



THE TORCH

You Raise Me Up

By Joe Sanders, Senior Minister

Several years ago, I heard a song on WBGL, and it really spoke to me during that season of life. I would listen to it whenever I drove or walked in solitude or returned home late after working overtime for the umpteenth time. It goes:

When I am down and, oh my soul, so weary
When troubles come and my heart burdened be
Then, I am still and wait here in the silence
Until you come and sit awhile with me
You raise me up

Growing weary seems to be a natural result of dealing with circumstances and experiences, none of them bad but most of them just plain exhausting. For example:

We can be weary of waiting (Psalm 69:3).
We can be weary of fighting the enemy (2 Samuel 23:10).
We can be weary of criticism (Psalm 6:6-7).

The longer we are weary, the more our hope, our motivation, our spark, our optimism is strangled. Our life seems sapped as we run the race without being able to catch our breath.

If you are weary this winter I want to give you a word of encouragement from the prophet Isaiah: “The Sovereign LORD has given me his words of wisdom, so that I know how to comfort the weary. Morning by morning he awakens me and opens my understanding to his will” (Isaiah 50:4).

Our God never grows weary and he never gets tired. God can give strength to the weary — He really can! The Lord doesn't promise to give us an anti-weary pill or something to take so we can tough it through our weary moments. Instead, God promises us Himself morning by morning every single day. That is all. That is enough to Raise You Up.

Central Kids

By Darlene Lamb, Interim Children's Minister

Sunday Morning Programming

Happy February, Central Families! We are so excited to welcome back our K-5th grade Sunday School Classes. We have been waiting and preparing for this day and it's finally here. Thank you for your patience and prayers.

We will be following ALL safety measures. For the safety of all our church family, students must be able to wear their masks and follow social distancing guidelines. Registration will be required each week.

We will not be having our Sunday afternoon activities so that we can focus on our return to Sunday School. We will, however, have occasional special activities, and we will let you know in plenty of time to join us.

SuperStart Presents Treasured

Your value — your TRUE value — comes from CHRIST. That's the theme of this year's SuperStart event for kids in 4th-6th grade. This two-day program is coming to Central on February 26 and 27.

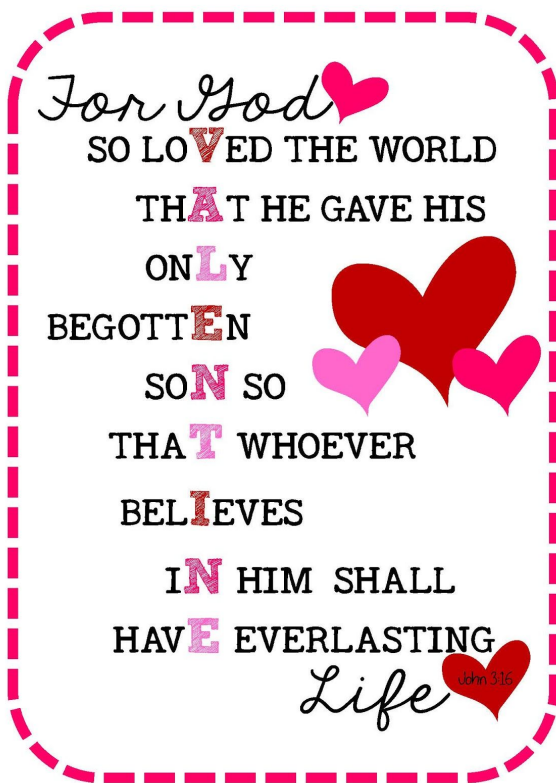
Friday 2/27: Dinner and group activities--4:30 p.m.

Main session--6:00-8:00 p.m.

Saturday 2/28: Sessions and activities--10:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Snacks and lunch will be provided.

We encourage all our pre-teens to take part in this amazing experience and bring a friend. Contact the church to sign up. There is no charge for this event.



Thank You to Our Church Families

I want to say thank you to our church family for your love and support. We have been able to continue some of our children's activities throughout these last 11 months, and we've had a lot of fun times sharing the love of Jesus and staying connected with you. We have some exciting days ahead of us as a church family and a children's ministry.

We have a lot of great stuff coming your way over the next few months, so keep checking all of our announcements on Facebook, Central News, the Torch, and church video announcements.

A friend loves at all times.

Proverbs 17:17

Central Students

By Paul Webster, Youth Minister

Limited Sunday AM Student Services Return

We are excited to announce that on Sunday, February 7, 2021, Central Church of Christ will resume limited activities for children and youth on Sunday mornings. This will take place during the 9:30 a.m. worship hour with activities at the 11:00 a.m. worship to follow as soon as our attendance needs make that necessary.

Our Junior High and High School students will meet in the gym for energetic worship, relevant teaching, fun, and fellowship with your friends. Details and registration information can be found on the Central Student's Facebook page or in Central News.

Here's what you need to know...

