



# Central United Methodist Church

## *A Reconciling Congregation*

Organized 1810—Incorporated 1822—Sanctuary completed 1867

March 28, 2021

Palm Sunday



## 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

### PRELUDE

Daniel Dillingham

### INTROIT

Bobbi Thompson

## ACTS OF PRAISE

### \*CALL TO WORSHIP

ONE: The story of faith is a story of courage.

**ALL: It took courage for John the Baptist to prepare the way.**

ONE: It took courage for Mary to say, "Here I am. Use me."

**ALL: It took courage for the disciples to drop their nets and follow Jesus.**

ONE: It took courage for the paralyzed man's friends to lower him through the roof.

**ALL: It took courage for Peter to walk on water.**

ONE: It took courage for Zacchaeus to give half of his possessions to the poor.

**ALL: It took courage for Jesus to enter Jerusalem on a donkey.**

ONE: Faith has never been easy. It is a journey of courage.

**ALL: Again and Again, God, show us the way.**

ONE: Let us worship a brave and courageous God.

## **\*OPENING HYMN**

*Hosanna, Loud Hosanna*

UMH #278

1. Hosanna, loud hosanna, the little children sang; though pillared court and temple the lovely anthem rang. To Jesus, who had blessed them close folded to his breast, the children sang their praises, the simplest and the best.
2. From Olivet they followed mid an exultant crowd, the victor palm branch waving, and chanting clear and loud. The one whom angels worship rode on in lowly state, and glad to see the children, slowed down the donkey's gait.

3. "Hosanna in the highest!" that ancient song is ours. We hail our great Redeemer and sing with all our powers: "Hosanna, Christ, we praise you with heart and life and voice. Hosanna! In your presence forever we'll rejoice!"

WORDS: Jeanette Threlfall, 1873; MUSIC: *Gesangbuch der H. W. k. Hofkapelle*, 1784; adapt. And harm. By W. H. Monk, 1868; CCLI2815228

## **ACTS OF SHARING**

### **GREETING AND WELCOME OF FIRST TIME VISITORS**

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **TIME FOR CHILDREN**

Deaconess Anne Hillman

### **CALL TO CONFESSION**

ONE: Glennon Doyle, a famous author and writer, frequently uses the phrase, "We can do hard things." It's one of her many mottos in life. As a result, this declaration, "We can do hard things," has become an anthem for so many. You can buy these words on poster prints, on greeting cards and even on coffee mugs. These five simple words aren't particularly radical, so when I stop to think about why they have caught hold for so many, I can only assume that it is because life and faith require courage.

Vulnerability requires courage.

Relationships require courage.

Advocacy and justice require courage.

Facing our privilege requires courage.

Faith requires courage.

Even confession requires courage.

So friends, let us do hard things.

Let us confess together, trusting that God is always there,

Cheering us on, in every courageous act.

Let us pray...

## **PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**God of palm branches and hallelujahs:**

**We confess – we love a good Palm Sunday celebration.**

**We love the sound of a joyful parade.**

**We love shouting, “hallelujah!”**

**We love that Palm Sunday means Easter is just around the corner.**

**We love good news.**

**However, if we slow down and pay attention,**

**We know that Palm Sunday was not a walk in the park for you.**

**There was risk. There was fear. There was the threat of violence.**

**You were leading a peaceful protest against an unjust empire,**

**And the whole world knew it.**

**Forgive us for glossing over the courage this day took.**

**Remind us that the story of faith is a story of courage,**

**And even we can do hard things.**

**With hope we pray. Amen.**

## **WORDS OF FORGIVENESS**

**ONE:** Family of faith, even when we gloss over the truth, even when our courage fails us, even when we doubt that we can do hard things, God believes in us. God loves us. God forgives us. Hear and believe this truth:

**ALL:** We are known. We are loved. We are forgiven. Again and again and again. Amen.

## **INVITATION TO OFFERING**

### **OFFERTORY**

Chantel Woodard

**\*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**

## **PASTORAL PRAYER**

## **HYMN**

*All Glory, Laud and Honor*

Adapted from UMH #280

1. All glory, laud and honor to you, O Christ, we sing, to whom the lips of children made sweet hosannas ring! The people of the Hebrews with palms adorned your way; our praise and prayer and anthems we offer you this day.
2. O Promised One of Israel, of David's royal line. The one called "God's beloved," of flesh and yet divine. To you before your passion, they sang their hymns of praise; to you, now high exalted, our melody we raise.
3. As you received their praises, receive our prayers today, whose justice and whose mercy and sovereignty hold sway. All glory, laud, and honor to you, O Christ we sing, to whom the lips of children made sweet hosannas ring!

## **ACTS OF PROCLAMATION**

### **PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

If we could buy our way closer to you, we'd sell everything we have.

If we could work our way to you, we'd never take a day off.

If we could walk our way to you, we'd keep our tennis shoes on tight.

But I know – we know – we cannot buy, or work, or walk our way closer to you.

We must listen our way closer to you.

So holy God, as you have so often done again and again,

Open our ears,

Clear out the self-talk that keeps us from you.

