



Central United Methodist Church

A Reconciling Congregation

Organized 1810—Incorporated 1822—Sanctuary completed 1867

December 3, 2023

First Sunday of Advent

How Does a Weary World Rejoice? We Acknowledge Our Weariness.

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.

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

PRELUDE

Bobbi Thompson

INTROIT

Augustus Williamson

ACTS OF PRAISE

***CALL TO WORSHIP** (from A Sanctified Art)

ONE: In God's house, we can be joyful.

ALL: We can be grateful. We can be hopeful.

ONE: In God's house, we can be weary.

ALL: We can be anxious. We can be grieving.

ONE: In God's house, we can be honest—

ALL: inspired or tired, delighted or doubtful, connected or curious, and everything in between.

ONE: This is God's house. You are welcome exactly as you are.

ALL: Let us worship our loving God.

***OPENING HYMN**

All Who Hunger

TFWS #2126

1. All who hunger, gather gladly; holy manna is our bread. Come from wilderness and wandering. Here, in truth, we will be fed. You that yearn for days of fullness, all around us is our food. Taste and see the grace eternal. Taste and see that God is good.
2. All who hunger, never strangers; seeker, be a welcome guest. Come from restlessness and roaming. Here, in joy, we keep the feast. We that once were lost and scattered in communion's love have stood. Taste and see the grace eternal. Taste and see that God is good.
3. All who hunger, sing together; Jesus Christ is living bread. Come from loneliness and longing. Here, in peace, we have been led. Blest are those who from this table live their lives in gratitude. Taste and see the grace eternal. Taste and see that God is good.

WORDS: SYLVIA G. Dunstan; MUSIC: William Moore; Words © 1991 GIA Publications, Inc.; CCLI 2815228

ACTS OF SHARING

GREETINGS AND WELCOME OF FIRST TIME VISITORS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PASSING OF THE PEACE

Augustus Williamson

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

Biernat Family

ONE: How does a weary world hope?

**ALL: By telling stories of hope,
by lighting candles in the night,
and planting seeds in the winter that
will bloom in the spring.**

ONE: By praying for children as they grow, and
picking up trash on the sidewalk.

**ALL: By insisting that small acts can make a
difference.**

ONE: There are a million ways to practice hope.
So today we light the candle of hope as a
reminder and a charge.

**ALL: With God's help, may we bring hope
into a weary world. Amen.**

CHILDREN'S MOMENT

Deaconess Anne Hillman

ANTHEM

In the Bleak Midwinter by Harold Darke

Laura Burger & Alex Oatley, Solo

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

OFFERTORY

Come Thou Long Expected Jesus arr. by John A. Behuke

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

*CENTERING HYMN

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel, v 1 & 2

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)

2. O come, thou Wisdom from on high, and order all things far and nigh; to us the path of knowledge show and cause us in her ways to go. (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, 7cd, Laurence Hull Stookey, 1986.; MUSIC: 15th. 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

ACTS OF PROCLAMATION

***SCRIPTURE** (Please Stand) *Luke 1:1-23*

Many others have undertaken to compile a narrative of the events which have been fulfilled among us, exactly as the original eyewitnesses and ministries of the Word. I too have investigated everything carefully from the beginning and have decided to set it down in writing for you, noble Theophilus, so that you may see how reliable the instruction was that you received.

In the days of the ruler Herod, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the priestly class of Abijah. His wife Elizabeth was a descendant of Aaron. Both were worthy in the sight of God and scrupulously observed all the commandments and observances of our God. They were childless—unable to conceive—and they were both advanced in years.

Now it was the turn of Zechariah's priestly class to serve. And as he was fulfilling his priestly office before God, it fell to him by lot, according to priestly usage, to enter the sanctuary of our God and offer incense. While the full assembly of people was praying outside at the time of day when the incense was offered, an angel of our God appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense. Zechariah was deeply disturbed upon seeing the angel and was overcome with fear.

The angel said to him, "Don't be frightened, Zechariah, Your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear a son, who you'll name John. He will be your joy and delight and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the sight of our God. He must never drink wine or liquor, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb. And he will bring many of the children of Israel back to their God Most High. He will go before God as a forerunner, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the rebellious to the wisdom of the just—to make ready a people prepared for our God."

Zechariah said to the angel, "How can I be sure of this? I am an old man, and my wife too is advanced in age."

The angel replied, "I am Gabriel, who stands before God. I was sent to speak to you and bring you this good news. But because you have not trusted my words, you'll be mute—unable to speak—until the day these things take place. They'll all come true in due season."

Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah and wondered about his delay in the sanctuary. When he finally came out he was unable to speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision inside. But he could only make signs to them and remained mute. Then, when his time of priestly service was over, he went home.

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

ALL: **Thanks be to God.**

MESSAGE *How Does a Weary World Rejoice? We Acknowledge Our Weariness*

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:

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

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

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

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

**ALL: Christ was birthed among us.
Christ was killed 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-dom 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

Guide My Feet, v 1-3

TFWS #2208

1. Guide my feet while I run this race.

Guide my feet while I run this race.

Guide my feet while I run this race,
for I don't want to run this race in
vain!

3. Stand by me while I run this race.

Stand by me while I run this race.

Stand by me while I run this race, for
I don't want to run this race in vain!

2. Hold my hand while I run this race.

Hold my hand while I run this race.

Hold my hand while I run this race,
for I don't want to run this race in
vain!

WORDS: African American spiritual; MUSIC: African American
spiritual; harm. by Wendell Whalum; Har. © Estate of Wendell
Whalum; CCLI 2815228

BENEDICTION & SENDING FORTH

BENEDICTION & SENDING FORTH

CHORAL BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Bobbi Thompson



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.

Central United Methodist Church
23 East Adams, Detroit, Michigan 48226 ~ 313.965.5422

www.centralumchurchdetroit.org

cumcdetroit1810@centralumchurchdetroit.org

Rev. Paul Perez, Lead Minister

Rev. Edwin Rowe, Pastor Emeritus

Deaconess Anne Hillman, Ph.D. Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministries

Margaret Reese, Music Director

Bobbi Thompson, Accompanist

Brandon Reeves, Choral Accompanist

Debra Cox, Office Administrator

Dave Wilson, Maintenance Manager

Yvette Meadow, Receptionist

Angela Bakeley, Receptionist

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)