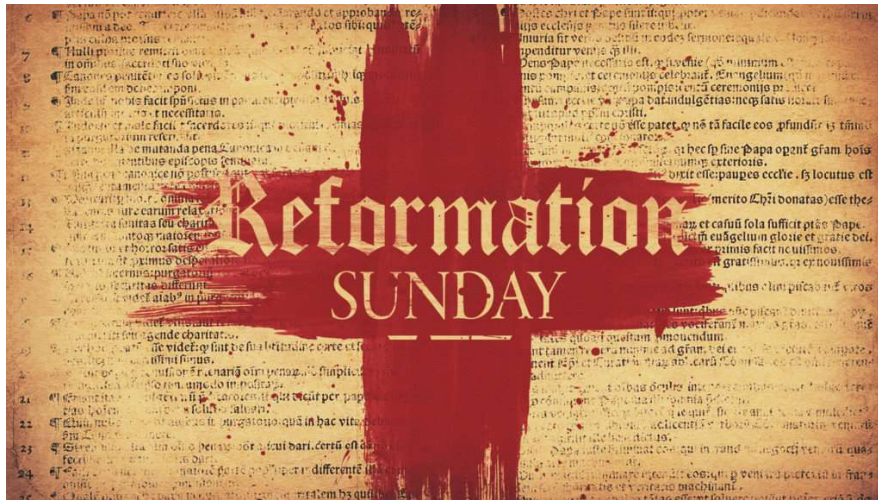


Central United Methodist Church

3700 Pacific Avenue, Stockton, CA 95204

ORDER OF WORSHIP
Reformation Sunday
Sunday, October 29, 2023



GATHERING

PRELUDE

Berceuse from Dolly Suite
(Gabriel Fauré) for 4 hands, one piano

Monica Adams

GATHERING MOMENT

Chris Chan (8:30am), Jennifer Langham (11:00am)

INTROIT

Rejoice in the Lord
(by John Horman)

Chancel Choir

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Chris Chan (8:30am), Jennifer Langham (11:00am)

Leader: We come together to seek inspiration and guidance.

All: **God, help us to face adversity with unwavering determination.**

Leader: We have commitment to truth and honesty in all we share.

All: **God, give us the strength to stand firm in the face of opposition.**

Leader: We dedicate ourselves to serve others above all else.

All: **God, give us the love that mirrors a nursing mother's care for her children. Amen.**

*HYMN

O God, Our Help in Ages Past

UMH #117

CHILDREN'S MOMENT

Rev. Sungho Lee

STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

Stewardship Video 2

MISSION & MINISTRIES MOMENT

Chris Chan (8:30am), Jennifer Langham (11:00am)

PRAYER CARDS COLLECTED

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

Jennifer Langham

***PASSING THE PEACE** Chris Chan (8:30am), Jennifer Langham (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 *Now Thank We All Our God* Chancel Choir
(arr Mark Hayes) Monica Adams and Amy Dahlstrom, Piano

PROCLAMATION AND RESPONSE

SCRIPTURE Deuteronomy 34:1-12 (Pew Bible NRSV, page 191) Chris Chan (8:30am)
Leader: This is the word of God for the people of God. Jennifer Langham (11:00am)
All: **Thanks be to God.**

***HYMN** *Jesu, Jesu* UMH #432

SCRIPTURE Matthew 22:34-46 (Pew Bible NRSV, page 24) Chris Chan (8:30am)
Leader: This is the word of God for the people of God. Jennifer Langham (11:00am)
All: **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON "God Chooses Leaders" Rev. Sungho Lee

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE Chris Chan (8:30am), Jennifer Langham (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), Jennifer Langham (11:00am)

OFFERTORY 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), Jennifer Langham (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.***

The flowers on the altar are given by Van-Ha To-Cowell: "in memory of my mother" and "in honor of my son Andrew" for their birthdays in October.

*Indicates please stand as you are able.

