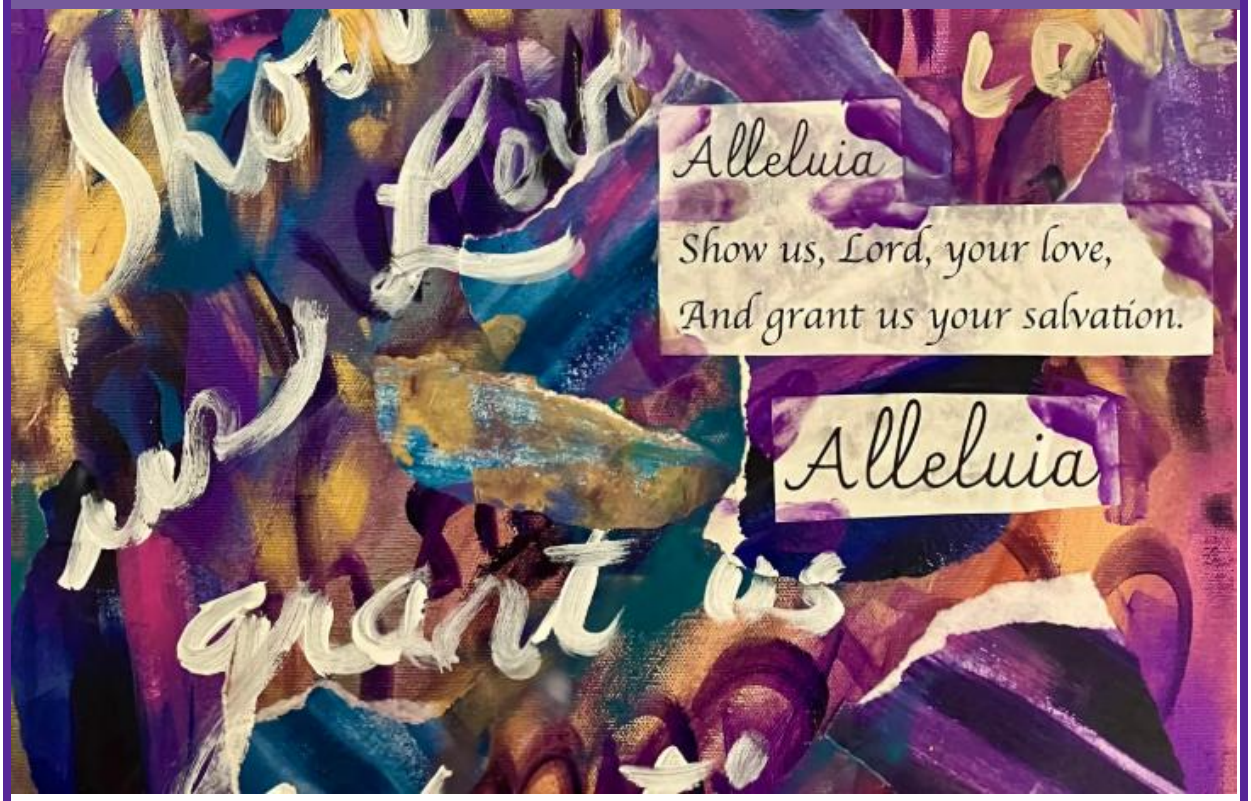
# Central United Methodist Church
# November 29, 2026




Lectionary readings for First Sunday of Advent:

Isaiah 64:1-9
Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
1 Corinthians 1:3-9
Mark 13:24-37

*But in those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, 25 and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.*
*26 "Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in clouds' with great power and glory. 27 Then he will send out the angels and gather the elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.* Mark 13:24-26

Looking to the clouds for salvation, Mark echoed Isaiah's prayer, "Tear open the heavens!" We too long for God to show up and put an end to the evils that humans inflict on each other, God's creatures, and creation.

This week, as lead azide missiles were exploded in Middleton, Iowa, I prayed a similar prayer for salvation from ourselves: our addiction to war and manufacturing death, our obsession with criminalizing the poor, the addicts, the immigrants; even children are swept up in our madness for more money and control. Our delusion that we can extract from the earth and persons forever.

I prayed that our hardened hearts would soften at the Potter's touch. I pray that we would live like the elect gathered and called by the angels.

Jesus' answer to Isaiah's lament for God to show up, promising that his generation would see "the Son of Man coming in clouds.'

This is the first Sunday of Advent, the Sunday of Hope. Advent gives us four weeks to prepare for God's coming in the Christ Child with truth-telling about our condition and how we got here. Jesus' birth, his Incarnation, makes sense only if we live it out.

