



The Central Visitor

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

Vol. LXXIX

Decatur, Illinois, December 27, 2006

No. 52

New Year's Eve Pop Concert at Central

End the year in God's house at Central's annual New Year's Eve Organ Pops Concert at 8:30 p.m. on Sunday, December 31. Our guest artist will be **Robert MacDonald** in his fourth appearance at this event where he has proven to be a gifted artist extremely popular and entertaining.

Mr. MacDonald is a native of Massachusetts and holds degrees in organ performance from Boston University and the New England Conservatory of Music as well as the Associate degree of the American Guild of Organists.

A lifelong church musician, MacDonald enjoys music of all styles and periods. He has served churches from the famed Riverside Church in Manhattan to the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Newark, to First Presbyterian Church in Fort Worth from which he retired earlier this year.

This concert is free and open to the public, and any you invite to join you here will have a good time at this popular event.



Millikin Chamber Chorale Performs Concert at Central

You are invited to attend the **Millikin Chamber Chorale** homecoming concert at 7:00 p.m. on Sunday, January 14, 2007 in Central's sanctuary.

The Chamber Chorale, under the direction of **Dr. Guy Forbes**, is a highly select mixed choir of 40 voices and is one of the top touring choirs at Millikin. Their repertoire this year features compositions by Francis Poulenc, Giovanni Groce, William Walton and David Dickau. The Chamber Chorale's program also includes carols, folk songs and spirituals arranged by such popular contemporary American composers as Mack Wilberg and Moses Hogan.

Mark your calendars, invite your family and friends, and plan to attend this inspiring concert.

Reaching For Black Ink

Members and friends of our church have been extraordinarily generous during December, and we're almost in reaching distance of eliminating the accumulated deficit in the church's operating fund. To receive credit for your gifts in 2006, they must be received in the church office by noon December 31 or postmarked before that date. Your extra gift this weekend can really help your church!

Church Office Holiday Hours

The church office will be closed on Monday, January 1 for New Year's day.

Sunday School Holiday Schedule

Children & Youth classes will not meet on Sunday, December 31st. We will return to our regular schedule on Sunday, January 7th.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2006

WORSHIP AT 10:00

**The Sharp Edge
of Christmas**

Text: Luke 2:21-35

Charles Watkins

Single Morning Services

This Sunday

Instead of our usual two services this Sunday, we will worship God in a combined service at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday, December 31.

Officers Installed December 31

All those elected as trustees, deacons, elders, and executive officers will be installed in their new positions during morning worship on Sunday, December 31 at 10 a.m. in the sanctuary. Plan to pledge your support for those who will lead us in the coming two years as they are "sworn in."

Welcome New Member



Aaron Osman joined Central on December 24 by transfer of membership from First Christian Church in Bethany, IL. Married to **Betsy (Quigg) Osman**.



Central Youth

Central Youth will NOT meet on Sunday December 31st. Enjoy the holiday with your family!

Sunday, January 7th Epiphany Games 4:30-6:30 p.m.

Youth Grades 3-5 and 6-12 are invited to our annual Epiphany Games. We will search for clues to solve a mystery. Bring a flashlight and a friend! This will be FUN!

Winter Youth Party January 28th 2-5 p.m.

Vine Street Christian Church, Arthur

Youth grades 6-12.
Camp reunion and rally for Church Camp 2007!
Let's Get Real in 2007!

Coming Summer 2007

Koinonia Camp (gr. 3-8) -
June 11-16

Shalom Camp (gr. 9-12) -
June 25-30

Wisconsin Dells Trip July 8-15

The Inn at Glacier Canyon

Youth entering 6th grade -
finishing 12th grade.

Spend the week with your friends from Central!

Indoor/Outdoor Water Parks

Wisconsin DUKW Tours
And MUCH MORE!

Mark your Calendar Today!

Charles's Column

While our secular society is done with Christmas, the church is not. I saw the first Christmas tree of the season in the window at Haines and Essick on August 1, and other merchants were not far behind. Christmas is such a vital commercial season for retailers, and I understand their eagerness completely and sympathetically. But by the time Christmas actually arrives, it is so over in our culture. Everybody is exhausted with the whole thing and even a little weary of hearing jazzed up Christmas carols in the elevators. People who don't have their tree ornaments back in storage by New Year's Day may be regarded as dawdlers.

But the Church just begins its Christmas celebration on December 25, and the festival continues for twelve days, what with turtle doves and lords a-leaping. So this Sunday, the Church will still be singing carols and rejoicing at the birth of Jesus. Our congregation in its single morning service will be installing officers for the new year in positions of service to the new-born king.

Following the church's calendar instead of American culture's calendar offers you an opportunity for a true counter-cultural experience. Go ahead and leave your tree up for the full twelve days. You might actually have time now to sit beside its glow and sip a warm mug. Perhaps you could reflect on other Christmases and give thanks. You might look at the crèche and wonder at the faith of Mary, the courage of Joseph, the innocence of Jesus, and the tolerant companionship of the animals sharing their stable space with those who did not belong there.

If all the days leading up to Christmas were frantically busy for you, let the twelve days of Christmas be an opportunity to reflect and pray. Let these twelve days be as quiet and thoughtful as the previous thirty days were rushed and noisy. Let these twelve days be that time in your life when you truly welcome Jesus into your life in a fresh and renewing way. Let us offer to Christ the invitation extended in these words of Phillips Brooks:

*O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in; be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, our God, Emmanuel.*

Charles Watkins

Offering Envelopes on the Way to You

Central is mailing a booklet of offering envelopes to all regular contributors on January 2. Volunteers who operate the financial office at the church plead with you: 1) Please use the numbered envelopes—even if you use only one a month or one a quarter, it still saves volunteer time in the office to receive your gift in a numbered envelope, and 2) Please throw away all old envelopes from previous years—your number may change and an old envelope with the wrong number messes up the record-keeping. If you do not get a set of envelopes by January 5, please phone the church office (428-4336) so that we can send yours to you.

