

The Central Visitor



Vol. XCVIII

Decatur, Illinois, January 28, 2026

No. 2

Girl Scout Cookies

Available for Purchase on February 15

Our church members involved in Girl Scouts of America will have boxes of cookies for sale after all three services on Sunday, February 15. Look for them in the Friendship Center. There will also be an opportunity to purchase a box(es) of cookies to be sent to our troops serving overseas. Those donations will be collected February 15 and then gathered into a larger donation to be shipped overseas. So even if you're not a "cookie monster" yourself, consider supporting our troops (and the Girl Scouts) with a purchase on February 15.



DONUTS with DORCAS Returns with LOVE!

All Central women are invited to the February 17th Dorcas meeting in the Disciples Room at 10:30 a.m. You don't want to miss this mid-winter gathering for a warm "pick me up" of coffee and Casey's donuts, fellowship and special "Bible Love Trivia" game. We'll learn about upcoming mission-based meetings. RSVP by Tuesday, February 10th to Nancy Ellen Taylor at 217-872-9174 or xstr@sbcglobal.net to make sure we have enough yummy donuts. Contact Sandy Garver at 217-454-2111 or revrag@comcast.net for more information about Dorcas Disciples. Hope to see you February 17th!

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2026

TRADITIONAL WORSHIP
IN-PERSON (SANCTUARY)
AT 8:00 AM & 10:30 AM
AND LIVESTREAMED ON
WWW.CCCDISCIPLES.ORG
AND FACEBOOK LIVE
AT 10:30 AM

CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP
IN-PERSON (GREAT HALL)
AND LIVESTREAMED ON
WWW.CCCDISCIPLES.ORG
AND FACEBOOK LIVE
AT 9:15 AM

Sermon for 2/1/26
Michael E. Karunas



Happy Birthday!! (2/1—2/14)

Sally Thicksten, Bob Logan, John Dunn,
Gretchen Kirby, Janet Deakins,
Jack Dixon, Calvin Andrews, Doug Luthy,
Peyton Swarthout, Olivia Patricio,
Ryan Damery, Ellen Damery,
Amy Lester, John Downs,
Christian Jackson, Clara Monroe, Cohen
Moma, Sherri Hood, Autumn Cooper,
Jessa Wilcoxon, Sam Hawkinson

In Sympathy

We mourn with Julie Jones and family upon the passing of her mother, Betty Joyce Swango, on January 21st. Services will be Friday, January 30th, at 10:00 AM, at the Mackey-Wright Funeral Home in Monticello. The visitation will be the night before, same place, from 6:00—8:00 PM. Thank you for joining us in prayer.



Congratulations, Baron!

We are proud of our own Baron Wilcoxon, who won the John's Hill School 4th—6th Grade Spelling Bee! We celebrate with Baron Wilcoxon and family! Baron will now move on to the Decatur Public School District #61 Spelling Bee. Good luck in the next round, Baron! We are proud of you!!

Usher Help Wanted: 8:00 Service

We have an 8:00 AM service Usher team that could use 1-2 more volunteers. If you're interested, contact the church office at 217-428-4336 or email central@cccdisciples.org.

Counting On You

Sunday, January 25, 2026

Total worshipping online = 551
Total worshipping in-person = 20

Sunday, January 18, 2026

Total worshipping online = 166
Total worshipping in-person = 280

Minister's Article

We Are Your Net

This past week I spent a few days in Nashville, TN. Every year, toward the end of January, the Pension Fund of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) holds a "large steeple" conference. It is a gathering of the senior ministers of the 40 (or so) congregations that are among the largest in the denomination. By virtue of Central's size and worship attendance, the senior minister of Central is invited to this conference annually. I have attended this conference for all but one of my years as Central's senior minister. This year it was held in Nashville and hosted by Woodmont Christian Church.

The highlight occurred on Tuesday afternoon when a guest speaker shared her story with us. Her name was Katie and she was the mother of two daughters. The younger of the two, a nine year-old in 2023, was tragically killed in a school shooting in March of that year. The family was a member of Woodmont. For nearly an hour, Katie shared with us the events surrounding that day and what she remembered about them. She described the work she has been doing over the past two years to lobby for bi-partisan support for better gun safety laws in Tennessee. And she shared stories about her late daughter and read from the daughter's bible and journal. To say it was impactful would be an overwhelming understatement. Katie herself had trouble choking back tears and I can't imagine there was a dry eye in the audience. I know mine weren't.

