

Central United Methodist Church

3700 Pacific Avenue, Stockton, CA 95204

ORDER OF WORSHIP

Nothing but Organ

Sunday 25, 2022



GATHERING

PRELUDE

Variations on "Simple Gifts"
[Shaker Hymn Tune By James Pethel]

Erin Wolf (8:30am)
Mary Monroe (11:00am)

GATHERING MOMENT

Chris Chan (8:30am)
Nedy Tovera (11:00am)

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Lord, help us to see the reality of afterlife.

All: We want to prepare ourselves for the afterlife.

Leader: Lord, we want to share our fortunes with others.

All: Help us to glorify your name through our actions.

Leader: Lord, our life on earth is too short for us to build God's Kingdom on earth now.

All: However, our life on earth is long enough for us to plant a seed of God's Kingdom now. We will forgive our enemies. We will do something for the poor in God's name. We will be rich in good works. Amen.

Chris Chan (8:30am)
Nedy Tovera (11:00am)

INTROIT

From the Rising of the Sun
[By Eric Thiman]

Chancel Choir

***OPENING HYMN** *Hope of the World vs. 1-4* UMH #178

CHILDREN'S MOMENT (11:00am) Alan Cook

SPECIAL MUSIC *Prélude sur l'Introit de l'Epiphanie, Op. 13* Lawrence Torres
[By Maurice Durufle]

PRAYER CARDS COLLECTED (11:00am)

MISSION & MINISTRIES MOMENT Chris Chan (8:30am)
Nedy Tovera (11:00am)

RITE OF FRIENDSHIP AND A SPECIAL WELCOME TO OUR VISITORS Chris Chan (8:30am)
Nedy Tovera (11:00am)

***PASSING THE PEACE** Chris Chan (8:30am)
(Stand, bow or wave, with the word "Peace be with You!") Nedy Tovera (11:00am)
All Sing: *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path (2x).*

ANTHEM *Immortal, Invisible* Chancel Choir
[arr. by Patti Drennan]

PROCLAMATION AND RESPONSE

SCRIPTURE Jeremiah 32:1-3 (NRSV Pew Bible page 736) Chris Chan (8:30am)
Leader: This is the word of God for the people of God. Nedy Tovera (11:00am)
All: Thanks be to God.

***HYMN** *Take My Life, and Let It Be* UMH #39

SCRIPTURE 1 Timothy 6:6-19 (NRSV Pew Bible pages 210-211) Chris Chan (8:30am)
Leader: This is the word of God for the people of God. Nedy Tovera (11:00am)
All: Thanks be to God.

SCRIPTURE Luke 16:19-31 (NRSV Pew Bible pages 79-80) Pastor Sungho Lee
Leader: This is the word of God for the people of God.
All: Thanks be to God.

SERMON "Be Rich in Good Works" Pastor Sungho Lee

QUESTION AND ANSWER TIME (8:30am)

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE Chris Chan (8:30am)
Nedy Tovera (11:00am)

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

Chris Chan (8:30am)
Nedy Tovera (11:00am)

OFFERTORY

Byzantine Sketches: #2, Stained Glass
[By Henri Mulet (1878-1967)]

Rebecca Nelson

***DOXOLOGY**

Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

UMH #94

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Chris Chan (8:30am)
Nedy Tovera (11:00am)

SENDING FORTH

***CLOSING HYMN**

Give Thanks

TFWS #2036

***BENEDICTION**

Pastor Sungho Lee

***POSTLUDE**

Fanfare
By John Cook (1918-1984)

Rebecca Nelson

The flowers on the altar are presented by Martha Tipton in memory of our Central friends who died during the pandemic and my husband Rick on our anniversary.

* Indicates please stand as you are able.

SERVING YOU TODAY

Rev. Sungho Lee
Chris Chan, Worship Leader, 8:30am
Nedy Tovera, Worship Leader, 11:00am
Ric Campero, Director of Music
Erin Wolf, Pianist (8:30am)
Rebecca Nelson, Organist/Pianist (11:00am)
Alan Cook, Children's Moment
David Campero, Media
Cherie Hudson, Facilities Coordinator
Rupert Cooper, Audio

MEET AND GREET

Sunday, September 25 will be our last Meet and Greet gathering at the home of Patricia Hatton. This will be a great time to meet with Pastor Lee in a small group setting. If you would like to attend please email Alan Cook (acook@cumcstockton.org) or sign up today at the table in the Atrium.

16th ANNUAL BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

Saturday, October 8, 2022 ~ 10:00am ~ Central Park

Bring your cat, dog, hamster or other animal companions and join us for a simple prayer service honoring St. Francis of Assisi, to celebrate the important place pets hold in our lives, and remind us of the wonder of God's creation, and our roles as stewards of the earth.

SERMON IN A NUTSHELL: "BE RICH IN GOOD WORKS!"

Pastor Lee

The rich man in the parable did not pay attention to Lazarus.

We just read the parable of a rich man and Lazarus. What did the rich man do in the story? He was "dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day." Purple and fine linen are expensive clothes. As you know, Lydia, who helped Paul to start the Philippi Church, was a dealer in purple cloth (Acts 16:14). His dress was a signature of his luxurious lifestyle. What would be a modern item to show that you live in luxury every day? A certain brand of accessory? A certain car?

This lifestyle tends to prevent us from seeing the predicament of our neighbors.

