

# Central United Methodist Church

3700 Pacific Avenue, Stockton, CA 95204

## ORDER OF WORSHIP Sunday, January 29, 2023



### GATHERING

**PRELUDE** (11:00am) Snap Jackson & the Knock on Wood Players

**GATHERING MOMENT** Chris Chan (8:30am), Ed Bonilla (11:00am)

**\*CALL TO WORSHIP** Chris Chan (8:30am), Ed Bonilla (11:00am)

Leader: Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scholar?

**All: God has made foolish the wisdom of the world.**

Leader: Jews ask for signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to gentiles.

**All: To those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength. Amen.**

**\*OPENING HYMN** *Gather Us In* UMH #2236

**PRAYER CARDS COLLECTED**

**MISSION & MINISTRIES MOMENT** Chris Chan (8:30am), Ed Bonilla (11:00am)

**RITE OF FRIENDSHIP AND A SPECIAL WELCOME TO OUR VISITORS** Ed Bonilla (11:00am)

**\*PASSING THE PEACE** Chris Chan (8:30am), Ed Bonilla (11:00am)

(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).**

### PROCLAMATION AND RESPONSE

**SCRIPTURE** Micah 6:1-8 (Pew Bible NRSV, page 866) Chris Chan (8:30am)

Leader: This is the word of God for the people of God. Ed Bonilla (11:00am)

**All: Thanks be to God.**

**\*HYMN** *Blessed Be the Dear Uniting Love* UMH #566

**SCRIPTURE** Matthew 5:1-12 (Pew Bible NRSV, page 4) Chris Chan (8:30am)  
Leader: This is the word of God for the people of God. Ed Bonilla (11:00am)  
**All: Thanks be to God.**

**SERMON** "Blessed Are You!" Rev. Sungho Lee

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE** Chris Chan (8:30am), Ed Bonilla (11:00am)  
After a concern, the worship leader will say "Let us pray to the Lord," and the congregation will reply, "Lord, hear our prayer!"  
After a joy, the worship leader will say "Let us pray to the Lord," and the congregation will reply, "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), Ed Bonilla (11:00am)

**OFFERTORY** (11:00am) Snap Jackson & the Knock on Wood Players

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

**PRAYER OF DEDICATION** Rev. Sungho Lee

### SENDING FORTH

**\*CLOSING HYMN** *We are Marching in the Light of God* TFWS #2235-b  
(Two times, English only)

**\*BENEDICTION** Rev. Sungho Lee

**\*POSTLUDE** (11:00am) Snap Jackson & the Knock on Wood Players

\* Indicates please stand as you are able.

### SERVING YOU TODAY

Rev. Dr. Sungho Lee  
Chris Chan, 8:30am Worship Leader  
Ed Bonilla, 11:00am Worship Leader  
Ric Campero, Choir Director  
Monica Adams, Organist/Pianist  
David Campero, Livestream  
Mark Wharff, Media  
Cherie Hudson, Facilities Coordinator  
Rupert Cooper, Audio

## SERMON IN A NUTSHELL: "BLESSED ARE YOU!"

### **When do you feel that you are blessed?**

I feel that I am blessed right now. Who am I to preach a sermon to these wonderful people? What a privilege and what an awesome opportunity. I am still alive after a serious car accident and surgery! I am blessed that I am breathing.

Jesus called this kind of mind-set as poor in spirit. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." When we feel that we do not deserve God's grace, but God still loves us and gives us favor, we are poor in spirit. Like the prodigal son in Luke 15, we will seek God's forgiveness and grace, and we can *enjoy relationship with God* (In other words, *we have the Kingdom of God!*).

The opposite state of being poor in spirit would be arrogant spirit. With arrogant spirit, people would say, "I should have a better job or higher position!" or "I should marry a richer, younger, and better spouse" or "I should be recognized more!" They are not blessed. They are filled with complaints. They are unhappy! They eventually accuse God. "Lord, you are not fair, and you do not do your job! I can do better without you!" They do not enjoy their relationship with God. They do not have the Kingdom of God!

