

# Central United Methodist Church

3700 Pacific Avenue, Stockton, CA 95204

**ORDER OF WORSHIP**  
First Sunday of Lent  
**Sunday, February 18, 2024**



\*Indicates please stand as you are able.

## GATHERING

<b>PRELUDE</b>	<i>Lamb of God with The Old Rugged Cross</i> (arr. Lynette Maynard)	Monica Adams
<b>GATHERING MOMENT</b>		Chris Chan (8:30am), Mary Dalton (11:00am)
<b>INTROIT</b>	<i>This is My Father's World</i>	Chancel Choir
<b>*CALL TO WORSHIP</b>		Chris Chan (8:30am), Mary Dalton (11:00am)
	Leader: Guide me in your truth and teach me!	
	All: <b>You are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long.</b>	
	Leader: The Lord guides the humble in what is right and teaches them what is true.	
	All: <b>The ways of the Lord are loving and faithful. We will follow them. Amen</b>	
<b>*HYMN</b>	<i>Lead Me, Guide Me</i>	TFWS #2214
<b>CHILDREN'S MOMENT</b>		Rev. Sungho Lee
<b>MISSION &amp; MINISTRIES MOMENT</b>		Chris Chan (8:30am), Mary Dalton (11:00am)
<b>PRAYER CARDS COLLECTED</b>		

**RITE OF FRIENDSHIP AND A SPECIAL WELCOME TO OUR VISITORS**

Chris Chan (8:30am)  
Mary Dalton (11:00am)

**\*PASSING THE PEACE**

Chris Chan (8:30am), Mary Dalton (11:00am)

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

**All Sing:**

*Sweet, Sweet Spirit*

UMH #334

***There's a sweet sweet spirit in this place and I know that it's the spirit of the Lord.  
There are sweet expressions on each face and I know that it's the presence of the Lord.***

**ANTHEM**

*Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days*  
(arr. John Leavitt)

Chancel Choir

**PROCLAMATION AND RESPONSE**

**SCRIPTURE**

Mark 1:9-15 (Pew Bible NRSV, page 34)

Chris Chan (8:30am)

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

Mary Dalton (11:00am)

All: **Thanks be to God.**

**\*HYMN**

*Jesus, Tempted in the Desert*

TFWS #2105

**SERMON**

"Change your hearts and lives and trust God!"

Rev. Sungho Lee

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

Chris Chan (8:30am), Mary Dalton (11:00am)

**LENTEN PRAYER**

**Rev. Sungho Lee**

Last week, a convoy of lorries waiting to bring food into the Gaza Strip was struck by Israeli fire, according to UNRWA director Thomas White. Moreover, OCHA reported that 66 percent of planned humanitarian missions to distribute food, water, or medical support were denied by Israeli authorities in January.

**Good God, we hold on to our faith that you hear the cries of the oppressed and see the evil actions of the oppressor. We pray that all in need in Gaza will receive their daily bread through the lorries carrying aid and the end of their oppression. We call all those perpetrating and enabling injustice to, "Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it" (Psalm 34:14). Lord in your mercy... hear our prayer**

**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), Mary Dalton (11:00am)

**OFFERTORY**

*He's Got the Whole World*  
(Emma Lou Diemer)

Monica Adams

**\*DOXOLOGY**

*Bless Thou the Gifts*

UMH #587

***Bless thou the Gifts our hands have brought; bless thou the work our hearts have planned.  
Ours is the faith, the will, the thought; the rest, O God, is in thy hand.***

**PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

Chris Chan (8:30am), Mary Dalton (11:00am)

## SENDING FORTH

### \*BENEDICTION

Rev. Sungho Lee

### \*RESPONSE

Spirit Song

UMH #347

*O let the Son of God enfold you with his Spirit and his love, let him fill your heart and satisfy your soul.  
O let him have the things that hold you, and his Spirit like a dove will descend upon your life and make you whole.*

### \*POSTLUDE

*Jesus Walked This Lonesome Valley*  
(Anna Laura Page)

Monica Adams

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## SERVING YOU TODAY

Rev. Dr. Sungho Lee  
Chris Chan (8:30am), Worship Leader  
Mary Dalton (11:00am), Worship Leader  
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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**“Change your hearts and lives and trust God!” Mark 1:9-15**

### **First Sunday of Lent**

Today is the first Sunday of Lent, a season of introspection and spiritual preparation leading up to Easter Sunday. For us, these forty days symbolize a journey toward renewal, a chance to purify our hearts and scrutinize our lifestyles in anticipation of joining the ranks of the resurrected.

