

Central United Methodist Church

3700 Pacific Avenue, Stockton, CA 95204

ORDER OF WORSHIP Sunday, November 5, 2023



GATHERING

PRELUDE	<i>When We All Get to Heaven</i> (Emily D. Wilson)	Monica Adams
GATHERING MOMENT		Laura Dinges
INTROIT	<i>I Was Glad</i> (Text: Psalm 122:1 Music by Lloyd Larson)	Chancel Choir
*CALL TO WORSHIP		Laura Dinges
Leader:	We remember and celebrate all those who have gone before us in faith. They are the cloud of witnesses who surround us, cheering us on in our own journey of discipleship.	
All:	We give thanks for their courage, their compassion, and their commitment to living out the gospel of Jesus Christ.	
Leader:	We remember the saints of the past, from the apostles and martyrs of the early church to the missionaries and reformers of the Middle Ages to the social justice activists and evangelists of modern times.	
All:	We are grateful for their legacy, and we pray for the strength and wisdom to follow in their footsteps. Amen.	
*OPENING HYMN	<i>Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah</i>	UMH #127
CHILDREN'S MOMENT		Mary Juarez Dalton
STEWARDSHIP MOMENT		Stewardship Video 3
MISSION & MINISTRIES MOMENT		Laura Dinges
RITE OF FRIENDSHIP AND A SPECIAL WELCOME TO OUR VISITORS (11:00am)		Laura Dinges

***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.*

PRAYER CARDS COLLECTED

ANTHEM

I Was Glad
(Eugene Butler)

Chancel Choir

PROCLAMATION AND RESPONSE

SCRIPTURE

Joshua 3:7-17 (Pew Bible NRSV, page 195)

Laura Dinges

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

All: Thanks be to God.

***HYMN**

Lord, Whose Love Through Humble Service

UMH #581

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 23:1-12 (Pew Bible NRSV, page 25)

Laura Dinges

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

All: Thanks be to God.

SERMON

"Cross The Jordan River With Faith"

Rev. Sungho Lee

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Laura Dinges

PASTOR'S PRAYER

Rev. Sungho Lee

THANKSGIVING

WORSHIP WITH OUR TITHES & OFFERINGS

Laura Dinges

OFFERTORY

What Gift Can We Bring

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

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

*Here I Am, Lord
What Wondrous Love
Fill My Cup*

UMH #593

UMH #292

UMH #641

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

*O Praise the Lord with One Consent
(William T. Best)*

Monica Adams

Flowers on the altar this morning are given in gratitude as we anticipate the month of November ahead. A month of Thanksgiving and reflection on the bounty of our many individual and collective blessings. We celebrate our veterans and all who work to keep us safe and secure at home and in far away places. We pray for global peace and safety for all.

*Indicates please stand as you are able.

SERVING YOU TODAY

Rev. Dr. Sungho Lee
Laura Dinges, Worship Leader
Mary Juarez Dalton, 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: "CROSS THE JORDAN RIVER WITH FAITH"

We have great examples in our church history.

In our venerable 176-year history as a church community, we have been graced by the presence of countless remarkable lay ministers who have left an indelible mark on our congregation. From its very inception, our church owes its roots to the vision of a devoted layperson, Mr. Westbay. Recently, we had the privilege of celebrating the remarkable 102nd birthday of Inez Pope, a living testament to unwavering dedication. For a remarkable 57 years, she graced our sanctuary with her musical talents as she played the church organ, and even at her centennial milestone, her passion for this sacred task remained undiminished, a truly awe-inspiring testimony to her spirit.

Our hearts also swelled with gratitude as we gathered to commemorate the life of Sally Mills, a paragon of dedication to her faith and her community. Throughout her lifelong career, she found her calling in the field of social work, extending her care and compassion to the most vulnerable among us. Early in her career, she dedicated herself to the rehabilitation of young girls in a New York institution and later, at the California Youth Authority. The majority of her 40-year career was spent as a social worker, offering solace and support to countless children and families through her work at the San Joaquin County Human Services. Her commitment to people, especially children, compelled her to continue this noble mission, even long after her official retirement in 2007. In Sally Mills, we found a beacon of selflessness, whose actions spoke louder than words.

