

Happy New Year, Church Family!

Let us pray as the Family of God for a blessed 2024 for this chaotic world of ours! I am reminded of a contemporary Christmas Song called "My Grown-up Christmas List" (by Kelly Clarkson), that kind of summarizes what many of us are thinking regarding our hopes and dreams for this coming/new year for this hurting planet:

*No more lives torn apart
That wars would never start
And time would heal all hearts
And everyone would have a friend
And right would always win
And love would never end*

It goes on to say: *"As children we believe that grandest sight to see was something lovely wrapped beneath the tree. But heaven only knows that packages and bows can never heal a hurting human soul."*

These are the goals and prayers and priorities that excite us as God's people! Of course, there are lots of different New Year's resolutions that folks make and try to keep that can be helpful, like trying to lose weight or exercise more or spend less money or eat healthier. These are resolutions or goals that speak to our desire to be good stewards of what God has provided. But when I think about so many hurting in our nation and world today, so many that are affected by the consequences of warfare or violence, addictions, poverty, and abusive situations, my heart breaks. **I know I need to lose weight and eat better, but there are sure a lot of people out there that have it much worse than I do, and I want to do something to help them!**

So what do we do??? Let us continue to pray in earnest for the most vulnerable. Let us continue to do our part in Menard County and beyond to lighten the burdens of our fellow human beings in the name of Christ. Let us continue to put our trust in the Sovereignty of God, and in His ever-present love, and His good news that The Kingdom of Christ is on the march, growing, expanding, and working throughout the world, and that one day *"there will be no more death or grieving or crying or pain for the old order of things has passed away"* (Revelation 21). God will give us a blessed 2024, and He will even give us many opportunities to be a part of what He is doing in and around us!

Thanks be to God,

Amen!

Ryan Edgcombe, Pastor

Edgeness79@hotmail.com



Highlights of Regular Session Meeting, December 21, 2023

- Bank balance as of November 30, 2023: \$61,346.64.
- Home Communion was served to a total of 7 people.
- Taking down of the greens will be immediately following Worship service on Sunday, January 7.
- Blue Christmas Service was well attended with 21 in attendance. Tree has been moved to Tiffany Room with tags available to anyone that would like to add a name to the tree.
- **MOTION: Congregational Meeting to be held on Sunday January 21, 2024 immediately following worship for the purpose of nominating, electing and installing Elders and Deacons. Motion by Jane Stephenson, seconded by David Drake. Motion carried. APPROVED.**
- **MOTION: Annual Congregational Meeting to be held on Sunday February 25, 2024 immediately following worship for review of the Annual Report. Motion by Jane Stephenson, seconded by Steve Territo. Motion carried. APPROVED.**
- **MOTION: To send \$500.00 to Troop 52 for annual re-chartering. Monies to come from the Troop 54 monies in allocated funds. From Committee. APPROVED**
- Pastor Edgecombe Report for November:
 - Made numerous home visits, hospital visits, nursing home visits, and telephone calls.
 - 6-month review by Clerk of Session.
 - Attended and participated in the PORTA Community Thanksgiving Service held at St. Paul's.
 - Regularly attends Food Pantry Meetings.
 - Continues weekly Bible Study.
 - Attended Session, Deacons meeting, and Worship Committee meeting.

Administration Committee News

Financial

- Income year to date is \$4,803.34 above budget and YTD expenses are below budget by \$20,744.61. Regardless of budget, our income, YTD, is \$3,850.25 lower than our expenses.
- Treasurer's report and financials were reviewed.
- General, MMF, Obligated Funds were also reviewed.
- 2024 budgeting work is near completion.
 - The Committee has renewed our insurance with Church Mutual and increased our deductible to \$25K with significant annual savings. We have also added Earthquake insurance to our policy.
 - We have received 31 Pledges for the General Fund, which is the highest number since 2015. We have also received the highest total dollar amount in over 20 years!
 - Major Maintenance Fund pledges were also increased.
- Recommendation to Session: To send \$500 to Troop 52 for annual re-chartering. Monies to come from the Troop 54 monies in allocated funds.

Building

- Ongoing issues are occurring with the phone system. Discussion of people to inspect the system for repair or replacement. I have reached out to Shannon Wilhite and am waiting for a return call.
- Ongoing issues with the lock on the front door and A-1 Lock will repair on December 19.
- Light bulbs for the front sign were originally ordered with Ace Hardware, but they cannot get them. Steve to investigate in Springfield, as well as look to convert them to LED bulbs. If not viable, John Impson will be contacted to repair.

