

- **PRAY.** Pray about what God is calling you to give it is through prayer that He will lead and guide us.
- **PARTICIPATE.** We will accomplish the vision God has given us corporately only by many of God's people reaching out and seeking God to supply beyond our personal limitation.
- **PLAN.** Jesus judges the greatest giving not by how much is given but by how much is left. The more our giving includes after sacrifice the greater the blessing of God.

You can trust the leadership of Central Wesleyan to use strict standards of internal control and accountability. God-honoring stewardship is at the heart of leadership as it seeks to manage the resources that God provides. The church is managed by the highest standards and discipline in financial management and internal controls.

Not only does the church have levels of internal oversight in its management, it submits to a formal audit by independent auditors that hold the church to the highest standards of general acceptable accounting principles. Audited financial statements are posted online annually as part of leadership's accountability. The church operates by a disciplined budget process in which great care is made to steward resources proved toward the most God-honoring ministries that will work toward fulfilling the vision that He has given the church.

Leadership is committed to doing what it says with resources that people give. Much care is given to honor donor restrictions placed on any gift. Leadership also holds itself accountable for results in reviewing the effectiveness of ministry effort to ensure a good return for the ministry investment that is being made. Leadership understands there are many ways to invest in the Lord's work and there is a passion to be as effective as possible.

RESULTS & RELIABILITY

WAYS



ONLINE GIVING – the most popular way to give is through online giving at centralholland.org/give. Regardless if you set up recurring gifts or place a one-time gift, it is easy, guaranteed safe and the most popular and efficient way to give.



FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE 70 ½ and have an IRA, a direct distribution counts toward a required minimum distribution and it is sent directly to the church without being reported as taxable income for the donor. Notify the custodian of the IRA and direct them to send a direct distribution to the church and then let the Business Office know so the church can properly recognize this gift and apply it according to your wishes.

TO

GIVE

STOCKS AND NON-GOVERNMENT BONDS

- If stocks and bonds have appreciated in value, by donating them one can receive giving credit for the market value and avoid being taxed on capital gains or the cost of liquidating the security. For assistance in processing this type of gift contact the Business Office at 616.395.3121.

GIVE IN PERSON BY PLACING A GIFT

in one of the kiosks in the main lobby or balcony. You may also mail the gift to the church.

CENTRALHOLLAND.ORG/GIVE





CENTRALHOLLAND.ORG