



# Central United Methodist Church

*A Reconciling Congregation*

Organized 1810—Incorporated 1822— Sanctuary completed 1867

December 6, 2020  
Second 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

**PRELUDE**

Daniel Dillingham

**INTROIT**

Bobbi Thompson

# ACTS OF PRAISE

## WELCOME

### CROSSING THE THRESHOLD

In both the Gospel of Matthew and Isaiah, a messenger appears as a sign from God, heralding a new era. In each passage, the words, “do not be afraid” appear...offering a clue that the messenger – whether prophet or angel – was referencing something that induced fear in the recipient. A new way of being together, of relating and loving takes courage – letting go of the present order of things so that a new and better day can be born.

### THRESHOLD MUSIC

(Solo) I believe in love, I believe in love, even when, even when I don't feel it.  
I believe in love, I believe in love, even when, even when I don't feel it.

ONE: The emptiness of loneliness

**ALL: The emptiness of loneliness**

ONE: The wounds inflicted

**ALL: The wounds inflicted**

ONE: The fear of the “other”

**ALL: The fear of the “other”**

### PRAYER:

ONE: Holy One, we thank you for the glimpses we catch of your gift of daring love. Even in the midst of fear, of challenge, of struggle- even when we cannot yet see a better day, when we will act like the human family we are, ignite the flame of love within us.

**ALL: That we might glow with its brilliance from the inside out.**

(Congregation joins soloist in unison)

I believe in love, I believe in love, even when, even when I don't feel it.

ONE: Help us face this fear of difference and dare to see what love can do.

**ALL: Amen.**

ONE: You are invited to light your Advent 2 candle of love at this time.

**OPENING HYMN** *Lift Up Your Heads, O Mighty Gates* Adapted from UMH 213

**1. Lift up your heads, O mighty gates;  
behold the glorious Ruler waits! The  
Sovereign One is drawing near; the  
Savior of the world is here.**

**3. Redeemer, come! I open wide my  
heart to you; here, Christ abide! Let  
me your inner presence feel; your  
grace and love in me reveal.**

**2. Fling wide the portals of your heart;  
make it a temple, set apart. From  
earthly use for heaven's employ,  
adorned with prayer and love and joy.**

**4. So come my Sovereign; enter in! Let  
new and nobler life begin; Your Holy  
Spirit guide us on, until the glorious  
crown be won.**

# ACTS OF SHARING

## GREETING AND WELCOME OF FIRST TIME VISITORS

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

## ACTS OF PROCLAMATION

### CHILDREN'S TIME TO SHINE

Deaconess Anne Hillman

(children first sing "This Little Light of Mine")

**Pastor:** As we said last week, our worship series this Advent calls on the power of music that has always called humanity to a brighter tomorrow. Rather than turn away from music in sorrow, we will turn toward the story of music and deepen our appreciation of its role in healing, change and reconciliation. On this Sunday, with "love" at the center, we can attest that probably love songs top the charts in the history of human song.

This week, our film festival will be watching and discussing the documentary film, *Girls on the Wall*. It is available to rent on Amazon Prime for \$1.99. We will be gathering on zoom on December 09 at 7:00 to discuss this movie. The "girls" of this documentary film are juvenile offenders in prison. A drama teacher leads them in writing the story of their lives and creating a musical out of it. As they allow the process and the music to penetrate their hardened hearts, they find that their desire for love is the key to moving forward in their own healing and rehabilitation.

In this moment, we present to you an anthem called "Love Has Broken Down the Walls." This anthem has become a favorite of youth choirs across the country. Young people are showing us what it means to accept each other's diversity as a global community and we pray that this continues as time moves on.

### ANTHEM

*Love Has Broken Down the Walls* by Mark Miller

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rmO-CrV\\_ABo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rmO-CrV_ABo)

**GOSPEL READING***Matthew 1:1-25*

New International Version

A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham.

Abraham was the father of Isaac,

Isaac the father of Jacob,

Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers.

Judah, the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar.

Perez the father of Hezron,

Hezron the father of Ram,

Ram the father of Amminadab,

Amminadab the father of Nahshon,

Nahshon the father of Salmon,

Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab,

Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth,

Obed the father of Jesse,

and Jesse the father of King David.

David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife,

Solomon the father of Rehoboam,

Rehoboam the father of Abijah,

Abijah the father of Asa,

Asa the father of Jehoshaphat,

Jehoshaphat the father of Jehoram,

Jehoram the father of Uzziah,

Uzziah the father of Jotham,

Jotham the father of Ahaz,

Ahaz the father of Hezekiah,

Hezekiah the father of Manasseh,

Manasseh the father of Amon,

Amon the father of Josiah,

and Josiah the father of Jeconiah and his brothers at the time of the exile to Babylon.

After the exile to Babylon:

Jeconiah was the father of Shealtiel,

Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel,

Zerubbabel, the father of Abiud,

Abiud the father of Eliakim

Eliakim the father of Azor,

Azor the father of Zadok,

Zadok the father of Akim

Akim the father of Eliud,

Eliud the father of Eleazar,

Eleazar the father of Matthan,

Matthan the father of Jacob,

and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

Thus there were fourteen generations in all from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Christ.

