

The background of the cover is a photograph of the Central Presbyterian Church. The church is a large, multi-story building constructed from light-colored stone. It features Gothic-style architecture with pointed arch windows and doorways. The roofline is decorated with a series of small, dark, pointed finials. In the foreground, a wide, light-colored concrete sidewalk leads towards the church entrance. To the left of the sidewalk is a grassy area with some small plants and a low stone wall. In the background, other buildings and trees are visible under a clear blue sky.

MINISTRY REPORT 2016

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Pastoral Greetings.....	04
Worship at Central.....	08
Missions at Central.....	10
Central West End.....	12
Equip Central.....	14
Women at Central.....	16
PEEPs.....	18
Kid Central.....	20
Student Central.....	22
College Central.....	24
Central School.....	26
Hospitality Central.....	28
Congregational Care	30
Operations Central.....	32
Finance Central	34
Session at Central.....	38
Project Central	40





2016: A SEASON OF BLESSING, TRANSITION, & ANTICIPATION

Ecclesiastes 3 reminds us: “for everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven.” This familiar section of scripture captures the essence of the year 2016 at Central. We have said goodbye to a very special man of God, Pastor Bob Hopper. While we knew the day would come, we deeply miss both Bob and Tacey. At the same time, we rejoice at the call of Pastor Clay Smith. The Lord has begun to reveal to us what the next chapter at Central will look like, and we are grateful.

As 2016 comes to a close and we prepare to receive our new Senior Pastor, we give thanks to the Lord for the year behind us. This report is a small glimpse into what the Lord has done in us and through us. Thank you for being part of it. We pray that you are able to taste and see the goodness of God in all that He has done this past year.

A SPECIAL THREE YEARS: THANKFUL FOR GOD'S WORK AT CENTRAL



It is hard to believe that nearly three years have passed since I first joined you here at Central. I vividly remember my first day on the snow-covered ground with you in January 2014. Looking back on our time together, it is clear that the Lord has been merciful and gracious to us in so many ways, and I am deeply thankful for what He has done in us and through us.

One of the works of the Lord in these last three years may not be clearly visible to you, because it is a work of the Lord in me. Through my time with you, our Heavenly Father has deepened my dependency on the finished work of His son, Jesus our Lord. He has fixed my eyes more joyfully and desperately on the bloody cross, the empty tomb and the occupied throne. My time here with you has done a wonderful gospel work in my own heart. Thank you for being part of that work in my life, dear friends.

I am also exceedingly thankful for the Lord's visible work in you, the flock of Central. You may recall a season in 2015 when we identified the need to create a more welcoming environment at Central, particularly on Sunday morning. I hope that you see how the Lord has transformed us in this area. Our time of fellowship

between services is a remarkable ministry. Through the enthusiastic efforts of so many of you, new visitors experience a warmer, more welcoming place on Sunday morning. Is there more work to do in this department? Of course. But I am thankful for what the Lord has already done.

I am also deeply thankful for the Lord's work in our Session. The elders that serve you in this role have grown in their own dependency on Jesus. Their discourse has become increasingly humble and God-honoring. Perhaps most notably, God has given them a new passion to serve and shepherd you, the flock of Central. These transformations will, Lord willing, bear much gospel fruit in the months and years ahead in partnership with Pastor Clay Smith. The newly adopted governance model will be implemented in 2017, allowing Clay and the elders to serve you better and with greater intentionality. They are doing this because it is their heart's desire to do it, and I am eager to see how the Lord will work in and through them in the years ahead.

With eternal affection in Christ,
Pastor Bob

AN EXCITING ROAD AHEAD: HOPEFUL FOR OUR FUTURE MISSION

In Proverbs 16, we are reminded that while our hearts may plan our way, it is the Lord who establishes our steps. How wonderful it is to see how the Lord has led the Smith family back to Central Presbyterian Church. When the Lord called me away to Rivermont nearly six years ago, who could have known that He would then call me back to serve you in this new role?

My wife Missy and I are overjoyed to be returning. Central has and always will hold a very special place in our hearts. It seems to us that the Lord has prepared us for a time such as this, and we are eager to see where He will lead us together as a church body in the coming years. We are deeply grateful and encouraged to hear so many reports from you in recent months about how the Lord is at work. There is a sense of joy, peace and hope that is clearly present across the flock at Central. Many of you have walked through difficult moments over the past 6 years, but the Lord has persevered you. No secret to you, it is often these moments of difficulty that bear the fruit of growth and revival. As Central is entering a new chapter in that direction, we are praying for the Lord to do so in greater abundance than we could ask.

As I think about our future mission together, I am praying and wondering about what the Lord may be calling us to as a church. Central is tremendously blessed and has been a beacon of gospel ministry in St. Louis for many generations. As we enter 2017, what might the Lord be leading us into in this next chapter?

Certainly one facet of our mission going forward is to continue to grow in what I like to call “whole life discipleship.” When the Lord calls us to Himself, His work in us is only beginning. What does it look like for us as both individuals and as a community to grow more deeply in the image of Jesus? How might we organize our resources in a way that further optimizes this work in us?

And as you know, our discipleship is not an end to itself. The Lord forms us to be a light to the nations, near and far. That can take so many different forms. At this particular time in history, in our particular context, what might the Lord call us to in terms of being His light in the world around us? I invite you to pray about that with me in the coming weeks as we seek to discern His will for us. Let us pray earnestly for the Lord to make our mission clear, and that He would give us all that we need to follow.

In closing, as you peruse the contents of this 2016 ministry report, I hope that you are greatly encouraged in how the Lord has moved in and through you as a congregation. Truly, there is so much to be thankful for. His mercy and kindness to Central is abundantly obvious. His hand is upon us and his love is steadfast. May that encourage you as you look ahead to our future ministry together.

Merry Christmas, dear friends. May 2017 be a year of continued joy and fruitfulness at Central.

With great hope in Christ,
Pastor Clay



MINISTRY REPORT 2016







WORSHIP at CENTRAL

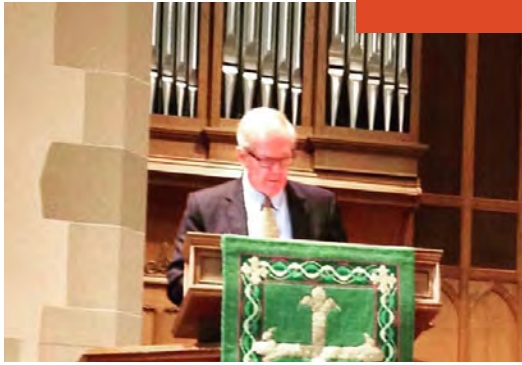
At the core of who we are is our worship of the Lord God Almighty together. When we come together as a body on Sunday, it is truly the bedrock of who we are as a church. Sometimes it may be easy to forget that because of all of the ministry that we do between Sundays. You probably see it, but over the years we have put countless hours into making Sunday a meaningful time of worship. Consider these fun facts about all that we did in 2016 on Sunday:

- planned and led 150 different worship services;
- prepared and rehearsed 100s of musical hymns and praise songs;
- wrote and delivered nearly 100 different sermons;
- prayed unceasingly for your petitions on Sunday;
- kept the facility in pristine condition to aid our worship;
- 1000s of delectable treats during our fellowship hour;
- served communion, received new members, and administered baptisms.

This list could go on, but you get the point. There is A LOT that goes into Sunday at Central. We hope that over the last year, Sunday has been a special time for you with us. We pray that the Lord is drawing you closer to Himself as we worship together, study together, fellowship together and pray together.

One element of Sunday that is always present but seldom mentioned: we have wonderful volunteers. From people who help in the nursery to greeters, from the kitchen to the parking lot, it would be impossible to do what we do on Sunday without the volunteer teams that so faithfully serve. To all of you that served in this way: Thank you!

POWERFUL PREACHING



“The bloody cross, the empty tomb, and the occupied throne.”

The Lord touched our hearts in powerful ways through Pastor Bob’s preaching and the sermons of all of our pastors. We are blessed to have such a long history of biblical preaching at Central. Jesus is lifted up every week, and we are drawn to Him.