Although our understanding is 'cloudy,' God hears our cries, senses our longing, and empowers us to bring heaven closer, now. We testify to the presence of Jesus Christ among us; at his table, when we gather, when the Spirit uses us to answer prayers. We acknowledge that we are sent out as part of God's plan for salvation.

Is there hope that we will be able to salvage our little blue spaceship in time? Refreeze the ice caps? Unlay pipelines? Melt the weapons of every henchman, snatch missiles from the air, heal every single wounded person? It's a worthy prayer. It's a God-sized prayer.

Living this kind of question is bigger than any of us. Sin seems heavier than the foundations of the world can hold. Yet, the season of Advent is upon us. We enter the darkness of our unknowing, trusting an encounter with the divine.

Following the way of Jesus has the answers that can save us from the forces of evil and destruction we face. Mary prayed down the mighty from their thrones. Jesus said the powers would be shaken. His throne was a cross. His crown: thorns.

Keep crying out, full-throated, for liberation. It is shaping us into persons through whom God's justice and mercy -mysteriously, miraculously-shall flow, even when we do not find Her face.

Blessed Advent waiting in Hope,

***Pastor Biel***

Still need to make your pledge? - **click here**.

# Worship Service

Join us on **November 29, 2026 -** First Sunday of Advent in the Sanctuary for our in-person service. We celebrate the **Lord's communion every Sunday and we invite all to partake regardless of membership.**

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.

# 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**



# 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.

**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.


Upcoming Events 2026
December
Dec 12 Saturday - Santa In the Cabin
Dec 21 Monday- Winter Solstice - First Day of Winter
Dec 24 Thursday- Christmas Eve - Service 9 PM
Dec 25 Friday - Merry Christmas!
Dec 31 Thursday- New Year's Eve
January
Jan 1 Friday - New Year's Day!

# Altar Flowers



The altar flowers are provided by Emelita Benigno in honor of Maricel Ladieras' Birthday.

# Poinsettia Flowers



**Sunday, November 29 , 2026**

Christmas Poinsettia Order forms and payments will be due on **Sunday, November 29, 2026**. 6" single plants blooms at **$22 each** for placing on the altar for Christmas. Order forms will be located on the sign-in table or at the church office.

# Fellowship



Join us for Fellowship provided by our Emelita Benigno.

Several members of our congregation are known to have allergies and diet restrictions: Dairy, Gluten, Meat and Corn.

# Looking Ahead

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

November 29
Reader: _____Katy Washington_____
Flowers: ____Emelita Benigno___
Fellowship: _____Emelita Benigno_____

December 6
Reader: ____Tina De Ocampo_____
Flowers: ____Tina De Ocampo___
Fellowship: _____

December 13
Reader: _____
Flowers: _____
Fellowship: _____

December 20
Reader: _____
Flowers: ___Poinesittas____
Fellowship: _____

December 27
Reader: _____Pam Castenada_____
Flowers: _____
Fellowship: _____

# Niles Township Clergy Forum

The Annual Community Thanksgiving Service
"A Sense of Home"

Keynote Speakers:
Ruth Orme Johnson, Director of Niles Township Social Services
Charlie Biggins, Respite Center Manager
Robert Gaiter, Respite Center Support Staff

Central gracefully hosted The Annual Community Thanksgiving Service again for the second year. The theme for the service was “A Sense of Home” especially for people who are homeless. The three keynote speakers, Ruth, Charlie, and Robert gave witness to the need of people needing a helping hand in finding shelter and a hot meal. The Respite Center in Niles Township does just that, help the homeless and the hungry.

After the service, Central abundantly provided a lite dinner and desserts. Thanks to these great chefs: Alpha & Emil, Kathy, Mary, Miriam, Remy, Tina, Mariano, and Millete.




# United Women In Faith

United Women in Faith

The link below will list and describe what is going on throughout our Northern Illinois Conference, for United Women in Faith.

One particularly exciting event will be on **Saturday, March 13th, 2027, here in this church**. This is the yearly World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women. The program includes scripture readings, social action program summaries, inspiration, and music.

We have been asked to provide breakfast snacks and a light lunch.

**Click here.**

Also in this Insight Publication are various articles:

Lois Moreland Dean was elected to the Board of Directors of the United Women in Faith Corporation, 2026-2030.

LEGACY ENDOWMENT FUND has nearly reached its goal of $60M.
Becky John, is our new UWFaith Northern Illinois Conference secretary.
The 2027 Reading Program Link is in this article.

