



The Central Visitor

A weekly visitor to your home bringing you news from Central Christian Church

Vol. LXXVII

Decatur, Illinois, September 7, 2005

No. 36

Dress for the Picnic

All members of Central are encouraged to attend the annual all-church picnic this Sunday on the east lawn of the church at noon. There will also be games and activities for the children. At the picnic, congregation president **Chris Fagin** will convene a business meeting of the church to elect elders, deacons, a trustee, and three deacons emeritae. Names of all nominees were published in *The Central Visitor* week before last. Wear your picnic clothes to church Sunday!

Last Call to Sign Up for Dinner for Eight!

Sign up this Sunday for a Dinner for Eight Group! Each group of eight adults (give or take a few) decides when to meet and what to bring for an informal and enjoyable evening sometime before mid-November. The group will meet at the hosts' home (or other agreed-upon location) with each family contributing to the meal. The rest is magic as new friends get to know each other and old acquaintances have a chance to catch up on what's been happening. Sign up in the Friendship Center this Sunday!

Now is the Time to Register for the Women's Retreat!

Now is the time to sign up for our 2nd Annual Fall Women's Retreat. What a wonderful event this is shaping up to be! The excitement will take place October 21-22 at Camp One-Way (near Mt. Auburn). Our retreat leader is Claudia Grant, a nationally recognized Disciples leader. With sensitivity and spiritual insight she will guide us through the theme "*Dream On, Sisters!*" The registration fee of \$60 is due upon registration. An additional gift of any amount will help subsidize program costs or provide scholarships which are available upon request. Attendance is not limited to Central members. Invite a friend or family member to enjoy this event with you. Registration deadline is October 5th.

New Short Term Study Opportunity - The Life You've Always Wanted

Have you ever been frustrated with the state of your spiritual life or wondered why spiritual growth seems to go so slowly? If you've ever felt confused or stuck in your spiritual life, this study may be for you! **Pastor Gretchen** will lead a new six-week study entitled "The Life You've Always Wanted: Spiritual Disciples for Ordinary People" beginning Thursday, September 22. There will be both a daytime session from 11:30 to 1 p.m. and an evening session from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. A minimum of at least 6 participants is required for each session. Both sessions include a meal (either lunch or supper) and the study which combines group discussion and video presentation. Study books are \$10 and a donation will be accepted each week to offset the cost of the meal. Childcare will be provided, if needed, and children are invited to share in the meal with the group. Take a look at the study book and sign up this Sunday.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2005

WORSHIP AT 8:15 AND 10:45

Settling Scores

Text: Matthew 18:21-35

Charles Watkins

Ushers Are Needed

Mike Munos, the head usher of our congregation, is looking for volunteers to serve on usher teams for each service. Ushers hand out bulletins, count attendance, and assist worshippers as they enter the sanctuary. This is an important job that you can do! Ushers are scheduled to serve one Sunday each month. Please speak to Mike this Sunday at the picnic and let him know you will join an usher team.

Elderberries to Meet Wednesday September 14th!

Elderberries, Central's fellowship group for those at least 55 years young will meet at noon on Wednesday, September 14th. This month's menu includes Hot Beef Sandwich, Mashed Potatoes & Gravy, Fresh Fruit Salad, Lemonade Pie. The food is lovingly prepared from scratch in Central's own kitchen with the dedicated hands of Central volunteers. Cost for the meal is just \$3. Following the meal, **Jan Baird** and **Janice Mitchell** will entertain us with a musical program entitled, *Love Songs Through the Ages*. To sign up, call the church office (428-4336) or mark "Elderberries" next to your name on the Friendship Pad this coming Sunday. Reservations cannot be accepted after 5 p.m. on Monday, September 12th, so don't delay, reserve your place today!

General Assembly Highlights begins this Sunday, September 11 at 9:30 a.m. in the Great Hall.

Children's Worship Begins This Sunday

Beginning in September, Children's Worship will be available on the 2nd, 3rd & 4th Sundays of each month during the 10:45 a.m. service. Children ages 5 yrs.-10 yrs. are invited to a special worship time after the Offertory Prayer during the 10:45 a.m. service. Children are to meet our CW Leaders in the Friendship Center. Children will be participating in morning worship on the 1st Sunday of each month beginning in October.

