

Central United Methodist Church

3700 Pacific Avenue, Stockton, CA 95204

ORDER OF WORSHIP Sunday, February 12, 2023



GATHERING

PRELUDE

When Love is Found (The Water is Wide)
[Howard Helvey]

Monica Adams

GATHERING MOMENT

Alexis Easton (8:30am), Jennifer Langham (11:00am)

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Alexis Easton (8:30am), Jennifer Langham (11:00am)

Leader: "You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, 'You shall not murder,' and 'whoever murders shall be liable to judgment.'"

All: But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment, and if you say, 'You fool,' you will be liable to the hell of fire.

Leader: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.'"

All: But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

Leader: "It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.'"

All: But I say to you that anyone who divorces his wife, except on the grounds of sexual immorality, causes her to commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

Leader: Law cares for our actions and consequences.

All: God sees both our actions and our motives. Amen.

*OPENING HYMN

When Love Is Found

UMH #643

CHILDREN'S MOMENT (11:00am)

Betty Parsons

PRAYER CARDS COLLECTED

MISSION & MINISTRIES MOMENT

Alexis Easton (8:30am), Jennifer Langham (11:00am)

RITE OF FRIENDSHIP AND A SPECIAL WELCOME TO OUR VISITORS

Jennifer Langham (11:00am)

*PASSING THE PEACE

Alexis Easton (8:30am), Jennifer Langham (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).

ANTHEM

Let Us Love One Another
[arr. Robert C. Lau]

Chancel Choir

PROCLAMATION AND RESPONSE

SCRIPTURE

Deuteronomy 30:15-20 (Pew Bible NRSV, page 186)

Alexis Easton (8:30am)

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

Jennifer Langham (11:00am)

All: **Thanks be to God.**

*HYMN

God, Whose Love Is Reigning O'er Us

UMH #100

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 5:21-37 (Pew Bible NRSV, page 4)

Alexis Easton (8:30am)

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

Jennifer Langham (11:00am)

All: **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

"A Seed Will Grow"

Rev. Sungho Lee

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Alexis Easton (8:30am), Jennifer Langham (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

Alexis Easton (8:30am), Jennifer Langham (11:00am)

OFFERTORY

Voluntary in F
[John Bennett]

Monica Adams

*DOXOLOGY

Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

UMH #94

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Rev. Sungho Lee

SENDING FORTH

*CLOSING HYMN

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

UMH #89

*BENEDICTION

Rev. Sungho Lee

*POSTLUDE

Herr Gott, Dich Loben Alle Wir (Praise God from All Blessings Flow)
[Johann Pachelbel]

Monica Adams

FLOWERS

The flowers on the altar are given by Linda and Dean Newhall to honor all those renewing their commitment.

* Indicates please stand as you are able.

SERVING YOU TODAY

Rev. Dr. Sungho Lee
Alexis Easton (8:30am), Worship Leader
Jennifer Langham (11:00am), Worship Leader
Betty Parsons, Children's Moment
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: "A SEED WILL GROW!"

Renewal of Marriage Vows

At our Worship Team meeting, someone suggested that we should have a Sunday worship for the renewal of our marriage vows. We liked the idea and found that the Sunday before Valentine's Day would be a good time for it because it is the time when lovers express their love in many ways.

Why do we have a wedding service?

Many people live together without a wedding service. Weddings can be costly. It takes time and energy for preparation. Still some people want to have a wedding service. They want to make it official. They want to receive blessings from God and from others.

Considering those reasons, we will have a renewal of marriage vows to bless all the couples. However, there are people who have never married, who are single, and who are separated. We want to bless them also.

So, we will have a general commitment vow renewal to include all the people who make a commitment vow either to God or to his or her spouse.

Why does a person marry another person?

