



The Central Visitor

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

Vol. LXXX

Decatur, Illinois, December 19, 2007

No. 51



The Central Christian Church Staff wishes you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy 2008!

Gretchen Barron
Katie Beal
Kaylene Beal
Pat Beals
Robert Bushey
Rudi Descaro
David Flanders
Joanne Frady
Debra Fulk
Trudy Garland
Dean Hadden
Wendy Jalley

Janet Langston
Shelby Larrick
Don Martin
Shelly Messmore
Leslie Peart
Valerie Rozanski
Kay Villarreal
Charles Wallace
Charles Watkins
Jim Whitaker
Robin White

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2007
WORSHIP AT 8:15 AND 10:45
Overture for a Savior!

Text: Matthew 1:18-25
Robert Bushey

Christmas Eve Service

Our congregation will celebrate the birth of Jesus in a traditional service of candlelight and communion on Monday, December 24 at 7:30 p.m. in the sanctuary. The service lasts less than one hour, and all your out-of-town guests are welcome to worship with you on Christmas Eve and to receive the Lord's Supper, for in our church the Lord's Table is open to all believers in Christ regardless of denominational affiliation or tradition. Childcare will be available in the nursery.



New Year's Eve Pops!

On **December 31 at 8:30 p.m.** **Paul Fleckenstein**, organist and director of Music at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Wilmington, Delaware will present our traditional New Year's Eve Organ Pops Concert. This is a fun and glad time of preparation for your own celebration of the arrival of the New Year later that evening. Be sure to start your celebration in God's house at 8:30 p.m.

Children's Christmas Pageant December 23rd

This Sunday, children of Central ages 3-11 yrs. will present their Children's Christmas Pageant entitled *Matt and Lucy's Version Births* at 9:30 a.m. The drama, which features the story of the nativity from the gospels of Matthew and Luke, will take place on the Great Hall Stage. All children present will have an opportunity to join the production as angels, wisemen, and shepherds to make our scenes complete. We will have extra costumes and there are no lines to learn. The presentation will be followed by a Birthday Celebration for Jesus with cake and punch sponsored by the Christian Education Department. Dress rehearsal is scheduled for Saturday, December 22nd at 10-11:30 a.m.

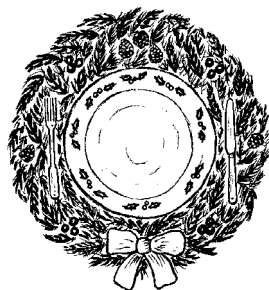
Installation of Officers

The congregation of Central Christian Church will install the trustees, elders, deacons, and emeriti officers elected in September during the morning worship services on December 30.

Central Youth

Candlelight Christmas Party Sunday, December 23rd 5:30-8:00 p.m.

Youth are invited to Pastor Robert's home for a Candlelight Christmas Party. Bring treats to share and a Stocking Stuffer to exchange. A light dinner will be served and drinks will be provided. Sunday morning appropriate attire is requested.



Christmas Dinner

Holiday Schedule Change

Sunday, December 30th
Central Youth will not meet.



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

What will he think of next?!?
Clue: To Spin or Not to Spin
Pizza will be served!
Friends are Welcome!!
Prizes, Prizes, Prizes!!!

Robert's Reflections

In the midst of all the gatherings and celebrations, the inspirational and meaningful worship experiences and delightful concerts, the family reunions and holiday fun of the past month, it is easy for one to lose touch with the true spirit of Christmas. Beyond the exceptional and beautiful music, the delicious dinners and receptions is the simple, unadorned, dwelling of Bethlehem that holds the most wonderful gift ever given: a tiny, vulnerable, humble infant who is Christ the Lord. Christmas is about God doing amazingly much with so very little, using the ordinary, unassuming, and even fragile to bring salvation to the world and about our response to this freely given gift of true hope.

As we make our final Advent preparations for the Christmas season, which begins on December 25th and lasts for 12 days until Epiphany on January 6th, we may want to pause once more and reflect on the ways that we respond to God's truly amazing gift for the world. One of the ways that we have responded collectively as a community of faith in our community was by reaching out to some of Decatur's most under-resourced families. The Spirit of Christmas ministry of outreach for 2007 was a great success with more than 90 individuals adopted and nearly \$1000 in donations given to support the effort. Thank you Central for your generous support of families in need in our community!

