

Central United Methodist Church March 15, 2026



Lectionary readings for Fourth Sunday of Lent
March 15, 2026

1 Samuel 16:1-13

Psalm 23

Ephesians 5:8-14

John 9:1-41

His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

"Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." John 9:2-5

We begin the fourth week of Lent by looking at John's gospel. Here, we learn why Jewish leaders in Jerusalem so violently opposed Jesus' ministry. Remember that it was the pious people, Scribes (lawyers), Pharisees and Sadducees, and Temple leaders who sought to have Jesus crucified. Yet we must resist the trap that also snares us in judgment and blame.

The story in John 9:1-41 begins and ends with Jesus refuting the idea that physical ailments are God's punishment for sinfulness. With spit and mud, Jesus healed a blind man. You'd assume that all parties could acknowledge this healing as God's handiwork. Instead, it set off a series of bitter encounters with combative religious authorities.

The trials of the 'sighted' man mirror the experiences of the community of the gospel writer, John. The early church considered themselves faithful Jews who followed a rabbi Jesus, in whom they saw God enfleshed. Yet they faced persecution and exclusion by other Jewish factions for allegiance to his teachings and way of life.

The painful narrative of the 'sighted' man takes us through the rejection and ostracism that the early church endured. By the end of the story, the healed man, who has been kicked out of his religious community, finally meets Jesus again. Having sought out the man, Jesus offers him a calling and a new identity.

What began with bold imagery of God's creative power in Jesus, using soil (like in Genesis) to create eyes that work, concludes with the 'sighted' man brought into new life in Christ. We still deal with leaders who distort the faith, using religion to accuse, condemn, and bless violence. It's tempting to imitate their finger-pointing. If we do, however, we ourselves miss Jesus' invitation to the "sighted" man.

Dare to see. Dare to look at each day as an opportunity to glorify God. Dare to participate with God in loving, healing, and reconciling people and all creation. This is the work to which Jesus set you free.

Jesus, take away our blindness,

Pastor Biel



Upcoming Events

Family Game Night @Log Cabin- March 27, April 24 & May 29 6-9 PM	Mother's Day Sunday May 10, 2026 10: 30 AM Service
Maundy Thursday April 2, 2026 6:00 PM Service	United Women Of Faith May 14 **Local Group 2 PM May 17 , 2026 - After Fellowship
Good Friday April 3, 2026 6:00 PM	Graduation Sunday May 31 , 2026 10:30 AM Service
Easter Sunday April 5, 2026 10:30 AM Service	Father's Day Sunday June 21, 2026 10: 30 AM Service
Canasta Game Wed May 6, 2026 3 PM Log Cabin	

CENTRAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
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WWW.SKOKIECENTRALUMC.ORG | PASTOR TIM BIEL JR. |

Worship Service

Join us on **Sunday, March 15, 2026 - Fourth Sunday of Lent** - 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.** Worship begins at 10:30 am.

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.

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

 TOMICS by Tom Gould

John 4:4-7



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 Mae Williams in celebration of great grandson “Micah” Joel Williams IV, born March 11.

Easter Flowers Fund



Easter Sunday - April 5, 2026

Please consider donating funds to decorate the altar with various flowers this **Easter!**

Please write in: **Easter Flower Funds** on the memo line on the offering envelopes and on checks.

Fellowship



Join us after the church service for fellowship provided by Tina De Ocampo and Ellen Nero.

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

Looking Ahead

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

March 15

Reader: ___ David O.

Flowers: _____

Fellowship: Tina & Ellen

March 22

Reader: _____

Flowers: Rose & Ruby

Fellowship: United Women in Faith

March 29

Reader: _____

Flowers: _____

Fellowship: Potluck

UMC Handbook 2025 - 2028



Discover the Handbook of The United Methodist Church—a digital, print-ready resource designed to help you understand who we are, how we are connected, and how we live out our shared mission together. Updated for the current quadrennium, this handbook offers clear explanations, helpful visuals, and trusted information for learning, teaching, and leading in The United Methodist Church. UMC Handbook is also print-ready. The downloadable PDF is formatted for local printing, whether for personal use, small groups, new member classes, or leadership training. You can also find a conversation guide for new church members explaining what means to be a United Methodist.

[click here](#) to download.

