



The Central Visitor

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

Vol. LXXXIII

Decatur, Illinois, March 3, 2010

No. 9

Charles Watkins Announces Retirement

Charles Watkins, senior pastor at Central since October 1, 1992, has submitted his resignation to the President of the Congregation **Mary Jane Oliver** effective on May 1. He and **Jane Watkins** are retiring to Bloomington, Indiana, after forty years in congregational ministry. Capable leaders of our congregation have a strong plan for seamless transition so that ministry and mission at Central will not be interrupted.

Our former regional minister and president of the Christian Church in Illinois and Wisconsin the **Reverend Dr. Herbert L. Knudsen** will become Transitional Senior Pastor at Central on May 1, leading our congregation through an intentional process to prepare us to call a new senior pastor. Now is the time to refresh your commitment to Central Christian Church and prepare for the next chapter in a notable history of mission and service.

Sign Up Now for the March 21st Fellowship Sunday!

Central's monthly fellowship lunch is coming up March 21 at noon in the Great Hall. The Fellowship Department will prepare a delicious lunch, and Central's preschool children will provide a program. The Preschool students and their families will be our special guests. To make your reservation, write "Fellowship" next to your name in the friendship register this Sunday or next or call the church office, 428-4336.

Maundy Thursday Service, April 1, 7:00 p.m.

This service will include a drama, music by the Chancel Choir and Communion. *Magdalene* is a moving and poignant drama. This poetic dramatization of the life of Mary Magdalene is based on a combination of scripture and historical documentation. *Magdalene* inspires us with the timeless message of the power of God's healing grace. Mary Magdalene will be brought to life by Miki Mathioudakis, an actress and chaplain from Indianapolis. The service will be accented by anthems by the choir and will lead to a service of Holy Communion. Plan to be present for this significant Holy Week experience. Invite your friends to share the evening with you.

Join the Lunch Book Discussion

Pastor Robert has added a seven week discussion of the book *Rediscovering Values* by Jim Wallis on Wednesdays at noon in the Disciple Room. It is NOT too late to bring your lunch and join us. The book is available at most bookstores.

Central's Women's Retreat – March 26-27

Central women and friends are invited to join at Camp One-Way, March 26-27, for a relaxing 24 hour retreat! Our own **Coleen Myers** will lead us in discovery throughout the weekend. Registration forms are available in the Friendship Center. Cost for the retreat is \$80 which includes accommodations and four meals. **Registration deadline is Sunday, March 7th**. Call the church office today!

SUNDAY, MARCH 7, 2010
WORSHIP AT 8:15 AND 10:45

**Lent...a Time to
Draw Near to God**

Text: Isaiah 55:1-9

Gretchen Barron

Elderberries Meets February 10

If you are at least 55 years young, we invite you to join the Elderberries on the second Wednesday of each month. We will meet on Wednesday, March 10 at noon in the Great Hall. The menu is pulled pork barbeque sandwiches, baked beans, coleslaw, chips, fruit salad and cookie. The cost for the meal is just \$4 per person.

Following lunch, Rob Mehan, Investor Education Specialist with the Illinois Secretary of State Office will be with us, speaking on Identity Theft and Investor Fraud. To sign up call the church office (428-4336) or mark "Elderberries" next to your name on the Friendship Pad this Sunday. Reservations need to be made before 5 p.m. on Monday, March 8.

Central Preschool Registration

Central Christian Preschool will hold an in-house fall registration for the 2010-2011 school year, March 8-11, from 9:00-11:30 a.m.

We have classes for two years old through five years old. Two year olds come with a parent or grandparent, one day a week; three year olds, three days a week; four year olds, four days a week; and five year olds, five days.

March 15-18 will be open registration. We look forward to having your children in preschool this year!

Central Youth

Sunday, March 7th
6:00-8:00 p.m.

Youth grades 6-12 will meet at the church for fun & fellowship.

Sunday, March 14th
5:00-7:00 p.m.

