

SPECIAL...ALL THE TIME!

A guy shows up late for work. The boss yells "You should have been here at 8:30!" He replies: "Why? What happened at 8:30?"

By the time you read this, many of you will have taken down the decorations. The lights of Christmas will be turned off in most homes.. Nothing wrong with that. In fact, it doesn't look right to me when I see Christmas lights on a house in July. I don't know why but it makes me feel a little sad. For many, the "magic" of Christmas is also fading. It does not have to be that way. The wise men came some time after the birth of Christ. He was not in the manger when they arrived. Matthew 2 says they found Him in a house.

I love the wise men. I know that "wisdom" was in their job description but not all "wise men" or "wise women" really live up to the title. These men impress me. They gave more than gold, frankincense and myrrh. They gave their time and hard work. Travelling was not easy. Whether they rode camels or horses or whatever their transportation, it took a lot of effort to get to Bethlehem. There were no truck stops with snacks and indoor restaurants. No Holiday Inns. And they risked their lives. They were passing through other kingdoms. They may have had an entourage with them for protection but it would not be enough if a king wanted to take their treasures.

They went first to Jerusalem. King Herod told them, "When you find this baby, let me know where He's at so I can come and worship Him." They saw through Herod's lies. He was evil. Jealous. Power hungry. They found the infant with Mary and Joseph in a house. They didn't just give their gifts although that was a good offering. They bow down and worship Him. And they give their lives. How do I know? Matthew 2:12 says that when they left Bethlehem, they went home "by "another route."

Herod would be angry. He was not a world power but I believe he had enough power to chase them down and make them pay. They chose to be faithful to Christ even at the risk of their lives. Even though they probably didn't understand fully who He is.

I believe we should leave the Christmas season by "another way." Our life's path can be changed by our love for Christ. A couple saw a magic show in Vegas. After a spectacular trick, the wife yelled out, "How did you do it? The magician said, "If I tell you, I would have to kill you." The woman yelled back, "Then just tell my husband."

The magi were probably risking their lives. We often say they got there late. I don't think they did. Some only worship Christ at the manger. Or they worship at the manger and the empty tomb. Church attendance is great at Christmas and Easter. I am grateful for people who worship in January.

Jesus isn't just special at Christmas. Or Easter. He's special all the time. When the lights come down, THE LIGHT still shines. Does He shine in your life?

--Pastor Rick



CAROLING THIS SATURDAY

(PACK BOXES AT 10:00AM)

Join us for a great time as we go caroling at **5:00 pm**. We'll meet at the church,

break off into our caravans and spread our good cheer! Then we'll gather at the church for a meal.

We're packing the goodie bags that morning at **10:00 am**. If you would like to donate something for the baskets (candy, fruit, cookies) have it here by that morning!

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS VIDEO THIS SUNDAY

Plan on being here this Sunday for the showing of the Children's Christmas Video during the worship service. A lot of hard work went into this video—you won't want to miss it!

If you would like a DVD of the children's program, write "DVD" by your name on the Fellowship Pad Sunday morning. There's no set charge for these – just whatever you care to contribute to the church's video ministry. Just write "DVD" on your check memo line or offering envelope. The DVDs will be ready around the first of the year.

SINGING GROUP EARLY PRACTICE

The Singing Group will be gathering at **8:00 am this Sunday** to rehearse the Hallelujah Chorus—come and add your voice to this powerful song!

God so loved...



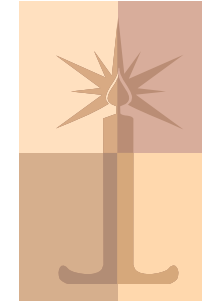
that God Gave.

CHRISTMAS SPECIAL OFFERING

The Christmas Special Offering supports the ministries of *our* region—from developing new churches, training camp counselors, and, as we've experienced, support when congregations are "in between" ministers.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

Our annual Christmas will be **Friday**. The program will include scriptures and carols. traditional candlelit candle in the Night."



mas Eve Candlelight Service **December 24th at 7:00 p.m.** The service will close with the lighting, each person lifting their darkness while we sing "Silent Night."



CHRISTMAS DAY LUNCH

We're hosting a Community Christmas Day Lunch here at the church from 11 am – 1:30 pm. There are many ways to plug into this event!

Sign-up sheets are on the L-table by the sanctuary entrance. Sign up if you'd like to (1) come and eat with others on Christmas, (2) help serve, (3) contribute a dish, or all of the above. Or just phone in your "reservation" (543-2292).

Last year we served over 80 meals and lifted hearts and spirits. Let's come together again this year to make this event a success!

PLUG-IN IN 2011!

As we head to the end of the year, it begins the season of sign-ups! We have had a fantastic response to the call for volunteers so far, but want to leave the opportunity open for anyone who would like to be a greeter, tell Children's Stories, and make coffee for the Sunday School hour.

Either contact the church office at 543-2292 or yscc@mchsi.com to sign-up, or just write a note on the pew pad.

