



# THE TORCH

## **If Life Gives You Lemons, Make Lemonade**

**By Joe Sanders, Senior Minister**

William Levine started to think his life might be in danger after his butcher shop in Brooklyn was robbed four times in a month! He searched for a bulletproof vest and found one, but the year was 1980, and bulletproof vests were a recent invention. Once he purchased one, many of the nearby business owners asked where they could get vests. Since the vests were not widely available, Levine started taking orders selling bulletproof vests as a side job.

Before long, he was making more money selling the vests than he did in his butcher shop. A short time later, Levine became the president of Body Armor International with a few dozen sales representatives who sold several hundred vests a month. It would have been easy for him to give up and close his butcher shop after four robberies in one month. Instead, Levine persevered and found success.

We have all heard the saying, “If life gives you lemons, make lemonade.” William Levine definitely made lemonade.

Levine’s story reminds us that trials, troubles, and tribulation do not make us failures. Failure happens when we give up, give in, and start becoming sour because we are sucking on lemons. Success comes out of our troubles like the early morning dawn rising up out of the darkness.

Whatever trouble we are facing, like work, family, financial, or Covid-19 problems, remember Jesus’ words of comfort, “I have told you this, so that you might have peace in your hearts because of me. While you are in the world, you will have to suffer. But cheer up! I have defeated the world” John 16:33 (CEV). Cheer up! No matter what circumstances come our way, we can drink our sweet lemonade because in Christ, we have success!

# Central Kids

By Darlene Lamb,  
Interim Children's Minister

## SuperStart Thank You

Thank you, Central Church family! Because of you, we were able to host our first virtual SuperStart for our pre-teen kids. The theme this year was Treasured. The kids learned where their true value comes from. With the many voices we hear from this world, it is a nice reminder to all of us that God — not people or things — defines who we are.

Thank You to ALL of the helpers who made SuperStart run smoothly. You blessed our kiddos so much and gave them an example of what serving Jesus looks like.

Also, thank you to the families who trusted your kids with us. We will continue to pray and come alongside you as you raise your amazing children to love Jesus and impact this world.

## Escape the Tomb

ESCAPE THE TOMB, a new family activity, is coming your way at the end of March. Your family will work together to find the TRUE meaning of Easter. Stay tuned for sign-up details.

## Sunday Opportunities

March brings the promise of spring's long-awaited fresh start. As we observe nature showing God's beauty and newness of life, let this be an opportunity for us to have a fresh start too.

Come join us on Sunday mornings as we are at a new beginning for bringing our children back. It has given us great joy to see them return. We are currently offering classes for kids in kindergarten through 5th grade during the 9:30 and 11:00 hours. Registration is required each Sunday.

Adults, are you looking for a place to serve in your church and share your talents and gifts? We would love to help you find that place. There is nothing better than giving your life like Jesus did, serving and loving others.



# Worship and Arts

By Tony Ross, Creative Arts Minister

## “King of My Heart”

One of the newer songs that we sing at Central is “King of My Heart.” The opening lyrics are this: “Let the King of my heart be the mountain where I run. The fountain I drink from, oh He is my song.” That lyric has always struck me. I’m always interested in the story behind songs, so I did a little research. Sarah McMillan wrote these words during a very difficult time in her life. This is a portion of the song’s story:

This song is about the tension we often find ourselves in this life. At the time I wrote this song, I was processing the divorce of my parents and at the same time experiencing the overwhelming joy of having children of my own. Both experiences changed my identity so deeply. I wrote “King of My Heart” to remind myself that there was no joy or sorrow that could dilute the pure goodness of who God was. Everything I thought I lost, could actually be found in the force of His goodness.

I like that phrase, “in the force of His goodness.” I think we would do well to think of God more as a force at times. All too often we think of God as a Father, helper, and friend. None of those are bad things at all. In fact, they are good things and true things. But thinking of God as a force moves Him from someone who is merely walking along with us to something that is paving a way for us. It reminds me of what Exodus 13:21 says about when God was with the nation of Israel:

The Lord went ahead of them. He guided them during the day with a pillar of cloud, and he provided light at night with a pillar of fire. This allowed them to travel by day or by night.

He was viewed as a force of nature. A beacon, a protector. Remember that whatever you’re going through, God is a force, not a bystander. He is most definitely with us, but He is also going before us.

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## Sympathies

We extend our deepest sympathies to the family and friends of Kristin Bacha, Lura (Neitzel) Gilkerson, Jean Harrison, Sheryl (Camp) Maurer, and Lee Sember.