News From the Pews....

The sympathy of the congregation is extended to **Tim & Connie Ogden** and family following the December 24th death of Tim's mother, *Janet Ogden*.

Pamper Yourself at the 2007 Women's Retreat!

Lucy Acheson writes... *"I have attended two CCC Women's Retreats and found them thoroughly enjoyable. The atmosphere at Camp One-Way is relaxing and spiritually invigorating at the same time. The retreat is a wonderful time to get to know other women of Central in a warm and inviting setting. The retreat leaders have been uplifting, the comraderie warm and fun, and the food is fantastic! It's the perfect way to pamper yourself. I wouldn't miss the next retreat for the world!"*

Registration forms are now available for our next Women's Retreat, February 22-23, 2007. Pick up a brochure in the Friendship Center this Sunday and make plans to join us for a refreshing, relaxing and renewing weekend in February.

Register Now for Mission Trips in 2007

Registration and information packs are now available for our two 2007 mission trips to the hurricane-affected Gulf region, March 10-18 and June 23-July 1. Both groups will travel to the New Orleans area to assist individual families with the reconstruction of their homes. Tasks may include roofing, dry wall installation, painting, general cleanup and more. There will be a job for you to do, regardless of your physical ability or knowledge/experience. Cost per participant is \$250 to cover travel, lodging and meal expenses, and scholarship will be available. You will also be responsible for purchasing your own meals during travel. Now is the time to plan ahead to participate in this life-changing experience!

Thank you!

The Spirit of Christmas gifts were delivered last week in time for the big day. Thanks to **Darla** and **Andrew Otis, HH** and **Hilary Critchfield, Dale** and **Judy Ford** and **Penny Rutherford** for helping with the deliveries!

It's Not Too Late!

The annual Christmas special day offering goes entirely to support the regional ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Illinois and Wisconsin. Our region has been in financial meltdown, and those who serve us there really need your financial support. We don't remit this offering until the middle of January, so it is not too late for you to make a Christmas offering for our regional ministries.

Counting On You December 24

Christmas Eve Morning

Worship Attendance 343

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Worship Attendance 600



Sunday, December 31, 2006

10:00-Worship Service

Music: Offertory-Karen Driver, Soprano
Anthem-Chancel Choir

8:30-**Robert McDonald Organ Pops
Concert**, Sanctuary

Monday (January 1, 2007)

Church & Office Closed

Tuesday (2)

9:00-ChristCare Stitchers, 207

10:00-Pastors' Staff Meeting,
Senior Pastor's Study

4:00-Aerobics, 290

6:30-Boy Scouts, Disciple Room

Wednesday (3)

9:00-Baby Talk Parents, 280

12:00-Central Singers

1:00-4:00-Banner Committee, 207

4:00-Aerobics, 290

Thursday (4)

10:00-Alanon, 212

4:00-Aerobics, 290

6:30-Decatur Needle Arts, 207

7:00-Chancel Choir

Friday (5)

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

Going to the Hospital?

If you are entering a local hospital, please notify the church office so that the minister or elder who is visiting each day may stop by to visit and pray with you. Frequently, a caller from the church may pass your room, because we don't know you are there. Procedures to protect your privacy make it hard for the church to find you if you don't let us know.

Evangelism Seeds

"Will you look back on life and say, 'I wish I had,' or 'I'm glad I did'?" (Zig Ziglar)

Invite someone to church this week – you'll be glad you did!

Serving Schedule—December 31, 2006

Elders:

10:00 - Linda Kuhns, Connie Bordner

Deacons:

10:00 - 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, Kelly Swallow, Steve Swarouth, Janet Thicksten, Larry Thicksten, Sally Thicksten, Kathy Thornton

Ushers:

10:00 - Team 8 - Dean Hadden, Doug Soebbing, Donna Strong

P.A. Operator:

10:00 - Larry Pepper

Preparation of Communion:

Barbara Beyer, Karen Baird, Donna Dash, Gerri & Mike Munos

Van Drivers:

10:00 service only - John Flanders

January 3 Visitor Mailing Crew:

Sara Field

Hosts:

Jan. 1 **New Year's Day**
Church & Office Closed

Jan. 2 9:00-12:30 - *Help Needed*
12:30-4:00 - Helen Hufford

Jan. 3 9:00-12:30 - Joan Smith
12:30-4:00 - Donna Strong

Jan. 4 9:00-12:30 - Shirlee Johnson
12:30-4:00 - *Help Needed*

Jan. 5 9:00-12:30 - Bonnie Sauer
12:30-4:00 - *Help Needed*



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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 Burkhams, Jane Latschaw Parish Nurse Coordinators
Katie Beal Childcare Coordinator
Joanne Frady, Debra Fulk Childcare Providers
Shelby Larrick, Kaylene Beal Childcare Providers
Shelly Messmore Preschool Director
Trudy Garland, Janet Langston Preschool Teachers
Wendy Jalley, Kay Villarreal, Robin White Preschool Teachers
Rudi Descaro Custodian
David Flanders Custodian
Dean Hadden Custodian
Charles Wallace Custodian

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