Reports about "What is happening" in our five NIC Districts:
- Lake North District
- Lake South District
- Prairie Central District
- Prairie North District
- Prairie South District

Information about Cunningham Children's Home is listed here.
Emma Norton Volunteer Day is described.
Lessie Bates Davis Neighborhood House is described.
Church and Society Events are listed.
Order your daily Prayer Guide here!



World Federation
Of Methodist and Uniting
Church Women

Dear United Women in Faith,

"The World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women (formerly World Federation of Methodist Women) is a fellowship of such officially recognized groups of Methodist, United and Uniting Church Women organized in Units from the respective participating nations to affirm its purpose "To Know Christ and To Make Him Known"."

**https://wfmucw.org/about**
**https://wfmucw.org/about/the-tree-of-life**

National Units are combined within nine geographical Areas. The Area and Unit Officers co-ordinate programs and provide a global network for sharing information on program activities. Two years ago, I worked with this wonderful

group of women in preparing the 18 page program. In 2024 their programs included: No Poverty; No Hunger; and Quality Education. Many churches explained how they helped in reaching these goals. I talked about our mini food pantry.

**This event is on Saturday, March 13th, 2027, here in this church.** This is the yearly meeting of the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women. Every four years, the United Women in Faith is the host. I anticipate that other leaders in the NIC United Women in Faith will help us in the setting up, serving, program, and clean up from this event.

The WFMUCW programs include scripture readings, social action program summaries, inspiration, and music. We have been asked to provide breakfast snacks and a light lunch.

***-Kathy Tiffin***
**United Women in Faith NIC**
**Social Action Coordinator**

# A Future Of Hope



# 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.

To join our Tai- Chi online **click here**.

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 - **click here** - Arlene Faulk

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

# Tuesday Morning Meditations



**Weekly on Tuesday**
**Ed Bldg. or on Zoom**
**10:30 AM CDT**

One ancient practice central to Christian prayer is called lectio divina or "divine reading." In lectio divina, we begin by reading and savoring a short passage of scripture. Our inner posture is one of a listening heart with an unhurried expectation that God has a message to convey especially suited to our circumstance. We read and ruminate

with the ears of our heart open, alert to any connections the Spirit may reveal between the passage and our life situation. We ask, "What are you saying to me today, Lord?" Listening in this way requires patient receptivity in which we let go of our own agendas and open ourselves to God's shaping purpose.

Once we have heard a word that we know is meant for us, we feel naturally drawn to prayer. From listening we move to speaking—perhaps in confession or sorrow, perhaps in joy or thanksgiving, perhaps in anger or hurt, perhaps in trust or surrender. Finally, after pouring out our heart to God, we come to rest simply and deeply in the wonderful, loving presence of God.

Reading, reflecting, responding, and resting—this forms the basic rhythm of lectio divina. God is present in you through the Spirit who speaks to you in scripture and prays in you and for you. Ask for grace to listen to what God says, then choose one of the short biblical passages here and follow the steps: read, reflect, respond, and rest.

1. Read the scripture slowly.
Watch for a key phrase or word that jumps out at you or promises to hold a special meaning for you. It is better to dwell profoundly on one word or phrase than to skim the surface of several chapters. Read with your own life and choices in mind.

2. Reflect on a word or phrase.
Let the special word or phrase that you discovered in the first step sink into your heart. Bring mind, will, and emotions to task. Be like Mary, Jesus' mother, who heard the angel's announcement and "treasured" and "pondered" what she had heard (Luke 2:19).

3. Respond to what you have read.
Form a prayer that expresses your response to the idea, then "pray it back to God." What you have read is woven through what you tell God.

4. Rest in God's presence.
Be still and let God's loving spirit pour out on you.

## Try It Out

- Do Justice, Love Kindness (Micah 6:8)
- God's New Thing (Isaiah 43:19-21)
- Do Not Fear (Isaiah 43:1-2, 4)
- Let Your Light Shine (Matthew 5:13-16)
- Be Still (Psalm 46:10-11)

**Click here to learn more or view other spiritual practices.**

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

# Central Caring Crafters



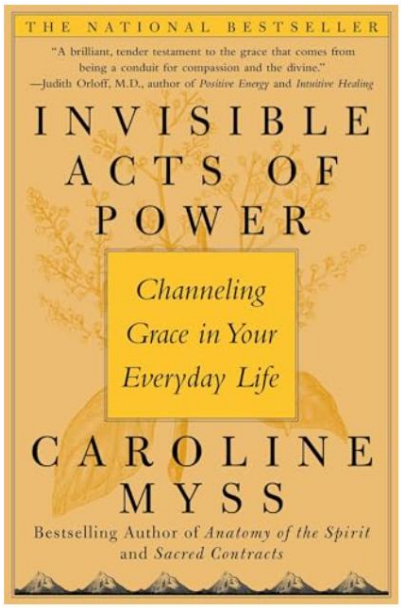
**3rd Thursday of the month**
**Next meeting is Dec. 17.**