Psalm 1:1 says, "Blessed are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked!" The advice of the wicked says, "You will not die when you take the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of the good and evil." In other words, when we doubt God's promises and commands and insist that our own thought is better than God's words, we are following the advice of the wicked. Blessed ones do not take such advice.

### **"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted."**

When we are poor in spirit, we repent our sins, self-centered lifestyle. Like the prodigal son in Luke 15, we cry out in front of God, confessing our sins! "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your child!" But God would comfort us and have a feast with us!

### **"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth."**

Because now we know that we have everything through God's grace, we do not boast our own talents or wisdom for our achievements in the world. We are forgiven sinners and we are willing and ready to forgive others who sin against us or who fail in the world! That is the reason why we become meek. Like the one whose huge debts are cancelled and becomes generous, we become meek. We easily forgive the mistakes and failures of others. If we become like this at home, our spouses and children would be very relaxed. Our colleagues at work would feel more comfortable working with us. Then people feel comfortable around us and want to do business with us. That is how we inherit the earth.

The opposite character of being meek would be scoffing. Psalm 1:1 talks about the ones who follow the advice of the wicked, saying, "They take the path that sinners tread or sit in the seat of scoffers." They laugh at others and put them at the top of the universe. A good example would be a White Supremacist. A White Supremacist would think that other races are not good enough to be anything. They laugh at other races.

### **"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled."**

We do not boast our achievements and we do not scoff others when they do not achieve things in the world. We work hard faithfully, but we know that we are able to do all the works because God provides and protects us.

When I had an accident, I realized that there was nothing that I could do. I simply slept during surgery. Doctors did all the lifesaving jobs and I slept through. After the surgery, I was tied up both arms and legs. I

could not even go to the bathroom alone. Nurses did all the work, and I was passively receiving all the services. Whenever I needed something, even a cup of water, I rang the bell and patiently waited for their services. I thought about my spiritual life there. God is doing everything, and I am just receiving God's grace. There is nothing that I can claim as my own! I hunger and thirst for God's righteousness, the faithfulness of Jesus. Then my thirst and hunger were filled. I am saved.

**“Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.”**

Through this experience in the ICU, I became more merciful. I understood that nurses had to take care of many patients at night. Some are in excruciating pain and could not help but crying and screaming. Even when I needed something, I could not say that I should be a priority. I understood the situation and prayed for others.

So, I always said thank you to the nurses. I tried to complement their services. I receive mercy and they did their best in their services. I learned that when I am merciful, others are merciful to me.

**“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.”**

Now after we see our realities as forgiven sinners, our heart becomes pure, and we can see God. When we think that we are somebody, we cannot see God because all we can see is us. Everything is about me!

When our hearts become pure, we know that everything is not about me. There are other human beings here on earth! Everybody is different and uniquely abled. God created everything with unique qualities. We all need each other. When we see God, we see others as God's masterpiece. Do not touch the artwork done by God! Do not speak ill of the masterpiece of God! You never know who is listening!

**“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.”**

When we become humble and respect others, we can make peace. When we become violent, we try to control everything according to our own will. Some people even kill others with weapons to show that he or she is in control. However, the end is always tragic because those criminals end up destroying themselves also. Last week a 72-year-old gunman killed himself after he shot and killed 10 others in Monterey Park, CA. That was a tragedy that we read in a newspaper now every day. Ah, Lord, forgive us!

When we say that we may be wrong and others maybe right, we do not use forces to make our plan go through. We can discuss options and other plans. Because we do not know which one is better, we try one plan with an open mind. If it does not work, we are willing to try other plans. That is how we work together as children of God. No wars and no guns are necessary. We can talk and negotiate.

**However, not everybody is blessed.**

That means that not everybody is poor in spirit, ready to repent, meek, merciful, respectful, and peaceful. Some people will be arrogant, scornful, self-righteous, relentless, and violent. We will face persecution and violence in this world.

