

Central United Methodist Church

3700 Pacific Avenue, Stockton, CA 95204

ORDER OF WORSHIP Sunday, October 2, 2022



GATHERING

PRELUDE

He's Got the Whole World in His Hands
[Traditional Spiritual]

Rebecca Nelson

GATHERING MOMENT

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: By the rivers of San Joaquin, there we sat down, and there we wept
All: How could we sing the Lord's song in this situation?
Leader: Many of our family suffered from COVID 19, wildfires, and depression!
All: We still do not know what is going to happen in the world!
Leader: Remember, O Lord, your people and your children!
All: You are the only hope that we have, our King and our Master!
Leader: We wait for you, Lord, now!
All: Show your mercy upon us and speak to us today! Amen.

INTROIT

From the Rising of the Sun
[Eric Thiman]

Chancel Choir

*OPENING HYMN

Draw Us In the Spirit's Tether
(sing in your own language)

UMH #632

CHILDREN'S MOMENT

Alan Cook

PRAYER CARDS COLLECTED

MISSION & MINISTRIES MOMENT

RITE OF FRIENDSHIP AND A SPECIAL WELCOME TO OUR VISITORS

*PASSING THE PEACE

(Stand, bow or wave, with the word "Peace be with You!")

All Sing: Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path (2x).

UMH #601

ANTHEM

Traditional Cambodian Song
(See insert for English translation)

Cambodian Choir

PROCLAMATION AND RESPONSE

SCRIPTURE Lamentations 1:1-6 (NRSV Pew Bible page 762-763)

Leader: This is the word of God for the people of God.

All: Thanks be to God.

SCRIPTURE 2 Timothy 1: 1-14 (NRSV Pew Bible page 211)

Leader: This is the word of God for the people of God.

All: Thanks be to God.

SCRIPTURE Luke 17:5-10 (NRSV Pew Bible page 80)

Leader: This is the word of God for the people of God.

All: Thanks be to God.

SERMON It's Not Great Faith We Need, It's Faith in a Great God!
(see insert for translation)

Pastor Viseth Hou

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

After a concern, the worship leader will say "Let us pray to the Lord," the congregation will reply,

"Lord hear our prayer!"

After a joy the worship leader will say "Let us pray to the Lord," the congregation will reply will

"Lord, we give thanks!"

PASTORAL PRAYER & LORD'S PRAYER

Pastor Sungho Lee

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

THANKSGIVING

WORSHIP WITH OUR TITHES & OFFERINGS

OFFERTORY

Siyahamba
[Traditional South African Hymn]

Chancel Choir

***DOXOLOGY**

Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

UMH #94

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

COMMUNION

UMH #24-25

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them up to the Lord.

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Leader: It is right and a good and joyful thing...And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Sing: *Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.*

Leader: Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ...And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

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

Leader: Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here...Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy church, all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father, now and for ever.

Sing: *Amen, amen, amen.*

COMMUNION HYMNS

Nothing but the Blood of Jesus
(vs. 1 & 3 English, vs. 2 & 4 Khmer)

UMH #362

Break Thou the Bread of Life
(sing in your own language)

UMH #599

COMMUNION REFLECTION

SENDING FORTH

*CLOSING HYMN

Make Us One (sing 2x)
(sing in your own language)

TFWS #2224

*BENEDICTION

*POSTLUDE

In Christ There is No East or West
[Tune: McKee, #548, arr. by Dale Wood]

Rebecca Nelson

* Indicates please stand as you are able.

SERVING YOU TODAY

Rev. Sungho Lee
Rev. Viseth Hou
Ric Campero, Director of Music
Rebecca Nelson, Organist/Pianist
Alan Cook, Children's Moment
David Campero, Media
Cherie Hudson, Facilities Coordinator
Rupert Cooper, Audio

BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

Saturday, October 8 • 10.00am • Central Park

Bring your cat, dog, hamster, bird, and other animal friends who are part of your family for a special blessing on Saturday, October 8, at the church. This special celebration is in honor of St. Francis, who called animals to be his brothers and sisters. If you have a pet that does not travel well or does not get along with other animals bring a photograph. Dogs must be on a leash or in a carrier. Bring a cat or dog toy to donate to the Stockton Animal Shelter.

During the service each pet will receive a special blessing and before and afterwards pets and their human family members can have a picture taken to remember this special day.

PASTOR EXCHANGE FOR A DAY • SUNDAY, OCTOBER 9

Want to meet Pastor Sungho's wife? Rev. Sungho Lee and Rev. Hyesung Lee will be changing pulpits on October 9. This will give Central's congregation the opportunity to meet Pastor Sungho's wife. Rev. Hyesung Lee is pastor of Brentwood United Methodist Church. On Sunday, October 9 our Pastor will be preaching at Brentwood, while his wife, Rev. Hyesung. Join us on October 9 as we welcome Rev. Huesung Lee to the Central pulpit.

LAITY SUNDAY, OCTOBER 16

October 16 is Laity Sunday. Mary Juárez Dalton will be our lay preacher. The Worship Team would like to celebrate the various ministries in which our congregants are involved. During worship, we would like to hear from some of these lay ministers about their service. Sign up to say a few words during worship on October 16 about your ministry at the Opportunities to Serve table!

MEMBERSHIP CLASS

If you are interested in being a member of this wonderful church, sign up at the Information Table or email Pastor Lee (slee@cumcstockton.org). The membership class will meet with Pastor Lee four times during the month of October. Together you will learn about our church's history, its mission, and ministry. After the four classes, you will decide whether you want to join our church or not. Time and place of the meeting will depend on who signs up for the class.

