



THE OUTLOOK

Central United Methodist Church

Volume 126 Issue 2

Staying “Focused” in 2026

~Juanita Joiner

Besides picking a new word for the year in January, it's also my tradition to go back and read my February lead article from the previous year. I picked four words last year...*Being Salt and Light!* In that article I placed a quote: “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.”

So, my question for you this year is this: How were YOU salt? How were YOU light? How were YOU these four words for Central? Our visitors? Our neighbors? Our community?

As I spent time thinking about my word for 2026, I decided to get inspiration by listening to my favorite piece of music. It's a piece I've written about in the past...*Gabriel's Oboe*. This time when I searched for a new recording, I literally was stopped in my tracks when I clicked “play” on the YouTube. This is by far the best recording I've ever heard. Perhaps you too will want to listen. You can find that recording [HERE](#). It will be 3 minutes you won't regret!

Gabriel's Oboe is the main musical theme in the movie “The Mission.” The basic themes of “The Mission” revolve around faith vs. violence, redemption, and the conflict between spiritual ideals and political reality, exploring how individuals and the Church grapple with protecting indigenous people from the exploitation by Spanish/Portuguese empires, highlights sacrifice, love, and the struggle for dignity against overwhelming power. Further research found that the composer and vocal artist, Sarah Brightman, together put words to that haunting melody *after* the movie had been released. Their lyrics nailed my word for 2026. You will find the text in the box below. Gabriel's Oboe represents the power of music, of faith, and of love that will bridge cultures and disarm hostility. But the words that were later added, symbolized *empowerment* and *spiritual connection*, used to show the enduring spirit despite destruction that is happening in our world.

After knowing what Rob's sermon series would be in January, the book he would base it on, and the words written to Gabriel's Oboe, I had my word! My word is also *perfect* for our church...a church embracing immigration.

FOCUS is my word for 2026. This word would serve as a powerful anchor for setting my goals, aligning my energy, and making decisions by emphasizing priorities and eliminating noise, making it highly relevant for me personally. I liked the word so much that I decided to make a list...I called it my 26 for 2026. I started listing my 26 areas I personally wanted to “focus” on during 2026. As I started making my list, I realized that I was not only focusing on me, but on our church and the areas we as a church already had on our “Vision Roadmap for 2026”. Here's that list: Intentionally *invite* and *include* Nelson Neighborhood Improvement Association, *ask* community partners how to use our space, *create* new energy in worship; *be present, visible and welcoming*; *addressing* our needs, resources, relationships, and communication; *being* a spiritual hub, and *partnering* with our diverse community. Perhaps you too would like to “focus” on things this year that not only include you, but our church, and yes, our world that is totally plagued with hate and so much unrest.

Like last year, I'll leave one last thought for each of you to “chew on” personally during 2026: **“Without ‘Focus’, none of us will be on the path to what matters! Let's still be shepherds, wise men, Mary, Joseph, and Jesus for Central during 2026 ... but let's also be a Ruth, a Naomi, and a Boaz for our church, for our world, and for ourselves.”**

In my imagination I see a fair world.
Everyone there lives in peace and honesty.
I dream of people that are always free,
Like the clouds that fly,
Full of kindness inside the soul.

In my imagination I see a clear world.
Even the night is less dark there.
I dream of people that are always free,
Like the clouds that fly,
Full of kindness inside the soul.

In my imagination there's a warm wind,
That blows over towns, like a friend.
I dream of people that are always free,
Like the clouds that fly,
Full of kindness inside the soul.

Mission Possible for February 2026 (Weekly offerings)

♥ Mission of the Month

MI Area UMC Camping and Camp Scholarships

This is your opportunity to help us support the church camp program and provide scholarships to those who wish to attend. Camping makes a huge difference in the life of a young person's life.

♥ Helping Hand Fund

(Supporting people in need.)

Mission Accomplished December 2025

Mission of the Month

Heifer International \$830.10

Helping Hand Fund \$2,588.10

Helping Hand Support Given During December

Gas Cards

\$50.00

Thank you for helping us "Build
Love" at Central.



Hope Project has reached out to us with another challenge. During the month of February they would like to see if we could donate a total of 150 of any of these items: laundry pods, dish soap, diverse hair care, conditioner (full size), toilet paper, shampoo (full size), lotion/moisturizer (full size), and body wash (full size).

We did great with the successful Yam challenge; let's see if we can also reach this new challenge! A container will be in the narthex for you to drop off your items.

Thank you, Carol



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

Continuing in February!

Join us for a Congregational Conversation on Immigration
Worship Series on [The God Who Sees](#): Immigrants, the Bible,
and the Journey to Belong by Karen Gonzalez

Discussion in the Chapel at 11:00 a.m. using
a [Study Guide for Vital Conversations on Immigration](#)
by the United Methodist Commission on Religion and Race

Remaining Schedule

Sunday, February 1

Worship: The God Who Sees, Chapter 3 (and 4)

Vital Conversation: Session 2

Sunday, February 15

Worship: The God Who Sees, Chapter 5 (and 6)

Vital Conversation: Session 3

Sunday, March 1

Worship: The God Who Sees, Chapter 7 (and 8)

Vital Conversation: Session 4

Sunday, March 15

Worship: The God Who Sees, Chapter 9 (and 10)

Vital Conversation: Session 5

Journey with us as we all seek a place to belong...