Miracle Day Lock-In and Day Trip

A Lock-In will be held at the church on Friday, October 7th beginning at 7 p.m. for Youth grades 6-12 who will travel to Carbondale, IL for the CCIW Miracle Day on Saturday, October 8th. We will leave from the church at 5 a.m. and return to the church by 10 p.m. We will be working on the SIU Interfaith Center. There is no cost for the trip. Youth must register this Sunday and a parent signature is necessary. Call Pastor Robert with any questions 428-4336.

Youth Kick-Off

Plans are being made for the Central Youth Kick-Off Party on Sunday, September 18th when we will begin our Fall youth program. Watch this space and your mailbox for details for CCC KIDS (grades 1-5) and CENTRAL YOUTH (grades 6-12)!

Central Breakfast Café Menu

All Adults, children, and youth are welcome to join us for breakfast this Sunday from 9-9:30 a.m. Donation baskets will be available to offset the cost of the breakfast. The Central Breakfast Cafe menu includes: breakfast burritos, pastries, yogurt, fruit, cereal, milk, juice and coffee.

Charles's Column

One of the important functions of religion is to make sense of life, to organize events and experiences around what they mean. Religion attempts to bring to life events of a kind of cosmic context in which to see their significance in the whole big picture. Religion struggles with the "who" and "why" questions that people ask when they are trying to understand what they see happening in their lives.

Around the really big events including 9/11, the tsunami in Asia and the hurricane and its aftermath along the Gulf coast, people pose theological questions. Were the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington God's way of punishing America for its cultural and financial imperialism? Did God send the tsunami as chastisement for the peoples around the Indian Ocean? Was Hurricane Katrina God's judgment against New Orleans as a notorious party town?

My answer to each of these questions is emphatically, "No! Absolutely not!" And beyond that passionate no, I go further to object that affirmative answers to these questions are slanders against God and gross misunderstandings of God's character. Understanding that God is more righteous than any of us sinners, I ask "would any of us orchestrate the mass destruction of innocent life in order to make a point? Would any of us intentionally inflict the kind of suffering we have all witnessed in these catastrophes?" To suggest that God would choose to do such things is to suggest that God has a weaker, more cruel, and more vindictive character than we do. It is blasphemy!

The Psalmist assures us: The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love....He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him: as far as the east is from the west, so far he removes our transgressions from us." (Psalms 103:8-12)

When Jesus was asked about some Galileans who had been slaughtered by Pilate (human caused disaster) and about eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them (natural disaster) and whether these were worse sinners than all the others living in Galilee and Jerusalem, Jesus's answer was, "No." (Luke 13:1-5) And when his Disciples asked Jesus about a blind man: "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind," Jesus's answer was, "Neither." (John 9:1-3). Jesus declined repeatedly to blame God for disasters both corporate and personal, both natural and human-caused.

I understand that God does not need me to defend the character of the Almighty, nor does God depend on me to defend the reputation and motivation of the Holy One. But I, and I hope you, will disagree whenever anybody suggests that horrible suffering and mass destruction of innocent life (both human and animal) is God's choice, God's will, God's doing. It is not!

Charles Watkins

Prairie Avenue Garage Sale

Prairie Avenue Christian Church will have a garage sale September 16th and 17th from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. The sale is sponsored by the Christian Women's Fellowship. Food and beverage will be available for purchase. If you would like to donate items to be sold, please contact Prairie Avenue CC at 428-3327.

Last Chance to Sign up for Miracle Day Volunteers

Now is the time to sign-up for one of the Region's Miracle Days, October 1 (in Chicago) or October 8th (in Carbondale). All registration forms are due in the Regional Office no later than September 15th. Registration forms and informational brochures are available in the Friendship Center and may be turned in to Gretchen or mailed directly to the Region. Gretchen also has information available for area hotels for both locations. Be part of the miracle, sign up today!

Congratulations, Jared!

