

the caller

A Bi-Monthly Publication of Central Christian Church, San Jose

Christmas in the Heart

Christmas is centered in the heart, because it began in the heart of God. Father God wanted relationship with the people He created so much that He sent His Son to live in the womb of a poor young girl, be birthed in unhygienic conditions, and grow up in a peasant family. God's heart is about communicating love, truth, and LIFE. As we think about our own Christmas celebration, we must consider how this message of love, truth, and LIFE can be communicated, relished, and celebrated—and how wise people all over the world still worship Jesus.

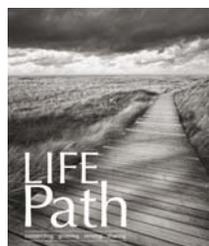
At Central for six years, we've been discussing how to celebrate Christmas differently—a way that is not so complicated, not so stressful, but more meaningful than the trappings we are so used to. Along with other Christians, we determined to **love all**—especially the poor. We decided to **spend less** on people who didn't really need our gifts, and **give more** to those who desperately needed our gifts. Last year, we raised over \$75,000 at Christmas. \$15,000 of your money drilled 12 wells in Cambodia in areas where there is little clean water and AIM works. *Doesn't everyone deserve a cup of clean water?* \$60,000 (+\$29,00 that came in later) helped prevent sex trafficking and restore girls to health who had already been trafficked in Cambodia. *Doesn't everyone deserve a chance a real life rather than slavery?*

We work with a terrific group of loving Christian folks called Agape International Mission (AIM). This year, we have a **God-sized challenge**: to pool our giving together to provide \$95,000 to buy a new school building in Svay Pak, the heart of the sex trade in Cambodia (see brochure for more info). This school building will provide girls and boys with the opportunity to grow up with a good education and even more importantly, the opportunity to get to know the same Jesus who is changing your life. Changing lives while they are young will mean that they can earn a good living and are not likely to be induced to sex trafficking. It's a big challenge, but if we all give what God calls us to give, I'm sure we can do it.

Besides all that, we have determined to do things in our own celebrations that make a difference. Rather than give many unneeded gifts to our family and friends, we gave goats, oxen, rabbits, and chicks to people who really needed them—and a card to tell our family and friends where their gift went. The recipients were thrilled. And we found that we **worshiped Jesus more fully** and celebrated Christmas more joyfully than we did with an abundance of gifts. We wanted to **give presence**, rather than just presents, and some found ways to give more of ourselves rather than give a lot of gadgets that go unused.

I hope your Christmas will be full of the heart of God in sending His Son to those who need it the most—the whole world.

MERRY JESUS CHRISTMAS,
Roger Edrington, Senior Pastor



Central is people . . .

Connecting with Jesus,

Growing in Faith,

Serving Others, and

Sharing the Good News



Exciting things are happening in the children's ministry here at Central Christian Church!

The grand opening for the newly remodeled Kid's Path room was a smashing success! It is a blessing to have a room just for worship, learning and fun. I must personally thank Rick Rock, Jim Munce, Jared Henry, Russ Staffen, David Wetzell, David Kietzke, Evan Ellithorpe, Aren Ellithorpe, Janessa Favors, Jolie Cooper, Scott Primeau, Lon Hansen, Frank Preciado and the rest of the BIT team for their hours of commitment to this project. Everything looks amazing and you are all a part of helping the children of Central to connect, grow, serve and share. Thank you for being a shining example of Christ's love!

We have started a new format for the two services held here at Central. In the 9:00 hour we will be conducting regular Sunday School by grade level with myself and Karin McClay leading worship in Room 3 before splitting into individual classrooms for the lesson and application. For the 10:45 hour we will be following the Kid's Path schedule of worship, review, lesson, activities and application in Room 3, with a short break out session of 10-15 minutes by grade level. We are excited to return to this format so that our children get the most out of each experience whether they attend first or second service, each lesson will be fresh and fun!

If you haven't already done so, please stop by Room 3, Room 10 and Noah's Ark Nursery to see the newly remodeled rooms and class schedules.

