

# Central United Methodist Church

3700 Pacific Avenue, Stockton, CA 95204

**ORDER OF WORSHIP**  
9<sup>TH</sup> Sunday After Pentecost  
**Sunday, July 30, 2023**



## GATHERING

**PRELUDE**

Monica Adams

**GATHERING MOMENT**

Joe Krider (8:30am), Martha Tipton (11:00am)

**\*SUNG CALL TO WORSHIP**

*Invocation*  
By Alexis Easton

Joe Krider (8:30am)  
Martha Tipton (11:00am)

Vocals

4

Vox.

7

Vox.

We come to-gether ground-ed in the love of God, We come to-gether to  
claim the Spir - it's power.. May we see Christ's face in one an - oth - er,  
May we be strength - ened for God's pur - pose in this hour.

**CHILDREN'S MOMENT**

Rev. Sungho Lee

**\*OPENING HYMN**

*God of Many Names*

UMH #105

**MISSION & MINISTRIES MOMENT**

Joe Krider (8:30am), Martha Tipton (11:00am)

**PRAYER CARDS COLLECTED**

**RITE OF FRIENDSHIP AND A SPECIAL WELCOME TO OUR VISITORS**

Martha Tipton (11:00am)

**\*PASSING THE PEACE** Joe Krider (8:30am), Martha Tipton (11:00am)  
(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 29:15-28 (Pew Bible NRSV, page 26) Joe Krider (8:30am)  
Leader: This is the word of God for the people of God. Martha Tipton (11:00am)  
**All: Thanks be to God.**

**\*HYMN** *All Things Bright And Beautiful* UMH #147

**SCRIPTURE** Matthew 13:31-52 (Pew Bible NRSV, pages 14-15) Joe Krider (8:30am)  
Leader: This is the word of God for the people of God. Martha Tipton (11:00am)  
**All: Thanks be to God.**

**SERMON** "God Makes Us To Grow" Rev. Sungho Lee

**BAPTISM** Rev. Sungho Lee & Rev. Tom Harshman  
Carter Green  
Nolan Walther

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

**OFFERTORY** Jennifer Alcover, Soloist  
Monica Adams

**\*DOXOLOGY** *Praise God, From Whom all Blessings Flow* UMH #94  
***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** Joe Krider (8:30am), Martha Tipton (11:00am)

## SENDING FORTH

\*BENEDICTION

Rev. Sungho Lee

\*RESPONSE

*Shalom to You*

UMH #666

***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.***

\*POSTLUDE

Monica Adams

\* Indicates please stand as you are able.

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## SERVING YOU TODAY

Rev. Dr. Sungho Lee  
Rev. Tom Harshman, Guest Minister  
Joe Krider, 8:30am Worship Leader  
Martha Tipton, 11:00am Worship Leader  
Ric Campero, Choir Director  
Monica Adams, Organist/Pianist  
Jennifer Alcover, Soloist  
David Campero, Livestream  
Mark Wharff & Steven Adams, Media  
Cherie Hudson, Facilities Coordinator  
Rupert Cooper, Audio

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## **SERMON IN A NUTSHELL: "GOD MAKES US GROW!"**

### **Baptism in the United Methodist Church**

Baptism is a significant sacrament within the United Methodist Church, serving as a foundational rite of initiation into the Christian faith. While some denominations emphasize adult baptism, the United Methodist Church follows a distinctive approach, including infant baptism.

### **Infant Baptism in the United Methodist Church**

In the United Methodist Church, infant baptism is performed as a demonstration of the family's commitment to raise their children with Christian love and teachings. It symbolizes an entry into the community of faith, encompassing not only the individual but also the family and the congregation. Unlike denominations that practice adult baptism exclusively, the United Methodist Church emphasizes the significance of baptism as a communal act that includes the support and guidance of the faith community.

### **Spiritual Formation and Confirmation**

While infants receive baptism in the United Methodist Church, the church acknowledges the importance of personal faith formation as individuals grow older. Through a process called confirmation, which usually takes place during adolescence, young individuals can reaffirm their faith and accept the gift of baptism that they received as infants. This confirmation class serves as a crucial step in nurturing spiritual maturity and personal commitment to the Christian faith.