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

But after he had considered this, an angel of God appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus because he will save his people from their sins.”

All this took place to fulfill what God had said through the prophet: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel – which means “God with us”.

When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of God had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

**ALL: Thanks be to God!**

**MESSAGE**      *I Believe in Love: Daring Right Relationship*      Rev. Dr. Jill Hardt Zundel

## **WE RESPOND**

### **PRAYERS IN THE STILLNESS**

Pastor: I invite you to get in a comfortable position of rest. I invite you to a deep breath and a deep listening posture – perhaps eyes closed or fixed on a candle – as we prepare for a time of prayer. (Breathe)

(Song by soloist)

The gentle pull of God  
is often lost amidst the rush  
of all the obligations which lay a claim on us.

Yet just beyond the frantic pace  
our restless feet have roamed  
lie deep still pools of quietness-  
the dwelling place of God.

Meet me in the stillness, God,  
Be the air I breathe  
Meet me in the stillness, God  
Free me to receive

O take me to that secret place  
where lost in wonder and in awe,  
the moment comes and I rejoice  
to be and be with God.

Meet me in the stillness, God,  
Be the air I breathe  
Meet me in the stillness, God,  
Free me to receive

## **PASTORAL PRAYER**

## **INVITATION TO OFFERING**

## **OFFERTORY**

## **DOXOLOGY** (Sung to TFWS 2036)

Believe, with a hopeful heart!  
Believe, and shine your light!  
Believe, because the song we sing is sung for all!

And now let the weak say, "I am strong;"  
let the poor say, "I am rich,  
Because of what our God, has done for us." Believe!

## **PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

## **COMMUNION PRAYER**

**ONE:** God, you filled the night of creation with music and light, setting in motion the rhythms of sunrise and sunset, of sound and silence. You formed within us your love song and breathed into us the breath of life.

Sometimes our voices are choked off and we cannot find your melody. But you keep the bass line humming, waiting for us to rejoin the chorus. You show up in the worst of times, offering us the way to freedom in you. Your voice breaks through in prophets whose songs wake us up to the kingdom you desire.

On the night in which Jesus gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples and said: "Take, eat, this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

When the supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples and said, "Drink from this all of you; this is my love poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

In remembrance of your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

**ALL: Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.**

**ONE:** Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here and on these gifts of bread and fruit of the vine. Make them be for us your love and light so that our hearts may be broken open for the world and our lives poured out in service.

By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet. Through Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy church, all honor and glory is yours, now and forever. Amen.

The body of Christ given for you. **Amen**  
The life of Christ poured out for you. **Amen.**

## **CAROL OF RESISTANCE**

*It Came Upon a Midnight Clear*

Our Carol of Resistance was written in 1849 by a Massachusetts Unitarian minister, Rev. Edmund Hamilton Sears. One verse has been left out of several hymnals over the decades but was added back in the new hymnal *Glory to God*, which restores this powerful verse that refers to the love-song of the angels being drowned out by our warring nature:

“Yet with the woes of sin and strife  
the world has suffered long;  
beneath the angel-strain have rolled  
two thousand years of wrong;  
and we at war on earth hear not  
the love-song which they bring;  
O hush the noise and cease the strife,  
and hear the angels sing.

Let us be reminded that we are to listen to the angel chorus and then join it, raising our voices with the message that love, not hate, is the answer.

1. It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old, from angels bending near the earth, to touch their harps of gold: “Peace on the earth, good will to all, great news of joy we bring.” The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.
2. Still through the cloven skies they come with peaceful wings unfurled, and still their heavenly music floats o’er all the weary world; above its sad and lowly plains, they bend on hovering wing, and ever o’er its Babel sounds the blessed angels sing.
3. And ye, beneath life’s crushing load, whose forms are bending low, who toil along the climbing way with painful steps and slow, look now! for glad and golden hours come swiftly on the wing. O rest beside the weary road, and hear the angels sing!
4. Yet with the woes of sin and strife the world has suffered long; beneath the angel-strain have rolled two thousand years of wrong; and we at war on earth hear not the love-song which they bring; O hush the noise and cease the strife, and hear the angels sing.
5. For lo! the days are hastening on, by prophet seen of old, when with the ever circling years shall come the time foretold when peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling; and the whole world send back the song which now the angels sing.

# BENEDICTION AND SENDING FORTH

## \*BENEDICTION

Rev. Dr. Jill Hardt Zundel

We wait for justice but we do not wait to work for change;  
We wait for restored health but we do not wait to work to heal;  
We wait for wholeness but we do not wait to work at binding brokenness.  
We wait for peace but we do not wait to work to eliminate hatred.

And so, my friends, like bells ringing out the news  
that the sun still shines even on cloudy days,  
fill the night left by sadness with messages of hope.  
Go into your lives humming the tunes that keep that hope alive in you  
and that spur you on in your work of justice and reconciliation.  
Raise your voices and repeat after me....Do not be afraid!  
**Do not be afraid! Amen.**

## BELL BENEDICTION

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