WORSHIPFUL MUSIC

If you have listened to our choir lately, you know how wonderful they sound. Like a finely-tuned instrument, our choir leads us humbly yet powerfully as we worship the Lord through song. Director of Music Ministry, Matt Mazzoni, is such a blessing to Central in leading this facet of our ministry.



A DYNAMIC DUO



After Eric Stiller left our 5 pm service to plant a church, Todd and Sherdonna Denholm stepped in and led our 5 pm service during an important season of transition.

FOCUSED ON JESUS

There is a clear sense when we worship together on Sunday morning that Jesus is the focus. From our greeting, “Christ is risen!” to our sending out, Jesus is clearly at the center. This is a real gift to any church. Let us pray that it will always be so.





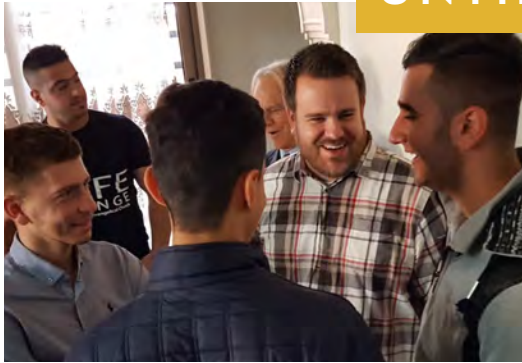
MISSIONS CENTRAL

Year after year, decade after decade, Central pours a wealth of support into scores of missionaries around the world so that the gospel would be known to the ends of the earth. Over the years, your generosity has resulted in millions upon millions of dollars being distributed to areas near and far that might otherwise not hear the gospel. In 2016, we provided more than \$700,000 in support for nearly 90 missionaries and agencies locally, nationally and globally. Pastor Randy Mayfield and assistant Carol Mulick provided regular and ongoing support and encouragement to these families who are serving in all manner of conditions. From the desert of Iraq to the door steps of France, the Lord is doing amazing things through the missionaries whom we support.

Missions Weekend. Our annual Missions and Outreach weekend focused on “Building Bridges” with Muslim neighbors this year. This unique seminar equipped us with a better understanding of Islam and ways that we can connect with Muslims in our community and around the world. The seminar was conducted in conjunction with our Mission Sunday that featured artist Mauricio Palacio. If you attended one of our three worship services that day, you know how amazing it was to watch the canvass come alive before our eyes during worship (see photo above).

Special Commissioning. Sending missionaries out is always a powerful testimony, but especially when we send out one of our own. This year we had the joy of doing just that when we commissioned our very own Lucy Wynn to the mission field of Honduras with the Micah Project. Lucy (first from left in photo above) was called to the missions as an 8-year old at missions weekend! What an amazing testimony of God’s call and faithfulness.

UNTIL THE WHOLE WORLD HEARS



For decades, Central has passionately invested in missionary work of all varieties around the globe to answer God's call to us as His light to the nations. **At left**, Student Central Director and pastor-in-training Andrew Dickson enjoys fellowship with young men from Iraq.

WELCOMING THE REFUGEE

We need not limit our care for the refugee to our global work! Central members Deb Sommer and Sara Kramer have cultivated a vibrant ministry to local refugees right here in St. Louis, primarily by gardening and fellowship.



CARING FOR THE LEAST OF THESE



Years ago thanks to the passion of one of our long-time members, Thrive began. It is now a beacon of hope for the unborn and for mothers in crisis across St. Louis. The photo **at left** is from our Women's Ministry annual Thrive baby shower.

SETTING THE CAPTIVES FREE

Pastor Randy, Rosemary Oliver, and a host of other Central members visited the Potosi maximum-security prison this year to perform a concert and to hear the gospel proclaimed. Four inmates came forward to give their lives to Christ!





CENTRAL WEST END CHURCH

Central West End Church is off to a wonderful start, and there is so much to be thankful for. The church plant is now worshipping regularly on Sunday mornings at Juniper (restaurant) in the Central West End. The setting offers a wonderful ambiance and seating for ~ 100. Praise God, on many weeks this new work is running out of room!

The church is a wonderful blend of Central families that went with Eric and Jenny Stiller to begin the work, and many new attendees that have come from the nearby neighborhoods. The gospel is being preached with clarity and power, and people are being drawn in as Jesus is lifted up.

The church has a number of active small groups that have formed, providing ways for new guests to connect at a more personal level. As those connections are being made, real conversations are taking place and people are asking real, candid questions about the gospel. This is exactly what we hoped and prayed for when we approved Eric to move forward with this new work – seekers and lost souls coming to Jesus. What a blessing to see it happening.

Eric and the team are actively seeking a new assistant pastor to help with this budding work. Please pray for God to raise up the right person, and soon.

Financially, the plant is doing very well for such a new ministry. In recent months, giving to the church has exceeded expenses.

Please continue to pray for Eric, Jenny and the entire CWE team as they continue to pour their hearts into this new work.

FULL HOUSE



It is every church planter's dream to have a capacity problem, and praise God, that is exactly what we have at Central West End Church. The photo **at left** captures a full Sunday at Juniper. Eric and team are actively dreaming about where the Lord might locate them next.

FULL PRAISE

Mary Higgins, **at right and below**, is the worship and music leader for our Central West End Church plant. She is exceptionally gifted and more importantly she has a deep love of Jesus. She leads worship in a Christ-centered, soulful way.



FULL WORSHIP



The worship at Central West End Church is eclectically robust and theologically deep. Communion is served each week and is a staple of the weekly worship.



EQUIPCENTRAL

A Teaching Church. While that is certainly not all of who we are, it is a key component of who we are. We are a church that, by God's grace, equips its people for the work of ministry. We are biblically literate and committed to the inerrancy of scripture. We make discipleship and spiritual formation central to who we are as a church family. After all, we cannot give what we do not have.

Pastor Mike Farley oversees this important area of Central's ministry, and he and his team helped to create a rich offering of spiritual formation and equipping opportunities for us throughout the year. One new component of equipping that we provided this year is a weekly prayer guide. The guide is now distributed on a weekly basis every Sunday, and it provides us with a rich supplement to our prayer lives. Containing links to hymns online, scripture verses and guided prayers, it brings helpful focus to the busiest of schedules. Not signed up for the prayer guide yet? No worries, you can access it here: www.centralpres.com/prayer-guides.

Equip Central. Our Wednesday night "Equip Central" continued this year, providing a range of opportunities for bible study, discussion groups, and other educational forums. Julie Kraus and team continue to catalyze our fellowship together with the now-famous dinners. They are more famous this year, because we made them free! This change was made to encourage all of us to invite friends and neighbors. It worked. Attendance at dinner was significantly higher this year.

Perhaps the most notable equipping event of the year was our Faith and Politics forum. Designed to equip us during a challenging political season, it provided a forum for growing in our role as Christians in the political discourse of our nation. It served as an attempt to equip us to be ready to engage what was anticipated to be a deeply divided political season. The theme of the forum was born out of a new book written by new Central member John Inazu, entitled *Confident Pluralism*. The book puts forth a vision for healthy dialogue that respects and honors one another, even and especially when we disagree. Senator John Danforth (center chair in photo above) was a keynote member of the discussion panel and made for an insightful and entertaining night.

SPIRITUAL NOURISHMENT



The table that our Hospitality team sets every Wednesday night is obviously a rich form of physical nourishment, but it is also spiritually nourishing. Coming together as a family to break bread together is a wonderful time of connection, and it is a means of God's grace in our lives.

KNOWING THAT LEADS TO DOING

Equipping ourselves as an end to itself is obviously not our goal. We are called for a purpose, and we equip ourselves to answer God's call to be His light to the nations. EquipCentral gives us the tools and resources to do it. We even offered a specific course on evangelism this year to that very end.



BEING KNOWN



Our Sunday School communities provided incredible options for growth and fellowship this year. We offered a wide range of ongoing classes and new ones, too. All of them provide places to be known by one another. Come connect with us in 2017!

KNOWING HOW TO ENGAGE

Our Faith and Politics forum and subsequent class offerings were aimed to help us to know how to engage one another when we disagree on significant matters of political and cultural relevance. We hope you found yourselves better able to engage your friends and neighbors as a result.





