

# Central United Methodist Church

3700 Pacific Avenue, Stockton, CA 95204

**ORDER OF WORSHIP**  
Baptism of the Lord  
**Sunday, January 7, 2024**



\*Indicates please stand as you are able.

## GATHERING

<b>PRELUDE</b>	<i>Coventry Carol/The First Nowell</i> (arr. Mark Hayes)	Monica Adams
<b>GATHERING MOMENT</b>		Laura Dinges
<b>*CALL TO WORSHIP</b>		Laura Dinges
<b>Leader:</b>	I saw "a new heaven and a new earth," for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.	
<b>All:</b>	<b>I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.</b>	
<b>Leader:</b>	And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.	
<b>All:</b>	<b>'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.'</b>	
<b>Leader:</b>	He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!"	
<b>All:</b>	<b>To the thirsty God will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life. Those who are victorious will be God's children. Amen.</b>	
<b>*OPENING HYMN</b>	<i>We Were Baptized in Christ Jesus</i>	TFWS #2251
<b>CHILDREN'S MOMENT</b>		Mary Juarez Dalton
<b>MISSION &amp; MINISTRIES MOMENT</b>		Laura Dinges
<b>RITE OF FRIENDSHIP AND A SPECIAL WELCOME TO OUR VISITORS (11:00am)</b>		Laura Dinges

**\*PASSING THE PEACE**

Laura Dinges

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

**All Sing:**

*Hymn of Promise* verse 1

*In the bulb there is a flower; in the seed, an apple tree; in cocoons, a hidden promise: butterflies will soon be free! In the cold and snow of winter there's a spring that waits to be, unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.*

**PRAYER CARDS COLLECTED**

**ANTHEM**

*Shall We Gather at the River?*  
(arr. John Carter)

Chancel Choir  
Rachelle Mimms, Solo

**PROCLAMATION AND RESPONSE**

**SCRIPTURE**

Genesis 1:1-5 (Pew Bible NRSV, page 1)

Laura Dinges

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

**All: Thanks be to God.**

**\*HYMN**

*Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee*

UMH #89

**SCRIPTURE**

Mark 1:4-11 (Pew Bible NRSV, page 34)

Laura Dinges

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

**All: Thanks be to God.**

**SERMON**

"Jesus is the Savior, King, and Sacrifice"

Rev. Sungho Lee

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

Laura Dinges

**PASTOR'S PRAYER**

Rev. Sungho Lee

**THANKSGIVING**

**WORSHIP WITH OUR TITHES & OFFERINGS**

Laura Dinges

**OFFERTORY**

*Lully Lullay, Thou Little Tiny Child*  
(arr. Jan Kraybill)

Monica Adams

**\* DOXOLOGY**

*For the Beauty of the Earth* verse 6

UMH #92

*For thyself, best Gift Divine, to the world so freely given,  
for that great, great love of thine, peace on earth, and joy in heaven:  
Lord of all, to thee we raise this our hymn of grateful 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

*Let Us Break Bread Together*

UMH #618

*Take Our Bread*

UMH #640

*Eat This Bread*

UMH #628

#### 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

*Joy to the World*  
(Handel, arr. Lowell Mason)

Monica Adams

---

#### 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  
Steven Adams, Media  
Cherie Hudson, Facilities Coordinator  
Rupert Cooper, Audio

---

## SERMON IN A NUTSHELL: "JESUS IS THE SAVIOR, KING, AND SACRIFICE"

### **Follow Jesus**

As we usher in the New Year with hopes and resolutions, let us not forget the transformative power of following Jesus. In a world historically divided between "before Jesus" and "after Jesus," our Annual Conference's vision statement, "Following Jesus, Thriving in Community, and Healing the World," takes center stage. Today, I delve into the profound meaning of "Following Jesus."

In the era preceding Jesus, societies were governed by rigid laws, creating distinctions between insiders and outsiders, haves and have-nots, and men and women. Yet, as Paul articulates in Galatians 3:28, "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

For some, this assertion may be startling. In a world marked by Palestinian-Israeli tensions, political partisanship, and immigration debates, divisions persist. Nevertheless, in Christ Jesus, these divisions dissolve. The call is to learn to love and coexist amidst differences—a true manifestation of the Savior's purpose. Jesus liberates us from negative feelings rooted in human divisions.

The Bible declares a simple truth that nullifies these divisions: we are all God's children, bearing His image. While acknowledging human imperfections, this recognition allows us to embrace humility. We can admit our fallibility, consider alternative perspectives, and empathize with others—an embodiment of the humility Jesus displayed by taking on human form.

In this spirit of humility, we can approach the birth of Jesus much like the Magi did. These wise individuals, potentially kings or scholars from distant places, transcended ethnic, geographical, and religious boundaries to worship a Jewish king. Their focus was not on the baby's ethnicity or social class but on the anticipated outcome: world peace and well-being.

