

# Central United Methodist Church

3700 Pacific Avenue, Stockton, CA 95204

## ORDER OF WORSHIP

*5<sup>TH</sup> Sunday After Pentecost*

Sunday, July 2, 2023



## GATHERING

### PRELUDE

Monica Adams & Rebecca Nelson

### GATHERING MOMENT

Laura Dinges

### \*CALL TO WORSHIP

Laura Dinges

**Leader:** Let us gather in this sacred space and lift our voices in reverence.

**All:** **No longer shall we offer ourselves to sin, instruments of unrighteousness. Instead, let us present ourselves to God, transformed from death to life, offering our beings as instruments of righteousness.**

**Leader:** Sin shall have no dominion over us, for we are freed from the power of sin and death by grace.

**All:** **Praise be to God, for we were once slaves to sin, but now our hearts have found obedience in the teachings entrusted to us. We have been liberated from sin and now find ourselves enslaved to righteousness.**

**Leader:** Let us present ourselves as slaves to righteousness, leading to sanctification and holiness.

**All:** **The wages of sin are death, but the gracious gift bestowed upon us by God is eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us honor and exalt the name of our Lord in this sacred place. Amen.**

### \*OPENING HYMN

*Breathe on Me, Breath of God*

UMH #420

CHILDREN'S MOMENT Carol Willson

PRAYER CARDS COLLECTED

MISSION & MINISTRIES MOMENT Laura Dinges

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

\*PASSING THE PEACE Laura Dinges

(Stand, bow or wave, with the word "Peace be with You!")

**All Sing: *And God will raise you up on eagle's wings, bear you on the breath of dawn, make you to shine like the sun, and hold you in the palm of God's hand.***

**PROCLAMATION AND RESPONSE**

SCRIPTURE Genesis 22:1-4 (Pew Bible NRSV, page 17-18) Laura Dinges

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

**All: Thanks be to God.**

\*HYMN *My Life Flows On in Endless Song* TFWS #2212

SCRIPTURE Matthew 10:40-42 (Pew Bible NRSV, page) Laura Dinges

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

**All: Thanks be to God.**

SERMON "God Provides" Rev. Sungho Lee

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE Laura Dinges

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

**THANKSGIVING**

WORSHIP WITH OUR TITHES & OFFERINGS Laura Dinges

OFFERTORY Monica Adams & Rebecca Nelson

\*DOXOLOGY UMH #94

*Praise God, From Whom all Blessings Flow  
Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise God, all creatures here below: Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Praise God, the source of all our gifts!  
Praise Jesus Christ, whose power up lifts!  
Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit!  
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!*

PRAYER OF DEDICATION Laura Dinges

## COMMUNION

### UMH #23-24

Laura Dinges

Leader: The Lord be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

**People: We lift them up to the Lord.**

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Leader: It is right and a good and joyful thing...And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**Sing: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

Leader: Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ...And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

**Sing: Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.**

Leader: Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here...Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy church, all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father, now and for ever.

**Sing: Amen, amen, amen.**

### 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.**

### COMMUNION HYMNS

*One Bread, One Body*  
*Let Us Break Bread Together*  
*Eat this Bread*

UMH #620

UMH #618

UMH #628

### COMMUNION REFLECTION

Rev. Sungho Lee

## SENDING FORTH

### \*BENEDICTION

Rev. Sungho Lee

### \*RESPONSE

*Shalom to You*  
***Shalom to you now, shalom, my friends.***  
***May God's full mercies bless you, my friends.***  
***In all your living and through your loving,***  
***Christ be your shalom, Christ be your shalom.***

UMH #666

### \*POSTLUDE

Monica Adams & Rebecca Nelson

***The altar flowers are given by Connie Edgecomb just because...***

\* Indicates please stand as you are able.

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## SERVING YOU TODAY

Rev. Dr. Sungho Lee  
Laura Dinges, Worship Leader  
Carol Willson, Children's Moment  
Ric Campero, Choir Director  
Monica Adams, Organist/Pianist  
Rebecca Nelson, Organist/Pianist  
David Campero, Livestream  
Mark Wharff & Steven Adams, Media  
Cherie Hudson, Facilities Coordinator  
Rupert Cooper, Audio

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### **SERMON IN A NUTSHELL: "GOD PROVIDES"**

#### **Independence Day: Fight for our nation required sacrifice and faith.**

On this meaningful Sunday we celebrate our Independence! As we commemorate the fierce struggle of our forefathers against the mighty forces of England, let us reflect upon the remarkable story of our nation's birth.