SERVING YOU TODAY

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

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

SERMON IN A NUTSHELL: "GOOD CHOOSES LEADERS." (REFORMATION SUNDAY)

Reformation Sunday

As we observe Reformation Sunday, it serves as a poignant reminder of a pivotal chapter in Christian history, one ignited by the indomitable Martin Luther, along with fellow luminaries like Calvin and Zwingli. Their audacious endeavors challenged the entrenched power and perceived corruption of the Catholic Church. The echoes of their actions reverberated not only within the Protestant sphere but also stirred a transformative awakening within the very heart of Catholicism itself. In essence, the Reformation embodies an ongoing and evolutionary narrative in Christianity.

This anniversary compels us to reflect upon the perennial necessity of reform in our own faith journeys. To remain unswervingly attached to a faith devoid of introspection and rejuvenation is to risk stagnation, moral decay, and a sense of spiritual staleness. The Reformation's enduring legacy serves as a compelling invitation to renew our commitment to faith.

The Reformation, both as a historical episode and as a timeless principle, underscores that change and self-examination are integral to the Christian experience. It beckons us to aspire to a faith that remains vibrant, adaptive, and continually refined. So, on this Reformation Sunday, let us seize the opportunity to rekindle the flames of our faith, to explore new dimensions of understanding, and to embark on a journey of perpetual reformation in our quest for spiritual growth and renewal.

God keeps God's Promise

The first principle that we need to remember on this reformation Sunday is that God keeps God's promises no matter what. Moses, the revered leader of his people, glimpsed the promised land, but the privilege of entering it was not destined for him. His ascent to Mount Nebo, rising from the Moabite plains to Pisgah's summit, presented a divine vista. Moses felt that God did not keep Go's promises.

However, God unveiled the entirety of the coveted land—stretching from Gilead to Dan, embracing Naphtali, the territories of Ephraim and Manasseh, the expanse of Judah along the Mediterranean Sea, the Negev, and the surrounding regions, including the Valley of Jericho and the City of Palms, reaching all the way to Zoar. God kept God's promise, sworn to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, affirming that it was for their descendants, and Moses had been granted the privilege to behold it with his own eyes. Yet, crossing into this bounteous land was not to be his fate. Remember! When I am not the beneficiary of God's promise, still God keeps God's promises.

God uses God's servants for God's work.

The second principle that we need to remember is that it is not about us. Moses's story reminds us that, at times, despite giving our all, we may not taste the fruits of our labor. Nevertheless, we hold in high regard the deeds we have accomplished. We refrain from lamenting the absence of personal rewards, for in our service itself, we discover the ultimate recompense. We find satisfaction in the fulfillment of our mission, and therein lies our contentment.

The Unceasing Cycle of Leadership and Faith

The third principle that we need to know is that the passing of one great leader does not mark the conclusion but a continuation of the divine mission. Even in Moses' absence, God's people were entrusted with significant responsibilities. In this transition, God, the ultimate guide, anointed a fresh leader to navigate the challenges of a new era. When we find ourselves longing for the golden days and the extraordinary leaders of yore, we should be reminded of a timeless truth: God perpetually calls forth new leaders to meet the demands of evolving times.

Joshua, the son of Nun, emerged as the chosen one, endowed with the spirit of wisdom, thanks to Moses's imparted blessing. The Israelites attentively heeded his counsel and diligently executed the Lord's directives, ensuring the mission's continuity.

We need to raise the next generation leaders.

It's essential to acknowledge that no prophet has ever arisen in Israel who could rival the profound connection Moses enjoyed with the Lord, having beheld His countenance directly. Moses was a beacon of miraculous feats and divine signs, his actions resonating from Egypt's courts to its very heartland, captivating Pharaoh, his officials, and the entire nation. His unparalleled demonstrations of God's mighty power and extraordinary deeds remained etched in the collective memory of all Israel.

However, Moses reminds us that leadership evolves, adapts, and answers the call of the times. It underscores that the divine mission marches forward, with new leaders rising to fulfill the ever-evolving needs of faith and purpose. In this ceaseless cycle of leadership, we find both a challenge and an inspiration—to embrace the promise of renewal and to trust in the guiding hand of the divine, which consistently shepherds us toward a new and unfolding future. Each committee chair, small group leader, and community leader should train and raise new leaders. I am proud that our church recommended three candidates for the ordained ministry this year.

