



# Central United Methodist Church

*A Reconciling Congregation*

Organized 1810—Incorporated 1822— Sanctuary completed 1867

May 2, 2021

Fifth Sunday of Easter

## 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 are God's people, the community of Christ, living compassion and hope. In this moment and in this place, we gather around to worship our God, to uphold one another in prayer and be bound to each other in friendship and concern. We come as a community bound by the spirit who calls us to be vital, vibrant people, living out our redemption, forward looking, alert and ready to bring healing and wholeness to the world.

**ALL: God of life, gather us in and hold us in love.**

**ONE:** We come for we have heard the call to live compassion's way, to welcome the stranger and break down barriers of exclusion, to reconcile our differences and set aside wrongs, to embrace our diversity and know the blessing and harmony that is found when we open our hearts and minds to all.

**ALL: God of justice, gather us in and encircle us with grace.**

**ONE:** We come to sing hope's song, to sing in the light when darkness abounds, to be a beacon of joy in desperate places, to respond to God's love as it beckons us into a still more excellent way.

**ALL: God who makes all things new, gather us close as we walk a resurrection path.  
Amen.**

## **\*OPENING HYMN**

*Gather Us In*

TFWS #2236

1. Here in this place new light is streaming,  
now is the darkness vanished away, see in  
this space our fears and our dreaming,  
brought here to you in the light of this  
day. Gather us in - the lost and forsaken,  
gather us in - the blind and the lame; call  
to us now, and we shall awaken, we shall  
arise at the sound of our name.
2. We are the young – our lives are a  
myst'ry, we are the old who yearn for  
your face, we have been sung throughout  
all of hist'ry, called to be light to the  
whole human race. Gather us in – the  
rich and the haughty, gather us in – the  
proud and the strong; give us a heart so  
meek and so lowly, give us the courage to  
enter the song.
3. Here we will take the wine and the water,  
here we will take the bread of new birth,  
here you shall call your songs and your  
daughters, call us anew to be salt of the  
earth, give us to drink the wine of  
compassion, give us to eat the bread that  
is you; nourish us well, and teach us to  
fashion lives that are holy and hearts that  
are true.
4. Not in the dark of buildings confining,  
not in some heaven, light years away, but  
here in this place the new light is shining,  
now is the Kin-dom, now is the day.  
Gather us in and hold us forever, gather  
us in and make us your own; gather us in  
– all peoples together, fire of love in our  
flesh and our bone.

WORDS: Marty Haugen; MUSIC: Marty Haugen; ©1982 GIA Publications, Inc CCLI2815228

## **ACTS OF SHARING**

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

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **TIME FOR CHILDREN**

Deaconess Anne Hillman

### **PRAYER FOR THE MORNING**

**O God, You who are always doing a new thing,  
we confess that we sometimes close windows  
against the fresh air of new ideas,  
against the noise of other people's worries,  
against the winds of change.**

**God of every place and time,  
we confess that we often draw the curtains  
against people who are different,  
against world news or community concerns.**

**Forgive us our insulation in our locked homes,  
our shuttered churches,  
the security systems on our hearts.  
Open up our lives,  
and let your Spirit blow through. Amen.**

## INVITATION TO OFFERING

## OFFERTORY

Brandon Spencer

**\*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

*Swing Low, Sweet Chariot*

UMH #703

*(Refrain)* Swing low, sweet chariot, coming for to carry me home; swing low, sweet chariot, coming for to carry me home.

1. I looked over Jordan, and what did I see, coming for to carry me home? A band of angels coming after me, coming for to carry me home. *(Refrain)*
2. If you get there before I do, coming for to carry me home; tell all my friends I'm coming too, coming for to carry me home. *(Refrain)*

3. I'm sometimes up, I'm sometimes down, coming for to carry me home; but still my soul feels heavenly bound, coming for to carry me home. *(Refrain)*
4. The brightest day that I can say, coming for to carry me home; when Jesus washed my sins away, coming for to carry me home. *(Refrain)*

WORDS: Afro-American spiritual; MUSIC: Afro-American spiritual; adapt. And arr. By William Farley Smith, 1987; Adapt. And arr. ©1989 The United Methodist Publishing House; CCLI2815228

# ACTS OF PROCLAMATION

**NEW TESTAMENT LESSON**      *Acts 8:26-40*

Bobbi Thompson

An angel of God spoke to Philip and said, “Be ready to set out at noon along the road that goes to Gaza, the desert road.” So Philip began his journey.

It happened that an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official in charge of the entire treasure of Candace, the ruler of Ethiopia, had come to Jerusalem on a pilgrimage and was returning home. He was sitting in his carriage and reading the prophet Isaiah.

The Spirit said to Philip, “Go up and meet that carriage.”

When Philip ran up, he heard the eunuch reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?”

