The Central Connection

MESSAGES & OPPORTUNITIES FROM CENTRAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH TO YOU!

September 2010

THE CHRISTIAN ATHEIST

Charles Blondin was a world-renowned tightrope artist and acrobat. On June 30, 1859, before a stunned crowd of 100,000 excited onlookers, Blondin was the first person to cross Niagara Falls by tightrope. He crossed 1,100 feet on a single three-inch hemp cord, strung from 160 feet above the falls on one side to a spot 270 feet above the falls on the other. The breathless assembly watched him accomplish, step by slow step, a feat most believed impossible.

But Blondin was just getting started. In the years to come, the daring entertainer crossed again and again: on stilts, in a sack, even pushing a wheelbarrow! The story goes that an exuberant onlooker called out, "You could cross with a man in that wheelbarrow!" Blondin agreed and invited the man to climb in. The spectator nervously declined.

My dysfunctional relationship with God was often like that. I've always believed in God, just not enough to trust him with my whole life in his wheelbarrow. I knew God could fulfill his promises, but I was never sure he'd do it for me. My selfish Christian Atheist view was that God existed for me, rather than I for him. If he'd do what I thought he should, I'd trust him more. If he'd come through for me, I'd give him more of my life. If he made my life better and pain-free, I'd believe him more passionately. But anytime God didn't meet my expectations, we had a problem. God created me in his image. I returned the favor and created him in mine. The kind of God I wanted to believe in was this: if he's not what I want then he can't have my whole life...

Every day, we'll choose to live out our belief in God instead of believing in the world or ourselves. When we truly know God, rather than living ashamed of our past of doubting God's love for us, we can daily enjoy his grace and unconditional love and acceptance. As our faith and prayer life grow, we'll see his goodness–even in our trials–and grow to forgive as he has freely

I've always believed in God,
just not enough to trust him
with my whole life
in his wheelbarrow.

forgiven us. Instead of believing we can never change, we can let his unlimited power transform us and lead us out of a life paralyzed by fear and worry. Because God isn't just someone we believe in but is our life, we won't seek security and happiness in the things of the world but will find them in his presence and will. As he consumes us, strengthened by his church, we'll seize opportunities to share his love with people daily. The choice is ours.

Taken from *The Christian Atheist* by Craig Groeschel. ©2010, Zondervan

MUSIC NOTES

And-a-one--And-a-two...

Put Saturday, September 18 on your calendar!! Do you like to tap your feet or clap your hands when you hear music? I do. Except for slower music (when I tend to sway or rock), I can't keep myself still when I hear a good beat!

Come one, come all to a Rhythm Workshop in the Fellowship Hall at 10:30 a.m. on September 18. This is especially for choir members; but if you like to move to music and want to learn about rhythm you're more than welcome to come.

This is a fun, learning experience. Be prepared to get up, move around, and find that beat!

It would be helpful to me to know how many are coming.☺ Please let me know by phone (886-2952) or by email at arveo@ntelos.net if you will attend. I look forward to seeing many of you there. Let's get rhythm!

Thanks,
Sherry von Oeyen
Director of Music Ministries

It is the time of year when we begin to plan for Central's upcoming financial year. Together we can help many in our community and around the world if we all commit to giving our best to our church in time and gifts.

Thoughts about stewardship will be discussed starting Sunday, September 26, and will continue through our covered-dish luncheon on Sunday, October 24. Please consider how you will be able to contribute to Central so that we can continue to make a positive difference.

Work area chairpersons are asked to have 2011 Spending Plan requests in to the Church Office no later than Sunday, September 5. Figures will be compiled and presented to members of the Finance Committee on September 8.

Josh Gutshall, Chairperson
Finance Committee

The Central Connection is the monthly newsletter of Central United Methodist Church, Lewis and Beverley Streets, Staunton, VA.
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IN MINISTRY

The Mission of Central UMC is to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

Pastor	Stephanie M. Sault
Pastoral Assistant	Daniel K. Purdom
Minister of Music/Organist	Sherry von Oeyen
Church Secretary	Agnes Campbell
Child's Play Director	Jo Ann B. Black
Custodian	Janet Nuckoles
Retired Missionary Professor	Hunter P. Mabry
Retired Pastor	David D. Reed
Professor MBC	Kenneth A. Beals
District Superintendent	D. Michael Houff
Resident Bishop	Charlene Payne Kammerer

Help Complete our Email Directory!

