



# Central United Methodist Church

*A Reconciling Congregation*

Organized 1810—Incorporated 1822—Sanctuary completed 1867

March 19, 2023  
Fourth Sunday in Lent  
Women's History Month



## 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

## ACTS OF PRAISE

### \*CALL TO WORSHIP

ONE: Scripture is full of questions...

**ALL: Where are you?**

ONE: Am I my brother's keeper?

**ALL: Whom shall I send?**

ONE: Who do you say that I am?

**ALL: Who sinned?**

ONE: How many times shall I forgive?

**ALL: If God is for us, who can be against us?**

ONE: Scripture is full of questions, so just like those in our scriptures, may we bring our full curiosity and wonder into this space.

**ALL: Let us ask and seek after our merciful God.**

**\*OPENING HYMN**      *O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing*      (adapted from UMH #57)

**1. O for a thousand tongues to sing my  
great Redeemer's praise, the glories  
ever echoing the triumphs of God's  
grace!**

**3. Jesus! the name that calms our fears,  
that bids our sorrows cease is music in  
the sinner's ears, is life and health and  
peace!**

**2. My gracious Savior and my God, assist  
me to proclaim, to spread through all  
the earth abroad the honors of your  
name.**

**4. Glory to God, and love and praise be  
ever, ever given by all the saints in  
every age, the church in earth and  
heaven.**

# ACTS OF SHARING

## GREETING

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

## WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH MOMENT

Linda Priest

## CHILDREN'S TIME

Rev. Dr. Jill Hardt Zundel

## CALL TO CONFESSION

In today's text, the disciples ask Jesus, "Who sinned?" They want to know who around them could be blamed for suffering. The disciples want to identify who around them had done wrong.

In the prayer of confession, we stop pointing fingers at others. In confession, we turn our attention toward ourselves and invite God into that honest and vulnerable space.

So do this counter-cultural thing with me today. Let us pray together using the prayer of confession, printed in your bulletin. Let us pray:

## PRAYER OF CONFESSION

ONE: Who here has sinned?

**ALL: We have sinned. We put our heads in the sand. We ignored people in need. We make false assumptions and fail to be kind. We are in need of forgiveness.**

ONE: Good news! Our God is a merciful God. God does not punish, hold grudges, or keep score. When you suffer, God weeps. When you sin, God forgives. When you lose your way, God comes running.

**ALL: Thanks be to God for a love like that. Have you sinned?**

ONE: I have sinned. I put my head in the sand. I ignore people in need. I make false assumptions and fail to be kind. I, too, am in need of forgiveness.

**ALL: Good news! Our God is a merciful God. God does not punish, hold grudges, or keep score. When you suffer, God weeps. When you sin, God forgives. When you lose your way, God come running.**

## ANTHEM

*The Rose* by Mary E. Caldwell

## INVITATION TO OFFERING

We worship a God who listens and answers. We serve a God who longs to draw nearer to us in the midst of our seeking and curiosity. We love a God who sends us into the world to seek a path more like Jesus' path. May these gifts we bring today be a response to the ways we've heard God's voice of love, peace, and justice.



## **OFFERTORY**

*Liebst du um Schonheit* by Clara Schumann. Laura Burger, Soprano

## **\*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**

**God who listens and answers, we offer these gifts to you in love. Bless these gifts that they may be used to share your love and grace and to do your work of peace and justice in this community and beyond. Bless also those who gather to worship this day, that we might be people who listen with eyes, ears, hearts, and minds open wide and heed the call of your voice. Amen.**

## **SHARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS**

## **PASTORAL PRAYER**

Rev. Dr. Jill Hardt Zundel

## **PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

Helen Monroe

God of Good News,  
there is *reading* your Word,  
there is *hearing* your Word,  
and then there is tunneling ourselves into your Word –  
harvesting your Word,  
building a home in your Word,  
laying your Word over us like a blanket,  
wrapping ourselves in your Word,  
knowing your Word like the back of our hand,  
singing your Word,  
planting ourselves like a garden in your Word.

God, we could listen to scripture like we listen to the news  
or we could cocoon ourselves in your Word and it could change us entirely.  
So bundle us up. Give us the latter.  
We want to know you.  
With hopeful hearts we pray, Amen.

**\*GOSPEL READING**

*John 9:1-9 The Inclusive Bible*

Helen Monroe

As Jesus walked along, we saw someone who had been blind from birth. The disciples asked Jesus, “Rabbi, was it this individual’s sin that caused the blindness, or that of the parents?”

“Neither,” answered Jesus, “It wasn’t because of anyone’s sin – not this person’s, nor the parents. Rather, it was to let God’s works shine forth in this person. We must do the deeds of the One who sent me while it is still day – for night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

With that, Jesus spat on the ground, made mud with his saliva and smeared the blind one’s eyes with the mud. Then Jesus said, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” – “Siloam” means “sent”. So the person went off to wash, and came back able to see.

Neighbors and those who had been accustomed to seeing the blind beggar began to ask, “Isn’t this the one who used to sit and beg?” Some said yes; others said no – the one who had been healed simply looked like the beggar. But the individual in question said, “No – it was me.”

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

**ALL: Thanks be to God.**

**\*CENTERING HYMN**     *I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light*     adapted from UMH #206

**1. I want to walk as a child of the light. I want to follow Jesus. God set the stars to give light to the world. The star of my life is Jesus. (Refrain)**

**2. I want to see the brightness of God. I want to look at Jesus. Clear Sun of Righteousness, shine on my path, and show me the way to the Creator. (Refrain)**

*(Refrain)* **In him there is no darkness at all. The night and the day are both alike. The Lamb is the light of the city of God. Shine in my heart, Christ Jesus.**

**3. I’m looking for the coming of Christ. I want to be with Jesus. When we have run with patience the race, we shall know the joy of Jesus. (Refrain)**

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## **ACTS OF PROCLAMATION**

**\*GOSPEL READING CONTINUED**

*John 9: 10-41*

Helen Monroe

The people then asked, “Then how were your eyes opened?”

