

CHRISTMAS EVE

Gathering Stories

DECEMBER 24, 2023





IN OUR PRAYERS

Central is a caring community of faith that includes members, friends, and visitors. We give thought to those who are rarely or currently not able to attend worship here. **Today, we keep in our prayers Mawulouwoe Foli.**

CHILDREN

Children are a beloved part of our community and always welcome in the sanctuary with you. At the back of the room are activity bags and books for them to enjoy during their time in worship. Infants through age 6 are also invited to spend the worship hour in our nursery on the upper level, playing and learning together. Changing tables are available in our restrooms with diapering supplies available in the nursery.

FLOWERS

If you would like to bring flowers to place on the chancel for worship in recognition of a special moment or event, contact the office.

PHOTOGRAPHY & SOCIAL MEDIA

You are in a space where live stream videography and photography will occur. To review our photography and media use policy, go to www.centralforgood.org/photography.

LICENSE

The music in today's bulletin is reprinted with permission, OneLicense.net A-71257.

ACCESSIBILITY



Large print worship bulletins and hymns are available from the ushers or in back of the sanctuary.



The sanctuary is T-coil enabled for those with the hearing aid technology. Sound amplification devices are also available from ushers.



Reserved accessible parking and a wheelchair ramp are available in the MPR lot off 9th Street East. Accessible restrooms are in the hall by side sanctuary doors and on the lower level.

PARKING

Free parking is available Sundays in the MPR lot, KCP lot, and the World Trade Center Parking Ramp across Cedar Street. If parking in the ramp, see an usher for a voucher to pay your ramp fees.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Central Presbyterian Church occupies the sacred land of the Dakota people. Broken treaties and the systematic loss of life and land led directly to the availability of this sacred space which we presume to possess today. Our faith demands confession of the evils from which we benefit, action to support Indigenous peoples seeking justice, and lives guided by love. We keep this in our minds and hearts as we worship today. For the full statement of our commitment to action, visit our website at www.centralforgood.org/land.

Welcome to Central Presbyterian Church

Whether you are sharing worship with us in our historic sanctuary or watching online, we hope you feel the vitality of our people, our ministry and our focus on the present. If you are looking for a place to put your faith into action or for a community to provide support and inspiration, we are looking for you. Central is open and affirming of all people. If you are visiting today, we invite you to fill out a Connect card in the pews and drop it in the offering plate.

ORDER OF WORSHIP

As we gather in this space to worship, let us listen for God's voice by silencing our cell phones and using the music to bring us into a time of reflection and prayer.

✦ Please rise in body or in spirit

We Gather in God's Presence

PRELUDE

Dr. Melanie Ohnstad, organist

Go, Tell It on the Mountain (by Aaron David Miller)

Contemplation on "O Little Town of Bethlehem" (by Aaron David Miller)

The Snow Lay on the Ground (by Leo Sowerby)

Pastorale "Gesù Bambino" (by Pietro A. Yon)

✦ CALL TO WORSHIP - Adapted from Luke 1

Beverly Bodom (4:00 p.m.)

Emily Ross (10:30 p.m.)

One: My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

All: **The Mighty One has done great things for us, and holy is God's name.**

One: By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us.

All: **To give light to those who sit in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.**

One: Let us worship God!

✦ HYMN

Hymn #132

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice!

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rev. Chris Chatelaine-Samsen

One: The peace of God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer, be with you all.

All: **And also with you.**

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLES

Sanchez family (4:00 p.m.)

Flinner family (10:30 p.m.)

One: Throughout Advent, we have lit candles in preparation of our Lord – hope, faith, joy, and peace.

All: **These candles guide our way, as we hope and trust in God's promises, and as we find joy and peace in a life marked by God's presence.**

(Lighting of the candles of Hope, Faith, Joy, and Peace.)

One: This Christmas Eve, we light the Christ candle. Christ, the object of our longing and expectation, is with us, bringing God's love and justice into the world.

All: **This candle points us to a light that can never be extinguished, a light that knows no beginning and no end.**

One: In Jesus, God makes a home amongst mortals. God knows the fullness of the human condition, our pain and sorrow as well as our joy and longing. God empathizes with the whole of creation, and leads us on a new path towards the reconciliation of the whole world.

(Lighting of the Christ Candle)

One: Let us pray.

All: **God, on this Christmas night we gather our hopes and prayers into the manger in Bethlehem. You choose to come into the world not with worldly might, but with divine vulnerability. As a dim candle can ignite a roaring fire, may the love you plant within us transform our lives and the whole world. Amen.**

We Listen for God's Voice

TIME FOR CHILDREN

Jennifer Anderson

(4:00 p.m. only. Children will remain in the sanctuary with their families after this time.)