Beyond the Walls and Mix & Match Teams Are Keeping Busy

The Beyond the Walls team was granted a \$500 gift card from Meijer Stores to purchase items for our Homeless Blessing Boxes, which we have placed outside the church. Miquelle worked with Meijer to help us receive this generous gift. We would like to thank Miquelle and Meijer stores for working with us to help the homeless and people in need in our area. This will go a long way toward ensuring they have the items they need to stay warm and healthy this winter. We will use it to help purchase items such as gloves, hats, toiletries, etc.

If you would like to donate to the Beyond the Walls team for this mission, you can give a financial donation directly to the church. Please designate the gift to the Beyond the Walls team. We will also take new or gently used clean gloves, socks, hats, etc. New individual toiletries such as toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, deodorant, feminine hygiene products, lip balm, band-aids, etc., are also needed. We are packing these up weekly and putting them in the boxes for individuals to take as needed. We will put out a collection box in the church for you to drop off these items as you bring them in.

Thank you so much for your help with this project. Keith and Liz

The Mix and Match Team would like to encourage each you to save a date and also give support to our neighbors at The Corner. On Saturday, March 14, they will be presenting "The Jungle Book", with showtimes at 4 and 7 PM. More details and ticket prices will be available in the near future. We think this is a perfect time to not only show our support, but help fill their auditorium.

~Julie and Katie

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

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 1 — Donna Cotton, Josie Terpstra
- 4 — Carolyn Buboltz, Nathaniel Cotton
- 8 — Billie Joy Thomas
- 12 — Kip Smith
- 15 — Dorothy Argue
- 16 — Nicholas Lundholm
- 17 — Jon Newman
- 20 — Vallerie Clark
- 21 — Miguelle Newman



FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

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

A huge thank you is in order for everyone who participated in preparing this church family and building for Advent and Christmas. A LOT of effort went into decorating the building, hosting the community for the Cookie Crawl, practicing and preparing for the Advent and Christmas Eve services, and finally, in getting everything safely put away for another year. All these tasks were completed with joy and teamwork. **Thank you, Julie**



United Women in Faith Thanks you all for shopping the "Mission Mall" before Christmas. While there is no active Unit or Circle of United Women in Faith at this time, there still is financial mission support that we still pay. Our payment was sent in early December to the Western Waters District Treasurer. If there is interest in starting a Circle at Central, the outgoing president was offered as a person to talk with us if we are thinking about it. Interested? See Erika who still is the secretary-treasure for Central.

Experience Clearer Sound in the Sanctuary Using AudioFetch!

1. Connect to our Guest WiFi (Password: Welcome!)
 2. Download the AudioFetch App (Apple and Android)
 3. Connect your hearing aids or headphones to your phone or tablet.
 4. Open the AudioFetch App and start listening!
- Works GREAT!**
Click [HERE](#) to learn how to setup and use this app.

Church Office Hours

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

FEBRUARY CALENDAR

- 1 — Worship 9:30 a.m. (In-Person & Virtual)
Holy Communion
Conversations on Immigration 11:00 a.m. (Chapel)
- 2 — Joy Bells 5:30 p.m. (Choir Room)
Vocal Ensemble Rehearsal 6:30 p.m. (Choir Room)
- 3 — MAP Clothing Pantry 12:30 p.m. (Temple UMC)
- 4 — Staff Mtg. 11:00 a.m. (Conference Room)
Going Deeper 1:00 p.m. (Conference Room)
- 5 — Blood Drive 11:00 a.m. (Lower Level)
MAP Clothing Pantry 12:30 p.m. (Temple UMC)
- 8 — Worship 9:30 a.m. (In-Person & Virtual)
Beyond The Walls (packing) 11:00 a.m. (Parish Hall)
- 9 — Mobile Food Pantry 4:30 p.m. (CUMC Parking Lot)
Joy Bells 5:30 p.m. (Choir Room)
Vocal Ensemble Rehearsal 6:30 p.m. (Choir Room)
- 12 — Romeo's 8:30 a.m. (Carmen's Café)
Juliet's 9:00 a.m. Cherokee Restaurant
- 15 — Worship 9:30 a.m. (Sanctuary)
Conversations on Immigration 11:00 a.m. (Chapel)
- 16 — Joy Bells 5:30 p.m. (Choir Room)
Vocal Ensemble Rehearsal 6:30 p.m. (Choir Room)
- 17 — Outlook Deadline 8:00 a.m.
Book Club 10:00 a.m. (Library)
Building Team Mtg. 11:00 a.m. (Conference Room)
Planned Giving Mtg. 5:15 p.m. (Conference Room)
Finance Team Mtg. 6:16 p.m. (Conference Room)
- 18 — Going Deeper 1:00 p.m. (Conference Room)
Ash Wednesday Service 7:00 p.m. (Sanctuary)
- 19 — Blood Drive 11:00 a.m. (Lower Level)
- 22 — Worship 9:30 a.m. (In-Person & Virtual)
- 23 — Joy Bells 5:30 p.m. (Choir Room)
- 24 — Outlook Mailed 9:00 a.m.
Mix & Match Team Meeting 11:00 a.m. (Library)
- 25 — Leadership Council Mtg. 5:30 p.m. (Conference Room)
- 26 — Volunteer at KFB 10:00 a.m. (2330 Barclay St.)

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 17**. Thank you!

LOOKING AHEAD TO LENT

You will want to attend our Ash Wednesday Service this year.
Mark your calendars NOW!

