

CHATHAM CHRISTIAN CHURCH 9897 So. Main St., P.O. Box 527 Chatham, Illinois 62629

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Sunday Worship Service 9:15 AM
Bible School 10:45 AM

James warns us not to say what we're going to do today or tomorrow, but it's so hard not to set a date, assuming things will work out. We thought we were going to be in the gym in time for our Thanksgiving dinner, but that didn't happen.

A break in our water line had to be repaired before we could cut the trench for a gas line to the gym, and weather held up installing the HVAC units and the external ductwork. We also decided to put a balcony on top of our planned storage units, and equipment that was ordered was often delayed.

Last week, however, things really got rolling. Insulation was blown in the ceiling, the doors between the fellowship hall and the gym were installed, the heat detectors for the fire alarm system were attached, and the basketball hoops were delivered. The gym floor is scheduled to be laid, boundaries painted, and holes for the volleyball pole sockets drilled this week and next. I think it's safe to say, Lord willing, we will dedicate the gym on February 15th.

While thinking about this dedication, I couldn't help but think about the dedication of our church building back in 1976. We planned to dedicate it the first Sunday after we moved in. The Sunday before we moved in we marched from the storefront on the square to our new building carrying flags and singing. We knew there was still a lot to do, and lots to move. When we got to the church we held a prayer meeting, and I'll never forget the prayer of Jerry Aulich. "Praise God, Bless His People. Fill this Church, and Deliver the Steeple."

The steeple arrived, and on Saturday while the men were hoisting it in place, the women were moving furniture, arranging rooms, and putting books on my still sagging shelves.

Hopefully everything will be ready to go for the dedication of our gym, and the first church volleyball game of the season, on the 15th.

If not, we'll do it on the 22nd, or...
God Bless, Rick



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DEDICATION OF THE CHATHAM CHRISTIAN CHURCH GYMNASIUM FEBRUARY 15TH, 6:30

MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH THE BEQUEST OF
JACK AND BONNIE RUEBUSH

Formal dedication of our gymnasium has been scheduled for the 15th of February. Barring any unforeseen delays, we will meet at 6:30 in the evening for a time of celebration, remembrance, and recreation. After cutting pizza and the ribbon, children will be invited to enter the gym and be the first to play volleyball. After they leave teens and adults will take over, and instead of playing in the gym at the camp, we will begin a new season of volleyball right here at CCC.

Youth groups and adult study will be cancelled for the evening so all can share in this momentous event.



STATISTICS		
Worship Offering	1/4	120
		\$18,497.24
Worship Offering	1/11	121
		\$4,484.00
Worship Offering	1/18	105
		\$7,207.17
Worship Offering	1/25	40
		\$1,550.24



VOLLEYBALL IN OUR GYM

We are planning to play volleyball in our own gym on Sunday evening, February 15th. The kids will play after we eat pizza and dedicate the gym at 6:30, and adults and teens will take over the gym at 8:00.



A VALENTINE'S DAY COMMUNION MEDITATION

by Kirk Polley

As you know, on Sunday nights we have been watching Ray Vander Laan's series *That the World May Know*. A handful of weeks ago Ray explained the betrothal and wedding practices in the Jewish culture. Rick has recently also explained the process in his sermons, specifically explaining Mary and Joseph's relationship. Well, you are going to hear it again this morning from me.

In Jewish culture, a wedding didn't begin at the altar, it began with a betrothal. This was far more than a promise or engagement. It was a binding covenant between the groom and bride's father, then ultimately the bride. When a young man desired a bride, he would go to her father's home and negotiate a bride price, called the *mohar*. This wasn't a purchase in a cold sense, it was a declaration of value. It said, "Your daughter is precious to me and I want to bring her into my family. I am willing to give something costly for her." Only when the price was agreed upon would the covenant move forward. A cup of wine was poured and the groom would offer it to the potential bride. If she drank from the cup, she was saying yes, yes to the covenant, yes to the future, yes to belonging to him. The couple was then considered to be betrothed. They were considered husband and wife, they just didn't live together yet. That's because after the cup was shared, the groom would leave to prepare a place for her. He would return to his father's house and begin building an addition onto it, called the *insula*, a dwelling place where they would one day live together. And the groom was eager to get the room complete so he could bring his bride home and partake in husbandry things. But it was the father who decided the room was complete. The father told the son when to go get his bride and bring her home.

During the betrothal period, the bride lived in expectation. She kept herself ready because she didn't know when her bridegroom was returning. She remembered the covenant and she trusted the promise of the one who would return for her. Jesus referenced this imagery when He said, "My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going." Jesus is building the *insula* for His bride. He is preparing the dwelling. And one day, the Father will say, "It is time," and the Son will come for His bride. He will come for us!

Communion reminds us of the covenant we have entered into with Jesus. On the night Jesus was betrayed, He lifted a cup and said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you." He was offering a covenant to His bride, the Church. And the price He paid was not silver or gold, but His own life. Jesus's life was our bride price. When we take the bread and the cup, we remember the price that was paid. We remember the covenant that was sealed. We remember that we are not abandoned, we are betrothed. We belong to a faithful Bridegroom who is even now preparing a place for us. The bread reminds us of His body given for us. The cup reminds us of His blood poured out for us. And together they remind us: we are loved, chosen, and promised a future with Him. As you receive communion today, let your heart respond like that bride who lifted the cup and said yes. Say yes again to His covenant. Yes to His love. Yes to living ready for His return. Our Bridegroom has paid the price. He is preparing the place. And He will come again.



There have been some exciting football games this playoff season! The Bears put up a good fight during their game, but the Rams outplayed them in the end. It turned out to be a better season for the Bears than expected and that Green Bay game was historic for sure.

Whether your team is still in the playoffs or not, I encourage you to come out for our annual Super Bowl Party on February 8th. Of course there will be those watching the game and commercials, but if you are not interested in football, come out anyway! There will be plenty of people playing a variety of board games or just visiting together as we spend an evening with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

The Lakeview Lodge at LSCA will be open at 5pm that evening and we ask all attending to bring some finger food along with a 2 liter bottle of soda to share. So we know what everyone is bringing, a sign up sheet is located on the bulletin board.



We have 9 from our congregation who have expressed interest in playing Pickleball on Thursday evenings. That's great! Since we have 3 courts and it would be nice to have some substitutes, that leaves us room for around 3 to 5 additional players. This is a great venue and opportunity to invite a neighbor, or a co-worker, or whoever God puts on your heart to come join us for evenings of fun and fellowship. We will start the first Thursday after Volleyball begins.



The High Schoolers decided it is time to return to Winter Jam this year. For those who don't know, Winter Jam is a concert highlighting 11 Christian bands showcasing their music. Contemporary music styles with positive messages about forgiveness, grace and mercy.... I'll take that over the world's music any day!

All Jr/Sr High School students are welcome. Winter Jam will be held on Thursday, February 12th in Peoria. The good news is there is no school on the following Friday! We will be leaving as soon as possible after school and the cost of the concert is \$15 at the door. That is a little over \$1.00 a band. What a deal! Looking forward to a fun evening with everyone!



The schedule for the 2026 camp season is posted on the LSCA website and our bulletin board. Sessions this year will be centered around 1 Peter 2:9 which states: "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness and into His wonderful light."

Registration will be open on February 10th. As a reminder, the church will pay 1/2 the tuition for each of your children for one session of camp. The discount code needed will be available around the first week of February.