

Central United Methodist Church



From Pastor Biel

Lectionary Readings for Sunday, February 26, 2023,
First Sunday in Lent.

Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7 Psalm 32 Romans 5:12-19 Matthew 4:1-11

This first week of Lent, I am reminded of growing up and hearing kids ask, "What are you giving up for Lent?" This is how I knew which kids were Catholic. None of my Protestant and Bible Church friends "gave up" anything for Lent. Instead, my United Methodist Church increased activity: Bible Study, meeting Missionaries, visiting homebound members with Spring wreaths and, in good Methodist fashion, we held Lenten gatherings around food.

Twitter recently polled its users about what they're giving up for Lent. Alcohol was the number one answer. The next thing users tweeted that they'd like to give up is Twitter itself. Users indicated that social media was the third most likely thing they'd give up; followed by giving up Lent for Lent. I suppose if someone asked me today, I'd say that I'm giving up NFL Football for Lent.

For Methodists who observe the season of Lent, it's more common to hear about us taking something on during these 40 (plus) days rather than giving something up. Lent comes at a time of lengthening days (Lent literally translates: to lengthen). It is a season for growing in our faith walk. Methodists are known to take on practices of intentional prayer, justice seeking, increased generosity and deepened understanding of the Bible during Lent.

Even adding just five minutes at the beginning or end of the day for cultivating a sense of peace before the Lord can be life-altering. Such a practice helps us hear from the divine that we are, indeed, beloved as well as notice the blessings in our lives. This, in turn, helps us point out the blessings that we see in others and share that they are beloved.

Often times, the church I grew up in helped us raise our voices for Justice by providing post cards to sign that were already addressed to US Representatives. These cards invited them to enact legislation to assist children, women and families and at-risk people in our community. I recall being deeply moved when we had postcards addressed to political prisoners in Nicaragua letting them know that our church was part of a movement seeking peace with Justice and their release.

My favorite tool for generosity was the Checklists sent home by the United Methodist Women that raised our awareness of how few resources people around the globe live with. These lists encouraged us to give a dollar amount for every one of our luxury items like TVs, every medicine, every time we ate our food or enjoyed the warmth of shelter, blankets, coats and a furnace. By Easter, we had a mission offering of money as well as a sensitized understanding of the needs of our neighbors.

In whatever way you honor this Holy Season, I pray that you find spaces to rest your body, ways to be generous, times for peace and stillness in your spirit, and a growing trust in the good things God is revealing about you, Beloved.

Rely on God,

Pastor Biel

Bible Study

Join us for Bible Study from **9 am to 9:45 am** - Sunday morning via Zoom. If you would like to be on the Zoom list for the Bible Study Class, please email the church office by clicking on this link: centralchurch@skokiecentralumc.org.

Worship Service

Join us this **Sunday at 10:30 am** in the Sanctuary for our in-person service.

Masks and social distancing will be optional.

The worship service is available on Zoom at 10:30 am. Please email or click this link:

centralchurch@skokiecentralumc.org

to request the Zoom Link information.

Altar Flowers



The altar flowers this Sunday are given by Malou DeOcampo in celebration of her wedding anniversary.

Nursery

The Nursery is open and located on the south side of Fellowship Hall.

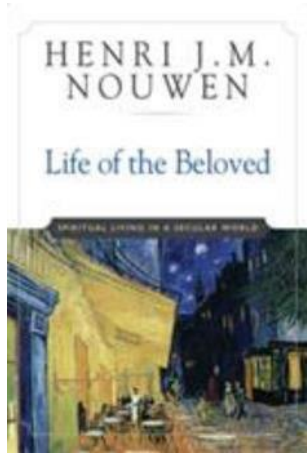
Fellowship



Fellowship on Sunday will be hosted by Malou DeOcampo.

There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board just outside the kitchen in Fellowship Hall.

Lenten Series



Starting on Wednesday, March 1st, at 7 pm, we will be holding a Lenten series on the book "Life of the Beloved: Spiritual Living in a Secular World" written by Henri Nouwen, and will be led by Mar Hadieres via Zoom. The book was originally written to describe the spiritual life for a secular Jewish friend of the author. This experience is for all those who want to have a spiritual life in a secular world. Copies of the book are available in the Narthex or can be downloaded on your Kindle.

Click on [Lenten Link](#) to join the discussion.

Dial in: 1-312-626-6799

Meeting ID: 851 8022 0876

Passcode: 128086

Devotional for Lent

From the grey of Ash Wednesday to the brilliant dawn of Easter Sunday, the season of Lent is a journey through color. And so, what better guides to this journey than the words of Scripture and the art of Henri Matisse, one of the most daring, influential artists in modern history?

In this devotional full of Scripture, art and weekly practices, we walk alongside Matisse from his childhood in northern France to what he called his "masterpiece," the Chapel of the Rosary in Vence.

He once said he liked to pray with a pencil: "At the moment I go every morning to say my prayers, pencil in hand; I stand in front of a pomegranate tree covered in blossom, each flower at a different stage, and I watch their transformation... filled with admiration for the work of God. Is this not a way of praying?"

