

Central United Methodist Church

3700 Pacific Avenue, Stockton, CA 95204

ORDER OF WORSHIP
17th Sunday After Pentecost
Sunday, September 24, 2023



GATHERING

PRELUDE

Eat this Bread
(arr. Malcom Kogut)

Monica Adams

GATHERING MOMENT

Chris Chan (8:30am), Martha Tipton (11:00am)

INTROIT

Praise To The Lord, The Almighty
(by Paul Sjolund)

Chancel Choir

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Chris Chan (8:30am), Martha Tipton (11:00am)

Leader: God, you are gracious.

All: We live by your grace.

Leader: God, you have given us plenty.

All: We share them with others in your love.

Leader: God, you are the owner of all creation.

All: We are your faithful stewards. Amen.

*HYMN OF PRAISE

Come, Sinners, to the Gospel Feast

UMH #616

CHILDREN'S MOMENT

Martha Shuemaker

STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

Dick Edelstein

MISSION & MINISTRIES MOMENT

Chris Chan (8:30am), Martha Tipton (11:00am)

PRAYER CARDS COLLECTED

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

Martha Tipton

***PASSING THE PEACE**

Chris Chan (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.*

ANTHEM

The Apple Tree
(by David L. Brunner)

Chancel Choir

PROCLAMATION AND RESPONSE

SCRIPTURE

Exodus 16:2-15 (Pew Bible NRSV, page2 62-63)

Chris Chan (8:30am)

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

Martha Tipton (11:00am)

All: Thanks be to God.

***HYMN**

A Man Owned a Vineyard
(words by Carolyn Gillette)

(Tune: To God be the Glory)

*A man owned a vineyard and needed a crew
To tend to his land — there was plenty to do.
He called out to people downtown in the square,
"Come work hard all day and I'll pay you what's fair."
God, you call and you send; there is work here to do.
There's your whole world to tend; may we garden for you!
O Lord, in your vineyard may we seek to be
The workers who tend to your justice and peace.*

*He went back a number of times on that day;
He called to new workers and promised fair pay.
Can we but imagine those first workers' rage
When all those who labored received the same wage?
God, the gift of your grace comes as quite a surprise.
For your mercies embrace even latecomers' lives.
May all who have worked long and hard humbly learn:
Your grace is a gift and not something we earn.*

*He called the complainers and said, "This is true —
That I kept my word and I gave you your due.
I share with compassion; I'm loving and kind.
I care for all people and give what is mine!"
God you give what is yours, more than what we deserve;
May we reach out in love where you call us to serve.
May we who have witnessed your grace gladly share
Your justice and love with your world everywhere.*

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 20:1-16 (Pew Bible NRSV, pages 21-22)

Chris Chan (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 Gives Us Our Daily Bread"

Rev. Sungho Lee

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Chris Chan (8:30am), Martha Tipton (11:00am)

PASTOR'S 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), Martha Tipton (11:00am)

OFFERTORY

I Am the Bread of Life
(arr. Glenn Wonnacott)

Monica Adams

*DOXOLOGY

*What Gift Can We Bring
This gift we now bring, this present, this token,
these words can convey it, the joy of this day!
When grateful we come, remembering, rejoicing,
this song we now offer in honor and praise.*

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Chris Chan (8:30am), Martha Tipton (11:00am)

SENDING FORTH

*BENEDICTION

*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

Magnificat Quinti Toni 2
(Pachelbel)

Monica Adams

*Indicates please stand as you are able.

SERVING YOU TODAY

Rev. Dr. Sungho Lee
Chris Chan, 8:30am Worship Leader
Martha Tipton, 11:00am Worship Leader
Dick Edelstein, Stewardship Committee
Martha Shuemade, Children's Moment
Ric Campero, Choir Director
Monica Adams, Organist/Pianist
David Campero, Livestream
Mark Wharff & Steven Adams, Media
Cherie Hudson, Facilities Coordinator
Rupert Cooper, Audio

SERMON IN A NUTSHELL: "GOD GIVES US OUR DAILY BREAD."

Give us our daily bread.

In the Lord's Prayer, after we pray for the glory of the Lord, we pray this prayer: "Give us our daily bread."

The key point in this prayer is "us." We do not pray, "Give ME MY daily bread."

When someone is still hungry, our prayer is not answered yet. Someone other than I still pray this prayer all over the world. I still see many unhoused people coming to the St. Mary's Dining Room to receive their daily bread. Our new Church Council Chair, Julius Hastings, said that he served there to pay his "rent" on Earth. He lives on Earth, and serving there is his rent payment to humanity. Julius wants to share his foods with others in this particular way.

