



CENTRAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Weekly Newsletter June 21, 2021

Join us for worship Sunday, June 27th @ 10:30am. Pastor Jack's message is "Within Shouting Distance," based on Psalm 130.

Worship will be in-person as well as Livestreamed.

From your computer or smartphone, watch at [facebook.com/waterfordcumc/live](https://www.facebook.com/waterfordcumc/live) or at [facebook.com/waterfordcumc/events](https://www.facebook.com/waterfordcumc/events).

Dear Friends,

June is typically a time for celebrations in the church and really for a lot of communities and organizations. It's the beginning of summer and the warm weather beckons us to outdoor activities and gatherings. Those gatherings are really important as we emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic. As Ecclesiastes 3:5 states, there is "a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing." We have refrained from embracing for a long time and I, for one, am ready to embrace my family and friends once again. Yesterday, I was saying goodbye to my nephew and niece. My nephew is very tall and embracing is awkward, so often a handshake is how we say hello and goodbye. My niece is a hugger and she put out her hand for a handshake and my face must have portrayed my confusion. She laughed and said, "I just wanted to see what you'd do, Uncle Jack!" We laughed and hugged.

As we gather for many celebrations during this time of year, from graduation parties to various recitals, end-of-the-school-year programs and Father's Day cookouts, I am mindful of some celebrations that are not happening. We typically celebrate our music ministry during one Sunday in June at Central Church, however, we have had recorded music for over a year now in our efforts to keep everyone safe. With the exception of a small bell choir, our choirs have not met in over a year. We usually have an end-of-year potluck gathering and, no doubt, some would prefer not having that gathering. There are some organizations that have decided to not meet for the past year and the feeling is there is no need for an end-of-year gathering/celebration.

It is my opinion that we need to plan new ways of gathering, celebrating and connecting with one another. I'm excited to plan gatherings that will mark new beginnings for our ministries and various groups. This fall ought to be awesome as we seek to reconnect!

Connecting is the issue, friends. So many times, as we have gathered online as the only way to worship, people have thanked our staff and volunteers for their work in keeping us connected. This summer will be a summer of easing restrictions and exploring ways to safely be together; to reconnect and enjoy together the same space and experience of worship and fellowship.

I want to end this letter by giving thanks for our congregation who connect and support our college students. We celebrated our high school and college grads yesterday as we also celebrated Father's Day! Eight scholarships were granted to seven students beginning and continuing their college careers. It gave me great joy to celebrate with our high school grads, who were fifth graders when I came to Central Church! It was also great to connect with our continuing college students as well.

Celebrating and connecting are crucial to having a vibrant community of faith that is thankful for the many blessings God gives to us. May God bless us as we reconnect throughout this summer! I look forward to seeing you in worship!

Because of Christ,
-Pastor Jack

Join Us Today at Hess-Hathaway

Join us this evening, Monday, June 21st at Hess-Hathaway Park Pavilion 2 from 5:00–6:30. We'll paint fish for the township's Flying Fish Art Display and hear a great Bible story. Bring a picnic or enjoy the provided healthy fruits and vegetables. Next Sunday, June 27, we'll meet after church from 10:30–1 pm on our property (playground, hill, gaga pit) and compete in a bean bag toss. Summer Socials are multi-generational events, which means everyone is welcome! Come join us tonight or Sunday and bring a friend!

Movies Under the Moonlight

Last Friday, Rev. Cora and the Little Sprouts Directors Mary and Monica interacted with our community at the Movies Under the Moonlight event organized by the Waterford Chamber of Commerce. We gave out glow sticks, had a bean bag toss, made giant bubbles, and handed out information about our church and preschool.

Thank You

Dear Central Family,

A huge thank you for expressing your care and concern with cards, emails, phone calls, offers to get groceries, notes from Purple Threads and Caring Core, and especially for all your prayers! Gil has gone from being flat on his back for 18 days in the hospital to walking short distances in his house independently! Bless you all!

With grateful hearts,
-Sue & Gil Waters

Song of the Week

I'm wishing you lots of love this week. We are all closest to our true selves when we feel the love around us, and I want that for each of you.

When talking about LGBTQIA+ issues, it is a frequent trap that the LG gets talked about while the others are lumped into the mix without full recognition. Bisexual erasure is an ongoing issue within and without the LGBTQIA+ community, so if you don't feel like you grasp the nuances of the rest, it is understandable. And it is also understandable if you have a hard time wrapping your head around the difference between gender and sexuality issues because they are so often lumped together in most people's minds, but they are very separate issues. And gender identity politics is very troubling right now, with many laws being passed to actively persecute our youth across the nation by denying them medical and mental health services. But let's start with separating the two issues a little more clearly.

