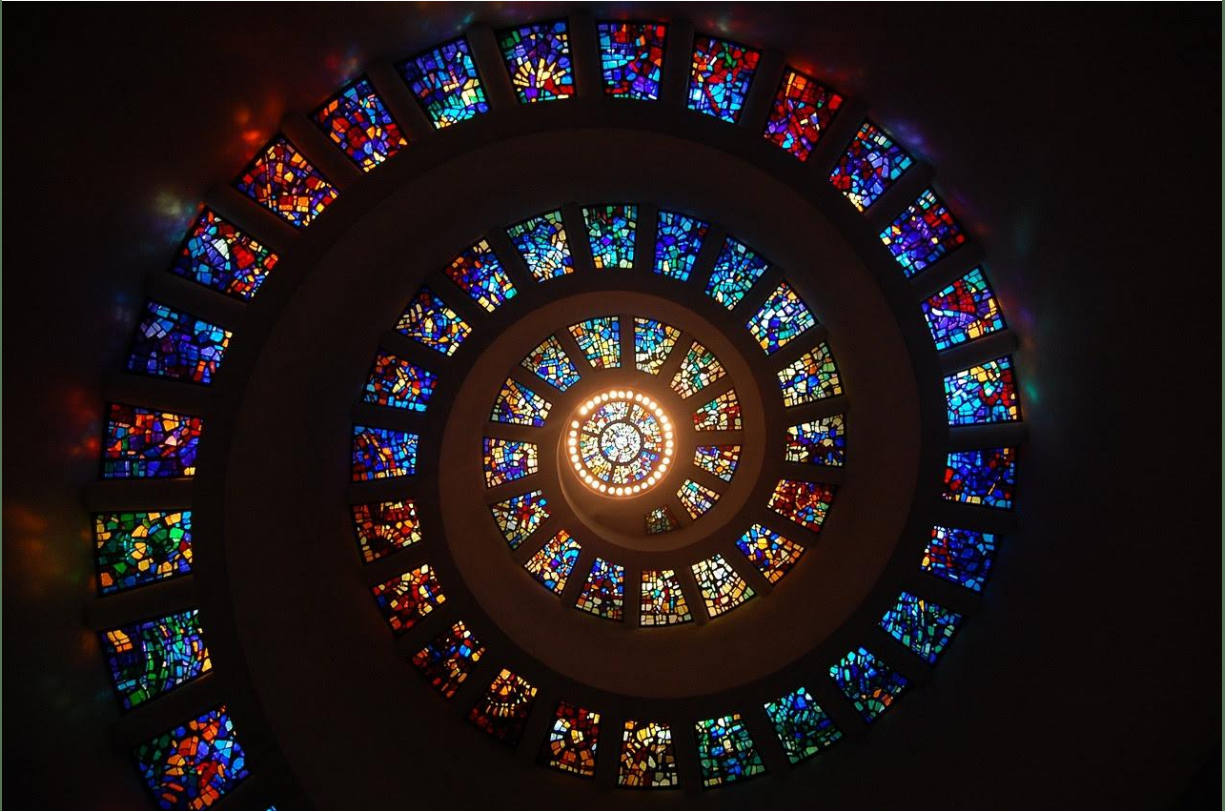


# Central United Methodist Church



---

Lectionary Readings for January 14, 2024,  
Second Sunday after  
the Epiphany  
1 Samuel 3:1-10 (11-20) Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18,  
1 Corinthians 6:12-20 John 1:43-51

---

Beloved,

How often do we take someone less seriously because of where they are from?

In our gospel for Sunday, Nathaniel tries to extinguish Philip's excitement about meeting Jesus with the tired phrase, "Can anything good come from Nazareth?"

It would be easy to insert modern places into Nathaniel's insult. Can anything good come from Chicago? Detroit? South of the border? The other side of the tracks?

It's not uncommon for people I meet in other states to ask if I'm afraid of being shot when I go to Chicago.