Youth grades 6-12 will meet at the church for Dinner and to attend the Just Flicks film, *Something the Lord Made*.

Pastors Class for Baptism & Church Membership Youth Grades 6 & Up

March 13, 9-11 a.m.

March 14, 1-3 p.m.

March 27, 9-11 a.m.

Youth, Grades 6 & up are invited to learn more about baptism and church membership with baptisms scheduled for Easter Sunday, April 4. Contact Pastor Robert if you are interested or have questions.

Looking Ahead
Sunday, April 25th
Youth Sunday

Central Youth will lead us in worship.

FORUM on FAITH at Millikin University

Central is partnering with Prairie Avenue Christian Church and First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Decatur to host an open and honest dialogue about life and faith for students at Millikin University. The Forum on Faith meets at 9 p.m. on most Tuesdays at Pilling Chapel. Facilitated by four ministers, the forum allows students to safely explore questions about faith at a time when much of their understanding of the world may be in question. For more information, contact **Pastor Robert**.

Charles's Column

For one hundred seventy-five years Central Christian Church of Decatur has devoted its energy, enthusiasm, and considerable resources to the mission of Jesus Christ in this community and from our doorsteps to the ends of the earth. This congregation ranks among the most energetic, effective, and generous of all 3600 congregations in our two hundred-year-old movement for Christian unity in the United States and Canada. Central is a beacon of life and hope and service not only to its distressed neighborhood in hard times and in good, but also to its larger community, to its denomination, and to Christ's mission around the globe.

Having served this amazing congregation for one-tenth of its history as senior pastor, I will conclude my forty-year ministry as a Disciples pastor on May 1, 2010, retiring with my dear Jane Watkins to Bloomington, Indiana, where we will take up our new careers as grandparents to Lucas born last December 1. As I leave this distinguished pulpit to begin a new chapter in my life, I am excited about the possibilities that will open for Central's future under dynamic new leadership.

For many months I have worked with key leaders in our congregation to develop a plan of transition so that the important work of our church can move ahead without hesitation or interruption. We have succeeded in securing the services of one of the most distinguished and experienced transitional ministry specialists in our denomination. **Dr. Herbert L. Knudsen** has spent most of his career in congregational and regional ministry in Illinois and Wisconsin, along with recent transitional ministries in the Region of Mid-America and in Illinois. For ten years he was our congregation's bishop (or in Disciples' terminology, our Regional Minister and President.) Before that he served long and effective pastorates in Disciples congregations in Downers Grove and Bloomington, Illinois.

Herb has been a close colleague of mine for forty years, but he will not be my successor. He will instead direct an intentional process to prepare the way for the one who will become your next senior pastor. For the next twelve to eighteen months, Herb will guide our congregation through four developmental steps to get Central ready to call the new leader whom you will choose and elect. You won't tread water or flounder; you will move forward toward your future decisively.

Change is coming for you and for my family. And change, even though positive and constructive, introduces anxiety into our family systems. Your congregational leaders and I intend to stay calm, to manage our own anxiety, to help you manage any anxiety you may have, to stay connected and communicate clearly, and to lay a firm foundation for continued success in mission and service for this unique congregation. For these last seventeen-and-one-half years I have given thanks for you every day. You have been generous and kind and helpful to me always. I am deeply grateful for your steadfast support and encouragement. Thank you. And when I am gone from your presence, I will continue to praise God for you and pray God's blessings upon you each day. I believe that God will always bless you and keep you in the grace and power of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Charles Watkins

Attention Deacons!

If you have not mailed your diaconate dues, please send your check (made payable to *Central Christian Diaconate*) to **Nancy McAfee**, 2505 W. Ash, Decatur, IL 62526. Your \$5 contribution (per deacon) helps support the reception and luncheon provided for Central's Senior Members.

News From the Pews....

Congratulations to **Jon & Jill (Scott) Wiswall** of Seattle, Washington on the February 24th birth of their son, **Edward James**. Happy first-time grandparents are **Dave & Betty Scott**.

