



Congregational Christian Church The Red Brick Church in Stillman Valley

(Evangelical, Independent)

207 W. Roosevelt Road, PO Box 370
Stillman Valley, Illinois 61084-0370
Rev. Dr. Chris Brauns

A Cross-Centered Spring in 2017

While our church does not formally observe Lent, all of us should strive to be more cross-centered as we anticipate Easter. Lent observance can be a helpful part of worship provided we do not believe that giving up something is a way to merit God's favor. I have prepared an Easter Primer for those who want to understand more clearly what Easter is all about.

Lent begins this year on Wednesday, March 1. Easter is April 15. Lent references the period from Ash Wednesday until Easter in which some Christians have focused on fasting and penitence. Lent is traditionally the 40 days (less Sundays) before Easter and is based on Jesus's forty days in the wilderness.

Our church does not formally observe Lent. The central reason we do not observe Lent is because it has not been part of our liturgical or worship

tradition. Indeed, our church does not formally follow a liturgical calendar.

We would not want to imply that observing Lent is inherently wrong. See, for example, "Why Bother With Lent?" on The Gospel Coalition web site (2/12/2013). As our church family knows, we do encourage people to fast and pray. And we certainly want our people to think deeply about the Cross.

The dangers to avoid with Lent are essentially the same dangers we should avoid when fasting (giving up some legitimate practice for a season to focus on God). When we fast, it is easy to allow a works mentality to creep into our mindset. Said another way, we can consciously or unconsciously begin to believe that we are asking God to bless us because we are giving up something.

For those who would strive to be more cross-centered this Easter season, I encourage three broad-overlapping steps.

1. **First, we must prayerfully picture and meditate on the facts and events of Scriptures in general with a focus on Holy Week.** What events took place? Where? Who was involved? How do the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ tie into the rest of Scripture?
2. **Second, we should meditate on the meaning of the Cross.** We should think about the cross theologically. What do we learn about God and about ourselves from the Easter narrative? What do we learn about God's plan for redemption? Hearing the preaching of the Word and reading good theological books is critical in this endeavor. Like the men who encountered Christ on the road to Emmaus after the crucifixion, we need someone to help us understand the Scriptures.
3. **We should apply our understanding of the Cross to our lives.** We must see all of life through the lens of the gospel. For those who are Cross-centered, it is not just Sunday that looks different, it is not only church, but rather everything from our jobs to parenting and retirement that is seen differently.

If you are interested in understanding these steps more clearly, I have prepared a small booklet called, *Surveying the Cross: Pursuing An Increasingly Cross-Centered Life During Lent*. It is unedited --and hence full of typos and errors -- but I would be willing to pass along a copy free of charge to those who are interested in reading it.

I also highly recommend Andreas Kostenberger and Justin Taylor's book, *The Final Days of Jesus* (Crossway, 2014).

MARCH 2017 NEWSLETTER

CHURCH PHONE
645-2526

CHURCH E-MAIL ADDRESS
cccoffice1@comcast.net

TIME OF SERVICES
Worship Service – 9:00 am
Sunday School – 9:00 am
Adult SS Class – 10:30 am

MARCH GREETERS GREETERS SCHEDULE

- March 5th: Terrell and Terri Carby
 March 12th: Connie Blake and Kids
 March 19th: Bernice Kruse / Eunice Aden
 March 26th: Ken and Kathy Mrozek
 April 2nd: Dick and Shirley Johann

MARCH NURSERY

- March 5th
 9:00 am Crystal Dunseth, Joanna Easley,
 Susan Cahill
 10:30 am Lee and Shannon Hickey
- March 12th
 9:00 am Jamie Brauns, Justine Loyo,
 Jaime Wrasse
 10:30 am Aly Behmer, Betts Carby
- March 19th
 9:00 am Mandy Poliska, Kendra Booker,
 Tessa Baker
 10:30 am Jeanne Baker, Jane Jones
- March 26th
 9:00 am Sharon Rhodes, Barb Hale,
 Ryan Roberts
 10:30 am Carl and Elizabeth Jacobson
- April 2nd
 9:00 am Tom and Ashley Stahl,
 Donna Arnold
 10:30 am Tania VanBriesen, Alice Daniels

NURSERY NEWS

Parents with children under the age of 5 years are invited and encouraged to use our nursery during either of the worship services. Our nursery is just off the hallway on the west side of the building.

If you would like to volunteer to help in our nursery or have any questions, please contact our nursery coordinators, Tessa Baker (815-645-7040) or Stacy Coester (815-762-2567).

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS . . .

