



The Central Visitor

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

Vol. LXXVII

Decatur, Illinois, December 28, 2005

No. 52

New Year's Eve Pops Concert

Paul Fleckenstein, organist and director of music at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Wilmington, Delaware will play a concert of popular favorites on the Diller Memorial Organ in Central's sanctuary to help us "ring out the old year and ring in the new" at 8:30 p.m. this Saturday, December 31.

Mr. Fleckenstein is a native of California and holds degrees from the University of the Pacific Conservatory of Music and Westminster Choir College, where he held a graduate assistantship as accompanist for the famed Westminster Symphonic Choir. Noted for the diversity of his musical activities, he has performed extensively as solo organ recitalist, conductor, piano and organ accompanist, organ soloist with orchestras, organ accompanist for silent movies, cocktail pianist and professional choral singer. He has played significant pipe organs across America from Trinity Church in Boston to St. Patrick's Cathedral and St. Thomas Church in New York City, to the Conservatory Ballroom at Longwood Gardens in Kennett Square, PA, to the world's largest organ (the Wanamaker Organ in Philadelphia) to the Spreckels Organ Pavilion in San Diego. He has also been a featured performer at conventions of the American Guild of Organists, the Organ Historical Society, the Association of Anglican Musicians, and the San Anselmo Organ Festival in California.

This year's concert includes a number of delightful "encore" selections. Your family and friends will thank you for inviting them to enjoy this casual and entertaining hour at the church before your other New Year's Eve celebrations begin. Don't miss it!



Alternative Giving Great Success!

Nearly \$1200 was given through alternative gifts for our local human service agencies and Heifer Project. Your gifts will bring joy and hope into the hearts of many persons throughout the Decatur area and beyond. Thank you to **Julie Martin & Lucy Acheson** for organizing our program and displays for 2005 and to all who participated in this special outreach tradition.

Sisters in Spirit Gathering January 4th!

"Friendship" is the theme for our January gathering — why are friendships so important to us and how we can learn to better nurture and care for these important relationships! It's been said that to have a great friend, one must be a great friend. Join us at 7 p.m. on January 4th in the Disciple Room to find out more and share your insights and ideas on Friendship. Childcare will be provided for young children in the nursery. Sign up this Sunday in the Friendship Center. Sisters in Spirit is a monthly gathering of Central women and is open to all who are interested. It is not a group in the traditional sense, but rather an opportunity to gather around specific interests and programs. Join us on January 4th!

SUNDAY, JANUARY 1, 2006

WORSHIP AT 10:00

Redemption Center

Text: Luke 2:22-40

Charles Watkins

Single Worship Service

This Sunday

Our congregation will begin the New Year with a single worship service on Sunday morning, January 1 at 10:00 a.m. in the sanctuary. Come and meet the people that usually attend the other service from the one you normally choose.

Installation of Elders, Deacons, and Trustee This Sunday

Members whom the congregation elected to serve new terms as elders, deacons or trustee last September will be officially installed in their new offices this Sunday, January 1, at the single service at 10:00 a.m. All members are encouraged to attend to show support for our new serving board members.

Local Hunger Relief Task Force to Meet

Two dozen people have indicated interest in helping serve six weekend meals at the Good Samaritan Inn. During the recent allocation of funds from undesignated estate giving, a fund was established to help provide the meals in 2006. A meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday, January 11th at 6:30 p.m. in the Disciple Room. A reminder card will be sent to those who indicated interest in serving.

Youth Column

Christmastide Celebration Sunday, January 1st 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 Sunday School Classes, and Youth groups will not meet on New Years Day.

Central Youth Friday, January 6th Epiphany Lock-In

The season of Epiphany begins on January 6th and lasts until the beginning of Lent in March. Epiphany celebrates the revelation of God through Jesus, the Light of the World. Friday night, January 6th we will conduct our annual Epiphany Games (with prizes!) during a lock-in at the church. The event will begin at 7 p.m. and end at 7 a.m. on Saturday morning. Bring \$2, a flashlight and your favorite snack or dessert. Central Youth will not meet on Sunday, January 8th.

