



Central United Methodist Church

A Reconciling Congregation

Organized 1810—Incorporated 1822—Sanctuary completed 1867

March 21, 2021
Fifth Sunday in Lent

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: Every week is a new week, another chance to say:

ALL: "Here I am. Use me."

ONE: Every day is a new day, another chance to say:

ALL: "Thank you for yesterday. Thank you for tomorrow."

ONE: Every hour is a new hour, another chance to say,

ALL: "Again and again, make me new."

ONE: We do not come to this place to stay the same.

ALL: We come to this place to be changed.

ONE: So let us worship a holy God, who created yesterday, will create tomorrow, and even now is creating something new.

*OPENING HYMN

Change My Heart, O God (two times)

TFWS #2152

Change my heart, O God, make it ever true.

Change my heart, O God, Make it be like you.

You are the Potter, I am the clay.

Mold me and make me, this is what I pray.

Change my heart, O God, make it ever true,

Change my heart, O God, May it be like you.

ACTS OF SHARING

GREETING AND WELCOME OF FIRST TIME VISITORS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

TIME FOR CHILDREN

Deaconess Anne Hillman

CALL TO CONFESSION

ONE: In the gospel of John, a group of Greek people approach the disciples and say, “We would like to see Jesus.” It’s a brief, beautiful moment that the text doesn’t spend a lot of time on. And yet, it always catches my eye. It catches my eye, because the phrase, “I want to see Jesus,” feels like it should be my constant prayer.

Help me see Jesus.

I’d like to see Jesus.

Bring me closer to Jesus.

In the prayer of confession, we take a moment to recognize how much space exists between us and those words, trusting that even when we forget to seek out God, God is seeking us out. So join me in the prayer of confession today as we take one step closer to the Divine.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Gracious God, we want to see you. We want to be known as the people who looked for Jesus; but not only that, we want to be people who have your covenant written on our hearts. Why do we feel so far away from that at times?

What went wrong?

Where did we lose our way?

Could you, would you, once again, write on our fragile hearts?

We would be so grateful. Amen.

WORDS OF FORGIVENESS

ONE: Friends, despite our wonderings, despite our distractions, despite wrong turns time and time again, we are known and loved by God. Like a lighthouse keeper by the sea, God will never stop waving us home. So hear and believe the good news of the gospel.

ALL: Our fragile bones are held by the Great Creator.

Our fragile hearts are loved by the Great Creator.

Our tender spirits are forgiven by the Great Creator.

ONE: Today is a new day.

ALL: Again and again, we are forgiven; again and again, we are reformed. Thanks be to God. Amen.

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

HYMN

You Are the Seed

UMH #583

1. You are the seed that will grow a new sprout; you're a star that will shine in the night; you are the yeast and a small grain of salt, a beacon to flow in the dark. You are the dawn that will bring a new day; you're the wheat that will bear golden grain; you are a sting and a soft, gentle touch, my witnesses wher-e'er you go.
(Refrain)

2. You are the flame that will lighten the dark, sending sparkles of hope, faith and love; you are the shepherds to lead the whole world through valleys and pastures of peace. You are the friends that I chose for myself, the word that I want to proclaim. You are the new kin-dom built on a rock where justice and truth always reign. *(Refrain)*

(Refrain) Go, my friends, go to the world, proclaiming love to all, messengers of my forgiving peace, eternal love. Be, my friends, a loyal witness, from the dead I arose; "Lo, I'll be with you forever, till the end of the world."

3. You are the life that will nurture the plant; you're the waves on a turbulent sea; yesterday's yeast is beginning to rise, a new loaf of bread it will yield. There is no place for a city to hide, nor a mountain can cover its might; may your good deeds show a world of despair a path that will lead all to God. *(Refrain)*

WORDS: Cesareo Gabarain, 1979; trans. By Raquel Gutierrez-Achon and Skinner Chavez-Melo; MUSIC: Cesareo Gabarain, 1979; harm. By Skinner Chavez-Melo, 1987; CCLI2815228

ACTS OF PROCLAMATION

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Holy God, Scripture tells us that your word is written on our hearts. But we struggle to hear it. Is it possible that we have covered up your words with our own self-narratives? Is it possible that we have erased your truth to write our own? Is it possible that we have forgotten your words entirely?

Take us back to the beginning. Remove the self-talk that distracts. Clear away the cobwebs of doubt. Show us how to look inside ourselves for your truth, and then write on our hearts once more. We are listening. We are hopeful. We are here. Speak now. Amen.

GOSPEL LESSON

John 12:20-33

The Inclusive Bible

Among those who had come up to worship at the Passover festival were some Greeks. They approached Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and put forth this request. "Please, would like to see Jesus." Philip went to tell Andrew, and together the two went to tell Jesus.

Jesus replied, "Now the hour has come for the Chosen One to be glorified. The truth of the matter is, unless a grain of wheat falls on the ground and dies, it remains only a single grain, but if it dies, it yields a rich harvest. If you love your life you'll lose it; if you hate your life in this world you'll keep it for eternal life. Anyone who wants to work for me must follow in my footsteps, and wherever I am, my worker will be there too. Anyone who works for me will be honored by Abba God.

Now my soul is troubled. What will I say: 'Abba, save me from this hour?' But it was for this very reason that I have come to this hour. Abba, glorify your name!"

A voice came from heaven: "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again."

The crowds that stood nearby heard this and said it was a clap of thunder; others said, "It was an angel speaking."

Jesus answered, "It was not for my sake that this voice came but for ours. Sentence is now being passed on this world; now the ruler of this world will be overthrown. and when I am lifted up from this earth, I will draw all people to myself." By these words Jesus indicated the kind of death he would die.

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

ALL: **Thanks be to God.**

MESSAGE

Again and Again: We Are Reformed

Rev. Dr. Jill Hardt Zundel

VIDEO

Change by Jermaine Dupri

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VcI63ydmnQA>

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.

Central United Methodist Church

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