

the TORCH

January 23, 2017

Central Church of Christ

www.centrallive.net

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STAFF

Dr. Rory Christensen,
Lead Minister

Tony Ross,
Creative Arts Minister

Jessica Pastirik,
Director of Involvement
Ministries

Chelsea Davis,
Children's Minister

Rico Diaz,
Director of Student
Ministries

Abby Carrow,
Christian Education Intern

SUNDAY WORSHIP

1st Worship:
8:15 a.m.

2nd Worship
& Bible classes:
9:30 a.m.

3rd Worship
& Bible classes:
11:00 a.m.

Valentine's Day Dinner

Central Youth & Missions are teaming up to present to you a very special **Valentine's Day Dinner** on Friday, February 10, 2017.

Donations will help defray the cost of upcoming trips for Central Youth such as CIY Move, or CIY Believe (both are life-changing events for our youth) and the 2017 Mission Trip. Those going on the mission trip and the youth work very hard preparing the meal, setting up, decorating, serving, providing childcare, and clean-up. This is a great way for them to work alongside one another and provide you with an amazing and tasty evening. We have been told year after year that this is far above restaurant experiences for this special day.

It's a celebration of all the different kinds of love that we experience. Whether it is romantic love or friendship love, come out and celebrate. It's a fun night to dress up with your spouse, bff's, or small group members.

Reservations can be made on Sundays in the foyer for either the 5:00 p.m. or 7:00 p.m. time slots. Please be sure to leave your phone number as well when you sign-up so we can call you for your menu selection.



Central's College Scholarship Application Deadline is April 1

Central's College Scholarship applicants need to pick up an application in the Church Office, from the kiosk and return it to the office, completed by April 1, 2017 to be considered for the Fall 2017 college semester.

Generational Challenges & Opportunities:

How to Reach & Keep 5 Generations in the Church

Lincoln Christian University's Church Leaders' Conference is set for Saturday, February 18 at their campus. Featured speakers include Haydn Shaw, specialist in Generational Differences, Change Management, Leadership and Management Development, Personal Productivity and Trust; and Don Green, President of LCU. There is more information for this posted on the Information Kiosk in the foyer and then you can sign up at the Involvement Center. If you register by Feb. 13, the cost is \$35. You can do this online at www.lincolnchristian.edu/churchleaders



Winter Euchre Tournament

February 24, 2017

March 24, 2017

*Must sign up as a team of two.

*Please bring a snack to share.

*We need to start at 6:00 p.m., so please arrive early.

See Bob Snedden or Jessica Pastirik for more details.

Fellow Co-workers,

Dr. Rory Christensen

There's a bit of a riddle that I've been toying with lately. It goes like this: "What's the shorter distance, from excuses to success, or from failure to success?" If you had to answer it yourself, what would you say? No, really. How would you answer it? What's the shorter distance? The funny thing about that riddle is how difficult it is to choose the word "failure." Logically we know that has to be the case (even if you are failing, at least you're moving; excuses leave you sitting where you are). However, we've been well conditioned to go after any other option than "failure." There are reasons for that. For some of us the primary reason is psychological: No one likes the feeling of defeat, that digs on our self-esteem. For others, the reason might be social: people can be punishing and unforgiving of wrong choices, especially of ones that affect them in a direct or indirect way; and, people like to associate with success and successful people. For still others, the reason might be economical: Wrong choices can eat up precious collateral. Whatever the controlling reason, one thing remains: failure is a hard pill to swallow, so "we would rather not, if that's fine with you." The problem with that stance, however, is the riddle we just read: "What's the shorter distance, from excuses to success, or from failure to success?"

Often times in life (and certainly in God's kingdom!) forward progress looks less like a straight line and more like a zigzag. The Bible shows you that. Open the book of Numbers, and you're treated to a story of the Israelites making a trek from Egypt to Canaan (modern day Israel). Problem: that months long, straight-line trip turns into a 40-year hike. By common estimation, that trip was a failure (Fire the navigator!). And yet that trip shaped a group of former Egyptian slaves into a fighting force that would occupy and build a nation. It was a zigzag path that led to success. Go to Acts 16 and you find Paul's straight-line trip to Ephesus redirected by the Holy Spirit into a months long jaunt around the Aegean Sea, a jaunt that left him preaching the gospel in surrounding towns, and paving the way for his eventual ministry in Ephesus. Comb through the Bible when you can find story after story like these (you can even make a case for the fact that the cross was the greatest zigzag in history). Often times (perhaps even, "more often than not"), forward progress looks less like a straight line and more like a zigzag.

I look at all of this and I find myself wanting to reshape my own approach to failure. I wonder if you do too. What would it look like if we took the next few months, and set goals, made plans to achieve them, and set out to accomplish those plans, knowing all the while that our path toward that goal might look more zigzag than we anticipated? What would it look like, though, if we didn't let that hold us back? And, what if we got good at walking in zigzag, and when they came, we expected them and didn't quit because of them? I believe that if we did that, it could make a huge difference, in our lives, our marriages, parenting, church, workplace (you name it!). I like how "What's the shorter distance, from excuses to success, or from failure to success?" I like how Thomas Edison put it, after failing 10,000 times to create the incandescent light bulb, "I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work." Zigzag. I like it. Let's go to it.