Our Spirit of Christmas ministry is not possible without the volunteers who give of their time to facilitate the program. Thank you to our coordinator **Penny Rutherford** for her countless hours of organizing the adoption cards, sorting, shopping, wrapping and delivering gifts! Thank you to **Teri Bushey, Melinda Hawbaker, Pam Larrick, Gerri & Mike Munos, Darla Otis, and Gary Rutherford** for assisting this year.

The joy of God's hope this and every Christmas is found in giving. I can remember when I like most children, climbed up on Santa's knee to deliver my wish list of toys and Christmas was still mostly about receiving. My joy was found in uncovering the mystery of every new possession. I still love unwrapping mysteries, but my true joy is found in giving. On Christmas we are all receivers of God's abundant and unconditional love and grace. May we be bearers of hope for the world filled with an exuberant joy that exclaims Jesus Christ is born!

Christmas blessings,
Robert





News From the Pews.....

The sympathy of the congregation is extended to **Jane & Charles Watkins** and family following the December 11th death of Jane's uncle, *Ivan Combs* of Farmington, Illinois.

Great Way to Begin 2008!

Beginning on Sunday, January 20th a new ten-week course entitled *Experiencing the Bible Again for the First Time* by Marcus Borg and Tim Scorer will be offered each Sunday at 9:30 a.m. in the Great Hall. **Pastor Robert** will lead the multi-media course which surveys the Old and New Testaments through the lenses of contemporary scholarship. A curriculum editor said recently: *this study provokes inquiry, welcomes questions, engages the imagination and encourages listening for and discovering the word in the other. Engaging the three centers of learning, head, heart, and gut, participants encounter and engage the biblical story and tradition and make meaning in their own lives toward transformation - Susan Burt, Coordinating Editor of Seasons of the Spirit.*

An engaging Bible Study is a great way to begin the New Year! Add the dates to your shiny, new, "blank" 2008 calendar and prepare to experience the Bible as a fresh new resource for your faith journey. Watch for information soon on another new course *Experiencing Jesus Again for the First Time* beginning on Wednesday, February 6th.

Church Council in Recess

The regular December meeting of the Church Council has been canceled to give church leaders another evening with their families this month. Financial Reports for November will be available for your review on the counter in the Friendship Center by the church office.

Ladies, Mark your Calendars!

Our annual Women's Retreat will be held March 28-29, 2008 at Camp One-Way, near Niantic. Mark your calendar and plan to join us for this inspiring and relaxing time. More details and registration forms will be available in January!

Plan Ahead for a Life-Changing Mission Opportunity in 2008!

Central Christian Church and our sister congregation, Prairie Avenue Christian Church, are planning a third trip to the New Orleans area for next year. Our mission delegation will leave Decatur on Saturday, April 19th and return to Decatur Sunday, April 27th. During our week in Slidell, LA, we will work with local Disciples Churches and the North Shore Emergency Relief Agency, helping to rebuild individual homes that were destroyed in the 2005 hurricanes. Now is the time to plan ahead, save these dates, and arrange for time away! More details and registration forms will be available soon.

Counting On You

December 16

Worship Attendance 266
Sunday School Attendance 31



Sunday, December 23, 2007

8:15 and 10:45-Worship Services
Music: 8:15 Offertory-Alexandra & Rachel West
10:45 Offertory-Chancel Choir
10:45 Anthem-Chancel Choir
9:00-9:45-Parish Nurse Liz Campbell
9:15-Fellowship Coffee, Friendship Ctr.
9:30-Sunday School
9:30-Children's Christmas Pageant & Birthday Celebration for Jesus, Great Hall
11:15-Children's Worship, 250
5:30-8:00-Youth Christmas Party, Robert & Teri Bushey's House

Monday (24)

12:00-Church Office Closed
7:30-Christmas Eve Service

Tuesday (25) Merry Christmas!