One thing that stuck with me from Katie's words to us had to do with the memorial service held for her daughter. Katie described how, in the moments following the tragic event and continuing for the next several days, "everything was a blur." She said she couldn't recall specific things that happened in those days, because it all ran together. But she did remember, quite clearly in fact, something that happened in the service. One of the associate ministers at the church was speaking and asked the entire congregation to hold hands with one another and raise those held-hands upward. Then she asked Katie and her family to turn around look. She then said, "We are your net. These hands held high are here to carry you however you might need it."



As I mentioned above, I had been attending these conferences for over 10 years. In that time, we have discussed things like efficient staffing modes, fundraising strategies, capital campaign procedures, mission and vision, church-growth practices and other related things. But the words Katie shared with us were, in my estimation, the best thing ever offered because it reminds us why we are here. In the final analysis, we are here to help find meaning in the midst of life's chaos by speaking the hope of resurrection when it is most needed. Perhaps the best way we do that is by being a net for one another; pledging and promising to carry one another when any one of us can't seem to find the strength or direction to take steps on our own.

(continued on page 3...)

What that family at Woodmont experienced in that tragedy is something no one should ever have to endure. It is unfathomable even to consider what they must have felt then, and what they surely continue to feel now. And yet, in our own ways, large and small, we all face moments of personal tragedy, when our world seems to cave in around us, everything is a blur, and we can't find the sense or direction to take the next step in front of us. In those moments, especially, I would hope it might be said of us, "We are you net;" that our hands stand ready to catch you when you fall, hold you upright - even carrying you if necessary - when you struggle to take the next steps of your journey on your own.

Blessings – Michael

Prayer for the Serving Year

As a new year gets underway, we also begin a new serving year in the congregation. It is the serving efforts provided by our many faithful volunteers that makes the ministries of Central what they are. In some cases, church leadership positions are changing, with new people stepping into new roles. While in other instances, church leaders are continuing in the positions they held in 2025. But it is important to recognize the leadership provided by all these volunteers within the context of worship. On **Sunday, February 1**, we will be doing just that with a *Prayer for the Serving Year*. We are asking all *outgoing* church leaders (those stepping *down* from their positions of leadership) as well as those who are *beginning or continuing* their position to attend the service of their choice. During all three services, we will recognize and thank those outgoing leaders, and offer prayers for all the new and continuing leaders. At the 8:00 a.m. service, we will also be presenting to Ed and Joy Adams the award of Deacon Emeritus for the years of faithful service as deacons.

Food Donations for Northeast Community Fund

Thank you for your generous support of the Grocery Cart. Our next collection date will be February 1, 2026. Let's overflow the cart with nonperishable items to help our neighbors and community members who may have limited or uncertain access to safe and adequate food.

Here are some suggestions: soup, fruit cups, dried fruit, chili, nuts, rice, canned and pouches of chicken and tuna, boxed rice items, ramen noodles, snack crackers, pancake mix that only requires water, pancake syrup, canned vegetables, individual apple sauce, canned pasta sauce, pasta, and cereal. Of course, these are just suggestions. Be sure to check the expiration date. It is also a good idea not to donate items in glass packaging.

Look for the shopping cart in the Connection Cafe'. Together we can make a difference. Thank You!

Reminder: Milestones and Anniversaries

This year's Milestones and Anniversaries Fellowship Meal will take place on Sunday, February 1st at 12 noon. We will enjoy an Italian-themed fellowship dinner in the Great Hall. After the meal, we will celebrate all the milestones and anniversaries we look forward to experiencing in 2026. If you would like to attend the dinner, please RSVP by contacting the office (central@ccd-disciples.org or 217-428-4336). Just as importantly, please share with us your own milestones and anniversaries of the past year and those you are anticipating in 2026 (submission forms are located in the Welcome Center, or you can call the office by 1/28/26). Submissions are due TODAY. We want to celebrate your accomplishments with you.

