

DECEMBER 2018 NEWSLETTER

CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH

No matter who you are or where you've been, you are welcome here

From Your Temporary Shepherd ~

Don't forget Advent....

I must admit to having mixed feelings about seeing all the Christmas decorations that go up in November – sometimes even October. It seems to happen earlier every year – the beautiful fall season is brought to an abrupt end much too soon by the appearance of trees, elves, wreaths, and continual reminders of how many shopping days are left till Christmas.



The other side of this, of course, is that anything which reminds me of the birth of Christ is a welcome and wonderful thing. The world needs this reminder – this story – more than ever before. For this reason, the church long ago set aside a period of time so that we might prepare our hearts to hear this story once again.

A colleague refers to Advent as the “forgotten season”, and he has a point. The world jumps from Halloween to Christmas with a slight mention of Thanksgiving on the way. But the church, in observing the liturgical calendar, pauses to remember the significance of this pre-Christmas journey. To keep before us the image of the baby Jesus – the grown-up Jesus, the suffering Jesus, the resurrected Jesus – is the intention of this four-week period before Christmas. Advent literally means to “come to” – for us a pre-Christmas journey, so that we, and our world, may be ready to receive the Christ Child once again.

It is a time to remember that this Child taught us a new way to live – out of love rather than fear, under grace instead of under the law. Anything which brings him to mind gladdens our hearts and strengthens our spirits – even decorations put up much too early for my liking. It is a season of anticipation, of quiet waiting. But there's not much in all the stress of preparations that encourages us to remember this.

Each of us must embrace Advent in our own way. Some take a break from TV or their phone or Facebook for a time. Some do extra devotional or inspirational reading. Some spend more time in prayer and/or walking outdoors. This is a time when each of us are called to be even more generous – with time and resources – as we remember that for many this is a season of struggle in a variety of ways.

We hear such phrases as “Jesus is the reason for the season”, and “Keep Christ in Christmas”, (and don't even get me started on the “war” on Christmas!) It is indeed a hectic, but holy season.

In writing about this, Henri Nouwen observed, “Amid this frantic hurly-burly we lose touch with life itself...the more agitated we are, the more complicated our lives become and the more difficult it is to keep a space where God can let something truly new take place. Make room in your heart for God and let God cherish you.”

Good words for a time in which we celebrate God's amazing love for us all! What are you waiting for this Advent season? How will Christ be born in you? In your home? And in your world? How will you share the light of Christ's love with others? Ask yourself these questions as we make this journey together in the coming weeks.

I am delighted and blessed to be celebrating this most special season with Central Baptist this year. May God bless you abundantly during this Advent season!

Pastor Jerrie



Deb MacAdam gave an excellent talk on Stewardship last month.

“As I thought about what to say today, I wondered why we can give our money up so easily for some things and have a hard time letting it go for others.

How many times do we grab a cup of coffee from Dunkin Donuts, or at a corner store? How often do we grab a slice of pizza, a quick meal from McDonald’s, or another favorite fast food place, or even buy that scratch ticket? Most of us probably spend \$3 - \$8 dollars a week on things we don’t even think about.

When it comes to opening up our wallets on Sunday mornings, we tend to struggle with what to give. As humans we tend to be materialistic. When we hand out money, we are getting something right then and there in return.

I bet when you sit down to send out your bills for the month or week, you don’t think of what they stand for. Electric bill, how many times a day do you use electricity? When you turn on a light, do you think of how lucky you are to have light in a dark house? When you turn on the faucet to get water, do you think of how lucky you are to have running water? When you put your offering in the offering plate, do you think of how lucky you are to be in a beautiful building to sit here with no fear to worship, and are surrounded with the love of God and the love of your church family?

As you pray about your giving for the coming year, I ask you to give \$3 - \$8 more a week. Give God that cup of coffee, give God that slice of pizza, give God that fast food meal, even give God that scratch ticket. You may not get instant gratification, but He will show you the

light, He will quench your thirst, and He will feed your soul.”



- 10th Adam Jensen
- 12th Samuel Hawley
- 13th Shawn Ellinger
- 15th Louise Roland, Janet Kedzierski
- 17th Scott Lent
- 20th Laurie Adoretti, Cassie Hildreth, Melody Rivas
- 21st Margery Rogers
- 23rd Deb MacAdam, Phil Rogers
- 25th Cooper Chechile
- 27th George Rogers
- 28th Dannielle Tompkins
- 30th Frank Mochak, Jr, Deb Sherman, Brandon Paquette, Noel Whalen



POINSETTIAS

As in past years, our church will be decorated with beautiful poinsettia plants in honor or

memory of loved ones.

