

Central United Methodist Church

3700 Pacific Avenue, Stockton, CA 95204

ORDER OF WORSHIP Sunday, March 19, 2023



GATHERING

PRELUDE *Interlude on 'Canonbury'* Monica Adams
[Gilbert M. Martin]

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

INTROIT *Open My Eyes, That I May See* Chancel Choir

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

Leader: The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

All: He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters.

Leader: He restores my soul.

All: He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.

Leader: Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

All: You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

Leader: Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,

All: I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.

***OPENING HYMN** *Be Thou My Vision* UMH #451

CHILDREN'S MOMENT (11:00am) Rev. Sungho Lee

PRAYER CARDS COLLECTED

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

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

***PASSING THE PEACE** Chris Chan (8:30am), Jeni 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).

ANTHEM

The 23rd Psalm
[by Bobby McFerrin]

Chancel Choir

*The Lord is my Shepherd, I have all I need, She makes me lie down in green meadows,
Beside the still waters, She will lead. She restores my soul, She rights my wrongs,
She leads me in a path of good things, And fills my heart with songs.
Even though I walk, through a dark and dreary land, There is nothing that can shake me,
She has said, She won't forsake me, I'm in Her hand. She sets a table before me,
in the presence of my foes, She anoints my head with oil, And my cup over flows.*

*Surely, surely goodness and kindness will follow me, All the days of my life,
And I will live in Her house, Forever, forever and ever.
Glory be to our Mother, and Daughter, And to the Holy of holies,
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, World without end. Amen*

PROCLAMATION AND RESPONSE

SCRIPTURE 1 Samuel 16:1-13 (Pew Bible NRSV, page 259) Chris Chan (8:30am)
Leader: This is the word of God for the people of God. Jeni Bonilla (11:00am)
All: Thanks be to God.

***HYMN** *Lead Me, Guide Me* TFWS #2214

SCRIPTURE John 9:1-41 (Pew Bible NRVS, page 102) Chris Chan (8:30am)
Leader: This is the word of God for the people of God. Jeni Bonilla (11:00am)
All: Thanks be to God.

SERMON "God's Works May Be Revealed" Rev. Sungho Lee

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE Chris Chan (8:30am), Jeni 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), Jeni Bonilla (11:00am)

OFFERTORY *His Eye is on the Sparrow* Monica Adams
[J. Schrader] Filo Ebid, Tenor

***DOXOLOGY** *Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow* UMH #95

PRAYER OF DEDICATION Chris Chan (8:30am), Jeni Bonilla (11:00am)

SENDING FORTH

*CLOSING HYMN	<i>Lord, Whose Love Through Humble Service vs. 1, 2, 4</i>	UMH #581
*BENEDICTION		Rev. Sungho Lee
*POSTLUDE	<i>O Praise the Lord with One Consent</i> [William T. Best]	Monica Adams

* Indicates please stand as you are able.

SERVING YOU TODAY

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

SERMON IN A NUTSHELL: "GOD'S WORKS MAY BE REVEALED."

Do you see what I see?

At our church rummage sale, one volunteer found a ring that had a value of \$3,000 value in the jewelry section. We had a professional evaluation and sold it to a jewelry store. We were able to have the proceeds because of someone who had good eyes.

Find a disguised blessing in the challenges of your life!

Many times, we are overwhelmed by challenges in life and not able to see the blessings in disguise in the piles of challenges. In the Gospel reading we see an example of such blindness.

Jesus and his disciples saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him."

They saw the same blind man and the disciples tried to find a cause of the personal misery from the past sins. They saw the blindness as God's punishment. On the other hand, Jesus tried to reveal God's love through this man. Jesus saw the blindness as an opportunity to reveal God's glory.

When I had a car accident, some people tried to find whose fault it was. It was the fault of a drunken driver. However, I personally used the accident as an opportunity to find the power of prayer. I now became a fan of our prayer shawl ministry. I pray more often for our church members with confidence and faith!

Work to reveal God's power and love.

Every situation in life can be a great opportunity to reveal God's power and love. We need to pay attention to God, and we need to find out a clue to God's presence. Then we need to work on the challenge to see a new angle of the same challenge.

Jesus said, "We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see.

Jesus could just open his eyes. Jesus could just touch him and give him sight. However, Jesus did some physical actions and asked him to do his part also to have eyesight. Maybe because he was born blind, he did not just restore his sight, but he needed to construct his seeing ability from the same material that God used to create a human in Genesis 2. Jesus made the blind man a partner in creating his eyesight through his obedient works.

Be a witness!

The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" Some were saying, "It is he." Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am he." But they kept asking him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' Then I went and washed and received my sight."

