

# Central United Methodist Church

3700 Pacific Avenue, Stockton, CA 95204

**ORDER OF WORSHIP**  
Transfiguration Sunday  
**Sunday, February 11, 2024**



\*Indicates please stand as you are able.

## GATHERING

<b>PRELUDE</b>		Monica Adams
<b>GATHERING MOMENT</b>		Susan Perez (8:30am), Nedy Tovera (11:00am)
<b>INTROIT</b>	<i>God Is Here</i>	Chancel Choir
<b>*CALL TO WORSHIP</b>		Susan Perez (8:30am), Nedy Tovera (11:00am)
<b>Leader:</b>	Let's enter God's dwelling place; let's worship!	
<b>All:</b>	<b>Let us shout out with joy!</b>	
<b>Leader:</b>	This is God's residence; God will fill its needy full of food!	
<b>All:</b>	<b>Let us shout out loud with joy!</b>	
<b>Leader:</b>	God will prepare a lamp for God's children here.	
<b>All:</b>	<b>God will bless God's children here. Amen.</b>	
<b>*HYMN</b>	<i>Shine, Jesus, Shine</i>	TFWS #2173
<b>CHILDREN'S MOMENT</b>		Carol Willson
<b>MISSION &amp; MINISTRIES MOMENT</b>		Susan Perez (8:30am), Nedy Tovera (11:00am)
<b>PRAYER CARDS COLLECTED</b>		
<b>RITE OF FRIENDSHIP AND A SPECIAL WELCOME TO OUR VISITORS</b>		Susan Perez (8:30am) Nedy Tovera (11:00a)

**\*PASSING THE PEACE** Susan Perez (8:30am), Nedy Tovera (11:00am)  
(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.*

**ANTHEM** *Holy Ground* Chancel Choir  
(arr. Lloyd Larson)

**PROCLAMATION AND RESPONSE**

**SCRIPTURE** Mark 9:2-9 (Pew Bible NRSV, page 44) Susan Perez (8:30am)  
Leader: This is the word of God for the people of God. Nedy Tovera (11:00am)  
**All:** Thanks be to God.

**\*HYMN** *Soon and Very Soon* UMH #706

**SERMON** "Jesus Is God's Son. Listen To Him!" Rev. Sungho Lee

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE** Susan Perez (8:30am), Nedy Tovera (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** Susan Perez (8:30am), Nedy Tovera (11:00am)

**OFFERTORY**

**\*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** Susan Perez (8:30am), Nedy Tovera (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

## SERVING YOU TODAY

Rev. Dr. Sungho Lee  
Susan Perez (8:30am), Worship Leader  
Nedy Tovera (11:00am), Worship Leader  
Carol Willson, Children's Moment  
Ric Campero, Music Director  
Monica Adams, Organist/Pianist  
David Campero, Livestream  
Mark Wharff & Steven Adams, Media  
Cherie Hudson, Facilities Coordinator  
Rupert Cooper, Audio

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**"JESUS IS GOD'S SON. LISTEN TO HIM!" (Mark 9:2-9)**

**Pastor Lee**

### **Why do we need a religion?**

In the intricate tapestry of existence, the fortitude to surmount life's tribulations is intrinsically tied to the robustness of our foundational support. Navigating the complex labyrinth of human experience necessitates grappling with an array of challenges — be it in the realm of relationships, health, or finances. It is a universal truth that these hurdles are omnipresent, yet how we confront and conquer them distinguishes the resilient from those who succumb to despair.

Contemplating the imperative role of religion in one's life invariably leads to the recognition of its capacity to serve as a wellspring of strength during moments of crisis. Religion, in essence, bestows upon individuals a reservoir of resilience and a toolkit to draw upon in the face of adversity. The query of why one adheres to a particular faith finds its answer in the empowerment it offers, enabling individuals to rebound with renewed vigor and purpose.

### **Why do we need a church, a spiritual fitness center?**

Analogously, the commitment to physical well-being through regular gym attendance can be seen as a conscious effort to cultivate a healthy and gratifying life. The act of exercising not only contributes to the development of a robust physique but also underscores a commitment to vitality. In a world teeming with potential health threats, the establishment of a resilient immune system becomes paramount. The assurance derived from a sound physical constitution resonates, permitting individuals to engage in work and social interactions with an exuberant spirit.

Mirroring this principle, the cultivation of a robust spiritual immune system becomes instrumental in navigating the vicissitudes of life. In essence, the church emerges as a sanctuary akin to a spiritual fitness center. Within its hallowed confines, individuals engage in exercises for the soul, fortifying their spiritual sinews to confront and triumph over the challenges that life unfurls before them.

In this paradigm, the notion of a spiritually fortified individual becomes akin to one equipped with an impervious shield against the adversities that life invariably presents. Just as a disciplined gym routine fosters physical resilience, so too does the diligent practice of faith contribute to the development of an unyielding spiritual constitution. The church, therefore, assumes the role of a training ground, wherein believers hone their spiritual prowess, enabling them to effortlessly navigate the ebbs and flows of existence.

