



The Central Visitor

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

Vol. LXXXI

Decatur, Illinois, April 2, 2008

No. 14

Blessing of Children Scheduled

A service of Blessing of Children and Dedication of Parents has been scheduled for Mother's Day Sunday, May 11th during both services. If you would like to be included in this service, please contact the church office at 428-4336 by May 1st.



Elderberries to Meet Wednesday, April 6th!

If you are at least 55 years young, we invite you to join the Elderberries for a wonderful meal and program and delightful fellowship together on the second Wednesday of each month. We will meet on Wednesday, April 9th at noon in the Great Hall. Paula will be our guest cook. The menu is Chicken Salad on a Croissant, Fresh Fruit and Dessert. Following the meal, **Charlotte Lyon** and **Mike Borders** from the Scovill Zoo will be here with some of their favorite animals. Their presentation promises to be fun and interesting! To sign up, you will need to call the church office (428-4336) or mark "Elderberries" next to your name on the Friendship Pad this Sunday. If you think you would like to come but are not yet sure, please go ahead and make a reservation. We would rather have food left over than not have prepared enough for everyone. Reservations need to be made before 5 p.m. on Monday, April 7th, so don't delay, reserve your place at the table today!

Dinner for Eight

The Shepherding Department is revamping a favorite tradition at Central – Dinners for Eight. The dinners provide a unique opportunity for Central members and friends to get to know each other in a relaxed, informal atmosphere, usually in the host's home. Sign ups begin this Sunday, April 6th. Once you've signed up, you will receive a letter which tells you which group you are assigned to and who will act as your host. Members of each group decide the best date and time to meet and who will bring which dinner items. The groups are asked to meet one time for dinner in April or May. When you sign up, be sure and let us know if you are able and willing to host one of the group gatherings. For more information, contact **Pastor Gretchen**. Sign up this Sunday for Dinner for Eight.

Youth Cardboard Pick Up

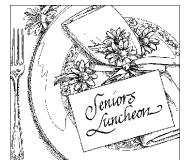
The Youth Cardboard Recycling Project for April has been scheduled for **Sunday, April 6th** beginning at 4:00 p.m. Call the church office if you would like to be added to our route. Acceptable cardboard includes corrugated, uncoated food containers, dry goods boxes, tissue boxes, etc. Please, help us by emptying your boxes of foam packaging, tissue paper, or other contents. Boxes do not need to be broken down, however this does aid our progress. Remember, the cardboard recycling is a service project and not a fundraiser for our youth.

SUNDAY, APRIL 6, 2008
WORSHIP AT 8:15 AND 10:45
What Shall We Do?

Text: Acts 2:15a; 36-41
Charles Watkins

Diaconate Sponsors Senior Members Luncheon

Saturday, April 19, the Deacons are honoring Central's senior members, who have attained the age of 70 or better, with a reception at 11:30 in the Disciple Room and a luncheon at noon in the Great Hall. Spouses are also invited.



If you did not receive an invitation and are eligible, or if you did receive one, but have not responded, please call the church office (428-4336).

Welcome New Members



Welcome to **Kim Kimberly & Mary Lynn Feltes**, who became members of Central by transfer of membership on March 30.

Central Youth

Sunday, April 6th
4:00-6:00 p.m.

Cardboard Pick Up

We will stop for ice cream afterwards.

Sunday, April 13th
4:30-6:00 p.m.

Central youth grades 6-12 will gather at the church for discussion, prayer and fun.

Youth are also invited to attend Just Flicks showing of Paper Clips at 6 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church.

Sunday, April 20th
4:30-6:00 p.m.

Central youth grades 6-12 will gather at the church for discussion, prayer and fun.

Summer Church Camp 2008

Camp Registration Forms are available in the church office!

Look for our display in the Friendship Center!

Genesis Camp

for Grades 2-3

June 4-6

Shalom Camp

for Grades 9-12

June 9-14

Koinonia Camp

for Grades 3-8

June 23-28

ADDaM Camp

for Grades 8-12

June 22-29

Counting On You

March 30

Worship Attendance 296

Sunday School Attendance 57

Charles's Column

When Easter comes in spring, there is lots of old-fashioned nature worship and fertility religion that creeps into Christian thought and worship. Faith in nature and fertility are much older than Judaism or Christianity or Islam. When the Hebrews entered the promised land after the death of Moses, the religion of the Canaanites focused on nature and fertility. And when Easter comes in spring, we often talk about Easter as if it were part of the natural order of things: as the world comes to life again following bleak winter's desolation, so it is with Christ and us, rising from graves to new life. But when Easter comes as this year in lingering winter, with no green grass, no leaves on the trees, and no place to hide Easter eggs, except in the straw covering grass seed that has not yet sprouted, then there is special theological significance. When the air temperature on the Sunday morning after Easter is roughly equivalent to the temperature in your refrigerator, then you are ready to understand the deeper truth of Easter faith.