The sympathy of the congregation is extended to **Morris Birkhead** following the February 25th death of his wife, **Wilma "Willie" Birkhead**.

EXTRA, EXTRA Just Flicks this Sunday, March 7th

The Just Flicks series will show the Decatur premiere of *At the Death House Door*, an acclaimed documentary featuring the Rev. Carroll Pickett of Huntsville, Texas. The film shows Sunday evening, **March 7**, starting at 6 p.m. at Central Christian Church. As usual, fine refreshments will be served. Also, please remember the **March 14** showing of *Something the Lord Made* at Central Christian at 6 p.m.

March 13-14, Rev. Pickett and his wife Jane will speak in Decatur, sponsored by the Macon County Citizens Opposing Capital Punishment and First Presbyterian Church. He will lead a workshop Saturday from 9 to noon at First Presbyterian, and then preach in the 8:00 and 10:30 worship services on Sunday. He'll also lead an adult education hour at 9 a.m.

Environmental Film Series Kicks Off 2010 Season

Saturday, March 6 is the launch of the 2010 Environmental Film Series. The first film, *Know Your Mushrooms* at 7 p.m. in the sanctuary of the Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship Church, 3773 N. MacArthur Road. The event is free and open to the public. Donations will be accepted in support of the film series. Fresh theater-style, organic popcorn and healthier drinks will be available at inexpensive prices. Larry Evans, who co-stars in the film and was raised in Decatur, will make a special appearance to introduce the documentary.

Permanent Prayer Wall is now Located near the Library

Thanks to the generous requests from some Central families, memorial funds have been made available for Central to build a permanent prayer wall, which is located just outside the north sanctuary door as you enter the library. Simply write your requests on the prayer request form, fold it up, and insert it into the prayer wall. Monday mornings, the requests are compiled into a list and distributed to members of the prayer team, who then pray on a daily basis for the listed needs, concerns and joys. If you would like to be part of the prayer team, contact **Pastor Gretchen** (gbarron@cccdisciples.org) or **Lois Whitaker** (jandlwhit@consolidated.net).

Time to "Think Spring" at Family Fun Night – March 6th!

Central families and friends with preschool and elementary age children are invited to our second Family Fun Night, Saturday, March 6th from 5:30-7:30 p.m. We'll meet in the Great Hall for a potluck supper (bring a dish to share – meat, beverage and table service provided). There will be crafts, games and other activities for children and parents to enjoy together. Join us March 6th as we *Think Spring!* To sign up, call the church office or email gbarron@cccdisciples.org

Remembering our Military Personnel

Pastor Gretchen is in the process of updating the status of all Central's military personnel. If you have a loved one who is currently listed on our prayer list, contact Pastor Gretchen so that we know where they are (deployed or state-side, special needs that Central might be able to respond to, etc.). You can call the church office (428-4336) or e-mail at gbarron@cccdisciples.org.



Sunday, March 7, 2010

8:15 and 10:45-Worship Services
Music: Offertory-Karen Driver,
Soprano; Marilyn Ward, Piano
10:45 Anthem-Chancel Choir
9:00-9:45-Parish Nurse Clinic
9:15-Fellowship Coffee, Friendship Ctr.
9:30-Sunday School
4:00-Millikin Concert, Sanctuary
6:00-Youth Group
6:00-Just Flicks, Great Hall

Monday (8)

9:00-Good Samaritan Inn
5:00-Preschool Teachers' First Aid
& CPR, 290
6:30-Boy Scouts, Disciple Room &
Great Hall

Tuesday (9)

9:00-ChristCare Stitchers, 207
10:00-Pastors' Staff Meeting,
Senior Pastor's Study
9:30-11:00-Preschool Vision & Hearing
Testing, Parlor

Wednesday (10)

9:30-11:00-Preschool Vision & Hearing
Testing, Parlor
12:00-Central Singers
12:00-Wallis Book Study, Disciple Rm.
12:00-Elderberries Lunch, Great Hall
5:30-Preschool Board, 290
6:30-Unbinding Group, Parlor
6:30-MCCOCP, Disciple Room
6:30-Wallis Book Study, Friendship Ctr.

