



Central Connections

175 years... and still a frontier church

Volume 44 Issue 1

A Sign of God's Kingdom in the Heart of the City

January 25, 2009

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"We are living, we are dwelling in a grand and awful time."

#472 in the Chalice Hymnal begins with this line, and as we sang it this morning in the closing worship service of our annual Indiana Disciples pastors retreat, I thought to myself (with apologies to my English teachers), "Ain't that the truth?"

It's a grand time to be alive. Every time I visit someone in the hospital I am awed by the technological advances that help keep people alive and healthy. Regardless of our political perspective we can celebrate how far our country has traveled along the road to racial reconciliation, symbolized in the inauguration of an African American president. We are able to communicate with people in far-off corners of the earth and learn about almost anything our heart desires.

Yes, it's a grand time to be alive. *And...*things also seem kind of awful right now. 70,000 job cuts were announced in *one day* this week. We or people we know are already affected, or uncertain about what the future will bring. We continue to send men and women to fight in two wars, and watch violence erupt elsewhere as it did recently in Gaza. There's the matter of the global food crisis, adding fuel to the fire of entrenched inequality, and the ever present threat caused by the damage we are doing to our planet.

It takes some courage to live in times like these. It's easy to get pulled off course by our struggles with what is happening or our fears of what might happen. It's easy to forget that the source of life and goodness and security have always been much deeper than outward circumstances.

For times like these I try to remember the basics: Pray. Read the Bible. Go to church. Be with people who love you. Learn from a stranger. Do something you love to do that also makes the world a better place.

And I do believe that God will, as we sang in Sunday's closing hymn, "*show us how, through care and goodness, fear will die and hope increase.*"

Blessings,
Linda

P.S. One way to increase hope is to hang out with several thousands Disciples at the General Assembly July 29-August 2 here in Indianapolis. You'll save a little money by registering *this week* – the price goes up on February 1. Register online at www.disciples.org.



Central Christian Church
Rev. Linda McCrae
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Worship: Sundays @ 10:30am
Study: Sundays @ 9:00am
Study: Wednesdays @ 6:30pm

An Update (From Minister Tanya)

Hello Central!

I just wanted to say “hi” and tell you how much I enjoyed my first semester with you. As usual, time certainly flies when you are having fun. The work here is helping to keep me very busy. But I am having fun while I learn about ministry and leadership in the faith community.

During the past months, I was given many learning opportunities and I accomplished a few of my goals for this semester. As you know, I recently facilitated classes for folks who, during the past year, united with our community, as well as those who wanted to learn a little more about our Central Christian and the Disciples of Christ denomination.

The preparation and research completed to lead those classes was “rich” and it helped me to understand who you are. Urban ministry and advocacy for others whose voices are not often heard, understood, or valued, has long been a part of Central’s mission and goals. I am thankful for being a part of your family and I hope to build on what was started before I came.

As part of Black History Month, I would like to extend an opportunity for a cross-cultural worship experience at my home church or another congregation in the Indianapolis area. In addition, I need your help with discussion and suggestion about how we can get more young people involved in being a part of our church family. I will be asking for participation in a focus group in the near future so keep your ears open to the announcements.

My prayer for you and your families is that you have prosperity in all areas of your lives. Blessings and peace to you all!
Minister Tanya

Unbinding the Gospel

With the General Assembly in mind, the Indiana Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) has scheduled a workshop on evangelism this spring. The overarching goal is to make the most of the evangelistic opportunities the GA will offer to central Indiana congregations.

The workshop is scheduled for May 2nd and will feature a visit by Martha Grace Reese, author of “Unbinding the Gospel” a book that has proved very helpful for many congregations in developing a stronger spirit and practice of evangelism. Congregations are encouraged to spend the time between now and the workshop studying the book.

Just what form that study will take is yet to be determined. The first step is to determine who would be interested in helping lead this study and who all would be interested in participating in other ways. For those not familiar with the book, a visit to Reese’s web site www.gracenet.com might prove helpful. Please contact Pastor Linda, Patti Case or Ed Groves with questions or suggestions on how best to move forward.



