



The Central Visitor

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

Vol. LXXXI

Decatur, Illinois, May 28, 2008

No. 22



Preschool Celebrates 43rd Year

Central Christian Preschool celebrated our 43rd year of early childhood education with an End of the School Year Party complete with games, ice cream, and songs by the children. As we look forward to the 2008-2009 academic year, we anticipate serving nearly one hundred families through Central Preschool and our collaborative Pre-Kindergarten, Illinois State Board of Education classroom with Baby Talk, Inc. Central Christian Preschool was recently awarded an \$8,000 grant through the distribution of undesignated bequests made to Central Christian Church. The tuition-based preschool classes will use these funds to provide scholarships, professional development for staff, updating equipment and for public relations.

We Really Want YOUR Story!

Many of you have read the collection of writings by Central members, *Our Journey of Faith*. In this little booklet, Central members share with us some parts of their faith stories – how they came to know Christ, how they've been involved in mission and ministry, how they came to Central and what it's meant for them. If you haven't had a chance to read this inspiring collection, they are available for you in the Friendship Center. Now, we want to hear (and read) YOUR story. Tell us something about your faith, something about your journey, something about the struggles you've overcome and the hope you have for the future. We hope to make Vol. 2 of the collection available soon. Try to limit your submission to around 250 words (or half a single-spaced typewritten page) or submit your story to the church by e-mail (preferred) at central@cccdisciples.org (please put "Faith Journey" in the subject line) or by dropping it by the church office. The deadline for submission is June 17th. Thank you for sharing YOUR story!



SUNDAY, JUNE 1, 2008
WORSHIP AT 8:00 AND 10:00
Keys to the Kingdom
Text: Romans 1:16-17
Robert Bushey, Jr.

Central High School Class of 2008 Recognized

Kaylene Beal, Megan Carter, Jack Funk, Bradley Phillips, Lucien Smith, Allison Stoddard and Rachel West were recognized during worship and treated to a Graduates Breakfast on Sunday, May 25th. Special thanks to **Christine Lyman-Harm, Janet Lyman and Marylu Lyman** for planning the event, and to our parent and youth servers. The breakfast was catered by Dove Inc. Fresh Start Catering. Congratulations to our High School Class of 2008!

MUSICAMP is Coming!

The MUSICAMP will be June 9-15 from 9:00-11:30 a.m. at the First Baptist Church, 1329 Arbor Drive. Again this year, we will combine forces with First Baptist Church to present MUSICAMP for children, grades K-6. Contact **Don Martin** for more information.

Save the Date Central Family Day at Nelson Park

Saturday, June 28
2:00-6:00 p.m.

Fun, Food, Games and more
for the entire family.

Tickets on sale soon
\$5 per person, \$15 per family

Central Youth

**Sunday, June 1st
4:30-6 p.m.**

Central Youth will meet at the Church to make final plans for Hoops of Hope and for our Youth-Led Worship in Jacksonville on June 8th. Pizza will be served!

Youth in Mission:

Hoops of Hope

June 3rd 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Central Youth will sponsor a Hoops of Hope Project with students at Hope Academy on June 3rd. Youth will meet at the school at 9 a.m. to help set up and we will finish by 4 p.m. Invite your friends to be a part of this huge event! We will be making a difference in the lives of thousands of children!

**Sunday, June 8th
Noon-6:30 p.m.**

Youth-Led Worship at Barton Stone Christian Home

Central youth will travel to Barton Stone Christian Home in Jacksonville, IL to lead an afternoon worship for the residents. The bus will leave from the church promptly at Noon and we will return by 6:30 p.m. We will stop in Springfield for supper on the way home. For more information speak to **Don Martin**.

**Sunday, June 22nd
4:30-7:30 p.m.**

Sunday Night Special

Supper, Swimming and More at Pastor Robert's house for Grades 6-12. Bring a dessert or snack food to share. Friends are welcome!

Charles's Column

The horrific video and reports of suffering from the cyclone in Myanmar/Burma and the earthquake in China hit each of us right in the heart of our Christian belief. Seeing the anguish of parents weeping over their dead children killed when their school collapsed on top of them, seeing the desperation of frantic people fleeing to higher ground, leaving behind lost loved ones in the flooded river delta make us raise one of the oldest questions in theology: "How can we reconcile the suffering of the innocent with our understanding of the loving God we worship?"