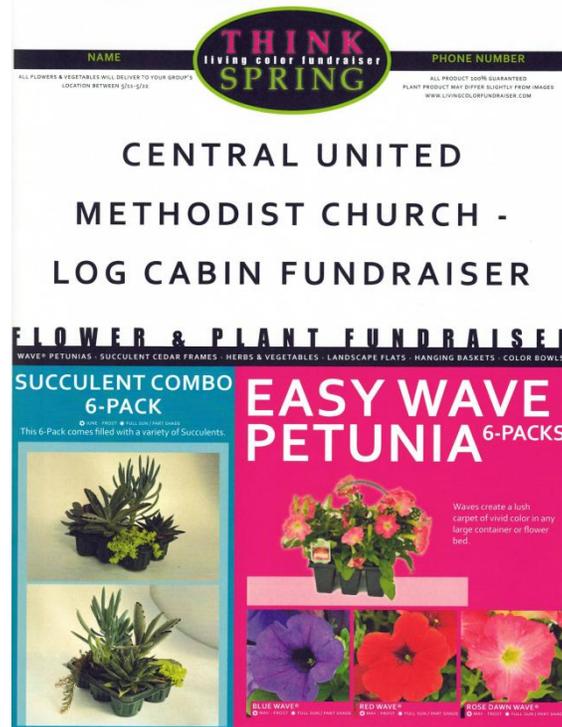
Women In The UMC History



Dorothy Height (1912-2010) was a civil rights and women’s rights activist who served as president of the National Council of Negro Women for 40 years. She was a key figure in the struggles for voting rights, desegregation and employment opportunities in the 1950s and 60s and, at the same time, was fighting gender bias, much of that work predating the women’s rights movement of the early 1970s. She was considered one of the most influential African-American women of the time, though she did much of her work outside the spotlight. Height was on the platform with Martin Luther King Jr. as he gave his “I Have a Dream” speech and with Barack Obama when he was sworn in as the first African-American president in 2009. In 1989, President Reagan awarded her the Presidential Citizenship Medal. She received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1994 from President Clinton and was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor by President George W. Bush in 2004, accepting it “on behalf of millions of people – particularly women – whose work goes unnoticed.” After her death, the U.S. Post office near Union Station in Washington, D.C., was named in her honor, the first federal building in the district named for an African-American woman.

To view more Women In The UMC History - [click here](#)

Think Spring



Order forms due Sunday, March 29th
Delivery will be in early-mid May

[Click Here](#) - to view order forms.

NEW this year is the Tomato Empress Purple. This purple “cherry” tomato is naturally high in antioxidants and has the same powerful nutrients as blueberries and eggplants. This single tomato plant comes in a quart size pot. Also new this year, the Petunia Firefly (the flowers and new foliage glow in the dark) will come as a single plant in a 3.5 inch ceramic pot. Perfect for a gift and ready to display.

Each order form has room for 12 individual orders. Please share this with your friends and neighbors. Be sure to include their name and cell phone number at the top of the order form. It would also be very helpful to have email addresses. Delivery will be in early-mid May and we’ll know the specific information shortly before then.

Order forms with payment need to be turned into the church office by Potluck Sunday, March 29th.

Checks should be made out to Central United Methodist Church or CUMC.
Forms with payment can be mailed to:

Central United Methodist Church
8237 N. [Kenton Avenue](#)
[Skokie, IL 60076](#)

Thank you for helping us raise funds and make the world a little more beautiful
in the process.

2026 Laity Convocation

Moving Forward with Hope



Northern Illinois Conference
OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

2026 LAITY
CONVOCAION

Saturday,
March 21

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

Registration 8:30

Cost: \$15

Walk-ins welcome, but registration preferred

\$10 box lunch
Glen Ellyn location only

Multiple Locations:

Glen Ellyn: First UMC

424 Forest, Glen Ellyn

Satellite locations:

Princeton: First UMC 316 South Church St.

Freeport: Faith UMC 1440 S. Walnut Ave.

Orland Park: Faith UMC 15101 S. 80th Ave.

Speakers:

Rev. Lindsey Joyce

Bishop Dan Schwerin

Multiple Young People from across the conference

Registration and more information at:

umcnic.org/calendar/2026-laity-convocation

Saturday March 21, 2026

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

First UMC of Glen Ellyn,

424 Forest Ave.

To register [click here.](#)

Friday Family Game Night



Friday March 27
Log Cabin
6 to 9:00pm

This idea came about during our Church Council Meeting in February.

Friday Family Game Night will allow families a chance to get together after the work week is over, and it is time to relax and have some fun. We have also invited the Morton Grove Church to join us on that night.

Timing and details include meeting up on the last Friday of the month. For young families we will start at 6pm so they can go home by 8.

We will close and clean up the Log Cabin at 9pm. David O'Connell has graciously offered to help us setup before hand and clean up afterwards. Thank You David!!!

Some games (but not limited to) would include: UNO, Garbage, Go Fish, Checkers, Connect Four, and Twister. In the Log Cabin we can have multiple tables set up for different types of games. Some kid games might be on the floor.

People can bring their own can of soda or bring a 2 liter bottle to share. For snacks, pretzels and chips only.
Please.

Parents/grandparents must accompany their children. This is a family event, not a babysitting opportunity.

The first three Friday dates are: **March 27, April 24, May 29.**

Concert Opera of Greater Chicago
 presents
Spring Into Action
Benefit Gala Concert & Fundraiser

**Join us for an evening of operatic arias, ensembles,
 wine & canapés.**

This gala is an exciting fundraiser for our summer
 full- concert production of Verdi's Don Carlo.
 This concert is presented in the original languages with English supertitles.