Regardless of our politics, we remember and pray for the families of those who died in military service since the last newsletter. We also remember the countless innocents from every nation who have died in war whose names we will never know.

Christopher W. Lotter, 20,
Benjamin B. Tollefson, 22
Chadwick A. Gilliam, 29
Anthony D. Davis, 29
Justin L. Bauer, 24
Sean P. McCune, 20
Marquis R. Porter, 28
Ricky L. Turner, 20
Omar J. McKnight, 22
Roberto Andrade Jr., 26
Matthew M. Pollini, 21
Grant A. Cotting, 19
Kyle J. Harrington, 24

***“In war, there are no
unwounded soldiers.”***

Jose Narosky



Have a Heart Witness Pitch-in

**Sunday, February 15
Following Worship
12:00 - 1:15**

We'll share a meal and then have presentation/discussion.

Topics include:
**Indianapolis Downtown
Food Co-op**
(They will present)
**Week of Compassion
Free Clothing**
(Complete with tour)



Keepers of the Ark- version 3.0

Contact: Terry Bradbury

January 17, 2009 was a cold winter morning when 21 hardy souls gathered to start the 3rd year of Keepers of the Ark. The original idea was conceived as a 16 month commitment to get ready for Central's 175th anniversary. "Keepers of the Ark" was a pseudo biblical name for the committee typically called 'Property'. Over the course of 16 months we gathered each month with an average of 15 folks. Many came virtually every time, others came occasionally when time would allow.

It's hard to comprehend but each month we filled a dumpster with "stuff" as we cleaned closets; removed junk stored in the crawl space; converted old shower rooms to new spaces for the food pantry; painted many rooms and generally "spruced up" our wonderful historical structure. Anyone who has an old house appreciates this first hand.

With the anniversary behind us we took a break over the summer, but it became clear during our planning for 2008-09 that "Keepers" should remain as the focus for the "Physical Asset Ministry Support Team" of our new organizational structure. We agreed to focus on another milestone in our long history as we get ready for Generally Assembly gathering in Indianapolis in late July, 2009.

Each month someone "volunteers" to start the morning with "devotion". These have been wonderful personal reflections which in some case left some with moist eyes or insights into our shared humanity. As work begins after breakfast the church is filled with hard working folks who share friendly banter and get to know their church family in ways not possible sitting in the pews on Sunday. Some might say that God's grace shows up in funny places like a cold Saturday morning in downtown Indianapolis.



Afghanistan

Contact: Glenda Survance

With your support for Week of Compassion, the people of war-ravaged Afghanistan are working hard to rebuild their lives and communities.

In Kabul, Rahima Khorosh is teaching at a Church World Service rehabilitation center for children recovering from trauma and violence. Here, boys and girls share a classroom — something unthinkable during the Taliban era — where they learn skills to help them overcome conflict, something that has plagued their country for so many years.

Your gifts to Week of Compassion help provide these classes to the children of Afghanistan. WOC supports educational programs in countries from Angola to Vietnam, helping individuals and communities gain literacy, learn peace-building skills, gain new livelihoods, and teach and pass on knowledge to younger generations. Thank you for your vital support.

Volunteer Opportunity

Contact: Marcia Phillips

Were you aware that the **Thrift Store** is open the last Saturday of the month along with the Food Pantry? This started last April as an experiment, and it has been quite successful. We operate from 10:00-noon. We have 3 trained cashiers and are looking for more to spread the fun around! If you are interested in volunteering, contact Marcia Phillips at pmarcia275@aol.com or by phone at 328-8477.



MCC Report

Contact: Jennifer Riggs

The Ministry Coordination Council met on January 12. The MCC discussed how to better provide you information about upcoming events – please look for directions in the bulletin and newsletter that point you to the online calendar. The MCC also began planning for Lent/Easter and for the Annual Stewardship Campaign. The Teams that make up the MCC continue to need volunteers for many tasks. Watch for announcements of volunteer opportunities on our new Volunteer Board in Fellowship Hall. Stan Worth has accepted the position of Chair of the Nominating Committee to prepare nominations for church leadership for next year.