If we do not share with others, it is going to be spoiled.

Exodus 16:2-15 recounts the Israelites' complaints against Moses and Aaron during their desert journey. Yearning for the familiar abundance of food in Egypt, they lamented their perceived starvation and questioned the wisdom of their journey into the unknown. In response, God's intervention takes the form of a promise to provide sustenance in the form of bread from the sky, which would be collected daily, instilling in them a vital lesson about reliance and trust.

God's response to the Israelites' complaints unveils essential teachings that transcend the historical context. The divine provision of manna, a type of bread-like substance, addresses the fears and uncertainties associated with scarcity. The dew-laden flakes serve as a reminder of God's steadfast care, reiterating the notion that earthly sustenance ultimately comes from the Divine.

Lessons in contentment emerge prominently from this narrative. The Israelites' discontent stems from a nostalgic yearning for their past circumstances. Yet, God's response challenges them to appreciate the present moment and trust in God's ability to provide. The impermanence of the manna reinforces the idea of living in the present, without excessive anxiety for the future.

Trust, Abundance, and Greed:

The practice of collecting manna each day, based on family needs, offers an exercise in trust and reliance. Storing excess for the following day results in spoilage, reminding the Israelites of their need to depend on God's daily provisions. This dynamic showcases the fine balance between utilizing resources responsibly and avoiding the pitfalls of greed.

Exodus 16:2-15 talks not only about sustenance, gratitude, contentment, but also about sharing. This point is clearer in Jesus' parable.

Everybody will have his or her share.

The biblical parable found in Matthew 20:1-16 offers a profound exploration of the concepts of equity and justice. Through the lens of this story, Jesus illustrates a scenario where a landowner hires workers at different times throughout the day, ultimately prompting a clash between the principles of fair distribution and compensation for wrongs. This narrative serves as a thought-provoking example that not only sheds light on the complexities of equity and justice but also has implications for modern society's approach to resource allocation and social support systems.

The Parable and Its Interpretation:

In this parable, a landowner hires workers at various times, from early morning to nearly closing time. He pays each worker a denarion, regardless of the hours worked. Those who began work later in the day receive the same wage as those who toiled throughout the day, leading to grumbling among the latter

group. The landowner's response emphasizes the concept of equity—giving everyone a fair chance to succeed, regardless of their starting point—and his right to be generous.

Equity vs. Justice:

Equity and justice are distinct yet interconnected principles. Equity pertains to the impartial distribution of resources and opportunities, irrespective of individual circumstances. It is grounded in the notion of leveling the playing field to ensure that everyone has an equal chance to thrive. Justice, conversely, concerns rectifying injustices and ensuring fair treatment, often involving compensation for harm or wrongs suffered.

Implications for Modern Society:

The parable's relevance extends beyond its religious context, offering insights into contemporary discussions about resource allocation and social support systems. It highlights the tension between providing equal opportunities (equity) and addressing individual contributions and needs (justice).

For instance, the scenario of workers joining at different times corresponds to the diverse starting points people have in life due to factors like socio-economic background, education, and opportunities. Just as the landowner's approach is perceived differently by the workers, modern debates surrounding taxation, social welfare, and minimum wage demonstrate the ongoing struggle to balance equity and justice.

The Parable's Influence on Social Support Systems:

The principles underscored in the parable resonate with modern social welfare systems. The concept of contracted wages versus uncontracted gifts parallels the idea of earned income versus government support. As the parable's landowner offers gifts to those who entered late, societal mechanisms like social security programs extend support to those who cannot earn a living due to varying circumstances. This synthesis of equity and justice aims to ensure that all individuals have access to basic necessities and opportunities for a dignified life.

Matthew 20:1-16 serves as a timeless discourse on the dichotomy between equity and justice. This parable underscores the value of offering everyone an equal chance to succeed while acknowledging the need for addressing disparities and compensating for wrongs. In the contemporary world, these principles continue to inform discussions about resource distribution, social welfare, and economic policies. As society grapples with finding a harmonious balance between equity and justice, the lessons from this biblical narrative offer a guiding light in the pursuit of a fair and compassionate world for all.

Earn as much as you can, save as much as you can, give as much as you can.

John Wesley said, "Earn as much as you can, save as much as you can, give as much as you can." We can interpret this statement in the light of social systems. In the realm of sustenance, there exist four distinct approaches: earning, begging, taking, and sharing. Capitalist ideology places emphasis on earning, yet within this framework, the chasm between the affluent and the disadvantaged continues to widen. I want to show the repercussions of these methods in both capitalist and communist systems, scrutinizing the escalating wealth inequality and advocating for a paradigm shift towards equitable bread distribution.

