



# CENTRAL LIFE

APRIL 2008

## A WORD FROM OUR PASTOR

by Dr. Louis Lotz



I never realized how much I loved our church until I thought, early on that Thursday morning, March 6, that we might lose it. I know it's just a building. I know that if the church burned down, we would still have a church. We're the church - you, me, all of us. Still, when I stood there on College Avenue, watching fire fighters scramble into the building, pulling hose, I thought: "O God, please..."

*I knew that if the church burned down,  
we would still have a church.*

All's well that ends well. Damage was slight. Nobody got hurt. We didn't miss a single Sunday of worship. But let's just say that this incident did wonders for my prayer life, and made me realize how much I've come to love this place.

As spring finally comes to West Michigan, there is much to be thankful for at church. Central's annual Congregational Report to the RCA shows that we are a growing congregation. Visitors continue to visit. The Youth Auction was a howling success. Our various outreach ministries to the poor are well supported and well received. The renovation project will be completed mid-June, and life at church will get back to normal.

Sunday, April 20 promises to be an important day. It's Car-pool Sunday at Central, and we invite you to share a ride with a friend, thereby saving gas, helping the environment, and freeing up parking spaces for our many visitors. April 20 is also the day when we'll invite folks to make a Phase II pledge/gift to the building fund. (You'll receive a letter with details.) We've known for a while that the cost of the project will exceed the total amount pledged. Obviously, we want our indebtedness to be as small as possible. Like many of you, Mary Jean and I made a three-year pledge. We've decided to simply continue that level of giving through a fourth year. Maybe that formula would work for you too.

Former generations struggled and sacrificed to give us this wonderful facility. For a moment, on that Thursday morning, I thought we were going to lose her. But she's still there, still strong and solid. Thank God. And thank you for your generous support.

## ADULT EDUCATION

### THE COMPILING OF A CANON

What is a canon and why does the Church have one? And who decided what books were going to be in it? Join us on either Sunday at 11:00 AM or Thursday mornings at 10:00 AM for a four week study about the Scriptures.

- **April 13 and 17**      *The Old Testament*
- **April 20 and 24**      *The Apocrypha*
- **April 27 & May 1**      *The New Testament*
- **May 4 and 7**      *The Gnostic Gospels and other Extra Canonical Books.*

### BUILDING COMMUNICATION IN YOUR MARRIAGE

"Tell me about a time when you didn't understand what I meant." It is questions like these that are considered fair game when couples talk with each other in Central's marriage class. A good mix of couples of many ages have been getting together every other week since February 24 for refreshments and for an opportunity to build the tools that strengthen their communication and increase their marital satisfaction.

**Mark and Doreen Bolhuis** have been the designated guides for all of these couples on this important journey that will go on through May. "It has been wonderful," said Jodi MacLean. "Not only are there questions in the book that you work through, there are additional questions that you and your spouse are to talk about when you go out on a date."

Because this class has been so successful, the **Adult Discipleship Team** is considering offering this class again in the fall. Please contact Pastor Karen if you are interested in joining and improving the communication in your own marriage.

### UNDERSTANDING ELDER LAW

Imagine this scenario: Your mother falls and is taken to the hospital. She isn't able to communicate for herself and suddenly you need to make decisions for her. Do you have all of your paperwork in order? Do you even know what permissions you need? What if she needs nursing home care? Will Medicaid help?

On Sunday, April 20, Attorney **Laurie K. Murphy**, will present "Understanding Elder Law" at Central Reformed Church at 11:10 AM in Worship Center I. Join us for this important session to help protect yourself and your loved ones.

## NEW MEMBERS JOIN CENTRAL



L to R: Andrew Meyers, Christine Van Timmeren, Dr. Lotz,  
Sue Ellen & Brian Vander Zee, with children, Arabella & Harrison (Rowen not pictured),  
Elizabeth & Tom Dietz, with children, Lily & Jack.