- The Boy Scouts are in the process of cleaning out their supplies stored at CPC.

Personnel

- The Personnel Committee is completing annual evaluations.

Submitted by Chairperson Steven Territo

Catechism Corner

Catechism Corner From κατηχέω, ("to teach orally")

I thought it might be useful for us to review and reflect a little each month from a catechism used by the PCUSA. Hopefully this will serve a purpose in helping us think deeper about our faith and even inspire us towards a greater pursuit of Christian Theology grounded in Holy Scripture. I pray you find this new section in the newsletter helpful. I enjoy talking theology so come by the church if you have questions or thoughts about these!

The Study Catechism: Full Version Approved by the 210th General Assembly (1998) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Question 32: What do you affirm when you say He was “conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary”?

First, that being born of a woman, Jesus was truly a human being. Second, that our Lord’s incarnation was a holy and mysterious event, brought about solely by free divine grace surpassing any human possibilities. Third, that from the very beginning of His life on earth, He was set apart by His unique origin for the sake of accomplishing our salvation.

Luke 1:35 *“The angel said to her, ‘The Holy spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; He will be called Son of God.’”*

Hebrew 2:14 *“Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death He might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil.”*

Question 33: What is the significance of affirming that Jesus is truly God?

Only God can properly deserve worship. Only God can reveal to us who God is. And only God can save us from our sins. Being truly God, Jesus meets these conditions. He is the proper object of our worship, the self-revelation of God, and the Savior of the world.

Matthew 11:27 *“All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him.”*

1 John 4:14 *“And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent His Son as the Savior of the world.”*

Question 34: What is the significance of affirming that Jesus is also truly a human being?

Being truly human, Jesus entered fully into our fallen situation and overcame it from within. By His pure obedience, He lived a life of unbroken unity with God, even to the point of accepting a violent death. As sinners at war with grace, this is precisely the kind of life we fail to live. When we accept Him by faith, He removes our disobedience and clothes us with His perfect righteousness.

Hebrew 2:17-18 *“Therefore He had to become like His brothers and sisters in every respect, so that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God,*

to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. Because He himself was tested by what He suffered, He is able to help those who are being tested.”

Romans 5:19 “For just as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous..”

Question 35: How can Jesus be truly God and yet also truly human at the same time?

The mystery of Jesus Christ’s divine-human unity passes our understanding; only faith given by the Holy Spirit enables us to affirm it. When Holy Scripture depicts Jesus as someone with divine power, status and authority, it presupposes His humanity. And when it depicts Him as someone with human weakness, neediness and mortality, it presupposes His deity. We cannot understand how this should be, but we can trust that the God who made heaven and earth is free to become God incarnate and thus to be God with us in this wonderful and awe-inspiring way.

Mark 1:27 “They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, ‘what is this? A new teaching—with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits and they obey him.’”

Mark 4:41 “And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, ‘who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?’”

Quotation Station

(Thoughts on “new beginnings”)

“By reading the scriptures, I am so renewed that all nature seems renewed around me and with me. The sky seems to be a pure, a cooler blue, the trees a deeper green. The world is charged with the glory of God and I feel fire and music under my feet.” --Thomas Merton

“God became man to turn creatures into sons; not simply to produce better men of the old kind but to produce a new kind of man.” --C.S. Lewis

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he/she is a new creation. The old has passed away, behold, the new has come.” --2 Corinthians 5:17

“Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God.” --Corrie ten Boom

“New Year’s Day is a good time to fix one’s eyes on the only One who knows what the year is to hold.” --Elisabeth Elliot

Monthly Riddle/Joke

Tell Pastor Ryan the answer to this riddle/joke and win a prize! “Why did the police go to the daycare center on New Year’s Eve?” (Don’t Google the answer, as that would be cheating!)

Have Lunch with Pastor Ryan

Come by the church on Monday, January 22, at 12:00 noon for lunch provided by Pastor Ryan and pleasant conversation in the Fellowship Hall. If you would like, you could bring a side dish or a dessert, but don’t feel obligated to do so! There will be chili and some other type of soup. Please text or call 217-972-4859 to R.S.V.P. so that Pastor Ryan knows how much food to prepare.

