



February 2021

A Note from our Pastor, Rev. Bill Russell



Friends,

I do not have adequate words to express how much Anne and I appreciate your words and actions showing your love and concern for us as we journey through her illness.

We know God is with us in this battle and we know, in so many ways, you are His vessels in showing that love. We don't know where we are going, but we **DO** know who will be with us. We thank God for His presence; we thank you for yours.



For several years Central Christian Church has been the home of Compassion Neighborhood Clinic (CNC). Unfortunately CNC will close its doors in March. Please read the letter of appreciation beginning on page 3.

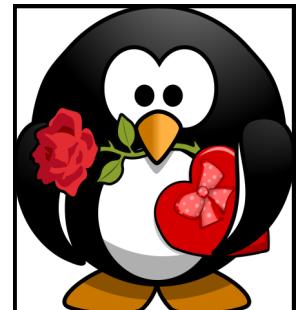


Above is an archive photo from Feb/ 2016 of doctors and volunteers at CNC.

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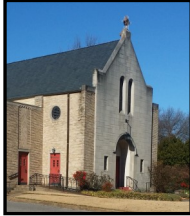
News Ya' Gotta Read!

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BOARD MEETING FOR FEBRUARY 2021

The February Board meeting will be a conference call beginning at 6:00 p.m. the evening of Wednesday, February 24th. Board members may call into the conference at 602-580-9862, and enter access code 2576798.



News About Peggy Browne

Peggy Browne, a long time member of Central Christian Church, recently suffered a stroke that left her paralyzed in her left leg. To let Peggy know that members at Central are thinking about her and praying for a speedy recovery, the Elders sent a beautiful arrangement to her from *Rachel's Flower Shop*. Peggy is currently recovering at the Memphis Jewish Home & Rehab, and may be contacted there at 901-302-1805.



Photo by George Goodnight

Thanks to the efforts of Micki Artman and Debra Goodnight, new banners for the upcoming Lenten Season now hang in the sanctuary. Additional new banners will be displayed during Pentecost.



There will be a 3-church combined virtual Ash Wednesday Service with Central, Lindenwood and Kingsway on February 17 at 5:45 p.m. Instructions for viewing will be provided as soon as the information is available. Lindenwood's website is www.lindenwoodcc.org.

ANOTHER CREATIVE ARTIST AT CENTRAL!



Linda Johnson is a woman of many talents. The photo on the left is a perfect example of her artistry. Linda calls her work a "Shoe Box Gift", a shoe box which contains several kinds of cookies (one of which is Linda's special *pumpkin pie cookie*!), and an assortment of candies, books, and a beautiful hyacinth. The "Shoe Box Gift" was taken to Peggy Browne by Deacon Brad Lott.

In a phone call to Linda, she told the *Banner* how much Peggy truly enjoyed the gift as well as the flowers sent to her by the church. "When I talked to Peggy on the phone," said Linda Johnson, "you could tell by her voice that her spirit was uplifted when she received her gift".

A Letter of Appreciation from John and Judy Lang to the members of Central Christian Church



(Above, Dr. Lang with a patient)

The pandemic and the public health emergency caused by the COVID-19 virus have taken a severe toll on our operations and Compassion Neighborhood Clinic (CNC). The present situation has made it impossible to safeguard the health and well-being of our patients, our volunteer staff, and your beautiful church. The risks have become too great and we cannot in good conscience continue to operate with the potential to spread the COVID-19 virus to the very people we have come to love and cherish.

After much prayer, deliberation, consultation, and soul-searching, our board of directors recently unanimously voted to dissolve the organization, determining this path was the wise and prudent option among the many options considered. So, after eleven and a half years of operation, Compassion Neighborhood Clinic is closing.

We owe a special debt of gratitude to the members of Central Christian Church for their support, friendship, encouragement, leadership, and mentorship. You have led by example and taught us how to truly love God and love others. From the time we first stepped into Central Christian Church with Harry and Rachel, we were welcomed and loved by your congregation. We had no idea that when we read an article about Rachel's Kids, that we would embark on a journey that would bring so many wonderful people into our life. This entire congregation has taught us how to live out the scripture in Matthew 25 when Jesus says: *'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'* Never have we seen such a collection of folks who were more hard working, loving and inclusive. You worked tirelessly to support our efforts with finances, medications and fundraisers. You have taught us what it truly means to be God's hands and feet and for all your love we are deeply grateful. Closing the clinic was a hard decision especially because all of you have believed in us and supported us wholeheartedly for so long.

We have grown so much from what has gone on at CNC. We have met wonderful people who have come alongside to serve with us and support us. And we now know wonderful families and people who first came to us as patients but are now considered friends, neighbors, and extended family. We have often heard comments and feedback about our hard work, dedication, and sacrifice but the honest truth is that the clinic is not now and never was about us at all. We were truly humbled by this experience. We have come to appreciate the fact that this clinic was in reality the Lord's invitation to get to know Him better and to know His saints better as well. We have received many times more blessings than we pretend to give, which leads me to steal a line from one of my most beloved mentors, Harry Greer when interviewed by a reporter from the Commercial Appeal some 20 years ago. Harry was asked about all the kids he was helping and he simply stated this about his experience, "We are the lucky ones". He was right. Judy and I have embraced his attitude and are deeply grateful to God and to you all for enriching our lives and helping us grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord.