### **Parallel with Monetary Inheritance for Minors**

The legal framework surrounding the inheritance of wealth by minors draws intriguing parallels to the concept of infant baptism and spiritual inheritance. Generally, minors are unable to directly inherit significant sums of money or assets. Instead, when a minor is named as a beneficiary in a will, the assets are typically placed in a trust until the minor reaches the age of majority or a specified age stipulated in the will.

### **The Role of Trustees and Protection of Assets**

In both scenarios, the role of a trustee is pivotal. In the case of monetary inheritance, a trustee is responsible for safeguarding and managing the assets on behalf of the minor, ensuring that they are used wisely and for the minor's benefit according to the terms outlined in the will. Similarly, within the United Methodist Church, ministers and families assume the role of trustees, nurturing and guiding the spiritual development of the baptized child until they reach an age of personal commitment and understanding.

Infant baptism in the United Methodist Church symbolizes the commitment of families and the faith community to raise children with Christian love and teachings. This practice aligns with the concept of spiritual inheritance and underscores the importance of ongoing spiritual formation and personal commitment to the Christian faith. By drawing parallels between the legal framework of monetary inheritance and the concept of spiritual inheritance, we can gain a deeper understanding of the significance and intent behind infant baptism.

### **Did Rachel become Jacob's wife when they spent the first night together?**

In the Old Testament reading for today, we found an interesting story. Laban, Jacob's uncle, had two daughters, Leah and Rachel. Leah's eyes were weak, but Rachel was graceful and beautiful. Jacob loved Rachel, so he said, "I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel." Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days because of his love for her.

However, when Jacob finished his 7 years labor at his farm, Laban gave Leah, not Rachel to Jacob. Do not think that uncles are not trustworthy! This is the case what goes around comes around. Jacob deceived his father using his weak eyesight. So, Jacob received weak-eyed-wife at night when his eyes could not see well. The uncle, Laban, had a good justification based on their cultural tradition. Laban said, "This is not done in our country—giving the younger before the firstborn." We Methodists have a big tent, and many diverse cultural groups are living together. We honor their cultures even when it is different from our tradition. One example is the membership. Cambodians accept infants as members when they had infant baptism, but we wait until they had confirmation. When it comes to the Cambodian babies, we count them as our members, but when it comes to the Greens and Walters we will wait for their confirmation.

Laban offered Jacob, saying, "Complete the week with Leah, and we will give you Rachel also in return for serving me another seven years." Jacob did so and completed her week; then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel as a wife.

Now when did Rachel become Jacob's wife? Legally after Jacob served another 7 years. However, substantially, when he started living with her. That is like infant baptism and confirmation. Rachel's status was changed into Jacob's wife instantly, but Jacob still had to work for 7 more years to acquire his legal right to his wife. With infant baptism, Carter and Nolan will become God's children instantly but they and their family must work 7+ more years to complete the transaction that we make today!

### **Is Kingdom of God here or not yet?**

The theological question of whether the Kingdom of God is already present or yet to come sparks intriguing discussions among believers.

### **The Parables of the Mustard Seed and Yeast**

Jesus used parables to illustrate the nature of the Kingdom of God. The parable of the mustard seed conveys that the Kingdom begins as a small seed but eventually grows into a substantial tree, providing shelter for many. Similarly, the parable of the yeast highlights the transformative power of the Kingdom as it permeates and leavens the entire batch of dough. These parables suggest that while the Kingdom exists in seed form, it requires growth and development to become fully visible and impactful.

### **Infant Baptism as Spiritual Growth**

Infant baptism holds parallels to the concept of growth within the Kingdom of God. Just as yeast leavens the dough, infant baptism initiates a journey of spiritual growth and maturation. Baptism marks an instant transformation of status, as individuals become children of God. However, this transformation does not guarantee immediate spiritual maturity or performance, like becoming a citizen upon taking an oath without automatically possessing all necessary skills.

### **The Treasure and the Pearl**

Jesus likened the Kingdom of God to a hidden treasure and a valuable pearl. The Kingdom holds immeasurable worth, prompting individuals to treasure and pursue it. Infant baptism signifies the beginning of this journey, akin to discovering the treasure or pearl in the field. By partaking in baptism, believers become owners of this spiritual treasure, committing to nurture and grow their faith over time.

### **The Journey and Transformation**

Infant baptism represents the initial step in the faith journey. However, baptism is not the culmination of this journey. The parable of the fishing net emphasizes the importance of discernment and growth as believers sort out good habits from bad. The faith journey involves continually developing into mature disciples of Jesus, striving for personal transformation while contributing to the growth of the Kingdom of God.