This is the best part of the whole process. Once we found disguised blessings in our challenges, we need to testify to God's love and power. When I recovered from the surgery, I kept talking about the power of prayer whenever I had chances to talk about the accident. Now I am almost convinced that I had a car accident to tell people about the power of prayer!

Why do we experience miracles? God allows miracles for us to be a witness of God's power and love. If we do not testify to God's power of love, then all the miracles lose their meaning. The blind man did his part as a good witness to the divinity of Jesus. Only God can open eyes of the born blind man. He was born blind to show the whole world that Jesus was and is God!

Some cannot see the light because they keep their eyes closed.

They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know." They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see." Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not observe the Sabbath." Others said, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And they were divided.

When it rains, if you put a lid on your bucket, you will not receive any raindrops. When God's grace is showering upon you, if you close your heart, you will not feel the warmth of God's love. When a born blind man starts seeing, if you just discuss the Sabbath laws, you will be just debating and being divided. When a person was called and ordained, if you just talk about the violation of the Book of Discipline, you will not see God's work in day light!

So, they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened." He said, "He is a prophet." Now he was intimidated. When we have a negative influence on a witness, we cannot have the full truth! That is how we get half-truths all the time. Some scientists cannot share their findings about climate change because of the political pressure. We get partial truth when we have political pressure.

Some try to distort the truth to keep their perspective.

The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" His parents answered, "We know that this is our son and that he was born blind, but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself." His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. Therefore, his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

Let us be honest and reasonable. C. S. Lewis says, "If a person said that he was God, then there are only three logical options. Either he was crazy, or he was lying, or he was actually God. Now, Jesus was not crazy based on his words and action. Jesus was not a liar, either. A liar cannot preach the Beatitude. Then I have to honestly conclude that Jesus was actually God. That is how I became a Christian." This is one of the best arguments that I have ever heard.

However, people do not want to accept arguments. They already have their own conclusion and distorted all the evidence and facts to keep their perspective. Listen to the debate between the born blind but now seeing man and the Pharisees:

Pharisees: "Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner."

Born-Blind-But-Now-Seeing Man (BBNSM): "I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see."

Pharisees: "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?"

BBNSM: "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?"

Pharisees: "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from."

BBNSM: "Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing."

Pharisees: "You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?" (And they drove him out).

(If you are jurors, whose arguments are more convincing? The Pharisees had to use violence to silence the truth telling witness.)

Spiritual Blindness

Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" He answered, "And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him." Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he." He said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped him.

Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see may see and those who do see may become blind." Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard this and said to him, "Surely we are not blind, are we?" Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, 'We see,' your sin remains."

Find an alternative answer to your challenges!

When we open our eyes and start seeing God's power and love, we can find opportunities to serve God in every situation. Let us refuse to accept the traditional interpretations and perspectives that have been given to us so that we can find an alternative reality to our future.

Read 1 Sam. 16:1-13. When King Saul did not follow God's commandments, the prophet Samuel was grieving and lost hope for his nation. However, the Lord said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons."

When one door is closed, God opens another door. Do not think that your life is over because your dream is shattered. Butterflies are born from eggs. The butterfly-egg-stage usually lasts for a couple of weeks. When the butterfly egg hatches, out comes a caterpillar. When the caterpillar is fully grown and stops eating, it becomes a pupa. The pupa of butterflies is also called a chrysalis. Then they become butterflies. From eggs to caterpillars to pupas to butterflies, they go through many deaths and new births. God always shows the next step for us. Do not get stuck in your past.

It can be scary for us to welcome new changes.

Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me." And the Lord said, "Take a heifer with you and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.' Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do, and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you." Samuel did what the Lord commanded and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling and said, "Do you come peaceably?" He said, "Peaceably. I have come to sacrifice to the Lord; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice." And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

One of the ways to make a smooth transition for us is to use a bridge between a tradition to a new reality. If you are not ready for an electric car, use a hybrid one first. Find some contact point for the traditionalist but look for a way to find a new reality.

See the essence of reality, overcoming the traditional standards.

When we think about the process of becoming a butterfly from an egg, we cannot use the same standard to evaluate each stage in the process. We cannot say that a caterpillar is too long for an egg. We cannot say that a butterfly is too colorful as a caterpillar. We need to look for a totally different standard to evaluate the new reality.

When Samuel was looking for a new king, he looked on Eliab and thought, "Surely his anointed is now before the Lord." But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him, for the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart." Then Jesse called all the other sons except for David.

Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep." David was the youngest son, and he took care of the least important work in the field. And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him, for we will not sit down until he comes here."

