



# The Central Visitor

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

Vol. LXXVII

Decatur, Illinois, December 7, 2005

No. 49

## Music for a Merry Christmas this Sunday!

Invite neighbors and friends to join you this Sunday afternoon at 4:30 p.m. for a Christmas candlelight organ concert in the sanctuary featuring **Christopher Brayne**, organist and choirmaster at Christ Church in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Christopher Brayne grew up in England, studied at Cambridge University and holds diplomas in organ performance and choir training from the Royal College of Organists and the Royal College of Music. He began his training as a chorister at Lichfield Cathedral and later held organ scholarships at St. George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, and Emmanuel College Cambridge. He was assistant organist at Wells Cathedral and Coordinator of Vocal studies and Organ Tutor at Wells Cathedral School.



Mr. Brayne moved to the United States in 2000 where he directs four youth choirs and two adult choirs at Christ Church Charlotte as well as teaching keyboard and vocal coaching. He is an accomplished recitalist and has made recordings for the Priory label and the BBC. You will love to hear him play this Sunday afternoon, December 11.

## Come Home for Christmas

You and your family are invited to Come Home to Central on Sunday, December 18. During the worship services our special music will be provided by the Millikin Decatur Symphony Chamber Orchestra, under the direction of **Dr. Michael Luxner**. Early risers will be treated to a breakfast of ham, hashbrown casserole, scrambled eggs, fruit salad and croissants, served between 7:15 and 7:45 a.m. in the Great Hall. A delicious Christmas luncheon will be served at noon, immediately following the second service. The menu is ham, party potatoes, peas and carrots, holiday salad, croissants and Christmas cake. If you've not yet done so, please turn in your reservation card or call the church office (428-4336) to make your reservation TODAY! Let us know we can set a place for you and your family at the table when we all *Come Home to Central for Christmas!*

## Spirit of Christmas Gifts to be Dedicated

You may still participate by giving a cash donation to the program by marking your check made payable to the church with *Spirit of Christmas*. All gifts should be returned to the church, wrapped and tagged, no later than Sunday, December 11<sup>th</sup> when they will be dedicated during our morning worship.

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2005**

WORSHIP AT 8:15 AND 10:45

**Why Jesus Came**

Text: Philippians 2:5-11

Charles Watkins



## Holiday Worship Services

The Worship Department has decided that Central will offer the traditional candlelight communion service on Christmas Eve at 7:30 p.m., a single service of worship on Christmas morning at 10 a.m., and a single service of worship on New Year's day at 10 a.m.

## No Council Meeting in December

The Church Council will not meet on December 21 so that members may have an additional evening at home with their families. The next meeting of the Church Council will be on January 18 at 5:30 p.m. in the Disciple Room.

## Advent Devotions by Bill Nichols

*Partners in Prayer* published by Christian Board of Publication features Advent devotional meditations drawn from books written by **Dr. C. William Nichols**. This collection of meditations for the season is available for sale in the church office for \$2 and on the devotions table in the narthex.





## Youth Column

**Central Youth  
Parent's Day Out  
Saturday, Dec. 10<sup>th</sup>  
11 a.m. - 3 p.m.**

Youth grades 6-12 are needed to help with our annual Parent's Day Out program following the Children's Christmas Workshop. We will provide care for children 3 yrs.-11 yrs., from 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.

**Christmas Caroling  
Sunday, Dec. 18<sup>th</sup>  
5 p.m.**

CCC KIDS and Central Youth will bring "tidings of comfort and cheer" to several homes of church members. Hot Chocolate, finger foods and goodies will be waiting for us afterwards at Pastor Robert's house.

**Christmastide  
Celebration  
Sunday, Jan. 1<sup>st</sup>  
9 a.m.**

Celebrate the Christmas Season and New Years with cake and punch! Sponsored by the Christian Education Department & Sunday School. Children and Youth Classes will not meet that morning.

## Charles's Column

You know how when you have company coming to visit your home, everything suddenly looks different to you? You're the same and the house is the same, but all at once you look around with the eyes of your visitors. You see your every day environment the way a guest will see it with "visitor's eyes." And then you panic!