### **Baptism of Jesus**

Although Jesus, as the sinless Son of God, had no need for repentance, his decision to partake in baptism conveyed a powerful message. It affirmed the sanctity of John's baptism as a sacred rite, a pathway toward spiritual purification accessible to all. In embracing this ritual, Jesus laid the foundation for the sacrament of baptism as a cornerstone of Christian faith, signifying our entry into God's loving embrace and our incorporation into the community of believers.

The Gospel accounts recount the momentous occasion of Jesus' baptism in vivid detail. As he emerged from the waters of the Jordan River, the heavens themselves seemed to part, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in the form of a dove. A voice from above resonated, proclaiming, "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased." This divine affirmation underscored Jesus' identity as the beloved of God, imbuing him with the assurance and strength necessary to fulfill his divine calling.

### **Our Encounter with God**

In our own journeys of faith, such encounters with the boundless love of God serve as foundational pillars. As a member of the District Committee on Ordained Ministry, I had two-days retreat interviewing 8 candidates. We heard their stories of calling, examine the psychological evaluation and recommendations, and discussed whether the candidates were fit to the local church ministry. Whether interviewing candidates for ministry or

enlisting volunteers within our local congregations, it's essential to ascertain whether individuals have encountered the transformative love of God.

Without this vital connection, the rigors of service can lead to burnout, frustration, and disillusionment. Yet, when rooted in a living relationship with the divine, our acts of service are infused with joy and resilience. Jesus' baptism serves as a poignant reminder of this truth, urging us to seek out those moments of profound encounter with God that sustain us in our service to others.

### **Spiritual Disciplines.**

Following his baptism, Jesus was thrust into the wilderness, where he grappled with temptation. Amidst the desolation, he faced trials that tested not only his resolve but also his spiritual fortitude. It's a narrative that resonates deeply, not only in biblical context but also in the contemporary realm of human experience.

In scrutinizing candidates for various roles, particularly within the realm of ministry, we are compelled to assess their capacity to navigate adversity. For every congregation, conflict is an inevitable reality. Yet, like Jesus, those called to leadership must possess the resilience to transform life's lemons into lemon juice.

Jesus' trials in the wilderness serve as a blueprint for confronting the multifaceted challenges of existence. His initial test, one of physical deprivation, mirrors the material scarcities and financial constraints encountered by many. Yet, Jesus countered this trial by affirming the primacy of spiritual sustenance, asserting that life transcends mere sustenance, drawing nourishment from the eternal words of God.

Similarly, Jesus confronted the allure of fame, resisting the temptation to perform sensational acts for the sake of acclaim. Instead, he anchored himself in the unwavering certainty of divine love, recognizing that external validation paled in comparison to the intimate communion with God.

The final trial, one of power and dominion, echoes the perennial human temptation to wield authority for personal gain. Yet, Jesus steadfastly upheld the sovereignty of God, refusing to succumb to the allure of earthly power. For him, true servitude meant channeling one's influence towards the betterment of others, affirming the supremacy of divine authority above all.

As aspirants to spiritual leadership, we are called to emulate Jesus' example, grounding our service in a steadfast commitment to God's will. Before assuming positions of influence, we must undertake a rigorous examination of our hearts, ensuring that our motivations are rooted in humility and devotion rather than self-aggrandizement.

### **Jesus Announces the Good News**

Following his baptism and triumphant navigation of temptation's treacherous terrain, Jesus received word of John the Baptist's imprisonment. Yet, far from retreating or hesitating, Jesus embarked on a new phase of his ministry with unwavering resolve. In Galilee, he proclaimed the arrival of God's kingdom, urging all to repent and embrace the good news.

This transition, from John's ministry to Jesus' active proclamation, illustrates a timeless truth embedded within the fabric of divine mission. Just as Joshua succeeded Moses in the Old Testament, so too does a new generation invariably rise to carry forward the mantle of leadership when the torchbearers of yesteryears step aside. When John was imprisoned, it was the time for Jesus to start his public ministry.

In the ebb and flow of life within our local congregations, we witness this cyclical pattern unfold time and again. As one chapter draws to a close, another begins, marked by the emergence of fresh faces and voices eager to heed God's call.

