

The Central Visitor

*A weekly visitor to your home bringing you news from Central Christian Church
Our mission ... Sharing Christ,
Changing Lives, Delivering Hope*

Vol. XCII

Decatur, Illinois, December 2, 2020

No. 48

Come Home for Christmas

Due to the pandemic and the decision to move to virtual-only worship for the next few weeks (at least), Central's annual tradition of "Come Home for Christmas" is being modified. On December 13, between the times of 11:45 a.m. and 12:30 p.m., the Fellowship Team will be serving "box dinners to go" at the West Entrance. Menu includes fried chicken, hash brown casserole, peas and carrots, croissant, and a cupcake for dessert. We will serve as many as would like meals, but we need meal reservations made by 4 p.m. on Thursday December 10 (428-4336, central@cccdisciples.org).

Details About the Congregational "Meeting"

Every year in December, at a date set by the congregation's president, the Central Christian congregation gathers for a meeting at which a vote is taken to approve the Nominating Committee's report along with the operating budget for the coming year. Not surprisingly, the COVID-19 pandemic has forced us to modify this annual regulation. Instead, we will have a "drive-thru vote."

Here's what is planned:

- President Gregg Foltz has called a special congregational vote for Dec. 13.
- Between now and then copies of the Nominating Committee report and the proposed operating budget for 2021 are available inside the West Entrance doors. You may come by anytime the office is open and pick up a copy of each.
- On Sunday Dec. 13, between 11:45 – 12:30, you are asked to drive by the West Entrance. At that time, a ballot will be given to you to fill out.
- Results of the vote will be communicated by email later that night and in the following week's newsletter.

Note: this is meant to coincide with the "Come Home for Christmas" take-away dinner served at the same time.

Sharing the Journey Continues

Sharing the Journey, a prayer group that talks about the sermon, will continue to meet through Advent. The group meets on Zoom Sundays from 6:30-7:30pm. To join us for any Sunday, simply contact the church office for the Zoom link or email Scott and Vicky at svwoolridge@gmail.com.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2020

TRADITIONAL WORSHIP LIVE

STREAMED ON

WWW.CCCDISCIPLES.ORG

AT 8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.

CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP ON

FACEBOOK LIVE

AT 9:15 a.m.

You Are Not Forgotten

Text: Isaiah 40:1-5, 8-11; Mark 1:1-4

Michael E. Karunas

This Week in Advent

There is a lot happening this week in Advent (December 3 – 10).

- Keep building Advent Prayer Chain
- Send a picture of your household by your Christmas tree (central@cccdisciples.org)
- Bring hats and mittens for DOVE by Friday December 4
- Watch Millikin Vespers (The Best Of...) Sat., Dec. 5 at 7:00 PM or Sun. Dec. 6 at 2:00 PM (www.millikin.edu)
- Light the second advent candle on your advent wreath on Sun., Dec. 6



Thank you!!

The Worship Committee would like to sincerely thank the following people who participated in the Hanging of the Greens and preparing our church for the Advent season:

Tom & Diana Ritter, Doug Soebbing, the Kirby family, Carrie Funk & family, Janet Lyman, Christine Lyman-Harm, Gail Prince, Sandy Garver, Debbie Hoffert, Pearl & George Jones, Joy & Ed Adams, Carol Bischoff, Carolyn McCall, Paul Gorden, Mike Munos, Shirley & Steve Swarthout, Carolyn Sunderlik, Cheryl Zollinger, Kathy Matherly, Laura Chapman, Jodie Walwer, our wonderful Central secretaries & Caretakers, and as always, Michael, Don, & Tina.