Suddenly, everything that looked normal looks terrible. The stack of newspapers by your chair looks like a pile of trash. The slip covers that protect the velvet couch from the dogs, looks like a rumpled pile of canine hair. The spots on the rug all at once appear much darker and more pronounced. And the only thing to be done is a frantic grabbing and tossing and vacuuming and dusting and window washing and getting ready for your visitors. The desk in the study with its carefully stacked piles of bills and catalogs and Coke cans looks like hurricane damage, and you've got to sort and toss or get a big box out of the basement. Company coming means lots of work in a big hurry.

In Advent, we have company coming. And the guest whose arrival we anticipate isn't looking at stacks of newspapers and rumpled slip covers, but at your soul. When the King comes, he's looking inside you for faith and love and commitment. Are you ready for company? For a holy visitor? For your brother who is the Son of God?

Not many of us are ready to face Jesus on a daily basis. Few of us can say that we are prepared to meet our Maker at any hour of the day or night. We have some considerable spiritual tidying up to accomplish before that, if not a major spiritual renovation.

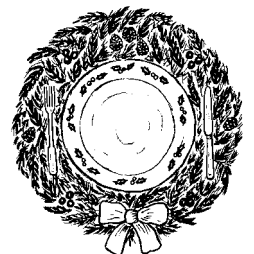
And that's what Advent is for. It is a season of spiritual preparation with four weeks of warning that company is coming. Yes, it's about getting ready for Baby Jesus to come on a silent and holy night when we light the Christ Candle on the Advent Wreath. But it's also about getting ready for the Sovereign Lord to come in the last minute of our lives. Advent is about both kinds of coming—the advent of Jesus in Bethelhem long ago and the advent of Christ when this life is over. It's all about preparation and getting ready.

So look at your life during these weeks of Advent the way your Guest will look at it with "visitor's eyes"—your values, your commitments, your faith, your devotion, your love. And thank God that we have this precious time to get ready. I'll be in church this Sunday to help myself get ready, and I hope you'll be there with me!

*Charles Watkins*

## Elderberries to Meet Wednesday December 14<sup>th</sup>!

Elderberries, Central's fellowship group for those at least 55 years young will meet at noon on Wednesday, December 14<sup>th</sup>. This month's menu includes ham balls, au gratin potatoes, tossed salad, green beans, rolls and butter, sherbet and a cookie. 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, our own Central Singers will share joyful, seasonal music. To sign up, please 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, December 12<sup>th</sup>, so don't delay, reserve your place today!



## Alternative Gift Giving Market Opens Sunday

This is the last week to participate in the Alternative Gift Giving program for 2005. This year you may purchase alternative gifts in honor of your loved ones from Baby Talk, ChristCare Stitchers, DOVE, Good Samaritan Inn, Habitat for Humanity, Heifer Project International, the Oasis Day Center for the homeless, and Webster Cantrell Hall. Stop by the Alternative Gift Market near the West Entrance on Sunday, December 11<sup>th</sup>; make a donation in someone's name to one of the organizations; and we will provide you with a certificate or card to send to your loved one telling them of the wonderful gift you have made in their honor for the holidays.



### Have You Forgotten Your Poinsettia?

Just a few poinsettias remain in the Heritage Center for pick up. If you ordered a poinsettia in October and have not yet picked yours up, please do so by this Sunday. Make sure and check your name off the list on the table so we know you've picked your plants up. We thank you for your support of future mission trips and hope you enjoy the beautiful plants as they help bring holiday joy into your home.

### FunTimers on the Go to Sullivan

The Fun Timers, Central's "on the go" group for those 55 years and older, will head to Sullivan on December 21<sup>st</sup> for their Holiday Show matinee "The Magic of Christmas". We will join the talented performers of The Little Theatre On The Square for a magical adventure filled with beautiful songs, dances, comedy routines, and classic stories that will surely lift your spirits and challenge even Scrooge to leave the theatre without Christmas in his heart. Admission to the show is \$23. Tickets are limited and must be paid in advance. We will leave the church at 10:30 a.m. Following the show, we'll plan to stop at the Old School Market for a late lunch/early supper (lunch additional). Sign up in the Friendship Center or call the church office to reserve your ticket. For more information, speak with **Pastor Gretchen**.

### Acknowledging Your Giving

Last Friday grateful acknowledgements of your gifts in the first eleven months of this year were mailed to all regular contributors. Please check the statement for accuracy and to confirm your intention to complete your giving plan in December. The troublesome accumulated operating deficit popped back up over \$30,000 in November, so your most generous effort is needed to wipe this out before the New Year. Thank you for all your gifts to your church!



