CENTRAL Chimes
Central Presbyterian Church
PETERSBURG, ILLINOIS

Hello Friends**:**

I've been reading a book lately that has provided some very interesting insights. It is called "*The Rage against God: How Atheism led me to Faith*!" by Peter Hitchens. Mr. Hitchens is a British journalist with quite a lot of experience living and reporting all over the world. In this book he outlines some of the things that led him away from Christ and the Church, and then later in his life those things that led him back to Faith in Jesus. One of the better chapters of the book is entitled: "*Is it Possible to Determine What is Right and What is Wrong without God*?" Here he gives some great insight into the foundations, roots, or origins of what we would call morality:

> "It is plain that for a moral code to be effective, the code must be attributed to, and vested in, a non-human source. It must be beyond the power of humanity to change it to suit itself. If that non-human source can be shown to be false, then the moral code that it endorses cannot be absolute. It will become a matter of choice or have to be kept in place by the threat of force, or a mixture of both, like any other code of human invention."

The Founders of our Country knew this well. They looked to something beyond themselves, whether they called this something God, or Natural Law, to justify those inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, the very foundations of our Revolution and later our Constitution. We do not look to our subjective understanding when it comes to a moral code of conduct. If we did, we would probably promote more of a "survival of the fittest" ethic. The new "Golden Rule" would become: "Whoever has the gold, makes the rules."

We instead, as members of Christ's Church, strive to love our neighbor as Jesus loves us. Any society that gets remotely close to this ethic has prospered and will prosper. The light found within the Ten Commandments: to love God first, and then to love your neighbor as yourself, is the bedrock of any successful culture or nation. This way of life does not have roots in fickle and self-centered humanity, but in someone greater than you or I. Morality that stands the test of time is not found in the creation, but in the Creator!

A final quote from this author, celebrating God's people sacrificially striving to follow the ways of God: "Humans, some say, are not so constituted as to care for others as much as themselves. This is demonstrably untrue and can be shown to be untrue—first through the unshakeable devotion of mothers to their children; through thousands of examples of doctors and nurses risking infection and death in the course of caring for others; in the uncounted cases of husbands caring for sick, incontinent, and demented wives (and vice versa); through the heartrending deeds of courage on the battlefield, of men actually laying down their lives for others. We all know that these things happen. If we are honest, they make us uncomfortable because we are not sure that we could do such things, though we know them to be right and admirable."

Happy New Year!

Ryan Edgecombe, Pastor
Edgeness79@hotmail.com

Highlights of Regular Session Meeting, December 19, 2025

- Bank balance as of November 30, 2025, is $31,441.28.
- **MOTION: The following were approved for Financial Assignment for 2026:**
  - **Church Treasurer—Rhonda Plaeger**
  - **Major Maintenance Fund Treasurer—Rhonda Plaeger**
  - **Endowment Funds—Chris Ford**
  - **Memorial—Coleen Janssen**
  - **Bereavement—Beth Kiningham**
  - **Committee Assignment—Clerk of Session—Jane Stephenson**
    - **Motion made by Clerk, Seconded. APPROVED.**
- Annual Congregational Meeting—February 1, 2026.
- Pastor Report:
  - Pastor Visits: 13 Pastoral visits and/or contacts in person or via phone with members and friends of the Church.
  - Food Pantry—attends on a regular basis.
  - Bible Study—looking at various Messianic Texts in the Old Testament in observance of Advent. December 17, went to Sunny Acres and Countryside and sang Christmas songs for residents instead of Bible Study.
  - Christmas Eve Service will be held at 8:00 p.m. on December 24.
  - Pastor vacation December 25 through January 3.

