



THE OUTLOOK

Central United Methodist Church

Volume 125 Issue 2

Being Salt and Light

~Juanita Joiner

I try not to make many New Year's resolutions, but to be honest, I always seem to put one or two out there just to see if I can actually keep one of them. The past few years I had a word of the year as my resolution and that has been more successful for me than saying...I will stay away from sugar. At the top of my list this year I jotted four words — *Being Salt and Light*". Before I dive into the *why* of these words more deeply, I need to reflect on another thought that lead me in the direction of these four words.

As a member of the Worship Arts Team, I along with Julie Husted, Sally Wibalda, and Diane VanWesep again got to start at ground zero preparing our church for Advent. We hung banners, hung greens in the Narthex and Sanctuary; we thought deeply about how the Nativity would be introduced on the altar each week. This year the key figures were placed to match Rob's sermons. The Nativity was not totally completed until *after* Christmas...the wise men never made their entrance until Epiphany on January 5th. On that Sunday we completed the Christmas Story we had read in the book of Luke...or had we?

The team then had the responsibility of removing the Nativity that had so lovingly been arranged each week. As each figure was removed, I was reminded of something I had read during my morning devotions. In hindsight, I wish I had stopped the ladies and shared these thoughts with them as they carried each away. After you read these words, I think you will want to meditate on them just like I did when your own Nativity is put away next year. And now, what were those words I read?

"Lord, help me to be like a shepherd – to lead, nurture, and guide those around me to the Good Shepherd. Lord, help me to be more like the wise men – to hear your call and to use the gift that you have blessed me with to serve others. Lord, help me to be more like Joseph and Mary – to rely on you completely and trust you throughout each day. Lord, help me to be more like Jesus – to show love, kindness, understanding, and forgiveness. Lord, may the glory and wonder of the Nativity lead us through all seasons of the year." Amen.

I think you already know where the words in the title are leading each of us this month. How will YOU be salt? How will YOU be light? How will YOU be these four words for Central? Our visitors? Our neighbors? Our community?

The Nativity has led us to rediscover how this gift of love has been instilled in each of us. We only need to look into the eyes of another person to sense this strong connection. We will see that Christ lives in each and everyone of us...assuring the world that Christ is present in each of us and at Central UMC. This leads me to some more key questions: What will we do now as we proceed forward in the future of Central? Will we remember Christ is born in our world today through our love? Will we not be afraid to share this rich gift? Will we allow our inner light to comfort and guide us when we or someone we love experiences darkness? Will we be a beacon of hope and love to a world that is weary with injustice and hostility?

I don't usually leave blank space anywhere in this newsletter, but I think it is appropriate this month to actually add an additional page that not only gives you a copy of The Wesleyan Covenant Prayer Rob shared during his January 12 sermon, but will give you space to jot down your thoughts about "Being Salt and Light" during 2025.

Perhaps my four words and these three verses found in Matthew 5:13-15 will be your inspiration! These three verses are part of The Sermon on the Mount. These words are important because they define the Christian way of life and are considered to be one of the most famous sermons given by Jesus. In this sermon, Jesus taught his disciples how to be righteous, and he emphasized the importance of humility, forgiveness, and caring for others. Yes, he wanted them to be "Salt and Light".

"You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. People do not light a lamp and put it under a bushel basket; rather, they put it on the lamp-stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."

Without "Salt and Light", none of us will be on the path to life! Let's be like shepherds, wise men, Mary and Joseph, and Jesus for CENTRAL ... and ... OURSELVES.



Mission Possible for February 2025

Feb. 2 — Mission of the Month
Water for Life

Feb. 9 — Local Mission
Solid Rock

Feb. 16— Helping Hand Fund

Feb. 23 — Hunger/UMCOR
UM Rural Development

Monthly Pantry Donation
St. Gianna Baby Pantry

Mission Accomplished December 2024

Mission of the Month

HAPPI \$415.00

Local Mission

United Way Children's Books \$295.00

Helping Hand Fund \$243.00

Hunger/UMCOR

Heifer International \$290.00

Fifth Sunday

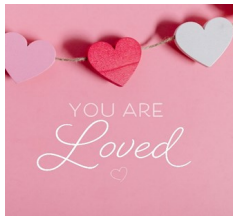
African University \$230.00

Pantry

Toilet Paper for MAP \$70.00

Christmas Eve Offering \$1,323.00
Immigration Law & Justice Michigan

Reminder...mission offerings can be given any time during the month even though we list our offerings by the week.