(continued on page 4)

("Appreciation Letter" - Continued from page 3)

Every one of you has contributed to the clinic in many ways over the years and we thank you all. However, there is a short list of folks (among so many) we would like to recognize for their exceptional support:

- **George and Deborah Goodnight:** George for forgiving us for being John Calipari fans and Deborah who's work ethic would make James Brown look like a slacker if she was a rock and roll musician
- **Mark Rutledge** for his unwavering support of our mission, his patience, and for preventing us from being homeless when Caritas closed
- **John Rainey** who opened and closed every Tuesday, cleaned, organized, and even fed our patients!
- **Linda and John Johnson** for their prayers and for the way they embraced our patients in need of legal assistance
- **Bill Russell** for opening the church to us and especially for his contagious energy and optimism
- **The DWM** for all their support; financial, spiritual, personal. Their faith, prayers and kindness are the stuff legends are made of
- **Rachel Greer** who is a friend that sticks closer than a brother (or sister) providing flowers, auction items, muscle (by way of Junior and Carlos who are outstanding men!) and above all for making us part of her beautiful family

As Rachel has said to us on more than one occasion, to everything there is a time and a season. For us, it is the right time and season to close this chapter and open a fresh page. We came to Memphis by way of the Navy and had no intentions of staying longer than one tour of duty. That was 26 years ago. We are still here because of friends like you! Never have we met a more generous, caring, loving, unselfish group of people in our lives. You do not just talk the talk; you walk the walk. It has been an honor and a privilege to walk with you and our hope is to continue to do so wherever we are led into the next episode of His story. Be assured, Judy and I remain committed to do as you have taught us, and as long as we have breath, our goal is to serve God and the people he point us toward.

John and Judy Lang

From the October 2020 issue of the *Banner*:

Compassion Neighborhood Clinic (CNC) went the extra mile Tuesday evening September 29th and offered free flu shots to anyone in the Memphis community. Usually CNC offers free medical help on the second and fourth Tuesday of every month to those without medical insurance. But with the help of generous donations and grants, CNC was able to reach out to help more people. The photo on the right shows nurse Judy Lang and Dr. John Lang preparing a flu shot.





Week of Compassion
Feb. 14th thru 28th

Nobody hungry, nobody thirsty,
shade from the sun, shelter from
the wind, For the Compassionate
One guides them, takes them to
the best springs. — Isaiah 49:10

Joshua Mumbi used to spend much of his time collecting water. When it rained, he would collect water running from the streets. Often he would spend much of the day walking to the water source and carrying back buckets. Sometimes he might even travel to the water source with his family the night before, spending the night there so that they could bring back water in the morning. But thanks to your gifts through Week of Compassion, Joshua Mumbi and his family — and all of the other families in his village — have a safe, clean water source close to home. With a new solar-powered borehole well, they have water for cooking, water for drinking, water for bathing and keeping things clean and sanitary. Because you let love flow, water brought new life to a whole community. Now children like Joshua Mumbi and his siblings can go to school every day, and a whole world of opportunity is open to them. Now the whole community is empowered to provide for their needs, plan for their future, and pursue new opportunities for growth. So that more communities can experience this new life, please give generously, and let love flow.

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IT'S A MYSTERY!!!



There's truly a mystery of clothes showing up just outside the kitchen door. About once a week several bundles of clothes are left, each bundle containing such items as women's tops and shirts, socks, etc. The clothes go to Central's Clothes Closet, and some go to help abused and recovering women through the Old Town Thrift Store.

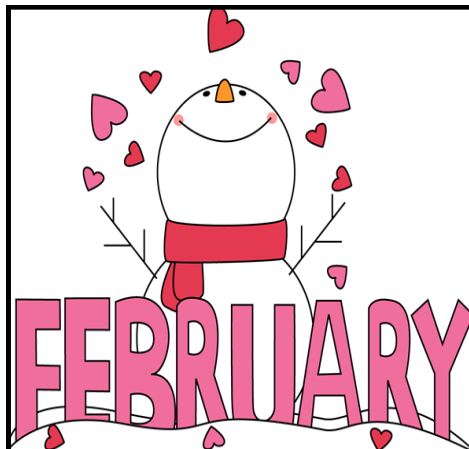
The clothes arrive at Central neatly folded and washed - washed because the donor leaves a dryer sheet within the bundle! No monetary reward will be given to those helping to solve the mystery; just a grateful *Thanks!* to the person or persons who are helping Central with its Outreach Ministries.



February at Central

Birthdays

Mary Artman
2/5
Russell Lindeman
2/6
George Goodnight
2/23



Church Calendar for February

9 - Compassion Clinic
14 - Valentine's Day
17 - Ash Wed Service
23 - Compassion Clinic
24 - Board Meeting



If you want to receive the Banner by E-Mail please contact the Church Office, by phone on (901) 276-2708 or by e-mail at: centralchristian@cccmemphistn.org