

Central United Methodist Church December 22, 2024



Lectionary readings for the
Fourth Sunday of Advent
December 22, 2024

[Micah 5:2-5a](#) [Psalm 80](#)
[Hebrews 10:5-10](#) [Luke 1:39-55](#)

As we lean into these lengthening nights, hopeful expectation meets our griefs. It is natural to look back over the year with a mixture of frustration, sadness, satisfaction, and joy. We are complex enough creatures to hold these competing feelings in tension. The cold and dark invite us to slow down, look within, and deepen our spiritual awareness. There's wisdom in how creation waits out the winter. May yours be generative and sweet.

Looking back, notice where you were comforted, where a relationship was nurtured, and where you grew from a challenge or mistake. Give thanks because some mistakes are the best way to learn and pain often teaches us about our resilience and who will stand by us even when we are wrong. No matter what, know that your church is with you.

Unlike the cultural New Year which begins with resolutions and setting goals, the Christian New Year arrives with the gentle anticipation of Advent; like waiting for a baby. It comes with prayers for dignity, health, reverence, and community. For justice and freedom. With Mary's song, the Magnificat, we expect systems of violence to end because of God's redemptive work in our world. Our role requires us to weave webs of love for that to happen.

The future-oriented vision at Christmas reminds us that we must raise children in love. And, like Mary, we need our minds open to learning from them and helping them lead.

In that vein, I was delighted to hear that Central Church raised over \$1,300 for people in Skokie living with food insecurity. You are light bearers, friends. The gift of giving in the name of our Generous God is alive and well.

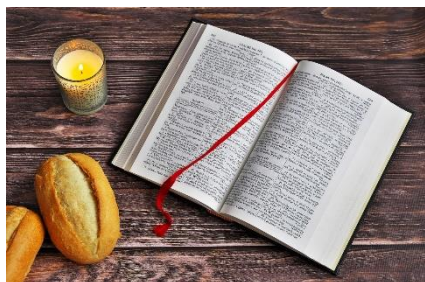
What other rhythms of care does the Christ child ask of us? May we meet Jesus in holy awe.

One more Sunday of Advent, and then Merry Christmas Beloved! Enjoy all twelve days of Christmastide; slow down, rest, connect to those you love. And remember the gift of those whose eternal life is in God's hands.

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 **December 22, 2024 - Fourth Sunday of Advent** - in the Sanctuary for our in-person service. We celebrate the **Lord's communion every Sunday and we invite all to partake regardless of membership.**

The Worship service will also be available on **Zoom at 10:30 am.**

Christmas Eve

****CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE - 9 PM**

Join us **December 24, 2024 - Christmas Eve- 9 PM** in the Sanctuary for in-person service. We celebrate the **Lord's communion, and we invite all to partake regardless of membership.**

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



Sunday, December 22 , 2024

**Poinsettia flowers are donated by the following:
Pamela Castaneda, in memory of Victoria Castaneda.
Doris Bloom, to the Glory of God.**

Linda Hovland, in memory of Jim Hovland.

Ellen Nero, in celebration of Christ's birth.

Syliva Pleas, in celebration of Christ's birth.

Dan & Kathy Ryan, in memory of their parents.

Dan & Kathy Ryan, in honor of Suzanne, Tim & Addie Jackson.

Mariano Santos, in celebration of Jesus Christ.

Kathy Tiffin, in celebration of the Life of the Church.

**Mary Wadleigh, in memory of Alan, Ivanell & Paul Tiffin,
and Avis & Ludie Wadleigh. Also, in honor of her family
and church family.**

Remy Yabes, in celebration of Jesus Christ.

Fellowship

Fellowship this Sunday is provided by the **Filipino Community**.

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

Looking Ahead

Readers, Flowers and Fellowship Oh My!

We are always looking for Volunteers. Please sign up, TODAY!

Sunday, December 22, 2024

Reader: Pam Castenda

Flowers: Donated by Central UMC members

Host Fellowship: Filipino Community Caroling

Sunday, December 29, 2024

Reader: Volunteer needed

Flowers: Doris Bloom

Host Fellowship: Potluck

Spread the Christmas Cheer: Support Central Church Staff



Sunday, December 29 , 2024

In the spirit of giving, we invite you to consider a donation to our Central Church Staff Christmas Gift Fund.

This initiative allows us to express our appreciation for the tireless efforts of our dedicated staff members, who work diligently to ensure the smooth operation of our church and provide unwavering support to our congregation. Your contribution, no matter the size, will make a significant difference in bringing joy and gratitude to our staff during this special time of year. Every gift, big or small, is a testament to the profound impact our staff has on our community.

To contribute, simply write "Staff Gifts" on the memo line of your check or indicate your donation during the online giving process.

Thank you for considering this meaningful opportunity to spread Christmas cheer and express your appreciation for our Central Church staff. Your generosity is truly appreciated.

Mission Outreach Niles Township Gift Card Drive



THANK YOU Central UMC Congregation, Family, and Friends for supporting this year's Christmas Mission Outreach. We donated \$1355.00 to the Niles Township Gift Card Drive. These funds will help our local community families during the holiday season. Tony Araque, the Pantry Director, was very happy to receive the check and stated, "This will go a long way in our community".