"Regardless of your race, ethnicity, immigration status, gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic situation, age, ability, belief, or background, whether you are single or partnered, you are God's beloved and you are welcome here."



"Creating safe spaces for growth and community in Christ."

Using Church Property to Re-Envision Our Future A Homework Update from Pastor Rob

Go Tigers! I am halfway through my year of study at Dakota Wesleyan University, and we have made progress on my applied project. As I shared in the fall, my project is focused on an exploration of how to use our church property for a housing development in downtown Muskegon. I hope to share my completed project at a congregational meeting in late May or early June, but for now I'd like to give you a brief update on my homework!



First, we are not alone in this work. The Project Team and I have had many conversations with potential partners, collaborators, and stakeholders. We are learning from others who have already done this work. One resource I've found helpful is a book written by Mark Elsdon called *Gone for Good? Negotiating the Coming Wave of Church Property Transition* (read an interview of the author [HERE](#)). Clearly many other faith communities like ours will be facing similar choices, and we can learn from each other as we claim a new future.

Second, this work takes time. Years! My project is designed simply to start the conversation as we prayerfully consider our intentions for our beautiful church building. We may not use the building in the future in the same way we have in years past, but we still have time to discern and follow God's direction carefully and intentionally.

Finally, this is more than a homework project. I understand the deep sense of loss we would all feel if one day a portion of our church building is no longer used as a church. Even as we explore new and promising possibilities, we will also look for opportunities to celebrate and remember how our congregation used these sacred spaces to touch so many lives. As we continue to be good stewards of our nearly century old church building, we will both celebrate the past and look to the future.

Please join us! We have another church property to discuss at an upcoming church conference (date TBA). We need to consider and vote on a proposal to sell the Mike Miller lot to the Nelson Neighborhood Improvement Association. Following the vote, I will also take some time to go more in depth about our exploration of a housing development at Central. Thank you for your openness and support as we have these prayerful conversations. God has given us so much, and we have so much yet to give!

Peace,

If you only receive a hard copy of the Outlook, the above link is accessible from the Outlook posted on our website: [MuskegonCentralUMC.org](https://www.muskegoncentralumc.org)

Special Church Conference To Be Scheduled!

A Congregational Vote to sell the Mike Miller lot to the Nelson Neighborhood Improvement Association will be scheduled in the next month or so.

Please stay tuned for further updates!

CUMC Housing Development Exploration Project Team Members

Cathy Brubaker-Clarke

Nancy Crandall

Tim Lundholm

Dan Melinn, Facilities Coordinator

Rev. Rob Cook, Pastor

Worship at Central

Available online: **LIVE**

<https://www.facebook.com/muskegoncentralumc>

And on our YouTube Channel: **LATER IN THE DAY**

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCZUQe2i7Fzj_tcwwSG7Ednw/videos?view=2&flow=grid

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITY

After you have completed the 'worksheet' on page 4, how about reading this little story found on the Internet to our children, grandchildren, and even some neighbor's children. It's never too early to teach our children to "Be Salt and Light".

Once upon a time, in a small town nestled between rolling hills, lived a little girl named Lily. Lily was known for her bright smile and her love for helping others, but sometimes she wondered how she could make a big difference in the world.

One day, while playing in the kitchen with her grandma, Lily asked, "Grandma, what does it mean to be "Salt and Light?"

Grandma smiled and said, "Well, my dear, 'salt' means adding flavor to life, making things a little bit better, just like when you sprinkle salt on your food. And 'light' means shining brightly, guiding others through the darkness."

Lily thought about this as she went outside to play. She noticed a small, lonely tree in the corner of the park that looked sad and forgotten. She decided to be like 'salt' and add some cheer. She gathered colorful pebbles and carefully arranged them around the tree's base, making it look like a little garden.

Later that evening, as dusk settled, Lily remembered the 'light' part. She took her small flashlight and shone it on the tree, illuminating its leaves and branches. A group of children playing nearby saw the glowing tree and gathered around, sharing stories and laughter. Lily felt happy that she had brought a bit of light to their evening.

The next day at school, Lily noticed a new student, Alex, who seemed shy and alone. Remembering her grandma's words, she decided to be 'salt' by inviting Alex to sit with her at lunch and sharing her favorite snacks. She also made sure to include Alex in the games during recess, making him feel welcome.

