



Central United Methodist Church

A Reconciling Congregation

Organized 1810—Incorporated 1822— Sanctuary completed 1867

December 11, 2022

Third Sunday of Advent



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

*CALL TO WORSHIP

ONE: Come! We shall co-create Good news and call forth the Spirit of the Living Christ:

For disabled people –

ALL: Access!

ONE: For those made poor by oppressive structures –

ALL: Freedom!

ONE: For those who are lonely-

ALL: Connection!

ONE: For those who are sick –

ALL: Healthcare!

ONE: For young people –

ALL: Protection!

ONE: For our elders –

ALL: Dignity!

ONE: For queer people –

ALL: Delight!

ONE: For communities targeted by white supremacy –

ALL: Liberation!

ONE: For flora and fauna –

ALL: Thriving!

ONE: For our decision-making –

ALL: Wisdom!

ONE: For the rough edges of our hearts –

ALL: Healing!

ONE: The Holy plots and plans with us.

ALL: They unlock and trouble and set us free!

***OPENING HYMN**

Angels We Have Heard on High

UMH #238

1. Angels we have heard on high sweetly
singing o'er the plains, and the
mountains in reply echoing their
joyous strains. *(Refrain)*

3. Come to Bethlehem and see Christ
whose birth the angels sing; come,
adore on bended knee, Christ the
Lord, the newborn king. *(Refrain)*

Refrain Gloria, in excelsis Deo!
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

4. See him in a manger laid, whom the
choirs of angels praise, Mary, Joseph,
lend your aid, while our hearts in love
we raise. *(Refrain)*

2. Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why
your joyous strains prolong? What
the gladsome tidings be which inspire
your heavenly song? *(Refrain)*

WORDS: Trad. French carol; trans. *Crown of Jesus*, 1862, alt.;
MUSIC: French carol melody; arr. by Edward Shippen Barnes,
1937; harm. by Austin C. Lovelace, 1964; Harm. © 1964 Abingdon
Press; CCLI 2815228

ACTS OF SHARING

GREETING

ANNOUNCEMENTS

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

CHILDREN'S TIME

Deaconess Anne Hillman

CALL TO CONFESSION

ONE: A series of experiments by Princeton psychologists, Janine Willis and Alexander Todorov, taught the world that it only takes a *tenth* of a second for us to form an impression of a stranger. In other words, it only takes a tenth of a second for us to look at someone's face and determine a stereotype about who they are.

With decisions happening *that* quickly, it is not hard to imagine why we might need this moment of confession.

The prayer of confession is an opportunity to slow down. We take that tenth of a second and give it room to breathe. We reflect on the decisions that we've made this past week and we ask for God's mercy to be in all of them.

And without fail, God wiggles God's self into the cracks of our lives, and we are made better for it. So, with that confidence, let us go to God in prayer:

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of mercy, a million times a day we have the opportunity to be gracious, to assume the best in others, to give the benefit of the doubt. A million times a day we could choose the better way, but so often we don't. Fear and greed kick in. Assumptions and insecurities take the wheel. Comparison and critique lead the charge. Forgive us for forgetting that we are descendants of Joseph. Forgive us for forgetting that grace and mercy are in our blood. Forgive us for forgetting that all belong to you. Give us the courage to love even bigger than before, and the wisdom to choose a better way.

WORDS OF FORGIVENESS

ONE: Family of faith,

We who have chosen wrong, are given a second chance.

We who have lost our way, are welcomed into community.

We who feel alone, are seen, held and known.

This is the good news of the gospel.

No matter how many times we choose wrong or lose our way,

God continues to be a God of second chances, community and love.

Thanks be to God!

ALL: Amen.

ANTHEM

Carol for Advent by Don Besig

Caen Thomason-Redus, Flute

INVITATION TO OFFERING

Activist and poet, June Jordan, said of those seeking liberation: we are the ones we have been waiting for. So let us co-kindle Christ's Luminous Love within our own spirits, not waiting for a time other than this to set each other free. We will gather our resources and gifts, offering them to each other this day that it may be so. I invite you to the offering.

OFFERTORY

The First Noel/Pachelbel's Canon by Michael Clawson

Caen Thomason-Redus, Flute

***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**

To the material reality of our joy, we dedicate our offerings – nourishing food, clean water, safe housing, communal spaces, abundant landscapes, nurturing relationships, space to dance. Come, Holy Spirit, Come. Make vivid our dreams. Amen.

SHARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

PASTORAL PRAYER

Rev. Dr. Jill Hardt Zundel

***CENTERING HYMN**

A Better Way

(Tune: God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen)

**1. When Joseph learned of Mary's state
he pondered her disgrace. He
calculated all the shame the scandal
would create but not content to see her
stoned he offered her some grace.**

(Refrain)

(Refrain) **Oh there is a better way, God's
better way. Oh, we can choose the
better way.**

**2. He planned to leave her quietly and
not create a scene. But Mary still
would grow with child; what then
would her fate be? When Joseph went
to sleep that night an angel intervened.**

(Refrain)

**3. Said Gabriel, "Joseph, do not fear to
make Mary your wife. She bears
inside her womb the hope of
everlasting life the son that she will
bear to you is Jesus the Messiah.**

(Refrain)

**4. Like Joseph woke from sleep to find
his pathway had been changed. Still
here today God calls us all to choose
the better way. Beyond our wildest
dream is still a calling that remains.**

(Refrain)

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ACTS OF PROCLAMATION

***GOSPEL READING**

Matthew 1:18-25

The Inclusive Bible

This is how the birth of Jesus came about.

When Jesus' mother, Mary, was engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Joseph, her husband, an upright person, unwilling to disgrace her, decided to divorce her quietly.

This was Joseph's intention when suddenly the angel of God appeared in a dream, and said, "Joseph, heir to the House of David, don't be afraid to wed Mary; it is by the Holy Spirit that she has conceived this child. She is to have a son, and you are to name him Jesus – 'Salvation' – because he will save the people from their sins."

All this happened to fulfill what God has said through the prophet:

"The virgin will be with child and give birth,
and the child will be named Immanuel." – a name that means "God is with us."

When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of God had directed, and they went ahead with the marriage. He did not have intercourse with her until she had given birth; she had a son, and they named him Jesus.

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

ALL: Thanks be to God!

MESSAGE

We Can Choose a Better Way

Rev. Dr. Jill Hardt Zundel

**Emmanuel, Emmanuel, his name is called Emmanuel.
God with us, revealed in us, his name is called Emmanuel.**

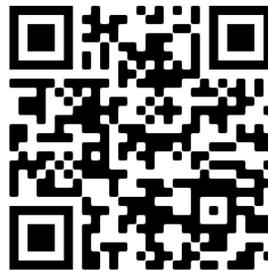
WORDS: Bob McGee, 1976; MUSIC: Bob McGee, 1976; © 1976, C. A. Music (div. of Christian Artists Corp); CCLI2815228

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.

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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
Maggie Reese, Interim Music Director & Bobbi Thompson, Accompanist
Debra Cox, Office Administrator,
Andrew Cox, Building Superintendent, Dave Wilson, Building Maintenance
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 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)