Gary Graeff, Kim Krause  
and Gabrielle (Elle)

- **Andrew Meyers** and **Christine Van Timmeren** grew up in Jenison, went to Jenison schools, were members of Fair Haven Church, and now attend GVSU. They will be married this August at Central. After graduation, Christine will continue to work for FOX 17 News in GR. After graduation, Drew will attend Western Theological Seminary. They both enjoy boating and spending time with family and friends near Lake Michigan.
- **Brian & Sue Ellen Vander Zee** both graduated from Calvin College. He is the managing partner for Atlas Coast and enjoys running, reading, golf, and watching football and tennis. Sue Ellen put her career on hold to become a full-time mom. She enjoys running, sewing, knitting, and card making. She is also a Silpada jewelry consultant. They have 3 children: Harrison (4 years), Arabella (3 years), and Rowen (1 year).
- **Tom & Elizabeth Dietz** recently moved to GR from the Chicago area. Tom was born in the Detroit area and works for CDW Berbee as a consultant. He enjoys running and computer programming. Elizabeth attended Central as a teen and is the granddaughter of Marva Lamberts. She works for Lumbermen's and enjoys painting and tennis. They have two children: Lily (2 years), and Jack (5 months).
- **Gary Graeff** was born in Hastings and lives in Grandville. He graduated from Hope College and works at Steelcase. Gary helped to plant a new church, Compass Church (affiliated with Kentwood Community). He led the outreach team and participated in a mission trip to Guatemala. He loves to traveling, cooking, photography, and technology. He is the father of 3 children: Carrie, Justin and Alex.
- **Kim Krause** was born in GR and graduated from Hope College. She works for WZZM TV in sales. Kim has an adopted 3-year-old daughter, Gabrielle (Elle) from Guatemala. Kim loves animals and has two Lhasa Apsos. She serves on the board of the Ronald McDonald House of W. Michigan.

### THE CENTRAL PULPIT

- April 6** Communion  
Sermon: *The Best Bequest*  
Psalm 73: 21-28, I Peter 1: 3-4  
Dr. Louis Lotz, preaching
- April 13** Rev. Scott Hozzee, preaching,  
from Calvin Seminary Center for  
Preaching Excellence
- April 20** Sermon: *What Do These Stones  
Mean?*  
Joshua 4: 1-9, II Peter 1: 12-15  
Dr. Louis Lotz, preaching
- April 27** Sermon: Fruity People  
John 15: 1-5, Galatians 5: 22-26  
Rev. Karen Fitz La Barge, preaching

### CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

**Central Hosts Central College Choir:** Our church is honored to host the Central College A Cappella Choir, from Pella, Iowa, as they make a Spring Tour stop in Grand Rapids. They will present a concert in our sanctuary on Friday, April 11, at 7:30 PM.

**Chicago For a Day:** We will visit the Art Institute to view the Hopper/Homer exhibit on Friday, May 2. Lunch will be on your own and there will be time for shopping or museums. We will stop at the Corner Bakery for supper on the way home. The cost is \$50 and payable with your reservation.

**Back to Stratford:** October 24-25—Friday night performance of *Romeo and Juliet*, and Saturday afternoon performance of *The Music Man*. Lodging at an Arden Park property, *The River Garden Inn*. The cost is \$325 (estimated) and reservations are due with a \$100 deposit. Please contact Sue Poll or Linda Bal-last with reservations or questions.

### GEORGE & ELIZA YOUNG SOCIETY MEETING

The annual meeting of the George & Eliza Young Society is **April 18, 2008**, at **Kent County Country Club**. The George & Eliza Young Society was established to recognize and honor friends of Central Reformed Church who remember the church in their long-range planned giving. Membership now stands at 70 persons. For many persons, a gift to Central's **Endowment Fund** is an appealing option. All gifts to the church are welcome, but gifts given to the Endowment Fund are different in that they exist in perpetuity. Endowment Fund monies are never consumed; only the interest accrued. Remembering Central's Endowment Fund in your long-range financial planning enables you to give a gift that will be used, but never used up. For information on joining the George & Eliza Young Society, or for information on how to realize tax savings through planned giving, please contact **Steve Ozinga**.

## RENOVATION PROJECT

Throughout much of February and March, progress on the exterior of the new addition was hampered by the cold and snow. However, a lot of work was completed on the inside of the church and, with the moderating temperatures at the end of March, work has picked up again on the exterior.

Inside the existing facility, most of the new doors and hardware have been installed; work is progressing on the emergency lighting and fire alarms systems; and new lighting has been installed in Fellowship Hall and the stairway from the narthex to the lower level. Heat has been restored and the new ceiling and lighting have been installed in the Choir Room.