I can not express enough how much fun I am having working with your children and the volunteers here at Central. It is a blessing to come to work each and every day. If you would like to join Noah's Ark or Kid's Path team, please contact me at 408-264-7643 or jacquie@centralsj.org.

—Jacquie Henry, Children's Director

Sermon Series—The Colors of Christmas

Dec 1	Green	Dec 15	Gold	Christmas Eve
Dec 8	Blue	Dec 22	Red	Dec 24 White

A Revolving Door of Heartaches

Growing up in a family of five I had little I wanted to remember—more clips than actual memories. I remember moving a lot from room to room. I say room because that was all we had. My father raised us the best he knew how, but at a very young age, I was exposed to an uncertain lifestyle with a very fragile foundation. While growing up, our family relationships were never very solid—acquaintance relationships rather than a stable, intimate family atmosphere. There was just a sense of fending for yourself, which led me to living a cold life.

My adolescent years were tough. I couldn't focus in school. I had trouble comprehending things which ultimately led to rebellion. That caused a lot of hurt in my family. After high school, I moved out on my own. I worked at a cannery in Alaska where I felt the sense of independence but that was short lived. I was haunted by the longing for relationships. That void was still present no matter what I did or where I went. The sense of security which I had never experienced with my loved ones was missing. I was searching for acceptance and connection.

Then I met her, my blessing that I actually prayed for, a person who I can relate to, who would love me for who I was, not for what little I had. She was Sawathy, the most wonderful thing that had ever happened to me. We shared a lot of the similar hurt and sorrow of our past—each of us seemed disconnected. Through my struggles, she had patience; through her sadness, I was her comfort. We had each other, something we both desperately cried out for. The void that was missing was now slowly partially being filled.

In the midst of searching for who I was, there were a lot of ups and downs, a revolving door of heartaches. Chasing things that would mask the surface, things I thought were answers were always temporary, and just led to another wrong way. I was still lost, but it became even more challenging for me—because now I had this beautiful person in my life who thinks the world of me, yet I have no clue about myself. How can I provide for this woman that gave her life to me? How can I give her what she surely deserves?

I was looking for answers in all the wrong places, but through trial and error, I discovered that spirituality was lacking. Religion was something I knew of but was never assured of. I knew when you are hurt and troubled you are supposed to pray. I had seen photos, statues, and had visited churches, but that was basically it.

Problems still piled up—a loss in the family, a serious illness, financial struggles, arguments among the family, and still trying to finding our place on this earth. I survived a terrible auto accident, but unfortunately the person in the other car didn't. I was now in the darkest days of my life—by far. "Why?" I cried out, "Why?" I got down on my knees alone, sobbing. Broken and still lost. We knew now we needed something beyond ourselves, but we didn't know what.

I was alone, hurt, and still searching. Throughout my whole life I had tried to understand my purpose, analyzing my self worth. But I hadn't found it. Then I turned to the Lord I had heard about. I prayed, "Lord, I know I need you, but I don't even know where to start. I don't even have a Bible." As I walked the dog along our regular route, I sat down on my customary bench, and on the end of a bench was a Bible. In the midst of all my confusion, the Lord came to me and validated His presence with the gift of a Bible. I eagerly read it.

Since then I have not turned back and I brought the most important thing with me, my wife! We are both on this journey, and we are relying on the Lord Jesus. We don't know where we are headed and don't understand the process, but we know we're not alone. I know now who I am. I am a child of God. He is our comfort, His grace is truly sufficient for me! Thank you, Christ Jesus!

—Romeo Tutop

Letting Go

I was never taught to believe in Jesus Christ. I was born into a family of many generations of Buddhists.

My parents decided to leave Cambodia to come to America so that we could have a great life. But it was difficult for my parents here. They were struggling to get used to the customs, everything was new to them. Our family didn't have any structure; they just didn't know how to live here. I don't blame my parents for that, but I am grateful that they took great care of me.

I remember going to church once. We went because we tried to do what other people did. Other people went to church so we did too. My parents barely spoke any English and they were trying to find their place.

