



Central United Methodist Church

A Reconciling Congregation

Organized 1810—Incorporated 1822—Sanctuary completed 1867.

December 1, 2024

First Sunday of Advent

Words for the Beginning: You Are a Blessing

Favored One



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

Brandon Reeves, Augustus Williamson

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 *A Sanctified Art*)

ONE: God says,

ALL: "Do not be afraid."

ONE: God says,

ALL: "I have called you by name."

ONE: God says,

ALL: "I will be with you."

ONE: God says,

ALL: "You are precious and honored in my sight."

ONE: At the beginning of this season,

ALL: at the start of this week,

ONE: at the top of this hour,

ALL: may we wrap ourselves in these words. May we begin again.

ONE: Let us worship our Holy God!

- 1. It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of ole,
from angels bending near the earth, to touch their harps of gold:
“Peace on the earth, good will to men, from heaven’s all gracious King.”
The world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing.**

- 2. Still through the cloven skies they come with peaceful wings unfurled,
and still their heavenly music floats o’er all the weary world;
above its sad and lowly plains, they bend on hovering wing,
and ever o’er its Babel sounds the blessed angels sing.**

- 3. And ye, beneath life’s crushing load, whose forms are bending low,
who toil along the climbing way with painful steps and slow,
look now! For glad and golden hours come swiftly on the wing.
O rest beside the weary road, and hear the angels sing!**

- 4. For lo! The days are hastening on, by prophet seen of old,
when with the ever-circling years shall come the time foretold
when peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling,
and the whole world send back the song which now the angels sing.**

WORDS: Edmund H. Sears, 1849; MUSIC: Richard Storrs Willis, 1850, 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

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

Elin Chambers, Aria Brazier

ONE: In a weary and worn world,
how do we begin again?
Where do we start?

ALL: Let us begin with the good news!
Let us begin by trusting that we are a
blessing, loved by a gracious God.
Let us begin with music and singing!
Let us begin with warmth and welcome.
Let us begin with hope.

ONE: Yes, let us begin with hope.
Today we light the candle of hope to
shine a light in a worn and weary world.

ALL: May this be our foundation.
May this be our fresh start.
May this be our new beginning.

ONE: May hope flow forth from here.

AMEN!

CHORAL RESPONSE: *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*, v. 1 UMH #211

1. O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear. *Refrain*

***(Refrain)* Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

WORDS: 9th cent. Latin; trans. st. 1, 3, 5ab, 6cd, 7ab *The Hymnal*, 1940; st. 2, Henry Sloane Coffin, 1916; st. 4, 5cd, 6ab, 7ab, Laurence Hull Stookey, 1986;
MUSIC: 15th cent. French; arr. and harm. by Thomas Helmore, 1854; ; Sts. 1,3,5ab, 6cd, 7ab © 1940, 1943, renewed 1981 The Church Pension Fund; trans/
sts/ 4, 5cd, 6ab, 7cd; © 1989 The United Methodist Publishing House; antiphons © 1962 Sisters of St. Benedict; CCLI 2815228

CHILDREN'S MOMENT

Deaconess Anne Hillman

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

OFFERTORY

Come Thou Long Expected Jesus by Richard Webster.



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

The Heart of Christmas by Jan Sanborn

ACTS OF PROCLAMATION

***SCRIPTURE**

Luke 1:26-38

Six months later, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a young woman named Mary; she was engaged to a man named Joseph, of the house of David. Upon arriving, the angel said to Mary, “Rejoice, highly favored one! God is with you! Blessed are you among women!”

Mary was deeply troubled by these words and wondered what the angel’s greeting meant. The angel went on to say to her, “Don’t be afraid, Mary. You have found favor with God. You’ll conceive and bear a son, and give him the name of Jesus— ‘Deliverance,’ His dignity will be great, and he will be called the Only Begotten of God. God will give Jesus the judgment seat of David, his ancestor, to rule over the house of Jacob forever, and his reign will never end.”

Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I have never been with a man?”

The angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you—hence the offspring to be born will be called the Holy One of God. Know too that Elizabeth, your kinswoman, has conceived a child in her old age; she who was thought to be infertile is now in her sixth month. Nothing is impossible with God.”

