



Central United Methodist Church

A Reconciling Congregation

Organized 1810—Incorporated 1822—Sanctuary completed 1867

December 25, 2022

Christmas Day



OUR WELCOMING STATEMENT

Central United Methodist Church is a Reconciling Congregation. Regardless of your race, ethnicity, immigration status, gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic situation, age, ability, belief, or background, whether you are single or partnered, you are God's beloved and you are welcome here.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

We envision Central United Methodist Church as a vital, diverse, River of Life nurtured by the light of Christ, rooted deeply in and living the scriptures, a holy presence in the center of the City of Detroit, transforming individuals, institutions, and the world, advocating peace and justice in all we do.

* Indicates when to stand, if able in body or in spirit. **Please silence cell phones.

Hymnal Guide: UMH = The United Methodist Hymnal; TFWS = The Faith We Sing;

SOZ = Songs of Zion; WS=Worship & Song

PRELUDE

Bobbi Thompson

INTROIT

Bobbi Thompson

WELCOME

ACTS OF PRAISE

***OPENING HYMN**

Joy to the World

UMH #246

1. Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King; Let every heart prepare him room, and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing, and heaven, and heaven, and nature sing.

2. Joy to the world, the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ; while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

3. No more let sins and sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground; he comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is found, far as, far as the curse is found.

4. He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the nations prove the glories of his righteousness and wonders of his love and wonders of his love and wonders, wonders of his love.

WORDS: Issac Watts, 1719; MUSIC: Arr. from G. F. Handel, 1741, by Lowel Mason, 1848; CCLI 2815228

ACTS OF SHARING

GREETING

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHILDREN'S TIME

Deaconess Anne Hillman

CALL TO CONFESSION

ONE: On a day like today we may want to skip the prayer of confession because today is a day for joy. Why should we pause to think and talk about the ways we as humans mess things up?

I get that argument. However, I also believe that the joy of this day is even more joyful when we are honest about who we are. We humans tend to be messy, scattered, and full of doubt at times. Knowing that Jesus was born in a manger for us, and that Jesus loves and forgives us, is even better news.

So let us confess together to God, knowing that the honest truth of our lives only makes this good news better.

Let us pray:

PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND WORDS OF FORGIVENESS

ONE: Holy God, too often we feel as if change is hopeless. The problems of this world feel too big, the path forward is unclear, and we are not confident that we can truly make a difference. We give up hope.

Together we pray:

ALL: Forgive us for extinguishing hope.

ONE: Holy God, too often we believe that peace is a thing of fairy tales. Our spirits are anxious. Our bodies are weary. Our world is fractured. Instead of praying for peace – both in ourselves and in our society – we assume that peace is no longer on the table. We give it up.

Together we pray:

ALL: Forgive us for extinguishing peace.

ONE: Holy God, too often we paint joy as naïve – a luxury reserved for children and pets. We forget that you ate with friends, that you went to weddings, that you laughed and rested and hiked mountains. We forget that you knew joy, and that you want joy for us in this fractured world. Forgive us for turning away from your light.

Together we pray:

ALL: Forgive us for extinguishing joy.

ONE: Holy God, too often we treat love like a vending machine. We put some coins in and assume that we'll get something back. However, in our wiser moments, we know that love is not meant for keeping score. Love is meant to overflow, to spill out to our neighbors, to transform our world. Forgive us for holding love so tightly.

Together we pray:

ALL: Forgive us for extinguishing love.

ONE: Family of faith, sin separates us from things like hope, peace, and joy. Sin wiggles its way between us and love, both love of neighbor and love of self. Fortunately for us, God had something else in mind. God sent God's only son to this world so that we could see another way. So friends, hear and believe the good news of the gospel: no matter how many times we turn our back on hope, or extinguish peace, or snuff out joy – no matter how many times we let love burn out – God continues to light our way.

We are forgiven. We are seen. We are loved. The good news of this day – the hope, the peace, the joy and the love of this day – exists for you. Thanks be to God.

ALL: Amen!