2010 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

If you would like a record of your 2010 giving for tax purposes, just ask Financial Secretary **Carol Yoder**.

LANDSCAPING SPONSORSHIPS & MEMORIALS

The Landscape and Outdoor Sign Committee has been working hard—you've probably noticed the beautiful new landscaping on the east side of the church. Some of those fixtures are temporary—to be replaced by new versions, like the benches. And there are elements that are going to be added later, like trellises and fencing.

The committee has decided to offer some of these new fixtures for sponsorship or memorial, so if you would like to participate, please fill out the form below and return to the church office or drop it in the offering plate.

Sunday School Winter Quarter

Join us for some time for fun, learning, and inspiration. Thanks to our fantastic Fall teachers, and a big thank you to all the teachers volunteering this quarter!

Nursery: Jill Hohlbauch & Cindy Johnson

Preschool: Jeannene Yantis

K—2nd grade: Randa Carson

3rd—5th grade: Sandy Dolan &
Evelyn Hale

6th-12th grade: Jim & Carol Yoder

Adults: Choose the class that
speaks to where you are
in your journey.

- **KJV Adult Bible Class, "Assuring Hope"**—upstairs adult classroom
- **"Go Fish—Becoming a Disciple and a Witness of Christ"**: Rev. Rick Williams—Genesis Room
- **Coffee Hour**—Fellowship Hall. Relax & chat over coffee.



Vine Street Christian Church
Church Landscaping and Sign Project

PLUG IN! RECHARGE! LIGHT UP!

Items Available for Sponsorship
or Memorial Gifts - Phase I

- 2 Seating Benches -- \$200 each
- 6 Large Pots for Seasonal Plantings -- \$100 each
- 2 Rain Barrels -- \$150 each
- 3 Trellises -- \$150 each
- 1 Compost Bin -- \$150
- 4 Large Trees -- \$200 each

Also Available for Sponsorship or Memorial:

*Cedar Fencing for Play Area on NW Corner
of Church -- \$2000

*Pergola - Talk to Barry Williams or Mac
Condill for details.

Your Name: _____

Item: _____ Amount Enclosed: _____

In Memory of: _____

OR

In Honor of: _____

OR

Donated by: _____

OUT OF THE OFFICE...

Secretary Shana Condill will be out of the office from Tuesday, Dec. 21 through Tuesday, Dec. 28. And Rev. Williams will be out of the office beginning Monday, Dec. 27th.

Baby News!

Dear Church Family,

It is with great praise to God and thanksgiving that we tell you of the arrival of our newest grandchildren.

Isaac James Platzbecker, 5 lbs 7 oz, and his sister, Ellis Rae Platzbecker, 6 lbs 7 oz., were safely and healthfully born on December 7, 2010. They are the first children of Nicholas and Leigh Platzbecker of 825 Franklin Ave., Winthrop Harbor, IL 60096. Mother, babies, and Dad are all doing well.

The pregnancy had been one of high risk. We thank you all for your prayers and expressions of caring as it progressed to this joyous outcome.

In Christian love,

Hewitt and Marilu Hafer

Thank You's

Vine Street Christian Church Family,

Just wanted to say "Thank You" for your prayers and concerns during my recent illness. It's just wonderful to be remembered when you are ill.

Love,

Renie Willoughby

The big day is over thanks to some 42 different families doing a great job. That does not include all the families that contributed pies, cakes, or salads. Thanks to all from the CWF and church. We made over \$3300 at the Bazaar—a little less than last year, but well worth the effort and fellowship.

(con't on next page)

May our money be blessed and used for furthering the Lord's work.

--CWF

Thank you for all the thoughts and prayers during my hospital stays and time at home. Hopefully I am home to stay. Visitors are welcome.

--Alice Ray

POINSETTIA DONORS 2010

GIVEN IN MEMORY /
HONOR OF

BY

Pat Hafer Hewitt & Marilu Hafer
Clarence & Hazel Arganbright Edwards Family
Virgil Williams Wileva Williams
My son, James Farrell Yarnell Emogene Burrows
Judy Crist David, Carol, Haley & Zeb Crist
Marty Benard David, Carol, Haley & Zeb Crist
Michael Collins David, Carol, Haley & Zeb Crist
Ella Mae Artis Sandy Dolan
Gene Hoke Cornelia Davison

Jim & Anna Bray Brad & Sue Wells
Sharon Williams Barry & Sue Williams
Maureen Huckleberry Ellen Miller
Rodney Miller Ellen Miller
Larry Morris & Leon Elliott Margie Elliott
Kenneth Winings Future Builders/Willing Workers
Our Parents Lyle & Ann Huffman
Jason Ray Buck, Shana, Benjamin & Ayla Condill
Ross Taylor Buck, Shana, Benjamin & Ayla Condill
My brother, Lloyd S. Hale Evelyn Hale
Our daughter, Jill & Our Parents Wally & Renie Willoughby
Donald Crowe Estline Crowe
Brian Vandenbrink Erin Tohill & Chloe
Our Parents Gale & Janice Pearce
Our Parents Bob & Rose Lundquist
Bernice Dowell Cornelia Davison
Our Grandparents Rick & Melissa Williams
Dwight "Skeeter" Singer Ann Singer
Paul & Betty White Cindy Johnson & Family
Murv Harpster The Yantis Family
Calvin & Felice Robertson Jim & Carol Yoder
John & Alta Yoder Jim & Carol Yoder

Our Church CWF

Our Church CWF

We are grateful for those who have contributed poinsettias to the beauty of our sanctuary for Advent and Christmas – and to those in whose memory and honor the flowers have been given.