What is more important than a wedding service is the reason behind the service. Why do we marry? When God created Adam, God found that it was not good for Adam to live alone. "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner." (Genesis 2:18)

A person marries another person because a person needs a helper as a partner. What does a helper do? The partner helps a person to be a better person in terms of serving God and serving God's creation. Do you remember God's blessings for Adam? "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." (Genesis 1:28) In other words, Adam needs a helper as a partner to be a good steward of God's creation.

So, when you are looking for a good partner, do not look for riches, looks, or intelligence. See if the helper can make you grow spiritually, emotionally, and personally. See if the partner can make you a better worshipper and a better steward of God's creation. The partner should make you manage your time, talents, and treasures wisely so that you can testify God's goodness through your life.

A helper can tell your inner motive of your actions.

When our partner makes us a better steward of our time, talents, and treasures they do not just see our actions. They need to see our inner motive of our actions and help us to have genuine innocent motives.

We can have legal actions with self-centered motives.

According to the Old Testament laws, we can keep all the laws and still lead a self-centered life. Deuteronomy can be summarized in this way: Keep all the laws in the Bible, and you will be blessed. Break just one of the laws in the Bible, and you will be cursed.

In this Give-and-Take system, people keep the laws out of fear or with the expectation of blessings. Deut. 30:15-20 says, "See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God that I am commanding you today, by loving the Lord your God, walking in his ways, and observing his commandments, decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live and become numerous, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess. But if your heart turns away and you do not hear but are led astray to bow down to other gods and serve them, I declare to you today that you shall certainly perish; you shall not live long in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him, for that means life to you and length of days, so that you may live in the land that the Lord swore to give to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob."

If we summarize this text, it says, listening to the laws will bring us a long, healthy life with material abundance. When we do not keep the laws, we will die young or become sick or poor without descendants. This simple statement makes people scared or self-centered. In this system, there is no concern either for neighbors or for creation.

This is a good foundation in the sense that we need to have a strong self before we help others. Do you remember the sign in the airplane? Put the oxygen mask on you first before you help your loved ones? Yes, we need to take care of us first. Then we need to serve others. A good foundation is necessary to build a good house on it. If we just have a good foundation and no building on it, it is a waste of foundation.

We can be a blessing for all the creation!

We try to be a moral person and law-abiding citizen to become a blessing for others. Our foundation needs to be strong and stable to build a strong house or a strong community. We can build up a good family on it or a good nation on it depending on the size and stability of the foundation.

A helper as a partner helps us to build this community of God's creation. The purpose of God's call is to build a community of God's beloved. God uses us to build up such community. We cannot do it alone. We need a partner or partners.

A barrier to such beloved community is self-centered division.

In 1 Corinthians 3:1-9, Paul encourages the church members to grow and to act as grown-ups, not "as infants in Christ." People are "still fleshly" when they are "jealousy and quarreling," saying, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos."

Paul says that Apollos or Paul are just servants whom God used to make disciples of Jesus. Paul planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. Paul and Apollos are God's coworkers, working together; churches are God's field, God's building.

Some people say, "I am conservative" and "I am progressive." Both groups have places in God's beloved community. Both will bless others when they act with motive to take good care of God's creation. When people try to control others with the intent to be the sole power in the community, they do not become good partners in God's beloved community.

Become blessings for others and enjoy the community!

When you see a young person, do not say, "Grow up!" Bless them and help them to enjoy their youth and mistakes. Young people have permission to make mistakes to grow. When you see an elderly person, do not say,

“Move quickly!” Bless them and help them to enjoy their peace. When you see conservative people, do not say, “You are so narrow minded!” Bless them to keep a good stable foundation for our community. When we see progressive people, do not say, “You break laws and orders!” Bless them to be an engine for our progress. We need both young and old, conservative and progressive, white and non-white, rich and poor, valleys and mountains, powerful and powerless in our church and in our community. We learn from each other, and we grow together.

Say thank you to your partner!

When you see differences in your partner, say thank you! Because our partners are different from us, we can grow. They can point out our rooms for growth. They can help us to overcome our weakness. They can tell our inner motives and help us to be innocent.