Be bold. Stay faithful.

Rory

Christian Women's Conference—

"Royal Treasures"

Lincoln Christian University's Christian Women's Conference is set for Wednesday, April 26 at their campus. Featured speakers include Liz Curtis Higgs, author of more than 30 books, and talk radio host, national speaker, and author Susie Larson. Both women come with a passion to see women everywhere strengthened in their faith and awakened to the depth of God's Love and the height of their calling in Christ Jesus. There is more information for this posted on the Information Kiosk in the foyer and then sign up at the Involvement Center.



Exercise Class for women

Exercise Class for women happens here Mon. Tues. and Thurs. at 5:30 p.m., and Wed. at 5:00 p.m. and Sat. at 8:00 a.m. Doing the 21 day FIX video-class is approx. 40 minutes. If you have any questions please contact Dee Allen or the Church Office (815) 673-1581.

Thanks,
Everyone!

Our family wishes to thank everyone for their prayers, cards, and comforting words expressed to us before and during the recent loss of our beloved mother, Jean (Ligori) Voytko. Special thank you to the Funeral Ministry Team and everyone that served or made dishes for the funeral dinner. Thank you to Central Church of Christ for allowing us a place to meet. It truly was a blessing.

With loving appreciation to all,

Gloria (Bob) Noonan and Family
Janet (Terry) Webster and Family
Mike (Vickie) Voytko and Family
Nancy (Richard) McCoy and Family



Tony Ross, Creative Arts Minister

I'd like to take a moment and praise the ministry partners that I get the privilege of serving with every week. It takes a lot of people and a lot of time to do what we do on a weekly basis.

From communion prep to worship team there's a lot to do. It takes dedicated people to make any ministry work and mine is no different. It also takes time.

We have a full rehearsal every week. That includes all members of the worship team that you see on stage. That also includes the sound technician and the computer operators.

We run through every song and work through the dynamics of the song along with any tweaks that need to be made to the lyrics. After everyone is comfortable we leave for the night. We then reconvene bright and early on Sunday before anyone else is in the building and do a sound check and tweak anything that needs tweaked. From there, the band and vocalists head out to get ready for the day while the sound tech, computer operator and leader for the heritage service gets ready to start that service. Our day ends a little after noon as we shut everything down and turn off all the lights. It's a long day. I don't write this today to get sympathy or a pat on the back. I write this to show you that we have people here that love to serve. They love to give up their time and talents for His glory. Without the help of our ministry partners, who are serving like this in countless ways, there would be no church. So whether you serve in our children's or involvement ministries, helping to lead worship, or greeting people at the door, I would like to encourage you with these words from scripture,

"Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it." —1 Corinthians 12:27

Don't ever feel like what you do for the kingdom is of lesser importance than what others are doing. Everything is designed to impact those that do not yet know who Jesus is. If we can meet them with a smile, make them feel welcome, then we have given them a first step into knowing Christ and His desire for their heart.

Prayer Challenge

Jessica Pastirik, Director of Involvement Ministries

In early January, April Christensen conducted a training for Central small group leaders. A discussion was held on our prayer times and her challenge for us to go outside the box and incorporate different ways of praying. She introduced intercessory prayer and gave out the handout below. Leaders have already started using it and it has been great to hear how people are going to step out of their comfort zones and get comfortable with being uncomfortable in order to minister to each other.

How amazing would it be if all of us became so comfortable with praying that we could go up to anyone we met and feel comfortable praying for them?

Paul shows us amazing ways you can pray for someone without even knowing what is going on in their lives. Read Colossians 1:9-14. Read it again. Now find someone to pray for using these topics. Don't ask them what to pray for; just pray the following and whatever else comes to mind. Go.

Intercessory Prayer

Praying for Others: Colossians 1:9-14

- Intercessory Prayer = asking God to act on behalf of someone else.
- Sometimes we don't know how to pray for our friends and family (or even those who have hurt us), yet we know we should pray for them.
- In Colossians 1:9-14 Paul gave us a pattern to follow when we pray for others. Read this passage and try using it as a pattern the next time you pray. Watch how God answers.

Pray that...

1. They will understand God's will;
2. They gain spiritual wisdom;
3. They live a life pleasing and honoring to God;
4. They are filled with spiritual fruit;
5. They know God better and better;
6. They are filled with God's strength
7. They endure in patience;
8. They stay full in Christ's joy;
9. They are always thankful;
10. They recall God's forgiveness of their sins.