2024 Fellowship

In 2023, the Deacons resumed our 2nd Sunday Fellowship following worship each month. Hosts are needed for 2024. A sign-up sheet can be found on the table in the Narthex for those willing to volunteer to provide refreshments for our fellowship time.

Thank You

Thank you to all those involved in the numerous Advent activities throughout December. Without the participation and devoted service of our members, these special events could not happen and would be greatly missed. It was a busy month—but full of joy!

- Thanks to all the children who participated in the lighting of the candles of the Advent Wreath throughout the season.
- December 10: The Children’s Christmas Program “A No Rehearsal Christmas Pageant,” organized by Chr. Ed. Chair Linda Claussen and assisted by Bethany Edgecombe and Brianne Satorius, was a huge success. Many thanks to all the children who played roles and also the members of the congregation who volunteered ‘on the spot’ to fill the Nativity scene. Thanks to Linda’s leadership and creativity in guiding our children’s faith life.
- December 10: Our annual Christmas Fellowship once again was well stocked with a variety of yummy offerings. We are very grateful to the Deacons for organizing, all who prepared food for this event, and those who helped with set-up and clean-up.
- December 17: The “Blue Christmas” Service was new this year. Thanks to Pastor Ryan for acknowledging the need for this service and to Linda Claussen, Jan Costello, and Cindy Godbey for assisting him in this endeavor. It was a very meaningful afternoon.
- December 24: Thanks to Marilyn Montgomery, John Godbey, Ron Sanert, and Linda Claussen for being Readers at the Christmas Eve Candlelight service.
- A special thank you to Emma Lou Denton for her hours of preparation to share the ‘sounds of the season’ that we all cherish. Thanks also to Rich Ford, Julia Territo, and Bethany Edgecombe for sharing their talents this season.
- Thanks to David Long and Cindy Godbey for taking care of our sound and video for the services.

Chimes Deadline

Do you have an event or news that would be of interest to our congregation? Do you have suggestions or requests for topics to be included in the Chimes? All are encouraged to submit articles and pictures for the February 2024 *Chimes* to the church office no later than **Monday, January 22**. A *Microsoft Word file* attached to an email is the preferred method of submission. **Please reference “Chimes article” in the subject line.** Our email address is office@central-pres.org.

Keep Connected!

Pastor Ryan Edgecombe is in the church on Mondays and Wednesdays from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. If you wish to make an appointment to visit with him, please call the church office at 217-632-2651. You may also call or text his cell phone: 217-972-4859.

Members are encouraged to continue to stay connected with the church family. If you have an emergency or are in need of assistance from Central, please contact:

Church Office, 217-632-2651, Tuesday & Wednesday 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.,
Friday 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.; or leave a message anytime.
Pastor Ryan Edgecombe, 217-972-4859
Cindy Godbey, Deacon Chair, 217-652-9596
Jane Stephenson, Clerk of Session, 217-341-7599

Another option for keeping connected is through the use of the **Central Presbyterian Prayer Chain** on Facebook. Group prayer is so powerful. The congregation is encouraged to reach out with any prayer request—nothing is too trivial! The posts are seen only by group members. If you are a Facebook user but not yet a group member, look us up and join today!

Health Notes: *submitted by Alice Studzinski*

January is National Glaucoma Awareness Month

(Information taken from the Glaucoma Research Foundation)

Glaucoma is the leading cause of irreversible blindness. It is called “the sneak thief of sight” since there are no symptoms and once vision is lost, it’s permanent. As much as 40% of vision can be lost without a person noticing. Over 3 million Americans, and 80 million people worldwide, have glaucoma. Experts estimate that half of them don’t know they have it. The World Health Organization estimates that 4.5 million people worldwide are blind due to glaucoma.

Glaucoma is a group of eye diseases that gradually steal sight without warning. Although the most common forms primarily affect the middle-aged and the elderly, glaucoma can affect people of all ages.

Vision loss is caused by damage to the optic nerve. This nerve acts like an electric cable with over a million wires. It is responsible for carrying images from the eye to the brain.

There is no cure for glaucoma—yet. However, medication or surgery can slow or prevent further vision loss. The appropriate treatment depends upon the type of glaucoma among other factors. Early detection is vital to stopping the progress of the disease. The best way to protect your sight from glaucoma is to get a comprehensive eye examination. Then, if you have glaucoma, treatment can begin immediately.