CCC KIDS & Central Youth Group

Sunday, January 15th Indoor Miniature Golf

CCC KIDS will tee-off at the church at 4:00 p.m. to play nine holes of miniature golf throughout the church. Youth (grades 6-12) will meet at 5:30 p.m. for supper and tee off at 6:00 p.m. Prizes will be awarded! Friends are always welcome!

Winter Youth Party Sunday, January 29th 2-5 p.m.

First Christian Church of Sullivan

A fun break in your January "blahs." So make sure it's on your schedule, then go get the crew, grab some food, and get psyched to *Bring It!* Koinonia & Shalom Camp Reunions! Led by the Rev. Mike Dixon.

Charles's Column

Even at the height of our beautiful celebrations around the birth of Christ, I have been devoting much thought to the senseless violence in the world, in our country, and in our town. I'm not sure why these reflections seem so inconsistent with the birth of the Prince of Peace in Bethlehem. After all, at Christ's birth, violent men were sent by King Herod to slaughter all the innocent children in Bethlehem, as his parents fled with baby Jesus into Egypt to prevent his murder. And Jesus's cousin John who heralded the coming of the Lamb of God was himself put to death violently. And at last the death of Jesus was a purposely violent, gruesome and bloody affair.

So why are we so shocked when senseless violence invades our own church family and takes away a long-time member of Central who served us as president of the congregation, elder, deacon, chair of two different pulpit committees (including the one that called Dr. Nichols as our senior minister) department chair and leader in stewardship, who was married in our sanctuary and with his wife Barbara (also a life-long Disciples member and leader in our congregation) reared their children in our midst? Are we most outraged because *Dallas Beyer* was himself such a quiet and gentle leader, a distinguished educator and administrator in our public schools who loved children with special needs and always approached each one on her or his own level? Are we most agitated because Dallas was a devoted husband, and a proud father, and a doting grandfather, and we just never imagine that one of us, one of our own personal friends, would become the victim of a cruel murder? Or is our problem that daily reports of violence in our town and in our world always seem to destroy people who are different from us, live differently and elsewhere from where we live, and seem easy for us to dismiss because we think that they have made bad choices and aren't like us at all? Perhaps because we want to think of ourselves as safe and secure and even immune from the malicious violence that terrifies other people all the time, we have somehow managed to distance ourselves emotionally from others who suffer violent deaths.

There is nothing easy for any of us about Dallas's death. We can't imagine that such a thing could happen to a faithful volunteer in community causes who was President of the Decatur-Macon County Fair Association Board of Directors and the "go-to-guy" for keeping the fair viable through its 150th anniversary next year.

The only consolation available for us in our terrible loss is to remember that other victim of violence whom God sent to save us. At Jesus's birth, the angels called for "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among all people." All our hope for Dallas and for us is in Christ Jesus born that night. I pray that God's Holy Spirit will be our Comforter and Encourager as we struggle through this terrible grief and loss.

Charles Watkins

Dream On, Sisters!

Discover Your Dreams! Awaken to God's Dreams! Live out those Dreams in the World! Register now to attend the Mix in '06 Women's Event, June 21-25, 2006, Indianapolis, IN, bringing together the UCC National Women's Meeting and the Disciples Quadrennial Assembly. Join with 5,000 other dreamers at the Mix in '06 Women's Event and set free the power of your own dream. The 5-day event will inspire you to dream, empower your dreams and allow you to live out your dreams. Look for more information from Central's own "Dream Team" soon. Register at www.dreamonsisters.com.



News From the Pews....

The sympathy of the congregation is extended to the family and friends of **Betty Campbell** following her death on December 22nd.....to **Barbara Beyer** and family following the tragic death of **Dallas Beyer** on December 22nd.....and to **Dean & Joel Hadden** following the December 23rd death of Joel's sister, *Judy Smith*.

Offering Envelopes On Their Way to You for 2006

Central asks: Why is the church sending me offering envelopes this week?