What would be a biblical response to those people? Non-violent resistance is the answer.

Jesus said, “Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” Sometimes the only reward we expect comes after death. In this world, we suffer helplessly. We resist without using violence and get killed. It is not fair! However, that is what Jesus is talking about now. Why do you want us to follow this non-violence, Jesus?

### **Why do we take non-violent resistance position?**

It is difficult for us to be persecuted by evil ones. It is not fair! We want revenge. However, revenge gets another revenge. Later there will be no good ones and bad ones. Everybody will be in fights. We see that in long-term conflicts between tribes and nations. In the beginning, there must be someone who was at fault. After many rounds of revenges, we do not know anymore who is better. If one side gets persecution without retaliation for many years, we know who is bad and who needs to be saved. That is why the Bible asks us to be persecuted without revenge.

If you think that is not fair, think about the justice system that we have. We do not allow private retaliation. When someone kills our family members, we do not go after them and take revenge. We report the murder to the police and trust our justice system even when it is not perfect. Sometimes criminals walk free. Sometimes innocent people spend their lives in prison. Some feel that it is a broken system. However, what is the alternative? Reformation is necessary but, if we allow private retaliation, we will live in chaos like the wild, wild, west. We live with an imperfect but second-best justice system because that keeps our society in order. We trust judges. We trust our fellow citizens, juries, even though we know that they are not perfect.

We can say the same thing with cosmic court. We trust God and God's justice system. We do not take private retaliation and revenge. When we are persecuted, we take non-violent resistance, trusting that God would bring justice eventually. Unlike our juries and human judges, God is a perfect judge. We can trust God's judgment. Maybe not in my lifetime, but in God's time. Some people do not trust God and try to fix injustice in the world with their own ways and create more mess!

Prophet Micah says, "He has told you, O mortal, what is good, and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?"

Jesus has done that. Jesus focused on doing justice, practicing loving kindness, and walking humbly with God! Without sins, Jesus was persecuted and killed on the Cross. However, God resurrected Jesus after three days and put him on the right side of the heavenly throne to be the King of the kings. He was the first but not the last. All those who die with injustice will be resurrected also and rule over the wicked at the end. It would be God's cosmic justice where all the wicked will be punished in hell. That is why we need hell at the end to guarantee cosmic justice. That is why we can today endure injustice and persecution while doing justice and practicing loving kindness. We walk humbly with God! May God bless you all who follow this non-violent resistance in justice work! Amen.

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# CONNECTIONS



## **CHILI, MUSIC, AND FUN!**

The members of the United Methodist Youth Fellowship and the Chancel Choir are beyond excited for the in-person Chili Cook-Off **TODAY** at noon in the Fellowship Hall. Snap Jackson & the Knock on Wood Players will be performing!

**Tickets are on sale at the door for \$15.**

The funds raised during this event will be divided equally between the Putnam Musical Enrichment Fund and Summer Youth Experiences.

## **FAMILY PROMISE OF SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY**

Central will host 3 families the week of February 19-February 26. This is the largest group we will serve. Lots of help is needed. Sign-up sheets are available **TODAY** after the 11:00am worship service.

Volunteers are needed to help set up and clean up, cook meals, play games, stay overnight, and help with breakfast. Since this is a much larger group, we also need more sheets and blankets, toiletry items, wash cloths and hand towels, and food items. Note cards with specific items will be posted on a rolling board in the Atrium. Please take a card and help support this mission project. If you don't shop or like to shop, money donations are always welcome. Thank you for making this project a success. Any questions, please contact Glenda Schubert (209-479-6184) or Connie Edgecomb (209-639-9359).

## **ATTENTION ALL COMMITTEE CHAIRS & COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

### **NEW DATE! SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2023**

The Leadership Summit has been rescheduled to February 5 following the 11:00am service in the Fellowship Hall. All are invited to attend! Pastor Lee will share his vision and plan for ministry in 2023.