In a Christian context the critical problem is created by two claims that are made about God: goodness and omnipotence. If God is both completely good and completely powerful, why evil? In the 1958 Broadway play by Archibald MacLeish *J.B.* based on the biblical story of Job, the playwright poses the dilemma of evil in a world ruled by a loving God in a little taunt: "If God is good, He is not God. If God is God, He is not Good." That is if God is perfect love, then God must not be all powerful, or such terrible suffering could not be visited on the world God loves. And if God is all powerful, and such anguish is visited on the world, God must not be all loving.

The branch of religious thinking that struggles with this issue is called theodicy (a compound of the Greek words for God and justice). It comes up over and over in both Hebrew and Christian scriptures as Job cries out for vindication and Jesus answers the question of his disciples about who sinned to cause the blindness from birth of a man whom Jesus healed. It comes up in our lives whenever we turn on a news broadcast or when we ourselves must struggle with grief, illness, or disability. We ask, "What did I ever do to deserve this?" And that question assumes that our misery is inflicted by God, a fairly dangerous position. We have heard in the public discourse since the devastation of New Orleans that the winds and the waves and heaving of the earth are God's punishment sent upon the wicked. One good response to that vicious assertion is: "If God sent the hurricane as punishment for an evil city, why was the French Quarter spared almost entirely? It doesn't add up.

In thinking and preaching and living, I have struggled with theodicy both professionally and personally. My conclusion about this question is not completely satisfactory, and maybe not even orthodox. When I reflect upon the Holocaust, the various wars in my lifetime, and the natural disasters that are a regular feature of life on earth, I must conclude that our loving God's reign over creation does not include absolute control over human activity or even the natural realm. God built into the universe freedom to disobey God's will. My resolution of the issue in my own mind and heart compromises God's omnipotence in favor of God's perfect love. As unsatisfactory as it may be as a theological position, it at least refuses to blame the victims of suffering as though they deserve their anguish, and it refuses to blame God for the evil that befalls humanity. In the beginning when God started to create, God began with chaos and started forming a created order from it. Chaos is still around, affecting the natural order and our own lives. If you have it figured out better than I do, please share your conclusions! And may God's blessing rest upon you as you struggle with every hard question!

Charles Watkins

News From the Pews....

Congratulations to **Natalie Swansen**, who received her degree on May 10 as an oncology specialist from the Louisville Kentucky School of Medicine. Natalie is the daughter of **Jan & R. Roe Skidmore** and the granddaughter of **Roe Skidmore**.....and to **Bill Fogerson** who graduated cum laude from Southern Illinois University with a mechanical engineering degree and a minor in math. He will be starting his career with John Deere in Moline, Illinois in June. Proud parents are **Julie & Jim Schneider**, sister and brother-in-law **Nicole & Charlie Ropp**, and grandparents **Bill & Shirley McKnelly**.

The sympathy of the congregation is extended to **Ron & Paula Hovey**, following the May 26th death of Ron's mother, *Elizabeth Hovey*.....and to **Nancy & Jim Taylor** following the May 26th death of her sister, *Pat Thatcher*.

Congratulations to **Brian & Kim Spry** on the May 23rd birth of their daughter **Karissa Jean**. Karissa is also welcomed home by her big brother **Cole** and grandparents **Tom & Robyn Spry**.

2008 Neil Ewing Awards and Scholarships Presented

Kaylene Beal, **Megan Carter** and **John "Jack" Funk, Jr.** were presented with the **Neil Ewing Award** at the Senior Breakfast for the Class of 2008 last Sunday. The award, in honor of the memory of Neil Ewing, is given in recognition of high moral character, commitment to the church and service to the community.

Our three named scholarships were presented at breakfast as well. The **Cocoa "Coke" & Lilabelle Traylor Scholarship** was presented to **Alex Harm** and **Andrew Rutherford**. Alex will attend University of Wisconsin in pursuit of a degree in Architectural Sciences. Andrew attends Culver-Stockton College with a major in theater education.

The **Roy O. & Rachel R. Schilling Scholarship** was presented to **Alexandria Otis** and **Sarah Fulk**. Alexandria attends Truman State University majoring in vocal music and performance. Sarah attends Eastern Illinois University majoring in education.

The **Walter & Inabelle Kirby Scholarship** was presented to **Mourtallah Idy Gondah** and **Rachel West**. Mourtallah attends Parkland College with plans to enter the school of engineering at the University of Illinois and Rachel will attend Illinois Wesleyan University to pursue a degree in music. Congratulations to all our award and scholarship recipients!