What did the rich man do for Lazarus?

At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, "covered with sores and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table." Even the dogs came and licked his sores. The rich man did not make him leave. However, the rich man did not give something to eat to Lazarus, either. The rich man did nothing to Lazarus. No harm and no good. The rich man just ignored Lazarus.

This is the danger of a rich lifestyle. When we become rich, we want to have more and more. In the process, we do not pay attention both to God and to our neighbors.

1 Timothy 6:9-10 says, "Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs." This is what the rich man did.

What happened when both died?

The time came when the beggar died, and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. The rich man called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.'

In this story, we can tell a couple of things about the afterlife.

First, even when we die physically, we continue our living in some form. The rich man and Lazarus still had consciousness and senses. They recognize each other and talk to Abraham. When we die, we will meet all those who passed away before us and recognize them. We will see how they are doing! For those people who believe that our human life ends with our physical death, this is shocking news! Just think about this. If this is true, we better prepare for our afterlife now. Even if this is not true, what would you lose when you prepare for your after life now? It is like car insurance. If you have an accident, you would be happy that you have insurance. If you do not have an accident, you are still happy because you have no car accident. However, if you do not have insurance, you better pray not to have any car accident. Otherwise, you are in big trouble!

Secondly, there are two places that we can go to in the afterlife. One is called Abraham's side and the other one is called Hades. The names are not as important as the description. Whether you call it heaven or Abraham's side, it seems to be a comfortable place for the dead. Whether you call it a hell or Hades, it is a place with burning fire where dead people are tormented.

I have never been there. I cannot prove that this is a true description. However, this is what Jesus told us in a parable. This may not be an exact factual description, but it has some truth in it. Jesus was crucified and killed. Then Jesus was resurrected from the dead. I believe that if there is one person in the world who can tell us about the afterlife, it should be Jesus.

Some people feel uncomfortable to be on Abraham's side while others are tormented with burning fire. Psychologically they feel that it is not heaven because they have to watch others in suffering. That is exactly the reason why we need to save others so as not to be in that suffering and to prevent such a fate as much as we can. Once they die, we cannot reverse their fate. We have to work hard to warn them not to be in such a terrible situation.

How should we prepare for our afterlife?

Doing nothing is not an answer. We have to warn "the rich man" whenever we have an opportunity. Lazarus cannot bring a drop of water to the rich man. If we want our neighbors not to be in such terrible condition, we have to help them to do small acts of kindness with us.

First, we should take care of ourselves and our family members. However, let us expand our circles. We can help church members, community members, our fellow citizens, or global families as much as we can.

My mother-in-law had her 90th birthday in September. I went to Korea to celebrate her birthday with other family members. Before I came to the USA, I lived with my younger brother in one room. When I left, my mother-in-law invited my younger brother to live with her family. She treated him like her own son. My younger brother said that she prepared his breakfast and a lunch box every day for four years before he married his wife. He said he would not forget her care and love for him.

Secondly, we can care for our community. The Bible does not give us concrete guidelines. We can give directly to poor people, or we can give our money to the church and work together through our Mission Committee. I trust our Mission Committee members and their faithful ministries.

One of the examples would be our work for the LGBTQAI + brothers and sisters. Jennifer Robles is planning an event for them at our church on October 22. We can indirectly improve people's lives by participating in those mission events or changing laws to make a better society where everybody can enjoy the same opportunity.

Another example would be the ministry of the Central Methodist Nursery School. The school will celebrate its 60th anniversary in 2023. We can participate in raising global leaders through the nursery school by donating scholarship funds or participating in their activities. The children will grow to be leaders of our country and God's kingdom. For this purpose, I give appreciation gift cards to nursery school teachers every month. Someday, a leader of our country will say that she would not forget the love and care she received from Central Methodist Nursery School.

Before I went to Korea, I had an opportunity to serve the homeless at St. Mary's Dining Room with many of our church members. Those homeless members helped us to avoid tormenting fire after we die. We had the joy serving them and hope to be with them even in the afterlife. We could not solve the homeless issue completely. However, we prepared our afterlife with the homeless community.

What if we do not prepare for our afterlife?

Some people criticize Christianity, saying that we focus only on the life after death. They say that we have to build up God's Kingdom here and now. However, as we have seen in this parable, preparing for the afterlife and building up God's Kingdom here and now are one and the same thing.

The rich man in the parable lost his opportunity to share his riches with Lazarus. Now he wants to do something for his family members who are still alive. However, Abraham says sternly that they need to listen to pastor Lee's sermon and make their choice now. Helping others now is the best way to prepare for the afterlife. If they do not want to serve at St. Mary's Dining Room now, they will not change their lifestyle even after Lazarus came back to life.

Abraham replied to the rich man who did not prepare the afterlife. "If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead."

Be rich in good works!

If you are convinced that there is an afterlife and we need to prepare for it now, do small acts of kindness today. Do as much as you can to all people as you can.

Jeremiah purchased a small lot of land when he knew for sure that Jerusalem would fall into the hands of the Babylonians because he knew that there would be a future for the city of Jerusalem. If we believe that there will be an afterlife, we need to purchase a small lot of land in heaven.

How? Forgive others and their debts as much as you can! Share your fortune with others as much as you can! We will have a small lot for our heavenly home by Abraham's side after our physical death.