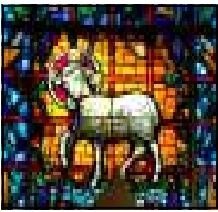




CENTRAL LIFE

ADVENT 2009

Photos by Greg Young, Dan Ballast



FROM THE PASTOR

ADVENT

By

Louis E. Lotz

December is such a busy month—cards to mail, shopping to do, parties to attend, family gatherings. But please don't allow the busyness of this season to pull you away from the spiritual meaning of Advent. Advent is a season of penitence and preparation. It is a time to remember the Christ who came to save the world, and to make ourselves ready for his second coming, when he comes to judge the world.

Worship during Advent will begin with families from the congregation lighting the Advent wreath. A series of sermons—*Advent Through The Lens of Luke*—will take us through the Christmas narratives in the third gospel. And of



course, we will have our annual **Christmas Eve services on the 24th**. There will be a **4:00 PM service geared to families** with smaller children, and then at **11:00 PM** Central's magnificent sanctuary will be aglow with the bright light of candles at the annual **Service of Lessons and Carols**. The Christmas Eve

service is a treat for us and a gift to the community.

The other day I found a "review" about our Christmas Eve service on a website (www.yelp.com-Real People, Real Review). The reviewer said, "Beautiful colonial church (think Williamsburg, Virginia—it's really that authentic) with an amazing pipe organ. For many years, my family went to Christmas Eve services there. I haven't been back since sometime in the early 1990's, but have a lot of great memories of this church."

On the Sundays of Advent, and especially on Christmas Eve, make a memory for your family, your children. Come to church. Worship is our privilege, our duty. I look forward to seeing you in your proper place throughout the season of Advent.

NEW COMMERCIAL COFFEE SYSTEM



A big thank you from the Central Family to Barb VanderJagt for the donation of the commercial coffee system in the Atrium kitchen. Given in loving memory of her husband, Don.



THE CENTRAL PULPIT

December 6: Dr. Louis Lotz, Preaching

Scripture: Luke 1:26-38

Communion (Intinction)

Advent Candle Lighters: Tim and Mary Ellen Miner.

December 13: Dr. Louis Lotz, Preaching

Scripture: Luke 1:39-56

Sacrament of Baptism

Advent Candle Lighters: The Boeve Family
Church Christmas Open House: Gerbens' Home, 6:00 PM

December 20: Dr. Louis Lotz, Preaching

Scripture: Luke 2: 8-20

Advent Candle Lighters: The Molenaar family

Christmas Pageant (11:00 AM): *Christmas in Central Town*

December 24:

Christmas Eve Worship (4:00 PM)

Candlelight Christmas Eve Worship (11:00 PM)

December 27: Dr. Louis Lotz, Preaching

Scripture: Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8

January 3, 2010: Revs. Tom and Mary Bos

January 10, 2010: Dr. Louis Lotz, Preaching

Blankets collected for *In The Image*

IN CASE OF SNOW



In the unlikely event that church needs to be canceled during these forthcoming winter months, the staff will, if possible, announce the cancellation beforehand.

Please **check your computer for e-mail announcements.**

Announcements will also be made on **television (WZZM 13 TV, WOOD TV 8, and radio (WOOD 1300 AM, WCSG 91.3 FM))**. Every effort will be made to hold services and events at their normal time. We will use our best judgement, based on the best and most recent information. Your safety is our first priority. Realizing that Central's congregation spans a 50-mile radius, members are encouraged to use their own discretion when conditions are questionable.



December 10, 1919, The congregation authorized the robing of both the minister and choir.

THE BUILDING FUND: WHERE DO WE STAND?



Central's new Atrium, basement renovation, and handicap-accessibility upgrades were made possible by gifts to the **"Our Time, Our Turn" (OTOT) Building Fund**. The following **Q & A** will address some frequently asked questions about the status of the Building Fund.

Q: How many families/individuals made a pledge to the OTOT Building Fund?

A: 154 families/individuals made a pledge. The total amount pledged was \$1,815,553. We also received numerous pledges and gifts from non-members.

Q: How much money has been collected so far?

A: As of September 30, the amount collected was \$1,820,000.

Q: When does the pledge period end?

A: Most made a three-year pledge. That pledge period concludes on December 31, 2009. Some pledged to give for four years; for those, the pledge period will conclude on December 31, 2010.

Q: How much do we still need to collect to pay off our indebtedness?

A: If we all give what we pledged to give, the remaining indebtedness on December 31, 2010 will be \$85,000. That's a lot of money, but to complete a two-million dollar project with an \$85,000 indebtedness is a significant accomplishment.

Q: Is the church now in debt?

A: Yes. We have borrowed approximately \$265,000. We believe we will eventually receive the great majority of the money that was pledged, but until that money is received, we will have to borrow money to make monthly mortgage payments.

Q: What is the interest rate on our loan?

A: The church was able to secure a very attractive interest rate of 2.25%.

Q: If my personal pledge has been paid, can I continue to give to the OTOT Building Fund?