The answer came, “The one they call Jesus made mud and smeared it on my eyes and told me to go to Siloam and wash. When I went and washed, I was able to see.”

“Where is Jesus?” they asked.

The person replied, “I have no idea.”

They took the one who had been born blind to the Pharisees. It had been on a Sabbath that Jesus had made the mud paste and opened this one’s eyes. The Pharisees asked how the individual could see. They were told, “Jesus put mud on my eyes. I washed it off, and now I see.”

This prompted some Pharisees to say, “This Jesus cannot be from God, because he doesn’t keep the Sabbath.” Others argued, “But how could a sinner perform signs like this?” They were sharply divided.

Then they addressed the blind person again: “Since it was your eyes he opened, what do you have to say about this Jesus?”

“He’s a prophet,” came the reply.

The Temple authorities refused to believe that this one had been blind and had begun to see, until they summoned the parents. “Is this your child,” they asked, “and if so, do you attest that your child was blind at birth? How do you account for the fact that now your child can see?”

The parents answered, “We know this is our child, blind from birth. But how our child can see now, or who opened those blind eyes, we have no idea. But don’t ask us – our child is old enough to speak without us!” The parents answered this way because they were afraid of the Temple authorities, who had already agreed among themselves that anyone who acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. That was why they said, “Our child is of age and should be asked directly.”

A second time they summoned the one who had been born blind and said, “Give God the glory instead; we know that this Jesus is a sinner.”

“I don’t know whether he is a sinner or not,” the individual answered. “All I know is that I used to be blind and now I can see.”

They persisted. “Just what did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?”

“I already told you, but you won’t listen to me,” came the answer. “Why do you want to hear it all over again? Don’t tell me you want to become disciples of Jesus too!”

They retorted scornfully, “You’re the one who is Jesus’ disciple. We’re disciples of Moses. We know that God spoke to Moses, but we have no idea where this Jesus comes from.”

The other retorted: “Well, this is news! You don’t know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes! We know that God doesn’t hear sinners, but that if people are devout and obey God’s will, God listens to them. It is unheard of that anyone ever gave sight to a person blind from birth. If this one were not from God, he could never have done such a thing!”

“What!” they exclaimed, “You’re steeped in sin from birth and you’re giving us lectures? With that they threw the person out.

When Jesus heard of the expulsion, he sought out the healed one and asked, “Do you believe in the Chosen One?”

The other answered, “Who is this One, that I may believe?”

“You’re looking at him,” Jesus replied, “The Chosen One is speaking to you now.”

The healed one said, “Yes, I believe,” and worshiped Jesus.

And Jesus said, “I came into this world to execute justice – to make the sightless see and the seeing blind.”

Some of the Pharisees who were nearby heard this and said, “You’re not calling us blind, are you?”

To which Jesus replied, “If you were blind, there would be no sin in that. But since you say, ‘We see’, your sin remains.

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

**ALL: Thanks be to God.**

**\*CLOSING HYMN***Lord of the Dance*

UMH #261

**1. I danced in the morning when the world was begun and I danced in the moon and the stars and the sun, and I came down from heaven and I danced on earth. At Bethlehem I had my birth. (Refrain)**

**(Refrain) Dance, then, wherever you may be; I am the Lord of the Dance, said he. And I'll lead you all wherever you may be, and I'll lead you all in the dance, said he.**

**2. I danced for the scribe and the Pharisee, but they would not dance and they would not follow me; I danced for the fishermen, for James and John; they came to me and the dance went on. (Refrain)**

**3. I danced on the Sabbath when I cured the lame, the holy people said it was a shame; they whipped and they stripped and they hung me high; and they left me there on a cross to die. (Refrain)**

**4. I danced on a Friday and the sky turned black, it's hard to dance with the devil on your back; they buried by body and they thought I'd done, but I am the dance and I still go on. (Refrain)**

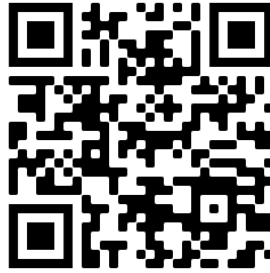
**5. They cut me down and I leapt up high, I am the life that'll never, never die; I'll live in you if you'll live in me; I am the Lord of the Dance, said he. (Refrain)**

WORDS: Sydney Carter, 1963; MUSIC: 19<sup>th</sup> cent. Shaker tune; adapt. by Sydney Carter, 1963; harm. by Gary Alan Smith, 1988; © 1963, 1989 Galliard, Ltd.; CCLI 2815228

**BENEDICTION AND SENDING FORTH****\*BENEDICTION**

Rev. Dr. Jill Hardt Zundel

As you leave this place,  
May God bless you in the seeking.  
Seek out the hungry.  
Seek the weary.  
Seek the good in every person you pass.  
Seek out the hopeful.  
Seek the faithful.  
Seek God in each of us.  
As you seek and as you wonder,  
may you find what you are looking for.  
In the name of our loving God,  
who is always seeking us,  
go now in peace. 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.**

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**Central United Methodist Church  
23 East Adams, Detroit, Michigan 48226 ~ 313.965.5422  
[www.centralumchurchdetroit.org](http://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

Bobbi Thompson, Accompanist

Margaret Reese, Music Director

Debra Cox, Office Administrator

Andrew Cox, Building Superintendent

Dave Wilson, Maintenance Manager

Yvette Meadows and Angela Bakeley, Receptionists

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*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)