### Note of Thanks Received

Thanks to the Keystone Class and many others who have showed me many kindnesses during my dilemma. Don't break your back.

*Mary Barnes*



### Sunday, December 11, 2005

8:15 and 10:45-Worship Services  
Music: Offertory-Leslie Peart, organist  
10:45 Anthem-Chancel Choir  
8:30-10:15-Parish Nurse Clinic  
9:15-Fellowship Coffee, Friendship Ctr.  
9:30-Sunday School  
11:15-Children's Worship, 250  
4:30-*Christopher Brayne Christmas Organ Concert*, Sanctuary

### Monday (12)

8:00-Wellness Walk, Great Hall  
12:00-CWU Annual Meeting & Luncheon, New Salem Missionary Baptist Church  
4:00-Aerobics  
6:30-CCC Bowling, PlaMor Lanes

### Tuesday (13)

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

### Wednesday (14)

9:00-Baby Talk Parents, 290  
12:00-Elderberries Lunch, Great Hall  
12:00-Central Singers  
12:00-3:00-Low Vision Support, Disciple Room  
2:00-ChristCare, 290  
4:00-Aerobics  
5:30-Fellowship & Shepherding Depts., Disciple Room

### Thursday (15)

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

### Friday (16)

8:00-Wellness Walk, Great Hall

### Counting On You

#### December 4

Worship Attendance ..... 282  
Sunday School Attendance ..... 70

## Serving Schedule—December 11, 2005

### Elders:

8:15 & 10:45 - Linda Kuhns, Sue Ann Cain

### Communion to Shut-Ins:

#### Deacons

Dee Hill  
Wayne Honeycutt  
Louellen Lusk  
Karen McFadin  
Debbie Bateman  
Philip Bateman  
Azalee Berner  
Warren Berner  
Alex Harm  
Christine Lyman-Harm

#### Elders

Larry Pepper  
Keith Backes  
Kevin Otis  
Tom Spry  
Mike Holbrook  
Cindy Soebbing  
Barbara Tyler  
Harold King  
Larry Thicksten  
Warren Berner  
Alternate: Roe Skidmore

### 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 4 - Ed Acheson, Capt., Carole Holbrook, Mike Holbrook, Carl Morris, Phyllis Morris, Betty Ann Roe  
10:45 - Team 9 - Bruce, Carol, Allison, Jessica, & Maggie Stoddard

### Greeters:

8:15 - Mary Kincaid, Norma Mason, Greg & Joe Carter  
10:45 - Judson & Jean Pease, Steve & Carrie Funk

### Children's Worship:

Teri Bushey

### Fellowship Coffee Hosts:

Jim, Cathy & Rachel Ash

### Acolytes:

8:15 - Jarrett Bednar  
10:45 - Jessica Brooks

### P.A. Operator:

8:15 - Greg Carter  
10:45 - Jordan Backes

### Preparation of Communion:

Barbara Beyer, Karen Baird, Donna Dash, Jan & Ron Dobbs

### Van Drivers:

8:15 service and Sunday School - Bruce Williams  
Sunday School and 10:45 service - Andy Fulk  
10:45 service only - Karen Baird

### December 14 Visitor Mailing Crew:

Ruby Agnew, Helen Hufford

### Hosts:

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

**Central Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)**  
650 West William Street Decatur, Illinois 62522  
Telephone (217)428-4336 FAX (217)428-1700  
HTTP://WWW.CCCDISCIPLES.ORG  
e-mail: [central@cccdisciples.org](mailto: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 Burkham, Jane Latshaw ..... Parish Nurse Coordinators  
Joanne Frady, Sarah & Debra Fulk ..... Childcare Providers  
Shelby Larrick, Bryan Rutherford ..... Childcare Providers  
Jean Pease ..... Preschool Director  
Trudy Garland, Shelly Messmore ..... Preschool Teachers  
Kay Villarreal, Robin White ..... Preschool Teachers  
Rudi Descaro ..... Custodian  
David Flanders ..... Custodian  
Dean Hadden ..... Custodian  
Charles Wallace ..... Custodian

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**Central Christian Church**  
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650 West William Street  
Decatur, IL 62522-2326

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