Our congregation is further enriched by a cadre of devoted volunteers who tirelessly serve in various capacities, from Godly play to Youth programs, Community Outreach missions, Worship services, and charitable missions. Their actions exemplify the teachings of the Gospel, as they embody the words of Jesus himself when he cautioned against following the lead of the Pharisees who offered lofty words but failed to practice what they preached. As our church volunteers demonstrate through their acts of kindness, it is in the humble service to others that we find the true embodiment of our faith.

Humble attitude is the key in our collaborative ministry.

In the Gospel lesson, Jesus delivered a solemn message to the crowds and his disciples, urging them to heed the wisdom of the legal experts and the Pharisees who sat on Moses' seat. He encouraged adherence to their teachings while cautioning against emulating their actions, which often carried a dissonance between their words and deeds. They burdened others with heavy loads but were unwilling to lend a hand themselves, and they sought the limelight through elaborate displays of piety.

Jesus, in his wisdom, implored his followers to adopt a different path, one of humility and servitude. He instructed them not to seek titles of grandeur, such as Rabbi, father, or teacher, for they have one teacher, one Father, and they are all brothers and sisters. The greatest among them, he emphasized, would be the one who served with utmost humility, while those who exalted themselves would ultimately be humbled.

Action speaks louder than words.

It is within our congregation that we find the embodiment of these teachings. Our church members, in their quiet yet profound ways, exemplify a spirit of selfless service and kindness. They heed the call to live as our dedicated volunteers and lay ministers do, demonstrating through their actions that true faith is not merely in words, but in the compassionate deeds that define our shared journey.

New leadership Model.

Upon my appointment as the senior pastor of our church, I embarked on a transformative journey to reshape our ministry model from one led primarily by the staff to a dynamic paradigm characterized by lay leadership. Through the formation of new committees, entrusted with the authority to make decisions pertaining to our church's mission and ministries, a fresh wind of change swept through our congregation. This evolution necessitated a learning process, one marked by the acquisition of vital skills in teamwork, boundary setting, and mutual respect.

This shift in leadership style, which I have come to dub "Joshua leadership," is fundamentally distinct from the paradigm epitomized by Moses. While Moses, with staff in hand, famously parted the Red Sea as the congregation looked on from behind, Joshua adopted a markedly different approach. He allowed the priests to bear the Ark, leading them across the Jordan River before the multitude.

A new leadership is for a new generation.

In the Book of Joshua, we find a poignant example of leadership transformation. The Lord spoke to Joshua, saying, "Today I will begin to make you great in the opinion of all Israel. Then they will know that I will be with you in the same way that I was with Moses." The directive was clear: "As soon as you come to the bank of the Jordan, stand still in the Jordan."

Joshua then gathered the Israelites, instructing them to draw near and heed the words of the Lord. He conveyed the promise that the living God was among them. The symbolic crossing of the Jordan with the Ark was laden with divine significance, and the miracle that followed, as the waters stood still, was a testament to the power of their faith.

First, they put the ark of covenant in front of them. In that ark, there were tablets of laws, Aaron's staff, and a jar of manna. They represented respectively words of God, priestly worship, and daily provisions. In other words, they want to know the words of God, worship God, receive God's forgiveness and grace for their daily lives.

Secondly, they "pick twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one per tribe." This is an egalitarian model of leadership. It is like a diverse group that we have in Stockton. Stockton, California, is the most racially and ethnically diverse large city in the United States. It is home to over 311,000 people, who speak over 200 languages and represent over 100 ethnic groups.

According to the 2020 Census, the largest racial and ethnic groups in Stockton are White (Hispanic 20.8%), Asian (20.5%), White (Non-Hispanic, 19.4%), Black or African American (11%). There are also American Indian or Alaska Native (1.4%), Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (0.3%), and Other Race (6%). Stockton is a very diverse city, with people from all over the world calling it home. Our church also reflects such diversity.