Growing up was very challenging for me and my siblings. As the youngest, I was mistreated by them; they caused me so much pain and animosity. Our family was lost in the world, and I had so much built up anger and held a grudge against them. I would always ask God, "Why? What have I done to be treated this way by my sisters? We are bound by blood. We should love and support each other, not mistreat one another." Every day I would pray to God, "Please take me to be with you." I believed that would be the answer to my problems.

Instead, God gave me something I needed, not what I wanted. He sent Romeo to show me the way to our Lord Jesus Christ. Romeo is a huge impact in my life. Since then, every day has been a blessing. Romeo taught me how to love and let go of all the animosity I had. He talked to me about God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ—even though He was just learning himself. If we have Jesus in our lives, our heart will be healed and saved from heartache.

Sometimes it takes a tragic loss for us to come to seek wisdom from Jesus Christ. And I have had many trials. But it was a huge joy to accept Christ and be baptized in October. Both Romeo and I put our lives in God's hand and continue to walk the path Jesus Christ leads us in.

—Sawathy Tutop



Seeing Beyond Outward Appearances

In October our middle school group took a missions trip to serve the less fortunate in San Francisco. We served with an organization called Center for Student Missions. We worked with City Team in their “Bags of Love” program, packaged food at the SF Food Bank, took a city-wide prayer tour, where we got an inside look at life in SF, participated in a “meet a need” event, and had many opportunities to talk with people who are less fortunate than ourselves. When we were done I asked each of the students to share what they learned from the weekend. Below are some of their responses:



Kayla said she learned not to judge someone by how they look. The group she was part of had the opportunity to spend some time with a man named Chris. He was standing on a street corner with a sign that read, “Food would be good but compassion is better.” When the group stopped to talk to him, Kayla noticed that he immediately took off his dark glasses so that we could see his eyes. I think he did this because he wanted us to know he was looking at us when we were talking to him. We got to hear the story about his life. I learned that my first impression about someone is not always the right one. Chris was nice and funny. We liked talking with him.”

Claire said she learned it was fun to help homeless people and serve the community around you. Claire and her teammates made 150 lunches that were taken to CityTeam SF to deliver to people who were living in a Single Resident Occupancy (SRO) building. SRO’s are the least expensive form of housing in SF. None of the rooms have a bathroom or kitchen. Some are as small as eight feet wide by ten feet long. Many elderly, and people living on fixed incomes, live in these buildings. Claire’s team knocked on doors and called out “CityTeam, we have a lunch for you.” Each time the door was opened the team would hand the person the lunch and ask if they could pray for them. Some said, “no” but many said, “yes.” It was a great experience and the students will remember it for a long time.

Adrianna said that she learned that everyone came from God and just because they are homeless or less fortunate, does not mean that God loves them any less than he loves us. She also reflected on meeting Chris, “He had a great laugh and was very funny to talk with.”

Each of these students had opportunities during this mission trip to experience people and places that were out of their comfort zone. I truly believe that each discussion and each meeting was God ordained and will change these students forever. As they get older, they will be able to think back on those experiences and conversations and draw on them as they develop a worldview of their own, seeing those less fortunate as God sees them.

—Lon Hansen, Youth Pastor

PANCAKES AND MORE

Central has a very active and impactful Youth Missions Program. Starting in middle school, we provide opportunities for our students to minister to others here in our local community as well as in more impoverished urban areas such as the Tenderloin District in San Francisco.

Our high school students serve locally and in Mexico where they spend their spring break building a home for a family in need and developing and implementing a Vacation Bible School for 100+ children in a community outside Tijuana.

Once a year the youth sponsor an event to raise funds to offset some of the cost for their outreach work. This event, **Pancakes & More** is organized and carried out by the serving students at Central and their parents and sponsors. I hope you will come support us on Saturday, December 7, in the Multipurpose Room. There will be a pancake breakfast, silent auction, baby sitting (parents can enjoy some time relaxing or get some shopping done), and fellowship.