Dust out the negativity and distractions.

Remove any doubt hindering our way. Amen.

**GOSPEL LESSON***John 12:1-19*

The Inclusive Bible

Six days before Passover, Jesus went to Bethany, the village of Lazarus, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. There they gave a banquet in Jesus' honor, at which Martha served. Lazarus was one of those at the table. Mary brought a pound of costly ointment, pure nard and anointed the feet of Jesus, wiping them with her hair. The house was full of the scent of the ointment.

Judas Iscariot, one of the disciples – the one who was to betray Jesus – protested. “Why wasn't this ointment sold? It could have brought nearly a year's wages, and the money been given to poor people!” Judas didn't say this because he was concerned for poor people, but because he was a thief. He was in charge of the common fund and would help himself to it.

So Jesus replied, “Leave her alone. She did this in preparation for my burial. You have poor people with you always. But you won't always have me.

Meanwhile a large crowd heard that Jesus was there and came to see not only Jesus, but also Lazarus, whom he raised from the dead. So the chief priests planned to kill Lazarus as well, since it was because of him that many of the people were leaving them and believing in Jesus.

The next day, the great crowd that had come for the Passover feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, so they got palm branches and went out to meet him. They shouted joyfully, “Hosanna! Blessed is the One who comes in the name of our God – the ruler of Israel!”

Jesus rode in sitting upon a donkey, in accord with scripture: “Fear not, O people of Zion! Your ruler comes to you sitting on a donkey's colt.”

At the time, the disciples didn't understand all this, but after Jesus was glorified they recalled that the people had done to him precisely what had been written about him.

Those who had been present when Jesus called Lazarus from the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to spread the word. A crowd gathered, and they went out to meet Jesus because they had heard he had performed this miraculous sign.

Then the Pharisees said to one another, “See, this is getting us nowhere! Look – the whole world is running after him.”

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

**ALL:** Thanks be to God.

**MESSAGE***Again and Again: We Draw on Courage*

Rev. Dr. Jill Hardt Zundel

# SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

ONE: May the God of hosannas be with you.

**ALL: May the God of this holy week be with you.**

ONE: Lift your broken hearts to our God,

**ALL: Who will fill them with hope in these days.**

ONE: Remember to sing laments during this holy time,

**ALL: We do so, that we may know the reason for glad songs of joy.**

ONE: Morning by morning, creation's voices join in praising you, God of every goodness. The forests form a festal procession, the heavens reflect your glory's light. We were formed by you and we looked around at everything sin and death had to offer, and followed them through the world, thinking they could protect us.

You gave prophets the tongues of teachers, to comfort our weariness and teach us the way back to you, but we turned our back on them. When judgment did not lead to redemption, you sent Jesus to reach out in love, to bring us home to you.

So with those who spread cloaks before you, and those who are sustained by your love, we join our voices, singing:

**ALL: Holy, holy, holy, God of enduring love. From every part of creation come glad songs. Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is the One who comes in humility and hope. Hosanna in the highest!**

ONE: Holy are you, Sustainer of the weary, and blessed is Jesus Christ, your Love become human. He emptied himself of glory, to be filled with our broken hopes and hearts. He chose the path of suffering love, so that we could run through the streets of the kingdom waving branches of joy. He walked the sin-cold stones into the tomb which could not hold him, so we could join our voices together, "Hosanna! Hosanna! He is risen!" As we journey through Jerusalem and beyond, as we struggle with death, loss and grief we would ponder that mystery we call faith:

**ALL: In trust, Christ died.**

**In joy, Christ was raised to new life.**

**In hope, Christ will come again.**

ONE: As we gather together, we discover the world you intended. Here where your love enlivens the bread and the cup, we are given more than enough of everything we need. Sharing deeply in the Spirit, we can give hope its wings, as it carries us to serve the broken all around us. Strengthened by the grace with which you feed us, we can join together to sustain the weary of the world.

And when the gates of joy have been opened to us, we will spend moment by moment, every knee in creation bending, singing our praises to you, God in community, Holy in One. Amen.

**CLOSING HYMN**

*O How He Loves You and Me*

TFWS #2108

1. O how he loves you and me! O how he loves you and me! He gave his life. What more could he give? O how he loves you; O how he loves me; O how he loves you and me!

2. Jesus to Calv'ry did go; his love for sinners to show. What he did there brought hope from despair. O how he loves you; O how he loves me; O how he loves you and me!

WORDS: Kurt Kaiser; MUSIC: Kurt Kaiser; ©1975 Word Music, Inc. CCLI2815228

**BENEDICTION AND SENDING FORTH**

**\*BENEDICTION**

Rev. Dr. Jill Hardt Zundel

As you leave this space,  
May your mouth speak of God's goodness.  
May your arms hold those in need.  
May your feet walk toward justice.  
May your heart trust its worth.  
May your soul dance in God's grace.  
And may this be your rhythm-  
Again and again and again,  
Until God's promised day.  
In the name of the Lover, the Beloved, and Love itself,  
Go with courage, go with heart, go in peace. Amen.

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