

**Central United
Methodist Church
February 15, 2026**



Lectionary readings for
February 15, 2026
Transfiguration Sunday:

[Exodus 24:12-18](#)

[Psalm 2](#)

[2 Peter 1:16-21](#)

[Matthew 17:1-9](#)

Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as bright as light.

Matthew 17:1-2

Depending on the Gospel, Jesus' public ministry either began or ended when he flipped over the tables of the Temple money changers, loosed the animals to be sacrificed, and whipped the animals' sellers with straps of leather which he braided on the spot. Braiding leather is not a quick craft project. Imagine the hours Jesus spent staring at the bedlam of the Temple market, while he muttered under his breath, "Someone needs a whuppin'." I'd hate to be the guy, just trying to make a buck by ripping off believers who traveled all the way to Jerusalem to have a holy moment and see Jesus staring me down while he crafted that whip.

Truth be told, I wish Jesus would do some whuppin' of our leaders right about now. I'd like an end to wars. I'd like resources used to end child poverty and lift people out of medical debt. I'd like to turn the sick logic of people putting children in cages on those profiting from them: How about we lock up everyone on the Epstein files in these detention centers, "They can wait there until we sort this out," and give amnesty to the hard-working, tax-paying people imprisoned now.

But I don't get to make those calls. Instead, we get to work on building the kinds of relationships and spiritual resilience to navigate this moment in history.

Jesus wasn't one of the Temple elites. He was a Nazarene. His views aligned with the Essenes, as did those of his cousin John the Baptist. When he taught, it certainly wasn't about the 600 impossible-to-follow rules that the Pharisees patterned their lives after. He didn't relate to God with the blood sacrifices offered at premium prices by the priests of the Temple cult. He viewed their practices as corrupt exploitation.

What Jesus offered was healing to people who had lost themselves. His ministry was a continuation of the line of prophets Isaiah, Micah, and Jeremiah, who called for Justice, mercy, and humility. Indeed, this Sunday we see Jesus, bursting with light, on a mountaintop conversing with the giver of the Torah, Moses, and the prophet who did not die, Elijah.

Rather than camp out in this Idyllic setting, complete with God's voice in a cloud reiterating Jesus' status as beloved, Jesus leads his disciples back down the mountain towards his death at the hands of the leaders in Jerusalem. He ordered Peter, James and John not to speak about the encounter until after his resurrection. Why? Because Jesus came to set us free and upset our systems of exploitation and abuse in the process. This encounter would serve as proof that hidden disciples should listen to his way.

May you be blessed on your mountain tops. And Jesus go with you through your moments of valley lows.

In Christ,
Pastor Biel

****Ash Wednesday Feb. 18, 2026 - 11 am- 1 pm- Sanctuary***

Gratitude from The Ryan Family

Kathy Ryan would like to say thanks to all at Skokie Central for their thoughts, prayers and cards and to Rev. Biel for his visits both at Glenbrook Hospital and for taking the long trip down to the University of Chicago Hospital. Her condition is progressing and we are hopeful for a decent recovery.

-Dan, Suzanne, Tim, Addie and sister Karen.

Council of Bishops



January 26, 2026

Grace and peace to you in the name of Jesus Christ.

In recent days, events in Minnesota and beyond have caused deep grief, concern, and alarm across our connection. The use of lethal force in public spaces, the detention of naturalized citizens, members of our indigenous communities, children, documented and undocumented immigrants, and the treatment of other vulnerable persons have weighed heavily on the hearts of many in our church. These actions have unsettled communities, strained trust, and intensified fear among those already living at the margins.

Scripture reminds us that “when one part of the body suffers, we all suffer with them (I Corinthians 12:26). As a Connectional church, we are reminded that we are one body that cares for and needs each other. The whole body is suffering, right now, today! The violence being perpetrated on our streets, the loss of safety, and the inhumane treatment of God’s children, are hurting us all. We cannot stay silent in the face of the evils of our day.

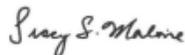
The United Methodist Church deplores the use of violence, fear, separation, and intimidation as a means of creating social order. Such means do not build beloved community. We reaffirm our longstanding commitment to the sacred worth of every person and to the way of peace taught and embodied by Jesus. We stand against the separation of children from their families. We detest the inhumane, evil actions that are perpetuated by governmental authorities.

Our Social Principles are clear: “We reject governmental use of threats, extortion, unlawful detentions, extrajudicial killings, and other forms of coercion to silence political opponents and those objecting to unlawful or immoral government policies and practices.” They further affirm that the church has both the right and the responsibility to educate and equip its members to be advocates for justice in the wider world (¶163D).