This perpetual cycle of renewal underscores a fundamental truth: the church is not bound by the limitations of individual lifetimes or tenures. Rather, it thrives on the enduring call of God, beckoning forth servants from every generation to play their part in advancing the divine mission.

As we journey through this Lenten season, let us heed this timeless message of continuity and renewal. Let us reaffirm the sacred vows of our baptism, recalling the grace bestowed upon us as we answer the call to serve. Through spiritual disciplines such as fasting, prayer, and diligent study of Scripture, may we fortify ourselves against the temptations of worldly allurements—be it wealth, fame, or power.

Yet, in our pursuit of faithful service, let us also acknowledge the inherent limitations of our human agency. We may sow the seeds of God's kingdom, but it is ultimately in the hands of the divine to bring forth the harvest. As we labor in our various roles, let us do so with humility, trusting in God's providence to guide and sustain us.

This is my mantra that I recite every day in my ministry:

*I am not God. I am just a servant of God. I have no power. I have no plans of my own. I trust God and I follow God. This helps me to remind that it is God's ministry and not mine. When we have a disappointing outcome, we give glory to God. God is the only one who controls the outcome. May God bless you also with such faith and trust! 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)

### **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.

### **GREETINGS, BELOVED MEMBERS OF OUR CONGREGATION!**

Do you find joy in the magic of cinema? Join us for an enriching opportunity to share and explore the spiritual dimensions of film within a community of fellow believers. Just as our book club delves into the depths of

literature, our Movie Club seeks to engage in thoughtful discussions surrounding movies and their significance to our Christian journey.

If you're eager to be part of a small group of movie enthusiasts, we warmly invite you to sign up! Together, we'll select films that resonate with our faith and gather to unpack their themes, messages, and insights.

Let's embark on this cinematic adventure together! Please indicate your interest, and we'll collaborate on deciding when and where our gatherings will take place.

### **LENTEN BIBLE STUDY**

As we approach the sacred season of Lent, we extend an invitation to deepen our spiritual understanding through the study of God's Word. Join us for a series of four intimate small group Bible study sessions centered on the Book of Ruth.

If you're eager to delve into the timeless wisdom and profound narratives of Ruth, we encourage you to sign up for this enlightening journey. Together, we'll explore the themes, lessons, and relevance of Ruth's story to our lives as modern-day disciples.

Let us come together in fellowship and exploration of Scripture. Sign up today to reserve your place in this meaningful Lenten Bible study experience.

### **A CALL TO SET THE LORD'S TABLE!**

Chris Chan, as part of the Worship Committee, is offering an opportunity to serve! She is stepping down from her post as Communion Steward for the 11:00 service on the first Sunday of each month. (She will continue to serve for the foreseeable future at the 8:30 service.) This post could be filled by an individual, a couple, or a family working together! The ministry involves purchasing bread, juice and crackers for each Communion Sunday. The Communion Steward is responsible for setting up and taking down the elements at the altar, as well as three self-serve stations (two when the choir is not in session). Lastly, the steward is responsible for replenishing all of the Communion supplies. Chris will continue serving for the March and April Communion Sundays, after which a replacement will be needed. Please answer the call to service by contacting the Worship Committee chair, Dave Lawrence, at [dclawrence3541@comcast.net](mailto:dclawrence3541@comcast.net), or Chris Chan, at [cc.luz4light@gmail.com](mailto:cc.luz4light@gmail.com). Thank you for considering this vital ministry!

### **SUNDAY MORNING ADULT CLASS**

Central's Sunday morning Adult Class continues this week. *Wrestling with Doubt, Finding Faith*, is a video series by United Methodist pastor Adam Hamilton. We'll explore questions that often trouble thoughtful Christians. Hamilton takes the questions seriously and responds in ways many will find helpful. We'll listen to Hamilton, and then we'll share how we've felt about these matters. We hope you'll join us Sundays at 9:45 a.m. in Knoles, Room 6.

### **SUNDAY BOOK GROUP**

9 people met Sunday for the book discussion - great turnout. Although this was a story of a pioneer family heading west and their many challenges, discussion noted how it was symbolic of a life journey.

The next meeting date is March 17 to discuss *The Women's March* by Jennifer Chiaverini. A novel of the 1913 Woman Suffrage Procession (a crucial but little-remembered moment in American history).

### **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).

## **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.