

# The Central Visitor

*A weekly visitor to your home bringing you news from Central Christian Church  
Our mission ... Sharing Christ,  
Changing Lives, Delivering Hope*

Vol. XC

Decatur, Illinois, December 19, 2018

No. 51

## **Blessing and Dedication of Children**

This past Sunday we welcomed six (6) families who among them presented 11 children for blessing and dedication. One family did so at the 9:00 contemporary service, the remainder at the 10:30 service. What a joy it was to experience this vibrancy and life!!!



**SUNDAY, December 23, 2018**

WORSHIP AT 8:00 & 10:30 a.m.

CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP AT 9:00 a.m.

**In the "UN-usual" Way**

Text: *Luke 1:26-47*

Michael E. Karunas

## **2019 Offering Envelopes**

Your 2019 Giving Envelopes should arrive in the mail soon. Use of these envelopes greatly helps our financial group properly distribute your contribution. If you do not receive your 2019 Giving Envelopes, please contact the church office.

## **"Come, they told me..."**

On December 23, we will bring our "finest gifts" to support the regional church through our Christmas offering. This offering enables our region to gather Disciples in camps, conferences and assemblies; to assist churches in calling new ministers; to support new ministers in preparation for ordainment; and generally to foster faith development and promote the mission of the church in our own community and state, to name but a few functions. Please consider bringing your gift, "fit to give a King," for this special offering.

## **BRING A BELL!**

Sunday, December 23rd

is **Bring a Bell Sunday.**

Bring a bell of any shape or size to worship and ring it while we sing

*"Angels We Have Heard On High"*

## **Food Collection**

The food collection for January 6th is canned fruit and canned soup. As always, the shopping cart is located in the Connection Café. Donations will be delivered to the Northeast Community Fund.

## **Welcome New Members!**



With joy and thanksgiving, we welcome Dave and Nita Phillips back to Central! Long-time members, they moved to Florida 7 years ago and moved their membership away from Central at that time. Having returned to Decatur during 2018, they have "come home" to Central on our annual "Come Home for Christmas" Sunday. Welcome Dave and Nita! We're so thankful to have you back!

*Thank you for your generous giving.*

## **Counting On You**

**Sunday, December 16, 2018**

Worship Attendance ..... 297

Sunday School & Small Groups.....NA

**THANK YOU!**

Thank you for contributing to the Benjamin Franklin Elementary School Christmas drive. We delivered 24 games and 25 packages of markers to the school early this week. The school administration and staff were thrilled to see our classroom contributions!

Mitten Tree donations were delivered to Northeast Community Fund. Your contributions will be sure to warm hands, heads, and hearts! Central Christian Church maintenance and office staff did a great job preparing our offerings for delivery. Special thanks to Ron and Mary Jane Oliver for delivering the collection.

**UPCOMING CONCERT**



MARTIN ELLIS  
*Organ Concert*  
Monday, December 31  
7:30 p.m.

To learn more pick up a Concert Series Brochure from the Welcome Center.

**Contribution Reminder**

If you plan to make a contribution to the church and wish to receive credit for it in the 2018 calendar year, it must be received in the church office or show a postmark no later than December 31, 2018. All gifts are appreciated.

**What does Faith Demand?**

I don't want to come off as a Scrooge or Grinch as we enter our last week before Christmas. Yet I am intrigued by this question: *Are there any drawbacks to celebrating Christmas?* It's hard to think of any, at least not right away. We are so conditioned to focus on the joy of the season (in both our sacred and secular celebrations), that we think readily of our favorite holiday movies, Christmas music. We don't need much coaxing to anticipate gifts to give and receive, cards to mail, reuniting with family and friends, etc. But drawbacks??? They don't come as easily to mind.

Richard Rohr believes there is one. His book *Preparing for Christmas* is the subject of the small group Don is leading this Advent. In it he says, "We do the Gospel no favor when we make Jesus, the Eternal Christ, into a perpetual baby, a baby that asks little or no adult response from us." In other words, over-emphasizing the baby in a manger can lead to our faith remaining infant-like, not growing and evolving into something more challenging and powerful over time. Yes, Jesus was a baby, helpless and dependent, born in a manger. But he also grew into a man who would demand that we be willing to:

- *Lose our lives for the sake of the Gospel*
- *Give up what we have to follow him*
- *Welcome the sinner and confront the self-righteous*
- *Give to the poor and pray for our enemies*

That's a list that demands not child-like innocence but mature, thoughtful, brave and courageous response and responsibility.