Answer: Contributors who use numbered envelopes save so much volunteer time in processing church receipts. Using your numbered envelopes is really a kindness to your fellow church members who process all contributions to Central. Marking on your envelopes how you want your gifts used takes all the guess work out of the process and saves both time and phone calls.

Central asks: But you send me an envelope for every week, and I make my gifts to the church monthly or quarterly. Why?

Answer: It costs very little (only 2 cents per envelope plus postage) to mail you all the envelopes, and then you have them whenever you want to use them. By closing the flap to protect your privacy, you can mail your gifts to Central at any time by adding a postage stamp. The envelope is already addressed to the church. Even if you used just one envelope all year, it would be a help for you to use that one. Keeping the envelopes near your check book may remind you that the church really needs your help.

Central asks: I still have envelopes from last year. Can I use them?

Answer: Please don't. Destroy all old offering envelopes. The envelopes you receive for 2006 may have a different number, and it is the use of that number in data entry that really saves the volunteers time.

Central asks: Well, so?

Answer: Please use a numbered envelope whenever you make a gift to Central, mark on the envelope how you want your gift used (operating fund, building fund, or special designated purpose), and the church can keep an accurate record thanking you correctly for each gift all year. Please use the envelopes! And if you do not get a set of envelopes for 2006, please call the office. We have a set ready to send you!

IRS Deadline

Federal regulations require that the church acknowledge gifts you make to the church for 2005 only if the church actually receives them by December 31, 2005. The church office will be open until noon this Friday, and because the church office cannot receive mail on Saturday, Sunday, or Monday, we really need to receive 2005 gifts by noon this Friday.

Gifts for 2005 received after this Friday will be credited to your Central giving record in 2006 and will still help fulfill your giving plan for this year. We begin this week with a substantial operating deficit for the current year, so every gift will help whether you give it this week or next.



Sunday, January 1, 2006

10:00-Worship Service

Music:

10:00 Offertory-Chancel Choir

9:00-Christmastide Party, Great Hall

Monday (2)

Church & Office Closed

Tuesday (3)

9:00-ChristCare Stitchers, 207

10:00-Pastors' Staff Meeting,

Senior Pastor's Study

4:00-Aerobics, 290

Wednesday (4)

9:00-Baby Talk Parents, 280

12:00-Central Singers

4:00-Aerobics, 290

7:00-Sisters in Spirit, Disciple Room

Thursday (5)

10:00-Alanon, 212

4:00-Aerobics, 290

6:00-Evangelism Dept., Disciple Room

6:30-Decatur Needle Arts, 207

7:00-Chancel Choir

Friday (6)

8:00-Wellness Walk

Counting On You
December 25
Worship Attendance230

Financial Reports Available

Detailed reports on church finances are always available on the counter in the Friendship Center next to the church office. The monthly Treasurer's report to the Church Council on the General Operating Fund and various designated funds are placed there along with the monthly Board of Trustees financial report.

Serving Schedule—January 1, 2006

Elders:

10:00 - Lois Whitaker, Jan Baird

Elder Serving Imboden Creek Living Center:

Julie Martin

Ushers:

10:00 - Team 7 - Karen McFadin, Chad McFadin, Jon French, Jane French, Clyde Booher

Greeters:

10:00 - Donna Strong

P.A. Operator:

10:00 - Jordan Backes

Preparation of Communion:

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

Van Drivers:

10:00 service - Kevin Wilmot

January 4 Visitor Mailing Crew:

Juanita Clark, Sara Field

Hosts:

Jan. 2 9:00-12:30 - *Church & Office Closed*
Jan. 3 9:00-12:30 - Roy Schilling
12:30-4:00 - Helen Hufford
Jan. 4 9:00-12:30 - Joan Smith
12:30-4:00 - Donna Strong
Jan. 5 9:00-12:30 - Betty March
12:30-4:00 - Shirlee Johnson
Jan. 6 9:00-12:30 - Bonnie Sauer
12:30-4:00 - *Help Needed*



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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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