Administration Committee News

Financial

- Our income YTD is $23,570.03 above budget and expenses are below budget by $10,250.70. Our income is above budget due to transferring $20,000.00 from the General Fund CDs. Regardless of budget, our income is $12,519.65 lower than our expenses. Without the $20,000 transfer we would be $32,519.65 below budget and this amount is in line with anticipated shortfall of $40,000 for our 2025 budget.
- Treasurer's Report, General Fund, Obligated Funds, and MMF were reviewed by the Committee.
- The checkbook balance, including Obligated Funds, is $31,441.28. This balance does not include one additional $20K CD that is held in savings.
- The one additional $20K CD matures on 12/19/25 and will initially be transferred to our Edward Jones money market account (currently paying 3.7%). This will be drawn out as needed in 2026 before utilizing any monies from our Endowment Fund accounts. This will be reflected in line items on the 2026 budget.
- The Committee is completing the 2026 budget:
- We are cancelling our insurance coverage with Church Mutual and have signed on with Goodville Mutual Casualty Company through Gillmore-Allen Insurance. The new coverage maintains strong coverage at a lower rate and we will have a local contact.
- Income line items will be completed toward the end of the year after all Pledges have been received and estimates are made on other Income line items.
- A completed budget proposal will be presented in January for Session approval prior to the Annual meeting in February.

- Julie Wankel with Edward Jones met with the Committee regarding the management of our combined Vanguard fund and Edward Jones accounts. We now receive a combined statement of our account. MMF and the Roof Fund will continue to be separate from our Endowment Fund (both Restricted and Unrestricted).
- With the inclusion of the Vanguard Funds, CPC now has a portfolio of 60% bonds and 40% stock which is more conservative in nature. This new balance will provide additional dividends annually so that we can better meet the ongoing financial needs of the church.

Building and Ongoing Projects

- Work is near completion on the painting of the Fellowship Hall. This is being paid for through the Memorial Committee and completed by Mark Goeringer.
- Presbytery Safety & Security Training has been moved to February 28.
- The Men's Lenten breakfast date for CPC will need to be changed due to a couple of the men being out of town on our assigned date.

Submitted by Steven Territo, Chairperson

Catechism Corner

Catechism Corner From κατηχέω, ("to teach orally")

I thought it might be useful for us to review and reflect a little each month from a catechism used by the PCUSA. Hopefully this will serve a purpose in helping us think deeper about our faith and even inspire us towards a greater pursuit of Christian Theology grounded in Holy Scripture. I pray you find this new section in the newsletter helpful. I enjoy talking theology so come by the church if you have questions or thoughts about these!

The Study Catechism: Full Version Approved by the 210th General Assembly (1998) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Question 120: What is Prayer?

Prayer means calling upon God whose Spirit is always present with us. In prayer we approach God with reverence, confidence and humility. Prayer involves both addressing God in praise, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication, and listening for God's word within our hearts. When we adore God, we are filled with wonder, love and praise before God's heavenly glory, not least when we find it hidden in the cross of Golgotha. When confessing our guilt to God, we ask for forgiveness with humble and sorry hearts, remembering that God is gracious as well as holy. When giving thanks to God, we acknowledge God's great goodness, rejoicing in God for all that is so wonderfully provided for us. Finally, when calling upon God to hear our requests, we affirm that God draws near in every need and sorrow of life and ask God to do so again.

Psalms 96:8-9 *"Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; bring an offering and come into his courts. Worship the Lord in holy splendor; tremble before him, all the earth."*

James 5:16 *"Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective."*

Psalms 75:1 *"We give thanks to you, O God; we give thanks; your name is near. People tell of your wondrous deeds."*

Ephesians 6:18 "*Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints."*

Question 121: What is the purpose of prayer?

Prayer brings us into communion with God. The more our lives are rooted in prayer, the more we sense how wonderful God is in grace, purity, majesty and love. Prayer means offering our lives completely to God, submitting ourselves to God's will, and waiting faithfully for God's grace. Through prayer God frees us from anxiety, equips us for service, and deepens our faith.

Psalms 62:8 "*Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us."*

Psalms 139:1 "*O Lord, you have searched me and known me."*

Philippians 4:6 *"Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."*

Question 122: How does God respond to our prayers?

God takes all our prayers into account, weighing them with divine wisdom, and responding to them by a perfect will. Although for the time being God's answers may seem beyond our understanding, or sometimes even bitter, we know nonetheless that they are always determined by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. God answers our prayers, particularly for temporal blessings, only in ways that are compatible with the larger purposes of God's glory and our salvation. Communion with God is finally the answer within the answers to all our prayers.

