

Central United Methodist Church



From Pastor Biel

Lectionary Readings for Sunday,
February 19, 2023, Transfiguration Sunday.

Exodus 24:12-18 Psalm 99 2 Peter 1:16-21 Matthew 17:1-9

This week, I had the opportunity to attend a Bishop's Day in the District to meet with our new Bishop, Rev. Dan Schwerin (pronounced like 'tangerine'), and his wife, Julie. He spoke to us briefly about his

background as a Wisconsin native and his call to ministry. Then, shifting from vulnerability and humor, he made an address to us.

In his addresses to both the clergy and laity of the conference, Bishop Dan outlined the themes of our Methodist Identity, Integrity and Imagination. Let's unpack some of his points.

He reminded us of our IDENTITY, naming our Wesleyan heritage, Scriptural holiness, covenantal relationships, that we are grace grounded and our social justice driven mission. He lifted up the four themes of #BeUMC; 1. Disciple-Making; 2. Belonging and inclusion; 3. Influence, connection and impact; 4. Experience of God through the UMC. He used the phrase "Ministry moves at the speed of relationships," to remind us of the work of building relationships with the people before us beyond our walls and within the church.

He ended his talk on Identity by referencing Bryan Stevenson's "4 Pillars to Change the World." These four pillars include moving towards pain instead of avoidance, creating space for narratives of truth while resisting narratives of fear and othering, being willing to be discomforted in order to be faithful witnesses, and believing the best about people, in a word HOPE that is relentless.

His statements on INTEGRITY included naming where the church missed the mark with our sharing and need to do restorative work with First Nation people and the history of boarding schools, past harm done in our partnership with Boy Scouts and the racial history of Central Conferences and colonialism. In his heartfelt words, "repentance continues while the harm continues."

In response to the UMC's settlement with Boy Scouts harmed by past child abuse, the Northern Illinois Conference is committed to raising \$735,000 over three years. He also encouraged every local church to keep working on our Safe Sanctuary policies to protect children and vulnerable adults.

Regarding disaffiliation, he said that no Methodist church needs to leave the UMC. Citing Acts 15, where Peter and Paul had a falling out, the Bishop remarked that there have always been differences in the body of Christ. He expects that this conference, which is a Reconciling Annual Conference, will continue our rich heritage of inclusivity and theological diversity.

He kicked off his discussion about IMAGINATION with a "thank you" to you, dear reader. He acknowledged how dogged and persistently you have been in your faith walk. Quoting Brene' Brown, he thanked you for your support of the church and said that "Daring leaders work from the assumption that people are doing the best they can." To back up this statement, he referenced three "scintillating graphs, LOL" that showed examples of our persistence during the pandemic: baptisms are on the rise, the church's online presence skyrocketed and the apportionment giving didn't "tank" as it could have without your effort.

He challenged us to think about doing ministry in our context in new ways, to reach new disciples of Jesus Christ, to live out the conviction that racism is incompatible with Christian teaching, increase the number of highly vital congregations and grow discipleship communities that increase radically inclusive love and justice!

Pray for Bishop Dan and Julie. I get the strong sense that Bishop Dan is genuinely thankful for your ministry, Central Church. We should look forward to working with him and his cabinet in the God's timing.

Blessings,

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 Sally Guerra in celebration of her husband, Al's birthday.

Nursery

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

Fellowship

Fellowship on Sunday will be hosted by the Guerra and Tacorda families in celebration of Al's and Bong's birthdays.

We will also be celebrating Mardi Gras so wear beaded necklaces and colorful clothing. The foods provided will be in the Mardi Gras theme.

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

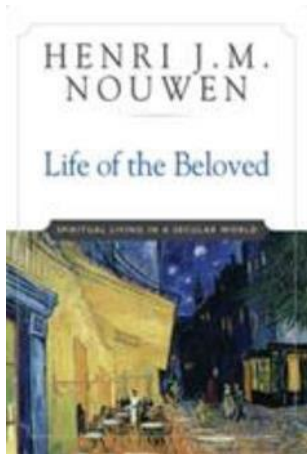


Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday is this Wednesday, **February 22**. There will be a prayer vigil in the Sanctuary between 5 pm and 7 pm. Imposition of ashes will be available.



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](#)

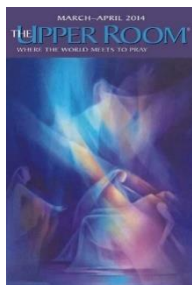
Volunteers



The Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) has contacted us to see if Central would be interested in volunteering to welcome and support refugee families arriving in the Chicago area over the next few months.

If you are interested in volunteering, HIAS is hosting a volunteer information session on **Thursday, February 23 from 7 to 8 pm** via Zoom. Please use the QR code for information on how to join the Zoom meeting.

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. Your 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

[Send Us An Email](#)

Rev. Timothy Biel Jr., Pastor
Rev. Adrienne Stricker, Deacon

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