



# In the Loop

Centennial Christian Church  
1219 E Grove Bloomington, IL. 61701  
Ph. 309-828-2185

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<https://www.centennialcc.org>  
email: [people@centennialcc.org](mailto:people@centennialcc.org)

## Listening and Talking . . . by Rev. Tom Cici

A leper came to him begging . . . , “If you choose, you can make me clean.” Moved with pity, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him and said to him, “I do choose, be made clean” (Mark 1:40-41)!

Leprosy was the term for a range of diseases from chapped lips to Hansen’s disease (modern-day leprosy). The common symptom was the breaking/cracking of the skin. The resulting impurity and the devastating social stigma that went with it prevented the infectious person from fully participating in society. Jesus’ healing ministry is not just about a physical cure (which certainly happens today), but about holistic healing.

Folks in Jesus’s day talked about healing as restoring self-worth, relationships with all others, and integrating someone back into social and religious systems. The Greek word *sozo*, which means “to make whole” or “to save” was used in Scriptures to talk about healing and salvation. Jesus’ healing is not just about a physical cure but about reestablishing right relationships between humanity and God and, hopefully, between individuals and community. Healing is a process of becoming whole which ultimately allows people to flourish.

In today’s story, Jesus is not just healing an individual; he is healing a community. Jesus is giving the community an opportunity to be healed, and free to love, and welcome all God’s creation (see Mark 1:45). For this to take place, the community must renounce the rivalry that had been imposed on one vulnerable person. The Gospel of Mark shows that Jesus’ liberation of Israel includes judgement by the scribes and priests (Mark 1:44).



Leprosy in the Bible becomes a metaphor for all kinds of diseases and malfunctions. Today, leprosy might include alcohol and drugs (even prescription drugs) which cause escapism, denial and addiction. It might include out-of-control consumerism and debt. It might include the violence of war, domestic abuse, racism, other prejudices, poverty, hatred, and anxiety-ridden fear.

As disciples of Christ, I believe Jesus Christ calls us to be healers, to stand against all the demons that possess us and keep us from freedom. The first step to being a healer involves the same issue that confronted Jesus on the first day of his ministry: to bring freedom and healing to others from the unholy spirits that society imposes upon us, but never at the cost of destroying or harming other people. Let the human heart heal.

Blessings to all as we share and live in God’s Love together!

## Subscribing to Pastor Tom's Podcasts Sends Reminders

Pastor Tom continues to put his live podcasts, called "Daily Inspirations," on YouTube and our website. These are a "live" five-to-six-minute podcasts in which Tom can receive "Chats" online while he's recording the Daily Inspiration. Pastor Tom told his sister, Margaret, all about his podcasts during the Holidays. She exclaimed, "Oh, I need to subscribe to your podcasts so I can receive daily reminders!" Again, while in the waiting room with Sharon Frizzell, she suddenly exclaimed, "Look, I have a reminder to listen to your podcast on my cellphone!" Clicking "Subscribe" on Pastor Tom's podcast will send reminders for you to listen to his videos each day.

To "Subscribe" to Pastor Tom's podcasts, please visit our website [www.centennialcc.org](http://www.centennialcc.org) to view his podcasts. Once you are on our website, click "worship" at the top of the page, and then click "online." Locate Pastor Tom's picture, and then click "Daily Inspirations" or click "Watch on YouTube". Once on the YouTube site, click the word "Subscribe" under his picture.

Pastor Tom's **upcoming "live" podcasts** are scheduled for **1:30 p.m. on Monday through Friday**. You can also listen to his previous videos by clicking on the three "bars" in the upper right corner of Tom's image and choosing a podcast from the list.

Or, after clicking "online," you can see and listen to our worship services by clicking the image of our church on the right of the screen. We hope this will be beneficial for you and our community. Please let us know how we are doing and how we can further assist you. Thank you!

### *Daily Inspirations by Pastor Tom Cici*



### *Sunday Worship 10:15AM*



BULLETIN FEBRUARY 9, 2025



**OUR VISION STATEMENT**  
**Spreading the message of God's Love,**  
**in our church and in our community,**  
**through caring for each other.**



## **The Finance Office Requests Your Input**

Dear Christian Brothers and Sisters.

Before the first of the year, your finance department placed an article In the Loop dated 12/19/2024. We are requesting your thoughtful consideration of increasing your financial support to Centennial Christian Church by giving a generous one-time special gift or increasing the amount of your regular (weekly or monthly) donations to help with our operating expenses. We thank you for your consideration and your response.

The two offices next to our Sanctuary are now vacant. Additionally, our building has several more rooms that are used infrequently, if at all, such as the rooms in the education wing. Offering and renting these vacant rooms to the community could be another way for Centennial to improve our income/cash flow. Occasionally (during Christmas, Easter or just because), people using our premises will contribute over and above our request.

The finance department brought this matter of renting these vacant rooms before our Church Board on 1/9/2025. Before offering and renting these vacant rooms to our communities, the Church Board would like all committees to discuss this matter and report back to the Board at our next scheduled meeting at 6:00 p.m. on March 13, 2025. Before we offer these spaces to the public, our Church Board would like all our committees to first have an opportunity to claim these vacant rooms on a regular basis to increase their ministries.

The finance office would like to hear your thoughts on the suggestion of offering our available rooms for rental space to the community. Would you please ponder the idea of renting rooms to help create added cash flow? Please share your thoughts with us. You may email ([finance@centennial.org](mailto:finance@centennial.org)) or mail your thoughts to Centennial, Attn: Bill Wetzel. Please share your input with us no later than February 13, 2025.

Thank you for your thoughts and concerns. May God continue to bless you and your family.

