



A VERY HAPPY

NEW YEAR

to You & Yours

January Lamplighter

*“For I decided to know nothing
among you except Jesus Christ
and him crucified.”*

– 1 Corinthians 2:2

The dash of our van is lit up like a Christmas tree right now. There is the tire pressure sensor light, the side collision avoidance light, and a check engine light. I could take our van in and pay to have all of the issues related to these lights fixed, but I am too pragmatic (not cheap) to do so. You see I know why each of these lights is coming on. The tire pressure sensors started going bad several months ago. We would periodically get a warning that the pressure was too low or too high or that it simply was not registering. The batteries in the sensors go bad and you have to replace the entire sensor. I grew up with cars that did not have this feature, and I figured I can just do what I have always done and visually inspect them or periodically check them manually. So when we had new tires put on recently, I had them remove the failing sensors and replace them with traditional valve stems. The collision avoidance lights are acting up because the sensors were not designed well and water gets into them. Water and electronics do not mix well. To have a sensor that tells us there is a car next to us on the highway is not a bad thing, but we have side mirrors that accomplish that just fine. The check engine light is the result of a temperature sensor that is acting up but does not affect the van's ability to operate normally, which means I am not very motivated to do anything about it.

Now all of these lights are telling me that there are things that are not working as they were designed. Our van is experiencing some malfunctions but none of them are critical to the safe, effective operation of the vehicle. As a friend who manages a part department at an auto dealership told me, “The problem with cars today is that they have been over

engineered.” While all of these additional features and sensors do serve a purpose by enhancing safety or providing convenience, most of the time they are not crucial to the vehicles primary purpose of getting its occupants from here to there.

As Christians, we often find that there can be many differing voices and opinions about virtually everything. Things pertaining to faith, interpretation of the Bible, the world we live in, acceptable behaviors, and the list goes on endlessly. There are matters of great weight and importance to the Church about how we understand and respond to the world we live in. There are disagreements about what is a sin and what is not, and that leads to disagreements about how to deal with sins and treat those who commit them. At times, all of this makes me feel like we have also ‘over engineered’ what it means to be a Christian. When we hear, see or experience something that seems off from our understanding of what it means to be a follower of Jesus we have internal warning lights that go off. They tell us something is out of line and we need to decide how to respond, and part of how we respond is to determine if this is critical to our faith or not.

Personally I draw upon Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 2:2 (above). Paul points us to the centrality of Jesus in our life and faith. He told the people of Corinth, that he was not there to persuade them with eloquent words or compelling arguments. His intention was to show them that it was not his own strength or intellect, rather his unrestrained commitment to Jesus that allowed the Spirit of God to bring forth the fruit of faith, hope, and love. Like Paul, my prayer is that in my life and my ministry at Central UMC Jesus would be first and foremost in all things. When we encounter conflicts, disagreements, or confusion there are not always simple, clear cut answers to be found, but in those times of uncertainty we can still point to Jesus. We must point to Jesus. Just like our van that keeps on running in spite of the warning lights, our faith in Jesus is sustained even when we wrestle to make sense of the world around us. However, if the engine or another critical component fails in our van then we will not be going anyway. Likewise, in our faith and as the Church, without Jesus things simply will not be right. In uncertain and trying times, may we resolve to know nothing except Jesus and trust that He will see us through. Before we try to fix the problems of the world, or even the Church, may we first seek Jesus.

IN CHRIST
Pastor Tom

Thank you, Central

for being so generous at Thanksgiving! We filled the back of Randy's pick-up truck to the brim, plus filled my car trunk, with all the food that was donated for the Rock Solid Thanksgiving Giveaway. Over 200 local families received a full Thanksgiving dinner with all the fixings, made possible in part by the giving and caring people of Central.

UMW Luncheon

A big thank you to Sally Sayre and her crew for a wonderful Christmas luncheon on Dec. 2. Thank you also to all the tremendously talented cooks who prepared all the food. It was a scrumptily delicious way to start Advent! Thanks also to Madeleine for providing us with beautiful Christmas music.

HOLD YOUR SPICES!

Central members have already donated 225 bottles of spices for the Indiana Women's Prison Christmas bags. Due to a fantastically generous gift from Jeff Logue, I was able to order 500 more bottles on-line. So the total number of bottles donated is now 725!! Thank you so much to all the people who donated spices and a great big hug to Jeff Logue for his kindness and support. Thank you all from the bottom of my heart, Ann Cashner

Creative Hands

Creative Hands will meet on January 10th and 24th for friendship, fellowship, fun, and food (and we may get some other things done).



Garage Sale

If you missed it last year (or not), UMW will be having a GARAGE SALE this year in late March. As you put away those decorations or you found things you don't want to deal with again or you want to downsize or for whatever reason, UMW is here to help with a GARAGE SALE. Just bring those items to the church and put them outside the office. One person's discarded items may be another's treasure.

Calendar of Events

1/1	CHURCH CLOSED	
1/9	Pastor's Study	10:00am
1/9	Lunch Bunch	11:30am
1/10	Creative Hands	9:00am
1/10	Soup Kitchen	9:00am
1/14	Monday Morning Connection	9:00am
1/14	Medical Monday	1:00pm
1/15	Bread Basket	4:30pm
1/15	Trustees Meeting	6:30pm
1/16	Pastor's Study	10:00am
1/17	Friendship Circle	10:00am
1/21	CHURCH CLOSED	
1/23	Pastor's Study	10:00am
1/23	Garden ReConnect	3:30pm
1/24	Creative Hands	9:00am
1/24	Ad Council	6:30pm
1/30	Pastor's Study	10:00am
1/30	Lamplighter Assembly	10:00am

Greeters

1/6	Glenn & Carol McGuire
1/13	Youth
1/20	David & Mary Jane Sheets
1/27	David & Sharon Miles

Scripture Readers

1/6	Jan Hibner
1/13	Pat Heiny
1/20	Kathy Robinson
1/27	Elaine Mollenkopf

Ushers

1/6	Electa Berk, Larry Parker, Linda Witter, Jim Robinson, Lester Robinson
1/13	Electa Berk, Larry Parker, Linda Witter, Jim Robinson, Lester Robinson
1/20	Rick Eyer, Phil Scott, Jackie Scott, Roger Clark, Beryl Wesler
1/27	Rick Eyer, Phil Scott, Jackie Scott, Roger Clark, Beryl Wesler

Altar Guild

TBD