

Central United Methodist Church

3700 Pacific Avenue, Stockton, CA 95204

ORDER OF WORSHIP Sunday, October 23, 2022



GATHERING

PRELUDE

Jesus, Come! For We Invite You
(Edwin T. Childs)

Monica Adams

GATHERING MOMENT

Chris Chan (8:30am)
Joe Krider (11:00am)

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Chris Chan (8:30am)
Joe Krider (11:00am)

Leader: Lord, we do not see the fruits of our labors.

All: **Give us your spirit of hope!**

Leader: Lord, our journey is long and we are tired.

All: **Give us your spirit of joy!**

Leader: Lord, we are deserted and left alone.

All: **Give us your spirit of love!**

Leader: Lord, walk with us! We will walk with you.

All: We worship you! You have given us your spirit of peace!

INTROIT

O Praise God

Chancel Choir

*OPENING HYMN

Gather Us In

TFWS #2236

CHILDREN'S MOMENT (11:00am)

Alan Cook

PRAYER CARDS COLLECTED (11:00am)

MISSION & MINISTRIES MOMENT

Chris Chan (8:30am)
Joe Krider (11:00am)

RITE OF FRIENDSHIP AND A SPECIAL WELCOME TO OUR VISITORS Joe Krider (11:00am)

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

ANTHEM *For This Joy* Chancel Choir
(arr. Susan Labarr) Mike Hernandez, Clarinet

PROCLAMATION AND RESPONSE

SCRIPTURE Joel 2:23-32 Chris Chan (8:30am)
Leader: This is the word of God for the people of God. Joe Krider (11:00am)
All: Thanks be to God.

***HYMN** *Spirit of God, Descend Upon My Heart* UMH #500

SCRIPTURE Luke 18:9-14 Chris Chan (8:30am)
Leader: This is the word of God for the people of God. Joe Krider (11:00am)
All: Thanks be to God.

SERMON "God, Be Merciful to Me" Rev. Sungho Lee

QUESTION AND ANSWER TIME (8:30am)

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE Chris Chan (8:30am)
Joe Krider (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 Rev. 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)
Joe Krider (11:00am)

OFFERTORY *Cordero de Dios (Lamb of God)* Monica Adams

***DOXOLOGY** *Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow* UMH #94

PRAYER OF DEDICATION Chris Chan (8:30am)
Joe Krider (11:00am)

SENDING FORTH

*CLOSING HYMN	<i>I Sing the Almighty Power of God</i>	UMH #152
*BENEDICTION		Rev. Sungho Lee
*POSTLUDE	<i>If You Will Only Let God Guide You</i> (Anna Laura Page)	Monica Adams

* Indicates please stand as you are able.

SERVING YOU TODAY

Rev. Sungho Lee
Chris Chan, Worship Leader, 8:30am
Joe Krider, Worship Leader, 11:00am
Ric Campero, Choir Director
Monica Adams, Organist/Pianist
Alan Cook, Children's Moment
David Campero, Media
Cherie Hudson, Facilities Coordinator
Rupert Cooper, Audio

CENTRAL UMC ALL CHURCH CONFERENCE TODAY! AFTER THE 11AM SERVICE!

All members, constituents, and friends of Central are welcome to attend our Annual All Church Conference TODAY at noon. We will enjoy a light lunch after worship service and convene for our Church Conference at 12.30pm. Our District Superintendent, the Rev. David Niu, will be presiding as we celebrate our ministry together this year and look forward to 2023 and beyond. This is an important meeting. Everyone is encouraged to attend.

YOUTH FELLOWSHIP LOCK-IN – SATURDAY, OCTOBER 29

The Middle School and High School members of the United Methodist Youth Fellowship are hosting a lock-in Saturday, October 29, from 8.00pm-7.00am in the youth room. Consider donating homemade desserts, or snack foods for the evening. They will be working on the Memorial altar, bagging rice for the Thanksgiving in a Bag project, playing games, and much more. If you would like to find out more information, contact Jeni Bonilla or Linda Tualla.

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. Time and place of the meetings will depend on who signs up for the class.

SERMON IN A NUTSHELL: "GOD, BE MERCIFUL TO ME!"

Pastor Sungho Lee – October 23, 2022

Faith without action is dead.

Last Sunday, at the Laity Sunday Worship Service, we heard so many wonderful expressions of the faith of our church members. They all showed their faith through their actions.

We memorize John 3:16, which says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life." This is one Bible verse that many Christians can recite by heart.

However, when I ask people, "What do you mean by believing in Jesus?" many people have different ideas about belief. Some think that without action, belief has no meaning.

James 2:15-16 asks, "If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,' and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that?" Then James concludes in verse 17, "So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead."