Commitment Vow Renewal

Now, if you are married and ready to accept all the shortcomings of yourself and your partners, please stand up with your partner and repeat after me, looking into your partner’s eyes: (We are using **UMH** Marriage Service liturgy)

***I will love you, comfort you, honor and keep you,
in sickness and in health,
and forsaking all others, be faithful to you
as long as we both shall live! Amen.***

Say Thank You to God!

For those who are not married or who are single now, we will renew our vows to serve God. If you are so moved, please stand, and repeat after me, looking at the Cross: (We are using **John Wesley’s** Commitment Vow Renewal Liturgy)

***Let me be your servant, under your command.
I will no longer be my own.
I will give up myself to your will in all things.
Lord, make me what you will.
I put myself fully into your hands:
put me to doing, put me to suffering,
let me be employed for you, or laid aside for you,
let me be full, let me be empty,
let me have all things, let me have nothing.
I freely and with a willing heart
give it all to your pleasure and disposal. Amen.***

Let us pray:

Lord, we planted a seed today in each disciple’s heart. We will water them with our care and love. Please send your light on them and help them to grow. When they bear fruits, we will glorify you together. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.



CAN YOU SAY SOUPER BOWL TIME?

Today is SOUPer Sunday, time to count your devices.

Please place canned goods into designated **boxes** and cash/checks (\$2 per devise) in **soup bowls**. Today's canned donations will be donated to the **Sunshine Food Pantry** of Galt and cash/check donations will go to the **Emergency Food Bank of San Joaquin**.

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

Women of Central! Come to our first United Methodist Women/now United Women of Faith lunch gathering since COVID hit. Tuesday, February 14 – Brown bag lunch in the Fireside Room – 11.30am. Topic: March Rummage Sale. *And* we'll share info on the name change and plans for our future. All are welcome.

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 or sign-up after church at the sign-up table.

ADULT EDUCATION NEWS - WHAT ABOUT LENT? SUNDAY, FEB 19, 9:30AM

ONE CLASS — the Sunday Before Ash Wednesday **The foundational question for us: How can Lent be a meaningful season for me this year?** We will start with 10-15 minutes of Christian history. Then **we'll share what Lent has meant to us... and hasn't...** as children and since. Our memories will reflect the diversity of our roots — whether we grew up Catholic, Protestant (diversity among Protestants too), or without any church connections (still, we may remember wondering about "those Catholics" keeping Lent). Bring your stories and that of others. **Most of our time will be sharing, listening, and discerning together:** How might what I choose to do this Lent connect me to the Christian story and Jesus, deepen my sense of Presence, and prepare me for Easter? Join us in this informal gathering before Lent begins on Ash Wednesday.

FAMILY PROMISE OF SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY HELP NEEDED

Sign Up sheets to volunteer for Family Promise will be available this Sunday after worship service. Please look for Glenda Schubert.

We need 3-4 people to sign up for overnight. We need 3-4 people to sign up for set up and take down. We need 2-3 volunteers to play games or help the children with arts and crafts. Our families will be here Feb 19-26. Thank you for making this program successful. ~ Glenda & Connie

ROTARY READ-IN

February 23, 2023! This year Central has been asked to provide readers to the kindergarten-3rd 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 dates for our All-Church Rummage Sale hosted by the United Methodist Women. Donate kitchen items, furniture, lamps, nearly new and vintage items, plants, clothing, books, jewelry, toys, games, puzzles, seasonal items.

Donations will be accepted Monday, February 27 through Thursday, March 2. Please watch Connections and News from 3700 for times to drop off items during the mentioned week. PLEASE DO NOT DROP OFF DONATIONS BEFORE THE MENTIONED DATES AND TIMES.

GODLY PLAY TEAM: LOOKING FOR TEAM MEMBERS

The Godly Play Team is looking for 2 Storytellers and 4 Door Persons. There is training for both 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

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

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.