

the TORCH

March 20, 2017

Central Church of Christ

www.centrollive.net

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STAFF

Dr. Rory Christensen,
Lead Minister

Tony Ross,
Creative Arts Minister

Jessica Pastrik,
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.



Easter is on April 16 and it's right around the corner. That's a huge reality for all of us! It's Resurrection Day, the day we show up and celebrate together the hope we have through our resurrected Lord! That being the case, schedule time for it, get stoked about it, and start inviting the friends and family that you've been praying will join you! Our Easter services will take place at 8:00, 9:30, and 11:00 am, with our regularly scheduled Sunday School classes fitting in that time frame. Plan for it. Bring others to it. It's Resurrection Day, on the horizon, and it's definitely worth getting ready and gearing up for! We'll see you and your guests there!

You know that pile of things you've been meaning to drop off to charity?

We want it! Drop off your treasures on **April 3-6, from 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.**, we'll be accepting donations for our Spring Giveaway to benefit the Haiti Mission Team. Household items, sports items, toys, jewelry, accessories, purses, shoes, books, furniture, knickknacks, antiques, collectibles (sorry, NO clothing, televisions, or computers). If you need an evening drop-off time, please contact Jessica Pastrik, (815) 673-1581

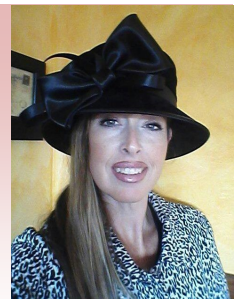


If treasure hunting and shopping is more your style, join us on **Saturday, April 8 from 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.** All donations support the mission team's projects. This includes several one-day sessions of Vacation Bible School, each expected to have 150 plus children and various work projects they will be participating throughout their time in Haiti.

Special-Tea Party

The Women's Ministry has designed this event to connect women and girls of all ages. We would love to see granddaughters, moms, and grandmothers all gathered together for afternoon tea. You'll have the pleasure of hearing guest speaker Dawn Benson share with us about hospitality. Dawn Benson is a wife and homeschool mama of three. She lives on a hobby farm in Central Illinois. She loves to make simple things beautiful and her home a place of rest and refreshment for her family and all those God brings through her door.

Plan to come and enjoy tea and refreshments. Join us on April 9, from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 pm.



Dawn Benson

Fellow Co-workers,

Dr. Rory Christensen

“We’re all sheep from the front, and leaders from behind.” I can’t fully remember when I tripped across that phrase, but I have to admit that it’s stuck with me. It’s one of those good quotes that reminds in a glance of the dual reality we live out and the dual responsibility we lean into. It reminds us, first of all, that to live is to follow. Albert Schweitzer (this missionary/theologian) said years ago that, “Example is not the main thing; it is the only thing.” Read that quote again, and then recognize it for what it is: a self evident truth. Calvin Cooley (the father of modern psychology) popularized it in his concept of the “looking glass self”: what the key people in your life say about you, you tend to believe about yourself (my paraphrase). You notice it in the way your life starts to look like and go in the direction of the people you look to as leaders, listen to as mentors and guides, learn from as life examples and coaches (either informally or formally), or do life with as relatives and friends. Any way you slice it, we are all “sheep from the front”; we’re all following and impacted by those around us. To live is to follow.

See, but, that’s only half of it. Not only is it true that to live is to follow, but it’s also true that to live is to lead others. How did that go again? “We’re all . . . leaders from behind.” Not only are we influenced by others, but we also influence others. They are guided and impacted by our life. They follow our life and example. I was reminded by some research I hit recently that we interact on average with 14 family members (2 children + average childbearing age of 25.3 = 3 generations), 25 co-workers, and 150 acquaintances (Robin Dunbar’s number) over the course of your life. When you add in the average number of friends on Facebook (338) or connections on LinkedIn (500+), you find that even the most cloistered of us impact dozens of people.

