



The Central Visitor

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

Vol. LXXXI

Decatur, Illinois, December 17, 2008

No. 51



Music for A Merry Christmas

This Sunday, Central's organist **Leslie Peart** along with vocal soloists from the chancel choir—**Connie Bordner, Karen Driver, Janice Mitchell** and **Lucien Smith**—will present the annual Candlelight Christmas Concert at 4:00 p.m. in the sanctuary. This program of entertaining and meaningful music will enhance your Christmas spirit and delight all whom you invite to join you at the concert.

Christmas Eve Service

Our congregation will celebrate the birth of Jesus in a traditional service of candlelight and communion on Wednesday, 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. Child care will be available in the nursery.



Christmas Doesn't End!

Christmas isn't just December 25th! The church's celebration of the advent of Jesus Christ into the world to save us continues for twelve days through January 5.

December 31 (the seventh day of Christmas), **Robert MacDonald** will travel from Ft. Worth, Texas, to play the magnificent Diller Memorial Organ at Central Christian Church in a seventh annual New Year's Eve Organ Pops Concert at 8:30 p.m. in our sanctuary.



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.

Installation of Officers

The congregation of Central Christian Church will install the trustees, elders, deacons, and executive officers elected in September during the morning worship services on December 28.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2008

WORSHIP AT 8:15 AND 10:45

The Son of the Most High

Text: Luke 1: 35-38; 47-55

Robert Bushey

Holiday Schedule for the Church Office

The church office will be closed on December 25 and December 26 for the Christmas holiday and on January 1 and January 2 for the New Year's holiday. All gifts for 2008 must be postmarked or received in the office by noon on December 31 to be included on your annual acknowledgement of gifts. Every gift is vitally important to our church in these difficult economic times throughout the world.

Festival of Church Choirs

Ten churches forming seven choirs will provide a benefit performance, supporting Big Brothers Big Sisters, at the Kirkland Fine Arts Center at 4:00 p.m. on Sunday, January 11, 2009. Come enjoy the wonderful music and blended voices of choirs from Antioch Missionary Baptist, Central Christian, Church of the Living God, First Baptist, First Christian, First Lutheran, First Presbyterian, First United Methodist, New Salem Baptist, and St. Peter A.M.E. Churches. Tickets are \$10 per person (\$8 for seniors, 65 and up) and are available at the Kirkland Box Office, 1184 West Main Street. The box office is open Monday-Tuesday; Thursday-Friday from 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Tickets may also be bought online www.kirklandfinearts.com



Central Youth

Sunday, December 21st
6:00-8:00 p.m.

Central Youth will gather
at Pastor Robert's house for
Dinner and Christmas Fun.

Bring two pairs of new
socks, one for an exchange
and one or more to give to
the Dove Clothing Room.

Sunday, December 28th
No Youth Activities

Sunday, January 4th
Noon-1:30 p.m.
**Soup Lunch & Heifer
Ranch**

**Trip Informational
Meeting**
at First United Methodist
Church (210 West North)

**2009 Christian Youth
Fellowship (CYF)
Mid-Winter Retreat
January 17 -19, 2009**
For High School Youth at
First Christian Church,
Pontiac, IL
See Pastor Robert for
Details

SAVE THE DATE!!!
**Senior High
Heifer Ranch Trip
Perryville, AK
June 13-21, 2009**

Robert's Reflections

As I write to you, large flakes of snow are falling outside the frost lined windows of my study. It is a beautiful scene, almost postcard-like! A gentle yet treacherous reminder that winter is almost here. Oh sure, we have felt the chill of the cold north winds already with daytime temperatures in the single digits, and we have scraped car windows, slid precariously at intersections, and had our hats and gloves out for a few weeks now. But, winter has yet to officially begin.

