



Central United Methodist Church

A Reconciling Congregation

Organized 1810—Incorporated 1822—Sanctuary completed 1867

December 24, 2025

Christmas Eve - *What do you fear?*

Good News is Louder than Fear.

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

ACTS OF GATHERING

PRELUDE

Brandon Reeves

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

WELCOME

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING (from *A Sanctified Art*) Eugenio and Rebecca Martin

ONE: In a fearful world, where do you see the presence of God?

ALL: We see God's fingerprints all around us.

We see God in the beauty of the stars. We see

God in the love of this community. We see

God in the dreams we hold for a better world.

ONE: You are right. Even in a fearful world, God is here. God is all around us.

On this holy night, we light the Christ Candle as a reminder of this good news.

May this flicker of light help us remember that even in a fearful world,

God's love is all around us.

(Light candle.)

Thanks be to God for a love like that!

Amen.

***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*)**

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

**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*)**

**4. See how the shepherds, summoned to his cradle,
leaving their flocks, draw nigh to gaze;
we too will thither bend our joyful footsteps; (*Refrain*)**

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 WELCOME

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 OF THE PEACE

Brandon Reeves

CHILDREN'S MOMENT

Deaconess Anne Hillman

ACTS OF PROCLAMATION

*SCRIPTURE

Luke 2:1-7

Jonathan Oatley

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.

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

ALL: Thanks be to God.

HYMN

O Little Town of Bethlehem, v. 1&2

UMH # 230

**1. O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie;
above thy deep and dream-less 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 of 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

*SCRIPTURE

Luke 2:8-14

Anton Hoffman

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.”

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

ALL: Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM

Shepherd's Visit
"Sing We Noel" arr. by Joel Raney

Central Choir

*SCRIPTURE

Luke 2: 15-20

Margaret Reese

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.

HYMN

Infant Holy, Infant Lowly

UMH #229

**1. Infant holy, infant lowly, for his bed a cattle stall;
oxen lowing, little knowing, Christ the babe is Lord of all.
Swift are winging angels, noels ringing, tidings bringing:
Christ the babe is Lord of all.**

**2. Flocks were sleeping, shepherds keeping vigil till the morning
new saw the glory, heard the story, tidings of a gospel true.
Thus rejoicing, free from sorrow, praises voicing, greet the morrow;
Christ the babe was born for you.**

WORDS: Polish carol; trans. by Edith M. G. Reed, 1925; MUSIC: Polish carol; arr. by Edith M. G. Reed, 1926; CCLI 2815228

MESSAGE

What do you fear? Good News is Louder than Fear

Rev. Paul Perez

ACTS OF SHARING

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

OFFERTORY

A Child is Born

Central Choir

"Sing We Noel" arr. by Joel Raney



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.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

CANDLE LIGHTING

HYMN

Silent Night, Holy Night

UMH #239

1. Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright
round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy infant, so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.
2. Silent night, holy night, shepherds quake at the sight;
glories stream from heaven afar,
heavenly hosts sing Alleluia!
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born!
3. Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love's pure light;
radiant beams from thy holy face
with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.
4. Silent night, holy night, wondrous star, lend thy light;
with the angels let us sing,
Alleluia to our King;
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born!

WORDS: Joseph Mohr, 1818, alt.; sts. 1,2,3 trans. by John F. Young; st. 4 trans. anon.; MUSIC: Franz Gruber, 1818; CCLI 2815228

CANDLE PRAYER

*CLOSING HYMN

Hark the Herald Angels Sing

UMH #240

1. Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born King;
Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations rise, join the triumph of the skies;
With th'angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!" *(Refrain)*
(Refrain) Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born King!"
2. Christ, by highest heaven adored; Christ, the everlasting Lord;
Late in time behold him come, offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the God-head see; hail th'incarnate Deity,
Pleased with us in flesh to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel. *(Refrain)*
3. Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings, risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by, born that we no more may die,
Born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth. *(Refrain)*

WORDS: Charles Wesley, 1734; alt. by George Whitefield, 1753, and others;
MUSIC: Felix Mendelssohn, 1840; arr. by William H. Cummings, 1856; CCLI 2815228

BENEDICTION

BENEDICTION & SENDING FORTH

CHORAL BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Brandon Reeves

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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

Angela Bakeley, Receptionist

Dave Wilson, Building Maintenance Manager

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)