I hope by now you are thinking, “very cool! I wonder how I can help?” Well you have asked the right guy. There are many different ways for you to support the youth mission program. You can attend the pancake breakfast and silent auction, bring your family, and invite friends. If you have a talent or skill you would be willing to donate to the silent auction that would be awesome! In the past we have had a number of great cooks donate dinner parties, others donated computer services, handyman services, music lessons, cleaning services, painting services etc. If the company you work for has a service or item that it could donate that would be appreciated. I have a sponsor letter for any organization or person willing to donate that allows there donation to be tax-deductible.

Finally if you are unable to join us for all the fun on December 7 but would like to help you can place a donation into the offering any week during the month of December, marked, “student missions.”

Please keep the students in prayer as they strive to raise money that will allow them to serve those less fortunate than themselves.

—Lon Hansen, Youth Pastor

I Missed December

The 2013 calendar hangs there.
I notice it’s still on November.
But now January 2014,
I realized I missed December.

Through Christmas motions I went.
But didn’t think about it much.
Busy going here and there,
Caught in the crunch.

It all went by like a blur—
Traffic, lines, cooking, presents.
No time for the Birth of Jesus.
No time for His presence.

I didn’t want to miss it.
I wanted the carols to sing,
And with others fellowship.
But, alas, no time for the King.

The 2014 calendar now hangs there.
I placed a reminder to remember,
So during this New Year,
I won’t again miss December.

— Charles B. Mayes



Special Events

- Dec 7 Pancakes & More
- Dec 15 Three Wisemen & A Baby
Childrens Musical
- Dec 24 Christmas Eve Services
- Dec 25 Merry Christmas!
Office Closed
- Dec 26 Office Closed
- Jan 1 Happy New Year
- Jan 10 Worship & Prayer Night
- Jan 17 Mission Dessert—AIM



Recent Additions to God's Community of Faith

by Baptism

- Romeo Tutop 10/13
- Sawathy Tutop 10/13

by Transfer

- Priya Balakrishnan 10/13
- Vinoth Kumar 10/13
- Birdie Crump 10/13
- Monica Jobak 10/13
- Keith Mortensen 10/13
- Francis Mortensen 10/13
- Anik Ribera 10/13

The Central Theme

I joined Central 31 years ago. My family had moved to San Jose from Riverside and were looking for a church home. My wife Carmen (at that time), our son Ruben, Jr., and I began attending Central at the invitation of Sylvia Fast (who is now with the Lord). We joined Central during the annual All Church Retreat.

Bryce Jessup, Don Hinkle, Jeff Bigelow, Mark Leeper, and Roger Edrington, this is just a short list of the men who have filled the pulpit at Central in the 30 years I have attended. During these years I have been blessed by each of them.

If not for the support of my church family, I would not have been able to survive the many changes I have faced these past years. Most importantly, without God's strength my walk would have been extremely difficult. During this time I have faced the loss of my youngest brother, my father, my mother, and most recently my wife Carmen in 2008. Life is difficult when we face it by ourselves. If not for our Lord we would not be able to cope.

After five years of widowhood, God brought Roxanne Key into my life. We were married in 2012. Many people say that God never takes anything from us without in some way replacing it. Well, God in his infinite wisdom knew that the loss of my first wife was not the end of my journey. God has given me a second chance at life and love. I am very proud of my church family for opening their hearts to welcome Roxie into their lives. Thank you.

During the last four years I have had the ultimate pleasure of teaching the Senior Ambassadors class. I will be praying for them as they search for someone to step forward to teach this class.

Everyone says that all good things must come to a close. After 50 years of living in this area, my wife and I have decided to move to Portland, Oregon. We do plan to visit occasionally, of course.

Do I know what this next season of our lives has to offer? Of course not. If I did, I probably would not be making this move. In the last six years, God's word has consoled me day in and day out, but one scripture that has become my rally call is found in Jeremiah 29:11:

"For I know the plans that I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope."

Thank you Central Christian Church for opening your arms to my family. Continue to open your arms wide to those who walk through your doors. God will continue to bless this house as long as we continue to keep the Word of God the central theme of Central.