Sunday (February 1)

8:00-Traditional Worship, Sanctuary
9:15-Sunday School
9:15-Contemporary Worship, GH & online
10:30-Traditional Worship, Sanctuary & online
11:30-Milestones & Anniversaries Luncheon

Monday (2)

9:15-Prayer Group, 401
1:00-DOVE Inc. Children's Clothing Room, 407

Tuesday (3)

7:00-Journeymen, Conn. Café
9:30-Christcare Stitchers, 3R
9:30-Card Ministry, 411/412
4:00-Décor Committee, Fireside Room
6:00-P.E.O. I.F., Disciples Room

Wednesday (4)

1:00-DOVE Inc. Children's Clothing Room, 407
1:00-Prayer Shawl Ministry, Fireside Room
6:00-Millikin Heights, 401

Thursday (5)

8:00-Emmaus Reunion Group, 401
10:00-Alanon, 401
12:00-Support Staff meeting
2:00-Decatur Needle Arts, Disciples Room
5:00-Christian Ed, Connection Café
6:00-Fathers & Sons small group
7:00-Chancel Choir

Friday (6)

11:00-Symphony Orchestra Guild, Disc. Room

Saturday (7)

9:00-Faith Quest

Sunday (8)

8:00-Traditional Worship, Sanctuary
9:15-Sunday School
9:15-Contemporary Worship, GH & online
10:30-Traditional Worship, Sanctuary & online

Monday (9)

9:00-Good Sam volunteer opportunity
9:15-Prayer Group, 401
1:00-DOVE Inc. Children's Clothing Room, 407
1:00-Golden K, Disciples Room
3:00-Decatur Piano Club, Sanctuary

Tuesday (10)

7:00-Journeymen, Connection Café
9:30-ChristCare Stitchers, 3R

Wednesday (11)

1:00-DOVE Inc. Children's Clothing Room, 407
5:00-Elders

Thursday (12)

10:00-Alanon, 401
6:00-Fathers & Sons small group
7:00-Chancel Choir

Friday (13)

Saturday (14)

Sunday (15)

8:00-Traditional Worship, Sanctuary
9:15-Sunday School
9:15-Contemporary Worship, GH & online
10:30-Traditional Worship, Sanctuary & online
4:00-Millikin Opera Dept. fundraiser, Sanct.

Serving Schedule — Sunday, February 1, 2026

Elders:

8:00 & 10:30 - Kim Miller, Krista Rohrscheib
9:15 - Krista Rohrscheib

Feb. Prep Deacons: Christine Lyman-Harm, Denise* & Matthew Swarhout

Offering Deacons:

8:00 - David King, David Wagner
9:15 - Laura Kappler
10:30 - Jeannie Backes, Luke Kirby

Ushers:

8:00 - Team 1 - Carolyn Sunderlik, Capt., Dianne Devore
10:30 - Team 6 - Ron & Terry Grant, Mark Kincaid

Greeters:

8:00 - Donna Dash
9:15 - Marla Eovaldi
10:30 - Gregg & Linda Foltz

P.A. Operator:

8:00 - Donna Dash
10:30 - Keith Backes

Liturgist:

8:00 & 10:30 - Hugh Rowden
9:15 - Theresa Fulk

Contemporary Snack Table: Laura Kappler

Contemporary Perishable Snacks: Stephen Turner

Nursery and Children's Sunday School Schedule

Sunday, February 1


Nursery: TBA

Children's Sunday School: TBA

Sunday, February 8

Nursery: TBA

Children's Sunday School: TBA



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Serving Schedule — Sunday, February 8, 2026

Elders:

8:00 & 10:30 - David Martin, David York
9:15 - David York

Feb. Prep Deacons: Christine Lyman-Harm, Denise* & Matthew Swarhout

Offering Deacons:

8:00 - Nancy King, Patti Swinford
9:15 - Deb & Randy Trei
10:30 - Keith Backes, Cole Shartzter

Ushers:

8:00 - Team 2 - Bruce Campbell, Capt., Liz Campbell
10:30 - Team 7 - George Virgil, Capt., Linda Virgil, Hugh & Linda Rowden

Greeters:

8:00 - Debbie & Jim Hoffert
9:15 - Deb & Randy Trei
10:30 - Brett Swallow

P.A. Operator:

8:00 - Krista Rohrscheib
10:30 - Luke Kirby

Liturgist:

8:00 & 10:30 - Janet Lyman
9:15 - Rebecca Monroe

Contemporary Snack Table: Deb & Randy Trei

Contemporary Perishable Snacks: "Do Good Donuts"

"Like" and "Follow" us on Facebook

To "like" hit the thumbs-up icon.

To "follow" click on the ellipse icon (...).

You will see a list of options pop up.

Find the option marked "follow" and click on that.



Prayer Request Text-In!

Have a prayer request? Text PRAY to 217-212-2173, or use the QR code to the left.

"PRAY" is the only word you should type.

Your phone then sends you a link to the prayer request form to fill out. We would love to pray with you and follow up, if you wish.

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