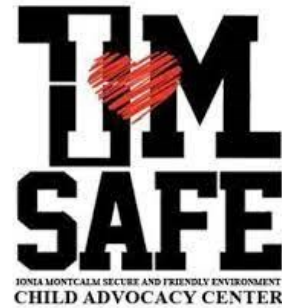


March Noisy Offering March 31

Our Noisy Offering for February will support Ionia Montcalm Secure And Friendly Environment Child Advocacy Center (I/M SAFE).

I/M SAFE serves children ages 2 years old to 17 years old who have been sexually abused, severely physically abused, human trafficked, and children who have been exploited over the internet. The children they serve are residents of either Ionia or Montcalm County.

Prayerfully consider giving on **March 31**. Your change could change a life.



Thank you to everyone who brought tasty treats on February 11th for our Fat Tuesday on Sunday Celebration that followed worship!



Thank you for your contributions to the Soup-er Bowl collection for Feed the Need! We collected 99 cans of soup, packages of Ramen noodles and macaroni & cheese, and a variety of crackers. We also collected \$158.50 for Feed the Need during our January Noisy Offering.

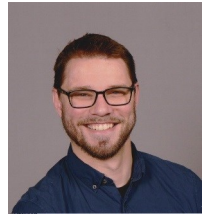
Rev. Paul delivered our contributions to Feed the Need in Woodland.



PASTORAL REFLECTION

Greeting friends in Christ,

When you receive this monthly letter we will be firmly within the season of Lent. In worship, we are contemplating what parts of our hearts to prune with God, with the understanding that our hearts need regular tending, as a tree would throughout its life. Trees grow in every direction with new growth every year. And sometimes, that growth takes the tree in directions that are not as helpful years down the road. At the parsonage, I find myself finding limbs that are growing into other trees! Sometimes some limbs present a great deal of weight and are overgrown. Some limbs are dead and haven't been brought down by the winds of early spring or late autumn. Like tree limbs that have to be carefully and discerningly removed at times, we grow and change in ways that require assessment with our God. This is what Lent is all about - learning what parts of us can be pruned so we can become more loving through God's grace.



In addition to this wilderness season, we are striving to live into the vision God has placed on our hearts. We are called to be the beacon at the center of our community that partners with those around us so that God's kingdom is seen more clearly. Being at the center of town, we have the opportunity to begin the conversations that will better Lake Odessa. On March 27 at 6:00 PM, Central Church will host its first conversation about housing, its disparity, the causes of the issue, and what we can do to change it. We are engaging the entire community to come together and learn and act together. Our keynote speaker is Stacy Moore of the Ionia County Habitat for Humanity with a Q&A after her initial presentation. Expect to leave with the means to make a change.

In conclusion, knowing it is Lent and also knowing that housing is limited and difficult to find, I'm reminded that Jesus was rendered homeless after claiming his identity as the Son of God in our Gospels. Run out of his hometown of Nazareth, Jesus found a home with his disciples and was the guest of many during his ministry, but ultimately the Son of Man "had no place to rest his head." We follow a homeless man into the kingdom of God and thus we are called to offer a home to those who bear Christ's sacred image. Home can mean many things to many different people, but we oftentimes find that home is other people who enrich our souls and instill in us a deeper love for self, neighbor, and God. May your Lenten season move you to be home to those who long for a place to lay their head.

In Christ,

Rev. Paul Reissmann

Central United Methodist Church is located in downtown Lake Odessa at 912 4th Avenue. Contact us at 616-374-8861 or info@centralchurch-lakeo.org.

Check out our Facebook page for weekly sermons, current activities, and other events. Central United Methodist Church—Lake Odessa

Keeping Christ Central

State of the Finance Report

Stats for January 2024

Average Attendance: 55

Operating Fund:

Receipts \$10,482

Expenses \$21,425

Other Designated Giving:

Building Fund \$ 440

General Missions \$ 30

Helping Hands \$ 220

Community Dinners \$ 397

Human Relations Day \$ 10

What Is Our Funeral Fund?

An important ministry of Central Church is the luncheon that follows a funeral or memorial service. It provides families and friends an opportunity to remember the loved one who has died and renew relationships with one another. Central Church does not charge families for this ministry. When pressed we will share with them how much we have spent to provide the meal, but there is no request made for money.

Families are typically as generous as they can be. Some give well above what it cost Central Church, and others are not able to even cover the cost that we have paid out. Whatever money we receive, however, goes into the Funeral Fund. These donations go directly to purchase the food for the next luncheon.

Recent Memorial Giving

A lasting legacy remains when you honor a loved one or friend with a Memorial Gift. Your gift to Central Church becomes a living tribute to their memory. The impact of your gift will transform the world for Christ. We praise the Lord for the lasting legacy provided by our generous donors.

In Memory of Mary Shoemaker \$190

On December 31st, we were blessed with a visit during worship from the Adult/Teen Challenge of West Michigan, an alcohol and substance abuse rehab center. We heard about their ministry and some testimonies. Thanks to your generous gifts we were able to support their ministry with a donation of \$245.

The Fellowship & Care Committee will have the prize wheel at the Lakewood Community Easter Egg Hunt at the Lake Odessa Park on March 30th.

Beginning on **March 3rd**, they will be accepting donations of small prizes for the event. Monetary contributions for the purchase of additional prizes can be given through a church offering envelope noted for the Easter Egg Hunt.