Please make note of these upcoming events in the life of the church:

January 25 – Circle on Central’s Open and Affirming Decision, lead by the Elders, after worship, lunch provided

February 7 – Keepers of the Ark, 8:00 AM

February 15 – Have a Heart Witness Lunch with a focus on a new downtown food co-op, Week of Compassion, and Free Clothing, after worship, pitch-in

Feb 25 – Ash Wednesday Service, details pending

Feb 28 – Prayer Retreat – Saturday, 9:00 AM to noon

March 1, 8, 15, and 22 – Class on Romans led by Calvin Porter, after worship, lunch provided

March 7 – Keepers of the Ark, 8:00 AM

March 13 – Movie for Justice on School of the Americas, 7:00 PM



Chaco region of South America

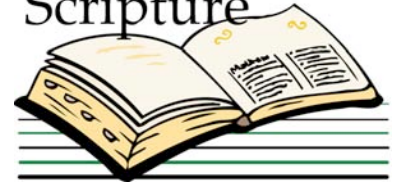
Contact: Glenda Survance

The Gran Chaco region of South America covers nearly 400,000 square miles, and includes parts of Argentina, Bolivia, and Paraguay. The indigenous people of the Chaco region struggle for their economic, social, and cultural rights, including the right to own their ancestral lands. Church World Service and local partners are supporting their efforts to defend and promote their rights.

With support from Week of Compassion, indigenous communities are developing livelihoods and gaining access to land via training in sustainable agriculture, seed bank development, and heightened focus on education.

Your gifts help to equip communities with the tools they need.

Lectionary Scripture



February 1

- * Deuteronomy 18:15-20
- * Psalm 111
- * 1 Corinthians 8:1-13
- * Mark 1:21-28

February 8

- * Isaiah 40:21-31
- * Psalm 147:1-11, 20c
- * 1 Corinthians 9:16-23
- * Mark 1:29-39

February 15

- * 2 Kings 5:1-14
- * Psalm 30
- * 1 Corinthians 9:24-27
- * Mark 1:40-45

February 22

- * 2 Kings 2:1-12
- * Psalm 50:1-6
- * 2 Corinthians 4:3-6
- * Mark 9:2-9

March 1

- * Genesis 9:8-17
- * Psalm 25:1-10
- * 1 Peter 3:18-22
- * Mark 1:9-15



HEARTS in the morning

Start your morning with heart. Enjoy this special breakfast with someone you love!

What you need:

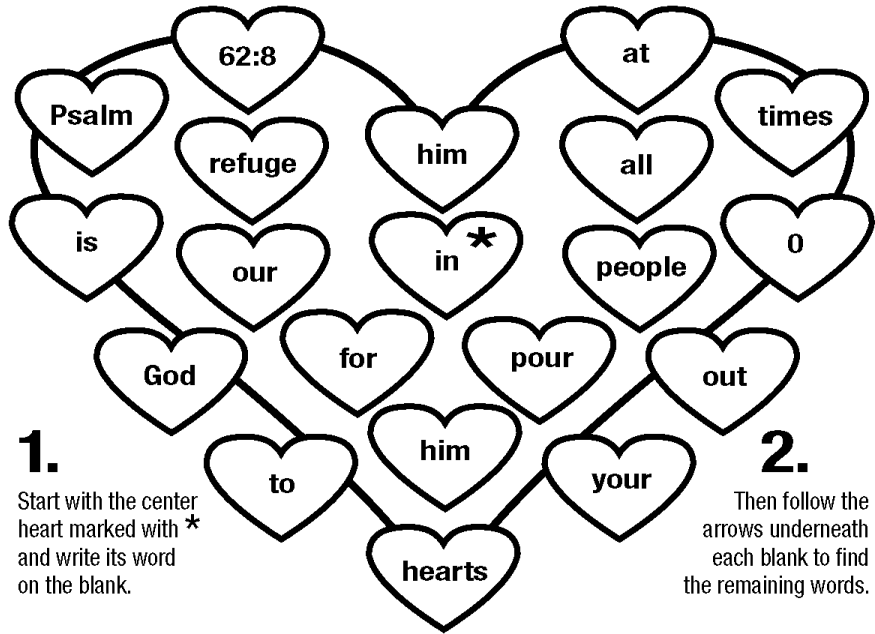
- Your favorite pancake recipe and syrup
- Pan or griddle
- Cooking spray
- Liquid measuring cup
- One 5-inch heart-shaped metal cookie cutter
- Wooden clothespin
- Spatula
- Adult help