Thursday (11)

10:00-Alanon, 212
6:00-Chancel Bells
7:00-Chancel Choir

Saturday (13)

7:30-Elders' Breakfast, Disciple Room
9:00-11:00-Pastors' Class, 290

Counting On You

February 28

Worship Attendance 273
Sunday School Attendance 67



Central Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

650 West William Street
Decatur, IL 62522-2326

PERIODICAL
POSTAGE
PAID



Serving Schedule—March 7, 2010

Elders:

8:15 & 10:45 - Larry Pepper, Linda Kuhns

Elders Serving Imboden Creek Living Center:

Larry Otis & Barbara Tyler

Deacons:

8:15 - Team 1 - Gene Garver, Capt., Bev Chapman, Merle Chapman, Dennis Downey, Al Fagin, Chris Fagin, Sally Force, Sandy Garver, Dean Gray, Janet Gray, Gail Prince, Larry Prince, Sue Simcox

10:45 - Team 2 - Richard Ward, Capt., Cathy Ash, Jim Ash, Neil Baird, Azalee Berner, Warren Berner, Dale Ford, Judy Ford, Erik Harm, Christine Lyman-Harm, Daniel Hinze, Janet Lyman, David Martin, Julie Martin, Ron Oliver, Aaron Osman, Betsy Osman, Dave Phillips, Nita Phillips, Kelly Swallow, Steve Swarthout, Janet Thicksten, Kathy Thornton, Kent West, Lea West

Ushers:

8:15 - Team 2 - Don Tankersley, Capt., Brenda Tankersley, Frances Heiserman, Becky Johnston, Betty Scott, Dave Scott

10:45 - Team 7 - Jon French, Capt., Jane French, George Virgil, Linda Virgil, Ed Voice, Jean Voice

Greeters:

8:15 - Clark & Mary Waldmier, Betty Ann Roe

10:45 - Howard & Marguerite Cravens, Steve & Carrie Funk

Acolytes:

8:15 - Julia Funk

10:45 - Austin Econie

P.A. Operator:

8:15 - Greg Carter

10:45 - Jim Hinze

Parish Nurse: Liz Campbell

Fellowship Coffee Hosts: Harold & Bess King

Preparation of Communion:

Becky & John Flanders, Pamela Bednar, David Flanders, Joan Stewart

Van Drivers:

8:15 service and Sunday School - John Flanders

Sunday School and 10:45 service - Kevin Wilmot

10:45 service only - Brett Swallow

March 10 Visitor Mailing Crew:

Ruby Agnew, Joanne Gustin

West Entrance Hosts:

Mar. 8 9:00-12:30 - Mary Boyle
12:30-4:00 - *Help Needed*

Mar. 9 9:00-12:30 - Janet Gray
12:30-4:00 - Ellen Sheffer

Mar. 10 9:00-12:30 - Virginia Griffith
12:30-4:00 - Marilyn Ward

Mar. 11 9:00-12:30 - Dee Hill
12:30-4:00 - *Help Needed*

Mar. 12 9:00-12:30 - Harold & Bess King
12:30-4:00 - *Help Needed*

Central Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
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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
Kevin Chunko Organist
Valerie Rozanski Administrative Assistant
Pat Beals Administrative Assistant
Jane Latshaw Parish Nurse Coordinator
Katie Beal Childcare Coordinator
Sean Beal Childcare Provider
Shelly Messmore Preschool Director
Trudy Garland, Regina Rhodes Preschool Teachers
Wendy Jalley, Janet Langston Preschool Teachers
Jennifer Van Dyke Preschool Teacher
Kay Villarreal, Robin White Preschool Teachers
David Flanders Caretaker Supervisor
Dean Hadden Caretaker
Crystal Thicksten Caretaker
Charles Wallace Caretaker

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