As days turned into weeks, Lily continued to be 'salt and light' in her community. She helped her neighbor with grocery shopping, read stories to younger children at the library, and always had a kind word for anyone who needed it.

One day, a friend said to Lily, "You know, you really brighten up our lives. You're like a little beacon of light!" Lily beamed with pride, knowing that she was living up to the meaning of "salt and light" - making a positive impact on the world, one small act of kindness at a time.

The End

Key points that children will understand and enjoy chatting about with you:

- ♥ "Salt" means adding flavor and making things better, just like a little bit of salt enhances the food we eat.
- ♥ "Light" means shining brightly and guiding others through darkness.
- ♥ You can be "Salt and Light" by doing small acts of kindness, being helpful, and spreading positivity around you just as these pictures of the people at Central UMC do weekly, monthly, and all year around.

Mobile Food Pantry

Our volunteers were bundled up from head to toe ready to distribute food when the truck arrived; the decision was made to cancel due to unfavorable conditions. Hot coffee and delicious cookies were even waiting for the workers. Even though they were disappointed, these volunteers knew that under other circumstances they would have been "Salt and Light" to so many people who depend on our gift of love each month.



Another disappoint happened at Kids' Food Basket!



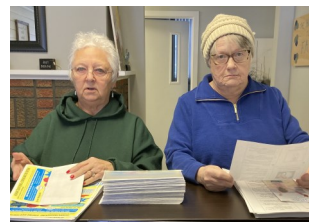
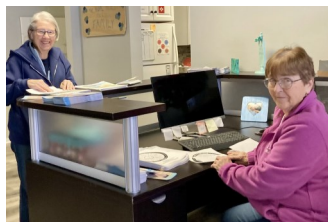
Volunteer shifts cancelled- Thursday, January 23rd

Due to inclement weather and school closures all volunteer sessions in Muskegon are cancelled for Thursday, January 23rd.

This team (some unable to work due to the weather) was able to work at Hope Project even though it was freezing outside.

Their hearts were warmed by being "Salt and Light" to the people who are serviced by this organization in Muskegon.

We give "HOPE" each month!



Can you list any other areas our church is "Being Salt and Light"?

THE WESLEYAN COVENANT PRAYER

On January 12, Pastor Rob shared this version of the Wesleyan Covenant Prayer with us during his yearly renewal sermon. This prayer is truly worthy of this reprint.

The Wesleyan Covenant Prayer was adapted by John Wesley, the co-founder of Methodism (along with his brother, Charles) for the renewal of the believer's covenant with God. Wesley says that the prayer was first used in a renewal service held on Monday, August 11, 1755, in London, with 1800 people present. Since then, the Wesleyan Covenant Prayer has often been used in Methodist services around the world on the first Sunday of the year. The prayer points to deep surrender of ourselves in complete trust to God.

**I am no longer my own, but yours.
Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will.
Put me to doing, put me to suffering.
Let me be employed by you or laid aside for you,
exalted for you or brought low for you.
Let me be full, let me be empty.
Let me have all things, let me have nothing.
I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things
to your pleasure and disposal.
And now, O glorious and blessed God,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
You are mine, and I am Yours. So be it.
And this covenant now made on earth,
let it be made complete in heaven.
Amen**

WORKSHEET FOR "BEING SALT AND PEPPER"

After reading the article "Being Salt and Pepper", jot down your thoughts as they pertain to the following questions.

- ♥ How will YOU be salt this year?

- ♥ How will you be light this year?

- ♥ How will you be "Salt and Light" for Central?

- ♥ How will you be "Salt and Light" for our visitors?

- ♥ How will you be "Salt and Light" for our neighbors?

- ♥ How will you be "Salt and Light" for our community?