Thirdly, "the priests who were carrying the covenant chest stood firmly on dry land in the middle of the Jordan. Meanwhile, all Israel crossed over on dry land, until the entire nation finished crossing over the Jordan." The job of the priests was to make sure that everybody else should cross the Jordan River safely and completely. Then they could cross the river later.

Emulating this spirit, I extend my wholehearted support to our lay ministry, urging you to courageously step into the metaphorical Jordan River. I and our church staff will stay in the middle of the river until all of you cross over the river and arrive at the promised land.

Moses stood in front of the group saying, "Follow me!" Joshua would say, "After you!" I will pray for our mission and ministry in the middle of the river, knowing that I am safe and secure in the hands of God. Waters will not swallow me and I can stay still with God's promise.

Whatever is your calling, do something to share God's love. I will pray for you in the middle of the river with shoes with mud on it. If I do not walk with you side by side, you know where I am. Cross the Jordan River with Faith. God be with you. 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.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT BEWARE OF SCAM EMAILS AND TEXT MESSAGES!

Dear Church Members,

It has come to our attention that fraudulent emails and text messages have been circulated under the name of Pastor Lee, with requests for money or gift cards. We urge you not to engage with these messages and, most importantly, refrain from sending any money or gift cards in response.

Pastor Lee would never request funds or gift cards from our cherished church members under any circumstances. Your financial well-being and security are of utmost importance to us, and we implore you not to be deceived by such deceptive tactics.

Thank you for your understanding and continued support in ensuring the safety of our church community. If you want to give money, give it to God. Send your pledge card to church!

Sincerely,
Central United Methodist Church

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 away within the last year, please email Susie at swanden@cumcstockton.org. If you have a picture of the individual, please include it so we can put it up on our screens. Thank you.

DONATIONS NEEDED

Our Godly Play and Nursery School program is growing! We are so grateful to experience growth in our Sunday programming for children. On Sunday's children ages 5-11 join us for Godly play and those under 5 have the opportunity to play together in the nursery while their families attend church service. During those times we like to provide a small snack and need help from our congregation to stock our snack cabinet! If you are able, donations of water, juice pouches, goldfish, granola bars or any other kid-friendly snacks would be greatly appreciated. Bring your donations to church and give them to Andrea Moccia or drop them off at the Godly Play room in the Knoles building.

Andrea is working on a plan to figure out where we can store the snacks so that the attendants have access to them on Sundays.

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.

UMW/UWF

Please join the UMW/UWF Tuesday, November 14 at 11:30 am for lunch and a general meeting. The SUSD Young Adult Program will provide the meal. A donation of \$5 per person is suggested.

Elaine Bradbury will report on finances. There will be a discussion on future meetings. Plans for the Christmas Tea will be finalized.

Join us for fun and fellowship. See you November 14. Questions, contact Martha Tipton or Elaine Bradbury.

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.

SOME PEOPLE JUST CAN'T GET ENOUGH. . .

SERVING AT ST. MARY'S DINING ROOM

For quite a few years, a number of Centralites have served lunches on the food line at St. Mary's Dining Room. Recently they told me that serving on alternate Fridays wasn't enough for them; they'd like to serve *every* Friday. St. Mary's is happy with that!

The Basics: St. Mary's Dining Room, 545 W. Sonora St, Stockton, Friday's from 11:30 (sign-in) until 1:00 pm.

Dress: For your safety, wear long pants & closed-toe shoes. When serving, wear an apron (your own or supplied), hair covering (supplied hairnet or baseball cap) and supplied plastic gloves (sanitary regulations).

If you'd like to join our serving team every week, or just twice a month, or just when you can, you learn more by calling Alan England (209-298-8634) or Julius Hastings (209-401-0771).

SAVE THE DATE: FEBRUARY 29TH 2024!

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