This Sunday morning at 6:04 a.m., the Winter Solstice will take place for the northern hemisphere of our planet. Known as the day of the longest night of the year, the solstice occurs when the Sun's position in the sky is at its greatest angular distance on the other side of the equatorial plane from the observer. For many residents of the northern hemisphere, the first day of winter is the least anticipated day on the calendar. For some, December 21st is just four days before Christmas, which of course means that the race to have everything ready picks up speed. And for many cultures and people of the world, the Winter Solstice marks a day of celebration and ritual. Far pre-dating the Christmas season, the solstice recognizes the re-birth of the sun when the earth's orbit and rotation begin to decrease the angular distance of the sun from the northern observer. The solstice marks the beginning of the return of longer daylight hours.

After Christianity became the religion of the Holy Roman Empire in the 4th century, Pope Julius declared the date of Jesus' birth as December 25th, integrating it with the Roman Winter Solstice celebrating the Birthday of the Unconquered Sun. Before the declaration there was no specific birth date for Jesus and there is very little evidence of celebrations of Jesus' birth. The date is still a mystery. Emphasis in the early centuries after the crucifixion and resurrection was placed on Easter and Pentecost.

This Sunday, as we northerners begin the season of enduring light, we will light the fourth candle on our Advent Wreath. We will proclaim to the world - often held in fear by hatred, violence, dishonesty and despair - that the love of God has come in flesh among us vanquishing the void of light with truth and life! God chooses to live among us and within us, enlightening our way with hope, peace, joy and love! Come and worship in the light of God's love for the world, singing Joy to the World, the Lord is come! Let Earth receive her King; let every heart prepare him room, and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing.

Peace & Joy,
Robert

Dear Central,

I wanted to say thank you for the support the congregation gave in adopting the budget for 2009. We all know the difficult economy is pinching every segment of our society. Yet the work of the church goes on. I want to commend the CCC staff and departments for continually operating frugally and operating within the confines of the budget. I want to thank the Stewardship Department for their work. I am also very pleased with the message coming out of the Church Council. While the budget was difficult to adopt, the message is clear. This situation is what Central faces and we will work together to help do God's will.

Best wishes,
Kevin Otis, Stewardship Dept. Chair

News From the Pews....

The sympathy of the congregation is extended to **Bruce & Felicity Williams** and family following the December 10th death of Bruce's mother, *Ethel Williams*and to **Ruth Stoddard, Bruce & Carol Stoddard** and family following the December 13th death of *David Stoddard*.



Note of Thanks Received

Thank you for honoring me as an Elder Emerita. You are my treasured church family.

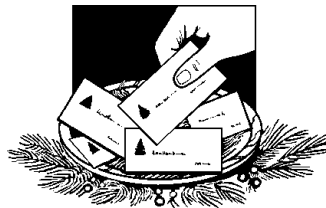
Marilyn Ward

Unbind Your Heart – Lent 2009!

We are excited to bring a wonderful opportunity to Central members and friends during Lent 2009. We will be participating in a congregational emphasis on Prayer and Faith Sharing called “Unbinding Your Heart.” During the 40 days and six-weeks of Lent beginning on March 1, 2009, we will have a unique opportunity to pray, study and share together as we grow in spiritual awareness and faith. You’ll be hearing more about this in the coming weeks. Our planning team is already praying for you and your participation in this unique opportunity. **Kevin Miller**, a member of the planning team, has this to say about his experience so far: *“Getting together in the planning stages of the Unbinding Your Heart group has brought me much closer to the other individuals in the group. Although I knew most of them at least casually, there is nothing like praying together in a small group to really forge a relationship with a person. To pray for a person and have them pray for you is a very unique experience and is something all Christians should try for themselves. It is a genuine act of love to sit next to someone else, hold their hand and pray for their well being.”* Look for more information in the coming weeks about Unbinding Your Heart!

A Decisive Month

Now is the time for all loyal Christians to come to the aid of your church. December is “make it or break it” month for the current budget. For most of the year, your gifts have kept up with expenses, and the church has done well, so help bring the year to a strong finish as you have for each of the last two years in which the church completed the year with a small surplus to start the new year. Any help you can give with a special gift for the church this month will really help at a time when help is especially important.



Alternative Giving Great Success!