Almost 250 years ago, our ancestors found themselves facing an overwhelmingly daunting task. They lacked the proper weaponry, resources, military might, and even human power to contend with the formidable British Empire.

Still, our brave ancestors marched forward. They may have been outnumbered, outgunned, and outmaneuvered, but their spirit was unbreakable. It was as if they were saying, "We may not have all the military power, but we've got heart!"

And so, armed with courage and the audacity to dream of a land where freedom would reign, they embarked on a journey that would forever change the course of human history.

And against all odds, their persistence paid off. The seemingly insurmountable became surmountable. So, as we celebrate this Independence Day, let us not only honor the memory of those who paved the way for our freedom, but let their indomitable spirit inspire us to face our own challenges head-on.

Let us remember that even when we feel ill-equipped or outnumbered, we can still make a difference. We can still fight for what we believe in. The story of our nation's birth reminds us that the power to change the world lies not in our circumstances, but in our hearts. And just like our forefathers, let us dare to dream, dare to fight, and dare to believe that against all odds, great things are possible.

#### **God will provide: When we give up our plans, God fulfills God's promises.**

This is the faith that we find in Abraham's story. In Genesis 22, we encounter a story of Abraham, a man whose faith and obedience to God were tested like never before. Abraham was called upon by God to make the ultimate sacrifice. He was instructed to take his beloved son, Isaac, to the top of Mount Moriah and offer him as a burnt offering.

The weight of this command must have been unimaginable for Abraham, as he loved his son dearly. Nevertheless, he chose to obey God's will, trusting in His divine plan. It is like our forefathers sent their sons to their battlefield, knowing that many of them might die there.

As they ascended the mountain, Isaac innocently questioned his father, "Father, we have the wood and the fire, but where is the lamb for the offering?" Abraham, filled with love and faith, replied with words that have echoed through the ages, "God will provide, my son." Imagine your son asked you the question, "Father, can I come back alive after this Independence War?" What would you say? "God will guide you and bring you back, son!" I would say.

Abraham's unwavering trust in God's provision resonates with us today. We often find ourselves in situations where we cannot see a way forward, where the path seems dark and uncertain. Whether it is Independence War or life crisis, it is precisely in these moments that our faith and courage are tested.

In the midst of our trials and tribulations, we must remember that God is always working behind the scenes, orchestrating events for our ultimate good. The story of Abraham teaches us that even when the situation appears dire and devoid of hope, God's hand is never absent. He is the ultimate provider, and God's love for us surpasses all understanding.

What happened next on Mount Moriah? As Abraham raised the knife to offer Isaac as a sacrifice, an angel of the Lord called out to him, saying, "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God because you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me." And there, caught in the thicket, was a ram—a provision from God Himself.

In that moment, Abraham's declaration, "God will provide," became a living reality. God had indeed provided a substitute sacrifice, sparing Isaac's life and reaffirming His promise to bless Abraham's descendants abundantly. The ram caught in the thicket was a symbol of God's unwavering faithfulness and God's infinite capacity to provide for God's people. In a sense, our independent country is also provided by God when our forefathers lifted their flags and sent their sons to battle fields.

Just as the ram was provided in the nick of time, God provide victory for our nation in God's perfect timing. It may not always be in the way we expect or desire, but God's provision will always be abundant and sufficient.

### **God rewards our motives and love.**

Why did our ancestors receive an independent country as a gift from God? Because we fought to build a community where everybody can enjoy "the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." God saw our motive and allowed us to have such undeniable rights of life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness.

Why did Abraham receive his son back and many other descendants? Because Abraham believed that God could create the world out of nothing and give life to those who are dead (Romans 4:17).

When we have a motive acceptable to God, God will give us reward. Jesus said, "And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward." These simple yet powerful words reveal the heart of faith principles. The smallest acts of kindness out of compassion will not go unnoticed or unrewarded by God.