The Kingdom of God embodies a tension between its present existence in seed form and its future growth and realization. Infant baptism serves as a significant tradition within this journey, marking the initiation of spiritual transformation and the acquisition of the valuable status of being God's children. However, baptism is just the starting point, inviting believers to embark on a lifelong faith journey of growth and maturation. As we witness the baptism of Carter and Nolan, let us remember our own baptism and commit to continually press forward in our faith, striving for deeper discipleship and an ever-growing Kingdom of God.

Let us say with Paul, “Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal, but I press on to lay hold of that for which Christ has laid hold of me.” (Philippians 3:12). May God bless Carter and Nolan with all the blessings that we share with them during our faith journey together! Amen.



### **DO YOU EVER WONDER WHAT CENTRAL WILL BE LIKE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW?**

Join the members of the Isaiah Partnership for a light lunch Sunday, August 13 at noon in the Fellowship Hall. We will work together to establish some priorities and values for our church. We're going to use a process with a fancy name – The Dotification Process.

Back in January, we gathered around tables and shared Central's strengths, challenges, and opportunities. The co-facilitators of the Isaiah Partnership\* were able to narrow the rich feedback to three areas of focus- education, music and the church being a community center.

The members of the Isaiah Partnership need to hear from you again. Each person who attends the event on August 13 will receive five dots, and the attendees will have the opportunity to place their dots under the values that they believe are best for our church community moving forward as a way to share God's love in the community.

We can't do this by ourselves, so please plan on joining us for the Dotification meeting following the church service.

Rev. Sungho Lee and Alan Cook co-facilitators of the Isaiah Partnership.

The Isaiah Partnership is built upon the passage from Isaiah 43:18-19a: *"Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?"*

It includes a process of innovation and change in and alongside our congregation.

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### **MEET THE MISSIONARY**

The Missions Committee is hosting the first Meet the Missionary event, Saturday, August 5 at 5.30pm in the Fireside Room. Our guest will be Katherine Parker who is a United Methodist missionary working in Nepal. Ice cream and some of your favorite toppings will be served.

Katherine has been in Nepal since 2013 and prior to that was a missionary in Cambodia with the Community Health and Agricultural Development program of the Methodist Mission. She has been a missionary since 2007.

While in Nepal she has worked with empowering adolescents, worked on water, sanitation, and hygiene projects.

Join us on August 5 and learn more about Katherine's work in Nepal. Invite a friend to join you.

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### **A SUMMER MISSION PROJECT**

Central has been invited to participate in Pacific's Day of Service scheduled for August 26 during new student orientation. We have been asked to provide the items for care packages for the unhoused women of our community. From Sunday, July 16 through August 20 you are invited to shop for the following items:

- Wet wipes
- Toothbrushes and toothpaste
- Socks
- Single serving snacks
- Feminine hygiene products
- Bandages
- Comb/brush
- Pocket Packs facial tissues
- Lip balm
- Nail clippers
- Small bottles of Shampoo

Bring your donations on Sundays and place them in the red tubs located in the Knoles Building and in the Atrium. On August 26 a group of incoming Pacific students will put them together. Please consider inviting your friends and co-workers to join you in donating. If you are unable to shop and would like to donate money to help cover the cost of the purchase, be sure to include the words Day of Service on the memo line of your check.

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### **HELP US CREATE A NEW CHURCH MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY**

A church directory is a foundation stone for connecting with each other and organizing our many activities and outreach efforts. It is time to create a new one that is easily accessible online, easily updated, and of course secure to maintain confidentiality.

EVERYONE needs to answer our questionnaire that is easy, takes 5 minutes to complete, and provides us with accurate and current contact information for you and your family. PLEASE ANSWER THE QUESTIONNAIRE even if you are a long-time member since we are updating our records and must verify that every record is up to date.

You can pick up a paper version of the questionnaire from the Church office or from a table set up outside the Sanctuary during Sunday services. Thank you for helping to build this important resource! Contact person: Dick Edelstein (209) 351-5857.

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### **SUMMER BIBLE STUDY**

Join Pastor Lee's Summer Bible Study Small Group during 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 August at 6pm via Zoom. Open to anyone that would like to attend. If you are a Committee Chair and have not attended this is your last chance. As Committee Chair you are required to attend this one-hour training.

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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 schoolteachers 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).