**10 AM Ed Bldg. Room 7**

If you crochet, quilt, sew or 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**

# Invisible Acts of Power




**Book Study Weekly**
**On Zoom**
**6 PM - 7 PM**

**To listen to the audiobook preview click here.**

**TedX Talk - Choices That Change Your life**
**click here.**

**1 book available in the office.**

For more than two decades, internationally renowned pioneer in energy medicine Caroline Myss has been studying how people use their personal power. Through her special brand of spiritual insight and intuition, her popular workshops, and her bestselling books, Myss has helped hundreds of thousands of people meet the lifelong challenge of managing their spiritual energy and improving their lives.

Now, in this inspiring new book, Myss expands her message about power in an entirely new spiritual direction. With characteristic originality, she explains how we become channels for divine grace and a conduit for miracles through kind, compassionate, generous actions, or, as she calls them, invisible acts of power.

When we act compassionately, without a private agenda or expectation of credit or reward, God works invisibly, anonymously through us. And as we move from visible acts, such as giving a friend a helping hand, to invisible acts, such as prayer and healing, we undergo a profound journey of personal empowerment.

The myriad simple but profound ways that people connect to create small miracles, gain a greater sense of spirituality, and transform their own -- and others' -- lives in an instant will inspire you to your own invisible acts of power...and attract them to you.

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

# The Scoop Around Skokie




Our community needs your help. Join us on **Friday, December 11th** and/or **Saturday, December 12th**, for an hour or two to make our church's upcoming event a success.

- **Bake some cookies or cakes**: We'll need plenty of delicious treats to sell at our event. Your baking skills are highly appreciated!

*****Bring your baked goods to Fellowship Hall on Friday, December 11, 10am-6:00pm**

**Here's other ways you can help:**

**Friday, December 11**- Receive, label baked goods and help decorate the Log Cabin.

**Saturday, December 12th-** set up, maintain cafe and clean up.

-Welcoming guests at the door, cashier in the café, taking food orders, plating and bussing tables etc.

E-mail the office today and let us know **which day** and **time** and how you would like to help!



# Simbang Gabi

Join the Northern Illinois Filipino-American United Methodists for three special Simbang Gabi gatherings.

**Nov. 29** starting at 4 p.m. **Friendship UMC** 303 E. Boughton Rd, Bolingbrook

**Speaker:** Rev. Ronald Allan Balang, Pastor of Prophetstown UMC and Leon UMC

**Dec. 6** starting at 4 p.m. **Our Redeemer's UMC** 1600 Schaumburg Rd, Schaumburg

Joined by the Fellowship of Asian Americans of NIC

**Speaker:** Eunice Cronin, Mabuhay Fellowship of Chicago Temple UMC

**Dec. 13** starting at 4 p.m. **Good Samaritan UMC** 960 Army Trail Blvd. Addison

**Speaker:** Rev. Dexter Ceballos, Pastor of Erie UMC

**Love Boldly, Serve Joyfully, Lead Courageously**

For more information visit:
umcnic.org/calendar/simbang-gabi-2026

Questions text:
Deaconess Joann Melad 773-677-9160

Northern Illinois Conference
OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

# 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**

# Prayer of the Week

## An Advent Prayer

Lord God, we adore you because you have come to us in the past.
You have spoken to us in the Law of Israel.
You have challenged us in the words of the prophets.
You have shown us in Jesus what you are really like.
Lord God, we adore you because you still come to us now.
You come to us through other people and their love and concern for us.
You come to us through men and women who need our help.
You come to us as we worship you with your people.
Lord God, we adore you because you will come to us at the end.
You will be with us at the hour of death.
You will still reign supreme when all human institutions fail.
You will still be God when our history has run its course.
We welcome you, the God who comes.
Come to us now in the power of Jesus Christ our Lord.

***- Caryl Micklem, "Contemporary Prayers for Public Worship"***

## Central United Methodist Church


**Rev. Timothy Biel Jr., Pastor**

**8237 Kenton Avenue**
**Skokie, Illinois 60076**

**Church Email:**
centralchurch@skokiecentralumc.org

**Church Website:**
www.skokiecentralumc.org

**Church Phone:**
**(847) 673-1311**


**Send Us An Email**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