
Central United Methodist Church December 14, 2025



Lectionary readings for
Third Sunday of Advent
December 14, 2025

Isaiah 35:1-10
Psalms 146:5-10
James 5:7-10
Matthew 11:2-11

Isaiah 35:1-10

The desert and the dry land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom like the crocus. They will burst into bloom, and rejoice with joy and singing.

There's something about the cold and snow that I really appreciate (besides reminding us that it's time for Santa in the Cabin!); it helps us remember to slow down. The icy conditions remind us to tread carefully; intentionally. Going out into the bracing chill rewards us with breathtaking skies and migrating birds. I appreciate how the plants that have gone to seed put on a display of abundance. A stroll through the snow contrasts beautifully with the dried brown flora. I like how the trees in winter reveal their branches and various nests.

Winter is also the time when trees send energy down into their roots. While animals look to them for shelter, they are still pushing earth; hidden from sight, they still grow.

Before his public ministry, the Holy Family and Jesus lived out of sight. They were so plain that no one took notice, yet they fruitfully manifested the promises of God. Among his followers were people who were overlooked. They were both achingly poor and ordinary, yet also able to catch the attention of wise ones from the east and dangerous rulers closer to home. God chose to become enfleshed in the life of Jesus surrounded by people of humble origins and die a criminal's death with only his closest female companions standing near.

In order to set us free, God put on vulnerability, as a baby, disarming our understanding of strength and power.

We are wise to revisit the Christmas story with attention to what's tender, what's gentle, and what's true. Advent is preparation for a love revolution that came down at Christmas.

God promised through Isaiah that the dry places and deserts will bloom and rejoice. May Jesus' life be our Joy; the spirit within us singing and praising like a desert after the rain.

Nurture dormant seeds of light and love into glorious flower this season. Your joy, your rest, your radical self-acceptance honor God's holy watering of the dry places.

In Christ,

Pastor Biel

Worship Service

Join us on **Sunday, December 14, 2025** - Third Sunday of Advent 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.** Please email the church's email address to obtain a Zoom Link.

centralchurch@skokiecentralumc.org

Christmas Eve Service

Wednesday, December 24, 2025

Choir Practice - 8 PM

Worship Service - 9 PM

On **Wednesday, December 24, 2025 at 9 PM**, please join us for a Christmas Eve evening service. We will have guest singers from the **Opera of Greater Chicago** singing with Central's Choir.



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



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 Kris Mascari in loving memory of her parents, Betty and Jack Rooney.

Fellowship



Join us after the church service for Fellowship provided by Maricel Ladieras.

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

All Hands On Deck

TODAY- Friday, 12, 2025

*****Cookie Drop Off in Fellowship Hall*****

10 AM - 6:00 PM

OR DROP OFF ON SATURDAY

9 AM - 11 AM

**TOMORROW - Saturday,
December 13 , 2025**



We hope you can join us again this year at **Santa in The Cabin.**

We'll have a wide variety of handcrafted and unique items to buy for gifts and for yourself.

Our Cabin Cafe' will be open again so you can sit in the Log Cabin's great room and enjoy lunch by the fireplace.

We will also have a bake sale with cookies, cakes, homemade breads and more. There is even a free craft for kids of any age to make and take home to hang on their own tree.

And of course, Santa will be up in the Log Cabin's loft visiting with young and old. Please join us for one of the most charming events of the holiday season.

FREE Admission for all. Doors open at 10:00 AM and close at 3:00 PM.

Spread the Christmas Cheer: Support Central Church Staff

In the spirit of giving, we invite you to consider a donation to our Central Church Staff Christmas Gift Fund.

This initiative allows us to express our appreciation for the tireless efforts of our dedicated staff members, who work diligently to ensure the smooth operation of our church and provide unwavering support to our congregation. Your contribution, no matter the size, will make a significant difference in bringing joy and gratitude to our staff during this special time of year. Every gift, big or small, is a testament to the profound impact our staff has on our community.



To contribute, simply write "Staff Gifts" on the memo line of your check or indicate your donation during the online giving process.

Thank you for considering this meaningful opportunity to spread Christmas cheer and express your appreciation for our Central Church staff. Your generosity is truly appreciated.