Discounting people and their experiences because of where they are from is an age-old mistake. What's behind this prejudice hasn't changed much in 2,000 years, has it?

Yet, throughout the Bible God shows up alongside unexpected people from unanticipated places. It's a message to us to keep our minds open.

Hearing Nathaniel's acclamation to Jesus, "You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" after just meeting Jesus is a bit of a surprise. It's all part of John, the gospel writer's job of showing us who Jesus is. Watch Jesus. Like Philip says, "Come and see."

When we do, we will see Jesus act in solidarity and radical love, with healing and feeding, inclusivity and liberation. These are truly the actions of the Son of God. And instructions for the Church of Jesus Christ.

Deep blessings be upon you as you learn to trust Jesus' blessings.

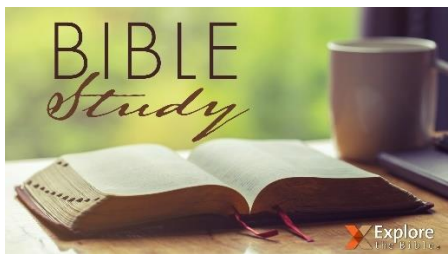
***-Pastor Biel***

THE BEST HEALING  
IS WHEN YOU REALIZE  
YOU'RE NOT BROKEN  
AND DON'T NEED FIXING



<https://www.facebook.com/nakedpastor/>

# 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](mailto:centralchurch@skokiecentralumc.org).

# Worship Service

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

The worship service is also available on Zoom at 10:30 am, please email or click this link: [centralchurch@skokiecentralumc.org](mailto:centralchurch@skokiecentralumc.org) before Sunday.

# Altar Flowers



The altar flowers this Sunday are given by Marides Haidari in honor of Emma's Birthday.

# Fellowship

Join us for fellowship after church this Sunday provided by Marides and Robert Haidari.

The last Sunday of each month will be a Potluck. There is a signup sheet outside the kitchen for Fellowship from now until the middle of May 2024.

# Lake North Leadership Training



## LEAD 2024 January 27, 2024

9 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

First Korean UMC

655 East Hintz Road, Wheeling

Cost \$15 each

---

### Program: 9 a.m. - Opening Worship

Online Zoom  
option available  
for opening  
worship and  
some sessions

10 - 10:15 a.m. - Break and Refreshments

10:15 - 11:15 a.m. - Ministry Training Session 1

11:15 - 11:30 a.m. - Break and Refreshments

11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. - Ministry Training Session 2

12:30 p.m. - Dismissal

---

### Classes: (SPRC) Staff Parish Relations Committee

- led by Rev. Arlene Christopherson, Assistant to the Bishop

Pick one  
topic per  
session

**Finance** - led by Susan Geil, Berry UMC

**Trustee** - led by Martha Rudy, First UMC of Evanston

**Evangelism** - led by Kara Lehnhardt and Kathy Locke, United Methodist of Libertyville

**Net Zero** - led by Kara Lehnhardt and Kathy Locke, United Methodist of Libertyville

**Discipleship** - led by Rev. Caleb Hong, Christ Church of Rockford

**Stewardship** - led by Rev. Chris Walters, Midwest Methodist Foundation, President & CEO,  
and Rev. Eun-Hye Choi, Glenview UMC

Online Zoom  
option available  
for SPRC and  
Stewardship

### More information and registration:

[umcnic.org/calendar/lake-north-leadership-training-2024](http://umcnic.org/calendar/lake-north-leadership-training-2024)

Questions? Contact Pastor Mori, [pastormorio@gmail.com](mailto:pastormorio@gmail.com)



Northern Illinois Conference  
OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

**Saturday, January 27, 2024 - 9-12:30pm**

**First Korean United Methodist Church**  
[655 East Hintz Road., Wheeling, IL](#)

Online Zoom option available for Opening worship and select classes.