Nearly \$1900 was given through alternative gifts for our local human service agencies and Heifer International. Your gifts will bring joy and hope into the hearts of many persons throughout the Decatur area and beyond. Thank you to all who participated in this special outreach tradition.



Sunday, December 21, 2008

8:15 and 10:45-Worship Services
Music: Offertory-Bob Smith, baritone;
Marilyn Mertz, piano
10:45 Anthem-Chancel Choir
9:00-9:45-Parish Nurse Clinic
9:15-Come Home for Christmas
Brunch, Great Hall
9:30-Sunday School
11:15-Children's Worship
12:00-Come Home for Christmas Lunch,
Great Hall
4:00-Music for a Merry Christmas
Organ Concert, Sanctuary
6:00-8:00-Youth Christmas Party,
Robert & Teri Bushey's house
Tuesday (23)
9:00-ChristCare Stitchers, 207
10:00-Pastors' Staff Meeting,
Senior Pastor's Study
Wednesday (24)
12:00-Central Singers
7:30-Christmas Eve Service, Sanctuary
Thursday (25) Christmas Day
Church & Office Closed
Friday (26)
Church & Office Closed
Saturday (27)
11:00-Chapel Wedding

Counting On You

December 14

Worship Attendance	390
Sunday School Attendance	74

Serving Schedule—December 21, 2008

Elders:

8:15 & 10:45 - Cindy Soebbing, Kevin Miller

Deacons:

8:15 - Team 3 - Mike Holbrook, Capt., Charlotte Ballance, Jarrett Bednar, Greg Carter, Larry Chapman, Jane Davis, Andy Fulk, Theresa Fulk, Sherri Hood, Debbie Seaberg, Max Sperry
 10:45 - Team 4 - Kevin Otis, Capt., Ed Acheson, Lucy Acheson, Jeannie Backes, Jordan Backes, Louise Boline, Mary Boyle, Shirley Brooks, Claudia Curry, Jon French, Melinda Hawbaker, Scott Hawbaker, Dee Hill, Bob Linton, Karen McFadin, David Miller, Katie Miller, Andrew Otis, Kevin Ann Otis, Bryan Rutherford, Gary Rutherford, Roger Rutherford, Doug Soebbing, Donna Strong

Ushers:

8:15 - Team 4 - Ed Acheson, Capt., Carole Holbrook, Mike Holbrook, Betty Ann Roe
 10:45 - Team 9 - Bruce Stoddard, Capt., Carol Stoddard, Kevin Miller, Kim Miller, Aaron Osman, Betsy Osman, York Powers

Greeters:

8:15 - Bob & Chloe Hoaglin, Betty Cox, Betty Ann Roe
 10:45 - Jon & Jane French, Neil & Karen Baird

Acolytes:

8:15 - Bobby Munos
 10:45 - Joshua Bushey

P.A. Operator:

8:15 - Donna Dash
 10:45 - Larry Pepper

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
 Rides home after Christmas Dinner - Karen Baird

December 24 Visitor Mailing Crew:

Joanne Gustin, Marge Karl

Hosts:

Dec. 22 9:00-12:30 - Nancy Ellen Taylor
 12:30-4:00 - *Help Needed*
 Dec. 23 9:00-12:30 - Dee Hill
 12:30-4:00 - *Help Needed*
 Dec. 24 9:00-12:30 - Virginia Griffith
 Dec. 25 **Christmas Day**
 Church & Office Closed
 Dec. 26 Church & Office Closed

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 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
 Jane Latshaw Parish Nurse Coordinators
 Katie Beal Childcare Coordinator
 Joanne Frady, Sean Beal Childcare Providers
 Lindsey Compton, Hannah Fitch Childcare Providers
 Shelly Messmore Preschool Director
 Trudy Garland, Paula Gruen Preschool Teachers
 Wendy Jalley, Jennifer Van Dyke Preschool Teachers
 Kay Villarreal, Robin White Preschool Teachers
 Rudi Descaro Caretaker
 David Flanders Caretaker
 Dean Hadden Caretaker
 Charles Wallace Caretaker

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