

Pastoral Reflection



Dear Central Families,

NEED HELP FOR CHRISTMAS?

A story is told of “a man who walked into a store looking for products. He went straight to the location he thought the product would be. He looked high and low on the aisle, but could not locate the desired item. He called for assistance and was immediately directed to the aisle where the product was. Why couldn’t he find it by himself? It’s because the needed items were moved to a different location. You may have found yourself in the same situation when you search for items in the store. This happens mostly during Christmas shopping when you cannot decide what to give or what to buy for friends and relatives.

Do you need assistance figuring out the kind of gifts you can share with a loved one? Well, if you are a Christian, and you have enjoyed a new life and a great relationship with the Lord Jesus, why not share the gospel of salvation with your loved ones? It could be the best Christmas gift you can share with them. Your loved ones can appreciate your compassion, forgiveness and assistance during trials and difficult moments in life.

In other words, Charles Dickens in the Christmas Carol gives some ideas of perfect gifts to friends at Christmas. “I have always thought of Christmas time, when it has come round ... as a good time: a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time: the only time I know of, in the long calendar of the year, when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely, and to think of people below them as if they really were fellow passengers to the grave, and not another race of creatures bound on other journeys. And therefore... though it has never put a scrap of gold or silver in my pocket, I believe that it has done me good, and will do me good; and I say, God bless it!”

Thank you Notes: As we get close to the end of the year, we reflect on all the blessings and faithfulness of God to our congregation. Thank you for how you display your spiritual gifts in our church. I am grateful for the commitment of every family at Central for hosting Fellowship hours every week. Kim Stoecker continues to serve the Church faithfully. Stability and flow of information to you and your family when you need it are her goals. And there are many that serve the Lord in many phases of ministries here at Central; we give thanks to the Lord for you.

Year-End Giving: To those who plan to give year-end offerings to the Church, and will need tax deductible receipts, please remit your gift by December 31. On this note, the Administrative Board, Finance and Endowment Committees, and your pastor are grateful for your faithful stewardship through the year. Thank you very much!

“We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ”. I Thessalonians 1:2-3

Children’s Christmas Program: On Sunday, December 17, our Sunday School children will be presenting a program during worship service. (Parents are reminded to bring their children to Sunday school at 9:30 on Sundays so they can practice their parts.) We hope everyone will be able to attend.

Christmas Eve Services: There will be two services on Sunday, December 24—(10:30 am and Christmas Eve Service at 7:00 pm). If you are in town with your family and guests, please invite them to the Christmas Eve Service.

We wish you and your family God’s blessings and a blessed Christmas season!

Sincerely in Christ, Pastor Dominic Tommy



Notes of Interest:

- ⇒ **No Sunday School Classes** will be held on December 24 or December 31. Classes will resume on January 7, 2018.
- ⇒ **Church Office Hours:** The Church Office will be lightly staffed during the last 2 weeks of December; if you need assistance, please call ahead or leave a message on our answering machine. As always, if there is a pastoral emergency, please call Pastor Dominic at the parsonage (616-374-8294) or on his cell (269-941-3787).
- ⇒ **Pastor Dominic will be on vacation** from December 31 to January 6. Our Guest Preacher on December 31 will be Duane Walters.
- ⇒ **There will be no newsletter published for January.**

Central United Methodist Church is located in downtown Lake Odessa at 912 4th Avenue.
Contact us at 616-374-8861; info@centralchurch-lakeo.org or pastor@centralchurch-lakeo.org.

You can also check out our Facebook page for current activities, weekly dinner menu, and youth activities.

where Christ is central.

Celebrations

Birthdays

12/02	Phylis Armstrong	12/28	Mary Dykhouse
12/04	Karl Klynstra	12/30	George Covington
12/04	Randy Freidhoff	12/30	Carole Reiser
12/05	Jane Shetterly		
12/05	Shane McNeill		
12/10	Case Zona		
12/10	Cole Zona		
12/12	Leah Abbott		
12/22	Patsy Cole		
12/25	Andrea Gentner		
12/26	Bob Kendregan		

Anniversaries

Dan & Margie First	12/11/1982
John & Andrea Gentner	12/13/1969
Jan & Jane Everett	12/15/1991
Ron & Eva Atwell	12/16/1982
Ron & Christine Cunningham	12/18/1982
Ray & Joanne McDaniels	12/24/1950
Gordon & Ruth Bylsma	12/27/1975

Recent Prayer Concerns

Family of Laura Avery	Linda Rogers	Toni Robinson
Family of Ellwood Perry	Sue Calkins	Patsy Cole
Armrose LaBine	Helen Miller	Sharon
Atticus	Dylan	Kylee Oakes



Upcoming Events

FRESH FOOD DISTRIBUTION

Tuesday, December 5—2:00 pm (Volunteers are asked to arrive at 1:30.)

