



THE OUTLOOK

Central United Methodist Church

Volume 125 Issue 3



It's Lent, Let's Dance

~ Bishop David Bard (2017)

Bishop Bard says Lent asks us to look at how we are out of spiritual rhythm, then helps us recalibrate.

Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me — watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly. Matthew 11:28-30, The Message

March 5 is Ash Wednesday, the beginning of the forty-day season (excluding Sundays) leading up to Easter. Given the history of our country, and its current religious make-up, a number of Christian celebrations are part of our wider culture. Christmas is a national holiday, not simply a church holy day. As Easter nears, we will see chocolate bunnies and marsh-mallow chicks in the stores, and there is no religious requirement to purchase these.

Lent, however, is not deeply ingrained in our culture. Sure, there are restaurants that advertise fish more frequently during this time, but beyond that, the wider culture pays little attention. Perhaps Lent has not “caught on” in the wider culture because it is typically a serious, even somber season.

Offering the image of dancing for the season of Lent, then, seems quite out of character, even odd. However, I do like the image of dancing as a way to think about Lent, particularly the image of dancing to “the unforced rhythms of grace” as written in Matthew.

Lent is a season to be reminded that our lives can get out of rhythm. We live in a world where bumper stickers proclaim: “The one who dies with the most toys wins,” and we come to believe it and live it. We live in a world where kindness is mistaken for weakness, and we do not want to appear weak. We lose our rhythm because we feel we need to dance to the frenzied tunes of an overly busy culture. We get out of rhythm because even among followers of Jesus who “has broken down the dividing wall” (Ephesians 2:14) we find walls being rebuilt – walls that divide along lines of ethnicity, race, culture, class, gender, sexual orientation. Lent asks us to look at how we are out of rhythm, how we are tripping ourselves up on the dance floor of life rather than swaying to and with the unforced rhythms of grace.

Lent invites us to self-examination and also to recalibration. We are invited to find again those unforced rhythms of grace and dance. Lent is a time to rediscover how justice can flow like water and how love can blow on the winds of the Spirit. In Lent we are invited to listen deeply to the rhythm of grace, to hear the tune of God's abiding love, a love that never gives up. Lent asks us to find rhythm as we rediscover the joys of silence, quiet, and prayer.

As you find new rhythms for your life and for your praying this Lent, I would ask for your prayers. Pray for your own life. Where you have been wounded, pray for healing. Where you have wounded, pray for forgiveness. Where you have turned away from the hurting of the world, ask for renewed vision and courage. Where you have neglected your own development as a unique child of God, pray for a fresh beginning. Where you have given in to apathy or cynicism, pray for a new spark of faith and hope.

Pray for your church. Give thanks for all the ways your church has touched the world with the love of God in Jesus Christ. Pray that fresh winds of the Spirit will blow through your congregation. If you are a congregation member, pray for your pastor and staff. If you are a pastor, pray for your people. Pray for The United Methodist Church in Michigan. Pray for the world. Pray that the world may grow in compassion, justice, peace, and love. Pray that the world's people might care more deeply for each other, and that we all might take better care of the planet that sustains us.

During this Lent please know that I will pray for you and will join you in prayer. May we all rediscover the unforced rhythms of grace. It's Lent, let's dance.

Bishop David Bard will join us on March 5 for our Ash Wednesday Service.

Mission Possible for March 2025

March 2 — Mission of the Month
UMCOR Sunday

March 9 — Local Mission
Read Muskegon

March 16— Helping Hand Fund

March 23 — Hunger/UMCOR
Love Beyond Borders

March 30 — Fifth Sunday
United Methodist Camping

Monthly Pantry Donation
\$\$\$ for Embrace Books

Mission Accomplished January 2024

Mission of the Month
Grace Pediatric Clinic \$440.00

Local Mission
Youth For Christ \$255.00

Helping Hand Fund \$285.00

Hunger/UMCOR
Multiethnic Ministries \$390.00

Pantry
Dollars for 1M \$255.00

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

OPPORTUNITY TO “RESORE OUR SOULS”

An Invitation from Bruce Dempsey.

Perhaps you share with me, in our world of rapid change and uncertainty, a need for calm and stillness, for some way to "restore our souls" (Psalm 23). If so, I invite you to engage in the upcoming Soul Friends experience. This will consist of five (5) weekly 90-minute sessions. The main purpose of the group is to provide a safe place to: 1) to help you take stock of "how things are with your soul" (John Wesley's phrase), 2) to show fresh ways of praying and meditating, and 3) to connect with God, others, and yourself at a deeper level. I'll guide us with some ways to actively reflect on our experience of God, which is unique to each of us. To provide an opportunity to share mutual experiences, each group will be limited to 8 participants.

Because we will be reflecting and trusting at a deeper level, certain commitments are necessary:

- to be present and on time for all sessions
- to share your experience with group members (without pressure!)
- to keep what is shared in the group within the group (confidentiality)
- to invest a nominal fee to take part (the church will help with this if it's beyond your means)

This promises to be a truly good experience. After all, what's more important than your soul?

**Express your interest
in joining a group
HERE!**

Anam Cara



Soul Friend

How is it with your soul?

Please consider joining us for a new spiritual growth opportunity beginning in April. Our new Soul Friend groups will gather 6-8 people for 5 meetings with Rev. Bruce Dempsey, LPC. Cost is \$25/person.

Please contact Pastor Rob for more information.

Spring Forward



March 9, 2025 • Set your clock ahead!



“Creating safe spaces
for growth and community
in Christ.”

Mix & Match Team

Over the past month you have been introduced to our new Care and Prayer Cards. Thank you for taking the time each Sunday to fill them out for us. You have also received your own “Welcome Bag” that will be given to our new visitors each Sunday.