Jesus did not ask us to have grand achievements. Just a humble act, like offering a cup of water to someone in need, carries great significance in the eyes of God. It is not the magnitude of the deed that determines its worth, but the purity of our motives and the love that we pour into it that matters.

Brothers and sisters, let these words of Jesus inspire us to continue our faithful works, knowing that God sees every act of compassion, generosity, and service we offer in His name. Our actions may not be heroic like the forefathers or Abraham. Even when the world may overlook our efforts, our Heavenly Father never

does. He keeps a record of every good work, and He promises to reward us according to His perfect wisdom and grace.

However, let us not be mistaken. The reward Jesus speaks of extends far beyond earthly recognition or material gain. While those may come as a result of our faithful works, the ultimate reward lies in the freedom from sin and death that Jesus has secured for us through His sacrifice on the cross.

In Christ, we find forgiveness, redemption, and eternal life. Our reward is the joy of being reconciled with our Heavenly Father, experiencing His unending love, and dwelling in His presence forever. This is the reward that surpasses all earthly treasures and temporal pleasures.

On this Independence Sunday, let us resolve to be free from the power of sin and death. Let us not simply hear these words and go about our lives unchanged. Instead, let us be moved to action, fueled by the knowledge that our deeds, no matter how small, have eternal significance.

May we look for opportunities to extend a helping hand, to offer a word of encouragement, and to share the love of Christ with those around us. Let us be known as a community that seeks to bless others, not for our own glory, but to glorify the name of our Heavenly Father.

May our lives be a testimony to the transforming power of Christ's love, and may the world see through our actions that we are truly free from the power of sin and death.



Family Promise will be on our campus the week of July 9-16, 2023. Once again, we are asking for your help. We need volunteers to help set up and take down the rooms, we need cooks for the week, and we need volunteers to stay overnight each night the families are here. We almost forgot; our Family Promise pantry needs replenishing. Cards with the items we need will be available after church.

Please visit us at the Opportunities to Serve table after church this Sunday, July 2. You may also sign up by calling Connie (209-639-9359) or Glenda (209-479-6184).

Unless things change from now until July 9, we will be hosting 3 families. Thank you for your support and help with this project.

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#### **THE OFFICE**

The office area is closed on Saturdays and Sundays. If you need to make copies or need to be in the office area, please come by during the week. It is best to make an appointment as we are short-staffed and may be in a meeting, on lunch or running errands.

Also, regarding the buildings. The buildings are kept locked during the week for the safety of the staff, nursery school teachers and children, and groups that use the facilities during the week. The office and the buildings are closed on Saturdays. On Sunday, only buildings that are being used are unlocked – usually the

Knoles Building and the Sanctuary. Again, the other buildings are kept locked for the safety of staff and others on campus. We have had several unpleasant encounters with some of the homeless on our campus and we need to be sure that everyone feels safe while on our facility. Thank you for understanding. If you have any questions, please contact Susie Wanden at [swanden@cumcstockton.org](mailto:swanden@cumcstockton.org).

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#### **NEW MEMBER CLASS**

Pastor Lee started a new members class in June. If you want to become a member of Central UMC, please email Pastor Lee at [slee@cumcstockton.org](mailto:slee@cumcstockton.org). The class will meet 4 times according to the schedule of the participants.

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#### **SUMMER BIBLE STUDY**

Join Pastor Lee's Summer Bible Study Small Group during June, July, and August on Sundays in the Fellowship Hall following the 11:00am worship service (except for the Sundays when Book Club meets, and Annual Conference happens). The study is open to everyone. Come to the Fellowship Hall and learn about the leadership of Samuel, King Saul, and King David in the Bible.

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#### **LEADERSHIP TRAINING CLASS**

First Wednesday of July and August at 6pm via Zoom. You only need to attend one class. If you are a committee chair, you are required to attend this one-hour training.

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#### **SUNDAY AFTERNOON BOOK GROUP**

The book club summer read is *The All-Girl Filling Station's Last Reunion* by Fannie Flagg. Discussion will be at dinner Friday, July 21, at 6pm at the home of Elizabeth Van Eerde. Questions or to RSVP email Elizabeth by July 14 at [emve@comcast.net](mailto:emve@comcast.net).

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