



In the Loop

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

February 8, 2024
<https://www.centennialcc.org>
email: people@centennialcc.org

Listening and Talking . . . by Rev. Tom Cici

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 new five-week sermon series: **“Recognizing Our Spiritual Gifts.”** This is the agenda of our new sermon series:

<u>Dates:</u>	<u>Scriptures:</u>	<u>Themes:</u>
Feb 18, 2024	Acts 8:26–40	Philip Baptizes an Ethiopian Eunuch
Feb 25, 2024	Exodus 18:10–24	Jethro’s Advice Accepted by Moses
March 03, 2024	John 12:1–9	Sisters Serve Dinner to Jesus
March 10, 2024	Acts 6:1–8	Seven Chosen to Serve
March 17, 2024	Ruth 2:1–16	Ruth Gleans in the Fields

Let’s suppose that you and I are really used margarine containers. Has anyone ever called you a margarine bowl? I didn’t think so. But I want you to pretend that you are a used margarine container. Do you have any margarine bowls at home? What do you use them for? Personally, I keep old screws and nails in one container! In another one there are string, washers, pitcher hangers and junk! Just suppose that you are one of God’s plastic containers, and God has chosen you to carry something around. What do you suppose God would put in you if you were one of God’s old plastic containers?

Well, the truth of the matter is that God thinks you are a pretty nice margarine container! If we open the plastic container, and pretend that this is really you, we will find that God’s loving and merciful Spirit – the same Spirit that is in Christ – is in you. In other words, we will find out that all of God’s precious jewels are inside of you. Wow, what an ole margarine container! We can call God’s precious jewels – “Spiritual Gifts.”

Our Creator trusts us with the very best that God creates. Of course, God doesn’t actually put jewels and money inside of us, but God trusts us with the very best – we call them “spiritual gifts” or talents that allow each one of us to reflect God’s love according to our individually unique passions that God has put in us.

Some of us have spiritual gifts of playing musical instruments, singing, acting, writing scripts, encouraging others, preaching, teaching, leadership, mentoring and gardening. Some of us have spiritual gifts of mathematics, computer science, crafts, sewing, art, cooking, cleaning, tutoring and building things. As you can see, the list of spiritual gifts is endless. God now asks us to share what we have with our neighbors and creation.



May the One Spirit speak to and through you as we journey together.



Ash Wednesday Service and Meal February 14, 2024-5PM

Realizing that Ash Wednesday falls on the same day as Valentine's Day this year, 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 February 14th 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, chili, Gondolas, and beverages. Please make plans to attend our Ash Wednesday Service on February 14 at 5:00 p.m. in our sanctuary, and then enjoying good food with good companionship in our Fellowship Hall afterward.



Pastor Classes

"Pastor Class" is a series of three or four sessions offered by the pastor to help the candidate prepare for their baptism. During the sessions, we review some scriptures referring to baptism, how to notice the Holy Spirit working in their life, their identity as a daughter or son of God, and what it means to be a member of the Christian Church. Basically, we discuss what baptism is all about, why a Christian would want to get baptized, and how the person will be baptized. We then tie baptism to Holy Communion.

If any youth or adult feels God's Spirit calling them to make preparations for their baptism on this Easter Sunday (March 31), please contact Pastor Tom by Sunday, February 18. You can see him after worship service on Sundays or call the church office (309) 828-2185 or Tom's cell phone: 765-541-0611. We would love to accompany your schedule and tailor baptismal instructions according to your needs.

Seeking God's Vision for Our Church

Our Elders need your assistance in seeking a God-directed vision for our faith community. Elders would greatly appreciate you attending one of these small group sessions to discuss when you felt most connected to God and this church in the past, what gifts or passions you would like to share with this faith community, and what you think God is calling this congregation to do in the near future. Please plan to participate in one of these four sessions:

Thursday, January 29, 2024 beginning 6:30 P.M.

Sunday, March 3rd after Worship service (Lunch available)

Sunday, March 10th after Worship service (Lunch available)

Monday, March 18 beginning 10:00 A.M.

Signup sheets for these small group sessions (with 10 participants per session) will be available outside the main doors of our sanctuary. Questions for our discussion groups will also be available. These questions are enjoyable, exciting, and inspirational when shared in a group. If you are unable to attend any of these small sessions, please answer the discussion questions, and forward them to the church office by April 7, 2024.

Elders will review all of your vision ideas from these sessions and look at all the written answers to our discussion questions at an Elder's Retreat on April 19 and 20, 2024. There, at Walter Scott Camp and Learning Center, they will draft a "preferred future story," a short vision statement, and a three-year ministry plan. Revisions and final approval will be sought from the Church Board and the entire congregation



**Ladies Luncheon
January 25, 2024**

At
Garden of Paradise



**Men's Dinner
January 25, 2024**

Bent School Annual School Supply Collection January 29-February 29

Outreach Supporting Bent School with Your Help!