A: Of course. To date we have received \$48,000 from individuals and families above and beyond what they pledged. Individuals and families who did not make a pledge have also given to the OTOT Building Fund. Simply make your check payable to the Building Fund. All gifts are welcome. God willing, we hope to be debt-free at the end of 2010. Thank you, one and all, for your wonderful financial support!



"ROOM FOR ALL" CONFERENCE HELD AT CENTRAL: OCTOBER 29-31



140 persons traveled from all over the United States to attend the First Annual **"Room For All"** Conference. Participants had the opportunity to engage in dialogue, attend worship services, take communion, and eat together. A little known fact - in a 48 hour

period of time, volunteers from Central prepared and served almost 800 meals. Central did a wonderful job in making all feel welcome here. A big thank you to the volunteers!!

"Room For All" is a non-profit organization that advocates for the full participation of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered persons in the life and ministry of the Reformed Church in America.

LET'S EAT!! A CHILI TASTING LUNCH

This Sunday, December 6, in Fellowship Hall. You are invited!! 9 different kinds of chili will be available for your tasting AND eating pleasure, including:

3 kinds of beef chili, prepared by Brian Andrew, Jim VanKuiken, and Carey Krause.

Venison chili, prepared by Mary Bauman.

3 kinds of white chicken chili, prepared by Mary Gerbens, Drew Meyers, and Dennis and Greg Kellermeier.

2 kinds of vegetarian chili, prepared by Dawn Tillema and Linda Ballast.

Recipes are available. Breads and crackers will be on the tables, as well as homemade cookies for dessert. A basket will be on each table to receive your contribution to help defray the cost of the meal.

Yum! Yum! Plan now to attend!!

ADVENT MUSIC, MUSIC, MUSIC



The seasons of Advent and Christmas can be busy times, but they are also two of the most wonderful seasons of the church year. For those in the Central's Music Program, it is becoming a time of exciting musical preparation and enjoyment, with a season filled with great presentations for our worship services.

Sunday, December 13: The Chancel Choir will present Dieterich Buxtehude's *Magnificat*, a wonderful musical work that tells the story of Mary's visit to Elizabeth, her cousin, and her joy when she learns that she will be the mother of the Savior. The Choir will be joined that morning by members of the Perugino String Quartet, and the organ.

Sunday, December 20: The Celebration Ringers Handbell Choir will provide the pre-service music, including arrangements of *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*, and *Gentle Mary Laid Her Child*. Be sure to stay after worship and attend the performance of *Christmas in Central Town*, a play presented at **11:00 AM** by the children of our Sunday School in Fellowship Hall. Then, plan to attend our wonderful and traditional service of *Lessons & Carols* at our **11:00 PM** service on Christmas Eve. Filled with many well-loved carols, the service will include a vast array of wonderful Christmas anthems sung by our Chancel Choir, including *See Amid the Winter's Snow*, John Rutter's *Christmas Lullaby, Gabriel, From the Heaven Descending* by Seth Bingham, and *Once in Royal David's City*. Of course, this service will continue the tradition of the singing of *Silent Night* -complete with the glow of candlelight.



December 31, 2009 @ 11:00 PM. The year will conclude with a musical extravaganza by **Mr. Todd Wilson**, who will present our annual *New Year's Eve Organ Concert* as part of the *Barker Concert Series*. Mr Wilson is an outstanding international organist currently Professor of Organ at Indiana University. He is also the organ curator at Severance Hall in Cleveland, OH. Filled with works by Karg-Elert, J.S. Bach, and Marcel Dupre', this performance will continue the tradition of closing the year with the audience participating in the singing of *Aud Lang Syne*. It will be an evening you do not want to miss, and a magnificent way to usher in the new year.



Ready to Soar!

For Central's high school students, the opportunity to participate in international ministry has become more than just "a thing that we do" every other year. In the uncomfortable setting of radically different cultures, many of our students have been changed forever during mere week-long experiences.

Some would say those most changed on such trips were just "ready" for some big spiritual reality to come to fruition. They might be right. I don't think God moves more during mission trips than any other week, and I don't think He is any more present in some other country than He is in our own. It's not God that changes...it's our awareness of Him. We "expand our horizons" on the mission field by intentionally entering into discomfort, uncertainty, and impossibility...and trusting God to be everything we are not and have not.

In 2008, all of Central stepped with us into the impossibility of funding an unprecedented mission experience in Romania. We felt called there to

work with orphans, and trusted God with the impossible task of funding. He used Central in a mighty way to exceed our expectations, and to meet financial needs we could not foresee. I pray that all of you felt as blessed as we did!!!

In June 2010, a new team of students will travel to Sutton, Alaska. The only "international" part of this trip will be traveling through Canadian airspace, we expect a radical cultural experience none the less! Only 80 miles north of Anchorage, Sutton is a former coal mining town in which there is no current industry. We hope to meet some of the most basic needs of families and individuals in the Matanuska Valley, and to learn a lot about ourselves in the process.

