



Central United Methodist Church

A Reconciling Congregation

Organized 1810—Incorporated 1822—Sanctuary completed 1867

December 5, 2021
Second Sunday of Advent

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



PRELUDE

Bobbi Thompson

INTROIT

Bobbi Thompson

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)

ACTS OF PRAISE

*CALL TO WORSHIP

ONE: If life was a home, then we would pray –

ALL: May love be the foundation. May God be the cornerstone. May the Spirit be the windows – ushering light in. And may hope be the walls – holding us together.

ONE: In this hour of worship, let us work toward building that home together.

ALL: We may not know the path ahead, but God is here, even now.

ONE: Let us give thanks for a foundation of love.

ALL: Let us worship our Holy God.

*OPENING HYMN

Soon and Very Soon

UMH #706

1. Soon and very soon, we are going to see the King; soon and very soon, we are going to see the King; soon and very soon, we are going to see the King. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! We're going to see the King.

2. No more dying there

3. No more crying there,

WORDS: Andrae Crouch, 1978; MUSIC: Andrae Crouch, 1978; © 1978 by Communique Music, Inc. / AASCAP & Crouch Music Corp. ; CCLI2815228

ACTS OF SHARING

GREETING AND WELCOME OF FIRST TIME VISITORS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING *Peace*

ONE: As we reflect on the foundation of our faith in our lives,
we gather together around the candle of peace.

ALL: The home we long for is a home that knows peace –

ONE: Peace that rests between us and our grief,

ALL: Peace around our anxiety,

ONE: Peace between us and our self-criticism.

ALL: Peace amidst our relationships,

ONE: Peace at the core of our being,

ALL: Peace hovering through and in our world.

ONE: The home we long for is a home that knows peace.

ALL: So today we light the candle of peace – as a reminder and as a prayer. Amen.

ADVENT SONG

Sung to the tune of UMH #420

1. Kindle this flame of peace. May it burn
bright and true. Lighting the way that is
of God, the journey we pursue.

2. God's realm is our desire, where peace
and justice reign. Heaven and earth
combined as one, When Christ shall come
again.

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TIME FOR CHILDREN

Deaconess Anne Hillman

CALL TO CONFESSION

ONE: In our scripture passage for today, Zechariah, a new father, speaks to his newborn son, John the Baptist, for the very first time. I want you to imagine yourself in his shoes...

What would you say to a newborn sleeping in your arms? What would you want them to know on their very first day? What would feel important?

I imagine that all of you would speak words of love.

It's impossible not to speak words of love when you're holding a baby, and yet as we grow up, that skill tends to become harder for us to practice. So let us return to our foundation – to words of love, starting with love for ourselves. Let us pray the prayer of confession together:

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Holy God,

When John was born, Zechariah leaned down and whispered words of love into his ear.

We know that you do the same for us, day in and day out, yet we fail to hear it.

We forget that in the beginning we were made good.

We doubt that we could possibly be enough.

We hustle for our self-worth and wear ourselves out aiming for perfection.

We deflect words of praise.

**We hide behind shiny first impressions.
Forgive us. Trusting our worth is the hardest job.
Open our ears as you open our hearts,
so that we might rest on the foundation of goodness you have laid for us.
Gratefully we pray, amen.**

WORDS OF FORGIVENESS

ONE: Family of faith, no matter how old we get, God continues to say to us: “You are loved; you are forgiven.” That is the foundation of our lives. That is the truth upon which we build our home. So breathe deeply. There is grace and peace there. Join me in proclaiming this good news:

ALL: We are loved. We are forgiven. We are claimed. This is our foundation. Thanks be to God! Amen.

INVITATION TO OFFERING

Zechariah gave one of the greatest gifts he could give to his son. He gave him a foundation of love – words of purpose, pride, love and belonging.

So, in turn, remembering that joyful day, we try to make a similar impact by giving what we can. And we pray that the gifts we give now – our time, our money, our talents – will be infused by the Spirit to make a more purposeful world of love and belonging that we can be proud of. So let us give now. Let this be the foundation – the very start – of a better world.

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. Amen.**

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

Holy God, You are our home. You and your goodness are the place we return to, the place we long to lay our head. So today as we offer you these gifts, we pray that you would take this offering and turn it into ministry. Use these gifts to transform the world we live in to better reflect the home you have envisioned for us – a home of peace, a home built on the foundation of love. Gratefully we pray, Amen.

SHARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

PASTORAL PRAYER

***CENTERING HYMN**

Zechariah's Lullaby

(Tune UMH #217)

**1. When old Zechariah held his baby son,
he blessed him and dreamed of what he
would become. As baby John rocked
in the temple that morn this song
Zechariah sang for his newborn.**

**3. We lay a foundation for what is to be
not knowing yet praying for what we
can't see. We trust in God's
imagination to build from blueprints
and hope for a dream yet fulfilled.**

**2. "And you child will be called a prophet
of Christ to bring hope to hearts and to
shadows the light. For God has sent
visions of what you will do. A dream to
proclaim and a world to renew."**

Music: William J. Kirpatrick (1895); Text: ©Anna Strickland
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ACTS OF PROCLAMATION

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

God, who speaks a good news language –
we admit, listening has never been our greatest gift.
We are easily distracted,
our minds run a million miles a minute.
We doubt your faith in us,
and take the easy way out when it comes to hope.
So today we bow our heads and ask for help.
Settle our minds.
Steady our breathing.
Help us to rest in you.
Help us to listen for your good news.
Gratefully we pray, Amen.

***GOSPEL LESSON**

Luke 1:57-80

from the Inclusive Bible

When the time came for Elizabeth to deliver, she gave birth to a son. When her neighbors and relatives heard that God had been merciful to her, they shared her joy. When all had assembled for the circumcision on the eighth day, they intended to name the baby after his father Zechariah. But his mother spoke up. "No, he is to be called John."

They pointed out to her, "But no one in your family has this name." Then they made signs to the father to find out what he wanted the child to be named. The father asked for a writing tablet and wrote, "His name is John." They were all astounded.

Immediately Zechariah's mouth was opened and his tongue was loosed, and he began to speak in praise of God. Their neighbors were all filled with awe, and throughout the hill country of Judea, people were talking about these events. All who heard the news stored it in their hearts and said, "What will this child turn out to be?" For God's hand was with John."

Zechariah, John's father, was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied:
"Blessed are you, the Most High God of Israel – for you have visited and redeemed your people. You have raised up a mighty savior for us of the house of David, as you promised through the mouths of your holy ones, the prophets of ancient times: salvation from our enemies and from the hands of all our foes. You have shown mercy to our ancestors by remembering the holy Covenant you made with them, the oath you swore to Sarah and Abraham, granting that we, delivered from the hands of our enemies, might serve you without fear, in holiness and justice, in your presence all our days.

And you, my child, will be called the prophet of the Most High, for you'll go before our God to prepare the way for the Promised One, giving the people the knowledge of salvation through forgiveness of their sins. Such is the tender mercy of our God, who from on high will bring the Rising Sun to visit us, to give light to those who live in darkness and the shadow of death and to guide our feet into the way of peace."

In the meantime, the child grew up and became strong in spirit. He lived out in the desert until the day he appeared openly in Israel.

ONE: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

ALL: Thanks be to God!

MESSAGE

Laying the Foundation

Rev. Dr. Jill Hardt Zundel

CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION

ONE: God be with you.

ALL: And also with you.

ONE: Lift up your hearts.

ALL: We lift them up to God.

ONE: Let us give thanks to our God.

ALL: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

ONE: Blessed are you, O God, ruler of the universe!

You draw your people to you with the promise of salvation.

In your goodness, every promise you make is fulfilled.

You delivered your people from bondage and exile,

Bringing them home and renewing their song.

When your creation was captive to sin,

You sent Christ to restore the whole world.

In your love and by your Spirit,

You have invited us in and welcomed us home

And so we thank you with the faithful of every time and place.

**ALL: Holy, holy, holy God. God of power, God of might.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is the one who comes in God's name.**

ONE: Gathering God, as grain is collected from the fields, in Christ, you draw us to Yourself; and as grapes are brought together in one cup, in this holy meal, you make us one family.
Send your Spirit upon your church that we may welcome the lost and the lonely into the household of Christ, who at supper with his disciples,
Took bread, gave thanks, broke the bread, and gave it to them saying,
"This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.
After supper he took the cup and he gave it them saying,
"This cup is the new covenant poured out for you and for all for the Forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

ALL: Christ has died, Christ is risen. Christ will come again!

ONE: God of justice, you have promised to make your home among us:
Come quickly to those who wait for you.
Raise up every head that is bent low in sin.
Lift up every heart that is bowed down in shame.
Uphold every soul that is made heavy by oppression.
Inspire every weary throat to sing of the day when justice and mercy
Will find their home in you.
Even so, Come to us, Jesus.

ALL: Amen!

CLOSING HYMN

Let There Be Peace on Earth

UMH #431

**Let there be peace on earth and let it
begin with me; Let there be peace on
earth, the peace that was meant to be.
With God our creator, children all are we.
Let us walk with each other in perfect
harmony.**

**Let peace begin with me; let this be the
moment now. With every step I take, let
this be my solemn vow; to take each
moment and live each moment in peace
eternally. Let there be peace on earth and
let it begin with me.**

BENEDICTION AND SENDING FORTH

***BENEDICTION**

Rev. Dr. Jill Hardt Zundel

As you leave *this* service, *your* service begins:

Comfort the homesick.

Open your doors to others.

Seek sanctuary.

Be brave enough to go home by another way.

And remember that here in God's house, all are welcomed – so come back soon.

In the name of our Foundation – God, Spirit and Redeemer – go in peace. Amen.

Central United Methodist Church

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