The truth is that there is nothing natural about Easter. What Christians proclaim during this season is extremely unnatural. The way of nature always leads to death, and nothing in the natural world lives forever. No, the amazing proclamation of Christianity this season is that the natural order leading inevitably to death is now challenged and defied by the very same God who created nature. It is unnatural.

And the meaning of resurrection is not that the soul of humanity is immortal, and that it just naturally passes through death to its eternal future. Instead, the Christian doctrine of Easter is that death is real. And it is final. In the Affirmation of Faith from the third century that we read together in last Sunday's early service, the oldest statement of faith in Christianity, we declare that Jesus died and was buried and descended to the dead. That's it. It's over. All Jesus's disciples understood that, and not one of them expected his resurrection.

But then God did what had never been done before and what no mortal really expected. God raised Jesus to new life. No, it wasn't Jesus as he had been; it was Jesus in a new "spiritual body" which could pass through closed and locked doors and be unrecognizable to those who had previously known him. Resurrection to new life, eternal life, life of an entirely different kind, is the heart of Christian faith. We do not believe in the resuscitation of dead bodies (as when Jesus called Lazarus forth from the grave). Instead we believe in the gift of new and eternal life as a gift of God's amazing grace in spite of the natural order's reality. Resurrection of the dead is not universal and natural and something to which human beings are entitled. No, resurrection to eternal life and salvation is a gift of God entirely unmerited, undeserved, and certainly not part of the natural order. The human spirit is not immortal unless God's redeeming love gives it new life in an eternal realm. Our faith is not in nature. Our faith is in God. And our hope for life beyond the grave is not that our souls are naturally immortal, but that God will graciously grant us new life in God's eternal presence. We understand the central miracle of our faith better when we proclaim it in the desolate, gray coldness of an Easter which comes way too early in bleak, late Illinois winter.

Charles Watkins

**Watch the mail for your contribution statements
for the first quarter.**

News From the Pews....

The sympathy of the congregation is extended to **Karen Driver** and family following the March 27th death of her mother, *Lorraine Siener*. The memorial service will be at the Hoffman Harker Funeral Home in Carbondale, IL at 3:00 p.m. on Sunday, April 6.

Disciples World - April 2008

Disciples' ministry in Appalachia is the focus for the April 2008 issue of *Disciples World*. Inside you will find articles about our church's ministry in the varied economic and environmental conditions of the region where as many as 23% of the population lives in poverty and 36% drop out of school before completing High School. Along with reflections on the lectionary scripture text for each week, articles on coming events for our general church, news and opinion from readers, *Disciples World* connects us with our sisters and brothers serving Christ across the globe. A free copy is available in the Welcome Center next to the church office for you to take home. New subscriptions are always welcome as we support this important ministry of our denomination.

Next at Just Flicks: *Paper Clips*

The next film in the Just Flicks Series will be shown on Sunday, April 13th at 6 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church. *Paper Clips* is the story of a middle school in rural Tennessee where students decide to collect six million paper clips as they struggle with the impact the Holocaust of WWII had on global history. The documentary details how the students' lives were transformed through their encounters with Holocaust survivors and through their project.

Declaration of Life Campaign

Signers of the Declaration of Life share the sentiments expressed by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., before his assassination on April 4, 1968. He said, "*If one day you find me sprawled out dead, I do not want you to retaliate with a single act of violence. I urge you to continue protesting with the same dignity and discipline you have shown so far.*" It is in this spirit that the Declaration of Life was created in 1993 by Sister Camille D'Arienzo, of the Convent of Mary in Brooklyn, New York. It is not legally binding, but it makes a strong statement of a person's wishes. Formatted and conceived in a way similar to that of a living will, the Declaration of Life allows individuals to express their opposition to the use of the death penalty in a very personal way.

The Peace & Justice Task Force invites you to consider signing a Declaration of Life on Sundays, April 6th and 13th. Members of the Task Force will be available in the Friendship Center and the office area to assist those so inclined to sign a Declaration of Life statement, which states your preference that should you be murdered, that under no circumstances would you want another life to be shed. In a way of explanation, we in no way diminish the horror of murder, but believe that another killing in no way mitigates this horror, and only perpetuates it. We believe that murderers need to be held responsible for their crime, and that we as individuals and as a community do not need to become like them in order for that to take place. The signing of the document will be verified by a witness and a notary public to assure that it reflects the intentions of the signer.