WOMEN'S MINISTRY

Women's Ministry is a vibrant and visible thread in the life of Central Presbyterian Church. For generations, our women's ministry has been a faithful and prayerful presence throughout the week. There are classes, bible studies, community groups, support groups, service projects and prayer groups that our women lead and participate in.

Our Tuesday morning group, "Women in Ministry", offers a complete program for women of all ages and walks of life. This group has been active at Central for more than 100 years! What a testimony to God's faithfulness and grace through the women of Central.

New this year is our "Single Mothers Group." This group gathers to study God's word and to address the unique needs of being a single parent. It is a wonderful new edition to our ministry in 2016.

On Thursday's, still other women of Central gather for bible study and small groups. In the Fall of 2016, our Thursday morning group had a rich offering for women to connect spiritually with one another through large group teaching and small group interaction.

And as if that were not enough, on Fridays another women's group of more than 40 people gathered to study Gospel Christianity by Tim Keller. The group explored questions like: What is the Gospel? Who is God? How do we respond?

Our women apply what they study, too. The photo above is from the annual Thrive baby shower where all of the women of the church gather to have a baby shower for women supported by Thrive, one of our partner ministries. This year we heard a story of how Thrive actually began as a result of one woman's vision to help women in crisis. That woman is a Central member!

BOUNTIFUL BLESSING



At left, just some of the gifts collected as part of the annual Thrive baby shower sponsored by our Women in Ministry. This is a very tangible and powerful application of the gospel at work in our community.

SUMMER STUDY

Again in 2016, we held a Wednesday night bible study during the summer. The study was well attended – a new room was needed due to the large turnout. We studied God’s word, prayed for one another, and supported a family in need as an act of service together.



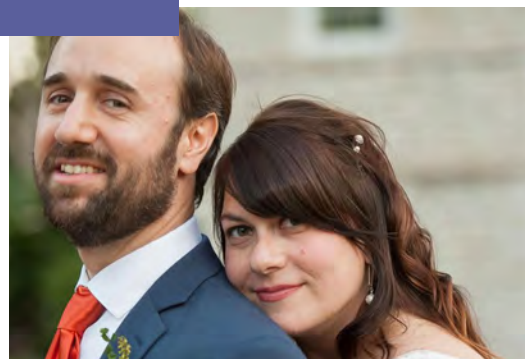
ROOTED IN PRAYER



A core of women’s ministry is praying together. Whether it be part of a bible study or dedicated time where people gather to pray, we make this a regular part of what we do together.

KIND OF A BIG DEAL

And of course we must mention that our Director of Women’s Ministry, Jamie Stowell, changed her name this year. She is now Jamie Afshari, newly wedded to husband Jahan. What a blessing to walk with Jamie through such a joyful season of life!





PEEPs

PEEPs – Central’s “Presbyterian Early Education Program” – is a decades-old ministry that has been serving our church families and neighbors for a very long time. This ministry can hide under our radar a bit, tucked away in our Early Childhood Wing. But make no mistake about it, this ministry is one of our most vibrant.

In 2016, PEEP’s served more than 200 children each week. Within our care, these youngest of God’s family are learning God’s Word. Children as young as two are memorizing scripture verses each month. Seeds are being planted daily as they hear the gospel. They are learning about God’s love and care for them, and how to extend that to one another. Friendships are being made, many of which will turn out to be lifelong as they grow up in our community together.

As you can imagine, it takes a substantial and talented staff to serve this ministry effectively. To that end, we have sixteen core staff, five subs and eight extracurricular teachers. Christine Vandervoort leads PEEP’s, and she and her staff view it as an outreach to unchurched families in addition to those from our church and other church homes. The team starts each day with prayer and devotional, recognizing that it is God’s ministry and that it is totally dependent on his grace and mercy.

Fun Fact: Marge Roth, who currently teaches in the Lion room, taught Anna Gladney Gnau over twenty years ago. Anna is now sending her children to PEEP’s as well as teaching in the Elephant room. Truly, this is a ministry that spans generations. We are so thankful for all that God has done over the past year, and all that he will do in 2017.

MISS JULIE TEACHES, TOO!



Our PEEPs kids have regularly scheduled baking classes with Julie Kraus (photo **at left**) in the church kitchen! No surprise, the kids love every minute of it. They are having fun and learning a few basic life skills, too.

HANDS-ON LEARNING

Our classroom teachers spend a lot of time developing curriculum and planning craft activities for the kids. This is not a daycare! It is a learning environment that is well-led and supervised. These kids grow in faith and life at PEEPs.



GOD'S LIVING WORD



Teaching Bible stories to kids of this age can be tons of fun. In the photo **at left**, the kids built a model of the walls of Jericho, and then proceeded to circle it with trumpets! No doubt a story of God's power that they will always remember.

MORE INFORMATION

If you or someone you know may be interested in PEEPs, please visit our website for more information, or contact Christine directly. Please pray for this ministry!

www.centralpres.com/peeps





KID CENTRAL

This past year in Kid Central, Karen Brown and team took our kids on a gospel-centered journey through scripture, putting Jesus at the center of every passage. Karen is a seasoned educator, and makes the learning accessible and fun for kids of all types. But at the center of it all is Jesus and the gospel. We are praying that these young ones will be deeply rooted in their walk with Jesus as they grow. What a privilege it has been to see the Lord move in them this past year.

On Wednesday nights this year we used the Sonship curriculum and focused on community and service as well. One of the things we tried to do this year is to make Wednesday nights feel very different from school. It's a long day for these kids! But we really try to give them plenty of time to choose and have ownership of their activities and to cultivate their friendships.

We also had a service emphasis this past year. We rotated several different projects throughout 2016:

- cleaning our building;
- cleaning the sanctuary;
- sending cards to Widows;
- gift bags for new babies;
- blessing bags for homeless; and
- prayer cards for missionaries.

Our kids get a definite sense of "otherness" through these projects, and it so great to see the Lord inspiring them to seek mercy and justice in the world.

This year we also added a choir! Led by Ruth Stith, this choir has involved more than 20 kids in music ministry, including leading our flock in worship on Sunday mornings. In addition, Elizabeth Smith is leading our tiny kids in music as well. Take a peak in on their work sometime and see what a blessing this ministry is to our children.

SERVING TOGETHER



Make no mistake, our kids have TONS of fun when they get together. But they also do serious work. **At left**, we are praying over hand-made blankets that will be given to Thrive for a newborn baby. Made and prayed by KidCentral. How cool!

FRIENDS TOGETHER

It is amazing to watch God forge friendships when we are together in community. Kid Central is such a sweet ministry in this way. Some of these friendships will last a lifetime. A foretaste of things to come!



LEARNING THE WORD TOGETHER



At the core of Kid Central is God's word. We partner with parents and volunteers to make the Word of God accessible and meaningful for these young ones. **At left**, Rosemary Oliver explains God's love for us.

PRAISING GOD TOGETHER

Our annual summer VBS is a special time for our community. Kids from a number of different churches – and even refugees – come together for a month of fun, food and finding God. A highlight of the program is always the praise music that kicks off each night (**at right**)!





STUDENT CENTRAL

Student Central is about walking with students as they come to know and be known by God, others, and ourselves, and to make him known in the places he has called us. As the ministry to junior and senior high students at Central Presbyterian Church, Student Central's vision is to partner with parents to bring students to spiritual maturity through intentional relationships and excellent programming.

Spring Storm. Wait, Spring Storm is for younger kids, right? Right. But this year, we had an amazing show of leadership and service from our Student Central kids as part of Spring Storm. The line of kids standing in the photo above are from Student Central. They poured their time and hearts into Spring Storm this year, and it was awesome to see God using them. They aren't just being served; they are serving.

God is on the Move. It is a really special thing when you see God move in the lives of our students. In 2016, we have seen a lot of that.

- **Generous Spirit.** Just recently, a few of our students took it upon themselves to buy Christmas presents (using their own money) for the Congolese refugees that they hang out with.
- **Powerful Word.** Bible studies are yielding conversations about vital doubts and struggles – our students are being really honest and vulnerable with one another.
- **New Connections.** God is raising up new adult volunteers to connect with students in need of discipleship.