This is a moment that calls for prayerful courage to speak against actions that are bringing harm to our neighbors. This is our time to have an effectual faith that stands with those who are suffering. This is our faithful response to our baptismal vow that summons us into what is required of us “to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with our God” (Micah 6:8). We must continue to work for justice to help heal the brokenness in our communities and in the world.

We ask you to pray for peace and for justice. And we ask that we work together with our communities so that we can create a world where the sword is turned into plowshares, and the lion lays down with the lamb. May we be faithful disciples of Jesus Christ, who empowered by the Holy Spirit, do our part to bring comfort, just practices, and healing for all God’s suffering people.

In Christ’s peace,



Bishop Tracy S. Malone
President, Council of Bishops
The United Methodist Church

Worship Service

Join us on **Sunday, February 15, 2026 - Transfiguration Sunday** - in the Sanctuary for our in-person service. We celebrate the **Lord's communion every Sunday** and we invite **all to take part regardless of membership**.

The Worship service will also be available on **Zoom at 10:30 am**. Click on the link join. centralchurch@skokiecentralumc.org

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:

centralchurch@skokiecentralumc.org

†**OMICS** by Tom Gould

Jesus and the Holy Spirit
Holy Trinity



New Tax Deduction 2026



Beginning in 2026, taxpayers who take the standard deduction can also deduct up to \$1,000 (\$2,000 for married couples) for cash and check gifts made directly to qualified charities like Skokie Central Church.

What this means: If a person doesn't itemize deductions (and most of us don't), this gives you a new way to reduce your tax bill while supporting causes and charities you care about. It also means you can increase your support because it will cost you less at tax time!

[click here](#) to learn more.

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.

Altar Flowers



The altar flowers this week are provided by Pastor Sylvia Pleas in honor of her Son-in-law Steve's and granddaughter Katherine's birthdays. Steve's is February 10th and Katherine's is February 17th.

Fellowship



Join us after the church service for fellowship provided by **Emelita, Ellen, Alpha & Emilio.**

The following allergies and dietary restrictions within our congregation are known of: **corn, dairy, gluten, meat and onions.**

Looking Ahead

Readers, Flowers & Fellowship, Oh My!
We are always looking for Volunteers.
Please sign up, TODAY!

February 15

Reader: _Alpha

Flowers: _Pastor Sylvia

Fellowship: _Emelita, Ellen Nero, Alpha & Emilio

February 22

Reader: Pastor Sylvia

Flowers: Pastor Sylvia

Fellowship: Potluck

March 1

Reader: _____

Flowers: _____

Fellowship: _Laura R.

March 8

Reader: _____

Flowers: _____

Fellowship: Mariano Santos

March 15

Reader: _____

Flowers: _____

Fellowship: Tina and Ellen

March 22

Reader: _____

Flowers: Rose & Ruby

Fellowship: United Women in Faith

March 29

Reader: _____

Flowers: _____

Fellowship: Potluck

The United Women in Faith



Sunday, February 15, 2026, after Fellowship

The United Women in Faith will meet after Fellowship this Sunday. We will have * Conversation, * Mission Ideas, * Pledge Cards, and a * Short Program about Social Action, by Kathy Tiffin.

Open Style Church Council Meeting

Monday, February 23, 2026, at 7:30pm hybrid meeting

The Church Council Meeting will be an open style meeting. This means, it is open to all church members. Our discussions will include but not be limited to: a) Mission outreach to the community; b) Congregational Growth; c) Website, Facebook, Social Media; in general, social media access; d) All church picnic; and e) Leadership Development.

Help Feed My Starving Children



Wednesday, February 25

Noon - 2 PM

Feed My Starving Children

[740 Wiley Farm Court, Schaumburg, IL 60173](#)

Join our Central team for this one-of-a-kind experience. You'll hand-pack rice, soy, dried vegetables and a nutritionally complete blend of vitamins and minerals into bags which are then sealed, boxed, placed on pallets and shipped to

incredible partners who distribute the food to children who need it **[around the world.](#)**

As a volunteer, you'll get the chance to impact hundreds of kids in just two hours per packing shift. You'll experience what it's like to make a tangible difference today. Car pools may be available.

If you're interested, please email the church office
at: centralchurch@skokiecentralumc.org

Save The Date



Moving Forward
with *Hope*
2026 LAITY CONVOCATION

Northern Illinois Conference
OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Saturday, March 21
9 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Registration 8:30

Cost: \$15
Walk-ins welcome, but registration preferred
\$10 box lunch
Glen Ellyn location only

Multiple Locations:
Glen Ellyn: First UMC
424 Forest, Glen Ellyn

Satellite locations:
Princeton: First UMC 316 South Church St.
Freeport: Faith UMC 1440 S. Walnut Ave.
Orland Park: Faith UMC 15101 S. 80th Ave.

