

Central United Methodist Church

3700 Pacific Avenue, Stockton, CA 95204

ORDER OF WORSHIP

19th Sunday after Pentecost
Sunday, September 29, 2024



*Indicates please stand as you are able.

GATHERING

PRELUDE

GATHERING MOMENT

INTROIT

I Was Glad

[by Lloyd Larson]

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: People of God, look about and see the faces of those we know and love — friends and neighbors, family and co-workers — a community of kindred hearts.

All: **People of God, look about and see the faces of those we hardly know — strangers, sojourners, someone who needs an outstretched hand.**

Leader: People of God, look about and see the images of God assembled here today. In me, in you, in each of us, God's Spirit shines for all to see!

All: **People of God, come, let us worship together.**

*OPENING HYMN

For the Beauty of the Earth (Vs. 1, 4-6)

UMH #92

CHILDREN'S MOMENT (11:00am)

MISSION & MINISTRIES MOMENT

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

God, bless us with a renewed sense of your spirit in our midst. Remind us of your great love for us and inspire in us gratefulness and thanksgiving for all that you call us to do. In Jesus name we pray. Amen!

*PASSING THE PEACE

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

All Sing:

Pass It On

*It only takes a spark to get a fire going
And soon all those around can warm up in its glowing
That's how it is with God's Love
Once you've experienced it you spread His love to everyone
You want to pass it on.*

ANTHEM

Be the Change

[by Marc Kaplan & Colin Britt]

Kailyn Rivera, Solo

PRAYER CARDS COLLECTED

PROCLAMATION AND RESPONSE

SCRIPTURE

Mark 9:38-50 (Pew Bible NRSV, page 45)

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

All: Thanks be to God.

*HYMN

Grace Alone

TFWS #2162

SERMON

"Stewardship Campaign Sermon Series 3: Historical Foundations"

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

PRAYER & LORD'S PRAYER

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

OFFERTORY

*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

SENDING FORTH

***BENEDICTION**

***RESPONSE**

I've Got Peace Like a River (traditional)
I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river in my soul. (2x)

***POSTLUDE**

The Flowers on the altar are given by Gayle and Ken Riley in celebration of their 38th wedding anniversary. Married September 20, 1986, at Central.

SERVING YOU TODAY

Rev. Dr. Sungho Lee, Minister
Alexis Easton, Worship Leader (8:30am)
Jeni Bonilla, Worship Leader (11:00am)
Rev. Dr. Sungho Lee, Children's Moment
Ric Campero, Music Director
Monica Adams, Organist/Pianist
Cherie Hudson, Facilities Coordinator
David Campero, Livestream
Steve Adams, Sound/Media
Mark Wharff, Media

Do all the good you can, in all the ways you can, to all the souls you can, in every place you can, at all the times you can, with all the zeal you can, as long as ever you can. ~ John Wesley

WELCOME CENTER

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

Sunday Schedule

- 8:30 am Worship Service in the Fireside Room of the Knoles Building in English
- 9:30 am Chancel Choir Rehearsal, choir room (behind the Sanctuary)
- 9:45 am Summer Bible Camp Experience. Room 6, Knoles Building
- 10:15 am Worship Service in the Fireside Room of 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!
- 12:15 pm Fellowship Hour in the Fellowship Hall

**ALL-CHURCH CONFERENCE
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2024
4:30PM IN THE FELLOWSHIP HALL**

Stewardship Campaign Sermon Series 3: Historical Foundations

Mark 9:38-50 "Be at peace with one another"

As we journey together in faith, we are called to consider the many ways God provides for our needs. There are four primary ways people can secure their income: earning through work, begging, taking by force, or sharing resources. Of these, earning through honest labor is the most dignified and fulfilling path, as it builds up our self-esteem and self-worth. The Bible teaches us the value of hard work, and when we labor with integrity, we honor God and reflect God's glory in our lives.

The Value of Earning

Earning through work is more than just a means to make a living; it is a way to contribute to God's kingdom. When we engage in meaningful work, we are participating in the creative power of God. The Apostle Paul reminds us in **Colossians 3:23**, "Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for people." Through our labor, we find purpose and satisfaction, knowing that our efforts are pleasing to God and beneficial to our community.

The Challenges of Begging

On the other hand, begging, though sometimes necessary in moments of extreme need, can erode our sense of dignity. It can make us feel powerless and dependent, which is why we must approach those in need with compassion and generosity. Jesus teaches us the importance of sharing our resources with others. In **Mark 9:38-41**, He rebukes the disciples for trying to stop someone from doing good in His name, reminding us that "whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward." This is a powerful reminder that acts of charity, even those outside our church, are valuable in the eyes of God.