On any given week, we have between 50 and 70 students actively engaged. God is definitely on the move.

GOD'S STORIES



One of the cool things that our Student Central team did this year is the sharing of testimonies from young adults as a witness to our students. God is active in our lives, not just some far off power. **At left**, Taylor Smith shares his story in the Student Center.

GOD'S MISSION

This past spring 2016, a group of our students and young adults went to Honduras to support God's ongoing mission at the Micah House. Our students get a firsthand look at God doing amazing things in the lives of lost causes. What a blessing to see God at work in this way.



PARENT PARTNERSHIP



The Student Central team has a passion for partnering with parents to tackle the difficult questions facing our students in today's culture.

At left, Student Central Director Andrew Dickson facilitates a conversation about social media use and its effects on students.

GOD'S WORD

This year, Student Central spent deep time studying the Book of Ephesians. Some weeks we reflected and prayed around only one or two verses, unpacking the richness of God's Word together. **At right**, Family Ministry Director Jeremy Blythe leads a Sunday night study.





COLLEGE CENTRAL

College Central is our ministry to college students – both our covenant children that grew up in our church family and have now gone to college, as well as an outreach ministry to campuses nearby. We are investing new energy in this ministry area after a season of transition, with Cole Lescher leading the way. Cole and his wife Kirk are pouring their hearts into this ministry, and it is bearing fruit.

Biblical Focus. This year, College Central has studied what it means to encounter Jesus as seen in the gospels. Throughout all of these encounters, it is evident that Jesus changes you when you encounter Him. This is what we pray for in our ministry – that our students would encounter Jesus and be changed by Him, forever.

This year, we have seen Jesus do just that. One of our newer students attends Wash U. She had a hard life growing up, and came to Central one Sunday on a whim. Our church community at Central (not just college) welcomed her in a special way. She is now a key leader in our ministry, and she says that she is here because of the community that she has found, not only in college ministry, but also the broader church at Central. This is exactly what we have been praying for, and we are so grateful to see God moving in this way.

In addition to our local campus ministry, our covenant students are across the country at over 40 different institutions. Earlier this year, we provided care packages to them. Here is what one student said in response:

"Thank you all SO much for thinking about me during finals week! I teared up when I opened the package...It's easy to feel disconnected from your home church during college...thank you for reminding me that it is still home!"

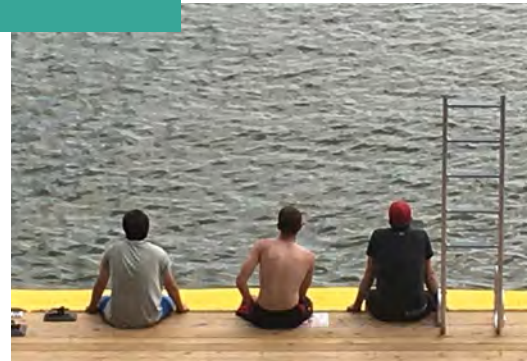
WE CARE



When our students graduate high school and go off to college, we miss them! We pray for them. We reconnect with them. And this year we sent finals week care packages to them! The photo **at left** is just a small number of those sent.

WE BREAK

College life is busy and often stressful. Getting away, even for a short weekend, can be a tremendous blessing. The photo **at right** is from one of our 2016 mini-retreats. We had a good time of fellowship and refreshing together, and our friendships grew stronger as a result of our time.



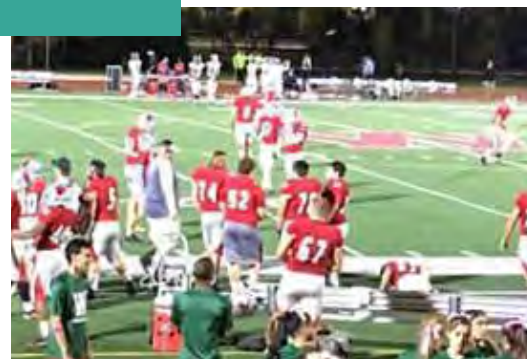
HOME AWAY FROM HOME



Cole and Kirk open their home regularly to our college students. They have a wonderful gift of hospitality, and the college kids really feel like they have a home away from home with the Lescher's. Interested in getting involved? We would love a few volunteers to join us.

LOCAL CONNECTIONS

In partnership with Ruling Elder Larry Kindbom, Cole spent some of the past year ministering to the Wash U football team. Coach Larry is a splendid leader and the Bears had a great season. It is fun to see what God is doing in many of his players.





CENTRAL SCHOOL

A Blue Ribbon Year. By now, most of you have heard that our very own Central Christian School was awarded the National Blue Ribbon Award from the Department of Education. Only 50 private schools in the entire nation received this recognition, and Central is one of only three in Missouri. The application process for this award is rigorous. For us to be awarded this distinctive achievement is a testimony to God's hand upon us. It is a remarkable recognition, and we are so thankful for God's continuing grace and mercy on our school.

An award like this does not simply happen over night. In most cases it is a recognition of a school having arrived at a place after a lot of hard work. Former Head of School Josh Crane paved the way for this award to be possible, and current Head of School John Murray has taken us to new heights. Both of these fine men have been God's gift to our Central community, and to our children. Our kids graduate from Central with an exceptional academic education, rooted in a Christian worldview. They enter the world as the next generation of Christian leaders in every industry, business and marketplace.

Facility Needs. Some of you have heard in recent years that we are considering a capital project at the school to expand our facility. While nothing is imminent, we do continue to wrestle with space limitations of all types. This is the blessing of high enrollment, and we wouldn't have it otherwise. But nonetheless, it does pose a challenge. At this time, we have no concrete plans in place but we do continue to study the issue. Your prayers for wisdom and resources in this regard are much appreciated.

A BANNER YEAR



At left, Head of School John Murray and members of his administrative team prepare to receive the Blue Ribbon Award from the Department of Education.

A NURTURING SPIRIT

While Central has become an academically rigorous school, it still has a wonderful nurturing spirit. **At right,** John Murray reads to Janet Heinemann's 3-k class. What a treat!



CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY



Our kids at Central School are learning in a Christian environment, and that naturally fosters Christian community. They learn how to reconcile, to serve and to pray together. It is a thing of beauty.

FUN FACT

If you happen to turn on a Duke basketball game this year, you might see a familiar face: Central alum Jason Tatum! Jason went to Chaminade for secondary school after Central, and went on to be the top basketball recruit in all of high school!





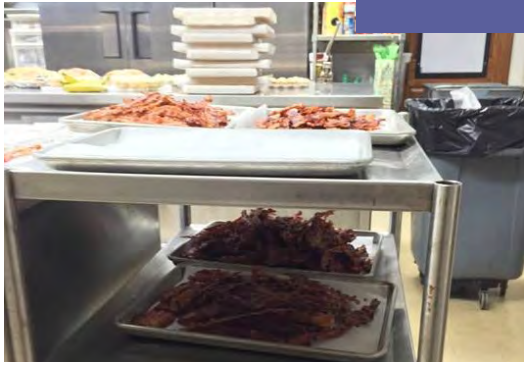
SERVE CENTRAL

Hospitality. Have you noticed how warm and welcoming our church has become over the past couple of years? We hear an increasing number of stories from visitors who choose to make Central their home because of how welcomed they felt when they came to visit. Friends, you make this possible by being present, by volunteering and by giving. God has used us in a really neat way in this department.

Our Director of Hospitality Ministry, Julie Kraus, is a key catalyst for all of this. She prefers to stay behind the scenes and serve quietly, but she and her team make a profound impact on our ministry. It's kind of hard to have good hospitality without good food, right? Well we have good food in plentiful quantity and quality. Recently, we dropped off a tray of cookies to the owner of the old Schnuck's parking lot as a way of saying "thank you" for allowing us to use it for relief parking. The owner and his team were so impressed with the quality of the cookies that they took the time to send a note back to us complimenting our baker! Friends, we have a real gem in Julie Kraus and our kitchen team. If you haven't had the chance to get to know her, sign up to work in the kitchen sometime and come join the fun.