Friday March 27, 2026 7:30 pm		Gorton Center 400 E. Illinois Road Lake Forest, IL 60045
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Music by: Mozart, Verdi, Donizetti, Puccini & more...

Tickets: \$40, includes concert & wine reception
 Available for purchase at the door
 or please visit our website for more information and tickets.
chicagoconcertopera.com
COGC is a 501(c)(3) organization.

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.

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

Central Caring Crafters



3rd Thursday of the month
Next meeting is March 19

10 AM Ed Bldg. Room 7

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.

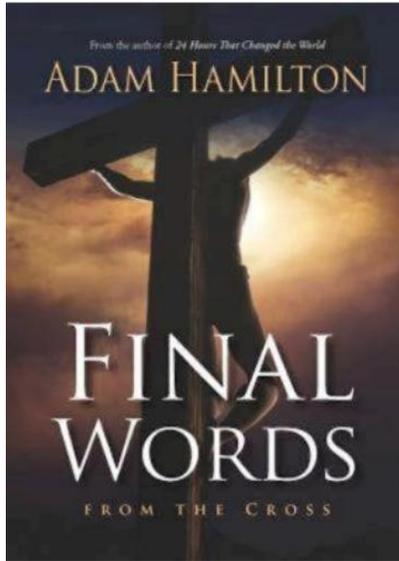
Below is a list of suggested items - because the Mini Food Pantry is outside, it's important to only contribute non-perishable items, such as:

- [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

Lenten Book Study: Final Words From The Cross



February 25, 2026 - April 1, 2026
Wednesday - 7 PM - 8 PM
6 week study

In person & Zoom

You're invited to Join us for this Lenten Study [click here](#) to order- Some copies available in the office.

In life and in death, Jesus' words were powerful and meaningful. Despite the serious effort and increased pain required for Jesus to speak as he hung on the cross, Jesus spoke seven "final words"—statements that have much to teach us about Jesus, his Father, and ourselves: Father Forgive Them Today You Will Be with Me in

Paradise Behold Your Son & help; Behold Your Mother My God, My God, Why Have You Forsaken Me? I Thirst It Is Finished . . . Into Your Hands I Commit My Spirit Postscript: The Words After That In 24 Hours That Changed the World, Adam Hamilton took us on a Lenten journey through the last day of Jesus' life.

Now in this inspiring follow-up book, Hamilton explores these final words as seen and heard through the eyes and ears of those who stood near the cross. Each chapter begins with the biblical account followed by a first-person story as might have been told from the viewpoint of one of the characters at the cross. Then the chapter explores the meaning of Jesus' dying words for our lives today. Following the last statement, a postscript recounts the words Jesus spoke following his resurrection, including what truly were the final words Jesus spoke while walking this earth. Join the crowd now and experience the final words from the cross.

Final Words from the Cross offers six chapters/sessions plus a postscript chapter/session, so that classes have the option of a seventh session on Easter Sunday.

If you have questions or suggestions, please email the church office at centralchurch@skokiecentralumc.org

Yoga

MORE INFO
& REGISTER



YOGA SAMPLER WITH VICTORIA BIEL

FRIDAYS 5:30-7 P.M.

FULL SESSIONS: \$125/\$156

DROP-INS: \$28/\$35

SESSION I:

1/9: VINYASA

1/16: YIN

1/23: HATHA

1/30: SOUND

2/6: EFT/SOMATIC

SESSION II:

2/20: IYENGAR

2/27: VINYASA

3/6: KUNDALINI

3/13: RESTORATIVE

3/20: LAUGHTER



RESTORATIVE YOGA
WITH VICTORIA BIEL
THURSDAYS 5:30-7 P.M.
1/8-2/26: \$200/\$250
3/5-4/30: \$200/\$250
DROP-INS: \$26/\$33



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MUSEUM@SKOKIEPARKS.ORG



Prayer of the Week

The Fast Life

Fast from judging others;
Feast on Christ dwelling in them.
Fast from fear of illness;
Feast on the healing power of God.
Fast from words that pollute;
Feast on speech that purifies.
Fast from discontent;
Feast on gratitude.
Fast from anger;
Feast on patience.
Fast from pessimism;
Feast on hope.
Fast from negatives;
Feast on encouragement.
Fast from bitterness;
Feast on forgiveness.
Fast from self-concern;

Feast on compassion.
Fast from suspicion;
Feast on truth.
Fast from gossip;
Feast on purposeful silence.
Fast from problems that overwhelm;
Feast on prayer that sustains.
Fast from anxiety;
Feast on faith.
- Author Unknown

Central United Methodist Church

Rev. Timothy Biel Jr., Pastor
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[Send Us An Email](#)



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