While it is good to support various charitable organizations and causes, let us also remember the needs of our own church community. When we host Family Promise, for example, we are providing shelter and hope to families in need, but we also have practical expenses like electricity, water, and maintenance that need to be met. Your financial support of our church enables us to continue this important work. As we give generously, let us do so with wisdom, ensuring that we also sustain the ministries that are close to our hearts.

The Danger of Taking by Force

We must also recognize the grave dangers of taking by force. Throughout history, we have seen the devastating effects of people who, driven by greed or power, resort to violence and theft. Jesus warns us in **Mark 9:42-50** about the seriousness of causing others to stumble and the dangers of sin. He uses strong language to emphasize the importance of righteousness, urging us to cut off anything that causes us to sin rather than face the consequences of our actions.

Avoiding the Cycle of Revolution: A Call for Shared Prosperity

History is a stern teacher. It shows us that when societies push their people to the brink—when inequality festers, when the many are deprived and the few hoard wealth—revolutions ignite. The past century has shown us, time and again, that desperate populations will seize power by force when left with no other choice. The Chinese Communist Revolution and the Russian Revolution of 1917 are glaring examples of what happens when political instability, economic hardship, and social discontent converge.

In China, the fall of the Qing Dynasty marked the beginning of a long, turbulent journey toward revolution. Political fragmentation, warlordism, and the inability of successive governments to address the needs of the people set the stage for upheaval. The Chinese Communist Party, rising from the ashes of political chaos, capitalized on the deep dissatisfaction of the rural poor, promising land reforms and an end to exploitation. Their promise of a more just society resonated with millions who had suffered for too long under an indifferent ruling class.

Similarly, in Russia, the monarchy's failure to modernize and meet the basic needs of its people led to widespread unrest. Tsar Nicholas II's autocratic rule, compounded by the catastrophic effects of World War I, left the Russian people disillusioned and desperate. The Bolsheviks, under Lenin's leadership, promised "Peace, Land, and Bread"—a simple yet powerful message that appealed to the masses suffering under the weight of war and poverty.

Both revolutions were fueled by severe economic inequality, political corruption, and the deep discontent of a population that felt abandoned by its leaders. These historical events serve as stark reminders that when people are pushed to the brink, when they are denied a fair share of prosperity, they will eventually take matters into their own hands—often with devastating consequences.

Today, we stand at a similar crossroads. Economic inequality is once again reaching alarming levels. Across the globe, the gap between the rich and the poor is widening, creating fertile ground for social unrest. If history has taught us anything, it is that we must heed these warning signs before it is too late.

The answer is not to wait for the inevitable spark that will ignite the next revolution. Rather, it is to act now, to share what we have, to ensure that the prosperity enjoyed by a few is extended to the many. We must learn from the past and recognize that a society that hoards wealth at the expense of the greater good is a society on the brink of collapse.

The time for action is now. We must build systems that promote equity, that provide opportunities for all, and that ensure the basic needs of every person are met. Only by doing so can we avoid repeating the mistakes of the past. Let us not forget that those who fail to learn from history are condemned to repeat it.

In the spirit of shared prosperity, we can choose a different path—one that leads to stability, peace, and a brighter future for all. The stakes are too high to ignore the lessons of history. We must act with urgency and compassion to ensure that the cycle of revolution is not repeated, but instead, replaced with a cycle of shared success and enduring peace.

Taking by force is a rejection of God's command to love our neighbors as ourselves. It leads to broken communities, broken relationships, and a broken world. As Christians, we are called to be peacemakers, to pursue justice through nonviolent means, and to resist the temptation to take what is not ours. In doing so, we become salt and light in a world that desperately needs the hope and peace of Christ.

The Blessing of Sharing

Finally, let us reflect on the power of sharing. Sharing can take many forms, from the taxes we pay to support public services, to the voluntary offerings we give to the church and other charitable causes. In sharing, we are reminded of our interconnectedness and our responsibility to care for one another.

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, once said, "Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can." Wesley's ministry was a testament to the transformative power of sharing, not only within the walls of the church but throughout society. His work, along with the gradual political and social reforms of his time, helped England avoid the revolutions that swept through other nations.

As we consider our own giving, let us remember that our church is a vital part of God's work in the world. By supporting our church financially, we are investing in the kingdom of God, ensuring that we can continue to be a beacon of hope, a place of refuge, and a community of love. Let us give generously, joyfully, and with the confidence that our contributions, no matter the size, are making a difference in the lives of others and in the heart of God.