Prize ideas:

peanut-free candy, small prizes such as play-doh, coloring books, sidewalk chalk, bubbles, crayons, etc.



Picture from the 2022 Egg Hunt

From the Trustee Committee

Your trustees have been busy behind the scenes taking care of the church and the parsonage. Recent accomplishments include:

- A new driveway and improved drainage at the parsonage.
- Church organ repaired and tuned.
- Installation of an 86 inch television monitor to replace the old projector system in the sanctuary.
- Repairs and improvements in the parsonage basement after water damage due to heavy summer rains. Structural improvements made to prevent future damage.
- Installation of a decorative, up to code, cable style safety railing in the sanctuary balcony area.
- Replaced the rear steel door in Fellowship Hall.
- Made landscaping improvements near the rear parking lot.
- In mediation with our insurance company seeking to replace the church and parsonage roofs. They sustained hail damage in April of 2023.

Please feel free to offer your trustees any suggestions about how to improve the church, its ground, and the parsonage. Your 2024 trustees include Kim Deardorff, Dawn Deardorff, Jane Everett, Mark Corston, Mike McCartney and Del Kostanko.

Red Cross Coordinator Needed

The church is looking for someone who would like to Coordinate the Red Cross Blood Drives. The Blood Drives are held on Mondays every other month. The responsibilities of the Red Cross Coordinator are as follows:

- Confirm date of Blood Drive.
- Acquire two volunteers for each of the two shifts, registration and canteen: 12:00-3:00 and 3:00-6:00 (4 people total in addition to coordinator)
- Be at the church at 10:45 to meet Blood Drive Truck and stay until drive finishes (approximately 6:30).
- Make a pot of decaffeinated and regular coffee and get out related supplies (cups, creamer, sugar, napkins, pitcher of ice water) from church supplies. (The Red Cross provides juice boxes and snacks.)
- Make donors and Blood Drive personnel feel welcome.
- Cover for a volunteer who wishes to donate blood if needed.
- Help canteen volunteer clean up kitchen.
- Turn off lights and lock church.

If you are interested or for more information, please contact the Church Office.

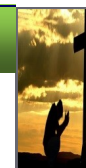
ONLINE GIVING IS AN OPTION

Point your phone's camera at this QR Code to be directed to our online giving page.



OUR PRAYERS OF CONDOLENCE



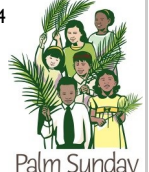
Family of Bernice Goodmoot



When writing checks, please take care to write 2024 for the year!

MARCH

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

Palm Sunday—March 24 Maundy Thursday—March 28 Good Friday—March 29 Easter Sunday—March 31		 LENT			1	2
3 	4	5 Fresh Food Truck 2pm Fellowship & Care 6 pm	6 Adult Bible Study 5:30pm	7 Community Respite 1-4pm Free Dinner 4-6pm	8	9
10 	11	12 Worship Committee 2pm	13 Adult Bible Study 5:30pm	14 Community Respite 1-4pm Free Dinner 4-6pm	15	16
17 	18	19 Finance Comm. 7pm 	20 Adult Bible Study 5:30pm	21 Community Respite 1-4pm Free Dinner 4-6pm	22	23
24  Palm Sunday	25	26	27 LAMA Housing Chat 6pm	28 Community Respite 1-4pm Free Dinner 4-6pm	29 LAMA Good Friday Service 1pm	30  @ Lake Odessa Park
31  Noisy Offering for I/M SAFE			*Dates and Times subject to Sunday School—Sundays at 9:30 am Worship—Sundays at 10:30 am Belding Adult Education Classes—Tuesdays & Wednesdays 9 am—12 pm Honeybee Fitness Class—Wednesdays at 6:30 pm			

Upcoming EVENTS

Join us during worship on **March 31** for the Choir Call-Down! We will be singing **Christ the Lord Is Risen Today, verses 1-3, #302** from the hymnal.

All are welcome to sing! All you need is your voice, a hymnal and a joyful spirit!



Daylight Saving Time Begins March 10



Birthdays & Anniversaries

Birthdays

- 03/01 Earl Strater
- 03/02 Terri Catt
- 03/03 Ian Shears
- 03/04 Ray Dykhous
- 03/07 Cody Merrill
- 03/10 Claire Freidhoff
- 03/12 Pam Shears
- 03/14 Tony Barcroft
- 03/16 Charlie Reiser
- 03/19 Lily Kostanko
- 03/25 Harold Dennie
- Jenna Gibbs
- 03/27 Eunice Goodemoot

Anniversaries

- 03/06 Bill & Jewel Eckstrom—69 yrs
- 03/30 Von & Sharlene Goodemoot—33 yrs

WHY AREN'T HOUSES CHEAPER?
WHY IS RENT SO HIGH?
WHY CAN'T I FIND PROPERTY?
WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT IT?

A community chat on:

HOUSING

Speaker: Stacey Moore,
Director for Habitat for Humanity - Ionia County

March 27, 2024 at 6:00PM
 @ Central Church
 912 4th Ave., Lake Odessa

Central CHURCH
 Keeping Christ Central

Sponsored by: Lakewood Area Ministerial Association | Habitat for Humanity - Ionia County

Vacation Bible School is returning to Central Church this summer! In participation with Zion Lutheran, we will be holding VBS **June 17—19th**.

VBS PLANNING

RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE at Central Church
Monday, April 8
12 to 5:45 pm