SS Superintendent:
Brooke Adams
815-645-8561

Our average weekly Sunday School **Attendance** for the past two years during the month of February is listed below:

February 2016	83
February 2017	75

Our average weekly Sunday School **Offerings** for the past two years during the month of February are listed below:

February 2016	\$25.56
February 2017	\$11.00

WORSHIP SERVICE REPORT

Our average attendance at Worship Services for the past three months is listed below:

December Average:	270
January Average:	233
February Average:	255

CHAIRMAN OF BOARDS/COMMITTEES

Deacon Board – Terrell Carby	630-661-9962
Deaconess Board – Deb Bonne	979-0885
Trustee Board – Jeff McLindsay	440-2042
CE Committee – Janice Amundson	645-7010
Memorial Committee – Jeff McLindsay	440-2042
Missions Committee – Cathy Midtsem	979-3715
Music – Pastor Tim Michalek	645-2526

**April Newsletter
Articles are due in the
church office by
Tuesday,
March 28th**

FINANCIAL REPORT

Through February 28, 2017

Total Approved 2017 Budget = \$411,383

Divided by 52 weeks/year = \$7,912/week

Budget Giving through Feb.28 \$71,208

Actual Giving through Feb. 28 \$66,027

Budget Giving vs. Actual Giving **\$-5,181**

Actual Expenses through 2/28/17 \$55,209



Do we have your e-mail address?

If the church office does not have your email address, please be sure to email your address to

the office at the following email address:

cccoffice1@comcast.net

The email address for Pastor Chris is:

cdbrauns@gmail.com

The email address for Pastor Tim is:

timothymichalek@gmail.com

We will be emailing out announcements, news articles, coming events, etc., so don't miss out!! Be sure we have your email address.



SPARKY CAMP

All registered AWANA Sparky's are invited to our AWANA Sparky Camp on **Saturday, March 4th** from 9:00 – Noon.

Bring your uniforms and Sparky books with you. We will be focusing on getting sections passed during camp! There will be devotions, crafts, games and snacks for the clubbers will be provided.

Should be a great morning full of memorizing, earning AWANA bucks and having an awesome time together! If you have any questions, contact your Sparky Leader or AWANA Commander Deb Smits (815-703-7294) or Darren Daniels (309-370-3617).



Reminder . . . Turn your clocks forward one hour before going to bed on Saturday, March 11th. Daylight savings time begins at 2:00 am on Sunday, March 12th.

SCOUT SUNDAY

Thank you to our Boys and Girls Scouts for being our greeters on Sunday, February 19th.



Haley Jones, Harleigh Wallin, Judah Loyo, Pastor Chris, Alex Booker, Elise Loyo, Eva Loyo.

sophie and moses welcome their baby brother ...

amos andrew

DATE: February 28th, 2017

TIME: 11:40 am

WEIGHT: 8 lbs. 4 oz.

LENGTH: 20.25 inches



Proud Parents: Pastor Tim and Amy



SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

Matthew 18:1-5 states, "At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" (2) And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them (3) and said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. (4) Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. (5) Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me."

Let me say it again, Jesus said, "Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me." I am thankful for our faithful Sunday School teachers, as they receive our children. Please, thank God for them and pray for their preparation and delivery of God's word. As an educator and a parent, I realize more and more that it's not always about what we teach children, but what they teach us. We are to humble ourselves like children. As we prepare for Easter, I encourage you to read the gospel to your children. Help your children to become familiar with the Holy Week events. Use Sally Lloyd-Jones's Jesus Storybook Bible as a guide to tell the story. (Our Sunday School Department has a few extra copies; if you'd like to buy one, contact me).

Looking ahead: Palm Sunday Services are Sunday, April 9th. The preschool - 5th grade children will parade through the sanctuary with palms at both the 9:00 and 10:30 am worship services. They are working on a song to sing during this time.

Brooke Adams,
Sunday School Superintendent

SUMMER CHURCH CAMP

Parents are reminded to be sure and pre-register their child / children for Summer camp this summer! Both Camp Forest Springs and Camp Timberlee are registering! CFS has a \$25 early bird discount if you register before March 10th and Camp Timberlee has a \$55 discount if you register before March 22nd! The CE Board offers \$100 scholarship for summer church camp and both camps also have scholarships available.



LADIES PALLET PARTY

The Deaconess Board is hosting a **Ladies Pallet Party** on Tuesday, April 11th, at 6:00 pm in the fellowship hall.

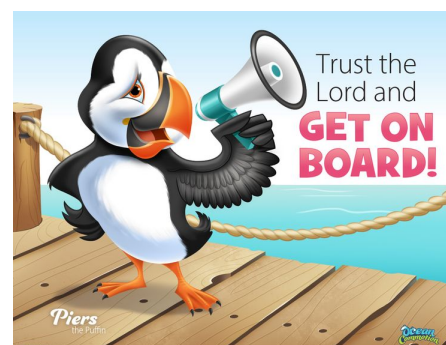
If you are interested, go to "**Clinescubby.com**" and click "**Upcoming Events**" and then click "**Red Brick Church Stillman Valley**" to register and select your pallet.

You must register on line by March 31st. The cost is \$35 and includes all material. More information on back bulletin board. Bring a munchie with you to the party. Talk to Deb Bonne if you have any questions.