He sent and brought him in. Now Samuel still saw his looks. David was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome. The Lord said, "Rise and anoint him, for this is the one." God saw his heart expressed later in 1 Samuel 17. Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.

See things in the new light, Jesus.

Jesus is the light of the world. When we meet Jesus, we see things in his light. That is how we have new perspectives on our daily challenges. We see them as a new opportunity to glorify God. Ephesians 5:8-14 says, "Once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Walk as children of light, for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord."

"Sleeper, awake! Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

If you struggle with your life challenges, do not just try to run away from them. Face them with new perspective in Jesus. Pray how you can glorify God through this challenging situation.

I have a mentally ill son. He is not a burden to my ministry or life. I see a great opportunity through him to serve mentally ill people. Because of my son, I study mental illness. I read books. I talk to experts. I try to serve mentally ill people through my ministry. I have not paid attention to the mentally ill people before. Now I reach

out to others to find ways to serve mentally ill people. This is just a beginning. However, mentally ill people became ill not because of their sins nor their parents' sins. They will reveal the works of God! May God use us to share God's power and love for the mentally ill people!

I pray that you also find some issues that are given to you. God wants you to reveal God's power and love through your challenges. Who are they that give you clues to your mission and ministry? May God bless your answer to that question. Amen.



CHURCH WORK DAY

The Board of Trustees is having another All-Church Work Day **on April 1 from 9:00am to 12:00pm**. We will be working on the inside and outside! If you have gardening supplies, please bring them. We will be cleaning windows, cobwebs, ledges, etc. It will be an exciting day at the Church! You don't want to miss it! We hope to see you there!

THIS WEEK--SUNDAY MORNING ADULT CLASS

Last week we discussed Chapter II of Brian McClaren's *Do I Stay Christian--YES!*

In that lively discussion, we quickly discovered that we had far more good material in our handout to explore in one hour. So this week—guess what—we'll pick up where we left off, digging into why McClaren thinks it's important to stay Christian.

If you'd like to join us on this ride, please do! For an advance copy of the handout we're working with, text me at 209-298-8634 or email to wdchkgsql@yahoo.com.

We meet Sunday at from 9:45 am to 10:45 in Knoles, Room 6

RECYCLE

Should be a sunny Sunday so bring your recycling...any EMPTY container marked CA CRV. \$92 collected in Feb. designated to the choir fund. March & April money will go to trustees. We can help fund the office wish list.... a computer for the part time staff office & some cabinet painting. Together our donations make a difference.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON BOOK GROUP DATE CHANGE!

The Book Group is reading *Solito* by Javier Zamora. They will meet in the Fellowship Hall on **APRIL 2** at 12:30pm.

A young poet tells the inspiring story of his migration from El Salvador to the United States at the age of nine in this gripping memoir of bravery, hope and finding family.

FAMILY PROMISE GIVING CLUB

The Family Promise Giving Club will start the month of March and will go until December. Participants pledge to give a certain amount every month for the next 10 months.

\$1 per month Club
\$20 per month Club

\$5 per month Club
\$30 per month Club

\$10 per month Club
\$? per month Club (you pick the amount!)

ALL ARE ENCOURAGED TO PARTICIPATE! ADULTS, YOUTH, CHILDREN!

If you would like to be a part of the Family Promise Giving Club, please sign-up on Sunday before or after Church.

SHARE THE BREAD AND CUP!

An Invitation and Opportunity to Serve!

Central is in need of an alternate Communion steward (or two). This person would take on Communion duties when the steward is out sick or otherwise unable to meet his/her ministerial commitment. The job involves purchasing bread and juice, preparing them for individual consumption, setting them out for both services, and cleaning up afterward. Rest assured; detailed instructions are available! Even if you are willing to do the job for ONE service, please contact Chris Chan at (209) 462-9663 (landline – no texts!) or cc.luz4light@gmail.com. Thank you for your prayerful consideration of this request.

CARE NETWORK DIRECTORY

As many of you know, our church does not have a printed church directory. However, we want to care for our church members. We want to call when people are sick. We want to be connected to each other. So, for those who want to be in this care network, please sign your name and we will publish a care network directory and revise it every year. We will have a sign-up sheet for the month of March and publish a yearly directory.

HOLY WEEK & EASTER SUNDAY Schedule

PALM SUNDAY • Sunday, April 2 • 11:00am in the Sanctuary

MAUNDY THURSDAY • Thursday, April 6 • 6:30pm in the Sanctuary

GOOD FRIDAY • Friday, April 7 • 6:30pm in the Sanctuary

EASTER SUNDAY • SUNDAY, APRIL 9

Sunrise Service • Central Park

8:30am Easter Worship Service • Sanctuary

11:00am Easter Worship Service • Sanctuary