—In His Service, Ruben T. Sr. and Roxanne Garcia

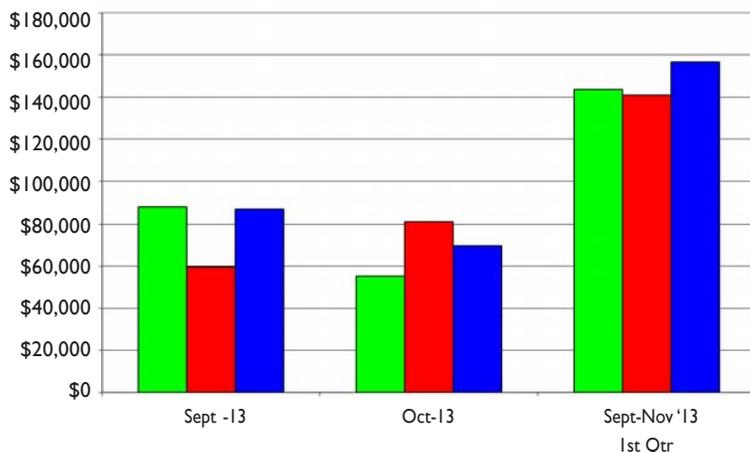


With Sympathy

... to David Siler and family in the loss of his mother Barbara Siler.

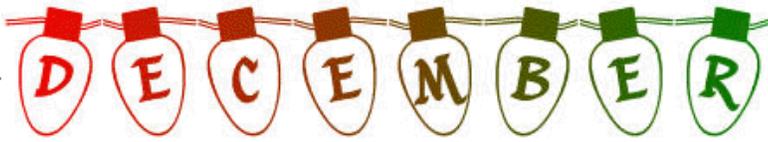
	Attendance	Offering
September	29 338	\$13,022
October	6 332	\$19,411
October	13 375	\$13,246
October	20 345	\$ 9,664
October	27 331	\$17,411
November	3 317	\$19,602
November	10 376	\$13,869
November	17 375	\$14,336
November	24 374	\$34,683
Average Weekly Giving		\$17,249
Weekly Budget Need		\$17,476
Missions	Fiscal Year to Date = \$41,199	

Central General Fund Giving vs. Spending vs. Plan 2013-2014



- Giving
- Spending
- Plan

- Senior Pastor** Roger Edrington 264-7643 x101
- Pastor of Worship Arts** Scott Primeau x102
- Pastor of Student Ministries** Lon Hansen x104
- Children & Family Ministries Director** .. Jacque Henry x103
- Office/Youth/Children Support** Janessa Favors x109
- Publications/Worship Support** Jolie Cooper x110
- Visual Arts Coordinator** Brooke Commons x105
- Membership Support** Leslie Sharpe x113
- Elders:** Gene Munce (chairman), Richard Rock, and Roger Edrington
(Philip Joseph-on sabbatical)



at central christian church

For more information check the Sunday bulletin, centralsj.org, or call the church office at 264-7643

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Celebration Services 9:00 & 10:45 am	2	3 Middle School Way 5:00-6:30 pm, MPR High School Life 7-9 pm, MPR	4	5 Young Adult Fellowship (YAF) LIFE Grp @ the Valko's 7:30-9:30pm	6	7
8 Celebration Services 9:00 & 10:45 am	9	10 Middle School Way 5:00-6:30 pm, MPR High School Life 7-9 pm, MPR	11	12 INSITE (YAF) @ Church on Hill 7:30-9:30pm	13	14
15 Celebration Services 9:00 & 10:45 am Three Wise Men and a Baby	16	17 Middle School Way 5:00-6:30 pm, MPR High School Life 7-9 pm, MPR	18	19 Young Adult Fellowship (YAF) LIFE Grp @ the Valko's 7:30-9:30pm	20	21
22 Celebration Services 9:00 & 10:45 am	23	24 Christmas Eve Candlelight Services 5pm & 11pm	25  Office Closed	26 Office Closed	27	28
29 Celebration Services 9:00 & 10:45 am	30	31	<p>“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.” Luke 2:14</p>			