For quicker and more efficient communication, we are compiling email addresses for members and friends of Central. Please review the current listing in the Gathering Room and make corrections and additions as needed.

A big "Thank You" to those who have already responded! Corrections and additions may also be sent to the compiler, Hunter Mabry, at hmabry@gmail.com or 943-5682.

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THE WIRED WORD

The Wired Word Adult Sunday School Class has a new meeting location

The adult Sunday School class which originated this past academic year as "The Shack" book study has evolved with a new curriculum and location. The class meets every Sunday morning at 10 AM in the church library. This class is scheduled to coincide with our children's Sunday school class and so is an ideal class for parents who have children in our Sunday school to attend. Others are welcome as well.

The class is using a curriculum called "The Wired Word" which focuses on Christian responses to current events. Each class is an independent session so this is also a great class for those persons whose schedules prevent them from attending on a regular basis. Recent topics have included the immigration issue, the oil spill, the internet privacy issue, etc.

Come and experience a lively discussion as we struggle to understand our Christian responses to these and other important issues. Contact Dan Purdom or Jim Printy if you have any questions.

CHILDREN'S CHOIR

Children's Choir Practice to Resume on September 12

Central's Children's Choir led by Jennifer Reed will resume practicing after a brief summer hiatus on Sunday, September 12. The choir is composed of children ages 3-7. Practice will be held weekly during the first 15 minutes of our children's Sunday school class which meets every Sunday morning at 10 AM on the second floor of Central's education wing. The choir will be working on preparing for this year's Christmas program and other potential performance events.

Parents, this is a great opportunity to get your kids involved in the church's music and Christian Education programs at one convenient time. Contact Jennifer Reed if you have any questions.

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MINISTRY OPPORTUNITY

The church has been contacted with a wonderful volunteer opportunity. Augusta Health's Hospice of the Shenandoah will be offering volunteer training from September 20 through October 14.

Registration for the training, which costs $10, ends Sept 13. A brochure with more information will be posted near the Gathering Room.

Fun for All

(well, maybe not the dog!)

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION TEAM PLANS ALL-CHURCH FELLOWSHIP ACTIVITIES

Central's Christian Education Team is planning to offer monthly all-church fellowship activities beginning with an Ice Cream Social and Game Night on Friday, October 8th (see below for details).

These activities are intended to engage our entire church family and provide an opportunity for inter-generational fellowship. We look forward to seeing you there. Contact Dan Purdom with questions.

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ALL-CHURCH ICE CREAM SOCIAL & GAME NIGHT

What: All-Church Fellowship Activity

When: Friday, October 8, 7:00 p.m.

Where: Church Fellowship Hall

Who: All church members, friends & family are welcome

Bring: Your favorite ice cream topping and a favorite game to share

Questions: Contact Dan Purdom or Emily Stumb

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QUOTE:

"Strive to be first:
- ✓ first to nod,
- ✓ first to smile,
- ✓ first to compliment,
- ✓ and first to forgive."

—Anonymous

BE #1

After a "toasty" summer, Child's Play is beginning a new year with an "Open House" for our new children and their families on September 13. Our first day is the next morning at 9:00. All of the quiet Tuesday and Thursday mornings are gone! You members are welcome to come by the door and wave to our "little ones". They love to make faces at whom ever they can.

This year, there will be some new teachers as Cynthia Botkin needed more work days and Gretta Cason is a Home School Mom. We wish them well. Our new highly qualified teacher is Emily Sproul Cox. She graduated from the University of Richmond with a B.A. in History and a Masters in Education. She is certified to teach pre-kindergarten through fifth grade and she has experience in the public schools. Her 2 boys attended Child's Play and her daughter will be with us this year. Emily is married to Steve Cox and is the daughter of Dr. and Mrs. George Sproul of Staunton. She is an active member of Emmanuel Episcopal Church.

We will need another teacher to help with our 10 children. Look for that information in the next news letter.

Child's Play began as a Central United Methodist Church sponsored program in September 1992. It was and is an answer for many parents who want a safe, loving and caring place for their child in a Christian setting with other children their age. We have always tried to make it affordable for the family. I thank Central for all your support through the years. This year the church will receive $50 per month toward utilities and services.

Jo Ann B. Black
Director and Teacher

Haiti

HAITIAN MEN & BOYS CHOIR COMING TO STAUNTON

When: Monday, September 13
7:00 p.m.

Where: Trinity Episcopal Church
214 West Beverley Street

Cost: Free, but tickets required
(and they're going fast!)