1 John 5:14 *"This is the boldness we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us."*

James 1:17 *"Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to Change."*

Matthew 6:33 *"Strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."*

Question 123: What encourages us to pray each day?

The God who has adopted us as children is the God who encourages and commands us to pray. When we pray, we respond with love to that greater love which meets us from above. Before we enter into prayer, God is ready to grant all that we need. We may turn to God with confidence each day, not because we are worthy, but simply because of God's grace. By praying we acknowledge that we depend on grace for all that is good, beautiful, life-giving and true.

Luke 11:12-13 *"If the child asks for an egg, will he give a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"*

Ephesians 3:20-21 *"Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen."*

Quotation Station for December

(Quotes on "Evangelism")

"Not called! Did you Say? Not heard the call, I think you should say. Put your ear down to the Bible and hear Him bid you go and pull sinners out of the fire of sin. Put your ear down to the burdened, agonized heart of humanity, and listen to its pitiful wail for help. Go stand by the gates of hell and hear the damned entreat you to go to their father's house and bid their brothers and

sisters and servants and masters not to come there. Then look Christ in the face—whose mercy you have professed to obey—and tell Him whether you will join heart and soul and body and circumstances in the march to publish His mercy to the world."

--William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army

"God is pursuing with omnipotent passion a worldwide purpose of gathering joyful worshipers for Himself from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. He has an inexhaustible enthusiasm for the supremacy of His name among the nations. Therefore, let us bring our affections into line with His, and, for the sake of His name, let us renounce the quest for worldly comforts and join His global purpose." --John Piper

"You have one business on earth—to save souls." --John Wesley

"I have but one passion: It is He, it is He alone. The world is the field, and the field is the world; and henceforth that country shall be my home where I can be most used in winning souls for Christ." --Count Nicolaus Ludwig Von Zinzendorf

"I am no longer anxious about anything, as I realize that He is able to carry out His will for me. It does not matter where He places me, or how. That is for Him to consider, not me, for in the easiest positions He will give me grace, and in the most difficult ones His grace is sufficient. The great Commission is not an option to be considered; it is a command to be obeyed. If I had 1,000 lives, I'd give them all for China." --Hudson Taylor

Monthly Riddle/Jokes

What's for breakfast on really cold January days?

Answer: snowflakes!

How was the snow globe feeling in January?

Answer: A little shaken!

What do you call a temper tantrum that a snowman throws in January?

Answer: A meltdown!

How did Jack Frost get to work on New Year's Day?

Answer: By icicle!

COATS

It was another successful COATS shopping trip! We took eight PORTA Junior and Senior High students shopping at Kohl's on December 10. The students got everything from coats to shoes and everything in between. One student's mom had emergency surgery that day and was unable to join us. We provided her with a Kohl's gift card. We got $360.00 in Kohl's cash which went to Anne Smith at the Menard County Housing Authority to help out with emergency clothing needs. Then we were off to Texas Roadhouse for a wonderful dinner. The hot rolls were flowing!

These students really needed our help. They were so grateful for the shopping trip and the dinner. Thank you for your generous donations. You are a blessing to our community.

Thank you to our shopping volunteers: Jan Costello, Beth Kiningham, Camilla and Dave Long, and Marilyn Montgomery.

Rebecca Rowe, COATS Coordinator

Children's Christmas Program

The Children's Christmas Program entitled "*The No Rehearsal Required Christmas Program*" was held on Sunday, December 21 during regular worship service. It was originally planned for Sunday, December 14, but had to be rescheduled due to inclement weather. A token of gratitude to all members and friends who volunteered 'on the spot' to fill roles; without you the story would have had numerous gaps. Thanks to Linda Claussen for directing and Camilla Long, Cindy Godbey, Bethany Edgecombe, and Brianne Satorius for costuming.

Christmas Fellowship

Following the Children's Christmas Program on Sunday, December 21, the congregation enjoyed the traditional Christmas Fellowship.