The Earning Paradigm:

In the United States, the Credit Suisse Global Wealth Report of 2021 reveals an unsettling wealth distribution: the top 1% controls over 35% of the national wealth, leaving the remaining 99% with less than 65%. The wealthiest quintile possesses a staggering 80% of the nation's assets. Such severe inequality, comparative to other developed nations, provokes concern among economists and social scholars due to its potential threat to economic stability and social harmony.

Begging, Taking, and the Limits of Mercy:

When the wealth gap is bearable, individual persons resort to pleading for sustenance, relying on the benevolence of the affluent. However, this reliance has its limits. Charitable initiatives and religious organizations serve as intermediaries, advocating for resource-sharing to maintain societal cohesion. In extreme cases, citizens resort to taking resources by force, manifesting as theft, robbery, or even revolutionary communism. Despite the communist ideal of equal distribution, historical examples reveal the challenge of balancing individual needs with the propensity for human greed.

The Role of Government and Social Safety Nets:

Recognizing the inadequacy of depending solely on benevolence, governments often institute social safety nets, such as the Social Security System in the U.S., to provide assistance to those in need. Taxation becomes the primary mechanism to fund such programs, acknowledging the necessity of redistributing wealth to foster a just society.

Sharing as an Alternative Paradigm:

Both capitalist and communist systems acknowledge the inherent sinfulness of human nature. Appeals to goodwill and conscience often fall short, compelling governments to introduce taxation systems. In communist nations, centralized planning, wage equality, and social welfare programs strive to ensure universal access to necessities. While the specifics vary across countries, the core objective remains consistent: to provide everyone with essential resources and an equitable opportunity for success. However, they pay the price. They take freedom from the people, and use force to enforce their ideals.

Religious and Ethical Considerations:

The passages in the Lord's Prayer, "Give us our daily bread" underpins the moral obligation to meet basic human needs. This plea prompts contemplation about one's share in equitable bread distribution. Spiritual and ethical principles urge individuals to embrace a commitment to sharing resources with those tempted to take or compelled to beg, transcending mere self-interest.

As socioeconomic disparities persist, addressing the issue of equitable bread distribution becomes paramount. While capitalism and communism offer distinct approaches, they ultimately converge in acknowledging the limitations of appealing to human virtue. Governments must step in to create effective social safety nets, and individuals must embrace the ethos of sharing. In this synthesis, a more just and compassionate society may emerge, transforming the perennial quest for sustenance into a collective pursuit of well-being for all.

Stewardship Consideration.

When we pray the Lord's prayer, we need to consider this discussion. God wants all of us to meet basic human needs for bread, shelter, clothes, safety, health, and love. I want you to make a pledge this year for us to share our bread with those who are tempted to take it or willing to beg for it.

How much bread do you need for your daily needs? How much are you willing to share with others? May God bless your decision and give you abundant life!

CENTRAL UMC ALL CHURCH CONFERENCE
Thursday, November 2, 2023, 5:00pm

CONNECTIONS

TRAINING OPPORTUNITY FOR GODLY PLAY TODAY

Calling on High School Students and Adults who would like to learn how to be a doorperson/storyteller for Godly Play!

This training is from 12:15pm to 2:15pm and a Pizza Lunch will be provided!

Meet Andrea Moccia upstairs in the Godly Playrooms right after church this Sunday September 24th. This quick and thorough training will build your confidence and you will feel prepared to volunteer for Godly Play on Sundays.

High School Students get Credit for volunteer hours (your training time will be included as volunteer hours).

Godly Play is a rewarding way to interact with our youth, ages preschool to 8th grade.

I look forward to seeing you there!

Andrea

Questions? Call/Text 209-406-9669 Email moccia.andi@gmail.com

FRIENDS OF WADI FOQUIN

All members and friends of Central United Methodist Church are invited to come to the Fellowship Hall **TODAY** to learn about the village of Wadi Foquin in the West Bank, its unique partnership with the United Methodist Church and, an interfaith, international nonprofit that was started here in the California/Nevada Conference to support Wadi Foquin partnership. A simple meal will be served. If you would like childcare, contact Alan Cook (alancook4138@gmail.com).

Our guest speaker will be Rev. Michael Yoshii a retired clergy from our conference. This event is sponsored by the Missions Committee, the Education Committee, and the Adult Studies Committee of our church.