Looking Ahead

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

December 14
Reader: Remy Yabes
Flowers: Kris Mascari
Fellowship: Carol & Roldan

December 21
Reader: Tina
Flowers: Emelita Benigno
Fellowship: Tina

December 28
Reader: _____
Flowers: Doris Bloom
Fellowship: Pot – Luck

The Mission Tree Is Up!



Mission



Supporting Our Mission: Families in Need

This mission is a direct reflection of our faith in action. It's about providing immediate, practical assistance to families within our community—and even within our own congregation—who are struggling with unexpected financial crises, food insecurity, or basic material needs.

Your generosity makes it possible to answer a prayer and change a life.

Financial Donations

A monetary gift is the most flexible way to help, allowing us to respond quickly to different crises, whether it's paying an unexpected utility bill, purchasing emergency groceries, or securing temporary shelter.

- **Designated Offering:** Please use an offering envelope and clearly write "Families in Need Mission" or directly on the check memo line.
- **Online Giving - Venmo:** If you give through Venmo please label the funds "Families in Need."

Donating Goods

Please contact the office for more details.

Niles Township Food Pantry - Winter Comforts

Supporting Our Mission: Winter Comforts

The Winter Comforts mission is a direct reflection of our faith in action, and it all started with Central's own knitters, crocheters and crafters!

We could use some socks and mittens to match up with the beautiful scarves and hats that the Caring Crafters have already made.

Please bring MITTENS AND SOCKS in the following sizes:

-infant to baby -2 year old (yo) -
4 to 8yo -8 to 12yo -large size

Your generosity makes it possible to answer a prayer and keep young people warm during our cold Chicago winter!



Niles Township Food Pantry - Holiday Gift Cards

"This holiday season, we are collecting monetary donations to purchase 1,000 \$75 gift cards for the children of our food pantry families. Our goal is simple but powerful: to ensure no child goes without a gift during the holidays.

Rather than collecting toys, we choose to give gift cards so that parents and guardians have the dignity and joy of selecting the perfect gift for their own child because they know them best.

With your support, we can bring comfort, choice, and holiday cheer to families who need it most.

Donate today and help make the season brighter for every child in our township. Collecting donations now until December 21st."

*****CHECKS SHOULD BE MADE OUT TO CUMC BUT ON MEMO LINE INDICATE IT IS FOR THE NILES TWP FOOD PANTRY DRIVE**

Santa In The Cabin



**SANTA
IN THE
CABIN**

&

**CRAFT
VENDOR
FAIR**

CABIN CAFÉ AND BAKE SALE

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13th
10 a.m. to 3 p.m.**

- * **A wide variety of unique and handcrafted gifts**
- * **Free take-home craft for the kids**
- * **Enjoy lunch in the Cabin Café**

Central United Methodist Church

8237 N. Kenton Avenue, Skokie, IL 60076

Phone: 847-673-1311 www.skokiecentralumc.org

Concert Opera of Greater Chicago



CONCERT OPERA OF GREATER CHICAGO

presents

**International
Christmas Music,
Opera Favorites
& more...**

...with exciting new voices!

*Opera favorites, Christmas music sing-along and
a few surprises...*



*Music by: Mozart, Verdi, Brahms, Menotti,
Händel, Rodgers and Hammerstein and more....*

Saturday December 20, 2025 at 1 pm

Tickets: \$20

chicagoconcertopera.com

COGC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

Central United Methodist Church
8237 Kenton Avenue
Skokie, Illinois 60076

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.

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 18**

10 AM Ed Bldg. Room 7

The prayer shawl group is back as **Central Caring Crafters!** 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

Resources for Grief and Loss



Grieving loss consciously is at the center of the spiritual path. It is soul work — healthy, cleansing, and intelligent. The process allows us to metabolize the pain of loss and continue living. It lets us open to love.

By honoring what has passed away, we are free to embrace the life that is here.

Yet grief is so deeply painful, so hard to endure.

A question I am often asked is: How do I find refuge in the midst? What can help me move through the pain of separation?

to learn more [click here](#).

Prayer of the Week

Third Week

Lord God, may we, your people, who look forward to the birthday of Christ experience the joy of salvation and celebrate that feast with love and thanksgiving. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Central United Methodist Church

Rev. Timothy Biel Jr., Pastor

8237 Kenton Avenue
Skokie, Illinois 60076

Church Email:
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[Send Us An Email](#)



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