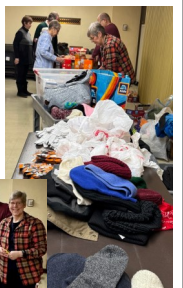
This team is *alive* and *focused* and will continue to do what their team name suggests: MIX & MATCH!

They have many more plans up their sleeves.



Beyond the Walls

This very active team is making a huge impact outside our church walls. They don't lack for new ideas on how we can witness to our neighbors and community. They have involved many of you on Sundays when they pack things up after Coffee Hour. We know each bag has food and hats, but did you know there is also a good dose of love and prayers in each bag? *Your love and your prayers!*



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



Central Cares

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

- 1 — Ben Clarke
- 11 — Bill Dye
- 16 — Jim Johnson, Tim Lundholm
- 18 — Ken McNeill
- 19 — Jean Anderson, Cathy Brubaker-Clarke
Kevin Younquist
- 21 — Connie Jones
- 26 — Carol Higginson
- 30 — Braylan Clarke
- 31 — Abigail Larabee



MARCH ANNIVERSARIES

- 16 — Rob & Kelsey Cook (2019)

NOTES OF THANKS:

- ♥ A lovely thank you from Steven Wei has been hung on the bulletin board by the Chapel. Steven is the son of Brenda Wei. You should take the time to read his special words of love and appreciation to our church and the people in our church.
- ♥ We want to thank Blake Durham for donating 125 hand knit hats to be used by our "Beyond the Walls" Team to hand out to those in need. Each hat will certainly come in handy during these very cold and snowy days. Blake would love to continue making hats for our church and as always, very appreciative if you want to donate any of your unused worsted weight yarn. He even told me he is willing to *reuse* yarn from no longer wanted afghans. This is a win win for everyone. Contact the church office if you have any questions.
- ♥ Dear Friends at Central United Methodist Church, We are so very thankful for the large donation of hats and gloves for our students. It means so much that our students know they never have to be cold because of your kindness.
Love, Cardinal Elementary (Orchard View)

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

MARCH CALENDAR

- 2 — Worship 9:30 a.m. (In-Person & Virtual)
Mix & Match Team Mtg. 11:00 a.m. (Library)
Going Deeper 5:00 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)
- 5 — **Ash Wednesday Service 7:00 p.m. (Sanctuary)**
- 6 — Red Letter Christians 10:00 a.m. (Conference Room)
Blood Drive 11:00 a.m. (Lower Level)
- 8 — Men's Christian Breakfast 9:00 a.m. (Crestwood UMC)
- 9 — Worship 9:30 a.m. (In-Person & Virtual)
Call to Prayer 11:00 a.m. (Conference Room)
- 10 — Joy Bells 5:30 p.m. (Choir Room)
Women's Ensemble 6:30 p.m. (Choir Room)
- 12 — Beyond the Walls Team Mtg. 11:00 a.m. (Conference Rm.)
- 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)
Beyond the Walls Work Team 11:00 a.m. (Parish Hall)
Going Deeper 5:00 p.m. (Conference Room)
- 17 — 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)
- 18 — Outlook Deadline 8:00 a.m.
Book Club 10:00 a.m. (Library)
Building Team Mtg. 11:00 a.m. (Conference Room)
- 20 — Red Letter Christians 10:00 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)
MAP Clothing Pantry 12:30 p.m. (Temple UMC)
- 26 — Leadership Council 5:30 p.m. (Conference Room)
- 27 — Volunteer at Kids' Food Basket 9:30 a.m. (1537 S. Getty)
MAP Clothing Pantry 12:30 p.m. (Temple UMC)
- 30 — Worship 9:30 a.m. (Sanctuary)
- 31 — Joy Bells 5:30 p.m. (Choir Room)
Women's Ensemble 6:30 p.m. (Choir Room)

Church Office Hours

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

Central United Methodist Church



1011 2nd Street
Muskegon MI 49440
231-722-6545
MuskegonCentralUMC.org



MUSKEGON CENTRAL UNITED METHODIST

For faster and more convenient giving.



Central Staff

- Rev. Rob Cook, Senior Pastor
rob@muskegoncentralumc.org
231-722-6545 Ext. 4
- Connie Jones, Office Coordinator
connie@muskegoncentralumc.org
231-722-6545 Ext. 1
- Marian Davis, Parish Visitor
marian@muskegoncentralumc.org
231-722-6545
- Juanita Joiner, Newsletter Editor
jjoiner@muskegoncentralumc.org
231-722-6545 Ext. 2
- Dan Melinn, Facilities Coordinator
dmelinn@muskegoncentralumc.org
231-722-6545
- Carl Chapman, Custodian
office@muskegoncentralumc.org
231-722-6545
- Marie Rood, Financial Administrator
marie@muskegoncentralumc.org
231-722-6545 Ext. 3
- Cavan Berry, Church Treasurer
cumc@muskegoncentralumc.org
- Colin Berry, Video Technician
colin@muskegoncentralumc.org
- Carolyn Buboltz, Financial Secretary
cumc@muskegoncentralumc.org
231-722-6545 Ext. 3

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



Bishop David Alan Bard is the presiding bishop of the Michigan Conference of The United Methodist Church. Bishop Bard received a BA from the University of Minnesota, Duluth in 1981; his Master of Divinity was earned at United Theological Seminary, Twin Cities 1984; and in 1994 he received a Ph.D. from Southern Methodist University with a focus on Christian ethics.



Muskegon Methodist Ministries

March 5, 2025
7:00 p.m.

Central United Methodist Church
1011 Second Street
Muskegon, MI 49440