



# Central United Methodist Church

*A Reconciling Congregation*

Organized 1810—Incorporated 1822—Sanctuary completed 1867.

January 5, 2025

## Second Sunday After Christmas - Epiphany

### 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

### PRELUDE

Brandon Reeves & Augustus Williamson

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

### ACTS OF PRAISE

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

ONE: How did you get here?

**ALL: I walked, eyes looking up, following the star.**

ONE: I ran, lunging for a love that is bigger than me.

**ALL: I tumbled and fell, tender step after tender step.**

ONE: Right side of the room: I ambled like a river, caught up in God's flow.

**ALL: I crawled, kissing the earth below me.**

ONE: Tell me again. How did you get here?

**ALL: I am here by God's grace and love's pull.**

ONE: Welcome home.

This is God's house.

There is room for you here.

**ALL: Let us worship our gracious God.**

**\*OPENING HYMN**

*Hark the Herald Angels Sing*

UMH # 240

- 1. Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn 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 newborn King!"**
- 2. Christ, by highest heaven adored; Christ, the everlasting Lord;  
late in time behold him comes, off spring 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

## ACTS OF SHARING

### 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 THE PEACE

Augustus Williamson

#### CHILDREN'S MOMENT

Deaconess Anne Hillman

### INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

#### OFFERTORY

*We Three Kings*

Section Leaders



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**

**ANTHEM**

*On This Day All Earth Shall Ring*

Section Leaders

## **ACTS OF PROCLAMATION**

**\*SCRIPTURE**

*Matthew 2:1-12*

After Jesus' birth—which happened in Bethlehem of Judea, during the reign of Herod—astrologers from the East arrived in Jerusalem and asked, “Where is the newborn ruler of the Jews? We observed his star at its rising and have come to pay homage.” At this news Herod became greatly disturbed, as did all of Jerusalem. Summing all the chief priests and religious scholars of people, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born.

“In Bethlehem of Judea,” they informed him. “Here is what the prophet has written: ‘And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, Are by no means least among the leaders of Judah, Since from you will come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.’”

Herod called the astrologers aside and found out from them the exact time of the star's appearance. “Go and get detailed information about the child. When you have found him, report back to me—so that I may go and offer homage, too.

After their audience with the ruler, they set out. The star which they had observed at its rising went ahead of them until it came to a standstill over the place where the child lay. They were overjoyed at seeing the star and, upon entering the house, found the child with Mary, his mother. They prostrated themselves and paid homage. Then they opened their coffers and presented the child with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

They warned in a dream not to return to Herod, so they went back to their own country by another route.

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

**ALL:** Thanks be to God.

**MESSAGE**

*Words for The Beginning: The Road Isn't Straight*

Rev. Paul Perez

## A SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION *(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, who welcomes the stranger

**ALL: To the One who reaches across every border, we give thanks and praise**

ONE: In wonder of your expansive embrace, we give you praise, O God. Through your radical welcome, you reveal the limitations of our own imaginations. You break down walls and boundaries we don't even realize we have erected.

Like the magi guided by the light of star through foreign territory, you call us all towards you. You lead your people across borders of hate and into lands of curious and different. You strengthen us as we journey, learning and unlearning stories about one another. Gathered in your presence, we come to recognize the gifts of community rich in diversity.

Therefore, we join our voices with your people on earth and all the company of the heavens, singing praise to you,

Holy, Holy, Holy One  
God of justice and love  
Heaven and earth are full of your wonder  
Hosanna among us

You move in mysterious way, O God. This journey with you is filled with more questions than answers. Each time we think we have you figured out, you surprise us again, revealing yourself in new ways.

In Jesus, we saw your radical welcome of strangers extended in challenging ways. Ways that disrupt our traditions and unsettle our comfort zones.

Jesus broke religious rules in order to include all people.  
He lifted up the sacredness of the people and places deemed unclean.  
He cared more about the well-being of the oppressed than his own reputation.

Jesus taught us to rethink your presence among us, but we couldn't accept it.  
Resistant to transformation, your people sent him to the cross.

On the night of his arrest, Jesus shared a meal with his companions.

ONE: He took bread, blessed it, broke it, gave it to his disciples and said:

**ALL: "This is my body which is given for you.  
Do this in remembrance of me."**

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

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

ONE: 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: May the same Spirit that lifted Christ from the grave be poured out on these gifts.  
Make this bread and this cup be an extension of your welcome that knows no  
bounds. Fill us with the courage and faith to join you in the work of tearing down  
walls that exclude and pointing to the Sacred in the margins.  
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, this meal we shared together is a remembrance of your radical embrace of the  
outcast and oppressed. May it strengthen us as we open our minds and hearts to new  
ways of recognizing your presence among us. Amen.

### **\*CLOSING HYMN**

*Go Tell It on the Mountain*

UMH #251

**1. While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night,  
behold throughout the heavens there shown a holy light. (Refrain)**

*(Refrain)* **Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere;  
go, tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born.**

**2. The shepherds feared and trembled, when lo! above the earth,  
rang out the angel chorus that hailed the Savior's birth. (Refrain)**

**3. Down in a lowly manger the humble Christ was born,  
and God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn.**

## BENEDICTION

### **BENEDICTION & SENDING FORTH** (*A Sanctified Art*)

It's okay if your journey hasn't looked like you thought it would. As you navigate twists and turns, stay curious and open to where God might be leading. May you find the courage to explore new routes and the wisdom to follow the One who will never leave or forsake you. May each new path be a chance to trust God and discover deeper truths about the love that will never let you go.

### **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

Dave Wilson, Maintenance Manager

Yvette Meadow & Angela Bakeley, Receptionists

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This service is live-streamed under CCLI STREAM PLUS 21469425

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### **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 Waawiyataanong (“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)