Contrastingly, King Herod lacked such vision. Disturbed by the news of a potential rival king, he sought information from religious authorities but harbored ulterior motives. Herod's duplicity serves as a cautionary tale, a reminder that not everyone welcomes the transformative vision that Jesus brings.

As we navigate the challenges of a new year, let us heed the profound message of Following Jesus—embracing unity amidst diversity, extending love despite divisions, and aspiring toward a vision of peace and well-being for all.

### **The Crucial Cost of Following a Vision**

In the pursuit of profound change, knowledge alone falls short. It is the willingness to pay the price that truly defines our ability to follow a transformative path, a lesson exemplified in the story of King Herod and his knowledge of Jesus' birthplace.

King Herod, armed with knowledge from scholars, was aware of the divine significance of Jesus' arrival. Yet, his knowledge did not deter him from hatching a plot against the very embodiment of God's will. This historical anecdote serves as a striking parallel to contemporary leaders who possess ample information about pressing global issues, such as climate change and poverty.

In our world, equipped with an abundance of resources and knowledgeable scholars, the impediment to progress often lies not in the lack of information but in the willingness to collaborate and make sacrifices for the greater good. The question becomes: Are leaders prepared to work together, to coexist in pursuit of shared solutions?

This challenge is underscored by the stark reality that some developing nations aspire to bridge the gap and elevate their living standards, akin to their Western counterparts. Simultaneously, certain developed nations

must temper their rapid progress to effect meaningful change on a global scale. However, the pervasive force of greed disrupts this delicate balance.

The imperative to live together harmoniously demands a price — a commitment to collective action, a willingness to compromise, and a recognition that progress necessitates sacrifice. While knowledge lays the foundation, it is the readiness to pay the price that propels us towards a future where nations collaborate, setting aside individual interests for the collective well-being of our shared planet. In a world grappling with critical issues, the question remains: Are we, as leaders and as a society, willing to pay the price to truly live together and effect meaningful change?

### **The Price of Following Jesus - Beyond the Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh**

**As we embark on the first Sunday of 2024, the story of the Magi's gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh takes on a contemporary resonance. Their symbolic offerings carry profound meaning for those considering the cost of following Jesus.**

Gold, often equated with money, becomes a metaphor for financial contributions to church ministries. The plea is clear: supporting our ministries requires a tangible commitment, beyond attending services. Pledges and offerings sustain not only worship spaces but also vital programs like the Homeless mission, Youth Ministry, Children's programs, and more. It's a reminder that financial support ensures the lights stay on and the doors open for these impactful initiatives.

People donate money for good causes, like Homeless mission, Youth Ministry, Children's program, senior programs, single ministry, young adult gatherings, but they do not pay money for the electricity bills and cleaning bills. However, where do they meet when we provide those ministries? They meet at our church buildings, and we need to maintain the buildings and pay the bills. Your offering actually makes these ministries possible when you make your pledges. I want to give thanks to all those who made pledges. Let me make you all stand up who made pledges more than 50 years continually for our church! Let us give them a round of plauds. I also want to recognize the first-time pledgers. Thank you for your trust in our church. We will faithfully manage your offering to do our ministry.

Frankincense is prayer. We have a prayer chain team. We also have people who knit prayer shawls. We have people who deliver those shawls to shut-ins or to those who had surgeries. We also have people who pray for the ministries. I want to have a prayer team who pray during our worship hours for the Spirit to come down on every worshipper. If you want to be prayer warriors during worship times, let me know. We need two teams, one for 8:30 AM and one for 11 AM. If you go 8:30 AM service, please pray for 11 AM for an hour. If you go at 11 AM, please pray for 8:30 AM service for an hour. We will post all the church gatherings and you can pray during those meetings or gatherings.

Myrrh symbolizes sacrifice. Many of us sacrifice our time to do volunteer work. We all enjoy power point presentation during worship times. It all started with the sacrificial volunteer work of the Rev. Mark Wharff. He donated his time to make artistic and careful power point slides every week. We all enjoy quality sound during worship. Mr. Cooper and Mr. David Campero donate their time every Sunday without failure. Some think that they are paid staff because they show up every Sunday. However, I call those three persons, Three Wise Men of our church. However, there are many volunteers other than those three. They give their time and talents in addition to their treasures. In this time, we have to make them all go through the live scan and fingerprinting to protect children and youth. It is like myrrh. However, they still do that to support our ministry. If you are doing any volunteer work, please raise your hands. Let us give them a big round of plauds also.

### **Following Jesus means to humbly give our gold, frankincense, and myrrh.**

The message is clear: Following Jesus demands more than a passive acknowledgment. It requires active participation and sacrificial giving of gold, frankincense, and myrrh—symbolizing financial, spiritual, and personal commitments. In the words of Jesus, understanding the cost before building a house is crucial. The grace may be free, but the commitment to share the good news demands our conscious and informed decision.