Mary said, “I am the servant of God. Let it be done to me as you say.”

With that, the angel left her.

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

ALL: **Thanks be to God.**

MESSAGE

Words for the Beginning: You Are a Blessing

Rev. Paul Perez

A SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

(adapted from enfleshed: liturgy that matters)

ONE: The Holy One be with you

ALL: And also with you

ONE: Open your hearts to the One who is Love

ALL: We open our hearts to you, O God

ONE: Let us give thanks to God with us

ALL: To the One who took on flesh, we give thanks and praise

ONE: Creator of all that is, Mother of life itself, by your hand we were formed.

You made us relational.

You created us to thrive – not alone, but together.

You shaped the entire cosmos so that every form of life depends on another.

You never intended for us to power through these lives alone.

You made us strong and resilient people, but equally vulnerable and dependent on you, the earth, and all our neighbors.

You gifted us with the need to rely on one another,
bone of each other's bone, flesh of each other's flesh.

In your wisdom, you created us with both desire and need to be in community.

Therefore, we join our voices with your people on earth and all the company of the heavens, singing praise to you,

ALL: Holy, Holy, Holy One

God of justice and love

Heaven and earth are full of your wonder

Hosanna among us

ONE: In our longing for your presence with us, we often expect your arrival in traditional places of power. We seek our hope and salvation in the false promises of dominance and might. But instead, you brought us salvation through vulnerability. You too became bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh. God, in the form of a baby, you made yourself dependent on us. An infant, revealing the transformative power of giving and receiving love through human flesh.

Throughout the life of Jesus, we saw lives transformed by your willingness to make yourself vulnerable. And yet, the same vulnerability also came at a price. Though some fed you and raised you and befriended you, others persecuted you to the point of death. Seeking to eradicate their own feelings of vulnerability, those in power preyed on yours.

Still, today, we often crucify the ones who dare to risk it all on love.
On the night of his arrest, Jesus shared a meal with his companions.
He took bread, blessed it, broke it, gave it to his disciples and said:

**ALL: “This is my body which is given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.”**

ONE: After the meal, he took the cup, blessed it, and shared it saying:

ALL: “This cup that is poured out is the new covenant.”

ONE: In remembrance of all you have done to save us,
we proclaim the mystery of our faith:

**ALL: Christ was birthed among us.
Christ died among us.
Christ rises again among us.**

ONE: Pour out your Spirit on these gifts, O God. Give us a taste of resurrection hope that lasts through even the most challenging of betrayals. Meet us in this bread and this cup and hear the prayers of your people in this aching world. Come, O Come, Emmanuel.

In collective longing for a taste of your Kin-om on earth,
we join together in echoing the prayer of Jesus:

**ALL: Our Creator, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name
Thy Kin-dom come, thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespassed against us.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the Kin-dom, the power, and the glory forever.**

AMEN.

SHARING THE BREAD & CUP

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

God, we recognize the ways you still make yourself vulnerable to us today. In gratitude for a taste of your Kin-dom, may our discipleship shape us into fierce protectors of the vulnerable, give us courage to practice our own vulnerability, and help us to honor the sacredness of our need for one another. In Christ’s name we pray, Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN**

In Case No One Ever Told You

Words by Anna Strickland, 2024

Music from the *Praxis Pietatis Melica*, 1668

In case no one ev - er told you or you have for - got - ten You are a
You are the mas - ter-piece born of God's i - ma - gin - a - tion E - ven the
You are u - nique-ly cre - a - ted for love and be - long - ing For-cing your-

7
bless - ing and have been since you were be - got - ten Fash - ioned from love
parts that are cry - ing out for res - tor - a - tion All that you are
self to be some - one you're not is ex - haus - ting You are a gift

14
Sent to the earth from a - bove You're no - thing short of a god - send
Born out of star - dust and scars Re - flects God's per - fect cre - a - tion
There is no box you must fit Let your be - lov - ed - ness blos - som

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BENEDICTION

BENEDICTION & SENDING FORTH

CHORAL BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

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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, Collaborative Pianist

Debra Cox, Office Administrator

Dave Wilson, Maintenance Manager

Yvette Meadow & 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)