**The Christian is always being transformed.
As we receive God's grace, let us always seek to share what we ourselves have received.
Let us go forth "Being Salt and Light" for the world.**



Central Cares

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 1 — Donna Cotton, Thomas Hippchen, Josie Terpstra
- 2 — Andrew Whitsell, Derek Whitsell
- 4 — Carolyn Buboltz, Nathaniel Cotton
- 6 — Joan Maxwell
- 7 — Kailey Lundholm
- 8 — Billie Joy Thomas
- 12 — Kip Smith
- 15 — Dorothy Argue
- 17 — Jon Newman
- 20 — Vallerie Clark
- 21 — Miquelle Newman



FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

- 24 — Tom & Mary Anne Maycroft (1996)
- 27 — Kevin & Cheryl Youngquist (1982)

Share their grief:

- ♥ Family and friends of **Maggie Green**, sister of Dollie Hippchen who passed away on December 29. Please keep Dollie's family in your prayers as they continue to adjust to their loss.
- ♥ Family and friends of **Mark Grider**, brother of Carl Chapman who passed away on January 5. Carl is our custodian and would appreciate your prayers of support during this very difficult time.



Dear Volunteers:

The beauty in our church during Advent would NEVER be possible without the MANY volunteers we have each year. You love to see that our Sanctuary, Parish Hall and our beautiful Christmas Tree get decorated. This year our church was even more beautiful. I can't thank you enough for your time and your loving dedication. Central is blessed to have so many people who love our church. YOU definitely are "Salt and Light" for Central.

~Julie Husted

If you have the desire to pray but don't know how, why not attend our Call to Prayer Group. We meet on the 2nd and 4th Sunday each month at 11 AM for an hour of prayer in the Conference Room. All are invited.

~Dollie Hippchen

Church Office Hours

**Our regular office hours at the church.
Tuesday — Thursday 9 a.m. — 2 p.m.**

FEBRUARY CALENDAR

- 2 — Worship 9:30 a.m. (In-Person & Virtual)
Going Deeper 5 p.m. (Conference Room)
- 3 — Joy Bells 5:30 p.m. (Choir Room)
Women's Ensemble 6:30 p.m. (Choir Room)
- 4 — Staff Mtg. 11:00 a.m. (Conference Room)
- 6 — Red Letter Christians 10 a.m. (Conference Room)
Blood Drive 11 a.m. (Lower Level)
- 7 — Supper House 3:45 p.m. (Temple UMC)
- 9 — Worship 9:30 a.m. (In-Person & Virtual)
Call to Prayer 11 a.m. (Conference Room)
Beyond the Walls Team Mtg. 11:00 a.m. (Parish Hall)
- 10 — Mobile Food Pantry 4:30 p.m. (CUMC Parking Lot)
Joy Bells 5:30 p.m. (Choir Room)
Women's Ensemble 6:30 p.m. (Choir Room)
- 13 — Romeo's 8:30 a.m. (Carmen's Café)
Juliet's 9:00 a.m. (Cherokee Restaurant)
- 16 — Worship 9:30 a.m. (In-Person & Virtual)
Going Deeper 5 p.m. (Conference Room)
- 17 — Joy Bells 5:30 p.m. (Choir Room)
Women's Ensemble 6:30 p.m. (Choir Room)
- 18 — Outlook Deadline 8 a.m.
Book Club 10 a.m. (Library)
Building Team Mtg. 11 a.m. (Conference Room)
- 20 — Red Letter Christians 10 a.m. (Conference Room)
Blood Drive 11:00 a.m. (Lower Level)
- 23 — Worship 9:30 a.m. (In-Person & Virtual)
Call to Prayer 11:00 a.m. (Conference Room)
- 24 — Joy Bells 5:30 p.m. (Choir Room)
Women's Ensemble 6:30 p.m. (Choir Room)
- 25 — Custodial Crew Mtg. 11:00 a.m. (Parish Hall)
- 26 — Leadership Council 5:30 p.m. (Conference Room)
- 27 — Volunteer at Kids' Food Basket 9:30 a.m. (1537 S. Getty)

Thank you for helping us keep our calendar updated each month!

Special Request:

- ♥ Please keep Connie in the church office updated on any of the prayer requests you have made on behalf of your friends and family.
- ♥ **Where to send important information!**
Please send to all addresses.
- ♥ Juanita Joiner for the Newsletter:
jjoiner@muskegoncentralumc.org
- ♥ Connie Jones for the Church Calendar:
connie@muskegoncentralumc.org

Central United Methodist Church



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MUSKEGON CENTRAL UNITED METHODIST

For faster and more
convenient giving.



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Have news for the Outlook? See page 3 for submission addresses. Next Outlook deadline is **February 18**. Thank you!

LOOKING AHEAD TO LENT

You will want to attend our Ash Wednesday Service this year.
Bishop David Alan Bard will be with us.
Mark your calendars NOW!