EXTENDING PASSING OF THE PEACE

HYMN *God Became Flesh with Us to Dwell* (Tune: UMH #245)

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| <p>1. From Galilee to Bethlehem, did Mary and Joseph their journey begin. Many miles from home without a room. Emmanuel came forth from Mary's womb. (Refrain)</p> | <p>2. Abiding in the fields that night, the shepherds saw a radiant light. When angels came to fill the sky breaking in to earth from heaven on high. (Refrain)</p> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

(Refrain) **Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, God became flesh with us to dwell.**

- 3. The shepherds went as the angels had said to a manger in town with hast they sped. And there as earth and heaven converged, they shared with the parents all that had occurred. (Refrain)**

INVITATION TO OFFERING

For generations and generations, it has been a Christian tradition to give gifts on Christmas. children give homemade cards, parents and friends give presents wrapped in brightly-colored paper and bows. We do this in remembrance of the Magi who gave gifts when Jesus arrived. But we also do this because we love one another, and when you love someone, it feels good to give.

So just as we give gifts to one another on Christmas morning, let us also turn that same love toward God. Let us be generous with our time, talents and treasures, because when we love someone, it feels good to give. I invite you to the offering.

OFFERTORY

*DOXOLOGY

Praise God from whom all blessings flow, Praise God all creatures here below. Praise God for all that love has done. Creator, Christ and Holy One.

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

We know that everything in this world is a gift from you, O God, so we humbly return a generous portion of these gifts to you. We pray that these gifts may help this church to change people's lives and to spread your message of peace and justice. Amen.

CREATIVE PRAYER OF THE PEOPLE

Rev. Dr. Jill Hardt Zundel

ACTS OF PROCLAMATION

POETIC READING OF

John 1:1-5

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

*CLOSING HYMN

Go, Tell It on the Mountain

UMH #251

(Refrain) **Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere, go, tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born.**

2. The shepherds feared and trembled, when lo! above the earth, rang out the angel chorus that hailed the Savior's birth. *(Refrain)*

1. While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night, behold throughout the heavens there shone a holy light. *(Refrain)*

3. Down in a lowly manger the humble Christ was born, and God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn. *(Refrain)*

BENEDICTION AND SENDING FORTH

*BENEDICTION

Rev. Dr. Jill Hardt Zundel

From generation to generation, God keeps drawing near.

From generation to generation, a light has shone in the darkness.

From generation to generation, God's love has moved through the world like our connection moved through this room. So may we celebrate that. May we rest in the joy of this day,

And may we allow it to change us.

Merry Christmas! Go in peace. God is with you every step of the way. Amen.



Please help us know you were here in worship today by scanning the QR code above with your phone. There is also a place for notes and prayer requests for the pastor.

**Central United Methodist Church
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www.centralumchurchdetroit.org**

Rev. Dr. Jill Hardt Zundel, Senior Pastor

Rev. Edwin Rowe, Pastor Emeritus

Deaconess Anne Hillman, Ph.D. Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministries

Maggie Reese, Interim Music Director & Bobbi Thompson, Accompanist & Soloist

Debra Cox, Office Administrator

Andrew Cox, Building Superintendent & Dave Wilson, Building Maintenance

Yvette Meadows and Angela Bakeley, Receptionists

This service is live-streamed under CCLI STREAM PLUS 21469425.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT STATEMENT

Central United Methodist Church acknowledges that the building in which we carry out our collective life together occupies and is built upon land that is part of what was first known as Waawiyaataanong (“At the curved shores.”), the ancestral and contemporary homeland of the Three Fires Confederacy, but which is now referred to as Detroit. In 1807 the Ojibwe, Odawa, Potawatomi, and Wyandot nations granted use of these sovereign lands to the US government through the Treaty of Detroit. Central United Methodist Church affirms the continued Indigenous sovereignty over these lands and honors all tribes with a connection to Detroit. We commit ourselves to working together with our native brothers and sisters to advance equity in all dimensions of life and to promote a better future for the earth and all its peoples. (Adopted by the Ministry Team -April 22, 2021)