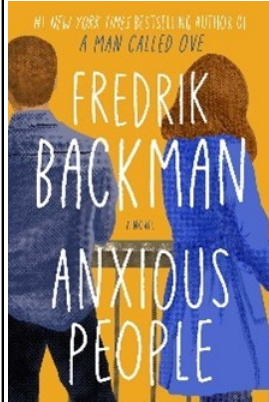
In Sympathy We Mourn

In sympathy, we mourn with the family of Eleanor Spracklen, who passed away unexpectedly this past weekend. Eleanor was a long-time member of Central Christian. There will more than likely be a graveside only family service for Eleanor. More information will come at a later time. Please join with us in prayer for her family.



The Worst of Us and the Rest of Us

Over the Thanksgiving weekend, I finished Frederick Backman's latest novel, *Anxious People*. If you liked Backman's earlier book, *A Man Called Ove*, then you will love this latest one for some of the same reasons. (Side note: and if you appreciated the plot twist in Spike Lee's bank heist *Inside Man*, you will likewise appreciate a similar set up in *Anxious People*).



Without giving away any more of the book's storyline, I will share here that Backman concludes with words such as these:

They say that a person's personality is the sum of their experiences. But that isn't true, at least not entirely, because if our past was all that defined us, we'd never be able to put up with ourselves. We need to be allowed to convince ourselves that we're more than the mistakes we made yesterday. That we are all of our next choices, too, all of our tomorrows.

Though the book is not explicitly Christian in any obvious way, I felt a connection to the season of Advent in this paragraph. Advent is about a journey that begins in darkness, but which ends in light. It is a journey that Christ – the light – makes to find us in our darkness and bring his light to bear on our lives. Spiritually speaking, darkness represents the “worst of us.” It represents sin, brokenness, grief, and pain. It stands for heartache, loss, regret, and shame. It reminds us of failure and fault, hopelessness and despair, but if there is something that *convince*s us that we're more than the mistakes of yesterday – as Backman suggests – it is Christ.

The light of Christ reminds us that the darkness is *part* of us, but not *all* of us. It reminds us that the not-so-best-of-us, is also not the *rest* of us. The rest of us *is*, in fact, the light of Christ. The anticipation of something better awaiting as the result of our next choice and the hopes and dreams of all our tomorrows. Advent may begin in darkness, but it doesn't end there. It is very much a journey that reveals the truth of John 1:5 – that there is no darkness within us or around us that cannot be overcome by the light when it comes.

I closed the sermon I had planned to deliver this past Sunday with the following challenge, which I offer as a conclusion to these weekly words as well:

Between now and next Sunday, you are asked to write two prayers, as long or as short as you like. The first is a prayer for the “world” (the literal world or our country, state, or neighborhood, but the “world” beyond ourselves). What is something you want God to save us from (collectively)? Secondly, write a prayer for yourself. Take time to look within you. Where do you see darkness inside? What is it within you that you want God to save you from? You don't need to share these prayers with anyone but God. The second one especially is likely to be very personal, but as we take on this challenge together, let us also remember that even though this world is full of darkness, we believe that Christ is laboring, even now, to bring his light so that our journey will end in triumph. Thanks be to God.

Blessings... Michael

Scott Woolridge's Retirement Zoom Party

To celebrate Scott Woolridge's years of ministry in the Christian Church in Illinois and Wisconsin, the region will be hosting a virtual party on Sunday, December 6 from 2-4 p.m. Here is the Zoom info for anyone who would like to "drop by" and wish Scott well:

Topic: Scott's Party
Time: Dec 6, 2020 02:00 PM Central Time (US and Canada)
Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83528775307?pwd=TmhTYW53QUUp1dDQ0MIJrc3hodTZKQT09>
Meeting ID: 835 2877 5307
Passcode: 317062

STEWARDSHIP CORNER Ways of Giving - Did you Know?

Are you thinking of making a donation to Central from your IRA this year? Even though the required minimum distribution has been waived for 2020, if you are age 72, or were 70 1/2 before January 1, 2020, you may do so without a withdrawal penalty. Are you aware you can avoid paying income tax on that withdrawal? It may sound too good to be true, but it's not.