Central Youth has changed its name to *Central Students!*

Rico Diaz, Director of Student Ministries

Over the past few years we have tried to get more intentional about reaching our college-aged members. Since these members aren't technically "youth" we decided that, to be strategic in reaching young adults, we needed to overhaul the name. Central "Students" helps us incorporate the young adults we are going after! As of right now we have a steady group of 5-7 Young Adults who are being poured into. My goal with this group is to help equip these young adults to become the next leaders of our congregation.

As for the Jr. High and High School, we have just launched a new initiative to help them grow in Biblical knowledge. Every day our Jr. High and High School students are being emailed a short devotional for the day. Our Core Leaders are also being emailed these "devos" in order to spark conversation that blesses the Lord! We are so excited for this and we need your prayers. Pray that our students fall in love with the Bible!

PRAYER: I covet your prayers for this ministry. If Central Students isn't bathed in prayer, we will fail. So please continue to think of us when you pray. Pray our students would grow in their understanding of God's will over their lives. Pray that our students would gain spiritual wisdom. Lastly, would you always pray that our students know God better.

I love Ephesians 1:17, "I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that ***you may know him better.***" The reason I love this scripture so much is because it reminds me of a sign that was outside of a restaurant called "Joe's Crab Shack". On the outside of their building they had painted, "FREE CRAB TOMORROW" you see the sign today, come back tomorrow and the sign is still there painted on the wall saying "FREE CRAB TOMORROW"! Since the sign is painted on the wall, tomorrow NEVER comes! So, when I read, "***you may know Him better***" I read it today and think, "I can know Him better today!!" then I come back to the same scripture tomorrow and it still reads, "***you can know Him better***"! Praise God, that the day never comes when I don't need to know Him better!



We are excited about 2017 in our Children's Ministry!

Chelsea Davis, Children's Minister

God has continued to be faithful and each week we invite children and families to grow in their relationship with God and others. A lot of growth has taken place and we are looking forward to seeing those relationships continue to grow and deepen. It is clear that there has been many changes within the past year, but our purpose and mission has continued to say the same. Every week we strive to connect children to God and others in a safe, fun, and high-energy environment. As we move forward in 2017, we will continue with this mission and allow God to continue to use us to shine His light into the community.

Ministry Spotlight: You'll notice this month that some things will begin to look different in the Kid Central hallways as we begin to paint and develop a cohesive color scheme for the children's ministry. You may also notice some extra excited 4th-6th graders who are looking forward to going to SuperStart in March for a two-day weekend conference in Bloomington, IL! If you have a child in 4th-6th grade that is interested in learning more about God and loves hanging with their friends, please e-mail Chelsea Davis at children@centrallive.net



Prayer: Join us in praying for our 4th-6th graders that will be going to SuperStart that God would begin to open up their minds and hearts to His Word. Also, be praying for the children and leaders at Awana for God to continue to reveal His truth to them and for them to be bold in sharing their faith with others.

THE TORCH

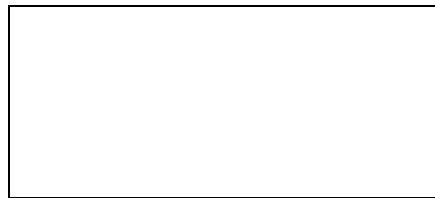
CENTRAL CHURCH OF CHRIST
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NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

**US POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO 296
STREATOR IL
61364**

Dated Material

Return Service Requested



Baptized

Chris Roberts
Lori Roberts
Tonya Drysdale
Richard Peterson



Statistics for Dec. 24 & 25, 2016

Dec. 24	312	
Dec. 24	215	
Dec. 25	157	Total 684

Statistics for Jan. 1, 2017

1st Worship	63	
2nd Worship	179	
3rd Worship	98	Total 340
Bible Classes	153	

Transferred

Jason and Cheri Tate

Offerings

E Giving

Since April 2016 25 Givers



Offerings needed to meet Budget-Y-T-D for 2017: \$52,680
Offerings given to-date: \$55,260

Financial Statement available at the Information Kiosk or the Church Office

In Sympathy

Our sympathy and prayers go out to: Gloria (Bob) Noonan, Janet Webster, and Nancy (Richard) McCoy and families at the loss of their mother, Jean Voytko who passed away December 15, 2016.

Also, Patsy Krockner and family at the loss of her husband, Robert who passed away on November 26, 2016.

Also, Marilyn (Jerry) Decker and family at the loss of her mother, Tillie Noon who died on November 18, 2016.

And Debbie (James) Ashlock and family at the loss of her mother, Betty Hardin, who passed away on October 22, 2016.

Statistics for Jan. 8, 2017

1st Worship	70	
2nd Worship	273	
3rd Worship	124	Total 467
Bible Classes	174	

Statistics for Jan. 15, 2017

1st Worship	75	
2nd Worship	223	
3rd Worship	133	Total 431

Statistics for Jan. 22, 2017

1st Worship	63	
2nd Worship	228	
3rd Worship	121	Total 412
Bible Classes	164	