



# In the Loop

Centennial Christian Church  
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November 21, 2024  
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## Listening and Talking . . . by Rev. Tom Cici

Silence precedes, undergirds, and grounds everything. Unless we learn how to live there, go there, and abide in this different phenomenon, everything – words, events, relationships, identities – becomes rather superficial, without depth or context. Silence has a life of its own. Silence is at the very foundation of all reality. It is that out of which all being comes and to which all things return. [Silence can be referred to as nothing.]

Everything, by God's plan it seems, first comes from nothing! When nothing (silence and emptiness) creates something, we call that grace! It is part of you and so much greater than you at the same time, which is why evangelists chose both a flow of living water gushing up from the believer's heart (John 7:38) and the Spirit of God descending like a dove (Matthew 3:16) as metaphors for this universal and grounding experience of spiritual encounter. It is always from a silence that is larger than you, surrounding you, and finally names the deeper truth of the full moment that is you.

Such silence is described in the very first two verses of Genesis. The first reality is described in the Bible as a "formless void" while the Spirit "swept over" or hovered over this darkness (Genesis 1:2) as if to impregnate God with creation – which silent mystery seems to be the first birth of "Christ"! The apostle Paul states this several times: "He [Christ] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers – all things have been created through him and for him" (Colossians 1:15–16). [Also see Ephesians 1:3–14; Ephesians 4:15–16; Acts 17:28]

The Spirit is silent, secret, invisible, but totally powerful and always effective, humble, and quite willing to give the credit to others for all the further unfolding ("evolution"). The coming together of these Two Great Silences (the Holy Spirit and "Christ") is the primal conception and the beginning of Everything including humanity!



When our interior Silence (Spirit) can feel, and value the Silence that surrounds everything else ("Christ"), we have entered the very heart of prayer. When the two Great Silences connect and bow to one another, we have a third dimension of knowing, which many have called "the mind of God" or the "depths of God" (1 Corinthians 2:10–16). I call such a way of knowing the *contemplative* way of knowing, as did much of the older, perennial tradition. When prayer is something that is done to you, with you, in you, and as you, then, like Mary, you are ready to give birth. You are ready for Christmas.

Blessings to all as we share and live in God's love together!

## Worshipping at Centennial Christian Church

### “Building Holy Habits” During the Advent Season

We are participating in a new Advent theme, *Building Holy Habits*, throughout the four Sundays in our 2024 Advent season, from December 1st through December 22. Forget about setting goals. Focus on this instead: Holy Habits. Our Advent season reminds us to practice four wonderful habits throughout the year: Hope; Peace; Joy; and Love. Goals are good for setting a direction, but good habits are best for making progress and building relationships with God and others.

<u>Dates:</u>	<u>Scriptures:</u>	<u>Themes:</u>
Dec 01, 2024	Luke 21:25–36	Building the Holy Habit of Hope
Dec 08, 2024	Luke 1:68–79	Building the Holy Habit of Peace
Dec 15, 2024	Multiple	Christmas Cantata
Dec 22, 2024	Luke 1:39–45, 50–55	Building the Holy Habit of Love

We will also be lighting the candles of the Advent Wreath during the weeks of December 1st through December 24th.

### Participate in our Beautiful 7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Program:

Thank you, Diane Andres, for designing, planning and coordinating our Christmas Eve Service, 12/24/2024. We will be singing Christmas Carols, listening to some birth narratives of Jesus Christ, Lighting the Advent Wreath and many other candles while enjoying a warm environment of community and friendship.

December 29th is **another Christmas** program with **Prayers for a Blessed New Year in 2025**. The scripture passage is from Luke 2:41–52: An amazing and astonishing story! Let’s make a holy habit of taking time to celebrate God’s love for us during this blessed season and always.

**January 05, 2025 is the Beginning of Epiphany.** Let us take the example of the magi: Come and worship the activity of Jesus Christ in our journey with God.

## Grateful for What Unites Us

### INTERFAITH THANKSGIVING SERVICE

# Y M C A

202 St. Joseph Dr.  
Bloomington, IL

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2024 4:00 PM**

- ASL interpreter will be present.
- A freewill offering will be taken for the Red Cross.



**OUR VISION STATEMENT**  
**Spreading the message of God’s Love,**  
**in our church and in our community,**  
**through caring for each other.**

### Would You Like Offering Envelopes for 2025?

If your answer to the above question is **yes**, please complete the requested information below and return it to the church **no later than December 1st**.

1 Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

2 Check the number of envelopes you desire.

\_\_\_\_\_ 52 Weekly

\_\_\_\_\_ 12 Monthly

\_\_\_\_\_ 4 Quarterly

3 You may return your completed request to the church office or drop it in the offering plate.

4 **Thank You** for getting your request to us **no later than December 1st**.