Here's how - there is a provision within the Internal Revenue code known as the **Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD)**. If age requirements are met, you can make a gift directly from your traditional IRA account to a qualifying charity. The gift can be up to \$100,000, but smaller amounts are also very meaningful. When you make such a gift from your IRA directly to a charity, you do not pay income tax on that withdrawal. However, if you choose to utilize itemized deductions, that QCD contribution cannot be included.

The Stewardship Team hopes you find this information helpful as you consider your giving strategy.

Together in Prayer

"Where two or three are gathered, I am there among them." These familiar words of Jesus, recorded in Matthew 18:20, may have us wondering, during these days of separation, about how and when we can gather. With this promise from Jesus, let's get creative.

You are invited to join with the Central Christian Church family for prayer by calling this number – (516) 387-8842. We will gather Monday through Friday evenings at 7pm, starting November 30 and going through Wednesday, December 23. Time will be given to share joys and concerns, and then the host will offer a prayer. It will be a 5-10 minute gathering.

During this season of Advent, as we await the coming of Christ, we can be together in prayer. You are welcome to call the prayer number every day or when your schedule allows. We hope this offering of time to pray with your church family is one more affirmation that we are in this together.



Sunday, December 6th, 2020

Front table: Janet Lyman &
Christine Lyman-Harm
Elders: Brett Swallow & Paul Gorden
PA: David Martin



Sunday (6)

8:00-Traditional Worship, Live Stream
9:15-Contemporary Worship,
Facebook Live

10:30-Traditional Worship, Live Stream
12:00-Praise Team rehearsal, G. Hall

Monday (7)

Tuesday (8)

Wednesday (9)

10:30-Ministers' Meeting
5:00-Elders, Zoom

Thursday (10)

5:15-Brass Choir, Disciples Room
5:30-Koinonia, Connection Café

Friday (11)

Saturday (12)

Sunday (13)

8:00-Traditional Worship, Live Stream
9:15-Contemporary Worship,
Facebook Live

10:30-Traditional Worship, Live Stream
11:45-Come Home for Christmas meal
pick up/Congregational Voting
drive-through

12:00-Praise Team rehearsal, G. Hall



Happy Birthday!!

Birthdays this coming week **(12/6-12/12)!**

Emelia Andrews, Karen Baird,
Liam Hawkinson, Kaleigh Larrick,
Tina Miller, Sue Muschal,
Kevin Ann Otis, Brett Swallow,
Don Tankersley, Janet Thicksten,
David Withrow

Counting On You

Sunday, November 29, 2020
Total worshipping online = 377

Central Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
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www.cccdisciples.org
e-mail: central@cccdisciples.org

Michael E. Karunas.....Senior Minister
 Don Martin.....Minister of Music
 Tina Miller..... Associate Minister of CE & Family Life
 David Martin.....Youth Director
 Cordelia "Dee Dee" GainOrganist
 David Williams.....Organist
 Kathleen Dudley.....Administrative Assistant
 Yvonne Boyd.....Administrative Assistant
 Hannah Brimmer.....Social Media Coordinator
 Gabrielle Coulthard.....Nursery Attendant
 Maddie Genz.....Nursery Attendant
 Cheryl WilliamsNursery Attendant
 Kattina WilliamsNursery Attendant
 Paula Partain.....Preschool Staff
 Lora WrightLead Caretaker
 Jim Denzer.....Caretaker
 Andrew Evans.....Caretaker
 Toby Jones.....Caretaker



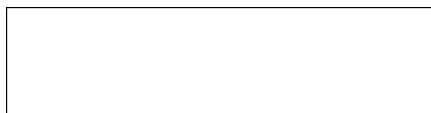
"Like" and "Follow" us on Facebook

To "like" hit the thumbs-up icon.
 To "follow" click on the ellipse icon (...).
 You will see a list of options pop up.

Find the option marked "follow" and click on that.

Temporary Church Office Hours as of
July 20th, 2020:
Monday through Friday
8:00 AM - 1:00 PM

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