



*Central and Algonquin United
Methodist Churches*

Sunday, March 15, 2026

With Pastor Marty Johnston

Mission Statement:

**Connecting all people to God by building bridges
of caring, outreach, and acceptance.**

Central United Methodist
Pastor Marty Johnston
March 15, 2026
Liturgical Colors: Purple
Fourth Sunday in Lent
CCLI License# 3999519

Ushers/Greeters: Norb Bennin, Josh Greenburg
Liturgist: Kathy Bankson

PRELUDE “Resignation” setting by J. McCarthy

CHOIR INTROIT “Lead Me Lord” Psalms 5:8/S. S. Wesley

WELCOME/MISSION STATEMENT

Connecting all people to God by building bridges of
caring, outreach, and acceptance

***Call to Worship:** (Inspired by Psalm 23)

Leader: Friends, whether this week led you through green pastures
or shadowed valleys, you are not here by accident.

People: The Lord is our Shepherd; we shall not want.

Leader: When we are weary, God gives us rest. When we are
scattered, God restores us.

People: He leads us beside still waters; He restores our souls.

Leader: When the path is uncertain and the valley feels dark—

People: Even though we walk through the valley of the shadow of
death, we will fear no evil.

Leader: Why?

People: For You are with us.

Leader: In a world filled with fear, blame, and division—

People: You prepare a table before us.

Leader: Surely goodness and mercy are not behind us, but with us
even now.

People: And we will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Leader: Come, then, and worship the Shepherd who walks with us.

*OPENING HYMN

“Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us”

UMH 381

SAVIOR, LIKE A SHEPERD LEAD US

*PASTOR’S OPENING PRAYER *

You are our Shepherd, and we come needing Your guidance.

Some of us feel steady. Some of us feel lost. Some of us see clearly.
Others are still walking in shadow.

As we journey toward the cross, open our eyes. Where we have
blamed, give us compassion. Where we have been proud, give us
humility. Where we have been blind, give us sight.

Restore our souls. Lead us in Your truth. And help us see Your glory
at work among us.

Through Christ, the Light of the world.
Amen.

TIME FOR YOUNG CHRISTIANS

INTRODUCTION TO SCRIPTURE READING:

Today's Gospel reading is the entire ninth chapter of John — forty-one verses telling one powerful story.

Rather than read every verse, we're going to listen to the key moments — the healing itself, the questions that follow, and the final encounter between Jesus and the man whose sight was restored.

As we listen, remember: this isn't just a story about blindness and sight.

It's about assumptions.

It's about blame.

It's about courage.

And it's about what happens when the Light of the world steps into human darkness.

Notice how the man's understanding grows.

Notice how others respond.

And perhaps ask yourself:

Where do I see myself in this story?

Hear now the Gospel of our Lord from John, chapter 9.

FIRST SCRIPTURE READING John 9: 1-41

1 Now as *Jesus* passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. ² And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

³ Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him. ⁴ I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; *the* night is coming when no one can work. ⁵ As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

- 6 When He had said these things, He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. 7 And He said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam”. So he went and washed, and came back seeing.
- 8 Therefore the neighbors and those who previously had seen that he was blind said, “Is not this he who sat and begged?”
- 9 Some said, “This is he.” Others *said*, “He is like him.” He said, “I am *he*.”
- 10 Therefore they said to him, “How were your eyes opened?”
- 11 He answered and said, “A Man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, ‘Go to the pool of Siloam and wash.’ So I went and washed, and I received sight.”
- 12 Then they said to him, “Where is He?” He said, “I do not know.”
- 13 They brought him who formerly was blind to the Pharisees. 14 Now it was a Sabbath when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. 15 Then the Pharisees also asked him again how he had received his sight. He said to them, “He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and I see.”
- 16 Therefore some of the Pharisees said, “This Man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath.” Others said, “How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?” And there was a division among them.
- 17 They said to the blind man again, “What do you say about Him because He opened your eyes?” He said, “He is a prophet.”
- 18 But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind and received his sight, until they called the parents of him who had received his sight. 19 And they asked them, saying, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?”
- 20 His parents answered them and said, “We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; 21 but by what means he now sees we do not know, or who opened his eyes we do not know. He is of age; ask him. He will speak for himself.” 22 His parents said these *things* because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had agreed

already that if anyone confessed *that* He *was* Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue. ²³ Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”

²⁴ So they again called the man who was blind, and said to him, “Give God the glory! We know that this Man is a sinner.”

²⁵ He answered and said, “Whether He is a sinner *or not* I do not know. One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see.”

²⁶ Then they said to him again, “What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?”

²⁷ He answered them, “I told you already, and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear *it* again? Do you also want to become His disciples?”

²⁸ Then they reviled him and said, “You are His disciple, but we are Moses’ disciples. ²⁹ We know that God spoke to Moses; *as for this fellow*, we do not know where He is from.”

³⁰ The man answered and said to them, “Why, this is a marvelous thing, that you do not know where He is from; yet He has opened my eyes! ³¹ Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him. ³² Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind. ³³ If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing.”

³⁴ They answered and said to him, “You were completely born in sins, and are you teaching us?” And they cast him out.

³⁵ Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said to him, “Do you believe in the Son of God?”

³⁶ He answered and said, “Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?”