In the picture from left to right are: Tony Araque, Pantry Director; Barb Smith; Julian Taylor, Clerk; and Kathy Tiffin. Of course, Barb and Kathy are on the Mission Outreach Team in Central.

The second picture is an official Thank You from the Niles Township Pantry.

Santa In The Cabin



Saturday, December 14, 2024

What a fun day we had on Saturday, December 14th. **THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO VISITED THE CRAFT FAIR, THE BAKE TABLE, THE KIDS CRAFT TABLE, AND THE BIG GUY, SANTA!** Your visit means the world to us.

The physical setup started on December 9th. Fellowship Hall was set up with the help of Scout Troop 72. The real fun started on

Friday the 13th with cookie labeling and went all the way through Saturday until 4:30 when the clean-up was done. KUDOS! to Karen Buccola, Mae Williams, Pastor Tim Biel, Tae Yoon Kim, and Diane W-K; the Central Santa Team Backbone. Nearly 250 people participated in one way or another: Guests, Santa Claus, Vendors, Central Helpers, Bread-Pie-Cake-Cookie Bakers, Church Chili Makers, Cooks & Servers, Cashiers, Kids Kraft Team, and the Clean-up Crew.

SOME STATISTICS ABOUT OUR EVENT

According to the Patch, the paid ad supposedly reached 95,000 people.

The Facebook Page Flyer reached nearly 500 people.

The Friday Church Email reaches about 200 readers every week.

The Website had over 150 unique viewers.

We were even on the big screens at the Skokie downtown Village Inn.

And local merchants and day care centers also shared our flyer.

Nearly 250 people attended as either a guest or a participant.

Santa in the Cabin generated about \$1,400.00 for the church.

66 "Take Home" Christmas ornaments were created by young and old alike!

Over 100 cookie plates were sold and over 30 breads and cakes were sold!

SMILES and CHARM and CHRISTMAS

Everyone had smiles on their faces after visiting Santa and making their very own ornament. All the families that came couldn't stop thanking us for having such a warm and charming place for their

children to talk with Santa. We heard several times how they collect their “make and take ornaments” to hang on their tree each year. This is the beginning of Christmas for many families in the area.

THE CENTRAL VOLUNTEERS

We have fun too! We love working together, doing something for others and spreading the spirit of Christmas Love. We see old friends visiting and catching up with others. It is a time of joy and a labor of love.

Cocoa & Carols

  @mgccpresbyterian

MORTON GROVE COMMUNITY CHURCH PRESENTS
Cocoa & Carols:
A Festive Concert & Sing-Along

DECEMBER 22
12:30 - 2PM



cookies
and hot
chocolate
to follow

sing-along
with Christmas
favorites

barber
shop
quartet

choir
concert

at the
log cabin
The Great Hall
8237 Kenton Ave, Skokie



mgcc@mgccpresbyterian.org
www.mgccpresbyterian.org
Questions? Contact the office: (847) 965-2982

Central Caring Crafters



Thursday, January 16, 2025

10 AM Ed Bldg. Room 7

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. 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

Tai-Chi Classes



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.

If you're interested, please email the church office at: centralchurch@skokiecentralumc.org

Tuesday Morning Meditation



Weekly on Tuesday

Log Cabin & Online

10:30 AM

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.

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 centeralchurch@skokiecentralumc.org

Center for Action and Contemplation



Discover contemplative wisdom and practices that are easy to understand and apply to your everyday life.

Contemplation is the practice of being fully present—in heart, mind, and body—to what is in a way that deepens awareness, encourages oneness, and strengthens compassion. A committed daily contemplative practice doesn't have to be long or complex—it simply needs to allow deep listening to open your heart to love.

Discover ways to embody the contemplative life with this collection of practices that help us align actions and values, re-engage with our True Self, and show up in service to the world.

[Click here](#) to learn more.

Spiritual Gifts



Every child of God is filled with [the power of the Holy Spirit](#), specially gifted to play a unique and valued role in the body of Christ.

No one is without gift or purpose.

Spiritual gifts are not our talents or skills. They are the grace of God at work within us, empowering us to match our deep passions with the world's deep need. The gifts are given to individuals, but they are given to build and strengthen community and to meet the needs of those around us.

Begin the journey. Discover your gifts. Talk about your gifts with others. Strive together to understand your gifts and how you can use them to serve God, neighbor, and world. You have been gifted. You have been given a purpose.

[Click here](#) to take Spiritual Gift Assessment.

[Click here](#) to learn more.

3 Ways to Ease Your Grief Journey



Prayer of the Week

Moonless Darkness Stands Between

But the Bethlehem star may lead me
To the sight of Him Who freed me
From the self that I have been.
Make me pure, Lord: Thou art Holy;
Make me meek, Lord: Thou wert lowly;
Now beginning, and always,
Now begin, on Christmas day.
- **Gerard Manley Hopkins, S.J.**

[Central United Methodist Church](#)

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