So, as we step into 2024, let us embrace the call to sacrifice with joy and gladness, aware of the costs and resolute in our commitment to follow Jesus. Amen.

---



### WELCOME CENTER

If you are a visitor, please use this information for your convenience!

#### Sunday Schedule

8:30 am Worship Service at the Fireside Room in the Knoles Building in English  
9:30 am Chancel Choir Rehearsal 9:30 am behind the Sanctuary choir room  
10:15 am Worship Service at the Fireside Room in the Knoles Building in Cambodian language.  
11:00 am Worship Service in the Sanctuary in English.  
Childcare (under age 5) is available in the Knoles building. A friendly caregiver welcomes you!  
Godly Play (leave 11 am service Following Children's Moment)

### OFFERING ENVELOPES

If you turned in a pledge card, you can pick up your offering envelopes in the Fellowship Hall on Sundays.

### LEADERSHIP TRAINING

When: **Jan. 20 Saturday 9 AM to Noon**

Where: **Via zoom**

Who: **All the Committee Chairs and members. Please register at the Conference Website, 2024 Church Leadership Virtual Training Event.**

### MARK YOUR CALENDAR

The Chili Cook off featuring Snap Jackson and the Knock on Wood Players returns to the Fellowship Hall Sunday, January 28 at noon. Tickets go on sale soon. Watch for more information in the coming days.

### BOOK GROUP

The current read is *River Sing Me Home* by Eleanor Shearer - a mother's gripping journey to find her stolen children in the aftermath of slavery. Next discussion date is **TODAY** after the 11:00am service.

### SANCTUARY FLOWERS

Sponsoring the Sanctuary floral arrangement for a Sunday worship service is a beautiful way to celebrate an occasion or honor your loved ones. Your personal dedication will be published in the worship bulletin on the Sunday of your sponsorship. There is a \$35 donation to the Flower Fund to sponsor an arrangement.

Sign up for a 2024 Sunday in the Fellowship Hall. You will be contacted the week prior to your Sunday to arrange wording for the bulletin. Your check must be received in the church office the week prior to your Sunday.

### SAVE THE DATE FEB. 15, 2024

71st annual interfaith tea at the Buddhist church. Sponsored by Community of Faith of San Joaquin County (Church Women United has reorganized to be more local and inclusive of all faiths.)

### SAVE THE DATE: FEBRUARY 29<sup>TH</sup> 2024!

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

## CENTRAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

### Supports

#### Family Promise of San Joaquin County

Hi Everyone,

It is my hope that you started the New Year with joy and laughter. My wish for 2024 is peace and hope for everyone this year. My own resolution is to be kind to others, to find a way to disagree without anger and find a resolution that works to solve the problem. I want joy and happiness in my life. One of my favorite projects is Family Promise of San Joaquin County. Serving Family Promise gives me the feeling that I have made a small difference in the lives of our families.

I am late in saying thank you to all who helped serve our three families the week of November 26- December 3. THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU. Thank you for helping set up and take down the rooms, thank you for preparing meals, thank you for staying overnight, thank you for providing snack items, blankets, linens, toothpaste, toothbrushes, deodorant, diapers and all the other items needed to take care of our families for the week. Thank you for your prayers of support and your financial support. It is a huge task to provide a safe living space for our guests during the week. I am always a little sad when they leave. What is the next part of their journey, and will they finally reach their goals?

Central will host families again the week of February 11-18. Starting Sunday, February 21, Glenda and I will be in the Atrium after the 11:00 am service with sign-up sheets and a list of food items, toiletries, linen, and other needed items. I hope you step forward and help us once more.

I wish you a beautiful New Year filled with hope, love, and joy.

Connie Edgecomb

### FOOD PANTRY

The food pantry shelves are getting bare. We could use your help filling them. Here are some guidelines to help you pick items for the closet. ***Everything needs to be no cook items!*** The people we serve do not have access to cooking facilities or can openers or refrigerator space. ***Please do not empty your cupboards or fridge or give us anything that is expired, legally we can't use it. We rarely serve families, and we direct them to the Emergency Food Bank. Sometimes the cheapest and easiest way to get these items is to go through Amazon and have it sent directly to the church!***

Here are our immediate needs:

Tuna (with a pull tab to open or packets of tuna that can be easily opened.)

Water bottles 16 oz. size

juice (apple, orange) small sizes

canned soups (with pull tabs that can be opened and eaten without water or heat.)

Vienna Sausage with pull tabs

Raisins, small boxes

milk (shelf stable, small sizes)

Cereal individual servings

Pudding cups in any flavor

Cup O' Noodles or something similar

If you have any packets of utensils with napkins that they hand out in some fast-food places, we can use those too!