What you do:

1. With an adult's help, follow your recipe to make your favorite pancakes.
2. Spray cooking spray onto your pan or griddle.
3. Pour pancake batter into a liquid measuring cup. (This helps with pouring individual pancakes.)
4. Place the cookie cutter on the pan or griddle. Then clip the wooden clothespin onto the cookie cutter to act as a handle.
5. Pour batter (about 3-4 Tablespoons) into the cookie cutter.
6. Cook until the top is bubbly and the pancake is dry around the edges.
7. When the heart is ready to flip, use the clothespin to lift and remove the cookie cutter.
8. Turn the pancake with the spatula and cook until golden on both sides. Enjoy with your favorite syrup or fruit.

OUR HEARTS

This special Bible verse from the NIV describes what God wants us to do with our hearts.



1.

Start with the center heart marked with * and write its word on the blank.

2.

Then follow the arrows underneath each blank to find the remaining words.

“Trust _____, _____, _____, _____, _____,”

_____ ; _____, _____, _____, _____, _____

_____ , _____, _____, _____, _____

_____ . _____, _____, _____

Answer: “Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge.” Psalm 62:8

Circle of Action: Open & Affirming

Contact: Jim Higginbotham (Article by Glenda Survance)

On Sunday the 24th, 21 people gathered to discuss Open and Affirming (<http://www.gladalliance.org/oa.html>). It seemed some came to learn more about Open and Affirming and others to see where we are headed with this public statement. Discussion lasted until 1:30 and we learned that we have much more to learn. Questions we wrestled with were what type of tag lines might we use on advertising, possible steps in reversing the Indiana Regions prohibition on ordaining gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered persons and what we might want to do while General Assembly is in town. Some of the questions will be taken to the Communications team. It was decided that another Circle would be called specifically to look at discussion around the topic of the Regional policy. Look for more information in the future.



Week of Compassion continues its commitment of helping those who call New Orleans home recover from the devastating effects of Hurricane Katrina. Since the storm struck August 29, 2005, the faith community has contributed countless hours to the largest disaster recovery effort in U.S. history, but the journey is far from over. We give thanks for the hundreds of Disciples who have already given time, resources, skills and heart to this ongoing initiative.

More than three years later, however, many agencies have concluded their Katrina recovery efforts. Public attention has dissipated. Frustrated residents have not returned because homes remain damaged and whole neighborhoods remain blighted. The faith community's extensive response in New Orleans proves how small efforts at recovery can grow: a single house repaired prompts another fixed home. Families return. Schools fill again with children as a community is reborn. That is why WoC, along with the Office of Disciples Volunteering (ODV), is joining our major partner organization, Church World Service (CWS), along with nine other of its member denominations in rebuilding a single neighborhood: Little Woods, in eastern New Orleans.

This area was selected because of its diversity, its lack of prior attention, the size of the homes (1,200-1,400 sq ft), its ability to host volunteer teams and the potential for the ecumenical community to make a large impact. With your help, we will return at least 12 families to their Little Woods homes, while urging other groups to reinvest in adjoining neighborhoods. Cases for assistance will be selected by the Crescent Area Recovery Effort. The confluence of volunteers will constitute a blitz, with teams working weekly April 20 through May 16. Work teams will arrive Sunday, work Monday through Friday, and depart Saturday. While in Little Woods, volunteers will not be segregated by denomination. The goal is ecumenical partnership, working together to foster recovery under the CWS banner.