Assimilation. We are so thankful to hear reports of new people coming (and staying) at Central. When they get here, though, it is important that we have ways to help them integrate into the life of our family. Kate Spielman, our Assistant Director of Assimilation, is adding smart systems and methods to do just that. She helps visitors and guests to take the next step with us in a subtle-but-helpful way. She and Julie make a great team and we see the fruit of it in many ways.

SUMMER BRUNCHES



They have turned into a summer classic, those brunches. Julie Kraus, Kate Spielman and their team of staff and volunteers have made the summer Sundays really special. It is no small feat to serve breakfast for 400 of your closest friends!

HAMILTON SCHOOL

Through our hospitality ministry, Central continues to provide occasional meals to Hamilton School in the City of St. Louis. This act of service brings resources into a community in need, and it brings us into community with them!



DO YOU FEEL CALLED TO SERVE?



Perhaps as you peruse this report, you are wondering whether you might like to join our servant team? There are myriad ways to help. Give Kate Spielman a call at the church for assistance in discerning what a good fit might be for you.

WELCOMING OUR GUESTS

At right, Deacon Andy Roth and son serve on Sunday morning in the parking lot. This simple-but-important duty creates a warm (and safe) front door for all of us, especially guests who are unfamiliar with our campus.





CARE CENTRAL



Congregational Care is a vital part of any church ministry, and certainly that is true of us at Central. In fact, it is of particular importance because we have such a wonderfully diverse congregation. We have young families and older families. We have elderly widows and younger singles. Providing helpful pastoral care to a diverse congregation is a ministry that requires a multitude of people working together to meet the respective needs.

Central is blessed with such a multitude. One example of this is our recently launched **Widows Ministry**. This work was previously left under-resourced, until deacon Lawson Primm stepped forward to organize a group of mostly lay persons in an effort to better care for our widows. In partnership with Tina Duke, our multi-talented staff person that works in both congregational care and music, Lawson has successfully launched this ministry to the blessing of many.

If you attended worship recently and heard Linda Gurney's testimony about this ministry, you know that it is making a difference.

Visitation. When members of our church family are hospitalized or shut in due to lack of mobility, how do we care for them? As many of you know, Eric Schmidt has been serving the church in this capacity on a part-time basis for the last couple of years. He collaborates with Tina Duke to ensure that those who need care during these times of need are able to receive it. Pastor Randy Mayfield is also a huge blessing in this area of ministry, calling on our elderly and sick regularly.

New Pastor. We do want you to be encouraged, though, that we continue to budget for a new full-time pastor who will be dedicated to this area of ministry. They will also lead our marriage ministry and our diaconate. Please pray that God brings the right pastor to us, soon!

EQUIPPING OUR WIDOWS



In 2016, this ministry team met real needs of our widows. We are connecting them with handy men, transportation, financial planning, Medicare planning, real estate help, and senior care. These resources come largely from our very own church family. We are being the body of Christ, together!

WALKING TOGETHER

At right, deacon Lawson Primm stands alongside several of our Central widows. The connections that are made in this ministry are special and transformative. Contact Lawson or Tina to learn more about how you might get involved.



VIP MINISTRY



Tina Duke regularly organizes a variety of special gatherings for our “VIP” ministry – a group of Central members age 80 and older. These veterans of the Christian life get together for a meal and fellowship, often with a speaker or musical performance.

PRAYER WARRIORS

A huge force in our congregational care ministry is invisible to most. It is our faithful prayer warriors that gather each week to lift up our needs to the Lord Almighty. **At right**, brother Jack prepares his weekly letters of encouragement to those of us in need of prayer and support.





OPS CENTRAL

Central is often referred to as a big church that can feel like a small church. Over the last few years, though, our campus has expanded significantly. There is no more disguising it: we are a big church. God has blessed us with a wealth of resources, and stewarding them well is no small operation. It requires skill, frugality, and commitment to maintain and optimize our campus and its resources. We are blessed to have a staff team that does this with excellence.

Facilities. If you like fixer-uppers, then Central is your building! Its historic beauty captures our hearts, but it is not easy to maintain. Dwight McKinney, our Facilities Manager, has overseen our facilities at Central for nearly 40 years. We would be lost without him. Dwight has the skills, expertise and talent necessary to keep up with the myriad repairs and fixes that pop up around here. From our landscaping to our tuck-pointing, from boilers to busted pipes, there is nothing Dwight has not seen. Dwight and his team provide exceptional care to God's resources at Central.

Communications and Technology. Director Jeff Brown heads up these ministries for us, and he leads a great team. On the communications side, they have a passion for telling the story of what God is doing in and through us. InfoCentral is a great example of this passion, and it continues to be a wonderful resource. Our website and social media presence are strong, and getting stronger. Our new logo and brand are a tasteful fit and well received.

This team does a remarkable job keeping our network and all of its intricacies running so that ministry is smooth and fruitful. They do it on a shoe-string budget, too. Most organizations require substantially more staff to do what we do here at Central. Jeff and team add tremendous value in this way. By the way – we are hiring! If you have tech or communication skills, contact Jeff to learn more.

Business Office. Another largely invisible ministry of Central is our business office team. Gloria Cryts and her team manage a vast amount of data and accounting for us, and our books are always in good order thanks to their expertise. They help us to stay compliant with the latest regulations, and they always have an eye out for where we can spend money more efficiently.

LIVE STREAM



Many of you know that we stream our morning worship services online. This ministry started on a shoestring budget several years ago, and over time has evolved to be reliable and high quality. In 2016, we invested in new high-definition cameras to improve the overall streaming experience.

RELIABLE REPORTING

Our \$4 million dollar budget is a significant amount of money to account for every year. Doing it right is important, for lots of reasons. Our Business Office team does this work with accuracy and reliability, allowing leadership to make good decisions about future budgeting and other capital investments.



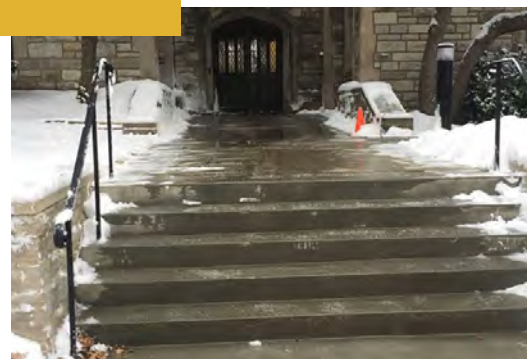
SOCIAL MEDIA



This ever-growing world online is a wonderful way to communicate. It also makes the gospel more accessible than ever before. Our Communications team has created a social media presence for the church, and it is growing more and more. Follow us on Twitter. Like us on Facebook. Be part of the conversation!

SUNDAY SNOW TEAM

It sure has a habit of snowing on Saturday night and Sunday morning, does it not? Dwight and his team, along with our deacons, keep our campus accessible through these storm events. It is hard work, and allows us to worship unimpeded.





FINANCE CENTRAL

Central is a church blessed with a wealth of resources and financial strength. For generations, people like you have stepped up and given sacrificially to God's work in and through this church, and we are grateful.

As 2016 comes to a close, we are thankful to report that we are on our way to another solid year financially. At the writing of this report, there is still need for additional gifts in order to meet our 2016 budget, but we are prayerfully hopeful that God will meet our needs and beyond.

Our Financial Rhythm. Central is a church like most other non-profit organizations financially, in that giving to the church is highest at the end of the year. We typically receive 25% of the total annual giving in December. This is a blessing, and a challenge. Beginning in January, giving slows down and remains at a relatively low level throughout most of the calendar year. By design and because of the year-end spike in generosity, we plan our expenses to run negative until December. This is a common trend, one that has persisted for many years. Central manages this trend by having enough cash in the bank to cover the deficit incurred over the first 11 months of the year.

