

Central United Methodist Church



Lectionary Readings for
October 22, 2023
Twenty-First Sunday After Pentecost:

Exodus 33:12-23 Psalm 99 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10 Matthew 22:15-22

Beloved,

And they brought him a denarius. Then he said to them, "Whose head is this, and whose title?" They answered, "The emperor's." Then he said to them, "Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's." Matthew 22

Jesus teaches us in Matthew 22 about our sacred worth as those who are made in the image of God. Men intent on ensnaring Jesus into speaking something unlawful tried baiting him into a discussion about taxes: specifically a tax that supported the Roman occupation. Jesus turned their deceit into a teaching moment about what is Caesar's and what is God's.

As those of you living in the U.S. well know, talking about taxes in a room filled with people of different political persuasions is going to divide the room. Half will immediately disagree with your point of view the moment you make your point. In Jesus' case, he united two groups that usually avoided each other with the intent to trap Jesus; the Pharisees of Jerusalem and the Herodians.

Pharisees were the religious experts. They understood the law as it pertained to scripture and generally resented Roman occupation. The Herodians were the wealthy political elites. Their aim was to protect the leadership of the Herod family over Israel. They supported the authority of Rome's rule over their homeland.

United in their opposition to Jesus, men from both of those groups brought the divisive question about taxes to Jesus hoping he would say either something against paying taxes for Roman occupation and justify his arrest, or that he would say something pro-Roman, like "pay your taxes, everyone," and lose support from his anti-imperial base.

Seeing through their deception, Jesus calls them 'hypocrites,' and asks for a coin. Notice that Jesus doesn't have one. No worries, his wealthy detractors do. He then asks whose image is on the coin. Why Caesar Tiberius, of course. Along with his image were the words: Tiberius Caesar, Son of the Divine Augustus Pontifex Maximus.

Nowadays, in the U.S. we print, "In God We Trust," on coins. Tiberius Caesar's father, Augustus Caesar, declared himself divine and that after his death he would be remembered as a god. It follows then that his son printed what amounts to "I Am God's Son" on the denarii. For these reasons, even having a Roman coin, with the image of another god, was considered by many to be idolatrous!

Jesus' answer, give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, is both a practical statement and a theological one. Jesus never asks for his image to be placed on a coin. God steers us away from graven images, also. Yet God's image is 'stamped' on something far more valuable than coins. Far more diverse and creative, sustaining, interdependent and reckless. It's you!

Jesus' instruction, "Give to God what is God's," turns the attention on us; on Jesus' followers and his detractors, alike. Everyone, all of us, are made in the image and likeness of God. We bear God's image in wonderful diversity, unlike Caesar's monotony of coins, no two of us looking, believing, creating, expressing our faith or critically thinking identically.

Jesus reminded his audience, then and now, that in God's image we are made to love. We are image-bearers of divine love. Jesus, pouring out his life, invited us to likewise spend our lifetime-full of God's capital teaching others about their sacred worth.

I give thanks that, just as no two atoms are identical and God in creation shows a bias for the novel, this task is different for each of us. And I pray for the unique blessing God continues bringing into the world through you.

Trust Jesus' Blessing,

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.

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 Remy Yabes.

Fellowship

Join us for Fellowship after church this Sunday provided by Simla, Eden and Miriam.

On October 29 we welcome kids to come dressed up in their costumes for Fellowship and receive some candy treats!

Starting in November we will have the last Sunday of each month as a potluck for Fellowship. There is a signup sheet outside the kitchen for Fellowship from now until the middle of May 2024.

United Women In Faith

Please mark your calendars for the following UWF events:

- 1) This evening at the Log Cabin, October 20, 2023, 5:30 to 8:30 PM. We will order dinner in from Grecian Kitchen.
- 2) Sunday, October 22, 2023 in Education Building after worship.
- 3) **United Women in Faith Conference**- Saturday, October 28th, 2023 at Cary United Methodist Church 8:30am-12:45pm [click here](#) to Register.

Any questions, contact Kathy Tiffin at ktrsstiffin@gmail.com

Happy Filipino American History Month!

"Why October?"

Filipino American History Month (FAHM) in October commemorates the first Filipinos to arrive in the continental United States at what is now Morro Bay, California on October 18, 1587.

In 1992, the Filipino American National Historical Society introduced FAHM, and in 2009 U.S. Congress officially recognized October as FAHM in the U.S.

History & Heritage

"History is inclusive of heritage and culture, but it's also about the ways we have built and changed this nation...whereas heritage is more limited to what we pass down in terms of culture, tradition, and legacies. - the late Dr. Dawn Mabalon, renowned historian and community leader, who was also believed to be the first Pinay to earn a Ph.D. in American History from Stanford University..."

[Click Here](#) to learn about 10 ways to celebrate Filipino American History Month!

Filipino Ministries Cohort

Central United Methodist Church has been invited to have a formal conversation with Rev. Dr. Bener Agtarap. Rev. Dr. Bener is a coach sent by the conference to help us in navigating our role as Filipino Ministry cohorts and envisioning a significant ministry to and with our Filipino siblings in Christ, particularly in our conference. Lunch will be provided and we hope to see you there!