In other words, even when we believe that Jesus is the Savior and Lord, our belief has no meaning and we are not saved, if we do not live out our faith in action.

Action without faith will make us arrogant.

On the other hand, action without faith will make us arrogant. Jesus warned about it in today's reading.

Jesus told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt: "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, was praying thus, 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of all my income.' But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven but was beating his breast and saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his home justified rather than the other, for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted."

The Pharisee in the parable acted out his faith through worship and tithing, but he became self-righteous. Jesus said that he was not justified. In other words, he was not saved!

What is Faith?

Considering these two pitfalls, we can define faith as "humility and gratitude."

Faith makes us humble.

When we say that we believe in Jesus, we mean that our good works are possible only because God gives us ability and opportunity for those good works. We give credit to God and not to us. Such faith makes us humble.

We have seen all the presenters of their ministries. They are all humble. Some of them even did not want to say anything about their ministries because they do not want to make it known! They want to do their ministries behind the scenes. Nobody wants to brag about what we have done because we know that it is not we who have done these wonderful ministries.

Faith makes us to realize that we are sinful.

Faith in Jesus means that we realize that we are self-centered people and our intention is always selfish. We acknowledge that we are able to do some good works because of God's grace. The Holy Spirit inspires

us to overcome self-centeredness. When we say that we are saved only by the blood of Jesus, we mean that whatever good impact we make on the lives of others comes from God and not from us.

Faith makes us to be thankful.

We give thanks to God whenever there is an opportunity to serve God and others. Such faith makes us grateful.

In the Old Testament reading, Joel confesses that we have abundant harvest because God has given us early rain and late rain. Early rain makes crops to grow (helps us to be aware of condition of others), and late rain makes them ripe (inspires us to take action for them). "O children of Zion, be glad, and rejoice in the Lord your God...he has poured down for you abundant rain, the early and the later rain, as before. The threshing floors shall be full of grain; the vats shall overflow with wine and oil."

Faith makes us work hard.

One day, a devout seminary student took a test. He did not know the answer to the question. He wrote, "God knows the answer." The professor of the class gave him an F grade with a comment, saying, "God gets A, you get F."

Faith is not a magic wand. We cannot just pray for a better world without our labor. However, we do not boast about our efforts when we make progress. We confess that it is God who brings us any fruits that we have. Joel shares his faith with us, saying, "You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied and praise the name of the Lord your God, who has dealt wondrously with you."

Faith helps us to survive.

When we give thanks to God, God also shares the Spirit of God with us. God says, "I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female slaves, in those days I will pour out my spirit."

When we receive God's Spirit, we can survive great ordeals of the world. We have courage to face the crises of our times. We are saved!

Faith helps us to glorify God.

When we do good works, we do not rely on our own strength. Whatever we achieve, we give credit to God. When we are saved from the challenges of the world, we do not depend on our wisdom, either. We give thanks to God.

God says in the Bible, "I will show portents in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved, for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the Lord has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the Lord calls."

Faith encourages us to finish our race.

Apostle Paul said in 2 Timothy, "As for me, I am already being poured out as a libation, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith. From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have longed for his appearing."

Paul knew that when he humbled himself, God would lift him up. When we have faith, even though our best is not good enough, God will fill the gap for us. In his ministry, Paul felt that when everybody deserts

him, God stayed with him. That was why he did not want to blame anybody. He just wanted to praise God who saved him.

Paul says, "At my first defense no one came to my support, but all deserted me. May it not be counted against them! But the Lord stood by me and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and save me for his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen."

Brothers and sisters! Keep the Faith!

Last Sunday, after worship service, I was inspired by the Prayer Shawl ministry. I decided to deliver two of them to Maryann Bennett and Evia Moore. When I brought one to Evia, saying that this is our prayer for her, her eyes shined and she was full of joy. I believe that she will recover from her physical condition because of the renewed spirit. Then I went to see Maryann Bennett. When I arrived at her place, I found that all her family were there around her bed. I did not know that her daughter already called the church and asked for a pastoral visit because she was dying. I put the prayer shawl around her shoulder in her bed and said, "Maryann, we are all with you. Each string of this shawl represents our church members prayer and love. This shawl may deliver God's love to you!" I read a scripture, prayed with her, and everybody shared their memories, saying how wonderful she was. We sang Amazing Grace together and recited Lord's Prayer together. Maryann finished her race with peace like Apostle Paul. She kept her faith!

Let us have faith. Do not be discouraged when you do not see the fruits of your labor. Do not boast when you have abundant fruits in your basket. Share your time, talents, treasure, and testimony with others, and give credit to God. When we finish our race here on earth, God will welcome us in heaven with open arms. Until we meet God and other brothers and sisters in heaven, let us love and care for each other with God's love. May God bless us all and pour God's Spirit upon us all! Amen!