



# Central United Methodist Church

*A Reconciling Congregation*

Organized 1810—Incorporated 1822— Sanctuary completed 1867

January 3, 2021  
Epiphany 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: We gather wondering, "Where will we find the Babe born in Bethlehem?"

**ALL: We will find the Babe in the laughter of children, in the wisdom of grandparents.**

ONE: We gather asking, "Where will we find the Child of Christmas?"

**ALL: We will find the Child where the needy are gifted with hope, where the oppressed are set free.**

ONE: We gather wanting to know, "Where will we find the Christ who has come for us?"

**ALL: We will find our hope where fear is overwhelmed by grace, where hatred is overwhelmed by love, where all people are overwhelmed by joy.**

### \*OPENING HYMN

*We Three Kings*

UMH #254

1. We three kings of Orient are; bearing gifts  
we traverse afar, field and fountain, moor  
and mountain, following yonder star.

*(Refrain)*

*(Refrain)* O star of wonder, star of light, star  
with royal beauty bright, westward  
leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy  
perfect light.

2. Born a King on Bethlehem's plain, gold I  
bring to crown him again, King forever,  
ceasing never, over us all to reign.

*(Refrain)*

3. Frankincense to offer have I; incense owns  
a Deity nigh; prayer and praising, voices  
raising, worshiping God on high. *(Refrain)*

4. Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume breathes  
a life of gathering gloom; sorrowing,  
sighing, bleeding dying, sealed in a stone  
cold tomb. *(Refrain)*

5. Glorious now behold him arise; King and  
God and sacrifice: Alleluia, Alleluia,  
sounds through the earth and skies.

*(Refrain)*

WORDS: John H. Hopkins, Jr., 1857; MUSIC: John H. Hopkins, Jr., 1957;  
CCLI 2815228

# ACTS OF SHARING

## GREETING AND WELCOME OF FIRST TIME VISITORS

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

## TIME FOR CHILDREN

Deaconess Anne Hillman

## PRAYER

**O Star-flinging God, whose light dances across eternity, dazzle us into your presence this new year. Open our hearts to the mystery of your love. Awaken us to your presence, knit to the ordinary. Reveal to us what is possible, but not yet present. Heal us that we might be healers.**

**Reconcile us to you and to ourselves that our living might be reconciling.**

**Stop us often, we pray with news that is good, with hope that holds, with truth that transforms with a Word tailored to this trail we're on.**

**May the word of your grace guide our steps like the sun by day and the north star by night, as we travel into the gift of a new year. Amen.** (written by Glenn Mitchell)

## HEBREW SCRIPTURE

*Isaiah 60:1-6* The Inclusive Bible

Alex Oatley

“Arise, shine, for your light has come! The glory of God is rising upon you! Though darkness still covers the earth and dense clouds enshroud the peoples upon you God now dawns, and God’s glory will be seen among you! The nations will come to your light and the leaders to your bright dawn! Lift up your eyes and look around: they’re all gathering and coming to you – your daughters and your sons journey from afar, escorted in safety; you’ll see them and beam with joy, your heart will swell with pride.

The riches of the seas will flow to you, and the wealth of the nations will come to you, camel caravans will cover your roads, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; everyone in Sheba will come, bringing gold and incense and singing the praise of God.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

**ALL: Thanks be to God**

## INVITATION TO 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. Amen.

## PRAYER OF DEDICATION

## SHARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

## PASTORAL PRAYER

## CENTERING HYMN

*The First Noel*

adapted from 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, born in a manger, Emmanuel.
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*)

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## ACTS OF PROCLAMATION

### GOSPEL LESSON

*Matthew 2:1-12* The Inclusive Bible

Alex Oatley

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. Summoning all the chief priests and religious scholars of the 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. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, after having instructed him, “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 were 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.**

**SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION**

ONE: Let us pray: We give you thanks, O God, for making your love evident since the very beginning of time when you spoke the word which replaced the darkness of chaos with life-giving light. A light which has nurtured generations of people, and plants and creatures, great and small. A light which also revealed the fear and powerlessness caused by corrupt and evil actions. And so you spoke the Word which would once and for all dispel the darkness of chaotic lives. Through your love for the world the Word became flesh and lived among us full of grace and truth. The angels caroled glory to you in the highest heavens and peace to all people on earth, and we join with them and with all people to praise their holy name:

**ALL: Holy God of endless love, heaven and earth are surely full of your glory. The angels sang of it – we have been lavished with it. Blessed is he who was born that we might have life. Glory to God and on earth peace to all people.**

ONE: Holy God, as travelers with their treasures were overwhelmed with joy on finding Jesus, so we also are overwhelmed on finding out the depth of his love for us. For Jesus showed just how beloved we are to him, by loving and giving himself for us.

On that night when he gave himself up for us, as he sat at the table and broke bread with his friends, he said, “Take and eat, this is my body which is broken for you. Remember me each time you do this.” After they had eaten, he took the cup and said, “Remember me as you drink from this, for it is my life, poured out for you – the beginning of a new relationship with God.”

Send the power of your Holy Spirit on these gifts of bread and juice, O God, that we may experience the presence of the Word-made-flesh- Jesus Christ. Breathe your Spirit in us that we may be one body with him – living out his ministry in the world today and every day. This we pray in Jesus’ name. Amen. (Written by Moira Laidlaw)

## CLOSING HYMN

*Star Child*

TFWS #2095

1. Star Child, earth Child, go between of  
God, love Child, Christ Child, heaven's  
lightning rod. *(Refrain)*

3. Grown child, old child, memory full of  
years, sad child, lost child, story told in  
tears, *(Refrain)*

*(Refrain)* This year, this year, let the day  
arrive when Christmas comes for  
everyone, everyone alive!

4. Spared child, spoiled child, having,  
wanting more, wise child, faith child,  
knowing joy in store, *(Refrain)*

2. Street child, beat child, no place left to  
go, hurt child, used child, no one wants to  
know, *(Refrain)*

5. Hope for peace Child, God's stupendous  
sign, down to earth Child, Star of stars  
that shine, *(Refrain)*

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## BENEDICTION AND SENDING FORTH

**\*BENEDICTION**

Rev. Dr. Jill Hardt Zundel

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