### **Jesus helped his disciples to have a core belief.**

In a transformative episode, Jesus strategically ascended a mountain, bringing along his key disciples for an intensive training session. The purpose behind this endeavor was profound — the disciples were being groomed to spearhead the establishment of the Kingdom of God on Earth. This mission, laden with gravity and challenge,

demanded a robust spiritual foundation, prompting Jesus to invest time and effort in nurturing the core spiritual muscles of his chosen followers.

Central to this spiritual regimen was the cultivation of an unwavering faith in Jesus as the Son of God and the Messiah. The disciples needed this bedrock conviction before committing their lives to the monumental task of building God's Kingdom on Earth. Such a steadfast faith, akin to a spiritual core muscle, served as the catalyst for wholehearted dedication to the cause.

This need for resolute conviction resonates in contemporary church contexts as well. Individuals with an unshakable faith are sought after, as they become the driving force behind the ministry, contributing their time, talent, and resources without hesitation. Without this deep-seated conviction, the willingness to sacrifice and share the Good News diminishes, giving rise to hesitation and reluctance.

Drawing a poignant parallel to Jesus' methodology, the narrative unfolds with the selection of Peter, James, and John for a unique mountain-top experience. Isolated from the hustle and bustle, the disciples witnessed a transfigured Jesus in dazzling white, accompanied by the venerable figures of Moses and Elijah — embodiments of Law and Prophets.

The pivotal moment came when a celestial voice resonated from a shrouding cloud, declaring, "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!" This divine proclamation served as the catalyst for an unshakable conviction within the disciples. Witnessing Jesus in communion with the revered representatives of Law and Prophets solidified their belief in his messianic role.

Peter, encapsulating the awe and reverence of the moment, suggested building shelters for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah. Yet, in their fear and trepidation, they were reminded to heed the voice from the cloud. This transformative encounter left an indelible mark on the disciples, instilling an unassailable conviction that Jesus was the chosen one to lead the charge in building God's Kingdom on Earth.

In this profound narrative, the mountain-top training served not only as a testament to Jesus' deliberate mentorship but also as a paradigm for the enduring need for unwavering faith in navigating the complexities of contemporary spiritual endeavors.

### **We can also have mountain top experience with Jesus.**

As we approach the onset of Lent, a sacred period offering a profound opportunity for spiritual introspection and growth, the cultivation of a steadfast core belief becomes paramount. Before embarking on the transformative journey of "following Jesus, thriving in community, and healing the world," a robust foundation of core beliefs is indispensable.

With Ash Wednesday marking the commencement of this introspective season, a 40-day spiritual training period unfolds, leading us towards Easter. This temporal expanse serves as a canvas for the construction of spiritual disciplines, akin to a personal mountain-top experience. The ashes ceremoniously applied on Ash Wednesday serve as both a somber reminder of our mortal origins— "from dust to dust" —and a poignant symbol of eternal life.

In contemplating the nature of ashes, we draw a parallel to burning sheet music. The tangible sheet may transform into ash, but the music endures. Similarly, in the inevitable cycle of life and death, our essence persists in the stories, memories, and dreams of those we leave behind. This truth is poignantly exemplified in the memorial service for our sister, Helen Underhill.

Death, rather than constituting an endpoint, emerges as the threshold to a new existence. Earthly life, akin to the gestation period of an embryo, serves as preparation for the eternal life that awaits. The vitality of this eternal life hinges on the cultivation of robust spiritual muscles, just as a healthy earthly existence paves the way for a vibrant eternal counterpart.

## Spiritual Disciplines as Means of Grace

### Weekly Worship Service

To foster a flourishing spiritual life, the incorporation of disciplined practices is advocated. Weekly worship serves as a grounding reminder of our status as creations, reinforcing our connection with a higher Creator and Lord.

### Small Group Bible Study

Small Group Bible Study and meditation become essential companions on the faith journey, offering fresh perspectives and fortitude to navigate life's challenges.

### Prayer

The act of prayer assumes a pivotal role, establishing an unbroken connection with the divine and providing a constant source of encouragement.

### Fasting

Fasting, undertaken as a deliberate act of restraint, unveils our spiritual weaknesses, prompting fervent prayers for guidance and assistance.

God allows us all those disciplines as means of Grace. God's grace will flow into us through these means. Consider, during Lent, the initiation of a small group Bible study or the commitment to a weekly day of fasting, with the saved resources directed towards community initiatives. The Super Bowl challenge, dubbed "Soup-per Bowl," beckons not only football aficionados but also conscientious Christians to collect non-perishable soup cans for charitable causes, transcending the game-day rivalry.

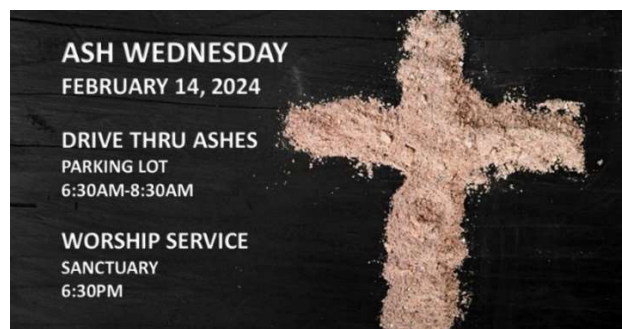
Further, a special offering for programs catering to seniors, the homeless, or youth presents an avenue to collectively nurture and serve our community. These acts of benevolence, borne out of sacrificial commitment, promise to yield a bountiful harvest of positive impact.

