



Central United Methodist Church

A Reconciling Congregation

Organized 1810—Incorporated 1822— Sanctuary completed 1867

December 24, 2022

Christmas Eve



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

WORDS OF WELCOME

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

ONE: We gather – people of faith and no faith

ALL: People of hope and no hope,

ONE: People of peace and no peace.

ALL: We gather with the longing to be made whole again

ONE: If just for this time, here and now. We gather with a prayer,

ALL: However vague and tenuous,

ONE: That in spite of the absence of virgins and angels

ALL: Wise men and shepherds,

ONE: We might still be a witness

ALL: To the birth of all love.

ONE: We gather as ready as we'll ever be

ALL: For this story of faith to unfold.

***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, 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)**

6. **Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning, Jesus to thee be all glory given. Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing. (Refrain)**

Words: John F. Wade, ca. 1743; trans. By Frederick Oakeley, 1841, and others; MUSIC: John F. Wade, ca. 1743; harm. from *Collections of Motets or Antiphons*, 1792; CCLI 2815228

ACTS OF SHARING

GREETING

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

CHILDREN'S TIME

Deaconess Anne Hillman

CALL TO CONFESSION

ONE: As a kid I used to think the prayer of confession was scary.

I thought it was a moment designed to make me feel guilty, intended for eyes cast down and shoulders hung low. But that's not it at all.

The prayer of confession is an invitation.

It's an opportunity to say, "This is who I've been, and *this* is who I long to be."

So let us pray together. Let us be truth tellers. Let us hold our heads high and speak honestly before God and one another.

This is easy to do when we are surrounded by a God who delights in us.

Friends, let us pray:

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

ONE: Holy God, we admit – we don't fully understand the Christmas story.

ALL: We are not familiar with angel choruses.

ONE: We have not walked many miles to be counted in a census.

ALL: And we don't always hear your voice in our dreams.

ONE: We don't fully understand this story, so we admit, sometimes we hesitate to tell it.

Instead of running out into the streets to shout that there is a love bigger than we could imagine,

ALL: We whisper this good news.

ONE: Instead of throwing open the doors and inviting people in,

ALL: We simply leave them unlocked, hoping folks will figure it out.

ONE: Instead of telling the next generation why this night matters so much,

ALL: We stay quiet, afraid of creating pressure.

ONE: Forgive us for our silence.

ALL: Forgive us for our hesitation.

ONE: Forgive us for the moments when we fail to share your good news.

ALL: Plant this story of love so deep in our bones that we cannot help but share it from generation to generation.

WORDS OF FORGIVENESS

ONE: Friends repeat after me:

No matter where we go,

ALL: No matter where we go.

ONE: No matter what we say,

ALL: No matter what we say,

ONE: No matter what we do,

ALL: No matter what we do,

ONE: We belong to God.

ALL: We belong to God.

ONE: We are held.

ALL: We are held.

ONE: We are loved.

ALL: We are loved.

ONE: We are forgiven.

ALL: We are forgiven. Amen.

ANTHEM

INVITATION TO OFFERING

Ready or not, the time for celebrating Jesus' birth is here! Family, food, hope, peace, joy, love. Giving abounds! So I invite us to come forward with generous hearts as we share our financial gifts. I invite you to the offering.

OFFERTORY

*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

Holy God, as we gather this evening, all our attention is focused on a baby, lying in a makeshift bed in an "it-will-have-to-do" stable. It's not lost on us that you sent your Son, our Savior, into the world among the poorest of the poor and told us: "This will be a sign to you." As we present gifts to you, we pray that they might reach those in the greatest need, that they might lift those in the deepest despair, and that they might bring peace and compassion to those who find themselves amidst conflict. We pray this in the name of that Holy Child, Jesus the Christ, our Savior and Redeemer! Amen.

PASTORAL PRAYER

Rev. Dr. Jill Hardt Zundel

*CENTERING HYMN

The First Noel

UMH #245

1. The first Noel the angel did say was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay; in fields where they lay keeping their sheep, on a cold winter's night that was so deep. (Refrain)

(Refrain) Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.

2. They looked up and saw a star shining in the east, beyond them far; and to the earth it gave great light, and so it continued both day and night. (Refrain)

3. And by the light of that same star three Wise Men came from country far; to seek for a king was their intent, and to follow the star wherever it went. (Refrain)

4. This star drew nigh to the northwest, o'er Bethlehem it took its rest; and there it did both stop and stay, right over the place where Jesus lay. (Refrain)

5. Then entered in those Wise Men three, full reverently upon the knee, and offered there in his presence, their gold and myrrh and frankincense. (Refrain)

ACTS OF PROCLAMATION

***GOSPEL READING** *Luke 1: 1-4. 2:1-20*

The Inclusive Bible
Marcus Dickson

Many others have undertaken to compile a narrative of the events which have been fulfilled among us, exactly as those happenings were passed on to us by the original eyewitnesses and ministers 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 those days, Caesar Augustus published a decree ordering a census of the whole Roman world. This 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.

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 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.”

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

Away in a Manger

UMH #217

1. **Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his
sweet head. The stars in the sky
looked down where he lay, the little
Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.**
2. **The cattle are lowing, the baby
awakes, but little Lord Jesus, no
crying he makes; I love thee, Lord
Jesus, look down from the sky and stay
by my cradle til morning is nigh.**

3. **Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask thee to
stay close by me forever, and love me,
I pray; bless all the dear children in
thy tender care, and fit us for heaven
to live with thee there.**

WORDS: Anon.; MUSIC: James R. Murray, 1887; CCLI 2815228

MESSAGE

We Tell This Story

Rev. Dr. Jill Hardt Zundel

*CLOSING 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

BENEDICTION AND SENDING FORTH

*BENEDICTION

Rev. Dr. Jill Hardt Zundel

As you leave this place, may you go knowing that from generation to generation, we have been claimed and loved.

From generation to generation, God has been by our side.

From generation to generation, we are not alone.

The God of yesterday and the God of tomorrow knows you by name, loves you, and calls you forth, saying, "Go be the person you are called to be, love wildly, do justice, and come back soon." May it be so. 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.

**Central United Methodist Church
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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 & Soloist

Maggie Reese, Interim Music Director

Debra Cox, Office Administrator

Andrew Cox, Building Superintendent

Yvette Meadows and 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)