**Cost: \$15**

[Click Here](#) for more info.

## United Women in Faith



United  
Women  
in Faith

**January 7-28 2024 - Virtual Only**

Mission U Winter Learning Event [Click Here](#) for more details.

## Hear the Call: Share Your Gifts!

Do you feel a stirring within, a talent yearning to be used, a passion longing to contribute? The church community needs your unique spark! We're not just talking about singing in the choir or baking for bake sales (though those are wonderful too!). Every skill, every passion, every bit of your creative spirit has a place here.

Think about it:

- The musician with a heart for worship: Can you imagine leading us in joyous hymns or composing a piece that touches hearts?
- The tech whiz with a knack for problem-solving: Can you streamline our communication, build a user-friendly website, or help us connect with the wider community online by using Zoom's fun features and camerawork?
- The organizer who thrives on making things happen: Can you plan events, coordinate volunteers, or breathe life into fundraising initiatives?
- The artist with a vision for beauty: Can you beautify our space, create meaningful visuals, or even choreograph a moving dance for a special occasion?
- The writer with a gift for storytelling: Can you share inspiring testimonies, craft compelling newsletters, or even pen a play for the next church production?
- The counselor with a listening ear and a gentle heart: Can you offer guidance and support to those in need, fostering a community of care and compassion?

These are just a few examples; the possibilities are endless! What gifts and talents are uniquely yours? How can you use them to build up, inspire, and make the church community a beacon of hope and love?

Here's your call to action:

- Talk to your pastor or church leaders. Share your ideas and see how your skills can be put to use.
- Connect with other members. Maybe you'll find others who share your passion and together you can create something amazing.
- Don't be afraid to step outside your comfort zone. You might surprise yourself with what you can accomplish.

Remember, every contribution makes a difference. By sharing your gifts, you not only enrich the lives of others, but you also discover a deeper sense of purpose and belonging within the church community.

So, let's hear the call, answer with enthusiasm, and together, let our individual lights shine brightly, making the church community a vibrant tapestry of shared gifts and talents.

**“Be who God meant you to be and you will set the world on fire.”**

– St. Catherine of Siena

[Click Here](#) to explore your gifts!

Got an idea? We want to hear from you! Please email the church office at: [centralchurch@skokiecentralumc.org](mailto:centralchurch@skokiecentralumc.org)

## Gospel Readers and Flowers Sign Up



[Worship Calendar 2024 - Click Here](#)

Please consider reading or bringing in flowers for the following Sunday:

February 2024

Sunday, February 4th, 2024 (2/4/24)

Flowers \_\_\_\_\_ in Honor of \_\_\_\_\_

Sunday, February 25th, 2024 (2/25/24)

Reader: \_\_\_\_\_

Consider the following dates as well:

March 2024

Sunday, March 3, 2024

Reader: \_\_\_\_\_

Flowers: \_\_\_\_\_ in honor of \_\_\_\_\_

Sunday, March 10, 2024

Reader: \_\_\_\_\_



Sunday, March 17, 2024

Reader: \_\_\_\_\_

Sunday, March 24, 2024

Reader: \_\_\_\_\_

Flowers: \_\_\_\_\_ in honor of \_\_\_\_\_

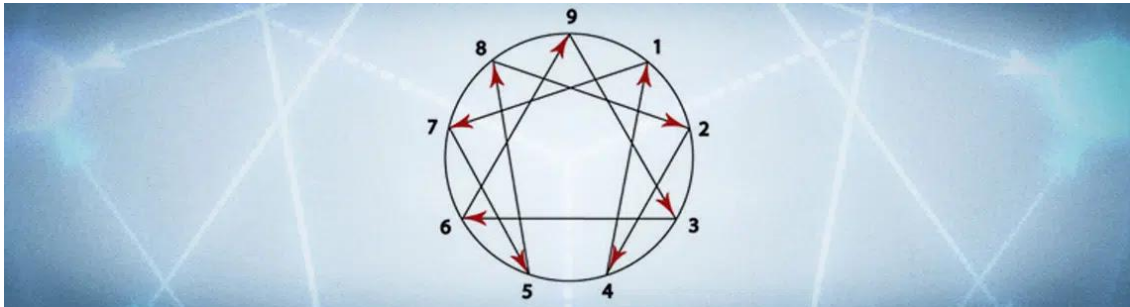
Sunday, March 31, 2024

Reader: \_\_\_\_\_

Flowers: \_\_\_\_\_ in honor of \_\_\_\_\_

**Volunteers will be needed for the dates above.** Please email the church office at: [centralchurch@skokiecentralumc.org](mailto:centralchurch@skokiecentralumc.org) or come see Mar for the sign up sheet.

## The Enneagram



Loving the Whole Self

*"True love of self entails a profound acceptance of ourselves—returning to Presence and settling into ourselves as we actually are without attempting to change our experience. —Don Richard, Richard Riso and Russ Hudson [1]*

I believe the purpose of mature religion or spirituality is to cultivate in us the ability to accept “the sacrament of the present moment” just as it is, including the good and the bad, and to find God in it. Our human minds are prone to dividing the field of the moment and to focusing on the parts rather than the whole, thus missing what the eyes of the Spirit see. The Enneagram’s root sins or passions can be seen as nine different ways of “missing the mark” (hamartia), nine ways of being disconnected from God’s Presence—our

essence—here and now. By viewing our Enneagram compulsions as reminders to return to presence, we can become aware of the Divine Presence in us and around us and we can share that love with a hurting world.

In the Enneagram tradition, “sin” is simply that which doesn’t work, i.e. self-defeating behavior. Our root capital sins can be understood as emergency solutions that we developed in early childhood as a way of coping with our environment. At the time, these coping mechanisms were necessary for survival. But the older we grow, the more they get in the way of living freely as our True Self. The nine Enneagram types correlate with the seven “deadly sins” (pride, envy, anger, sloth, avarice, lack of moderation or “gluttony,” and lust) and two additional temptations, deceit and fear. These last two are perhaps the most pervasive sins, because power builds on them and uses them, and thus they are often the most hidden, as we see in the present election cycle in the United States.

The Enneagram refuses to eliminate the negative and is grounded in what Bill Wilson called “a vital spiritual experience.” We only have the courage to face our deep illusions when we are entirely loved and accepted by God or by somebody who acts as God toward us. So, with great irony, our faults are the crack that lets grace in, exactly as the Gospel teaches. We must bring our root sin to consciousness rather than deny or repress it.

We can only heal our wound with kindness and compassion, not judgment and condemnation. This is how Jesus treated sinners, such as the woman caught in adultery (see John 8:1-11).

Teresa of Ávila said that the sinner is actually one who does not love himself or herself enough. We do not see or admire the whole self; so we split and try to love the good self and reject the bad self. But Jesus told us to let the weeds and the wheat grow together until the harvest, lest we destroy the wheat by trying to pull up the weeds (see Matthew 13:24-30).

The Enneagram allows us to see and embrace our shadow, the part of us that most carries our shame. Only with some degree of non-dual consciousness can we hold imperfection and beauty together in what Merton called “a hidden wholeness.”

It is no surprise to me that the Enneagram is unpopular with many. It refuses to disguise the pain, the difficult work, or the cost of enlightenment. By exposing our own darkness, it soon compels us to address that same darkness in culture, oppression, injustice, and human degradation. Sin “brings forth death” (see James 1:15), or in other words, sin is its own punishment. Our lack of moderation kills animals and forests; our aggressiveness and fear has led to gigantic arsenals. The poor pay for the envy and greed of the industrialized nations with their death.