Speakers:
Rev. Lindsey Joyce
Bishop Dan Schwerin
Multiple Young People from across the conference

Registration and more information at:
umcnic.org/calendar/2026-laity-convocation

2026 Laity Convocation "Moving Forward with Hope"

Sat., March 21, 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

First UMC of Glen Ellyn, 424 Forest Ave. To register [click here.](#)

DECONSTRUCTION & RECONSTRUCTION: *Being Queer+Religious* AN INTERACTIVE PANEL

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2026 7-8:30PM

The Log Cabin @ 8237 KENTON AVENUE, SKOKIE

Have you lost a faith home due to your gender or sexual identity? Do you still believe in the tenets of your religion, but have questions about being both queer and religious? Join us for a panel conversation with four queer religious leaders from the north and northwest side of Chicago.

PANELISTS



Rev. Shawna Bowman
(they/them/theirs)
Friendship Presbyterian Church



Kent R. Brooks
(he/his/him)
Northwestern University



Rev. Rick Incorvati
(he/him/his)
St. James Cathedral
Northwestern University



Rabbi Rachel Weiss
(she/her/hers)
Jewish Reconstructionist
Congregation



**RESERVE
YOUR
SEAT!**



www.mgccpresbyterian.org

Moderated by

Rev. Beth Guzman (she/her/hers)
Morton Grove Community Church



QUESTIONS?

call the office: (847) 965-2982
mgcc@mgccpresbyterian.org

[f](https://www.facebook.com/mgccpresbyterian) [i](https://www.instagram.com/mgccpresbyterian) @mgccpresbyterian

MORTON GROVE COMMUNITY CHURCH
PRESENTS

Bible Trivia

at
SUNDAY
MARCH 8 - 5-7 PM



Ready to put your Sunday school knowledge to good use? Join us for a beer and Bible trivia at Burning Bush Brewery in Chicago's North Center neighborhood. A free community event!

Categories:

OLD TESTAMENT
NEW TESTAMENT
BIBLICAL GEOGRAPHY
CHRISTIAN HISTORY
WOMEN IN THE BIBLE

Hosted by Dan Maurer

Dan Maurer has hosted trivia shows and karaoke in Chicagoland for the last five years. He studies sociology at Northeastern Illinois University.



More Info

call the office: (847) 965-2982
mgcc@mgccpresbyterian.org
www.mgccpresbyterian.org

@mgccpresbyterian



SCAN TO
RESERVE
YOUR SPOT!



Morning Tai-Chi Class



Weekly on Tuesday Log Cabin- 9 AM

Interested in learning Tai-Chi? Join our free class in the **Log Cabin, Tuesday mornings, 9:00 to 10:00 a.m.** Classes are taught by certified instructors, Jas and Jo Faber. This slow, meditative exercise is designed to improve energy, relaxation, balance and overall health.

Practice Tai Chi from your chair with this gentle 10-minute seated Tai Chi practice for balance and alignment. Relax the body through gentle movements - Tai Chi is a moving meditation. Guided by instructor Arlene Faulk, who shares: "Doing this chair tai chi practice every day for a year launched me on the road to walking again and good health."

To try chair Tai Chi and follow along- [click here](#) - Guided by instructor Arlene Faulk

If you're interested, please email the church office
at: centralchurch@skokiecentralumc.org

Central Caring Crafters



3rd Thursday of the month Next meeting is Feb 19

10 AM Ed Bldg. Room 7

If you crochet, quilt, sew and have a heart for other crafts, gather with us to work, to learn how, or just come for the fellowship! Bring a bag lunch and stay for lunch and a treat. We hope to see you there!

If you're interested, please email the church office
at: centralchurch@skokiecentralumc.org

Tuesday Morning Meditation



**Weekly on Tuesday
Log Cabin or Online
10:30 AM CDT**

Join us as we gather to practice Lectio Divina on the weekly lectionary readings.

Lectio Divina is a contemplative practice with its Christian roots in the Benedictine tradition. It combines slow, conscious reading of a biblical or sacred

text with contemplation and silent prayer. It is meant to promote communication with God and a deeper knowledge of Christ, in our lives today.

During Lectio Divina we put aside thoughts of studying the text. This is not the time to consider the historical or theological meanings of what we are reading. We read with a willingness to enter into text in a felt sense. The purpose of this practice is to hear, in silence, the word of God, in this moment. What, through this reading, is God saying to me right now? What do I hear that helps me know what it means to walk the Christ path today?