MEMORIAL SERVICE

Our devoted and loyal church member Sally Mills passed away on Sept. 5, 2023. Sally's spirit and enthusiasm were felt not only at church but at many music venues in town where she was a regular attendee. Her daughter Erin Mills has arranged for Sally's memorial to be held at CUMC on Sat. Oct. 28 at 2 pm.

STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

Be a good steward of Central! Don't forget to return your pledge card by October 15th. Volunteers are always needed to help with set up, decorations and take down for events. Special talents such as music (singing, playing an instrument), art (drawing, making banners, teaching youth about ascetics), crafts (quilt making, shawl making, decorating the sanctuary and flower selection and exhibits), gardening (help keep our gardens beautiful all year) and cooking/baking for mealtime events. Volunteering also provides an opportunity to meet new people and make new friends.

STEWARDSHIP CLASS

Amidst the sweeping wildfires that engulfed Maui, we are compelled to witness the stark repercussions of our changing climate. In our role as faithful stewards of God's creation, we must acknowledge our shortcomings in tending to God's gifts.

As we gear up for the upcoming Fall season, the Finance Committee will be presenting a Stewardship Class that is open to EVERYONE! The class will be throughout October. This endeavor extends beyond mere pledges and offerings. It's a journey towards embracing our responsibility as custodians of God's wondrous handiwork.

If you are seeking the true essence of stewardship and yearn to learn alongside fellow congregants, we warmly encourage you to share your email address with Pastor Lee at slee@cumcstockton.org. We will meet four times: October 1, 8, 15 & 22. Our gatherings will commence right after the 11am Sunday service in the Fellowship Hall. Each session will be an hour.

CENTRAL BOOK GROUP

This month's book is *The Mistress of Bhatia House* by Sujata Massey....the latest in the Perveen Mistry series. It's just out but the library has both hardback & kindle copies. If you have trouble getting a copy, the alternate book is *The White Lady* by Jacqueline Winspear author of Maisie Dobbs.

SAVE THE DATE

Sunday October 8, 2023 • 11:00 A.M. Service

Central United Methodist Church is celebrating 25 years as a Reconciling Congregation.

Central's Journey Toward Becoming a Reconciling Congregation

Central spent the years of the 1990s working through the process of becoming a reconciling congregation. Using the knowledge, wisdom, and skills of Bishop Mel Wheatley (Denver episcopacy and former CUMC Pastor), Rev. Dave Bennett (District Superintendent), Rev. Gary Putnam (Senior Pastor), Rev. Elbert Hoffman, and John Bradbury (church council chair): classes, discussions, and guest speakers were presented to the Central congregation. After years of extensive study, conversation, and prayers approximately 80% of the congregation voted yes and on September 28, 1998, to become a reconciling congregation.

What is a reconciling congregation? A congregation that welcomes all to participate in the church's mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. People of all nations, skin colors, economic backgrounds, and gender.

Every person has the right to be amongst us at all church activities. The reconciling movement in the United Methodist Church has been an effort to welcome the LGBTQ+ community into the United Methodist Church since 1983.

Statement of Reconciliation

As children of God, we are called to share in word and deed the divine love that casts out fear. Made in God's image, we are called to accept ourselves and our sexuality, which is a gift given by God, whatever our sexual orientation. We are called to work together through the Holy Spirit to uphold standards of human relationships grounded in mutual love, responsibility, accountability, trust, and nurture.

We are all forgiven and reconciled children of God, drawn together by our Lord's command to love one another. We invite all to proclaim God's kingdom and to share in all aspects of the life of our congregation:

worship, education, stewardship, and service.

Central United Methodist Church is a Reconciling Congregation affirming all persons without regard to race, gender, ethnic background, sexual orientation, national origin, age, physical or mental ability, marital status, economic condition, or anything else that threatens to divide God's family. In our quest to follow the example of Christ, we commit ourselves to loving acts of invitation, welcome and reconciliation, providing ministry to, for, and with all persons without exception.

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.

A NOTE REGARDING STAFF TIME ON SUNDAYS

Although many staff members work on Sunday during worship services, this does not mean they are available for anything outside of their Sunday duties. For instance, David is paid to provide online live streaming service on Sunday. He is not there to be advised of issues around the campus that may need attention. If you find issues that need to be addressed, please send an email to the appropriate staff member or committee head so it can be handled during their weekly work schedule. If it is an emergency, contact any staff member available.

STAFF

Sungho Lee, Senior Minister

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David Campero, Maintenance/Sunday Media

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COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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