



Central United Methodist Church

A Reconciling Congregation

Organized 1810—Incorporated 1822—Sanctuary completed 1867

December 24, 2023

4th Sunday of Advent

How does a weary world rejoice? We sing songs of hope.

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.

W&S=Worship & Song Hymnal Guide: UMH = The United Methodist Hymnal.

TFWS = The Faith We Sing

PRELUDE

Bobbi Thompson

INTROIT

Augustus Williamson

***CALL TO WORSHIP** (from A Sanctified Art)

ONE: How does a weary world rejoice?

ALL: We sing songs of hope.

We allow hope to change us, to strengthen us.

We tell the stories of what could be.

We listen for God's word.

We resist the temptation to give up or give in.

We remember Mary's song.

We gather for worship.

We hope.

We hope.

Against all odds, we hope.

ONE: Friends, this is the day that the Lord is still making.

Let us worship holy God.

***OPENING HYMN**

O Come, All Ye Faithful

UMH #234

1. O come, all ye faithful joyful and triumphant, O come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem. Come and behold him, born the King of angels; (Refrain)

3. Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation; O sing, all ye citizens of heaven above! Glory to God, all glory in the highest; (Refrain)

(Refrain) **O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.**

WORDS: John F. Wade, ca. 1743; trans. by Frederick Oakeley, 1841, and others; MUSIC: John F. Wade, ca. 1743; harm. from *Collections of Motetts or Antiphons*, 1792; CCLI 2815228

ACTS OF SHARING

GREETINGS AND WELCOME OF FIRST TIME VISITORS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PASSING OF THE PEACE

Augustus Williamson

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING (from A Sanctified Art)

Indigo and Robert Kerr

ONE: How does a weary world practice love?

ALL: By sending cards and picking up the phone.

ONE: By practicing empathy, and assuming the best in others. By learning people's stories and finding common ground.

ALL: By advocating for justice, and saving a place at the table.

ONE: There are a million ways to practice love. So today we light the candle of love as a reminder and a charge.

ALL: With God's help, may we bring love into a weary world. Amen.

CHILDREN'S MOMENT

Deaconess Anne Hillman

ANTHEM

Mary, Did You Know? Arr. Jack Schrader

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

OFFERTORY

O Whisper! Whisper! By Jay Althouse



For electronic giving, please use this QR Code.

***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

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

*CENTERING HYMN

O Little Town of Bethlehem

UMH#230

1. **O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie; above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by. Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light; the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.**

2. **For Christ is born of Mary, and gathered all above, while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch wondering love. O morning stars together, proclaim the holy birth, and praises sing to God the King, and peace to all on earth!**

WORDS: Phillips Brooks, ca. 1868; MUSIC: Lewis H. Redner, 1868; CCLI 2815228

ACTS OF PROCLAMATION

*SCRIPTURE (Please Stand)

Luke 2: 1-20

In those days, Caesar Augustus published a decree ordering a census of the whole Roman world. The first census took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All the people were instructed to go back to the towns of their birth to register. And so Joseph went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to “the city of David”—Bethlehem, in Judea, because Joseph was of the house and lineage of David; he went to register with Mary, his espoused wife, who was pregnant.

While they were there, the time came for her delivery. She gave birth to her firstborn, a son; she put him in a simple cloth wrapped like a receiving blanket, and laid him in a feeding trough for cattle, because there was no room for them at the inn.

There were shepherds in the area living in the fields and keeping night watch by turns over their flock. The angel of God appeared to them, and the glory of God shone around them; they were very much afraid.

The angel said to them, “You have nothing to fear! I come to proclaim good news to you—news of a great joy to be shared by the whole people. Today in David’s city, a savior—the Messiah—has been born to you. Let this be a sign to you: you’ll find an infant wrapped in a simple cloth, lying in a manger.”

Suddenly, there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying,

“Glory to God in high heaven!

And on earth, peace to those on whom God’s favor rests.”

When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go straight to Bethlehem and see this event that God has made known to us.” They hurried and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger; once they saw this, they reported what they had been told concerning the child. All who heard about it were astonished at the report given by the shepherds.

Mary treasured all these things and reflected on them in her heart. The shepherds went away glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as they had been told.

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

ALL: **Thanks be to God.**

MESSAGE *How does a weary world rejoice? We sing songs of hope.* Rev Paul Perez

***CLOSING HYMN** *Joy to the World* UMH #246

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| <p>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.</p> | <p>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.</p> |
|---|--|

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

BENEDICTION & SENDING FORTH

BENEDICTION & SENDING FORTH

CHORAL BENEDICTION

Choir



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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Rev. Paul Perez, Lead Minister

Rev. Edwin Rowe, Pastor Emeritus
Deaconess Anne Hillman, Ph.D. Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministries
Margaret Reese, Music Director
Bobbi Thompson, Accompanist
Brandon Reeves, Choral Accompanist
Debra Cox, Office Administrator
Dave Wilson, Maintenance Manager
Yvette Meadow, Receptionist
Angela Bakeley, Receptionist

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)