Lectio Divina has traditionally been a communal practice; that is, one shared when in a group but it can be done when alone.

If you're interested, please email the church office at:

centralchurch@skokiecentralumc.org

Mini Food Pantry

Thank you to everyone who brings food for our Mini Food Pantry. The Pantry needs filling every day. 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:



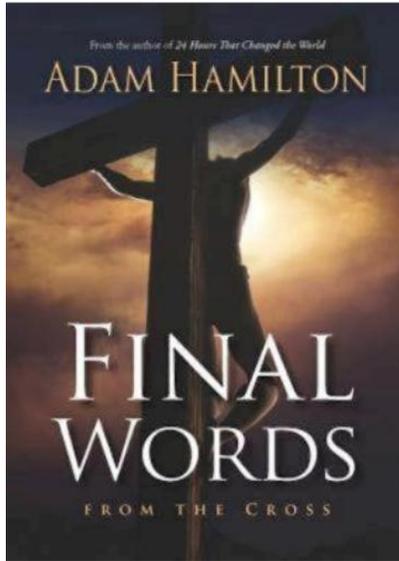
- [Canned goods](#) with ring-pulls
- Hygiene products: toothpaste/toothbrush, deodorant, soap, menstrual products, etc.
- Tuna and crackers
- Spices; salt and pepper
- Cooking oil
- Sugar
- Tea and coffee
- Peanut Butter
- Kids' snacks
- Dish Soap
- Stove-top Stuffing
- Non-perishable foods
- Bottled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

Lenten Book Study: Final Words From The Cross



February 25, 2026 - April 1, 2026
Wednesday - 7 PM - 8 PM
6 week study

In person & Zoom

You're invited to Join us for this Lenten Study [click here](#) to order- Some copies available in the office.

In life and in death, Jesus' words were powerful and meaningful. Despite the serious effort and increased pain required for Jesus to speak as he hung on the cross, Jesus spoke seven "final words"—statements that have much to teach us about Jesus, his Father, and ourselves: Father Forgive Them Today You Will Be with Me in

Paradise Behold Your Son & help; Behold Your Mother My God, My God, Why Have You Forsaken Me? I Thirst It Is Finished . . . Into Your Hands I Commit My Spirit Postscript: The Words After That In 24 Hours That Changed the World, Adam Hamilton took us on a Lenten journey through the last day of Jesus' life.

Now in this inspiring follow-up book, Hamilton explores these final words as seen and heard through the eyes and ears of those who stood near the cross. Each chapter begins with the biblical account followed by a first-person story as might have been told from the viewpoint of one of the characters at the cross. Then the chapter explores the meaning of Jesus' dying words for our lives today. Following the last statement, a postscript recounts the words Jesus spoke following his resurrection, including what truly were the final words Jesus spoke while walking this earth. Join the crowd now and experience the final words from the cross.

Final Words from the Cross offers six chapters/sessions plus a postscript chapter/session, so that classes have the option of a seventh session on Easter Sunday.

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

centralchurch@skokiecentralumc.org

Yoga

MORE INFO
& REGISTER



YOGA SAMPLER WITH VICTORIA BIEL

FRIDAYS 5:30-7 P.M.

FULL SESSIONS: \$125/\$156

DROP-INS: \$28/\$35

SESSION I:

1/9: VINYASA

1/16: YIN

1/23: HATHA

1/30: SOUND

2/6: EFT/SOMATIC

SESSION II:

2/20: IYENGAR

2/27: VINYASA

3/6: KUNDALINI

3/13: RESTORATIVE

3/20: LAUGHTER



RESTORATIVE YOGA

WITH VICTORIA BIEL

THURSDAYS 5:30-7 P.M.

1/8-2/26: \$200/\$250

3/5-4/30: \$200/\$250

DROP-INS: \$26/\$33



8031 FLORAL AVE. | (847) 929-8001
MUSEUM@SKOKIEPARKS.ORG



Prayer of the Week

A Prayer for Transfiguration

Radiant Christ, who shone with glory on the mountain, let me see you clearly today. Not just in the awe of holy moments, but in the middle of my ordinary life. Open my eyes to who you truly are, and in seeing you, begin to change me. Shape my thoughts, soften my heart, and help me reflect your image. Even when the world around me feels dim, may your presence be my clarity and hope. Transform me by your love, until I shine a little more like you.

Amen.

Central United Methodist Church

[Send Us An Email](#)

Rev. Timothy Biel Jr., Pastor
8237 Kenton Avenue
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