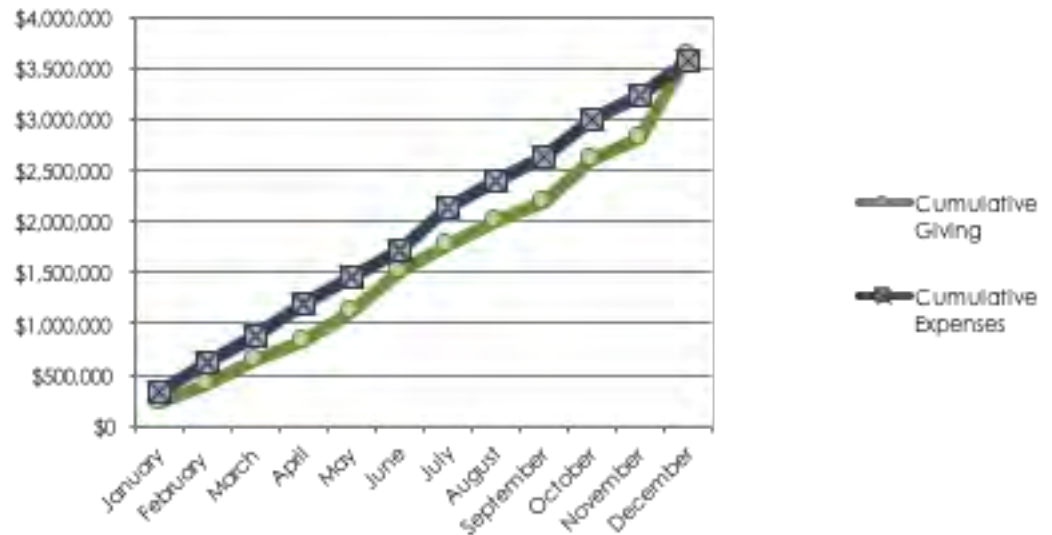
The challenge of this rhythm is that December is never a guarantee. It is subject to all kinds of variables, including stock market performance and general economic forces out of our control. Fortunately, God is in control, always. He continues to be faithful and generous to Central.

The following page contains additional financial data. Thank you, truly, for your generosity to Central Presbyterian Church.

2016 CUMULATIVE GIVING VS. EXPENSES

(December is projected, not actual)

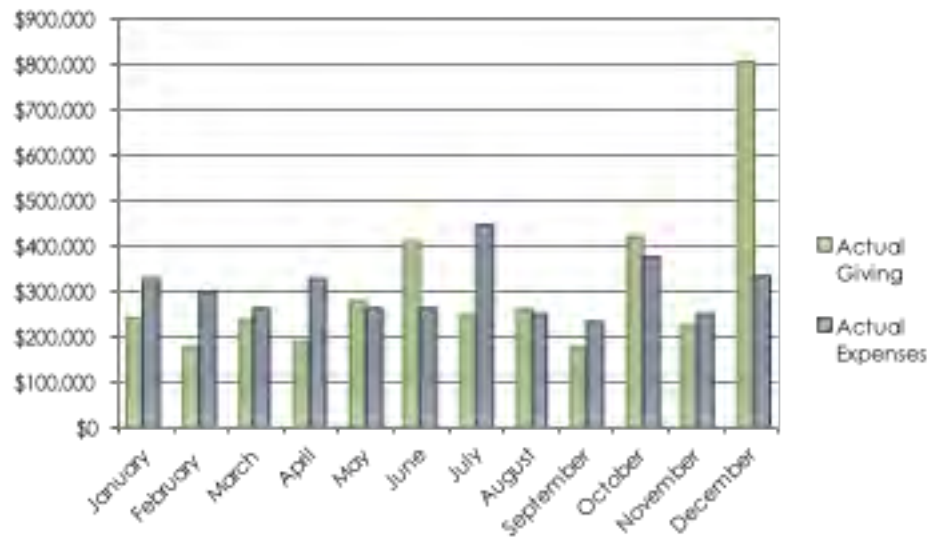
The trend described on the prior page is depicted for 2016 in the chart at right. We pray that we will finish the year roughly even, in terms of giving and expenses.



2016 MONTHLY GIVING VS. EXPENSES

(December is projected, not actual)

In the chart at right, the monthly trend of giving vs. expenses is portrayed. The spikes in expense for Jan, Apr, Jul and Oct are due to the payment of quarterly disbursements to missionaries.



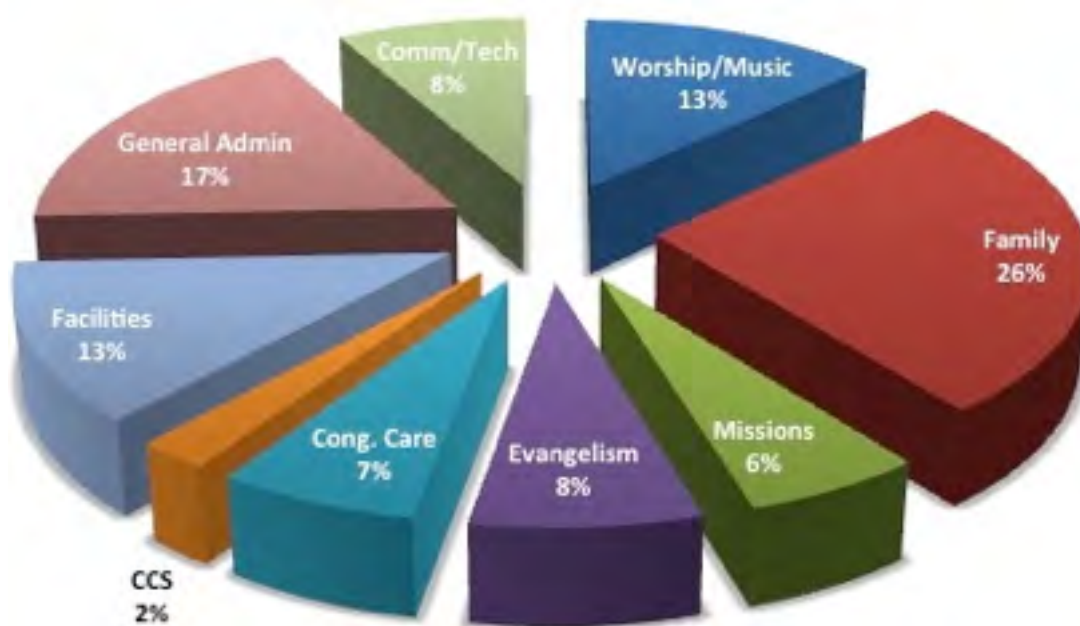
OTHER KEY FINANCIAL DATA POINTS

(Through November 2016)

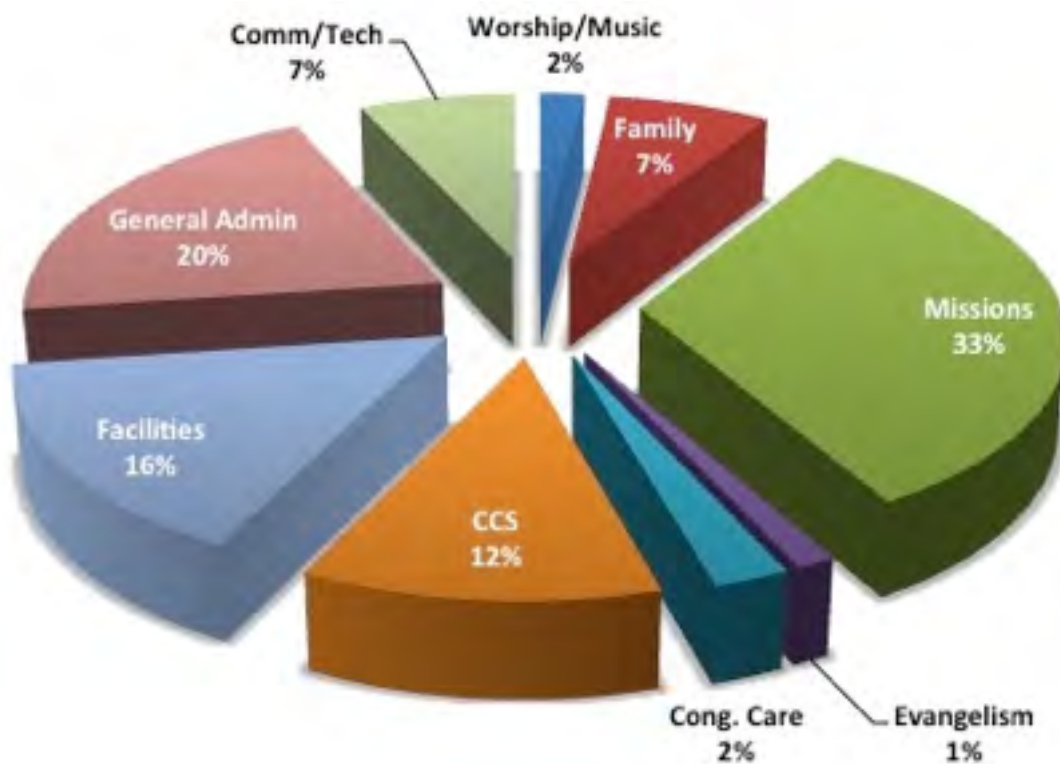
The table to the right shows a condensed and simplistic version of our balance sheet through November. Please contact Tim Page, Executive Administrator, if you would like additional detail or information.