JANUARY 2011 BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 - Marcia Lowder Stiff
Justin Michael Taylor | 17 - Sue Wells |
| 3 - Cornelia Davison | 19 - Adam Hopkins
Kevin Conlin |
| 4 - Anita Burnett
Kristianna (Bursa) Myus | 20 - Justin Tinkle |
| 8 - Matthew & Juliana Jones (A) | 21 - Mary Beth Condill
Jordan Watkins
Aubrey Benard
Rob & Sandy Fustin (A) |
| 10 - Haley Crist
Richard Buckler
John McGrath
Liam Bursa | 22 - Sue Perrine
Wayne Blaase
Dave Camp |
| 11 - Austin Abercrombie
Ellen Miller
Lloyd Gayle Daugherty
Bill & Bev Dean (A) | 23 - Kyle Hendrickson |
| 12 - Mary Foster | 24 - Ernetta Ohnesorge
Wally Willoughby |
| 13 - Loretta Grant | 25 - Randa Carson |
| 14 - James Hendrickson
Ayla Elizabeth June Condill
Brock Everett Suding | 26 - Matthew Jones |
| | 28 - David & Beth Camp (A) |
| | 30 - Joan Kingery |
| | 31 - Betty Ellison |

**Please let us know if anything in this list needs to be corrected.
Thanks – and Happy Anniversary!**

JANUARY 2011



EVERY SUNDAY	8:25 am SINGING GROUP PRACTICE 9:00 am SUNDAY SCHOOL 10:00 am WORSHIP
EVERY MONDAY	5:30 pm Weight Watchers

Saturday, Dec. 18 10:00 am Pack Christmas goodie bags
5:00 pm Caroling and Dinner

SUNDAY, DEC. 19 4TH SUNDAY IN ADVENT
10:00 am Children's Christmas Video

Friday, Dec. 24 7:00 pm Christmas Eve Service

Saturday, Dec. 25 11:00-1:30 Community Christmas
Day Lunch

SUNDAY, DEC. 26

Saturday, Jan 1 New Year's Day

SUNDAY, JAN. 2 *Food Pantry Sunday*

Tuesday, Jan. 4 11:00 am Prayer Group

Wednesday, Jan. 5 1:30 pm CWF meeting

Saturday, Jan. 8 8:30 am Ladies Birthday Breakfast
@ Yoder's Restaurant

SUNDAY, JAN. 9 *Home Communion Sunday*

Wednesday, Jan. 12 10:00 am Women's Bible Study
7:00 pm Board

SUNDAY, JAN. 16 11:30 am *Elders meet after worship*

SUNDAY, JAN. 23

Monday, Jan. 24 Noon VISITOR article deadline

Tuesday, Jan. 25 6:00 pm Arthur Home Service

Wednesday, Jan. 26 9-11 am ToeNail Clinic
10:00 am Women's Bible Study

SUNDAY, JAN. 30

Please be Praying for...

The family & friends of **Craig Fleener**, who died Dec. 1.

The family & friends of **Margie Sentel**, who died in early December.

The family & friends of **Bill Worker**, friend of Tosha Duzan, who died Dec. 8 as a result of injuries sustained in a motorcycle accident.

On the Prayer List

Cherryl Conlin, recovering at home.

Alice Ray

Jan Ray

Beryl Edwards

Max Duzan

JD Scott

Wally Willoughby

Keith Phillips, cancer

Neda Greahouse, Estline Crowe's daughter, cancer.

Geraldine Strong, Amy's mother-in-law, cancer.

Philo Schrock, lymphoma

Alvin "Sunshine" Schrock, cancer.

Nim Gray, pancreatic cancer

Arthur Wayne Hughes, Emogene Burrows' nephew, cancer

Youth Calendar Notes:

- *No more Wednesday afternoon elementary youth meetings until January 10 due to the holidays*
- *January 28 Area-Wide Winter Youth Gathering here from 2-5 p.m.*

- A quietly joyful service of carols, sharing and communion. Sermon: "Pondering All These Things in our Hearts"

MEALS ON WHEELS

We are responsible for Meals On Wheels in January. To volunteer to help deliver meals one or more days, call CORNELIA DAVISON at 543-2209

**Tuesday - Thursday
December 25-27**

**Secretary's Office will be closed this week,
except Friday afternoon.**