Sunday, April 6, 2008

8:15 and 10:45-Worship Services
Music: 8:15 Offertory-Central Singers
10:45 Offertory-Men's Chorus
10:45 Anthem-Chancel Choir
9:00-9:45-Parish Nurse Cindy Soebbing
9:15-Fellowship Coffee, Friendship Ctr.
9:30-Sunday School
11:15-Children's Worship, 250
4:00-6:00-Youth Cardboard Pick Up

Monday (7)

5:30-Fellowship Dept., Volunteer Room
6:30-Boy Scouts, Disciple Room & Great Hall

Tuesday (8)

9:00-ChristCare Stitches, 207
10:00-Pastors' Staff Meeting, Senior Pastor's Study
11:45-ChristCare Stitches, Parlor
12:00-ChristCare Stitches Lunch, Great Hall
5:00-C.A.D.V. Dept., Disciple Room

Wednesday (9)

9:00-Baby Talk Parents, 290
12:00-Elderberries Lunch, Great Hall
12:00-Central Singers
6:30-Jesus Study, Disciple Room
7:00-Mission Trip Mtg., Friendship Ctr.

Thursday (10)

10:00-Alanon, 212
5:30-World Outreach, Volunteer Room
6:00-Chancel Bells
7:00-Chancel Choir

Friday (11)

6:30-Davis-Erfling Wedding Rehearsal

Saturday (12)

7:30-Elders' Breakfast, Disciple Room
8:00-12:00-Hunger Relief Task Force, Great Hall Kitchen
3:30-Sanctuary Wedding, Jessica Davis & Jason Erfling

Scholarship Application

Deadline May 1st

Applications for the Kirby, Schilling and Traylor Scholarships are available at the church office and are due back by **May 1st**. The awards are based primarily upon academic achievement and financial need, however, participation in church, school and community activities are considered, as well.

Serving Schedule—April 6, 2008

Elders:

8:15 & 10:45 - Kevin Miller, Shirley Swarhout

Elders Serving Imboden Creek Living Center:

Chris Fagin, Mike Holbrook

Deacons:

8:15 - Team 1 - Gene Garver, Capt., Greg Carter, Jared Carter, Megan Carter, Bev Chapman, Merle Chapman, Dennis Downey, Al Fagin, Chris Fagin, Sally Force, Sandy Garver, Dean Gray, Janet Gray, Carol McClure, Brittney Munos, Gail Prince, Larry Prince, Dean Simcox, Sue Simcox

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, Erik Harm, Christine Lyman-Harm, Daniel Hinze, David Martin, Julie Martin, Ron Oliver, Dave Phillips, Nita Phillips, Kelly Swallow, Steve Swarhout, Janet Thicksten, Larry Thicksten, Lawrence Thicksten, Sally Thicksten, Kathy Thornton

Ushers:

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

10:45 - Team 8 - Dean Hadden, Capt., Pam Ferguson, Doug Soebbing, Donna Strong

Greeters:

8:15 - Ann Harshman, Donna Dash, David & Connie Shields

10:45 - Judson & Jean Pease, John & Carol Graham

Parish Nurse: Cindy Soebbing

Acolytes:

8:15 - Julia Funk

10:45 - Rachel Ash

P.A. Operator:

8:15 - Jim Bednar

10:45 - Keith Backes

Fellowship Coffee Hosts: Glen & Jody Featherstun

Preparation of Communion: Evelyn Sperry, Gregg & Linda Foltz, Ann Carnock, Betty Chapman

Van Drivers:

8:15 service and Sunday School - Bruce Williams

Sunday School and 10:45 service - Doug Soebbing

10:45 service only - Brett Swallow

April 9 Visitor Mailing Crew:

Ruby Agnew, Joanne Gustin

Hosts:

Apr. 7 9:00-12:30 - Mary Boyle

12:30-4:00 - *Help Needed*

Apr. 8 9:00-12:30 - Carl Morris

12:30-4:00 - Ellen Sheffer

Apr. 9 9:00-12:30 - Joan Smith

12:30-4:00 - Marilyn Ward

Apr. 10 9:00-12:30 - Darla Lienemann

12:30-4:00 - Linn Cummins

Apr. 11 9:00-12:30 - Harold & Bess King

12:30-4:00 - *Help Needed*

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*

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 Latshaw 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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Central Christian Church
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