



# Central United Methodist Church

*A Reconciling Congregation*

Organized 1810—Incorporated 1822—Sanctuary completed 1867

December 28, 2025

## First Sunday After Christmas Day

### 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

Augustus Williamson & Brandon Reeves

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

### \*CALL TO WORSHIP

ONE: For all those who have come fleeing oppression and persecution-

**ALL: God, help us welcome those who have come to dwell among us.**

ONE: For those who have come fleeing hardship and hunger,

**ALL: God, help us welcome those who have come to dwell among us.**

ONE: For those who have come to join loved ones already here:

**ALL: God, help us welcome those who have come to dwell among us.**

ONE: For those who have come seeking freedom and opportunity:

**ALL: God, help us welcome those who have come to dwell among us.**

ONE: Let us remember the words of Christ, who said,

I was hungry and you gave me food.

I was thirsty and you gave me a drink.

I was a stranger and you welcomed me.”

When were you a stranger that we welcomed among us?

“Truly, as you did it to one of the least of these, you did it to me.”

We welcome the stranger who is us. We welcome the stranger who is you.

**ALL: We welcome you, Christ Jesus, in our midst.**

## \*OPENING HYMN

*Your Little Ones Are Suffering*  
(Tune: O Sacred Head, Now Wounded UMH #286)

- 1. Your little ones are suffering from evil things we do.  
So, God, we pray for children, for youth and families, too.  
A girl cries for a loved one who's just been ripped away.  
And so a mighty millstone is ours to wear this day.**
- 2. Her mother can't console her; her dad has disappeared.  
The Land we love has told her, "There is no mercy here."  
We see the things that happen; we sigh and let them go.  
A heavy-weighted millstone – our guilt – is bound to grow.**
- 3. The harm comes from ignoring – participating too.  
When we look back on suffering, will we admit we knew?  
God, where is our compassion, that we would let this be?  
And now we wear the millstone – and none of us are free.**
- 4. When nations harm the children you've placed within our care.  
Lord Jesus, you give warning to people everywhere.  
And when we show compassion and mercy, love and grace.  
We'll all know peace and freedom together in this place.**

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## 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

Augustus Williamson & Brandon Reeves

#### CHILDREN'S MOMENT

Deaconess Anne Hillman

## **The Immigrant's Creed**

(This creed professes the Christian faith through the experience of an immigrant)

ONE: I believe in Almighty God,  
who guided the people in exile and in exodus,  
he God of Joseph in Egypt and Daniel in Babylon,  
The God of foreigners and immigrants.

**ALL: I believe in Jesus Christ,  
a displaced Galilean,  
who was born away from his people and his home,  
who fled his country with his parents when his life was in danger,  
and returning to his own country suffered the oppression  
of the tyrant Pontius Pilate, the servant of a foreign power,  
who then was persecuted, beaten and finally tortured, accused and condemned  
to death unjustly.**

ONE: But on the third day, this scorned Jesus rose from the dead,  
not as a foreigner but to offer us citizenship in heaven.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the eternal immigrant from God's kin-dom among us,  
who speaks all languages, lives in all countries,  
and reunites all races.

**ALL: I believe that the church is the secure home  
for the foreigner and for all believers who constitute it,  
who speak the same language and have the same purpose  
I believe that the communion of the saints begins  
when we accept the diversity of the saints.**

ONE: I believe in the forgiveness of sin, which makes us all equal,  
And in reconciliation, which identifies us more  
than does race, language, or nationality.  
I believe that the forgiveness of sin, which makes us all equal,  
and in reconciliation, which identifies us more  
than does race, language, or nationality.  
I believe that in the resurrection God will united us as one people  
in which all are distinct, and all are alike at the same time.

**ALL: Beyond this world, I believe in life eternal  
in which no one will be an immigrant  
but all will be citizens of God's kin-dom,  
which will never end. Amen.**

**ANTHEM***Away in a Manger*

Laura Burger and Laura's mother Janet Swarthout, Harpist

**ACTS OF SHARING****INVITATION TO THE OFFERING****OFFERTORY***Silent Night*

Laura Burger and Laura's mother Janet Swarthout, Harpist

**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****ACTS OF PROCLAMATION****\*SCRIPTURE***Matthew 2:13-23*

After the astrologers had left, the angel of God suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph with the command, "Get up, take the child and his mother and flee to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you otherwise. Herod is searching for the child to destroy him.: Joseph got up, awakened Jesus and Mary, and they left that night for Egypt. They stayed there until the death of Herod, to fulfill what God had said through the prophet: "Out of Egypt I have called my Own."

Herod became furious when he realized that the astrologers had outwitted him. He gave orders to kill all male children that were two years old and younger living in and around Bethlehem. The age of the children was based on the date Herod had learned from the astrologers. Then what was spoken through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

"A Voice was heard in Ramah  
sobbing and lamenting loudly:  
it was Rachel weeping for her children;  
she refused to be consoled,  
for they were no more."

After Herod's death, the angel of God appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt with the command, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and set out for the land of Israel. Those who had designs on the life of the child are dead."

Joseph got up, awakened Jesus and Mary, and they returned to the land of Israel. Joseph heard, however, that Archelaus had succeeded Herod as ruler of Judea, and Joseph was afraid to go back there. Instead, because of a warning received by Joseph in a dream, the family went to the region of Galilee. There they settled in a town called Nazareth. In this way, what was said through the prophets was fulfilled: "He will be called a Nazarene."

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

ALL: Thanks be to God.

**MESSAGE***When Home is the Mouth of a Shark*

Rev. Dr. Jill Hardt Zundel

**\*CLOSING HYMN***God of Justice, Love and Mercy*

(tune: Come, Thou Fount UMH #400)

**1. God of justice, love and mercy, pour your wisdom on our souls.**

By Your all-sustaining power Keep our spirits strong and whole

Lift our eyes to see your vision of a world in urgent need-

Grant us courage, then to follow bringing comfort with each deed.

**2. God of justice, love and mercy with compassion let us care  
as we come in humble weakness may your strength be ours to share**Press our hearts to know the struggle of the ones we cannot see-  
May Your kindness set us free.**3. God of justice, love and mercy send us out and make us bold  
As we strive to Your high calling let our hands Your mercies hold  
You have blessed us with abundance, gifts to share with those in need,  
Creator, Son, and Holy Spirit, may we follow as You lead.**

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**BENEDICTION****BENEDICTION & SENDING FORTH****CHORAL BENEDICTION****POSTLUDE**

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All Liturgy comes from an Immigration Conference Rev. Jill participated in led by the General Commission of Religion and Race, in Omaha, Nebraska.

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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

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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)