



# Central United Methodist Church

## *A Reconciling Congregation*

Organized 1810—Incorporated 1822—Sanctuary completed 1867

September 15, 2024

## Seventeenth Sunday After Pentecost

### *The Big Question: Is God There?*

#### 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:  
W&S=Worship & Song, UMH = The United Methodist Hymnal, TFWS = The Faith We Sing

#### PRELUDE

Augustus Williamson  
& Guest Pianist, Melissa Coppola

The Prelude and the Postlude are times for silent prayer and meditation guided by some of our gifted musicians.

#### ACTS OF PRAISE

\***CALL TO WORSHIP** (from *Black Liturgies: Prayers, Poems and Meditations for Staying Human* by Cole Arthur Riley)

ONE: I am free to not know.

**ALL: I can rest in mystery.**

ONE: I may not know what I believe,

**ALL: But I know it will sound like dignity.**

ONE: My doubts are sacred

**ALL: God, stay close as I wander.**

**\*OPENING HYMN**      *Praise the Source of Faith and Learning*      TFWS #2004

**1. Praise the source of faith and learning that has sparked and stoked the mind  
with a passion for discerning how the world has been designed.**

**Let the sense of wonder flowing from the wonders we survey  
keep our faith forever growing and renew our need to pray:**

**2. God of wisdom, we acknowledge that our science and our art  
and the breadth of human knowledge only partial truth impart.**

**Far beyond our calculation lies a depth we cannot sound  
where your purpose for creation and the pulse of life are found.**

**3. May our faith redeem the blunder of believing that our thought  
has displaced the grounds for wonder which the ancient prophets taught.**

**May our learning curb the error which unthinking faith can breed  
lest we justify some terror with an antiquated creed.**

**4. As two currents in a river fight each other's undertow  
till converging they deliver one coherent steady flow,  
blend, O God, our faith and learning till they carve a single course,  
till they join as one, returning praise and thanks to you, their Source.**

WORDS: Thomas H. Troeger; MUSIC: Rowland H. Prichard; harm. from The English Hymnal; Words © 1987 Oxford University Press, Inc.; CCLI 2815228

## **ACTS OF SHARING**

### **GREETINGS AND WELCOME OF FIRST TIME VISITORS**



**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.**

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**PASSING THE PEACE**

Augustus Williamson

**CHILDREN'S MOMENT**

Deaconess Anne Hillman

## INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

### OFFERTORY

*Be Still and Know*, by Ruth Elaine Schram



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

### ANTHEM

*I Believe*, by Mark A. Miller

Clara Zundel, Solo

## ACTS OF PROCLAMATION

### \*SCRIPTURE

*Genesis 18:1-8*

God appeared to Abraham by the oak grove of Mamre, while Abraham sat at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day. Looking up, Abraham saw three travelers standing nearby.

When he saw them, Abraham ran from the entrance of the tent to greet them; and bowing to the ground, said, “If I have found favor in your eyes, please do not pass by our tent. Let some water be brought, that you may bathe your feet, and then rest yourselves beneath this tree. As you have come to your faithful one, let me bring you a little food, that you may refresh yourselves. Afterward, you may go on your way.”

“Very well,” they replied, “do as you have said.”

Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah and said, “Quick—take a bushel of fine flour and knead it into loaves of bread.”

Abraham then ran to the herd, selected a choice and tender calf, and sent a worker hurrying to prepare it. Then Abraham took cheese and milk and the calf which had been prepared and placed it before the travelers; and he waited on them under the tree while they ate.

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

ALL: **Thanks be to God.**

**MESSAGE**

*The Big Questions: Is God There?*

Rev. Paul Perez

**\*CLOSING HYMN**

*Bring Many Names*

TFWS #2047

- 1. Bring many names, beautiful and good,  
celebrate, in parable and story,  
holiness in glory, living, loving God.  
Hail and Hosanna! Bring many names!**
  
- 4. Old, aching God, grey with endless care,  
calmly piercing evil's new disguises,  
glad of good surprises, wiser than despair:  
Hail and Hosanna! Old, aching God!**
  
- 5. Young, growing God, eager, on the move,  
saying no to falsehood and unkindness,  
crying out for justice, giving all you have:  
Hail and Hosanna! Young, growing God!**
  
- 6. Great, living God, never fully known,  
joyful darkness far beyond our seeing,  
closer yet than breathing, everlasting home:  
Hail and Hosanna! Great, living God!**

WORDS: Brian Wren; MUSIC: Carlton R. Young; Words © 1989, 1994; music © 1989; descant © 1994 Hope Publishing Co.; CCLI 2815228

## **BENEDICTION & SENDING FORTH**

**BENEDICTION & SENDING FORTH** (from *Black Liturgies: Prayers, Poems and Meditations for Staying Human* by Cole Arthur Riley)

Let your soul receive this rest: The divine who is both visible and invisible, near and far, small and grand, has mercy on you. Allow them to liberate you from bondage of certainty, that you would walk freely with curiosity, imagination, and a sacred unknowing. Amen.

## CHORAL BENEDICTION

## POSTLUDE

Guest Pianist, Melissa Coppola

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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, Director of Music

Brandon Reeves, Choral Accompanist

Debra Cox, Office Administrator

Dave Wilson, Maintenance Manager

Yvette Meadow & Angela Bakeley, Receptionists

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*This service is live-streamed under CCLISTREAM PLUS 21469425*

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## 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)