November

### Financial Update

On Sunday, November 17<sup>th</sup>, our congregation approved the proposed 2025 budget. The budget is an increase of \$9,991.14 over our 2024 budget. Inflation is a big reason for the increase.

We are grateful for the additional funds approved for general use. We now ask for your help in supporting the new budget. Would you please give prayerful thought as to how you can further financially support Centennial. A one-time gift or a small weekly/monthly pledge increase will be a big help.

Continued blessings to you and to your family!

*Janet & Bill*  
Finance Department



Poinsettia Order Form

**Purchaser's Name**

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# of Poinsettias \_\_\_\_\_

\$13.00 each

Total Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

Please include your payment with this form which can be placed in the offering plate, turned into the office, or mailed to Centennial Christian Church, 1219 E. Grove St. Bloomington, IL 61701

**Orders Must Be In The Office No Later Than  
Monday, November 25<sup>th</sup>**

The following information will be printed in the newsletter, if provided. If "Given by" is left blank, poinsettia will be shown as from "Anonymous Donor." If you purchase more than one poinsettia and have different information for each, please list information separately.

**In Memory**

**Of:** \_\_\_\_\_

**AND/OR**

**In Honor**

**Of:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Given**

**By:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for your order!**



Thanks to ALL who helped with the 2024 Annual Bazaar.

Your hard work made the bazaar a Big Success!

Thank you,  
Centennial Congregation

# NOVEMBER 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				<b>21</b> Worship 12P-FH  Monthly Prayer Service-5P-FH  TOPS#559 5:15P-Isaiah  Book Club 6:30P	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> Bridge 12P-GH
<b>24</b> <b>Loose Change Offering</b>  Worship 10:15A  *Interfaith service 4P-YMCA	<b>25</b> Decorate the church-6P	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> <b>Thanksgiving</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>December 1</b> <b>First Sunday in Advent-HOPE</b>  Worship 10:15A	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> Bridge 12:30P-GH  Choir 6P-choir loft	<b>5</b> Outreach 11A-FH  TOPS#559 5:15P-Isaiah  FGNA 7P-FH	<b>6</b> Young @Heart Luncheon 12P-FH	<b>7</b> Scott Christmas Dinner 10A-FH
<b>8</b> <b>Second Sunday in Advent-Peace</b>  Second Sunday Food Pantry  Worship 10:15A  <b>Blessing of the shawls</b>	<b>9</b> Trustees 11A-GH	<b>10</b> CWF Luncheon 11A-FH	<b>11</b> Bridge 12:30P-GH  Choir 6P-choir loft	<b>12</b> TOPS#559 5:15P-Isaiah	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>

**\*Interfaith Thanksgiving Service November 24 at 4PM  
YMCA 202 St. Joseph Dr. Bloomington**



**We need your help  
decorating the church for Christmas  
Monday, November 25 at 6:00 PM**



## Prayer Requests

Desiree Sams, daughter of Jerry and Patti Fitzgerald, recovering from an E Coli infection. Please pray for strength and healing.

Tony Valentine, son of Ruth Valentine, recovering at home from an appendectomy. Please pray for a quick recovery.

## Continuing Prayers

Larry Carius, Perry Watson, Hope's baby August, Debbie Holiday, Sisters Kelly Bestful and Lisa Behl, Jeff Kanchak, Randy Seibert, Tim, Kris Carius, Leonard Bates, Greg Firkus and Pat Murphy, Taylor, Charlie Middleton, James, Neil and Tammy and their caregivers, Cameron Cook, Angie Simpson, Jackie Steinhilber, Megan Brown, Mannie Martinez, Ann Burmaster, Cole, Ron Geske, Pam, Dick Tarter, Scott Griffith, Jessica, Marsha, Pete Rasmussen, Robin, Fern Scaggs

## At Home/Assisted Living

At home-Doris Miller, Frieda Foland; The Pointe, Pontiac-Rae Geske;

## Nursing Home

The Arc-Rev. Barbara Short, Don Short; Westminster-Anita Poling; Earl McIntyre; Evergreen Village-Pat Iliff; Hopedale Nursing Home-Dick Tarter; Accolade, Pontiac-Ron Geske;

## Military

Mark Brienon, Keyla Folsom, Troy Guyran, Benjamin Horn, Michael Iverson, John Thomas, Darrell Walton, Glen Whitecotton, Christopher Wilson-Poston

**Prayers for CCIW congregations and ministries:** Thanksgiving Offering, Eureka College, Eureka, IL; Disciples Divinity House, Chicago, IL

### December Birthdays and Anniversaries

Julie Dawson	12/04
August Matej	12/05
Emilia Todd	12/07
Rev. Tom Cici	12/25

### Our challenge for the week –

#### Pray this prayer every day –

Loving and merciful God, you reveal yourself as a waterwheel of outpouring love that never stops! Help us to remain in loving union with you as we respect, care, serve, sympathize or be compassionate of others.

[Listen and receive.]