So, grab a pencil (or a paintbrush!), your favorite Bible and a decent internet connection (all the paintings referenced here can be found online). Week by week, we'll travel through the colors of Lent – all the way to the beautiful, joyful dawn of Easter morning.

The scriptural passages in this devotional correspond to Year A in the Revised Common Lectionary – but since their themes are universal, this devotional can be used fruitfully during any Lenten season.

Files: This listing is for a downloadable PDF, printing instructions, an e-reader version, and a companion "Link Sheet" with hyperlinks to all the art mentioned in the devotional.

[Link A](#)

[Link B](#)

[Link C](#)

[Link D](#)

Bishop Dan Schwerin

Sunday, February 26 at 3:00 pm, a formal installation service will be held for Bishop Dan Schwerin. The service will be held at First UMC in Elgin at 216 E. Highland Ave.

Members of the Northern Illinois Conference will be joined by ecumenical and connexional guests. There will be hospitality to follow service.

Spring Lay Academies

Lay Servant Ministries is holding many different Lay Academies across the conference this spring. Click on the link below or visit www.umcnic.org/calendar for more information and registration. Look for more Lay Academies coming this, summer.

[Lake North](#) - 2 courses offered: Saturdays, starting March 18, or Thursdays, starting March 2.

A Prayer for Ukraine



Today, February 24, 2023, marks one year since Russian forces invaded Ukraine, continuing a war started in 2014 when Russia annexed Crimea and other Ukrainian territories. United Methodists have joined with other people of faith and people of good will across the world to provide relief for the people of Ukraine and support for those who care for refugees.

Together, we unite in prayer to seek God's strength and guidance and acknowledge God's love and power to give relief to the oppressed and turn the hearts and minds of oppressors. Please join

Roland Fernandes, Global Ministries' general secretary, today, Friday,

February 24, from 11 am to 11:15 am via [Facebook Live](#) in a prayer for comfort and peace for the people of Ukraine. More information [available here](#).

Personal Dignity Kits



Midwest Mission is preparing to send disaster relief supplies through their partner, North Star Foundation. They need to prepare upwards of 20,000 Personal Dignity Kits so they have what is needed to send to Turkey, as well as Ukraine and the other countries where they consistently send help.

What can you do?

1. You can donate! Monetary donations allow them to quickly buy supplies in bulk, and buy what is being requested by Turkey. Donate [here](#).
2. You can also buy items for the Personal Dignity Kit from their Amazon shopping list and have it delivered to Midwest Mission. To see the list, [click here](#).
3. You can pray! Disaster Relief is both a marathon and a sprint. There are years of recovery to come in Turkey. Pray for the people who are in crisis, pray for the people who are responding, and pray for God's hand in the process so that the people who are in need will receive life-saving supplies.

This is the first request for the first shipment - and there will be more.

[Learn more here](#).

Photo-a-Day Challenge

Rethink Church is continuing its Lent Photo-A-Day prompts on social media. Each day, they present a scripture-inspired word for your consideration.

Throughout the day, see how the word inspires you or shows up in your life, and share your thoughts by posting a picture. No explanation is needed in your post. After all, a picture is worth a thousand words.

Tag them on your [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [TikTok](#), or on [Twitter](#) with #rethinkchurch and/or #BeUMC.

[Click here](#) for more information and the full list.

Upper Room



The Upper Room Devotional for March/April is available in the Narthex and the office.

Mini Food Pantry

Thank you to everyone who brought food for our Mini Food Pantry. The Pantry needs filling every day, especially in the cold, snowy weather. Please bring something on Sunday - even a couple of cans would be gratefully accepted.

Please do not bring any containers - empty jars, etc.

Below is a list of suggested items - because the Mini Food Pantry is outside, it's important to only contribute non-perishable items, such as:

- [Canned goods](#) with ring-pulls
- Hygiene products: toothpaste/toothbrush, deodorant, soap, menstrual products, etc.
- Tuna and crackers
- Spices; salt and pepper
- Cooking oil
- Sugar
- Tea and coffee
- Peanut Butter
- Kids' snacks
- Dish Soap
- Stove-top Stuffing
- Non-perishable foods
- Bottled water



Thank you for your support in helping others less fortunate.

If you have questions or suggestions, please email the church office at

centralchurch@skokiecentralumc.org

Donate



We appreciate all the financial support that has been received to support the church and missions. You can now give your financial support to Central in many ways.

CASH and CHECKS— Cash and check donations can be placed in the offering box at our church services. Checks can be mailed to the church.

VENMO – Using the VENMO app, pay by credit card. Enter Central Church's Venmo email: centralchurchgiving@gmail.com.

ONE TIME DONATIONS OR SET UP RECURRING DONATIONS BY CREDIT CARD OR BANK TRANSFER USING THESE OPTIONS:

ONLINE GIVING – go to <https://onrealm.org/skokiecentralumc/give/now >;

or use the QR Code.

TEXT TO GIVE – Using our secure online giving platform, TEXT to 73256 and send the message GIVECHURCH. A response will appear with a link to our online giving web page.

Central United Methodist Church

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