That being the case, here’s my question: In what direction are you leading others, toward life or death, function or dysfunction, success or failure? Chase that question, and it’ll lead you back to the quote. If you’re a follower first and a leader second, then who are you following? Whose voice are you listening to and letting shape you? And, is it the right voice?

See, it’s because of those questions that I like the way God and His Word hook us up. Because we’re all like sheep from the front, the Good Shepherd has come (cf. John 10). And, because we’re all leaders from behind, he guides us in the right direction (cf. Matt 20:28; 1 Pet 2:25). And, as we follow, we’re led to be servant leaders: those who care for people sacrificially (Shepherds), influence others appropriately (Shapers), exercise their gifts responsibly (Stewards), mobilize others strategically (Strategists), watch the world perceptively (Seers), work together creatively (Synergists), and live wisely and share well God’s wisdom (Sages). This being the case, how well are you following? How well are you listening? How is your life increasingly growing in the direction of these images of a servant leader (and what’s missing)? Remember, this all matters because, “We’re all sheep from the front, and leaders from behind.”

Be bold. Stay faithful. Follow well.

Rory

Women’s Conference

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.



Our sympathy and prayers go out to: Judy (Dave) Hallowell and family at the loss of her brother, James Kerestes, who passed away February 15, 2017.

Also, Jeff (Hollie) Henson and family at the loss of his father, Dave Henson, who passed away March 11, 2017.

Elinor Holcomb and family at the loss of her sister, Betty Kendall, who passed away March 13, 2017.



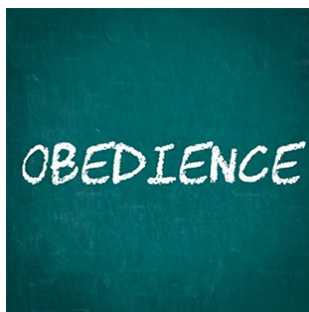
Exercise Class for women

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.

Creative Arts

Tony Ross, Creative Arts Minister

I'd like to start my article with a quote from Matt Redman, a highly respected Worship Leader. In the compilation, "Heart of Worship Files", he says this,



"Sometimes it can be tempting to strive to do something significant. We find ourselves wanting to write a significant song that will touch many hearts or lead a significant time of worship in which lives are truly changed. But we are not called to significance. Instead, the calling is to obedience. Look through the Bible and see how obedience reaps some major, significant outcomes. Look at Moses or Noah for example. Ultimately, look at Jesus and the Cross. The most significant act in all of history was one of sheer, humble, enduring obedience. Whether we're called to be up in front or behind the scenes, obedience is always significant in the eyes of God."

What a humbling thing to read. What a freeing thing to read. I don't have to be amazing, I just have to be obedient. You see, when we are truly obedient to God, people are more able to see how amazing *He* is. The more people get of glimpse of God through what we do, the more opportunity they have to know Him more. And that, my friends, is what it's all about.

Central Kids

Chelsea Davis, Children's Minister



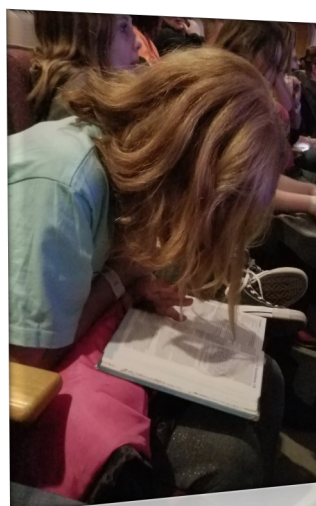
Our Sunday morning programming is entering unit 19 in our Gospel Project curriculum and will begin teaching on Jesus' life and ministry. We will be continuing to work our way through the New Testament throughout the spring and into the summer. It has been so exciting to see the children's eyes light up as they begin to see how the whole Bible points to Jesus!

Pray for our teachers and leaders as they continue to teach our little ones about God and His love for great for us. Pray for their health, as quite a few people have been sick recently. Also pray for our new visitors, each week we have been welcoming one to two new children and families. Pray that they would know that they are loved by our wonderful Creator.