Our 13 Committee Chairs (Adult Education, CMNS Advisory Board, Columbarium, Education, Finance, Flower, Godly Play, Lay Leadership Development, Membership, Mission, Reconciling, Staff-Parish Relations, Trustees, and Worship) will speak to their visions and plans for 2023 as well as discussions about budgets and long-term goals. We hope you can join us!

## **2023 LENTEN BIBLE CHALLENGE**

Lent is a season of 40 days, not counting Sundays, which begins on Wednesday, February 22 (Ash Wednesday) and ends on Saturday, April 8 (Holy Saturday). In Christian tradition, people abstain from entertainment, sensual pleasures and worldly desires during Lent. Many Christians use this time to prepare their body, mind, and spirit to be baptized on Easter.

We want to spend this Lenten journey with **Paul's Letter to Romans** (16 chapters) and **Gospel according to Luke** (24 chapters). We will read a total of 40 chapters, one each day during Lent. You will also be given 3 questions each day to meditate on. You are invited to write your thoughts on the given chapter.

We will meet both in person and online.

If you would like to participate, please email Pastor Lee at [slee@cumcstockton.org](mailto:slee@cumcstockton.org) or sign-up after church at the sign-up table.

### **ROTARY READ-IN**

**February 23, 2023!** This year Central has been asked to provide readers to the kindergarten-3<sup>rd</sup> grade classrooms at Cleveland and Madison schools. Each reader is asked to read one or two books to one or two classrooms. The books are then donated to the classrooms for the students to enjoy. It is a wonderful program and lots of fun too. Please consider joining us...the more the merrier! Sign-Up sheets are available at the Opportunities Table after church.

### **THE RUMMAGE SALE RETURNS!**

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS**, Friday, March 3, and Saturday, March 4, are the chosen dates for our All-Church Rummage Sale hosted by the United Methodist Women. Donate kitchen items, furniture, lamps, power tools, nearly new and vintage items, plants, clothing, books, jewelry, toys, games, puzzles, seasonal items.

### **GODLY PLAY TEAM: LOOKING FOR TEAM MEMBERS**

The Godly Play Team is looking for 2 Story Tellers and 4 Door Persons. There is training for both of these roles, and the level of commitment is flexible; however, preferred to be once a month.

Our small team needs to grow as more children are coming back and joining our church. It is an exciting time to be part of Godly Play.

In order to keep our children supported and safe we need a Storyteller and Door Person for each classroom. We can't do this without you! Please consider the following:

**Storyteller:** Tells the story for the day. There are Godly Play books that lay out the entire story and there are props for each story. Story Telling is a fun way to tell a small group of children about the stories in the Bible.

**Door Person:** Greets the children at the door, supports the storyteller while they are telling the story, helps the children get out their artwork, and greets parents at the door when it is time to leave.

**Call/Text/Email Andrea Moccia for more information!** 209-406-9669, [Moccia.andi@gmail.com](mailto:Moccia.andi@gmail.com)

### **EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

Consider being part of the Education Committee. This Committee meets once a month via Zoom. The Education Committee encompasses both children and adult education.

Do you have a passion that you feel others would benefit from? Financial Literacy? World Affairs? Local Concerns? Safety Plans in an Emergency? Learning/Teaching about Compassion, Dealing with Anxiety, or Time Management? Bonus if you know about Messy Church!!!

There is so much that we can bring to our congregation that would also benefit our local communities. Interested please **Call/Text/Email Andrea Moccia for more information!** 209-406-9669, [Moccia.andi@gmail.com](mailto:Moccia.andi@gmail.com)

### **THE SUNSHINE FOOD PANTRY**

The Special Offering on February 19, 2023, is designated to the building fund for the new Sunshine Food Pantry & Resource Center, Inc. in Galt, CA. The Sunshine Food Pantry currently operates out of the social hall of the Galt United Methodist Church, but the need to help the members of our community continues to grow: We currently provide food for over 2,000 people per month.