Phoenix II Recognizes Success

Central's second floor is the home for the Decatur Public Schools #61 Phoenix II Alternative School for teen moms. The school served 36 students during the past year from middle school through high school. Each student was given the opportunity to achieve credit recovery for credits towards graduation from High School that she would have lost had she dropped out of school during her pregnancy or after her child was born. At a recent banquet held in the Great Hall, several students were recognized for their academic work and for their commitment to the parenting education they received through Baby Talk. While in their classes, Phoenix II students are able to bring and care for their baby and their child is enrolled in early intervention care to support the educational development of the child. Phoenix II celebrated that 6 students received their High School Diploma from Decatur Public Schools and Futures Unlimited in 2008. Your generous hospitality is making a difference in the lives of the families served by Phoenix II.



Sunday, June 1, 2008

8:00 and 10:00-Worship Services
Music: Offertory-Janice Mitchell, Piano
10:00 Anthem-Chancel Choir
9:00-9:45-Parish Nurse Clinic
9:00-Sunday School
4:30- Youth Group Meeting

Monday (2)

6:30-CACS Department, 290

Tuesday (3)

9:00-ChristCare Stitchers, 207
9:00-Dorcas Group polishing silver,
Great Hall
9:00-4:00-Hoops of Hope, Hope School
4:00-H2O Volunteers, Hope School

Wednesday (4)

9:00-Baby Talk Parents, 290
12:00-Central Singers
1:30-CIOP Meeting, Disciple Room
6:30-Eclipsing Empire, Great Hall

Thursday (5)

10:00-Alanon, 212
10:15-1:15-HSAC Meeting, Disciple Rm.
4:00-H2O Volunteers, Hope School
6:00-Decatur Needle Arts Potluck,
Great Hall
7:00-Chancel Choir

Timing is Running Out for Hoops of Hope

Central Youth need
your support for Hoops
of Hope on June 3rd
from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.



You may sponsor a grade level with a donation through Central (forms available in the Friendship Center), you may volunteer to help at the event, or you may donate directly online at www.firstgiving.com/decaturohope08 or through one of the Hoops of Hope Academy Teams. Help our youth bring hope to thousands of orphans by sponsoring our Hoops of Hope event!

Serving Schedule—June 1, 2008

Elders:

8:00 & 10:00 - Chris Fagin, Larry Otis

Elders Serving Imboden Creek Living Center:

Felicity Williams, Becky Johnston

Deacons:

8:00 - 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

10:00 - 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 Swarouth, Janet Thicksten, Larry Thicksten, Lawrence Thicksten, Sally Thicksten, Kathy Thornton

Ushers:

8:00 - Team 1 - Charlotte Ballance, Capt., Jim Bednar, Pamela Bednar, Jarrett Bednar

10:00 - Team 6 - Mark Beal, Capt., Katie Beal, Kaylene Beal, Sean Beal, Charlotte Lyon, Barbara Tyler

Greeters:

8:00 - Kevin & Mickie Wilmot, Clark & Mary Waldmier

10:00 - Dave & Christy Hanson, Bob & Carol Bischoff

Acolytes:

8:00 - Julia Funk

10:00 - Alexis Econie

P.A. Operator:

8:00 - Greg Carter

10:00 - Keith Backes

Preparation of Communion:

Robyn Spry, Carol Charlton, Don & Virginia Swallow

Van Drivers:

8:00 service and Sunday School - Andy Fulk

Sunday School and 10:00 service - Kevin Wilmot

10:00 service only - Ron Oliver

June 4 Visitor Mailing Crew:

Janet Gray, Joanne Gustin, Shirlee Johnson

Hosts:

June 2 9:00-12:30 - Marylu Lyman
12:30-4:00 - *Help Needed*

June 3 9:00-12:30 - Joy Adams
12:30-4:00 - *Help Needed*

June 4 9:00-12:30 - Joan Smith
12:30-4:00 - Donna Strong

June 5 9:00-12:30 - Shirlee Johnson
12:30-4:00 - Linn Cummins

June 6 9:00-12:30 - *Help Needed*
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 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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Counting On You

May 25

Worship Attendance 265

Sunday School Attendance 81



Central Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)
650 West William Street
Decatur, IL 62522-2326

PERIODICAL
POSTAGE
PAID

