Central United Methodist Church

From Pastor Biel

Lectionary Readings for Sunday, March 19, 2023,
Fourth Sunday of Lent.

1 Samuel 16:1-13 Psalm 23 Ephesians 5:8-14 John 9:1-41

This week, John takes us another step in the direction of the Cross. Jesus is at it again; violating the rules by healing on the Sabbath, angering the men who have the power and ambition to silence him and to take his life, all without breaking a law themselves.

Various parts of this vivid story should grab your attention. For instance, just as God does, Jesus made a new creation using mud and his spit. His SPIT! Talk about mud in your eye!

- The blind man didn't actually see Jesus (remember he got sent to the pool of Siloam to wash the mud out of his eyes);
- The healed man's parents are so scared of the religious leaders that they won't even talk about the healing lest they lose their 'church' membership by accidently saying something positive about Jesus;
- And characteristic to John's writing, the Temple authorities reject God's new creation;
- Of course, after searching for him, Jesus finds the healed man and offers him a personal beatitude.

John's audience of persecuted Christians related personally to this narrative of a healed person being excommunicated by the priests. The story of obedient church people casting out someone for his/her/their identity carries on through the ages to how today's ecclesial authorities behave. I am reminded of author Lori Deschene's piece of wisdom "Practice the Pause," also the title of a book by Caroline Oakes. "Pause before passing judgement. Pause before assuming. Pause before accusing. Pause whenever you're about to act harshly and you'll avoid doing and saying things you'll later regret."

An anonymous meme about the pause flooded the internet a few years ago: When you're in doubt, pause. When you're angry, pause. When you're tired, pause. When you're stressed, pause. And when you pause, pray.

When you pause, turn to the love of God dwelling within you. That is your strength. That is how we will see.

Deep Blessings and "here's mud in your eye."

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 wearing of masks is optional.

The worship service will also be available on Zoom at 10:30 am. Please email the church to receive a Zoom Link.

Altar Flowers

The altar flowers this Sunday are given by Meriam Ramirez in celebration of her son, Andrew's birthday.

Nursery

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

Fellowship

Fellowship this Sunday will be hosted by Ellen Nero.

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

UMCOR Sunday

UMCOR Sunday is a denomination-wide celebration designed to raise awareness and support for UMCOR. UMCOR is dedicated to alleviating human suffering around the globe, working in more than 80 countries worldwide. UMCOR provides survivors with temporary relief and long-term education, training, and support. UMCOR spends 100 percent of designated gifts on the projects that donors specify. None of these designated gifts support administrative or operating costs.

Money donated this Sunday will be designated for the earthquake victims in Turkey and Syria. Envelopes are available in the Narthex.

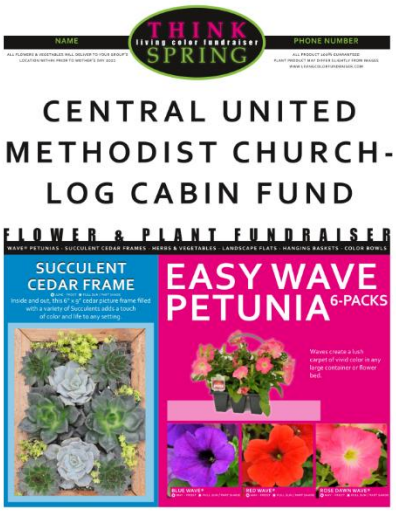
Beautification Award

Central's Parsonage has received a Beautification Award from the Village of Skokie for its beautiful garden, lovingly tended to by Victoria Biel.

The date to receive the Church's Beautification Award at the Village Board Meeting is Monday, April 3 at 7:30 pm in the Council Chamber, Village Hall, 5127 Oakton Street.

Those who would like to attend, RSVP the church office at **centralchurch@skokiecentralumc.org.**

It's Nearly Blooming Time!



Spring is nearly here and it's time to start planning our gardens. We hope you will participate in our annual fundraiser for Central Church and order plants to make your garden even more beautiful this summer. If you don't have a garden, you can make a donation towards the church's gardens.

Each order form has room for four individual orders. Please share this with your friends and neighbors and make sure to write their name and phone number at the top of the order form.

Karen Buccola will be handing out the order forms after church on Sunday. Forms will also be available in the office on Wednesdays from 9:30 am to 4 pm and on Friday mornings from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm.

Order forms with checks need to be turned in to the church office by **Friday, March 31**. Checks should be made out to "Central United Methodist Church" or "CUMC." The order forms and checks can be mailed to Central Church at 8237 North Kenton Avenue, Skokie, Illinois 60076.

The plants will be delivered in May (exact date to be determined).

If you have any questions, please contact Karen Buccola at 312-343-4139 or **klbuccola@aol.com**, or the church office at 847-673-1311.

Freshening Up

The Church would like to freshen up the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall, including the Kitchen. We are looking for volunteers to help make decisions about how to lightly renovate and improve the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall/Kitchen.

Please contact the church office at **centralchurch@skokiecentralumc.org** if you are interested in helping with this project.

Fish Fry

Hemenway UMC will be holding a Fish Fry Fundraiser on Friday, April 7 between 4 pm and 8 pm at 933 Chicago Ave, Evanston. The meal will include fresh fish, red beans and rice, french fries/fried plantain and coleslaw/steamed cabbage - for $25.

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. 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

8237 Kenton Avenue
Skokie, Illinois 60076

Church Email:
centralchurch@skokiecentralumc.org

Church Phone:
(847) 673-1311

https://www.skokiecentralumc.org