The journey through Lent, a season of profound reflection and disciplined practice, beckons us to collectively undertake this transformative expedition. Will you join me in this spiritual odyssey, fortified by sustained and resolute spiritual disciplines?

May God bless us and walk with us through this Lenten Spiritual Journey! Amen.

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# CONNECTIONS



## **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)

### **FELLOWSHIP TIME IS BACK**

We have heard from many of you that you miss Fellowship Time. Well, never fear, Fellowship Time is here. The Missions Committee is committed to providing Fellowship Time as often as possible as long as nothing else is happening after worship. So, be sure to head over to the Fellowship Hall following worship for coffee, goodies, and friendly faces. If you have questions about how you can participate, call Jackie Bennett at 916-261-1225. Can't wait to see you!

### **3700YTH – SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 18**

3700Yth invite you to join us after church on Sunday February 18 for BBQ & a few rounds of bingo. Our new youth director, Elaine is working hard to establish a new youth program, but she cannot do it without our help! This will be an opportunity for you to formally meet Elaine, learn more about the program and provide your suggestions and insights. This would be a great Sunday for you to invite a youth or young adult to church.

Interested in volunteering at this event or donating a prize for bingo? Please reach out to Ronesha Jackson at [Jackson.ronesha@gmail.com](mailto:Jackson.ronesha@gmail.com).

### **PRAYER SHAWLS NEEDED!**

Calling all crocheters and knitters! The need for shawls has been great in the past several months so our stock of prayer shawls has dwindled. If you feel the call to provide a shawl to our ministry, please consider making one. All it takes is 3 skeins of soft acrylic yarn, size 10.5 knitting needles or N-13 crochet hook. Once completed bring to church and we will get them blessed and packaged for delivery. For any questions, please email or call Linda Newhall 209-601-9239, [L.brackin@comcast.net](mailto:L.brackin@comcast.net).

### **SUNDAY AFTERNOON BOOK GROUP**

Book group will meet for discussion this Sunday Feb. 11<sup>th</sup>. Enjoy a brief mingle at fellowship time, then bring your coffee, etc. to the group. Meeting in the fellowship hall or conference room to be determined.

### **LENT: A TIME FOR REFLECTION AND RENEWAL**

Lent is a 40-day period of solemn observance in the Christian calendar that comes before Easter. It's a time for reflection, repentance, and spiritual growth, commemorating the 40 days Jesus spent fasting and being tempted in the wilderness before beginning his public ministry.

Lent is a time for Christians to prepare their hearts and minds for the celebration of Easter, the holiest day in the Christian calendar. It's a reminder of Jesus' sacrifice and a call to follow his teachings. By taking time for reflection, repentance, and renewal, Christians can deepen their faith and prepare for the joy of Easter.

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 14<sup>th</sup>, and ends on Holy Saturday, March 28<sup>th</sup>, the day before Easter Sunday.

There are many ways Christians observe Lent, but some common practices include:

**Prayer and reflection:** Christians may spend more time in prayer and meditation, attending special church services, and reading scripture.

**Fasting and abstinence:** Many Christians choose to give up something they enjoy, such as meat, sweets, or social media, as a way to focus on their spiritual life. Others may choose to fast from food or drink for certain periods.

**Almsgiving:** Lent is a time to remember those in need and to practice generosity. Christians may donate to charity, volunteer their time, or perform acts of kindness for others.

Our church offers Adult Education Study (9:45-10:45am, Knoles Building Rm 6) and Small Group Bible Study (After 11:00am Worship, Fellowship).

### **NEW CHURCH DIRECTORY LAUNCHED ONLINE**

Our new Church Online Directory is now up and running. It includes contact information for everyone who completed the questionnaire and requested that they be included in the directory. Hopefully it will be a handy tool for communicating with other church members and friends. There is even an app for your phone that allows you to access the directory anytime and anywhere.

The directory does not currently include everyone since we need your permission to be included. The directory is only accessible by other church members and requires a password to use. If you did not sign up to be in the directory but would like to be included, contact Dick Edelstein and he can add you to the directory database. You can also contact Dick if you need assistance in accessing and using the directory:  
email: <mailto:richardj15@me.com> phone (209) 351-5857.

### **INTERFAITH TEA**

**Feb. 15, 2024 1:00pm at Stockton Buddhist Church**

There will be 12 hosted tea tables at the interfaith tea following the 1:00pm service. Many thanks to those who have offered help. I could use 1 more person to make tea sandwiches & another batch of cookies would be a bonus.

Please contact Elaine Bradbury call/text 209-470-7382. The donations from the tea will go to Family Promise of San Joaquin County and STAND (Stocktonians Taking Action to Neutralize Drugs)