	Amount	Remarks
Cash for ministry ops	\$781,399	Excludes \$200k reserve
Non-cash assets	\$17,079,748	Land, buildings, equip.
Project debt	\$80,000	Balance less reserve fund
Other liabilities	\$13,026	

DISTRIBUTION OF \$2.2M STAFF COMP (as budgeted for 2016)



DISTRIBUTION OF \$1.55M DIRECT EXPENSES (as budgeted for 2016)





2016 In Review

Our 2016 budget of \$3.75 million is depicted in Figures 4 and 5 (at left). These are the approximate percentage allocations by ministry area.

Budgeted Staff

As shown, approximately \$2.20 million (roughly 58%) is dedicated to the compensation for full-time and part-time staff of Central. For the year, Central carried 36 staff members, 26 of whom are full-time employees and three of whom are pastors (the budget also includes compensation for the future Assistant Pastor of Congregational Care). Several staff transitioned over the course of 2016:

- Jo Durham, retirement
- Jonathan Dockery, relocation and job change
- Catherine Estes, resignation in good standing
- Pastor Bob Hopper, interim transition
- Todd Denholm, accepted new pastoral call

We give thanks for these talented and faithful servants, and pray God's abundant blessing on their respective next chapters.

Budgeted Direct Expense

The remaining \$1.55 million of the 2016 budget represents our direct expense budget allocated to the various ministries of Central (roughly 42%). As Figure 5 shows, we allocated a third of all direct expenses to funding for missionaries and missionary agencies that we support. The budgeted facilities amount is of note because it is for annual operating and maintenance. A reserve fund of roughly \$50,000 is available to absorb major facility needs that pop up, e.g. a new boiler at the school building or a roof repair at the church. Additionally, we have a Missions Reserve Fund of roughly \$100k to \$200k at any given time, from which we disbursed more than \$200,000 additional 2016 funds.

2017 Planning

Setting budget for the coming year is part art and part science, and certainly a large majority of faith. Each year, the Resource Management Division begins discussions in September/October to prayerfully discern what the Lord might have us do in the coming year. As you may know, the last several years we have held the annual operating budget flat and in some instances have made mild reductions.

We are greatly encouraged at what the Lord is doing at Central in recent months. As we prepare to receive our new pastor, we anticipate a season of new growth and flourishing. While we want to be wise in how we plan for that, we concluded this year that it is time to increase our budget and take a step of faith in 2017.

To that end, the Session unanimously approved a 2017 top line budget of \$4.15 million, a roughly 10% increase year-over-year. Several key assumptions are included in this increase:

- the increase is not for new personnel at this time;
- new expenses will be strategic in nature and non-recurring; and
- most new expenses will be back-loaded for the year and will not be authorized unless Resource Management determines that giving to the church warrants the new investments.

In this way, we can monitor giving patterns over the first half of the year to ensure that we do not overextend ourselves financially.



SESSION

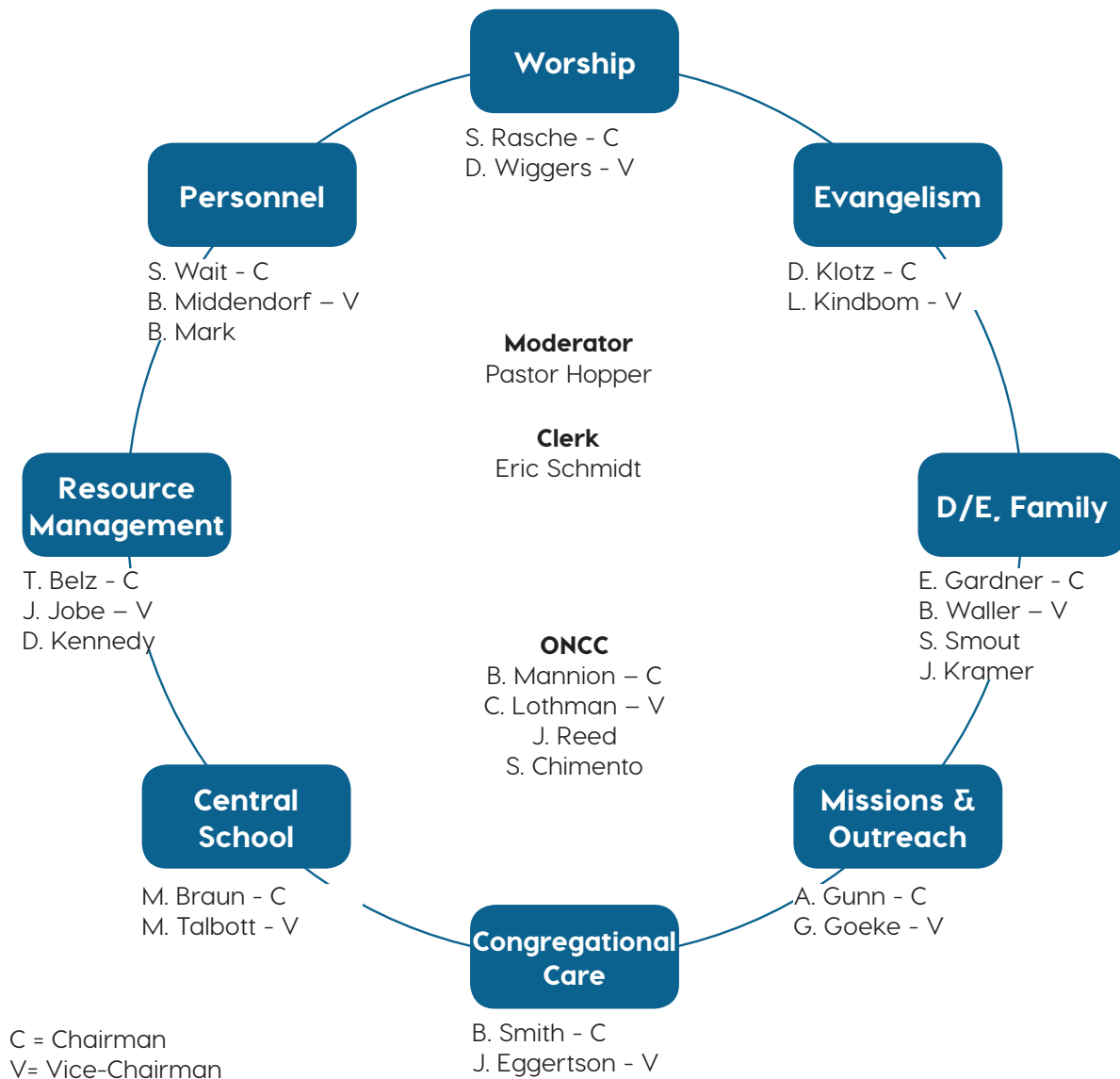
Your Session continues to grow and pursue increased health as elders who serve and lead the church. An elder has many functions and responsibilities, but this year your Session has been increasingly convicted that we need to be more active and intentional in the work of shepherding.