A limited number of tickets are available at Central UMC, Trinity Episcopal Church, The News Leader, or reserve at proger.bowen@gmail.com

The earthquake changed the center of their world. Their Holy Trinity Cathedral and thousand-student music school in Port au Prince collapsed into rubble. Scores of lives were lost all around the church complex. The philharmonic orchestra's instruments were crushed. Choristers in the elite men and boys choir, Les Petits Chanteurs, lost their homes. They sleep in makeshift tent cities now.

Miraculously, seven months after the earthquake, Les Petits Chanteurs has regrouped — and they will perform in the Shenandoah Valley in September. The 30-voice choir, accompanied by a string ensemble from the Holy Trinity Philharmonic Orchestra, will be touring the United States, and they have agreed to stop in Staunton, VA. The focus of the tour is to raise awareness in the United States about the rich musical traditions in Haiti and the importance of rebuilding Holy Trinity Music School, a keystone in Haiti's cultural life. Les Petits Chanteurs is a select group of performers ranging in age from 8 to 18. It is currently under the direction of Nicole St. Victor.

Over the years, representative groups from Holy Trinity Music School have performed at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., Lincoln Center in New York City, Tanglewood with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, with the Chicago Children's Choir, and at more than 90 churches across the United States. Holy Trinity Music School is the only music school of its kind in Haiti and depends upon charitable support to sustain its mission to all the people of Haiti. Its buildings are rubble now, as is the surrounding Holy Trinity Cathedral complex, but the choir and orchestra are rising again!

It is our hope to fill Trinity Episcopal Church to its 500 person capacity on September 13. A free will offering will be taken at intermission. We will help Haiti stand and sing.

For additional information, please contact: progerbowen@gmail.com or (540) 292-6423

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CONSERVATION EFFORTS

You may have noticed that we have recently begun using mugs for our coffee in the Gathering Room on Sunday mornings. We've been phasing out the use of Styrofoam products, and instead are using cups that are made from recycled/biodegradable material. These are just two small ways we are trying to be better stewards of God's resources.

We are also trying to be more conscious of our energy usage at the church, which can save money and help the environment. We appreciate your assistance and suggestions for more ways we can be better stewards of God's gifts.
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2010 SCHOOL OF CHRISTIAN MISSION

Every summer, the United Methodist Women meet at the School of Christian Mission held across the United States. The participants have opportunities not only to worship and fellowship with other UMW members from the different local churches of their states, but also to deepen their understanding of relevant faith topics. The topics this year were: *The Beauty and Courage of Sudan*; *Joy to the World–Mission in the Age of Global Christianity* (mission and evangelism); and *John's Epistles–For the Love of God*. The programs prepared for the school were not only for adults, but also for youth and children–an affair for the whole family.

Esther Mabry and I attended the School of Christian Mission held at the Virginia United Methodist Church Assembly Center in Blackstone. Esther took the study about *The Beauty and Courage of Sudan*, which I had taken last year; and I took *Joy to the World. Mission in the Age of Global Christianity*.

The Beauty and Courage of Sudan

Since Sudan declared its independence from foreign rule in 1956 it has been at war for economic, political, racial, religious and cultural reasons. The author of this study found that as differences in these basic life areas stirred the winds of war, uncertain rains heightened the quarrel over resources---scores went hungry, thirst and violence escalated and affected the life of tens of thousands in this ancient land. Yet at Sudan's core is beauty. According to a Polish journalist, Ryszard Kapuscinski: "Along with the landscape's beauty, there is an interior beauty—the spirit of courage; a richness of tradition, antiquity, cultures, and natural resources; human interchange; and endurance in all its mystery. Sudan also contains a richness of contradictions. Its beauty contrasts with and suffers from the carnage and violence that has marked much of its long history. Sudan's many ethnicities and languages both enrich the culture and become the cause for conflict.