The "I" stands for intersex and deals with biological sex, so it is a good place to start to understand the differences and why they are important. It is easy to think along binary lines in so many aspects of our lives, and it serves a purpose because the binary often includes most of the population, but it is not the entirety in nature, and all of the geneticists that study such things know it. We have images

Summer Socials Schedule

- **Monday 6/21**, 5-6:30pm, Hess Hathaway Park
- **Sunday 6/27**, 11:30-1pm @ CUMC
- **Sunday 7/11**, 11:30-1pm @ CUMC
- **Monday 7/19**, 5-6:30pm @ Depot Park (Clarkston)
- **Sunday 7/25**, 11:30-1pm @ CUMC
- **Monday 8/2**, 5-6:30pm @ Waterford Oaks
- **Sunday 8/8**, 11:30-1pm @ CUMC
- **Monday 8/16**, 5-6:30pm @ Indian Village Park (Pontiac)
- **Sunday 8/22**, 11:30-1pm @ CUMC



Rev. Cora ready to welcome families to Movies Under the Moonlight.



Little Sprouts Co-Director Monica Hungerford makes giant bubbles.

of male and female culturally that model our perspective powerfully, and genetically, we understand them as XY and XX chromosome pairs. However, biologically, things don't always work out so neatly. Between 1-2% of the population are born intersex, and the results range from having an extra chromosome and no other indicators to having parts opposite of their chromosomes or a mix of parts either internally or externally. And even though this wide spectrum is easy to understand, what's not is that there is such a social stigma around it that choices are made for that child as to what gender they are shortly after birth. The average age of corrective surgery for intersex individuals is 9.9 months. So, it shouldn't be surprising that when one of these individuals grows up and finds out that they were cosmetically altered to conform to a binary gender role that they didn't choose, they may not continue to identify with that role much less the fact that they were denied medical support throughout their youth for a condition that is more socially problematic than medical.

The "T" stands for transgender and deals with someone who, at minimum, identifies with a gender outside of their sex assigned at birth, but could be someone who wants to also change their body to reflect the role they identify with. For those of us who are cis-gendered (having a gender identity that aligns with our sex assigned at birth), this can sometimes be hard to fully understand. But I have good news, we don't need to. As with so many aspects of minority populations, we only have to be willing to accept that they are living their own truth. Loving them as fellow children of God means respecting their journey and that they are doing their best to be authentic, fulfilled, and accepted for whom they are. It is easy to get stuck on the binary here as well, but we are actually accustomed to murky gender roles already. We have eunuchs in ancient history, the Roman Emperor Elagabalus in the 200s A.D., Joan d'Arc as a great warrior in the 1400s, and George Sand as a writer in the 1800s. Stars like David Bowie pushed back against gender norms in the 1970s, and in December of 2020, the actor Elliot Page made his announcement and transition. (You can read more about how widespread the history of non-binary gender roles was at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transgender_history). We have encountered it more than we think, and we may even know some trans individuals, whether we realize it or not. It is common that trans men are able to move through their lives while not raising any questions about their identity, and so they don't enter into this conversation nearly as often or in the same way as trans women. Trans individuals do choose their path through a strong conviction, though, and often lose much if not all of the life they knew in order to make the change in their life. Trans youth have some of the highest rates of suicidal thoughts and attempts and victimization of physical and sexual violence. They are individuals who find resistance to their own identities from their own families and friends and often have to start anew in a new city to leave the difficulties of the past behind them. For such an extreme upheaval for these individuals, we must accept that they are living out the convictions of their spirits in pursuit of peace and happiness.

So how can we support these individuals? First, we can recognize that we are all creatures of the spirit and look past their stage of transition to accept them for whom they truly are. Second, we can practice their pronouns and ask them if we don't know which to use. They will be appreciative that we took the time to get it right and acknowledge their identity. This is a simple, but important way to show our kindness and hospitality. Third, we must let go of our awkwardness around differences of the body. Often, we are told not to stare at people who are different but don't be afraid to look, either. In the same way that we look for the soul of anyone else who is different than us, we should see a trans individual. Third, don't use their "dead name" even if you know it. This is the quickest way to destroy a safe space for a trans person. It is actively hostile to their well-being, and one of the biggest challenges when you have a trans individual as a childhood friend or family member. Lastly, like all the other minority groups I have highlighted, be a friend. More than any other population, true friends are hard to find for trans individuals. And we can be a real light to someone by practicing kindness in every interaction we have. We have no excuse if we choose to turn a blind eye to an opportunity put before us to improve someone else's life, and in my experience, trans individuals are some of the most appreciative of genuine friendships. I hope you all get the blessing of knowing someone in the trans community as more than just a statistic for the wonderful and colorful people they are.

I am including two selections this week because I think the visibility of this community and their struggle is important. The first, *Cameron*, is a song based on a true story about a trans youth. The second, *Thorn In Your Side*, is by a trans musician. I hope we can open our eyes and hearts to this community, like so many others who need our support.

[Cameron - Jillette Johnson \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5uQP7Fgk5TO\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5uQP7Fgk5TO)

[Thorn In Your Side - Namoli Brennet \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dqhAGu-lr9Y\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dqhAGu-lr9Y)

With Love,
-Kevin