Church & Office Closed

Wednesday (26)

12:00-Central Singers

Thursday (27)

10:00-Alanon, 212



Serving Schedule—December 23, 2007

Elders:

8:15 & 10:45 - Lois Whitaker, Bob Smith

Elders Serving Hospital Communion:

St. Mary's Hospital: Larry Otis

Decatur Memorial: Wayne Honeycutt

Deacons:

8:15 - Team 3 - Mike Holbrook, Capt., Charlotte Ballance, Jarrett Bednar, Jane Davis, Andy Fulk, Theresa Fulk, Sherri Hood, Bob Keller, Karen Keller, Shelby Larrick, Charlie Ropp, Nicole Ropp, Debbie Seaberg, Connie Shields, David Shields, Max Sperry

10:45 - Team 4 - Kevin Otis, Capt., Ed Acheson, Lucy Acheson, Jeannie Backes, Jordan Backes, Louise Boline, Mary Boyle, Shirley Brooks, Jon French, Melinda Hawbaker, Scott Hawbaker, Dee Hill, Karen McFadin, David Miller, Katie Miller, Janice Mitchell, Alex Otis, Bryan Rutherford, Gary Rutherford, Roger Rutherford, Doug Soebbing, Donna Strong

Ushers:

8:15 - Team 3 - Dennis Downey, Capt., Debbie Downey, Kim Downey, Ryan Downey, Tina Canfield, Paula Hovey

10:45 - Team 8 - Dean Hadden, Doug Soebbing, Donna Strong

Greeters:

8:15 - Donna Dash, Mary Kincaid, Gene & Sandy Garver

10:45 - Bob & Mary Jane Linton, Lawrence & Sally Thicksten

Parish Nurse: Liz Campbell

Acolytes:

8:15 - Julia Funk

10:45 - Joshua Bushey

P.A. Operator:

8:15 - Jim Bednar

10:45 - Larry Pepper

Fellowship Coffee Hosts: Debbie & Dennis Downey

Preparation of Communion:

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

Van Drivers:

8:15 service and Sunday School - John Flanders

Sunday School and 10:45 service - Doug Soebbing

10:45 service only - Karen Baird

7:30 p.m. Christmas Eve - Karen Baird

December 26 Visitor Mailing Crew:

Marge Karl, Coleen Myers

Hosts:

Dec. 24 *Christmas Eve*

Dec. 25 *Merry Christmas!*

Church & Office Closed

Dec. 26 9:00-12:30 - Virginia Griffith

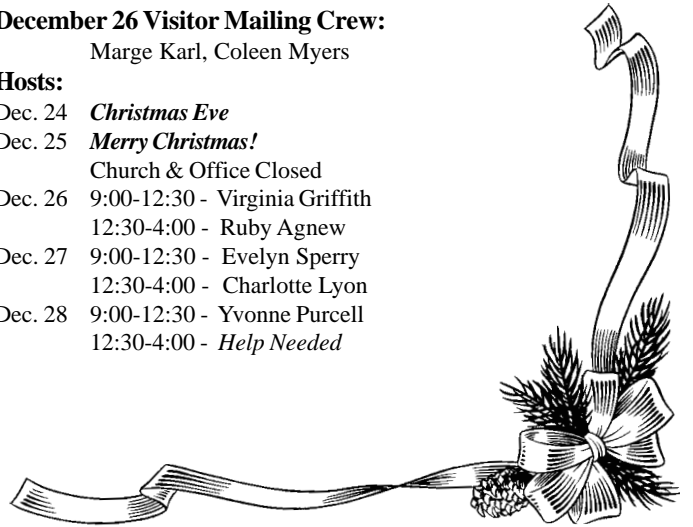
12:30-4:00 - Ruby Agnew

Dec. 27 9:00-12:30 - Evelyn Sperry

12:30-4:00 - Charlotte Lyon

Dec. 28 9:00-12:30 - Yvonne Purcell

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 Assistant
 Pat Beals Administrative Assistant
 Sue Burkham, 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 Caretaker
 David Flanders Caretaker
 Dean Hadden Caretaker
 Charles Wallace Caretaker

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