Jared Carter has been appointed by the Honorable Richard Durbin, the Senior Senator from Illinois and Assistant Minority Leader of the U.S. Senate, as one of thirty Senate pages to serve in the Capitol of the United States for the fall semester. Senate pages live in supervised housing in the Daniel Webster Page Residence near the Hart Senate Office Building in Washington, DC. (Senator Daniel Webster appointed the first Senate page in 1829) Jared is now enrolled in the Senate Page School in the lower level of Webster Hall, attending classes from 6 a.m. to 10 a.m. each day. Then for the rest of the day, he will serve as a messenger and helper for Senators. Academic standing is among the most important criteria used in the final selection of pages. Jared's appointment is a singular honor. Several incumbent and former Members of Congress as well as other prominent Americans have been congressional pages. Jared plans to return to Decatur and to Central in January. Jared is the son of **Greg and Jo Carter** and grandson of **Al and Bettie Carter**. Congratulations, Jared!

Week of Compassion – Hurricane Katrina Update

As the water flows out of New Orleans and other areas affected by Hurricane Katrina, the compassion and offers of assistance and financial gifts flow in. Thank you, Central, for your generous donations of over \$3,200 last week to Week of Compassion in response to the great need. We will continue to receive contributions for disaster relief and forward them to Week of Compassion and Church World Service, where they will be used in their entirety for needed supplies and assistance. For day to day updates on the work of Week of Compassion, visit Central's website at www.cccdisciples.org and click on the Week of Compassion link.

Now Showing: Dead Man Walking

The Peace & Justice Task Force will present the 1995 film based on Sister Helen Prejean's book *Dead Man Walking*, Sept. 21 at 6 p.m. in the Great Hall. Sr. Prejean will speak at Kirkland Fine Arts Center on Sept. 13 at 7 p.m.

CCC Monday Night Mixed Bowling League

Bowling begins September 26th at Pla Mor Lanes! Sign up this Sunday in the Friendship Center. There will be a League Meeting on Monday, September 12th at 6:30 p.m. at Pla Mor Lanes.

Notes of Thanks Received

We are so fortunate to have faithful, caring and dedicated ministers here at Central. I appreciate so much the prayers, visits, cards and calls during my recent hospitalization and recovery at home. Thank you so much, and may God bless all of you.
Howard Cravens

Thank you so much for your visits to the hospital by the ministers during my surgery. I appreciated the prayers, concerns, cards and wonderful meals at home. The Dorcas women supplied delicious food. I am thoughtful for your Christian cares and prayers.
Peace, Joy and Love, *Janice Sperry*

I am so overwhelmed by all the cards, calls, gifts, flowers, newsletter article and show of love from all of you. It has truly been my pleasure to serve God and you at Central Christian Church for the past twenty years, and I hope to continue in service for several more years! You've made me feel well celebrated and appreciated and I thank you so very much!
Valerie Rozanski



Sunday, September 11, 2005

8:15 and 10:45- Worship Services
Music: Offertory-Men's Quartet
10:45 Anthem-Chancel Choir
8:30-10:15-Parish Nurse Clinic
9:00-9:30-Central Breakfast Cafe,
Great Hall
9:30-Sunday School
11:15-Children's Worship, 250
12:00-All Church Picnic, west lawn
6:00-Peace & Justice Film, Great Hall

Monday (12)

8:00-Wellness Walk/Light Aerobics,
Great Hall/Heritage Center
9:00-CWU Fellowship of Renewal,
Wesley United Methodist Church
12:00-Cluster Ministers, Disciple Room
4:00-Aerobics

Tuesday (13)

9:00-ChristCare Stitchers, 207
10:00-Pastors' Staff Meeting,
Senior Pastor's Study
1:15-ChristCare, 218
4:00-Aerobics

Wednesday (14)

9:00-Baby Talk Parents, 280
12:00-Central Singers
12:00-Elderberries Lunch, Great Hall
4:00-Aerobics
5:00-CADV Meeting, Disciple Room

Thursday (15)

10:00-Alanon, 212
4:00-Aerobics
7:00-Chancel Choir

Friday (16)

8:00-Wellness Walk/Light Aerobics,
Great Hall/Heritage Center

Counting On You

September 4

Worship Attendance 329
Sunday School Attendance 63

Serving Schedule—September 11, 2005

Elders:

8:15 & 10:45 - Claudia Quigg, Linda Kuhns

Communion to Shut-Ins:

Deacons

Rebecca Smart
Jeannie Backes
Jordan Backes
Katie Beal
Mark Beal
Louise Boline
Deborah Foster
Larry Foster
Andy Fulk
Debra Fulk

Elders

Bruce Williams
Carol Graham
Keith Backes
Pat Ash
Jan Baird
Barb Tyler
Roe Skidmore
Bob Smith
Bruce Campbell
Ernestine Mrozinski
Alternate: Larry Pepper

Deacons:

8:15 - Team 1 - Chris Fagin, Capt., Tina Canfield, Jared Carter, Bev Chapman, Merle Chapman, Jim DeZarn, Dennis Downey, Al Fagin, Sally Force, Gene Garver, Sandy Garver, Dean Gray, Janet Gray, Bob Hoaglin, Joe Lewis, John Paradee, Gail Prince, Dean Simcox, Sue Simcox, Rebecca Smart
10:45 - Team 2 - Richard Ward, Capt., Cathy Ash, Jim Ash, Neil Baird, Debbie Bateman, Philip Bateman, Azalee Berner, Warren Berner, Dale Ford, Judy Ford, Alex Harm, Christine Lyman-Harm, Ernestine Mrozinski, Ron Oliver, Dave Phillips, Nita Phillips, Brett Swallow, Kelly Swallow, Steve Swarthout, Janet Thicksten, Larry Thicksten, Karen Thomas, Kathy Thornton

Ushers:

8:15 - Team 2 - Don Tankersley, Capt., Carl Boline, Frances Heiserman, Becky Johnston
10:45 - Team 7 - Karen McFadin, Chad McFadin, Jon French, Jane French, Clyde Booher

Greeters:

8:15 - Bill & Mary Alice Rule, Bob & Wanda Webb
10:45 - Ruby Agnew, Lilabelle Traylor, Azalee & Warren Berner

Acolytes:

8:15 - Brittney Munos
10:45 - David Martin, Avery Martin

P.A. Operator:

8:15 - Jim Bednar
10:45 - Greg Carter

Preparation of Communion:

Charles & Juanita Reynolds, Yvonne Purcell, Jan Sperry, Nancy Taylor

Van Drivers:

8:15 service and Sunday School - Bruce Williams
Sunday School and 10:45 service - Andy Fulk
10:45 service only - Ron Oliver

September 14 Visitor Mailing Crew:

Ruby Agnew, Helen Hufford

Hosts:

Sept. 12 9:00-12:30 - Mary Boyle
12:30-4:00 - Ken Davis
Sept. 13 9:00-12:30 - Carl Morris
12:30-4:00 - Ellen Sheffer
Sept. 14 9:00-12:30 - Joan Smith
12:30-4:00 - Marilyn Ward
Sept. 15 9:00-12:30 - Jean Booher
12:30-4:00 - Donna Strong
Sept. 16 9:00-12:30 - Juanita Ballance
12:30-4:00 - Juanita Reynolds

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HTTP://WWW.CCCDISCIPLES.ORG
e-mail: central@cccdisciples.org

Charles Watkins Senior Pastor
Robert Bushey Pastor for Children Youth and Families
Gretchen Barron Pastor for Evangelism and Membership
C. William Nichols Senior Minister Emeritus
Jim Whitaker Pastor for Visitation
Don Martin Minister of Music
Leslie Peart Organist
Valerie Rozanski Administrative Secretary
Pat Beals Church Secretary
Sue Burkhram, Jane Latshaw Parish Nurse Coordinators
Katie Beal Childcare Coordinator
Joanne Frady, Sarah & Debra Fulk Childcare Providers
Shelby Larrick, Bryan Rutherford Childcare Providers
Jean Pease, Janet Langston Preschool Director
Trudy Garland Preschool Teachers
Shelly Messmore, Kay Villarreal Preschool Teachers
Robin White Preschool Teacher
Rudi Descaro Custodian
David Flanders Custodian
Dean Hadden Custodian
Charles Wallace Custodian

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