

# Central United Methodist Church

3700 Pacific Avenue, Stockton, CA 95204

## ORDER OF WORSHIP Sunday, March 26, 2023



### GATHERING

**PRELUDE** Two Early American Times: *Johnny Has Gone for a Soldier and When Jesus Wept* Monica Adams  
[Thomas Keesecker]

**GATHERING MOMENT** Susan Perez (8:30am), Martha Tipton (11:00am)

**INTROIT** *Holy Spirit, Truth Divine* Chancel Choir  
[WORDS: Samuel Longfellow MUSIC: adpt. fr. Orlando Gibbons]

**\*CALL TO WORSHIP** Susan Perez (8:30am), Martha Tipton (11:00am)

Leader: Do you see what I see?

**All: I see only dry bones.**

Leader: Do you see the mighty God who speaks to them?

**All: I hear God's voice.**

Leader: Do you feel the wind blowing over these bones?

**All: Now I can see the bones coming to life!**

Leader: Are these bones going to live? Are you going to live also?

**All: Yes, Lord. I will live joyful and abundant life!**

**\*OPENING HYMN** *Hope of the World* UMH #178

**CHILDREN'S MOMENT** (11:00am) Martha Shuemake

**PRAYER CARDS COLLECTED**

**MISSION & MINISTRIES MOMENT** Susan Perez (8:30am), Martha Tipton (11:00am)

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

**\*PASSING THE PEACE** Susan Perez (8:30am), Martha Tipton (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** *Just A Closer Walk With Thee* Chancel Choir  
[Arranged by Robert Sterling]

## PROCLAMATION AND RESPONSE

**SCRIPTURE** Ezekiel 37:1-14 (Pew Bible NRSV, page 806) Susan Perez (8:30am)  
Leader: This is the word of God for the people of God. Martha Tipton (11:00am)  
**All: Thanks be to God.**

**\*HYMN** *Awake, O Sleeper* UMH #551

**SCRIPTURE** John 11:1-45 (Pew Bible NRSV, page 104) 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** "Can These Bones Live?" Rev. Sungho Lee

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE** Susan Perez (8:30am), Martha Tipton (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** Susan Perez (8:30am), Martha Tipton (11:00am)

**OFFERTORY** *Be Still My Soul* Monica Adams  
[Sibelius/Howlett]

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

**PRAYER OF DEDICATION** Susan Perez (8:30am), Martha Tipton (11:00am)

## SENDING FORTH

**\*CLOSING HYMN** *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling* UMH #384

**\*BENEDICTION** Rev. Sungho Lee

**\*POSTLUDE** *Voluntary in C* Monica Adams  
[Thomas Augustine Arne]

## **FLOWERS**

*"Our Lenten season continues, the first day of spring has arrived and our Christian Easter miracle approaches. We wait, watch and anticipate with wonder and gratitude." Flowers given anonymously.*

\* Indicates please stand as you are able.

## SERVING YOU TODAY

Rev. Dr. Sungho Lee, Minister  
Susan Perez (8:30am), Worship Leader  
Martha Tipton (11:00am), Worship Leader  
Martha Shuemake, Children's Moment  
Ric Campero, Choir Director  
Monica Adams, Organist/Pianist  
Cherie Hudson, Facilities Coordinator  
David Campero, Livestream  
Mark Wharff, Media  
Rupert Cooper, Audio

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### **SERMON IN A NUTSHELL: "CAN THESE BONES LIVE?"**

#### **Why did Jesus delay his trip to Bethany?**

There was Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. So, the sisters sent a message to Jesus, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." But when Jesus heard it, he said, "This illness does not lead to death; rather, it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

Jesus did not go to help Lazarus immediately. Jesus made sure that Lazarus died. When Jesus revived Lazarus, Jesus did not want people to say that Lazarus was not completely dead. To demonstrate God's power and love, Lazarus had to die completely, and people should not have any doubt about his death.

Before we confess that God saves us, we need to hit bottom. We need to surrender. We should say that I am helpless, and I need help. Otherwise, we tend to think that we were fine, and we were able to handle our situations ourselves. We do not surrender easily. Jesus knew humans. Jesus waited.

#### **God can revive a dead person.**

Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." Jesus was ready to revive him to show who Jesus was.

#### **Jesus wanted the disciples to be a part of this miracle!**

- 1) **Take away the stone:** Start with a baby step with faith. When Jesus arrived, Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Jesus did not take away the tomb stones. That was the job for the disciples. We need to overcome our doubts to listen to Jesus. Actually, Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days." She protested. Taking the stone away was an act of faith. We need to take a small step towards miracles. When we doubt God's power, we do not take the first step towards miracles. Go to a gym. Have a good diet. Write a gratitude journal. Participate in a small group. Come to Sunday worship! These are five steps that we can take with faith. Things do not happen all at once. God works through our participation.
- 2) **Unbind him and let him go:** Continue working on God's mission. Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?" So, they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, "Father, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me." When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

God does God's part, but we need to do our part. Lazarus was revived but still was wrapped in a cloth. We need to unbind him. When we recover from surgery, we need to do rehab work. When we are saved, born again, revived, we need to nurture our souls and adjust to this new life. It takes time and efforts. Do not give up after one try. Keep praying. Keep worshipping. Keep giving. Keep serving. Unbind the long wrapping. Our perspectives, personalities, and wounds have been formed for a long time. Healing also takes time. It takes four to six weeks for broken bones to heal. It takes many more years for a broken spirit to be restored.