Menard County Food Pantry

The Menard County Food Pantry is planning monthly food drives with the local churches and civic organizations on the first Sunday of each month. The committee will be asking for specific items for that month. For **January**, they are collecting **soup**, and for **February**, they will be collecting **canned fruit**. Donations can be put in the basket in the Narthex. The Food Pantry located inside Central Presbyterian Church is currently well stocked right to the recent Ameren Food Drive, and there were a few other food drives in December as well. There is also a Micro-pantry next to County Market. Lindsay Wilken, FSS Coordinator, can be contacted for more information.

Diaper Bank Needs

The Diaper Bank is currently stocked with most sizes of diapers and baby wipes, as well as adult briefs and pads. Needed items at this time are sizes 1-4 diapers and pull-ups. Rather than purchasing items to donate, a monetary donation is always accepted.

Advent Scenes from Central

Sunday, December 3: First Sunday of Advent



Sunday, December 10: Second Sunday of Advent; "A No Rehearsal Children's Pageant"



Sunday, December 10: Fellowship



Sunday, December 17: Third Sunday of Advent



Sunday, December 17: Blue Christmas Service



Sunday, December 24: Fourth Sunday of Advent



Sunday, December 24: Christmas Eve Service



Happy Birthday!

Jan. 2	Sherrie Leezer	Jan. 22	Greg Brown
Jan. 6	Lydia Winkelmann	Jan. 23	Hanna Roberts
Jan. 13	Lisa Willhite	Jan. 23	Grace Canady
Jan. 16	Henry Phillips	Jan. 28	Chris Ford
Jan. 17	Steve Territo	Jan. 29	Ashley Rutz
Jan. 20	Paul Montgomery		

Happy Anniversary

Jan. 9 Paul & Marilyn Montgomery



	<i>Usher/Greeter</i>	<i>Liturgist</i>	<i>Communion Steward</i>
Sunday, Jan. 7	Ben Kiningham	Pat Claussen	Pat Claussen
Sunday, Jan. 14	Camilla Long	Coleen Janssen	
Sunday, Jan. 21	Jerry Tice	Janene Tice	
Sunday, Jan. 28	Dan Stephenson	Cindy Godbey	

If you cannot fulfill your duty as usher/greeter or liturgist, please find someone to take your place.

Also, let the church office know of the changes as soon as possible.

Worship Attendance

December 3	36	December 24	30
December 10	51	Christmas Eve	30
December 17	43	December 31	24

Average Worship Attendance: 35



Members:

Will Carter
Steve Hollis
Alia Montgomery

Jo Ann Morris
Ken Morris
Family of Dale Satorius

Mary Rose Satorius
Judy Stahl
Linda Williams

Friends of the Congregation:

Jim Allen (P. & M. Montgomery's cousin)
Lois Bastien (D. & C. Long's friend)
Steve Blaum (Pastor in Lincoln/Pastor Ryan's friend)
Dale Blout (B. Satorius' father)
Judy Boutelle (Rev. J. Boutelle's wife)
John Buehner
Jane Claussen (P. Claussen's mother)
Danny Coffey (J. Goeringer's brother)
Mike Damler (J. Scheina's friend)
Jim Daugherty (Former Boy Scout Leader affiliated w/CPC)
Michelle Rankin Eddings (M. Montgomery's friend)
Bethany Edgecombe (Pastor Ryan's wife)
Katie Embrey (Phyllis Hunsaker's granddaughter)
Mark, Mary Kay & Rebecca Gamage
(J. Gamage's son, daughter-in-law & granddaughter)
Liam Grogan (C. Long's nephew)
Barb Harrison (N. Mehr's sister-in-law)
Marlene Hartsook (R. Ford's sister)
Jessie Heinz (C. Godbey's sister-in-law)
Family of Bobbie Johnson

Andrew Kelso (C. Godbey's nephew)
Cade Leesman (D. & C. Long's friend)
Manny Martinez (D. Long's friend)
Greg Mathis
Nancy Mehr
Jerry Naughton (D. & C. Long's friend)
Wayne Patterson (P. & M. Montgomery's friend)
Jay Rebman (L. Claussen's friend)
Dorothy Ricketts (R. Plaeger's mother)
Joy Rogerson (J. Gamage's sister)
Melissa Schaake (S. Territo's sister)
Dawn Schafer (S. Schafer's daughter-in-law)
Karen Stark (D. & R. Stark's sister-in-law)
Dean Territo (S. Territo's father)
Ted & Arlyn Tisdale (E.L. Denton's friend)
Carol White (J. Morris' friend)
Clara Willox (R. & C. Ford's granddaughter)
Lauren Woodley (J. Satorius' friend J.D. Proehl's
granddaughter)

Please pray for all we know who are homebound, residing in care facilities, undergoing surgery or medical treatment, serving in the military, or who are away from their family and friends.