2026 Giving Envelopes

General Fund giving envelopes for 2026 are available on the Narthex table for those who requested them. There will likely be a different number on the envelopes than you are currently using; please discontinue using any old numbered envelopes. If you have 'leftover' envelopes with an old number, please return them to the basket provided in the Narthex and they will be recycled for pew envelopes.

In addition to the envelopes for the General Fund pledges, blue Per Capita and Major Maintenance Fund envelopes are available on the Narthex table and in the pews. PLEASE use the designated envelopes for each different contribution in order to get the offering recorded correctly.

Please Mark Your Calendars!

Now that 2025 has come to a conclusion, plans for 2026 are being made. Members of Central are responsible for electing the leaders for 2026 and approving the reports submitted for 2025.

- Submissions for the 2025 Annual Report to the congregation are to be in the church office as soon as possible—no later than Monday, January 5.
- The Election of the 2026 Class of Elders and Deacons and the 2027 Nominating Committee will be held Sunday, February 1, 2026.
- The Installation of 2026 Class of Elders and Deacons will take place after the Election on February 1. All being elected should plan to be present.
- The Annual Congregational Meeting is scheduled to immediately follow the Installation of new officers on February 1.

A quorum is needed for the Election and the Congregational Meeting, so **PLEASE plan to be in attendance on February 1!**

Lutheran Pastor Gross to Retire

The public is cordially invited to the Retirement Celebration Service for Pastor Jeffrey Gross on Sunday, January 11, 2026, at 3:00 p.m. at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 120 W. Monroe Street, Petersburg, Illinois. Officiant is District President Michael Mohr, with Katrina (Fricke) Jurica as guest organist. Refreshments will follow the service.

What Are Probiotics?

Written by: WebMD Editorial Contributors
Medically Reviewed by: Jennifer Robinson, M.D.

Probiotics are live bacteria and yeasts that are good for you, especially your digestive system. We usually think of these as germs that cause diseases. But your body is full of bacteria, both good and bad. Probiotics are often called "good" or "helpful" bacteria because they help keep your gut healthy.

You can find probiotics in supplements and some foods, like yogurt. Doctors often suggest them to help with digestive problems.

How Do They Work?

Researchers are trying to figure out exactly how probiotics work. Some of the ways they may keep you healthy:

- When you lose "good" bacteria in your body, for example after you take antibiotics, probiotics can help replace them.
- They can help balance your "good" and "bad" bacteria to keep your body working the way it should.

Types of Probiotics

Many types of bacteria are classified as probiotics. They all have different benefits, but most come from two groups. Ask your doctor about which might best help you.

Lactobacillus: This may be the most common probiotic. It's the one you'll find in yogurt and other fermented foods. Different strains can help with diarrhea and may help people who can't digest lactose, the sugar in milk.

Bifidobacterium: You can find it in some dairy products. It may help ease the symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) and some other conditions.

Saccharomyces boulardii: This is a yeast found in probiotics. It appears to help fight diarrhea and other digestive problems.

What Do They Do?

Among other things, probiotics help send food through your gut by affecting nerves that control gut movement. Researchers are still trying to figure out which are best for certain health problems. Some common conditions they treat are:

- Irritable bowel syndrome.
- Inflammatory bowel disease (IBD).
- Infectious diarrhea (caused by viruses, bacteria, or parasites).
- Diarrhea caused by antibiotics.

There is also some research that shows they're useful for problems in other parts of your body. For example, some people say they have helped with:

- Skin conditions, like eczema.
- Urinary and vaginal health.
- Preventing allergies and colds.
- Oral health.

How to Use Them Safely

The FDA regulates probiotics like foods, not like medications. Unlike drug companies, makers of probiotic supplements don't have to show their products are safe or that they work.

Ask your doctor if taking probiotics is a good idea for you. In general, probiotic foods and supplements are thought to be safe for most people, though some people with immune system problems or other serious health conditions shouldn't take them.

In some cases, mild side effects might include an upset stomach, diarrhea, gas, and bloating for the first couple of days after you start taking them. They may also trigger allergic reactions. Stop taking them and talk to your doctor if you have problems.