This will be a trip of dramatic changes: altitude, temperature, tasks, culture. But a few things will remain constant. The sun will not actually go down a single time for the whole ten days. Our drive to be the hands and feet of Christ will not waver. God will not for a second cease to provide, protect and make Himself known to us. And if past experience means anything, Central will support us overwhelmingly in prayer and in finance.

We would LOVE to see you at the Youth Auction on March 6, 2010 at the Custer building in downtown GR. Our theme is "On Eagle's Wings". It would be fitting to end with Isaiah 40...

"Even youths grow tired and weary... But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint!"

His boy...todd <><



Kevin helping Vernon plan a carwash at YCAP in Nashville

ADULT EDUCATION OFFERINGS FOR ADVENT

SECOND HOUR: 11:15-12:00 NOON

December 6: The Meaning of Biblical Authority. Dr. Louis Lotz. Location-Chapel

How do I know? The Bible tells me so! What is the nature and meaning of Biblical authority? What do we mean when we say that the Bible is God's Word or inspired by God? What is the difference between inerrancy and infallibility?

December 6: Angels and Advent. Elder Dawn Tillema. Location-Parlor

Who are these angelic messengers in Luke and what do they have to do with the good news of Christmas? Come to get to know these heavenly creatures better and reflect on their news of great joy for the advent season!

December 13: Symbols of Advent. Helen Phillips. Location-Chapel

Explore the symbols of Advent - What is the meaning of the Advent Wreath? Why do we bring Christmas trees into the house? Did you ever wonder why we use poinsettias? Come and learn more about the symbols of Advent and bring more depth to your experience of Christmas.

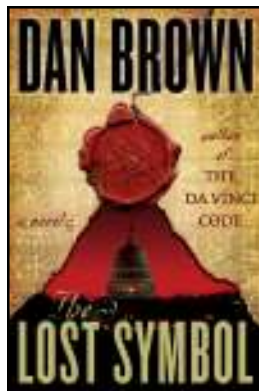
December 13: Identifying Your Spiritual Gifts. Seminarian Andrew Meyers. Location-Parlor

What are your spiritual gifts? Do you have them and what should you do with them? This practical course will help you discern your gifts and will guide you in finding your vocation.

BOOKS OF THE SPIRIT

Thursday, December 3: 10:00-11:30 AM. Join us for our ongoing discussion of some of the big theological questions in Tim Keller's book, *The Reason for God*. How can a good God send anyone to Hell? What about the existence of evil in the world? Why can't all faiths lead to the same God? Come join us for an illuminating time of community and discussion!

Thursday, January 7: 10:00 AM. Have you read Dan Brown's latest book yet? Join us for a discussion of *The Lost Symbol*, by the same page-turning author who brought us the *DaVinci Code*. What were the principles upon which the United States was founded? Are there secret clues in the architecture of Washington DC? What is fact and what is pure fiction? Bring your U.S History knowledge and join us for some fun discussion!



ALL-CHURCH CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13, 6:00 PM

Come One, Come All: All-Church Christmas Open House at the home of Larry and Mary Gerbens, 1815 Flowers Crossing Dr., NE, Phone 363-5555. This is one of the holiday traditions begun long ago at Central. It is a wonderful way to join with old and new church friends for a time of holiday cheer. The Gerbens will supply the beverages; you bring an appetizer to share. All ages of adults attend and have a wonderful time. If you have questions, please contact Larry or Mary by phone or by email at Imgerbens@gmail.com. Maps to the Gerbens' home are in your mailboxes, or get one at the Visitor Center.

IMPORTANT DATES TO PUT ON YOUR CALENDAR

December 3: 10:00-11:30 AM. Study of Tim Keller's book, *The Reason for God*.

December 6: Communion (Intinction).

December 6: 11:15 AM. *The Meaning of Biblical Authority*. Dr. Louis Lotz.

December 6: 11:15 AM. *Angels and Advent*. Dawn Tillema.

December 13: Sacrament of Baptism.

December 13: 6:00 PM. Church Christmas Party. Larry and Mary Gerbens' Home.

December 13: 11:15 AM. *Symbols of Advent*. Helen Phillips.

December 13: 11:15 AM. *Identify Your Spiritual Gifts*. Seminarian Andrew Meyers.

December 20: 11:00 AM-12:00 Noon. Christmas Pageant, *Christmas in Central Town*. Performed by children and adults from Central. Times are hard, and when the citizens of Central Town decide to cancel Christmas, it is up to the children to figure out how to still celebrate. This original musical by Mary Beth Timmer will warm your heart as we join in this unique story about a "hard times" Christmas. Admission is free, but the suggested ticket donation is \$2.00.

December 24: 4:00 PM. Worship geared for families, and 11:00 PM, Service of Lessons and Carols.

December 31: 11:00 PM. **Barker Concert.** Todd Wilson at the organ.

January 7: 10:00 AM. Study of Dan Brown's book, *The Lost Symbol*.

January 10: Blankets collected for In The Image.