Why are we doing this? Well, as we studied God's word together with Pastor Hopper, we considered what it truly means to be an elder. Shepherding God's flock is central to the role. 1 Peter 5 tells us:

So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

This reminder to grow in our role as shepherds has caused us to rethink a lot of things, including how we as a Session are organized and governed. We came to realize that our structure requires a great deal of administration, and the effect is that elders spend more time in meetings and study reports than we do in the work of shepherding.

To remedy this, the Session heartily adopted a new governance model in summer 2016. Lord willing, it will ease the administrative burden on our elders, and release them to do the work of shepherds. We are very thankful that the Lord led us here, and excited about serving you in this way.



The organization chart above shows the men of our flock who have served this past year on the Session of Central Presbyterian Church. They met often, and prayed much. Their committee assignments listed above are where they served primarily, but all of these men demonstrated a deep love and commitment to “the whole” of Central.

This is the group of elders that diligently worked through the recent governance study. They read a number of different

studies on the subject, and they consistently came back to the singular conviction of feeling called to do more shepherding.

The new governance model is not yet installed. The chart above will look very different in the new model. A special Task Force is working on a plan to implement the new model, and Lord willing, it will begin to come online in the first half of 2017. The members of the planning task force are:

Governance Task Force Members

- Bob Mannion, Chairman
- Eric Schmidt, Clerk
- Karen Bacon
- Jana Goeke
- Susan Klotz
- Gary Smith, Elder
- Bob Hopper/Clay Smith, Pastor
- Tim Page, Staff

Please pray for this group and all of your elders. Pray specifically that these governance changes will indeed result in more shepherding and ultimately more gospel fruit.



PROJECT CENTRAL

Master Plan. More than a decade ago, we began a master planning effort to define what we desired for the future of our church campus. We developed many ideas and had a lot of good, prayerful discussions about what the Lord might have us do in this regard. That effort resulted in the Session adopting a two-phase Master Plan for the church campus expansion. Phase 1 included a much-needed on-site parking garage and a new student ministry facility. By God's grace, we completed that project in 2013.

The second phase of the project is yet to be completed. It consists of a new ~ 24,000 square-foot addition that would be built adjacent to the south side of the sanctuary. That addition would include 3 floors of new ministry space. See next page for a few feature highlights of the new space.

Are We Moving Forward? Thank you for asking. In October of 2016, the Session unanimously confirmed that we should pursue completion of the project unless and until such time that it is found to be infeasible. The primary constraint at present is funding. The roughly \$9 million project would be a significant undertaking for us. But we believe the Lord is calling us to move forward. We are currently studying the financial options and are hopeful that the Lord will provide a way to bring this important and exciting project to fruition. Please pray with us to that end!

MASTER PLAN



A thumbnail of our project master plan is shown **at left**. Hanley Road is at the bottom of the figure. The large red space next to the sanctuary is where the next phase of the project would be located. It will cost ~ \$9 million to build.

NEW ENTRANCE

At right is a closer look at the new entrance, which would greatly enhance our ability to greet visitors and the surrounding community onto our campus. Our presence on Hanley Road would be dramatically enhanced. It will make for a great outdoor gathering space as well.



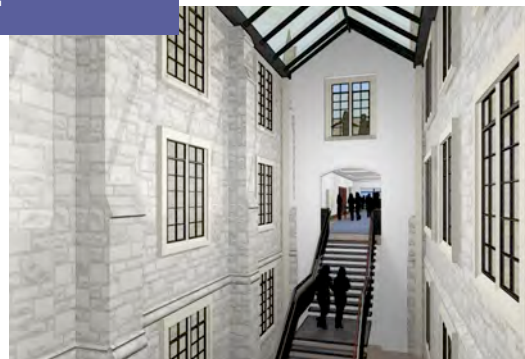
OPEN LOBBY



Upon entering the new building, members and guests will find themselves in a wide-open and inviting space. We believe that this feature will greatly further improve the way visitors experience our church campus.

STAIRWAY CONNECTOR

At right is a rendering of a new staircase that would connect the new addition on the east with the Biltmore entrance on the west. The Early Childhood Wing would also directly connect to the new facility, improving our accessibility and egress patterns.





LOOKING AHEAD

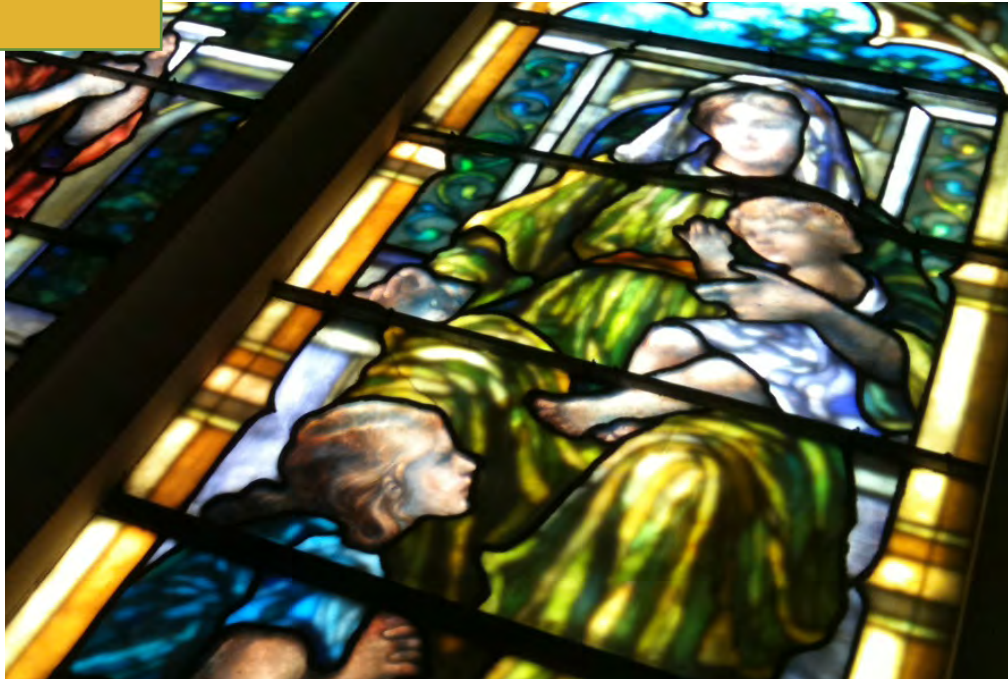
Lord willing, the future at Central is bright and full of hope.

As 2016 draws to a close, please know how thankful we are for your being part of the Central family this past year. There is much to be thankful for, and much to look forward to.

We are not an end to ourselves, dear friends. We are called to go out and to be a light to the world around us – not because of our goodness, but because of the goodness of Jesus Christ. This past year, we have seen what happens when Jesus is lifted up. He draws more and more people to Himself. Our role is to be agents for this light in all of the corners of our respective lives.

The year 2017 is marked with great anticipation as we prepare to welcome Pastor Clay Smith and his family. Let us pray for them, unceasingly. Pray that the Lord would protect them now and always, for the good of the Kingdom and for the fruitfulness of our work here together.

On behalf of all of us, Merry Christmas to you and yours. We look forward to all that God has in store for us in the coming year!



“He will be great and called son of the most High and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

Luke 1:32-33

Ministry Made Possible by YOU

There is still time remaining to partner with us financially in 2016!

Thank you to all of you who have done so already. The ministry of Central is possible because you give. You can do so in a number of ways:

1. Give on Sunday during the offering.
2. Stop by church to deliver your gift.
3. Transfer proceeds from sale of stock.
4. Give online at www.centralpres.com/generosity
5. Mail to Central @ 7700 Davis Drive, Clayton MO 63105

2016 Pledge

Pledge cards will be made available in early January. As you bring in the New Year, please consider partnering with us in 2017. If for financial planning reasons you would like to make your pledge sooner, please contact Gloria Cryts in our Business Office at 314.854.0115.



www.centralpres.com

7700 Davis Drive
Clayton, MO 63105

(314) 727-2777

Facebook: facebook.com/CPCStL

Twitter: @CPCStL

Instagram: instagram.com/CPCStL

Download our app at:
centralpres.com/gettheapp