Chimes Deadline

Please have your articles and pictures for the February **2026 *Chimes*** submitted to the church office **no later than Monday, January 19!** A ***Microsoft Word file*** attached to an email is the preferred method of submission. **Please reference "Chimes article" in the subject line.** Please email the church with any suggestions as to what you may want to see in the ***Chimes***. Our email address is office@central-pres.org

Keep Connected!

Pastor Ryan Edgecombe is in the church on Mondays and Wednesdays from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. If you wish to make an appointment to visit with him, please call the church office at 217-632-2651. You may also call or text his cell phone: 217-972-4859.

Members are encouraged to continue to stay connected with the church family. If you have an emergency or are in need of assistance from Central, please contact:

Church Office, 217-632-2651, Tuesday & Wednesday 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.,
Friday 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.; or leave a message anytime
Pastor Ryan Edgecombe, 217-972-4859
Marilyn Montgomery, Deacon Chair, 217-341-5361
Jane Stephenson, Clerk of Session, 217-341-7599

Another option for keeping connected is through the use of the **Central Presbyterian Prayer Chain** on Facebook. Group prayer is so powerful. The congregation is encouraged to reach out with any prayer request—nothing is too trivial! The posts are seen only by group members. If you are a Facebook user but not yet a group member, look us up and join today!

Menard Caring Food Pantry/Diaper Bank Needs

January is **"Brrr…..Bring Us Some Soup"** ***(canned soups)*** at the Food Pantry**.** Donations can be put in the basket in the Narthex.

For questions or information regarding the **Menard Caring Food Pantry**, please contact Lindsay Wilken, Food Pantry Coordinator at 217-717-2551, or Anne Smith, Menard Caring Treasurer at 217-303-8968.

Rather than purchasing items to donate, a monetary donation to the **Diaper Bank** is always accepted. Contact Lindsay Wilken for more information.

December Scenes from Central

Happy Birthday!

Jan. 2	Sherrie Leezer	Jan. 22	Greg Brown
Jan. 6	Lydia Winkelmann	Jan. 23	Hanna Roberts
Jan. 13	Lisa Willhite	Jan. 23	Grace Canady
Jan. 16	Henry Phillips	Jan. 28	Chris Ford
Jan. 17	Steve Territo	Jan. 29	Ashley Rutz
Jan. 20	Paul Montgomery		

Happy Anniversary!

January 9 Marilyn & Paul Montgomery

worship leader

	Usher/Greeter	***Liturgist***	***Communion Steward***
Sunday, Jan. 4	Ben Kiningham	Beth Kiningham	Pat Claussen
Sunday, Jan. 11	Camilla Long	Dave Long	
Sunday, Jan. 18	Jerry Tice	Janene Tice	
Sunday, Jan. 25	Steve Territo	Chris Ford	

If you cannot fulfill your duty as usher/greeter or liturgist, please find someone to take your place.

Also, let the church office know of the changes as soon as possible.

Worship Attendance

December 7	**35**	Christmas Eve	**45**
December 14	**0**	December 28	**28**
December 21	**48**		

Average Worship Attendance: 31

Members:

Will Carter
Steve Hollis
Mary Mies
Alia Montgomery
Marilyn Montgomery
JoAnn Morris
Charles (Sandy) Sandberg
Jim Satorius
Judy Stahl
Linda Williams

Friends of the Congregation:

Jim Allen (P. & M. Montgomery's cousin)
Tim Bellinger (R. Plaeger's nephew)
Raeleigh Bess (P. & M. Montgomery's great niece)
Tina Bidlingmaier (J. Higginbotham's daughter-in-law)
Clarice Blout (B. Satorius' grandmother)
Dale Blout (B. Satorius' father)
Judy Boutelle (Rev. Boutelle's wife)
Larry & Peggy Brandon (Pastor Ryan's friends)
Shirley Cassidy (C. Janssen's friend)
Danny Coffey (J. Goeringer's brother)
Jim Daugherty (former Boy Scout Leader)
Serge Davis
Barb Deihl (L. Williams' cousin)
Brad Denton (L. Denton's cousin)
Sandy Dierks
Pastor Ryan Edgecombe
Vicki Edgecombe (Pastor Ryan's mother)
Cheryl Esela (L. Claussen's sister)
Linda Ewing (D. & C. Long's friend)
Family of Renate Green (Pastor Ryan's friend)
Liam Grogan (D. & C. Long's nephew)
Tyler Gurski (B. & A. Studzinski's grandson)
Marlene Hartsook (R. Ford's sister)
Lucien Hill (grandson to friend of M. Montgomery)
Angie Hodgson (C. Drake's sister)
Kristina Hutton & boys (D. & C. Long's daughter)
Karen Kelso (C. Godbey's sister-in-law)
David "Anthony" Long (D. & C. Long's son)
Kathy Long (D. & C. Long's sister-in-law)
Jeanne Mohn
Katie Niccolls (J. Koch's granddaughter)
Janice Perry (daughter of a friend of Pastor Ryan)
Bonnie Peterson (Pastor Ryan's cousin)
Jay Rebman (L. Claussen's friend)
Steve & Kim Rebbe (C. Ford's friend)
Dorothy Ricketts (R. Plaeger's mother)
Stephanie Roseboom (J. Higginbotham's daughter)
Blair Rowe (R. Rowe's daughter)
Kathy Ruppel (M. Montgomery's friend)
Dawn Schafer (S. Schafer's daughter-in-law)
Harry Schirding
Co Shelton (J. Tice's friend)
Kay Siegrist (L. Williams' friend))
Jeff Smith (D. & C. Long's friend)
Janey Spangler (C. Long's family)
Nancy Swift (R. Pinkston's cousin)
John Territo (S. Territo's brother)
Gene Treseler
Carol White (J. Morris' friend)
Family of Dick Wiggins (Pastor Ryan's cousin)
Lauren Woodley (J. Satorius' friend J.D. Proehl's granddaughter)

Please pray for all we know who are homebound, residing in care facilities, undergoing surgery or medical treatment, serving in the military or who are away from their family and friends.

In Our Communities and In Our World:

Our Country and our World
Peace between nation neighbors
Victims of gun violence/mass shootings
Our youth so that they may find Christ!
Displaced people in the world
Victims of sexual assault
Racial equality
Homeless Veterans

Please keep the church office informed of members or friends that need to be placed on or removed from our prayer list. Send an email to: office@central-pres.org or call the church office at: 217-632-2651 with updates.

Beef Vegetable Soup

Taste of Home

Ingredients

1 lb. lean ground beef (90% lean)
1 medium onion, chopped
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. pepper
3 cups water
1 cup chopped celery
1 cup sliced carrots
2 tbsp. sugar
1 tbsp dried parsley flakes
2 tsp. dried basil
3 medium potatoes, peeled and cut into 3/4 -inch cubes
1 can (14-1/2 oz.) Italian diced tomatoes, undrained
1 can (11-1/2 oz.) V8 juice
1 bay leaf

Directions

1. In a nonstick skillet, cook beef and onion over medium heat until meat is no longer pink, breaking meat into crumbles, drain. Stir in salt and pepper.
2. Transfer to a 5 quart slow cooker. Add the remaining ingredients, cover and cook on low for 9-11 hours or until vegetables are tender. Discard bay leaf before serving.

Total Time/Prep: 20 minutes Cook: 9 hours Yield: 7 Servings

Favorite Chicken Salad Sandwiches

Taste of Home

Ingredients

1 cup shredded cooked chicken
1/2 cup chopped celery
1 tbsp. chopped green onions
2 tbsp. chopped ripe olives
2 tbsp. chopped dill pickle
1/4 cup mayonnaise
1/4 tsp. pepper
1/8 tsp. salt
4 slices sourdough bread, toasted
2 lettuce leaves

Directions

1. In a small bowl, combine the first eight ingredients. Spread over two toast slices; top with lettuce and remaining toast.

*Total Time/Prep: 20 minutes Yield: 2 Servings *