In the new addition, much of the brick and stone trim have been laid on the exterior and two new windows have been installed on the north elevation. Work is also progressing on the new entrance to the chapel, the installation of the new elevator, and the new entrance to the sanctuary. The skylights above the east chapel windows have also been installed.

In the coming weeks, most of the work will be wrapped up in the existing facility, the rest of the translucent ceiling and the clerestory windows will be installed, the brick and stone will be completed, and the slate roof should be installed on parts of the new addition. Work will also continue inside with walls, the new elevator, and the new entrances to the chapel and sanctuary.

This continues to be an exciting time in the life of Central Reformed Church. Up-to-date information and pictures will be provided in future editions of *Central Life*.



Brick and stone work completed on part of the north elevation



The translucent ceiling in the new entry above the north window



The new entrance to the chapel with the skylights over the windows

### BARKER SERIES CONCERT

The Grand Valley State University Arts Chorale, under the direction of **Ellen Pool**, presents choral repertoire from all periods of music. The Chorale will be accompanied by an ensemble from the University's music department and organist, **Dr Gregory Crowell**. Also performing will be the **Cantate Chamber Ensemble**, a highly select vocal ensemble of ten singers specializing in a cappella sacred and secular Renaissance and Baroque music. The Chorale has collaborated with numerous Michigan ensembles, including the **Holland Chorale**, the **West Shore Symphony**, and the **Grand Rapids Symphony Orchestra**. It was also featured in the American Choral Directors Association Choral Hour in Ann Arbor, MI, and has participated in their State Convention. Ellen Pool, conductor of the **University Arts Chorale**, has been on faculty at GVSU since 1982. She received her degrees in choral music education from the University of Michigan, studying under the tutelage of Maynard Klein, and has also pursued advanced choral conducting studies at the Eastman School of Music, studying with Donald Neuens. She serves as membership chairman on the state board of the American Choral Directors Association, and is a member of the Michigan School Vocal Music Association. This concert, the fifth of our series for the 2007 – 2008 year, will be held on **Sunday, April 13, 2008 at 7:30 PM** in our sanctuary.

Be sure to join us on **Friday, May 16<sup>th</sup>** for our final concert of the season, when we will 'welcome back' trumpeter **Pamela Smither-Baker & organist Michael Bloss**, in their performance of selections for organ & trumpet (this is the February concert of our series which needed to be re-scheduled, due to inclement weather).



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## A Series of *Extraordinary Events*

The Coopersville pile-up we were AT...but not IN

The other day a student approached me in the narthex to ask how long it's been since we have had Clubs. I needed a calculator to figure it out. It seems like sometime in late January God decided we were too comfortable with the routine, and began a barrage of the extraordinary.

The first weekend in February, **Dawn Tillema** and I, along with a group from the **56ers** (5th & 6th grade) enjoyed a weekend at **Camp Geneva**. I returned in time to join the senior high students to watch the Super Bowl, after which everyone made it home safely in quite less-than-ideal weather.

The following weekend **Astrida Molenaar** and I took a group of Junior High students to Grace Adventures, but the real adventure was getting home...past Coopersville. Glad we saved a seat for God in either vehicle that day!

The third Sunday in February was dedicated to preparing for the fourth—**Youth Sunday**. (By the way, the Class of 2008 designed and organized that whole service, and deserve all the credit...mighty fine work, seniors!)

The first weekend in March, we joined with the **Set Sail!** committee to pull off our most successful (and super fun) youth auction...EVER!

The following Friday, a group of senior high students left with **Carol Austin** and I for **Genesis 2008** in Traverse City. We began the weekend lost for 45 minutes because I made a wrong turn, and ended it early because of a bomb threat in the hotel...on our floor.

As I look back on all the stress we've faced over the past few months, I can't help noticing the parallel blessings the youth ministry has experienced in that same time. I cannot explain whether God had such great things in store that the evil one threw every obstacle in our way to derail our growth...or whether God just delighted in blessing us through and because of the snow, 50-car-pileup, insurmountable fundraising goal, bomb threat, flu, etc...

Isn't God always doing that though? He takes the impossible...and blows our socks off. I once read that many things are impossible for us, but ALL things are possible with God. May we all REST in that knowledge, despite our circumstances . . . despite even our best human logic!

His boy...todd <><