If you would like to order a poinsettia to decorate the Sanctuary during the Christmas Season, look for the order forms on the back table. The price of each plant is \$6.95; they will be wrapped in either gold or green foil. You can leave your order in the Christmas Box found by the forms or send it to Central Baptist Church, P.O. Box 95, Westfield, 01085

Deadline is December 12th.





MISSIONS

This month we are continuing to collect items for the Honduras trip in January:

toothbrushes, toothpaste, prenatal vitamins, adult and children's vitamins (100 count please), antibiotic ointment, and bandages.

During this holiday season we continue to collect for our local food bank. We are reintroducing the food collection on the first Sunday of each month. Your non-perishable donations can be put in the box wrapped in pink foil found in the narthex.

We are blessed this Christmas Season.
Let's share our blessings with others.



Sometimes don't you wonder where the money you give so generously goes? Here's what we've contributed to this year:

Retired Ministers & Missionaries	\$295.00
America for Christ	\$255.00
One Great Hour of Sharing	\$449.87
World Mission Offering	\$785.00

Thank You!



AN UPDATE

In the October 20th bulletin there was an insert telling of the Juanes Family. They are currently traveling the USA getting funding so they can go to their missionary country: Chian Mai, Thailand. They will be working with another of our missionaries, Kim Brown, serving tribal women and children who are coping with problems caused by Aids, and/or disabilities. Many of these women and children are migrating from their rural villages and urban slums to more populated areas. Our missionaries will focus on the discipleship and development of the children during their journeys.

BLESSING BAGS - A personal mission project

Quite frequently, in hustle to get my errands done, I have come across a person down on his luck. A few weeks ago, I watched a young man rummaging through the trash looking for a tidbit of food that someone might have thrown away. I felt compelled to help and wished there was something I could do. Then I read about "Blessing Bags".

A "Blessing Bag" is a package of items that could be used by a homeless or displaced person. It might include mittens, socks, hand sanitizer, toothbrush and toothpaste, beef jerky, gum, etc. It can be kept in your car; ready to be passed on to someone in need. I love the idea of being proactive and thinking ahead. What a wonderful, simple way to share our blessings! Here is a list of ideas:

DRINKS

Bottled Water
Coffee Packets
Tea Bags
Energy Drink
Juice Cans/Boxes

FOOD

Beef Jerky
Dried Fruit
Granola Bars
Oatmeal Packs
Protein Powder Packs

TREATS

Chocolates

Hard Candy

Mints
Gum

TOILETRIES

Chapstick
Face Wipes
Moisturizer
Comb
Toothbrush/Paste
Q-Tips

GENERAL

Sm. First Aid Kit
Heat Packs
Warm Socks (Wool)

EXTRA

Restaurant Gift
Cards
Prepaid Phone
Card
Personal Note of
Encouragement

*Put items in a clear zip lock bag; either quart or gallon size, depending on number of items.

We have gotten out of the habit of having the first Sunday of each month be a food collection Sunday and would like to reinstate it starting in January. Watch for reminders on the wall. Thanks.



Central Baptist Church would like to invite you to our Candlelight Service on Sunday, December 23rd at 5:30 pm

Both the Adult Choir and Children's Choir will be singing during worship. There will also be favorite carols and a re-telling of the Christmas story through Scripture, song, and prayer.

This is a wonderful community service, and a good opportunity to invite a friend to worship with you on this very special night.

The Deacons will be hosting a reception after service in Hays Hall. You may bring your favorite dessert or finger food to share with our CBC family. We will also have a birthday cake for Jesus.



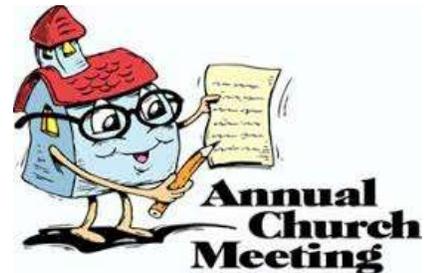
Baystate Noble Hospital is seeking new volunteers for their Pastoral Care Program. The volunteers provide comfort, a smile, and compassion to patients, family members and caregivers within the hospital setting. They also visit many areas of the hospital including in-patient rooms, out-patient departments, and the emergency department.



If you would like to know more about volunteering, please contact Laurie Gilbert at laurie.gilbert@baystatehealth.org or call her at 413-568-2811, X5573.

Congratulations to Dalen Mochak on his induction into the Western New England Univ. chapter of the National Honor Society for First Year Engineering Students.

And also, to Kaela Mochak on her induction into the Westfield High School National Honor



**will be on January 20th.
Please have all reports to Barb by January 7th.**



DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

27TH Bob & Sue Eck

28th George & Merian Rogers

**31st Clay & Karen Tompkins
Joe & Diane Ziemba**



Newsletter DEADLINE

for January articles
is
December 18th.