We will begin meeting at the **9:30 a.m. hour on Sunday, February 7**. Student services will be added at the 11:00 a.m. service soon! Students in grades **6th through 12th Grade** will meet in the gym.

Students can enter the main entrance with their parents and check-in at the beginning of the West hallway. Volunteers will be available for check-in and to assist with drop-off and pick-up.

A parent **MUST** be registered and present at Central during the same worship hour in order for students under 16 to attend. Students who are 16 or older and can drive themselves may attend without a parent. Students who plan to drive themselves can reserve their spot by signing up each week or contacting Paul.

Register your family at <http://bit.ly/worshipseating>. Just fill out the form available each week starting Sunday, January 31 at noon. Be sure to fill in the Kids and Students attendance section if your children plan to join us. If they plan to attend the main service with you, no additional steps are needed. Registration closes on Thursdays at noon.

Kids and Students services will follow the same COVID-19 guidelines as our adult worship service (masks must be worn, limited capacity, seats 6 feet apart, etc.) with additional consideration for the needs of our children.

If you have any questions please contact Paul at youth@centrallive.net.

Super Bowl

Central Students will host a Super Bowl party on Sunday, February 7. Jr High and High School students, join us for food, dodgeball, Nerf games, fun, and fellowship, and we'll watch the Big Game too, of course! The doors open at 5:00 p.m. Kickoff is at 5:30 p.m. The party will end when the game is over (around 9:00 p.m.). Don't forget to invite a friend!



Gathering and Connect

Junior High and High School Students meet together on Sunday nights for the Gathering and Wednesday nights for Connect small groups. Both begin at 6:00 p.m. and last until 8:00 p.m. We hope to see you there!

Registering for Sunday Services

Please register for services by noon each Thursday. Out of an abundance of caution, masks **MUST** be worn during the **ENTIRE** service by all attendees. A livestream is available on our [YouTube channel](#) during the 9:30 service and can be replayed afterward. To register, [click here](#), email connect@centrallive.net, or call (815) 673-1581.

Sunday Service Times: 8:00, 9:30, and 11:00 a.m.

Worship and Arts

By Tony Ross, Creative Arts Minister

The Who, Not the What

Calvin M. Johansson says in his book *Music and Ministry: A Biblical Counterpoint*:

Christians face the prospect that through their actions (including their music) God is made known. Church music is testimony, and in worship believers use cultural expressions, such as music, to show what God has done, what He means, and who He is.

When I read that passage I was reminded that worship is for God: to show what He has done, what He means, and who He is. Often, we are tempted to make worship something that we do, something that's for us. We put a box around that style, that song, that way and say anything outside of it is not worship — at least not worship for us.

I've learned over the years that personal preference should always take a backseat to biblical truth. The words we are singing to God are always more important than the way we sing them. It's the who, not the what, that makes what we do in worship important.

This is not an easy concept to take to heart and even harder to put into practice. I'm not perfect with this and doubt I ever will be. But my prayer is that, as I grow, I can continually focus on the who and not the what.

Sympathies

We extend our deepest sympathies to the family and friends of John Barichello, Elinor Holcomb, Ed Missel Jr., and Carol Yedinak.

2020 and 2021 Budgets

Amount received in 2020 toward budget: \$671,601.08
Budgeted for 2020: \$697,549.00

Amount received Y-T-D toward budget: \$58,067.75
Budgeted for 2021: \$672,840.00

Attendance

1/3/21: 149
1/10/21: 163
1/17/21: 159

Involvement Corner

Senior Saints in the Smokies

Due to COVID-19 concerns, Johnson University has decided not to hold Senior Saints in the Smokies this year. Anyone who has already put down a deposit will receive a refund from the school. Please contact the church office if you have any additional questions about this cancellation.

Thank You Notes

Thanks to all for your donation to the Streatorland Community Food Pantry. Your generosity is greatly appreciated, and this will be used to buy food for those in need.

Engle Lane has been dedicated to encouraging and spreading a love of the arts in Streator and the surrounding areas for over 60 years, and we look forward to continuing that mission for many years to come. So it is with deep gratitude that we accept your kind donation of \$500. Your generosity will help promote the arts in the Illinois Valley and help Engle Lane Theatre bring quality live entertainment to our community.

Words cannot express how much the Streator Salvation Army appreciates those that were able to ring the bells this Christmas season. The goal for this year was \$40,000. Streator went above and beyond with the best year ever. \$50,507.86 was raised in red kettle donations this year. Streator is a giving and sharing community and a great place to live. Central Church of Christ raised \$1800.54, an amount everyone can be proud of.

Let's Connect

Visit us at:

2001 East Main Street
Streator, IL 61364

Call us at:

(815) 673-1581

Office Hours

Monday–Thursday: 9 a.m.–noon, 1–4 p.m.
Friday: 9 a.m.–noon

Online at:

www.centrallive.net

Find us on Facebook at:

www.facebook.com/centrallive.net