“How can I,” the eunuch replied, “unless someone explains it to me?” With that, he invited Philip to get in the carriage with him. This was the passage of scripture being read:

“You are like a sheep being led to slaughter, you are like a lamb that is mute in front of its shearers: like them, you never open your mouth. You have been humiliated and have no one to defend you. Who will ever talk about your descendants, since your life on earth has been cut short?”

The eunuch said to Philip, “Tell me, if you will, about whom the prophet is talking – himself or someone else?”

So Philip proceeded to explain the Good News about Jesus to him.

Further along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “Look, there is some water right there. Is there anything to keep me from being baptized?”

He ordered the carriage to stop; then Philip and the eunuch both went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. When they came out of the water, the Spirit of God snatched Philip away, the eunuch didn’t see him anymore and went on his way rejoicing.

Philip found himself at Ashdod next, and he went about proclaiming the Good News in all the towns, until he came to Caesarea.

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

**ALL: Thanks be to God.**

**MUSIC**

Bobbi Thompson

**MESSAGE**

*Break the Rules!*

Rev. Dr. Jill Hardt Zundel

**PASSING OF THE PEACE OF CHRIST**

**SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION** (From the website Enfleshed)

**ONE:** Community of Saints, beloved of God, we are invited to come and gather at the table of love and liberation, to feast on the dreams of God, to be nourished by but a taste of what God desires to do among us.

God calls us from institutional halls of power, from shelters and the streets;  
God calls us from classrooms and pulpits, Gay bars and prison cells.  
God calls us as we are, from wherever we are, to come and be in solidarity with Christ who lives and loves on the margins.

God whispers “come” and live abundantly turning from all that claims blessings flow from money, power or control.  
Come, and love relentlessly, following Christ on paths of uncertainty, taking risks for one another, calling down unjust power from its throne and lifting up the lowly, the impoverished, the burdened.

To answer the call of Christ is to find ourselves, no matter our social location, choosing to align ourselves with the causes of the marginalized, the oppressed, the outcast and the isolated with the faith that together, we might en flesh new possibilities of healing, of connection, of freedom from all that destroys. When these are the desires of our hearts, we open ourselves to God. Blessed are those, Jesus said, who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. And so, let us come to the table, expectant, eager, open to tasting the rich blessings of heaven born from unexpected places and people and experiences.

In this meal, we remember the life, death and resurrection of the One who still takes on flesh among us today. On the night he would be arrested, Jesus gathered his friends and companions in the midst of a tense and dangerous time, they found each other at the table, connecting over the story of God-enfleshed among them.

And as they did so, Jesus took bread, gave thanks to God, broke the bread and shared it with his disciples saying, “Take, eat, this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” When the supper was over, he also took the cup, gave thanks to God, and shared it with his disciples saying, “Drink from this, all of you, this is the cup of the new covenant. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” And so we pray:

**ALL: Come, Holy Spirit, Breath of God, Renewer of Life, settle on these gifts and all who gather here, that we might be transformed in our remembrance of your radical love, your eternal embrace, and your grace that makes all things new.**

**For the sake of our shared lives, the life of this land on which we live and the lives of those yet to come, nourish us and renew our hope that soon Christ may rise again among us. Amen.**

**HYMN**

*Everyone Is Welcomed Freely*

(Tune UMH #384)

**1. Everyone is welcomed freely; everyone can come and pray. There is room for all God's people in the house of God today. We confess with pain and sorrow, times we've closed the door to grace, now we stand here as a witness: All are welcome in this place!**

**3. Everyone is now invited; turning from them is a sin. Refugees, you are our brothers! Wounded sisters, come on in! All you rich who bow in serving: Greet and welcome in the poor! No one waits who longs for welcome; In God's house, there's room and more.**

**2. Christ, you turned the tables over when the leaders strived for gain, when they crowded out outsiders, seeking wealth and causing pain. When we tolerate divisions – walls we build by greed or pride – God, remind us that your mercy welcomes everyone inside.**

Tune: John Zundel, 1870 (Love Divine, All Loves Excelling);  
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## **BENEDICTION AND SENDING FORTH**

**\*BENEDICTION**

Rev. Dr. Jill Hardt Zundel

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### **Central United Methodist Church**

**23 East Adams, Detroit, Michigan 48226 ~ 313.965.5422**

**[www.centralumchurchdetroit.org](http://www.centralumchurchdetroit.org)**

Rev. Dr. Jill Hardt Zundel, Senior Pastor

Rev. Edwin Rowe, Pastor Emeritus

Deaconess Anne Hillman, Ph. D, Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministries

Daniel Dillingham, Minister of Music

Bobbi Thompson, Accompanist & Soloist

Debra Cox, Office Administrator

Andrew Cox, Building Superintendent

Yvette Meadows and Angela Bakeley, Receptionists