Saturday, October 21, from 10am-2pm
Edison Park United Methodist Church
6740 N. Oliphant Ave., Chicago IL

Fifth Sunday - October 29

October 29, 2023

Fifth Sunday Appeal and Healing Service

Since 1979, Northern Illinois congregations have provided over one million dollars to support United Voices for Children's **affiliated agencies—Kids Above All** (formerly ChildServ), **MYSI** and **Rosecrance**—through the Fifth Sunday Appeal. Through this collaborative giving effort, dozens of United Methodist congregations of all sizes are able to make a real difference in the lives of children, youth and families in need. United Voices for Children is grateful to the 117 congregations in the Northern Illinois Conference who have participated in the Fifth Sunday Appeal in the past.

Giving envelopes will be available in the Narthex.

Also as a reminder this will be the last Sunday to hand in orders for **Poinsettias**. Order forms are also in Narthex.

Lastly, this Sunday will be the last day **Deacon Adrienne Stricker** will be serving us at Central. We wish her many blessings and joy on her next appointment.

A Letter From Deacon Adrienne

Thank You, Central Church,

I remember the first time I worshiped at Central. It was 2012, and I had the morning free. At the time, I served at Northminster Presbyterian Church of Evanston as the Director of Christian Education. I walked the several blocks between my apartment on Kilpatrick Avenue and Central on a beautiful fall morning. I sat somewhere in the middle (as I usually do when visiting a new church) and absorbed as much as I could unfolding around me: people entering,

some old, some younger; the sound of a musician warming up; the way the sunlight danced in the stained glass. I was happily surprised to realize that Communion was offered every Sunday, and with liturgies that inspired my imagination. The music was so beautifully diverse, interwoven so intentionally with the prayers - something I hadn't experienced in quite the same way in other churches. There was warmth in the air. I tucked that Sunday away in my memories as I continued to serve in ministry throughout the years. But I stayed curious about Central.

In the spring of 2018, I began to look for a new local church to serve as a Deacon. Though I had moved to the Bucktown neighborhood of Chicago by that time, Central kept coming into my mind. Once I learned Pastor Biel was going to be appointed in July of that year, I introduced myself, and we talked about the possibility of Central becoming my local church connection as a Deacon (the official term is "secondary appointment"). I came to the church in August of 2018, and you all welcomed me with open arms. For Deacons, secondary appointments are a little open-ended, allowing Deacons to serve in different ways. I began co-leading worship with Pastor Biel and set up prayer stations for special events throughout the church year. I imposed ashes on Ash Wednesday with Pastor Biel at the train station on a 20-degree morning. I helped plan a retreat to Wisconsin. I preached a few times each year, and was thrilled to start teaching a book study in early 2020.

Then COVID hit, and time felt different for all of us for so long. From my home, participating in virtual services, I witnessed the way you all care for each other; not out of obligation, but deeply. I got to listen in on conversations about merging Elston and Central - and to see the Spirit's movement in calling you to be one church, stronger together. You all generously surrounded me with love and support for my family as we welcomed my son, Samuel, into the world in 2022, and baptized him later that year.

And life quickly picked up speed. In some ways, it feels like my time at Central was just getting started. The needs of our world are so great, and there are creative ministries yet to be born and flourish in the church that will impact not only Skokie but communities far beyond. I longed to be a part of those ministries. And yet - I know that God was with all of us as we journeyed alongside each other these last 5 years. God was with us in all our small moments together; in every moment when we shook hands, looked into each other's eyes, and said, "Good morning. Peace be with you." What we were really saying to each other is, "You are a child of God. I see you. You are loved." This is what we always say to each other by being part of a community - in all the diverse ways we are in community together. Being present with the Central community was - and will continue to be - such a joy. And I am beyond thankful to have served with Pastor Biel, whom I now consider a brother and dear colleague.

My next secondary appointment will be with First United Methodist Church of Elmhurst, where I look forward to preaching and finding creative ways to serve and resource the congregation.

**Thank you, Central, for our time together.
Thank you for being who you are.
Thank you for letting me walk alongside you.
Thank you for showing God's love to your community.**

Sincerely,

Deacon Adrienne

Giving Statements

Giving Statements through September 30, 2023 have been sent out through e-mail. Anything given **after** September 30, 2023 will **not** be reflected. If you have any questions please email the church office at: centralchurch@skokiecentralumc.org

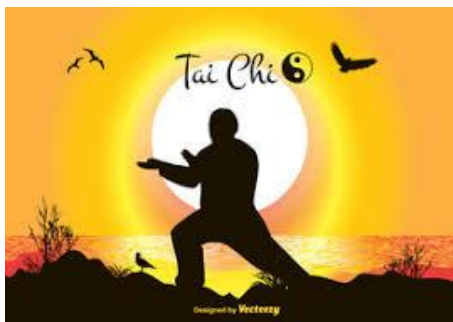
All Saints Day

On Sunday, November 5, we will be honoring those who have passed away. If you have somebody you would like to honor, please email the church office at: centralchurch@skokiecentralumc.org

Tuesday Morning Meditation

Join us weekly on Tuesday at 8:00 am on Zoom. If you have questions, please email the church office at: 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.

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



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 <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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