Also, if you missed the Super Early Bird special sign-up special for Rock River Christian Camp, no worries! You still have time to register and save \$20 through RRCC by signing-up before May 1! You can register online at <http://www.rockrivercc.net> or stop by the Involvement Desk to pick up a registration form. Have a great spring and happy April!



In March, eight students and five parents joined us for SuperStart in Bloomington, IL! We had a blast learning about the recipe for generosity! We have all been given time, talents, and treasure that we can be generous with. Right now, we are brainstorming ideas on how we can come together and put what we learned into action by raising funds for ABC Food Ministries.



Central Youth

Rico Diaz, Director of Student Ministries

Central Students has had such a great start of the year! We are seeing so many “God things” happening. Students are growing, students who are normally closed off are opening up, and we are even seeing students wanting to act as leaders! Students and Leadership, two words that we normally don’t see tied together, but we are trying to give our Students opportunities to grow in their God-given Leadership skills.

We have all asked this question numerous times, “Why are the youth bored with church?”. I’m not bored with church and you probably aren’t bored with church either, so why in the world are our Students bored? Must be their fault, right? Wrong. One thing I have found to be true with this young generation is that they want to part of something bigger than themselves. They want to change the world! They want to know that the life they live will make an impact in history! I know all of you reading this firmly believes that the Church of Jesus Christ is the best invention given to this world in order to see lives changed and to see nameless and faceless people impact history! I believe the majority of students would say they don’t believe those statements are true about the Church. That is where the boredom sets in! I also believe most of our students would say “church” is just a place they go to rather than a community they are a part of that is reaching toward a common goal to see life change wherever people in that community find themselves. One thing the leadership of Central Students is slowly trying to do is help students catch the greater vision of the church in order to kill their boredom!

Going back to the beginning of this article, we talked about Student Leadership. We are trying to marry Student Leadership with the greater Vision of Christ’s Church! Those two must go hand and hand when it comes to helping a Student not be bored with church. They must know that they are needed in the church and why they are needed. We can’t afford to wait until they “mature” to do some acts of leadership. Nothing helps someone mature faster than putting them in a place where they feel compelled to mature. We will always be here to hold their head up above the water, but we let them feel the sting of being in the deep end of the pool.

So, as of now we have students leading strong in our Awana clubs, serving in childcare that goes far beyond just “baby-sitting”, praying on a microphone for our weekly Gathering, telling friends about their faith and on Tuesday and Thursdays reading their Bibles on their free times at school! Keep praying for more boldness for our students, they live in a world that is very much anti-Christian, so to say yes to these roles of leadership means to say no to a lot of “cool” things of this world.



April 1 – Father/Daughter Sock Hop.

April 2 - CIY Move Deposit (non-refundable) of \$50 is due. Total cost is \$399.

April 7 – Movie Night Fundraiser! Watching the movie *Woodlawn* 6:00 p.m.—9:00 p.m.

The proceeds of this fundraiser will benefit all the students going to CIY Move in 2017.

Movie Plot: “After a government-mandate, Tony Nathan, a gifted high school black football player, and other black students desegregate Woodlawn High School in Birmingham, Alabama in 1973. As cross burnings and riots erupt in the city, Tandy Gerelds, the Woodlawn Colonels football coach, struggles to ease racial tensions between his players. It’s only when Gerelds allows Hank, an outsider, to speak to his team that real change begins. Hank, who has been radically affected by the message of hope and love he experienced at a Christian revival meeting, tells the players a “better way” is possible through following Jesus. More than 40 players, nearly the entire team, black and white, give their lives over to Jesus Christ and the spiritual change has a profound effect on the coach, the school and the community.” - Wikipedia, *Woodlawn* (film)



MISSION possible

April 25-29, 2017

Mission Possible 2017 is going to be bigger than ever before! In addition to strategic service in the Streator area, it will feature times for focused prayer and personal growth.