Still some people would doubt God. They would say that there are many near-death stories. Lazarus may be just one of them. Many of the Jews who had come with Mary and saw what Jesus did believed in him. However, Pharisees and many others made a plot to kill Jesus also. Reviving one dead person was not enough for them to believe in God! God had to do something more dramatic for us to have faith!

### **Imagine!**

You are in the middle of a valley which is full of dry bones. Then God asks this question: "Can these bones live?" What would be your answer? It is not possible for these dry bones to come back to life in your mind. However, you know that God can create the whole universe out of nothing.

You want to say with faith, "Yes, Lord, you can make these dry bones to live!" However, your reasonable, modern, scientific mind keeps whispering into your ears doubting words: "It is not scientifically possible!"

Finally, you answer, saying, "O Lord God, you know." How many times have we said these neutral words in our faith journey?

### **Speak!**

Then God would say to us, "Prophesy to these bones and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord God to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. I will lay sinews on you and will cause flesh to come upon you and cover you with skin and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the Lord."

### **Witness God's Power and Love!**

Once we speak the words of God, we can experience God's miracles. Hear what Ezekiel experienced: "Suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them, but there was no breath in them."

### **Be a part of God's creating movement!**

God does not just perform miracles. God wants us to be a partner in God's creating movement. God said to Ezekiel, "Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." "I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, a vast multitude."

### **We have hope!**

God said this to Ezekiel: "Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.' Therefore, prophesy and say to them: Thus says the Lord God: I am going to open your graves and bring you up from your graves, O my people, and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the Lord when I open your graves and bring you up from your graves, O my people. I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken and will act!"

### **God leads us to death for us to have a new life!**

For us to experience God's power we need to surrender to God. Sometimes God allows us to give up all the worldly things so that we should seek spiritual solutions. Paul says in Romans 8:6-11, "To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For this reason, the mind that is set on the flesh

is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law—indeed, it cannot, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God." That is why those who are in the flesh should die. We need to be born again.

Once we are born again, the Spirit of God dwells in us. Paul says again, "Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, then the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you."

**Choose life: Change your preferences in your life!**

When you have a choice of unhealthy foods and healthy options, choose healthy ones for your body. When you have talents, use them for God's community. When you have extra time and treasure, find meaningful mission and ministry for your spirit. That is how we enjoy life in Spirit. Listen to the small voice of the God. Pay attention to the nudge of God's Spirit. We can enjoy totally new life!

Can these dry bones to live? Yes, Lord! They will live with joy and gladness! Amen.



**THANK YOU!**

**TO SPRC:** Thank you so much for the wonderful meal and the Starbucks coffee gift card. This recognition means a lot to us! Blessings, CUMC Staff.

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**CHURCH WORK DAY**

**NEXT SATURDAY, April 1, from 9:00am to 12:00pm,** The Board of Trustees is having another All-Church Work Day. 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!

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**THIS WEEK--SUNDAY MORNING ADULT CLASS**

Our Story Thus Far: The last three weeks we've studied Brian McClaren's book, *Do I Stay Christian?: A Guide for the Doubters, the Disappointed, and the Disillusioned*

- Week 1 we explored Chapter I: "Do I Stay Christian? No," in which McClaren looks at ten historical reasons/issues that have driven people away from Christianity.
- Weeks 2 and 3 we discussed Chapter II: "Do I Stay Christian? Yes!" in which McClaren shares ten reasons he's still Christian. Many of these reasons focus on why the Christian story, despite how the faith has often gone off the rails, still offers hope and transformation that people need to hear.

This week, in our last lap, we'll move from the mind to the heart. We'll read a letter from Phil Gilbertson, former Provost at UOP and member of Central Methodist, a letter from him to his granddaughter as she approached her Confirmation in the Roman Catholic Church. Phil talks about why even as "Today most progressive, educated people are shedding the church as they move into adult lives independent of their family past," there remain important values to be retained by not jettisoning the Christian part of our heritage.

As we reflect on Phil's letter, we'll consider what message we'd want to give our young people.

We meet Sunday at from 9:45 am to 10:45 in Knoles, Room 6. We'd love to have you with us.

**RECYCLE**

Recycle dates...Sundays **March 26 and Apr. 2** or Work Day **Apr 1st**. **NO** recycle pick up on Easter Sunday. **ONLY** CA CRV containers - many juice bottles don't qualify. Sorted bags have been great. Let's continue to fund the Office's budget. Together our donations make a difference.

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**SUNDAY AFTERNOON BOOK GROUP**

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.

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**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.

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**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.

**EASTER FLOWER FUND**

Be a part of our worship services on Easter by honoring or remembering a family member or friend by making a \$20 donation to the Easter Fund. This loving tribute is a meaningful way to remember a loved one's legacy or recognize a special person in your life. *Yes, I / we would like to donate to the Easter Flower Fund to help decorate the Sanctuary and Fireside Room for Easter Worship Services.* **DEADLINE: APRIL 3**

**In memory of**

OR

**In honor/celebration of**

Given by \_\_\_\_\_

# of Plants \_\_\_\_\_ Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to CUMC. Thank you.  
***(Flowers may be picked up at 12.30 on Easter Sunday)***

# 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

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## **EASTER SUNDAY • SUNDAY, APRIL 9**

6:30am Sunrise Service • Central Park

8:30am Easter Worship Service • Sanctuary

11:00am Easter Worship Service • Sanctuary