Bill Wetzel

Property, Chair

## Ash Wednesday Service and Meal – March 5, 2025

Our Worship Committee is hosting a meal after our Ash Wednesday Service. Start the first day of Lent with prayer, reflection, and receiving the imposition of ashes on your forehead (or the back of your hand) by attending our Ash Wednesday Service on March 5th in our sanctuary beginning 5:00 p.m. The black ashes are a sign of human sin and mortality; they are placed on you in the form of a cross to help us reflect on the love, forgiveness and eternal life offered to us by the Risen Christ who transforms us with the breath of God’s Holy Spirit.



Please stay after the service to enjoy a meal in our Fellowship Hall. Our Worship Committee will serve heart-shaped cookies, soups, Gondolas, and beverages. Please make plans to attend our Ash Wednesday Service on March 5th at 5:00 p.m. in our sanctuary and then enjoy good food with good companionship in our Fellowship Hall afterward.

### A Lenten Sermon Series . . . by Pastor Tom

The season of Epiphany ends with Transfiguration Sunday, the time we celebrate the mystery that the light of God shown through the face of Jesus Christ. The next weekend, we celebrate the first Sunday of Lent, and I begin a five-week Lenten sermon series: “**Parables: Stories from Jesus.**” This is the agenda of our 2025 Lenten sermon series:



<u>Dates:</u>	<u>Scriptures:</u>	<u>Them</u>
March 9, 2025	Luke 13:1–9	The Parable of the Barren Fig Tree
March 16, 2025	Matthew 20:1–16	The Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard
March 23, 2025	Luke 15:11–20	The Story of the Younger Son
March 30, 2025	Luke 15:11–24	The Story of the Father Calling for Celebration
April 6, 2025	Luke 15:25–32	The Story of the Elder Son

A parable is a unique form of literature that’s always trying to subvert business as usual by undoing our reliance on what we think is logical. Yet we typically do not let parables do that for us. Our ego is so in control that we try to figure them out inside of our existing consciousness – or, more commonly, we just ignore them or consider them out of date. Parables aim to subvert our old consciousness and offer us a way through by utterly reframing our worldview.

Jesus often used parables to discuss the “Reign” of God. Mostly, Jesus told parables to describe the nature of God.

# February 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				<b>6</b> Worship Cmte 10A-FH  Outreach 11A-FH  TOPS#559 5:15P-Isaiah	7	8
<b>9</b> <b>Second Sunday</b> <b>Food Pantry</b>  Worship 10:15A	<b>10</b> Trustees 11A-GH	<b>11</b> CCIW Ethics Training: 9A-GH  CWF 9:30A-FH	<b>12</b> Choir-6:30P	<b>13</b> TOPS#559 5:15P-Isaiah	<b>14</b> 	15
<b>16</b> <b>Week of</b> <b>Compassion</b> <b>Begins</b> Worship 10:15A	<b>17</b> PRC 12P-Isaiah	18	<b>19</b> L/M clergy Cluster: 9A-GH  Choir-6:30P	<b>20</b> Monthly Prayer Service: 5P-FH  TOPS#559 5:15P-Isaiah  Book Club 6:30P	21	22
<b>23</b> <b>Loose Change</b> <b>Offering</b>  Worship 10:15A	24	<b>25</b> Elders 6:30P-FH	<b>26</b> Bridge 12P-GH  Choir-6:30P	<b>27</b> Ladies Luncheon 11:30A  TOPS#559 5:15P-Isaiah  Men's Dinner 6P-	28	March 1



## Homecoming Weekend

Saturday, August 16—Sunday, August 17

Our theme will be “*Welcome Home*”. This will be an opportunity to reconnect with some of our former members and pastors and reach out to new people in the community as well!



**Prayer Request**

Please pray for Barb Leach as she is currently in Goldwater Care undergoing therapy to mend a broken ankle. May Frank be aware of God's care and support for him as he is homebound.

**Continuing Prayers**

Susie Hallahan, Quinton, Janis, Paul Dawson, Janice, Sarah Hiatt, Susie, Western North Carolina, Nathan, Hope's baby August, Debbie Holiday, Sisters Kelly Bestful and Lisa Behl Tim, Kris Carius, Leonard Bates, Greg Firkus and Pat Murphy, Charlie Middleton, James, Neil, Cameron Cook, Jackie Steinhilber, Megan Brown, Mannie Martinez, Ann Burmaster, Ron Geske, Pam, Dick Tarter, Scott Griffith, Jessica, Marsha, Linda and Pete Rasmussen, Fern Scaggs

**At Home/Assisted Living**

At home-Doris Miller, Frieda Foland; The Pointe, Pontiac-Rae Geske;

**Nursing Home**

The Arc-Rev. Barbara Short, Don Short; Westminster-Anita Poling; Earl McIntyre; Evergreen Village-Pat Iliff; Hopedale Nursing Home-Dick Tarter; Accolade, Pontiac-Ron Geske;

**Military**

Mark Brienen, Keyla Folsom, Troy Guyran, Benjamin Horn, Michael Iverson, John Thomas, Darrell Walton, Glen Whitecotton, Christopher Wilson-Poston

<b>February Birthdays and Anniversaries</b>	
Earl McIntyre	02/13
<b>Jack and Janet Keefe</b>	<b>02/17</b>
Beth Rupe	02/18
<b>Sue and Randy Miller</b>	<b>02/20</b>

**Our challenge for the week –  
Pray this prayer every day –**

Loving God, may I see your mercy and favor upon me today. I entrust my life to your care and compassion. Even in my weakness you draw near to me for nothing can separate us from your love.  
[Wait and listen.]