A Timeless Call to Leadership and Love

Amidst the enduring journey of reform and renewal, we find an ever-relevant imperative that must not be overlooked: the unwavering commitment to the greatest commandments. In this quest for transformation, the search for leaders whose love extends to both God and neighbors becomes paramount.

Once an adept scholar of the law steps forward to put Jesus to the test, inquiring about the singularly most significant commandment within the Law.

To this, Jesus responds, encapsulating the essence of divine wisdom and moral guidance. He proclaims, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind." It is within this declaration that we discover the foremost and most profound of commandments. Yet, it doesn't conclude there, for the second commandment, equally monumental, is unveiled: "Love your neighbor as you love yourself." It is in the harmonious embrace of these two commandments that the entire tapestry of the Law and the teachings of the Prophets finds its ultimate purpose and meaning.

In the ceaseless pursuit of reformation, let us remain cognizant of this timeless wisdom—leadership finds its true calling when it stems from a place of love, both for the divine and for one another. For, in the harmony of these commandments, we unearth the enduring foundation of moral guidance, community, and the very essence of our shared faith journey.

In our Methodist words, we need leaders who keep both personal piety and social holiness. We need those who pray every day, read and meditate the Bible every day, come to church every Sunday, and still do justice work through small groups in the community.

The Eternal Echoes of Reformation: Time, Faith, and the Messiah

The spirit of reformation, as exemplified by Jesus, is an unceasing current that transcends the boundaries of history. While we may commemorate historical reformations, the work is far from finished. Jesus, once a historical figure who bore the Cross, transcends the limits of time, persisting in a continual presence, guiding us in God's work.

Some among us perceive time as linear—what's past is past, and the future remains out of reach. However, the Bible offers a contrasting view: time is circular, devoid of a defined beginning or end in the realm of God's eternal presence. Reformation, much like our ministry, knows no bounds in this timeless cycle.

In a gathering of Pharisees, Jesus provokes a question about the Messiah, inquiring about His lineage. The response is swift: "The son of David." Yet, Jesus challenges their perception, highlighting a profound truth. He references David's words, declaring that David, inspired by the Spirit, addressed the Messiah as "Lord," not merely as a son. This leaves a profound question hanging in the air—how could the Messiah be both the son of David and the Lord?

This enigma elucidates a timeless message: David's worship transcended the confines of temporal existence. Just as God exists beyond the limitations of time, so does Jesus, who shares in God's eternal nature. This insight brings forth a profound promise—those who engage in the everlasting journey of reformation in faith shall abide eternally with Jesus. The echoes of reformation, like the Messiah Himself, extend beyond the boundaries of history, beckoning us to partake in a faith journey that spans the ages, with Jesus as our eternal guide.

Answering the Divine Call: A Message for Reformation Sunday

On this significant Reformation Sunday, let us resonate with the profound understanding that each of us is summoned by a higher purpose—the divine call to engage in God's work. Regardless of whether you're nominated to participate in a committee or a small group, recognize the vital role you play in the grand tapestry of God's Kin-dom. Rather than perceiving your tasks as mundane chores, cultivate a sense of pride and unwavering passion for the unique calling that has been bestowed upon you.

It's essential to acknowledge that the fruits of your labor may not manifest immediately or visibly as they did for Moses. Nevertheless, remain steadfast in your commitment to the work, even if it sometimes feels unacknowledged or unappreciated. You might experience moments of hardship due to the mission and ministry you undertake but consider the enduring and eternal value of your efforts.

In these times of potential setbacks and tribulations, remember that success and recognition may elude you, but God's divine plan unfolds in God's time, through God's mysterious ways. Until that destined moment arrives, let us persist in the transformative work of reformation, not just in our communities and churches, but also deep within our own souls.

Amen.



HELP NEEDED

The office needs help building a desk! Our new Youth Director has a new desk! Yea! But we need help putting it together. If you are able to help, please contact Susie at swanden@cumcstockton.org or Elaine at elaine@cumcstockton.org.