February 2024, we will be collecting items to support Bent School. Along with sanitizing items, they have requested the following:

- Paper towels
- Pencils
- Paper/plastic cups
- Goo Gone
- Bookmarks
- Pencil erasers
- Expo Markers
- Glue sticks
- Composition notebooks
- Travel size deodorant
- Feminine products for girls



Your previous support over the years to Bent School has been a blessing to the children, and we look forward to supporting them again this year!

Please put your items in the bin located by the upstairs elevator door.

Your Outreach committee Thanks you for your support!

February 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
4 Adult Bible Study 9A-FH Worship *10:15A	5	6	7 Adult Bible Study 10:30A-FH Bridge 12P-GH Choir 6:30P	8 TOPS#559 5:15P-Isaiah	9	10
11 Second Sunday Food Pantry Adult Bible Study 9A-FH Worship *10:15A	12 Trustees 11A-GH	13 CWF 9:30A-FH	14 Adult Bible Study 10:30A-FH Bridge 12P-GH Ash Wed. Service and meal 5P- Choir 6:30P	15 Worship Mtg. 9:30A-FH TOPS#559 5:15P-Isaiah Book Club 6:30P @ Davis	16	17
18 Week of Compassion begins Adult Bible Study 9A-FH Worship *10:15A	19	20	21 Adult Bible Study 10:30A-FH Bridge 12P-GH Choir 6:30P	22 Ladies Luncheon 11A TOPS#559 5:15P-Isaiah Men's Dinner 6P-Bandana's	23	24
25 Week of Compassion Ends Loose Change Offering Adult Bible Study 9A-FH Worship *10:15A	26 PRC 12P-Isaiah	27 Elders 6:30P-FH	28 Adult Bible Study 10:30A-FH Bridge 12P-GH Choir 6:30P	29 TOPS#559 5:15P-Isaiah	March 1	2

*Online worship <https://www.facebook.com/pg/centennialcc.org>

FH-Fellowship Hall GH-Great Hall

In the Loop Submissions

In order to get the newsletter out in a timely fashion, I am asking that any information you would like included in the newsletter be given to me by the Wednesday morning before. I cannot guarantee anything after that time will be included.

The newsletter goes out every two weeks. The next "In the Loop" will go out on Thursday, February 22. I will need all information by Wednesday morning, February 21.



Prayer Requests

Ben, son of neighbor of Diane Andres, is having surgery Friday. Pray for a good outcome and strength and healing.

Angie Simpson, Sue's daughter, will be going to Mayo's in Rochester, MN for further testing. Please pray that God inspires her medical teams, here and in MN, to find healing for Angie's heart issues.

Cameron Cook, Sue's grandson, has moved to N.H. where his Father's family resides. Please pray that Cameron experiences love and harmony wherever he goes.

Continuing Prayers

Karen Middleton, Don Short, Brenda (mother of Sammy), Brandy Stanton, Henry Middleton, Jackie Steinhilber, Marla Gaines-Starke, Kip Hayden, Sara Hiatt, Heather Hall, Megan Brown, Mannie Martinez, Chuck Marseilles, Sr., Gery Conlin, Leonard Bates, Ann Burmaster, Caitlyn, Cole, Jacque Carter, Ron Geske, Pam, Ruth Ann Lowder, Dick Tarter, Scott Griffith, Janet Keefe, Jessica, Marsha, Deirdre Nehrt, Pete Rasmussen, Robin, Fern Scaggs, Amalie Schmidt, Tammy, Marian Wrinkle

At Home/Assisted Living

Myerling Home-Ruth Roley; At home-Doris Miller; The Pointe (Pontiac) Rae Ann Geske

Nursing Home

The Arc-Tom (Billy) Robey, Rev. Barbara Short, Don Short; Westminster-Anita Poling; Martin Health—Ruth Ann Lowder, Earl McIntyre; Evergreen Village-Pat Iliff; Hopedale Nursing Home-Dick Tarter; Accolade (Pontiac)-Ron Geske; Bickford House - Pryscilla (Pryl) Stam

Military

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

Prayers for CCIW congregations and ministries: FCC Mt. Sterling, New Beford CC, FCC Walnut

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

Loving and merciful God, we know for certain that you are in our lives on good days. Help us to see your presence on really hard days as well. Guide us in always being humble, caring and merciful toward others.
[Wait in the silence. Listen and receive.]

February Birthdays and Anniversaries

Audrey Harp	02/06
Earle McIntyre	02/08
Jack and Janet Keefe	02/17
Beth Rupe	02/18
Sue and Randy Miller	02/20