2017 VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL



Mark your Calendars! Our 2017 Summer Vacation Bible School will be held on July 10th through the 14th from 9:00 to 11:30 am. Tom and Ashley Stahl are heading up our VBS again this year and will be looking for several to help out! If you are interested in serving with our VBS Team this year, please let Tom or Ashley know.



AWANA NEWS and DERBY PICTURES

And the winner is?! Well, if it's the 2017 AWANA Grand Prix, EVERYONE - If you're looking for the actual speed and design winners, check out the pictures in this newsletter. Our winners are not only a good lookin' bunch, but their designs were incredible and speeds record breaking! Everyone was a winner that day though as they were welcomed into a wonderfully decorated venue with lots of helpful "bricks" on hand to serve before witnessing one of the most technical action packed races, maybe even surpassing NASCAR! But there is more winning to celebrate in AWANA by looking at some of the fruit seen this year. The week of the derby Aiden Carby one of our 5th grade "bricks" in AWANA, helped out at devotion time in a Q&A format as he answered some fun questions about himself and the derby and went on to answer questions about what motivates him to learn the amount of scripture he has in AWANA and sharing what the gospel means with his peers. That is 3 John 1:4 fruit! We have also had some recent situations present themselves through the AWANA ministry where we can see conspicuous moments of children or their parents impacted by the ministry taking place each week. AWANA is not only reaching our children in the community but entire families. We have two months left but plenty of more time for victories! Please continue to pray for times of safe fun, leaders to persevere in serving each week faithfully and whole families changed by the gospel of Christ!





FROM PASTOR TIM . . .

Each year the Red Brick Youth Group visits the widows and shut-ins in our church for Valentine's Day. We spend the day before baking cookies, making cards, and arranging mini-bouquets for each lady. This year we took eighteen teens and nine sponsors to visit eighteen homes. We all had a great time.



MISSION TRIP, July 26 - 30

We are heading to Immanuel Bible Church in Sheboygan, WI to help this reviving church update their facilities. We will leave Wednesday evening and spend through Sunday afternoon/evening. Being a work trip, we are primarily encouraging men to take this opportunity. There will be work SH teens and ladies can do as well. Some potential projects we may be doing include refreshing their main auditorium and lobby, repairing a retaining wall in front of church, updating bathrooms, painting kitchen cabinets, painting Pastor's home. On Sunday, we will be leading the worship service including preaching, reading scripture, leading music, and any special music. Housing will be provided by church members. Please let Pastor Tim know if you are interested in being a part of this Mission Trip.

YOUTH GROUP, Sunday March 5th

The Jr High Youth Group will meet at Noon in the church fellowship hall. The Sr High and Graduates Youth Group will be meeting at 5:00 pm at the Mrozek Home (229 W Franklin Street in Byron).



- March 1st - Jamie Brauns, Christopher Brauns
- March 2nd - Brent Bonne, Sydney Gatz
- March 4th - Jana Cox, Grace VanBriesen,
Grace Jacobson
- March 5th - Shari Halsmer, Amanda Mast,
Tessa Baker, Arlett Bonne
- March 6th - Sam Miller, Paisley Poliska
- March 7th - Jeff McLindsay, Chelsea Colon
- March 11th - Pastor Chris
- March 12th - Jamie Adams, John R Cox
Reagan Cross
- March 16th - Keith Wiltfang
- March 17th - Emily Houston
- March 20th - Alex Spors
- March 21st - Jaime Long
- March 22nd - Adrien Booker
- March 25th - Seth VanBriesen
- March 26th - Shirley Thompson, Kathy Mrozek
Homer Bailey
- March 28th - Oliver Jones
- March 29th - Ethel DeVore



- March 11th - John and Sandra Stout
- March 15th - Steve and Donna Arnold
- March 21st - Gary and Connie Rhodes
- March 31st - Dale and Karen Friedrich



March 2017 AWANA SCHEDULE

Wednesday, March 1st

It's M & M (Missionary) Night at AWANA's on the 1st. Clubbers should bring their missionary bank with them to club. We will view the next installment from the Boyd Family on being a missionary in Vienna.

Saturday, March 4th

Our Sparky's will be having their annual Sparky Camp from 9:00 to Noon on the 4th. See more information inside the newsletter. Sign up for Sparky Camp by Wednesday, March 1st!

Wednesday, March 8th

It's "Super Hero" Night at club on the 8th. Clubbers should dress like their favorite superhero this night!

Wednesday, March 15th

Tonight is "Wearin' O the Green" Night. We are close to St. Patrick's Day, so tonight the clubbers should wear green to club!

Friday, March 17th

It is our Annual T & T Overnight and Talent Show! Talent show will begin at 6 pm and more information will be sent home with the clubbers. Deadline to sign up is Wednesday, March 15th.

Wednesday, March 22nd

We're having "Inside / Out" Night on the 22nd. Clubbers ~ wear your clothes inside out or backwards for a crazy, fun night! This will be our final praise and worship night for the year, so parents, come early to worship with us! You will be blessed!

CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH
PO BOX 370
STILLMAN VALLEY, IL 61084