Stay
in the
Word

In preparation for the birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ, Pastor Jerrie is offering Advent Study every Sunday during

Advent. These will follow a coffee fellowship hour hosted by Christian Education. Each session is self-contained, so you may attend one, or two, or all of them. This is a good opportunity to share and discuss some of the themes of Advent.

- Dec. 2 Waiting in the dark
- Dec. 9 Making preparations
- Dec. 16 Coming of the Light
- Dec. 23 Celebrating Gifts

There will also be Advent craft sessions for the elementary aged children. Thanks, Erika!

One more thing.....tis the time of year for baking. Please bring some cookies to share at the coffee hours. Christian Ed. will appreciate it!

COTTAGE MEETINGS

The first cottage meeting was held on November 27th at Barb Gunn's house. Nine people attended for an informal "get to know you" time and to talk a bit about our church. It was fun and very successful.

There are two more meetings scheduled in December. One will be on December 4th at Bill and Harriot Stewart's house. Starting time will be at 2:00. The second one will be on December 12th in the social room at the church. Starting time will be at 3:00. We hope to schedule at least one more in January.

If you would like to attend one of the meetings, look for the sign-up sheet in the back of the sanctuary. You will be glad you decided to join us!



Getting to Know You



We are still working toward delivering the newsletter to you online each month. It would save time, effort, and money. And.... you can see it in living color! You can view it now on the church website to see the difference. (www.centralbaptistchurchwestfield.com)



If you don't have an email address, you will still receive the newsletter via snail mail.

Worship in December

- Dec. 2 1st Sunday of Advent
Communion
"God's Birth Announcements"
Isaiah 40:1-11
- Dec. 9 2nd Sunday of Advent
"How the Story Begins"
Luke 3:1-20
- Dec. 16 3rd Sunday of Advent
"The Couple from Nazareth"
Matthew 1:18-25, Luke 1:26-38
- Dec. 23 4th Sunday of Advent

"The Messengers"
Luke 2:8-20
- Dec. 23 5:30
Advent Candlelight Worship
- Dec. 30 Supply Preacher
Kathleen O'Goley



CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

All are invited to Christmas Eve Services at First Congregational Church.

The 5:30 service will be for families.

The candlelight 10:00 service will be a Festival of Lessons and Carols.



OH, TO BE A KID AGAIN.....

*We have been helping with the cake,
And licking out the pan,
And wrapping up our packages,
As neatly as we can.
We have hung our stockings up,
Beside the open grate.
And now there's nothing more to do,
Except
To
Wait.*



BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE

On Thursday, December 20th at 7:00, the sanctuary of Second Congregational Church will be open for a Blue Christmas Service. This is a service which is designed specifically for people who struggle during the holidays. The entire Westfield community is welcome to attend this service.

We specifically invite:

those who find the Christmas Season difficult because of previous losses.

those who have suffered loss this past year.

those who seek shelter from the bright and loud holiday hustle and bustle.

Traditionally held on or near the Winter Solstice, the Blue Christmas is also known as The Longest Night Service and it features muted hymns, quiet readings, and an opportunity to light tealights in memory of loved ones who have passed.

Please join us on Thursday, December 20th at 7:00 p.m.

December

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1 6:00 Youth Group
2 9:45 Sunday School 10:30 Communion 11:30 Coffee Hour Advent Study	3 10:30 Bible Study	4 2:00 Cottage Mtg @ Stewarts	5 10:30 Cooking Class 7:00 Choir 7:30 AA	6	7 Office Closed	8
9 9:45 Sunday School 10:30 Worship 11:30 Coffee Hour Advent Study 1:30-5:00 Kathy Frye in Hays Hall	10 10:30 Bible Study 6:00 Missions	11 2:30 Governor's Center 4:30 Grandparent's Gr. Christmas Party	12 10:30 Cooking Class 3:00 Cottage Mtg. 7:00 Choir 7:30 AA	13 1:00 Deacons 6:00 Trustees	14 Office Closed	15 8:00 Prep 9:00 Community Breakfast 6:00 Youth Group
16 9:45 Sunday Sch 10:30 Worship 11:30 Coffee Hour Advent Study	17 10:30 Bible Study 7:00 Church Council	18	19 10:30 Cooking Class 7:00 Choir 7:30 AA	20	21 Office Closed	22
23 9:45 Sunday School 10:30 Worship 11:30 Coffee Hour Advent Study 5:30 CANDLELIGHT SERVICE	24 10:30 Bible Study	25 	26 7:30 AA	27	28 Office Closed	29 6:00 Youth Group
30 9:45 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Service	31 7:00 NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY! & Pot Luck Supper					