## Baptisms

Harper Pellino  
Douglas Ramzey

J.D. and Sandra Defenbaugh  
Lilly Wonders

# Central Students

By Paul Webster, Youth Minister

## NERF and Games Hangout

Students, come hang out with your friends at Central on Saturday, March 13 for NERF games, board games, pizza, and more. Doors will open at 10:00 a.m. We'll play games for a few hours, eat lunch, and then set up the gym for Sunday morning worship the next day. Be sure to invite your friends! Parents, we will finish up around 2:00 p.m. for pickup. We hope to see you there!

## Kids and Students Meet Sunday Mornings at 9:30 and 11:00!

Did you know that we have limited activities for children and teens available during the 9:30 a.m. *and* 11:00 a.m. worship services on Sunday mornings? Registration is required and is available on the same form used for our regular Sunday worship services found at <http://bit.ly/worshipseating>.

## 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!

## The Vine at LCU is April 10

The Vine Conference 2021 is a one-day retreat to engage and challenge high school students (grades 9-12) to own their faith and draw deeper into the Word. Explore God's Word through engaging sessions, dynamic worship, interactive breakouts, and much more!

The Vine Conference 2021 is scheduled for **April 10** on the campus of Lincoln Christian University (LCU). It's open to all students in grades 9-12 who want to learn about the Gospel message and have a blast doing it.

Mark your calendars. Total cost for the trip is \$30 *if signed up by Sunday, March 14*. The cost includes the conference, travel and meals. *After March 14, the cost is \$40*. All forms and payments are due at sign-up. Forms are available at the kiosk in the foyer or online.

Contact us at [youth@centrallive.net](mailto:youth@centrallive.net) for more information.



## Deposits, Payments Due for CIY MOVE & MIX

Parents, if your child is attending CIY's Move or MIX conferences this summer, all deposits and forms are due as soon as possible and can be turned in at the Church office or at the Welcome Desk. This includes the \$65 deposit due at sign-up and the second \$65 deposit, which was due by February 7. In addition to deposits, three payments of \$90 for Move or \$75 for MIX are due by March 7, April 4, and May 2.

As always, scholarships are available for any family needing financial assistance. Just contact the Church office or talk with Paul to discuss details. Move takes place from Monday, June 21 through Friday, June 25 at Hope College in Holland, Michigan. MIX takes place on the campus of Indiana Wesleyan University in Marion, Indiana, from Monday, July 5 through Friday, July 9.



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## 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](mailto:connect@centrallive.net), or call (815) 673-1581.

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

# Involvement Corner

## Message from the Elders

This last year, CCC celebrated its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary since its humble beginnings in 1870. In 1832, a group referred to as the “Campbellites,” who were led by Thomas and Alexander Campbell and Barton Stone, started a movement to restore Christian worship to what the first church practiced. Only 38 years into that movement, CCC placed a firm foundation on the word of God and has spent the last 150 years worshipping and practicing like the first Church did in the New Testament.

This last year, the Elders at CCC updated the “What We Believe” statement for the church. We relied only on the Bible as we meticulously went through the statement. We tried to simplify it while making it clear that our beliefs coincide with what the first church believed as documented in the New Testament. The Elders have now been updating the “What We Practice” statement for the church, which includes many things we practice, such as baptism by submersion, weekly communion, the priesthood of every believer and much more. We again are relying on the Bible and following the same practices that the first churches did in the New Testament — what CCC has practiced for 150 years and what Christian Churches and Church of Christ followers have practiced since 1832.

The Elders are very much looking forward to the day when we can fully return to worship. We are praying for a revival of the church and have been preparing for that to happen. We have been organizing the many ministries and look forward to making it easy for all members to get involved in some aspect of the church. Please be praying for a quick end to the Covid-19 crisis and be thinking of those you can invite to church when we can open safely at full capacity.

Finally, be sure to ask Elders any questions you may have. It is easy to have misconceptions or misunderstandings of why or how the church is operating. Why get secondhand information when you can easily go straight to any Elder for answers?

--Jim Threadgill

## College Scholarships

Central’s College Scholarship applicants need to pick up an application in the church office or from the kiosk and return it, completed, to the office by May 1, 2021, to be considered for the Fall 2021 college semester. To qualify, you must be enrolling as a full-time student (minimum of 12 college credit hours).

## Thank You Note

Thank you so much for including us in the Night to Shine event. We all had a wonderful time! Thank you!

--Streator Unlimited

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## 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](http://www.centrallive.net)

### Find us on Facebook at:

[www.facebook.com/centrallive.net](https://www.facebook.com/centrallive.net)

## 2021 Budget

Amount received Y-T-D toward budget: \$116,334.55

Budgeted for 2021: \$672,840.00

## Attendance

1/24/21: 161

1/31/21: 105

2/7/21: 178

2/14/21: 180

2/21/21: 218

*Rejoice in the Lord always.*

Philippians 4:4