In Our Communities and In Our World:

People affected by the Ukraine/Russian conflict
People affected by the Israel/Gaza conflict
Our country
Victims of sexual assault
Relief for island of Maui, HI

Memorial Health lay-off workers
Racial equality
Peace between nation neighbors
Victims of gun violence/mass shootings
Displaced peoples in the world

Please continue to keep our healthcare workers and those in the educational field in our prayers. They have been a guiding light to all of us in their courage and dedication to keeping us safe and helping the future generation. Thank You!

Please keep the church office informed of members or friends that need to be placed on or removed from our prayer list by sending an email to: office@central-pres.org, or calling the church office at: 217-632-2651.

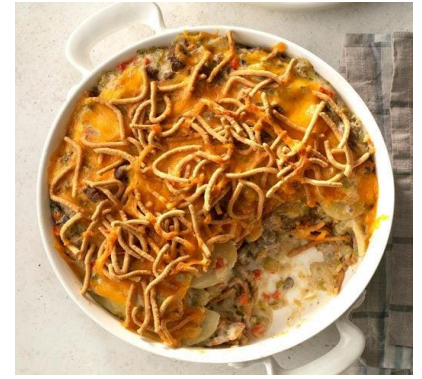
Church Supper Hot Dish

Taste of Home

Ingredients

1 lb. ground beef
2 cups finely chopped celery
¼ cup finely chopped onion
2 tbsp. butter
2 cans (10-¾ oz. ea.) condensed cream of mushroom soup, undiluted
1 can (5 oz.) chow Mein noodles, divided
1 cup shredded cheddar cheese

2 cups sliced peeled potatoes
¾ cup finely chopped carrots
¼ cup finely chopped green pepper
1 cup water



Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350°. In a large skillet, cook beef over medium heat until no longer pink; drain and set aside.
2. In same skillet, sauté potatoes, celery, carrots, green pepper and onion in butter 5 minutes. Add water; cover and simmer 10 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Stir in soup and cooked ground beef until blended.
3. Sprinkle half the chow Mein noodles into a greased shallow 2-quart baking dish. Spoon meat mixture over noodles. Cover and bake 20 minutes. Top with cheese and remaining noodles. Bake, uncovered, 10 minutes longer or until heated through.

Yield: 8 servings. Total Time: Prep: 40 min. Bake: 30 min.

Baked Parmesan Broccoli

Taste of Home

Ingredients

4 bunches broccoli, cut into florets
6 tbsp. butter, divided
1 small onion, finely chopped
1 garlic clove, minced
¼ cup all-purpose flour
1 cup grated Parmesan cheese

2 cups 2% milk
1 large egg yolk, beaten
½ tsp. salt
1/8 tsp. pepper
½ cup seasoned bread crumbs



Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400°. Place half broccoli in a steamer basket; place basket in a large saucepan over 1 inch water. Bring to a boil; cover and steam 3-4 minutes or until crisp-tender. Place in a greased 13x9 inch baking dish; repeat with remaining broccoli.
2. Meanwhile, in a small saucepan over medium heat, melt 4 tbsp. butter. Add onion; cook and stir until tender. Add garlic; cook 1 minute longer.
3. Stir in flour until blended; gradually add milk. Bring to boil; cook and stir 2 minutes or until thickened. Stir a small amount of hot mixture into egg yolk; return all to the pan, stirring constantly. Cook and stir 1 minute longer. Remove from heat; stir in the cheese, salt and pepper. Pour over broccoli.
4. In a small skillet, cook bread crumbs in remaining butter until golden brown; sprinkle over the top.
5. Bake, uncovered, 15-18 minutes or until heated through.

Yield: 12 servings. Total Time: Prep.: 30 min. Bake: 15 minutes