HONORING OUR SAINTS

Sunday, November 12 we will be honoring the Saints of Central. On this day, we remember and honor those who have passed away. We call the names of those lost in the previous year as a way of honoring the impact their lives have had on us. If you know of a member, a visitor or someone with a strong affiliation with Central who has passed within the last year, please email Susie at swanden@cumcstockton.org.

LUNCH ON US: CENTRAL INVITES OUR SENIORS TO A FREE LUNCH EVENT!

Are you a senior and interested in:

- A grab-and-go meal?
- A sit-down meal with other seniors?
- Community resources?

Come to Central on Thursday, November 2 from noon-1:00 for a meal that you can either eat with others in the Fireside Room or take with you. Bring a friend if you like!

While you don't have to sign up in advance, doing so will help us plan, and a limited amount of food will be available at the event.

Sign-up sheets will be available outside the worship services on Sundays October 22 and 29, or you can contact Alan Cook to let him know you're planning on attending.

Questions? Contact Alan Cook at (209) 610-7893 or alancook4138@gmail.com.

This project is part of a pilot project for Central to try out new programming that will help us put into action our goal of sharing God's love. Funding is provided by the Isaiah Partnership/Princeton Theological Seminary.

THE NOMINATION COMMITTEE

The Nomination Committee extends an invitation to all willing hearts within our congregation. We are in search of dedicated individuals who are eager to serve in vital roles within our church community – the Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) and the Trustee Committee.

Despite our best efforts, the Nomination Committee has faced challenges in identifying individuals willing to undertake these crucial responsibilities. Our church is predominantly powered by the dedication and service of lay volunteers, not just our dedicated staff. Without your participation, our ministries simply cannot thrive.

Positions Now Available:

1. Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC):

The SPRC plays a pivotal role in supporting and supervising our dedicated staff members. They are responsible for the hiring and termination of staff, overseeing their work within our church, and determining their salaries and benefits – akin to the Human Resources department in other organizations. If you feel called to serve in the SPRC, please reach out to Pastor Lee.

2. Trustee Committee:

The Trustee Committee is entrusted with the care and maintenance of our cherished church property and facilities. They are the diligent hands that repair broken facilities, negotiate contracts with workers on behalf of our church, and handle the acquisition and sale of church properties. If you are eager to serve within the Trustee Committee, please contact Pastor Lee.

This is a wonderful opportunity to contribute your time, skills, and dedication to our church's continued growth and well-being. We encourage you to prayerfully consider these roles and reach out to Pastor Lee to express your interest.

Let us remember that our church thrives when we come together as a community to serve, and with your help, we can continue to spread God's love and fulfill our mission.

RECONCILING COMMITTEE

Central's reconciling committee would like to ask anyone who is interested in joining our committee to contact myself or Pastor Lee and ask any questions you might have about joining/chairing this important team. We need to begin planning where Central is going from here. We really need younger members who have new ideas as to what Central should offer to support LGBTQ+ questioning children, and young adults in our congregation and community. This committee convenes as needed although the chair does attend monthly church council meetings. Our past projects have been Reconciling Sunday, participating in Stockton's Pride Festival, Lavender lunch special programs. We need you and your new ideas.

Jana Kattenhorn, Outgoing committee chair, jamakatt@verizon.net

ADVENT BIBLE STUDY

Advent Bible Study will continue the Leadership Bible Study (Samuel, Saul, and David) that we had during the summer. We did not finish the book and we will finish the book this time. Jesus is a "descendent of David" and what qualities of King David made him an ancestor of Jesus would be the key point of the Bible Study.

FREE GUN LOCKS

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 12:00PM-1:00PM (while supplies last) Drive through event in the parking lot of Central United Methodist Church, 3700 Pacific Avenue (entrance on W. Fulton Street). Locks provided by the Veterans Administration.

If you are able to help hand out the locks on Saturday, please contact Becky Cameron at 209-499-8033.

SAVE THE DATE: FEBRUARY 29TH 2024!

Rotary Read-In, 10:00 am - Cleveland and Team Charter Schools - Sign-ups will start in January.