³⁷ And Jesus said to him, “You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you.”

³⁸ Then he said, “Lord, I believe!” And he worshiped Him.

³⁹ And Jesus said, “For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind.”

40 Then *some* of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these words, and said to Him, “Are we blind also?”

41 Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, ‘We see.’ Therefore your sin remains.

Leader: The Word of God for the People of God

All: Thanks be to God

CHOIR ANTHEM “Savior, Like A Shepherd Lead Us” Thrupp / Roberts

SERMON Seeing Through the Light

Big Idea: When Jesus, the Light of the world, enters our story, He doesn't just heal what is broken — He reveals what we could not see before.

INVITATION TO OFFERING

As people who have received God's light and grace, we now return a portion of what we have been given in gratitude and trust.

OFFERTORY “ Reflection” M. Hayes

DOXOLOGY

UMH 95
OLD HUNDREDTH

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise him, all creatures here below;
Praise him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Gracious God, receive these gifts and use them to bring light, hope, and healing to Your world. May what we offer today help others see Your love more clearly through the work of Your Church. Amen.

HYMN

“Open My Eyes, That I May See”

UMH 454

OPEN MY EYES, THAT I MAY SEE

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE,

Leader: Lord, in your Mercy

All: Hear our prayer.

Trusting the God who opens blind eyes, who brings light into our darkness, and who reveals His mercy through the cross, let us pray for the Church, the world, and all who are in need.

For the Church

Light of the world, guide Your Church to walk in humility and truth. Help us see clearly, love generously, and bear witness to Your grace in all we do.

Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

For the World

God of peace, where conflict and violence threaten the lives of many, bring wisdom and restraint to leaders and hope to those who suffer. We pray especially for peaceful resolution to the wars in Europe and in the Middle East.

Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

For Creation

Creator God, open our eyes to the beauty and fragility of the earth You have made. Teach us to care for it faithfully and to live with gratitude for Your gifts.

Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

For Our Community and Congregation

Faithful Shepherd, walk with our community through every valley and every joy. Give us eyes to see one another with compassion and hearts ready to serve.

Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

For Those in Need

Compassionate Christ, draw near to all who suffer in body, mind, or spirit. Bring healing to the sick, comfort to the grieving, and light to those who feel lost in darkness.

Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

For Ourselves

Gracious God, where we are certain, give us humility; where we are confused, give us clarity; and where we are blind to Your work, open our eyes again.

Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

Pastor:

Into Your hands, O Lord, we place all for whom we pray, trusting not in our goodness but in Your mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray:

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS – March 15, 2026

There will be a Mission Meeting following worship today in downstairs lounge, grab a coffee and treat and join us.

Administration Board Meeting is rescheduled for March 22nd following worship, so please grab your coffee and treat, then join the meeting in the library.



Final Day for Easter Flower Orders. Flowers will be displayed during Easter Sunday Service. The order form & payment may be placed in the offering plate. **Deadline is today Sun., Mar. 15th**, also please plan to take your plant(s) after Easter service.

Save the Date

Mon., Mar., 16th – Rebecca Circle meeting at 1:30pm

Wed., Mar. 18th - Family Night at CUMC Fellowship Hall @ 5:30 PM – 7 PM. Come enjoy a tasty dinner, fun activities, and a meaningful lesson for all ages. Bring the whole family—everyone is welcome!

Sun., Mar. 29th – Palm Sunday

Thur., Apr. 2nd – Maundy Thursday, 6:30pm at Algonquin UMC

Fri., Apr. 3rd – Good Friday Community Services at the Presbyterian Church is (tentatively 1:00pm)

Sun., Apr. 5th – Easter Sunday breakfast will be at CUMC in the Fellowship Hall @ 9:15 AM.

The Mission/Outreach in coordination with our children will be making **Blessing Bags** for homeless. We will also include a note of encouragement from United Methodist Church. The Salvation Army will be keeping them to offer anyone who may need them.

Here are some ideas for items we wish to include.

Examples: (please buy travel or small sizes) deodorant, ChapStick, shaving cream and razors, band aids, instant oatmeal, trail mix, wool socks, hat, scarf, travel mug. If you wish to donate a gift card, we can purchase the items needed. Please pass that to either Kathy (in office), or Diane Bell....thank you.

We already have plenty of combs, toothbrushes, toothpaste and dental floss that has been graciously donated

There will be a white basket for the items donated located upstairs outside the office, under the Church bulletin board.

**Join us for Bible Study, led by Raymond Bell,
every Sunday at 9:30 AM in the CUMC lounge
We are presently studying "The Chosen" - season 5**

Central Birthday/Anniversary

Mar., 11th – Mallory Baier

Mar., 17th – Kathy Bankson

Mar., 21st – Paul Aikins

Mar., 23rd – Tom Brown

Mar., 18th – Kathy & Kevin Larson (31st)



Nursery is available for infants through age 3 during worship with Mallory Baier. The nursery is located downstairs, and ushers will be happy to assist you.

***CLOSING HYMN**

"In the Cross of Christ I Glory"

UMH 295

IN THE CROSS OF CHRIST I GLORY

BENEDICTION

CHORAL BENEDICTION

"The King of Love My Sheperd Is"

Baker / Irish Melody

POSTLUDE

"O Waly Waly"

setting by J. Mccarthy