Fortunately for us in our preparations for Advent, we meet John the Baptist (our focus in worship this past week). He was the slightly older cousin of Jesus, born with the Spirit of the Elijah on him, who was appointed by God as the forerunner of Jesus. He was the one chosen to prepare the way for the Messiah. And in preparing his way, he prepares *us*. He asks us to "repent" (which means "change"). He commands us – with great urgency - to change the way we think about ourselves, our relationship with God, and how we connect the world, of which we are part, to God. Jesus changed, from the baby born into a manger, to the Rabbi who changed the world with this words and witness. And so it is appropriate that we, his followers, are called to change along with him. For God does not want our faith to remain juvenile or even adolescent, but that it continue to grow into a mature and responsible one.

For God wants partners in the building of the kingdom and for us to be those partners is to be willing to change and grow.

So while we love the images of the baby in the manger and sing with great joy carols like "Away in a Manger," John the Baptist comes to ask us to reflect on our own faith. In particular: *What about your spiritual life needs to change in order for you to be a more mature and complete follower of Christ and partner with God in doing the work of the Gospel?*

Blessing—**Michael**

#### **DORCAS THANKS YOU!**

Dorcas Disciples send a HUGE thank-you to all those who generously donated to our Christmas ministry recipient, "God's Shelter of Love". The Shelter is a faith-based emergency shelter for homeless families, women and children in Central Illinois. Due to your kindness, Dorcas was able to forward an amazing amount to the Shelter. Thank you for helping Dorcas Disciples to continue its ministry to others. Wishing you all the blessings of the season!

#### **Last Chance for CCC Note Cards**

On Sunday, December 16th cards depicting Central scenes were sold in sets of 25 for \$5.00. We currently have 6 sets remaining for sale. The cards were donated by Dorcas and the proceeds are going to the Central Christian Preschool. This is a wonderful way to support our preschool. Please call or email the church office if you are interested in purchasing a set.

#### **Prayer Shawl Ministry**

Christmas is a time of great anticipation, filled with wonder and joy. But for some people, it is a time of sadness and depression as they deal with adversities and struggles. If you know of someone who would benefit in receiving a prayer shawl or lap blanket from our church, please let the church office or one of our ministers know. By giving a prayer shawl, our church is letting someone know that God loves and cares deeply for them and that they are never alone in facing their difficulties. So during this Advent season, let us express our mission as a church to "share Christ, change lives and deliver hope" by giving someone this special expression of faith, hope and love.

#### **Chalice Class**

Title: *Christmas Music and the Incarnation*

Focus: Throughout the Christmas season, the airwaves have been filled with a variety of Christmas music. Amidst all of these songs, which ones have spoken to you most powerfully about the message of Christmas? How can Christmas music speak to the idea that God is with us?

#### **Preschool News**

This week was our last week of preschool before Christmas break. The classrooms were filled with busy teachers and children. Last minute touches were put on gifts for parents. Gingerbread houses were completed. And parties were had by all. *It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year!* Merry Christmas Central Christian Church!

Jennifer Van Dyke  
Director



**Sunday, December 23, 2018**

#### **ADVENT 4**

Music:

Offertory—Brass Choir

Anthem—*Mary Did You Know*

8:00-Worship Service

9:00-Contemporary Worship, Great Hall

9:00-Fellowship Coffee

9:00-Youth Sunday School Classes

9:15-Adult Sunday School Classes

10:30-Worship Service

12:00-Praise Team Rehearsal, Great Hall

#### **Monday (24)**

#### **CHRISTMAS EVE**

5:00-Contemporary Christmas Eve Service, GH

6:30-Harp Concert & Children's Crafts

7:00-Christmas Eve Service

#### **Tuesday (25)**

#### **CHRISTMAS DAY—CHURCH & OFFICE CLOSED**

#### **Wednesday (26)**

1:00—Personnel Meeting, 201

#### **Thursday (27)**

10:00-Al-Anon, 240

11:45-CINC, Disciples' Room

#### **Friday (28)**

#### **Saturday (29)**

#### **Sunday (31)**

8:00-Worship Service

9:00-Contemporary Worship, Great Hall

9:00-Fellowship Coffee

9:00-Youth Sunday School Classes

9:15-Adult Sunday School Classes

10:30-Worship Service

12:00-Praise Team Rehearsal, Great Hall

#### **In the Hospital...**

#### **DMH:**

David Flanders

Robert Hoaglin

#### **St. Mary's:**

Thomas Maltas



**Central Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)**  
 650 West William Street  
 Decatur, IL 62522

PERIODICAL  
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**Serving Schedule—Sunday, December 23, 2018**

**Elders:**

8:00 & 10:30 - Mark Beal, Tom Spry

**Deacons:**

8:00 - Team 1 - Gene & Sandy Garver, Gail Prince, Debbie Hoffert, Al & Chris Fagin, Dennis Downey, Pamela Bednar, David Wagner  
 10:30 - Team 2 - Christine Lyman-Harm, Janet Lyman, Dale & Judy Ford, Erik Harm, Kathy Kauzlarich, Ron Oliver, Steve Swarthout, Andy Fulk, Janelle Beedle, Tom & Diane Ritter, Paul Gorden, Roberta Gorden, Thomas Karunas

**Ushers:**

8:00 - Team 2 - Becky Johnston, Capt., Bruce Campbell, Liz Campbell  
 10:30 - Team 7 - George Virgil, Capt., Linda Virgil, Jon & Jane French

**Greeters:**

8:00 - Ron & Jan Dobbs  
 10:30 - Dale & Judy Ford, Ron & Mary Jane Oliver

**Acolytes:**

10:30 - Peyton Swarthout, Amila Bradfield

**P.A. Operator:**

8:00 - Greg Carter  
 10:30 - Mike Kirby

**Preparation of Communion:**

Ron & Jan Dobbs, Karen Penn, Becky Johnston

**Ride Share Drivers:**

8:00 & 9:00 Services & Sunday School - Andy Fulk 763-6624  
 Sunday School and 10:30 service - Brett Swallow 433-7488

**Main Entrance Door Hosts:**

December 24 NO HOST — CHRISTMAS EVE  
 December 25 CHURCH & OFFICE CLOSED  
 December 26 8:30-12:00 - Judy Ford  
 December 27 8:30-12:00 - Carolyn McCall  
 December 28 8:30-12:00 - Yvonne Purcell

**Central Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)**  
**650 West William Street Decatur, Illinois 62522**  
**Telephone (217)428-4336 FAX (217)428-1700**  
**www.cccdisciples.org**  
**e-mail: [central@cccdisciples.org](mailto:central@cccdisciples.org)**

Michael E. Karunas.....Senior Minister  
 Don Martin.....Minister of Music  
 Tina Miller.....Associate Minister of CE & Family Life  
 David Martin.....Youth Director  
 Cordelia "Dee Dee" Gain .....Organist  
 Ashely Sparks.....Administrative Assistant  
 Yvonne Boyd.....Administrative Assistant  
 Monica Hernandez.....Nursery Attendant  
 Cheryl Williams.....Nursery Attendant  
 Chloe Jancosek .....Nursery Attendant  
 Jennifer Van Dyke.....Preschool Director  
 Angela Moore.....Teacher Assistant  
 Paula Partain.....Teacher Assistant  
 Lisa Coates.....Preschool Teacher  
 Kay Villarreal.....Preschool Teacher  
 Sharon Renfro.....Preschool Teacher  
 Diana Murray.....Preschool Teacher  
 Stephanie Nihiser.....Preschool Teacher  
 Lora Wright .....Lead Caretaker  
 Jim Denzer.....Caretaker  
 Vernon Wimberly.....Caretaker  
 Andrew Evans.....Caretaker

Sunday School Classes	Floor	Room
Koinonia	2	212
Ecclesia	2R	240
Chalice	2	207
6th grade - 12th grade	2R	280
Kindergarten - 5th grade	2R	230
Nursery (Birth - 5 years old)	1R	150

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