Focused Prayer: Tuesday through Friday, we will have prayer stations set up in the church lobby for you to come and journey through. We will also have times allotted and posted during which you can be prayed for by our church leaders.

Personal Growth: We will be bringing in Robby Osenga, on Tuesday, April 25 for an evening seminar on RIGHT RELATIONSHIPS. Robbie is uniquely qualified for it, and is a nationally recognized person on it. This will be a gift to the Streator community, so be sure to invite your co-workers, neighbors, and family!

Strategic Service: We will kick-off the ABC food packing portion of Mission Possible 2017 (a huge focus for us!) on Friday night, April 28, from 6:00-6:45p.m., with our Special Night of Prayer and Worship.

Throughout the week you can expect numerous strategic opportunities to serve. These opportunities include helping at the homeless shelter, helping widows and senior citizens with home repairs, collecting food for local food pantries, providing childcare during the weeks' events, helping clean the city streets, and packing food for ABC Foods (our goal is packing 50,000 meals!).

Our Mission Possible 2017 goal is for this to be a time for you to connect with God and his mission, and for you to help others do the same. Don't miss it! Remember: April 25-29!



RIGHT RELATIONSHIPS

Parenting is Hard. Marriage is Hard. If we are just being honest, Life is Hard.

But, in the end, it is all worth it & we can each grow in our ability to love & be loved!

Come and let's have meaningful conversations about the tips, tools & strategies,

that lead to right relationships with yourself, your world & those whom you love.

We all know that the best things in life come as a result of our relationships.

Additionally, we all know what it means to have wrong relationships.

Many of us though, struggle on how to build & maintain right relationships.

We can't control other people, but we can choose our own actions, behaviors & words.

Come spend time with Robby Osenga, who has spent time in the trenches,

as a husband, father, school principal & business leader. From these experiences,

Robbie will share the things that have consistently helped him re-build his marriage,

re-direct difficult children & empower others to live the lives they really want.

THE TORCH

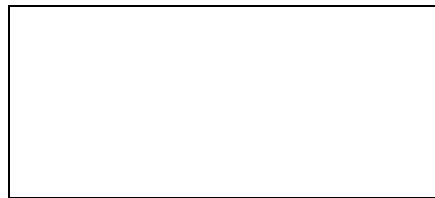
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Senior Saints in the Smokies

Looking for a fun getaway to kick off the summer? Central is heading to the beautiful campus of Johnson University in Knoxville, Tennessee on May 22-26 for Senior Saints in the Smokies.

This event is open to all those 50 and over! Find more information in the Kiosk and register (cost is \$260 + transportation) by Monday, May 15. You'll enjoy engaging speakers, beautiful scenery, and of course uplifting fellowship.

To find out more, chat with or talk to Jessica Pastirik, Involvement Director, Jean Kimes, Rory or April Christensen, or Jim Bressner. We already have one van full and would love to have more join in the fun! You can sign up throughout the week at the Church Office.

Baptized

Grace Bucalo
Samantha Bucalo
Jeffrey Olson



Statistics for Feb. 26, 2017

1st Worship	69	
2nd Worship	253	
3rd Worship	124	Total 446
Bible Classes	177	

Statistics for March 5, 2017

1st Worship	65	
2nd Worship	287	
3rd Worship	110	Total 462
Bible Classes	177	

Statistics for Mar. 12, 2017

1st Worship	59	
2nd Worship	241	
3rd Worship	123	Total 423
Bible Classes	154	

Statistics for Mar. 19, 2017

1st Worship	72	
2nd Worship	279	
3rd Worship	125	Total 476
Bible Classes	179	

Offerings

E Giving

Since April 2016 30 Givers



Offerings needed to meet Budget-Y-T-D for 2017:

\$158,040

Offerings given to-date:

\$159,919

Financial Statement available at the Information Kiosk or the Church Office