It's Not Great Faith We Need, It's Faith in a Great God!

SERMON IN A NUTSHELL

Pastor Viseth Hou

According to Luke 17:5-10 Jesus teaches his disciples and today Christians that through mustard seed faith we are able to do the impossible - we are able to uproot and get rid of the sycamine trees of bitterness and forgiveness that pursue to grow in our lives causing conflict and chaos. Jesus also reminds us that there is a responsible love. A love that can rebuke and reprove people but at the same time is able to forgive those same people even if it means forgiving them repeatedly. Jesus is telling his disciples that they must have the ability to discipline but always with a spirit of unconditional love and forgiveness.

No doubt in verse five the Disciples scream "Increase our faith". Because their feeling a heavy burden of Jesus' teaching. They are feeling the burden of being a leader in the faith. The disciples knew that they needed help. They knew that they couldn't do it on their own, so they asked for more faith. They thought the answer was more faith. I don't criticize them for asking. I would have had my hand raised

asking the for the same thing. I think we all need a little more faith at times, don't we? Isn't it right to say "Lord, increase our faith"?

Look at verse six where Jesus points us to the mustard seed and to the sycamine tree. Why in the world does he start talking about mustard seeds and sycamine trees when all we wanted was more faith?

We all know a little about the mustard seed. I believe it is the smallest seeds of ancient Israel. It's so small that some preachers said that "you could get one in your eye and not even be aware of its presence because it is so small". They saw the mustard seed as a perfect metaphor for anything small or tiny. But the sycamine tree looks like a cross between a mulberry tree and a fig tree. It grows to about 30-35 feet tall and can live for around 75 years. It produces fruit (bitter and sour) at least four times a year and its leaves stay green all year long. It's the same tree that the little man Zacchaeus used to see Jesus.

So, why does Jesus use these two things - a mustard seed and a sycamine tree in talking about faith, forgiveness, patience, and kingdom living? He is telling them that it doesn't require a great deal of faith to do the impossible. One doesn't have to wait until they have stored up this vast amount of faith to be a person who is kind, considerate, patient, forgiving, and encouraging. All that is necessary is for a person to put their faith in God into action. Once they do that, then the impossible can happen.

To describe the impossible Jesus points to the example of a sycamine tree. Jesus tells them that they all have enough faith to pull up a sycamine tree with all its roots and then plant it into the sea where it will of course completely die. This all sounds rather silly to us today. But there is much more at play here in Jesus using the sycamine tree.

Because of those things the sycamine tree became a symbol of a life filled with bitterness and unforgiveness. Its roots were compared to the roots of bitterness - thousands of them reaching everywhere. It's ability to grow anywhere and everywhere was exactly like that of bitterness and unforgiveness. It doesn't take much to cause some resentment, bitterness, or a spirit of unforgiveness to take root. And once they have taken root they seem to stay forever. Its fruit was exactly like the fruit of bitterness and unforgiveness - always plentiful but bitter, tart, and pungent. Left alone the spirit of unforgiveness and bitterness will lead a person to an early death. A spirit of bitterness and unforgiveness will envelop a person's life.

The disciples were worried about exactly what Jesus is talking about here in this passage. When he started talking about the sycamine tree they knew exactly where he was going. It was a perfect example of what was trying to happen in and among their community. Little sycamine trees of unforgiveness and bitterness were doing their best to grow among all of them. Little sycamine trees were sending out their roots and producing their bitter fruit and doing their best to kill harmony, accord, and communion.

That is not what Jesus, nor they, wanted. Instead, they wanted to be like Jesus. They had watched as Jesus dealt with people who were slow to learn. After all, Jesus had been working with them and who was heavier than they were at times. They had watched as they had tried Jesus' patience and tested his soul only to watch him be able to reach out in love, grace, and mercy. They wanted what Jesus possessed.

For us today Christians must believe that God will work through our mustard seed faith. All we have to do is to put it into action and must believe that God's Spirit is working in and through us transforming us into the image of Jesus. We must believe that we can do the impossible and can be loving, kind, long suffering, gentle, forgiving, and compassionate. We are to believe that in and through us the Lord wants to do the impossible. We must have faith just like Jesus, so we can become like him in this life.

In my conclusion, World Communion Sunday, we are reminded of a very important way by which we can connect with God's power and not increase our faith, but we come in the power of His Table. When coming to the Lord's Table, we take into our hands a tiny piece of bread, or drink from the cup of sacramental wine, it may seem like what we're holding in our hands is insignificant or unimportant. It's ordinary stuff that bread and wine – no different in substance from what might sit on our dinner table at home. Yet, like the atom of hydrogen that's transformed by nuclear fusion into a blaze of power, that bread and cup can transform our lives in astonishing ways. There is nothing magical about the material stuff of the communion elements. It's all about God's power we all hear the call of the Holy Spirit, that activates our lives.

Jesus said to his disciples that a mustard seed of faith is more than enough to uproot a mighty tree and cast it into the sea. There's no telling what a piece of communion bread or a drink of communion juice can do for people of faith who come to the Lord's table hungry and searching for what our host has prepared for us.

As you come to this table today, come as a humble servant. Come praising God for all the good and blessed things in your life, even if you are struggling amid overwhelming trials. Come to this Table today with confidence that God's gift of faith is available to you, and real faith, however tiny, can overcome all things in God. So, we don't need to be asking for more faith, but we ask for more faithfulness in His ministry. May the Lord bless you all.