Joy to the World-
Mission in the Age of Global Christianity

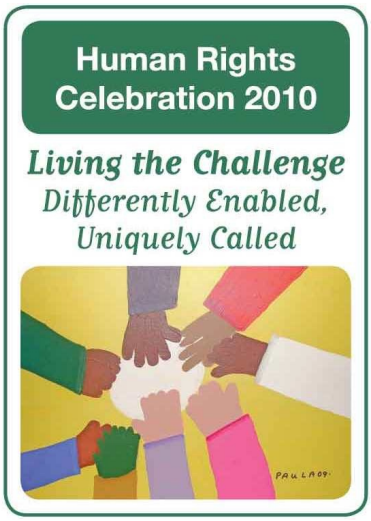
While, *Joy to the World* is a shout of celebration, penned by the great hymn writer Isaac Watts in 1819, it is also a beloved Christmas carol sung everywhere by Christians. It brings the message not only about the birth of Jesus, but about the fundamental changes brought into the world by the coming of Jesus Christ. John 10:10 says: Jesus came to bring abundant life in place of human limitations, brokenness, and death. The carol is also a glorious affirmation of Christian hope, "the Lord is come," and is the beginning of Christian mission and evangelism. It is our response to the Good News that God is present in Jesus Christ, who came into the world with a message of forgiveness, joy, and hope for all God's creation. Our proof of God's presence is the life and ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the coming of the Holy Spirit. In God's name, we go into the world to share the Good News.

John's Epistles-For the Love of God

This year's spiritual growth study is the Epistle of John; and they suggested that this study be called *For the Love of God* because John's Epistle deals with the love God has for us and for all creation and the love we have for God. It is also for the reason that in the love we have for others that we express and experience the love God has for us. This study was conducted by Rev. Clarence Brown from Annandale UMC, a very dynamic preacher and study leader.

It was a very wonderful and rewarding four days Esther and I spent at the assembly with the other members of the UMW in the Virginia Conference and this is because of the School of Christian Mission.

Shared by: Luz M. de Tablan
UMW President



CHURCH WOMEN UNITED

Annual Meeting

Friday, Sept. 10

Covenant Presbyterian Church, 2001 N. Augusta St.

Registration / Coffee 9:30 a.m.

Parking: Northernmost exit. Leads to Sanctuary Side Door. Handicap accessible.

All women are invited!

(The poster artwork was created by Paula Lapeyrouse, an artist with Terrebone (LA) Association for Retarded Citizens.)

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For the period 01/01/2010 – 08/16/2010

Income needed to fund Spending Plan through 08/16/2010.	$211,491
Our Spending Plan for the year 2010.	$343,673
Amount Received year to date.	$155,077
Expenses Paid year to date.	$158,077
Apportionments Due year to date.	$41,263
Apportionments Paid year to date.	$6,000

APPORTIONMENTS 101: EPISCOPAL FUND

What is it?

The Episcopal Fund supplies United Methodist bishops worldwide with much-needed support. Bishops have a very special role as they are elected and consecrated to speak to the church and from the church into the world. Their role is both practical and visionary since bishops oversee and promote the church's spiritual and temporal interests.

Why give to the Episcopal Fund? Bishops oversee the United Methodist faith community. Their guidance depends on our financial support. The fund is a source of revenue for office operations, travel salaries, health insurance, pensions and other expenses of the bishops. The fund supports 69 active bishops and approximately 125 retired bishops and surviving spouses in the five U.S. Jurisdictions and the Central Conferences and Europe, Africa and the Philippines.

The bishops in The United Methodist Church oversee and are responsible for the congregations in their respective episcopal areas. Bishops determine which church each pastor will be appointed. Bishops counsel with pastors, encourage congregations and lead in many ways. Without bishops, churches and pastors would be very much on their own. Bishops, supported by the Episcopal Fund, lend a face to connectional ministry.

(Info from website umgiving.org
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Central's 2010 Episcopal Fund apportionment request is $1,540.

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Quote:

People are drawn to enthusiasm. Where there is no enthusiasm, there is no passion. Where there is no passion, there is no great living. Are we meant simply to be lukewarm? From antiquity to the present, indifference in any realm has prohibited people from living whole and happy lives.

—Steve Goodier, *Apple Seeds*

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September
2010

Return Service Requested

Planning an event or meeting at church?

Have you put it on the church calendar?

Occasionally a private meeting or non-church-related-function is held in our facility but may not be shown on our bulletin or newsletter calendars. Sometimes, a "pick-up" or spontaneous meeting is given an appropriate not-previously-reserved space.

So if your group wants to meet in a specific room—and to help prevent duplicate bookings of a specific space—please contact the Church Secretary to reserve your meeting space.

BTW *[by the way*], this is just a "forewarned is forearmed" "stitch in time saves nine" friendly reminder. We haven't had any major problems with this, and with everyone's help we can keep it that way!

CHURCH SIGN SEEN IN ENGLAND:

**Adam blamed Eve.
Eve blamed the snake
and the snake didn't
have a leg to stand on.**

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