Amen.



No matter where you are on your faith journey, you are welcome here. Period.

BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

Our 18th annual Blessing of the Animals will be Saturday, October 5 at 10am in Central Park. Bring your cat, dog or other animal companions and join us for a simple prayer service honoring St. Francis of Assisi. We'll celebrate the important place pets hold in our lives, remind us of the wonder of God's creation, and our roles as stewards of the earth.

RUPERT M. COOPER MULTIMEDIA AND SOUND BOOTH DEDICATION

We invite you to join us on October 20th for a special dedication honoring Rupert M. Cooper. During the 11:00 o'clock worship service in the Sanctuary, we will recognize Rupert's contributions and celebrate the naming of the new Multimedia and Sound Booth in his honor.

This dedication is a tribute to Rupert's devotion and impact on our community. We hope you can be with us to acknowledge and celebrate his legacy.

FOOD CLOSET

I had decided to staff the food closet clear back in January. One person stepped up and quickly decided they couldn't do it. Thus, the food closet has been closed since then. However, winter is coming, as they kept repeating in Game of Thrones and for people who are homeless or food insecure it is a struggle just to eat. Something we take for granted every day. I know your grocery bill is high but what if you had no money? What would you do and where would you go for food? I asked one of our clients why he didn't just go to the Father McCoy Dining Hall and he said, " It's difficult to get to from this area and I don't have money for the bus. Also, it's really dangerous to sleep over in that area." For the food closet to reopen in mid-October, I need two things:

ONE:

- Cheese or peanut butter crackers
- Tuna Kits
- Campbell's chunky soups with pull tabs
- Water

Please remember that our homeless population does not have access to can openers so pull tabs are a must.

TWO:

I am requesting that the Food Closet be open 2X per week from 11-12 on Monday and Thursday. This would allow someone to staff the closet and hand out bags of food keeping Susie from having to interrupt her work to do this task. So, please send me an email with your availability. If no one volunteers we will not open the Food Closet.

Thank you,
Dianne England
diannengland49@gmail.com

ADULT ED CLASS ON HOLY COMMUNION ON WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY

On Oct 6, World Communion Sunday, the Adult Education Team invites you to a gathering to learn about and share our experiences of Holy Communion, one of the two Sacraments of the United Methodist Church.

If you took Communion in childhood or youth, how was it offered? Kneeling, walking forward to receive, passing the elements to your neighbor in the pew? What makes Communion sometimes more meaningful to you? Do you have a special memory of a Communion experience? We'll also learn a bit about the sacrament's history. For example, why do Methodists drink grape juice rather than wine?

Central's Adult Ed classes are informal, and we invite you to participate as much or as little as you choose. So please join us at 9:45-10:45 in Room 6, Knoles Bldg, and spend an hour that will support your celebration of the Sacrament at 11:00 worship. Questions? Call Alexis Easton at 209-483-4554.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON BOOK GROUP

The new book choice is *Remarkably Bright Creatures* - a novel by Shelby Van Pelt. A New York Times bestseller and a read with Jenna pick.

SAVE THE DATE

Messiah by G. F. Handel Excerpts from Part 1 featuring Central UMC Chancel Choir, Stockton Singers and Soloists and Chamber Orchestra. Sunday, December 22, 2024, 3:30 PM, Sanctuary, Central UMC 3700 Pacific Ave. Stockton, CA. **Free Will Offering.**

THE BOOK CART

Check out our stocked book cart.... Sundays after church in the fellowship hall while you enjoy coffee hour. Both adult and children's books are available. Take a book to enjoy and/or bring a book to share.

CENTRAL HISTORY/SANCTUARY/STAINED GLASS WINDOWS

For those of you who are interested in the design, construction and specifications of our 60-year-old sanctuary as well as a timeline history of Central Methodist Church, there is a brochure on the table in the narthex. There is also a brochure on our stained-glass windows there that discusses the design, scriptures used and for whom the windows were dedicated.

HEARING ASSIST UNITS ARE NOW AVAILABLE FOR WORSHIP

As of this week, four hearing assist devices are available for those who need help with hearing worship services.

If you feel that you are a candidate for a hearing device, please go directly to the audio/visual booth to receive a unit. Our volunteers and staff are happy to help you!

Please be patient as they are also busy preparing for the service.

If more than four devices are needed, we will make accommodations as soon as we can. By October, we will be upgrading to a newer ADA approved system.