We all have a little of each personality type in us, allowing us greater understanding and compassion for others. But for our own transformation, we must recognize that we tend to have a primary set of blinders, a primary delusion, a capital sin. There is a key dilemma, a habitual trap in each of us. We must notice how we block ourselves by our preferred style of perception. Even though this way of perceiving reality doesn't reflect the True Self, it seems to "work" for us, giving us false energy and purpose.

This one pitfall is so prevalent in our life that we don't recognize it, except perhaps through a surprising "aha" experience. In an instant, our lifelong false motivations and reactions become crystal clear. That's usually both a very humiliating and wonderful experience. It's sobering to realize that even the best things we've done were done for self-serving reasons. But it's liberating to know that God knew this all along, loves us anyway, and actually used our sins for God's purposes. As Paul puts it, "Precisely where sin abounds, grace abounds even more" (see Romans 5:20).

Our deepest sin and our greatest gift are two sides of the same coin. We spend the first part of our life creating our self-image and our ego by building on what we do well. That's a necessary stage. By our twenties, our personality type is well-established because it works for us in some strange way. But in the middle of our life we may begin to see the other side of the coin, the dark side of our gift.

When we are excessively fixated on our supposed gift it becomes a sin. Maintaining this self-image, this false self, becomes more important than anything else. This is where the Enneagram can help us to recognize this game for what it is and to disarm ourselves—to abandon the defense of the false self that we have created. We are letting go of what only seems good and discovering what in us is really good. We are returning to the Divine Presence in and around us. This leaving the garden and returning to the garden happens many, many times in a healthy life. And each time is both a self-revelation and a divine-revelation.

Gateway to Silence:  
Open me to Presence."

**-Father Richard Rohr**, is a Franciscan priest of the New Mexico Province. He is the founder of the **Center for Action and Contemplation**.

To learn more [click here](#).

**United Methodist Podcast: Find Wholeness and Balance with the Enneagram-** [click here](#)

*Collage Art "Pray and Listen" by Marides Haidari*

# Central Caring Crafters



**January 18, 2024**

The prayer shawl group is back as **Central Caring Crafters!** We are exploring the scope of our group to include quilting, sewing and other crafts that you have a heart for. We will meet at **10:00 a.m. on the third Thursday of each month** in the **Education Building, Room 7**. Bring a bag lunch and stay for lunch together or just come to gather for exchange of patterns and ideas. We hope to see you there!

If you're interested, please email the church office at: [centralchurch@skokiecentralumc.org](mailto:centralchurch@skokiecentralumc.org)

# Tuesday Morning Meditation



Join us weekly on **Tuesday at 8:00 am** on Zoom.

**Lectio divina** is a traditional Benedictine practice of scriptural reading, meditation, and prayer. It is a form of prayer that involves reading a passage of the Bible slowly

and intentionally. The phrase "lectio divina" means "divine reading" in Latin.

If you're interested, please email the church office at: [centralchurch@skokiecentralumc.org](mailto:centralchurch@skokiecentralumc.org)

# Tai-Chi Classes

Interested in learning Tai-Chi? Join our free class in the Log Cabin on **Tuesday mornings, 9:15 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



[centralchurch@skokiecentralumc.org](mailto: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](mailto:centralchurch@skokiecentralumc.org)

## Interfaith Prayer of the Week

### Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me. Your rod and staff support me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. A prayer for all The Lord bless us and keep us. The Lord keep all those whom we love, whether here or in some other place. May God be our companion and friend, as we walk together through all the days of our lives; and at the journey's end, may we find the welcome of God's love. It keeps us all. Amen.

# 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](mailto: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

Rev. Timothy Biel Jr., Pastor

8237 Kenton Avenue  
Skokie, Illinois 60076

Church Email:  
[centralchurch@skokiecentralumc.org](mailto:centralchurch@skokiecentralumc.org)

Church Phone:  
(847) 673-1311

[Send Us An Email](#)



Central United Methodist Church 8237 Kenton Ave., Skokie, IL 60076