Please contact the Office of Disciples Volunteering at 888.346.2631 or brenda@dhm.disciples.org to schedule a work trip. See you in New Orleans!



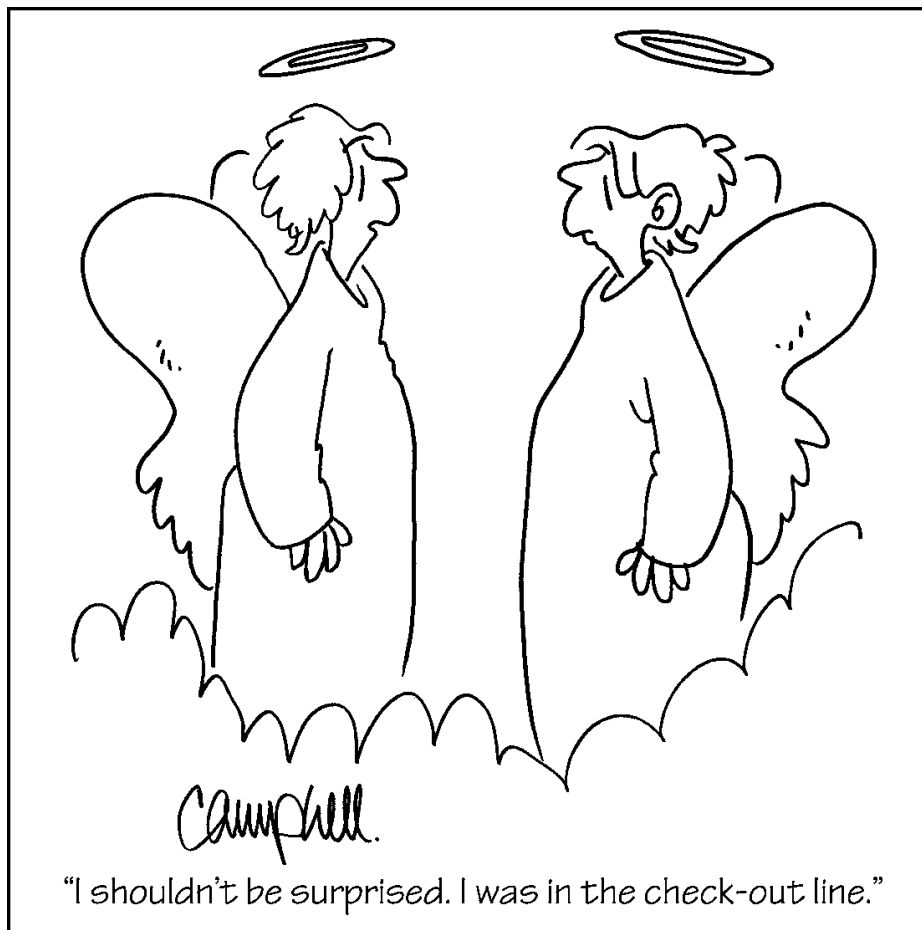
Keepers of the Ark February 7th 8:00 to Noon

With over 6,000 Disciples from across the country coming to Indianapolis for General Assembly in July, there is much to do to have our building ready for guests. And spring is just around the corner so there are plenty of project for that as well.

This is a great time to join Keepers of the Ark. You're welcome to join for breakfast at 8:00 or come between 9 and noon for as long as you like. There are projects for all interests and skills. If you have any questions, please contact Terry Bradbury.

Newsletter submissions may be left in the church office or by eMailing newsletter@indyccc.org. We welcome articles, notes of congratulations or concern, biographical sketches... anything for the good of the church family.

**Deadline for
next newsletter
February 25**



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