ADULT RESPITE (no respite on December 7)

Thursdays, December 14, 21, 28—1:30 to 4:30 pm

SOUPER THURSDAY COMMUNITY DINNER (no dinner on December 7)

Thursdays, December 14, 21, 28— 4:30 to 6 pm

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

Sunday, December 17 during worship—practice will be during Sunday School

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

Sunday, December 24—7 pm Open to the Community—bring your family & friends!

THANK YOU'S

- ◆ We would like to THANK everyone that filled a Samaritan Christmas Box. We filled 30 boxes this year. Thirty children somewhere in the world will be excited to receive a box filled with needs and treasures. Thank you!
- ◆ The Worship Committee would like to thank everyone who helped with the Advent decorating in the sanctuary and fellowship hall—especially those guys who put up the new Christmas tree. In this case, many hands didn't necessarily make light work, but they certainly were needed! Thank you to all those who provided food for the delicious lunch and to the Endowment, Memorial, and Planned Giving Committee for making memorial funds available to purchase the new tree. It was much more manageable than the previous tree. If anyone has need of a used, very tall Christmas tree, let the church office know. The Worship Committee will be 'taking down the greens' on Wednesday, January 3rd, at 7 pm if anyone is able to help.

NEWS OF THE UNITED METHODIST WOMEN!!

Christmas Breakfast will be Thursday, December 7, at the Gentner's home. Cost is \$6; call Virginia Decker for reservations. Members, spouses and church friends are welcome!

As we draw to the end of another year, we count our many blessings. We have had a great year with many successes. Our Rummage and Bake Sale with delicious donuts brought in over \$2,000. The Christmas 'Round the Town was a big success (\$685). We took your generous donations for our children's drive to our district meeting for missions. We thank all the hard workers and all the donations—We are blessed.

Our giving this year is as follows:

International:	Solar ovens — \$150; PET — \$200
National:	UMCOR — \$100; Puerto Rico — \$100
State:	Community House — \$300
Local:	Central UMC — \$300
	L.A.M.A. Benevolence Fund — \$100.00
	Habitat for Humanity — \$100.00

Our mission promise was \$1,000 which we accomplished.

We wish you a safe and blessed Christmas—our next meeting will be in February.

Christmas Baskets

The Lakewood Community Council Christmas Baskets will be delivered on December 9. Families who receive these gifts are blessed, and those who help with this project feel blessed as well. Your help in preparation is welcome at these times:

Tues. Dec 5, 7 to 9 pm
 Wed., Dec. 6, 9 am to 2:30 pm
 Thur., Dec. 7, 9 am to 2:30 pm
 Fri., Dec. 8, 9 am to 12
 Sat., Dec. 9, 9 am to 12

This year, donations of non-perishable food products, especially protein items and fruits, are being accepted thru December 6. Also appreciated are money, mittens, hats and socks. Your support of this ministry is very much appreciated!

State of the Church Report

Stats for October 2017

Average Attendance: 83

Operating Fund:

Receipts	\$18,389.82
Expenses	(\$14,589.85)

Other Giving Received:

Building Fund	\$ 881.00
General Missions	\$ 198.00
Souper Thursday	\$ 777.50
UMCOR Disaster Fund	\$ 560.00
Christmas Baskets	\$ 10.00
U.M. Student Day	\$ 1.00
World Communion Sunday	\$ 30.00



Earn Money for Missions while you Shop!

If you enjoy shopping on-line, there is a way for Central UMC to benefit from your purchases. Go to smile.amazon.com/ch/38-1474903 which has the same sites as Amazon, place your purchase, and Amazon donates a portion to Central UMC at no additional cost to you.

Upcoming Blood Drive



**Red Cross
 Blood Drive
 December 18
 12—5:45 pm.**

If you would like to volunteer to help, please contact Marian Durkee at 616-374-7489.