✦ HYMN

The First Nowell

Hymn #147, verses 1-3

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Lord, you are speaking. Open our hearts and minds to hear your voice and follow your call. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING - Isaiah 9:1-7

One: The Word of the Lord

All: **Thanks be to God**

ANTHEM

The Wexford Carol (arr. Don Michael Dicie)

THE NATIVITY FROM LUKE AND MATTHEW

Luke 1:26-38, Matthew 1:18b-23, Luke 2:1-20, Matthew 2:1-12

Children are invited to participate in the reading of the lesson. (4:00 p.m. only)

SERMON - "Gathering Stories"

Rev. Chris Chatelaine-Samsen

We Respond to God's Gifts

✦ HYMN

Love Has Come

Hymn #110

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & THE 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

CALL FOR OFFERING

You are invited to place offering gifts and completed pew cards in the plates as ushers pass them. You may also give online at www.centralforgood.org/give or submit to the office during normal office hours.

OFFERTORY

Ding, Dong, Merrily on High (arr. Barbara Wallace)

✦ SONG OF RESPONSE

Gratefully we sing to thee, Giver of unending gifts!
May your generosity Be proclaimed upon our lips:
Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!

✦ PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Lord, you are generous. As we return a portion of what you have given us, may it be used to proclaim your love in words and actions, here and everywhere. Amen.

We Are Sent Into God's World

✦ HYMN

Hymn #122

Silent Night, Holy Night
Lighting of the candles

1 Silent night! Holy night!
All is calm, all is bright
'round yon virgin mother and child!
Holy infant, so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace,
sleep in heavenly peace.

2 Silent night! Holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight.
Glories stream from heaven afar,
heav'nly hosts sing, "Alleluia!
Christ the Savior is born!
Christ the Savior is born!"

3 Silent night! Holy night!
Son of God, love's pure light
radiant beams from Thy holy face
with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth!
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth!

4 Silent night! Holy night!
Wondrous star, lend thy light;
with the angels let us sing
"Alleluia" to our King:
"Christ the Savior is born!
Christ the Savior is born."

✦ SCRIPTURE READING - John 1:1-14

✦ HYMN

Joy to the World

Hymn #134, verses 1, 2, & 4

1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King!
Let every heart prepare Him room,
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

2 Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!
Let men their songs employ,
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

4 He rules the world with truth and grace,
and makes the nations prove
the glories of His righteousness
and wonders of His love,
and wonders of His love,
and wonders, wonders of His love.

✦ CHARGE & BENEDICTION - Adapted from Luke 2

One: Behold - I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.

All: **Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom God favors!**

One: God is with us.

All: **Let us go forth!**

POSTLUDE

Toccata Sur "l'Il est né, le divin Enfant" (by Denis Bédard)

Dr. Melanie Ohnstad, organist

Announcements

View our church calendar and share upcoming events at www.centralforgood.org/calendar.

Special Thanks

Thank you to our musicians this evening, including our section leaders (Shanta Hejmadi, Abbie Betinis, Adam Van der Sluis, and Eric Bartlett), organist Melanie Ohnstad, and the Central Choir. Thank you to Louise French for creating special paraments to decorate the pulpit.

Pledging and Year-End Giving

If you have not yet submitted your giving pledge for 2024, we invite you to do so now to assist Finance & Stewardship with budget planning for the coming year.

We also encourage you to think of Central in your year-end giving. If you would like to make a gift, you may do so in person, through the mail, or on our website at www.centralforgood.org/give.

Due to staff availability and office closure for the New Year's Eve holiday, **2023 gifts being made in person for tax deductible purposes should be received by Friday, December 29 at noon**. Online donations may be made up until midnight on December 31 via our website at www.centralforgood.org/give.

Central's mission and ministry is made possible by the generous support of church members and friends. Thank you for all your continued support!

No Nursery Care

There is no nursery care for our Christmas Eve or New Year's Day services. However, the nursery room will be open if you need a place to bring your child for a wiggly break or diaper change.

Undecorating Central

It was beautiful while it lasted, but soon we will need help to take down the holiday greenery and pack away the Christmas decorations. If you are able to help, please contact Anna Sanchez in the church office.

Offering Envelopes

If you have ordered offering envelopes, they can be picked up in the Friendship Room starting next Sunday. Please contact Anna Sanchez in the office if you would like to have your box of envelopes mailed, or if you would like to sign up to receive a box of pre-dated offering envelopes.

Looking for Photographs?

Go to www.centralforgood.org/photos to enjoy and download high resolution photographs from recent holiday activities, including Deck the Halls, Children's Pageant, and Lessons and Carols.

Be sure to check back from time to time as more photos are added throughout the year!

Christmas Greenery & Poinsettias

Thank you to the following people for donating the beautiful poinsettias and fresh greenery used to decorate our sanctuary and church entrance this Christmas season.

Phil Asgian	In memory of Andrew Lederle.
Rick & Kathy Barker	In memory of Michele Barker Boone.
Allynne Burg	In memory of my family members.
Margaret & Jim Cellette	In honor of loved ones, near & far.
Janet Engeswick	In honor of Central Presbyterian Staff.
Ruthena Fink	In honor of Martha & Arthur Sternberg.
Tom & Barbara Hein	In honor of our children Aimee & Jack.
Laura & Terry Henry	In honor of our great-grandchildren and our new great-great granddaughter, Georgie.
Florette Hujanen	In memory of our parents: Fred & Florence Berganini, and Ahti & Viola Hujanen.
Bonnie & George Joyce	In memory of our parents: Mildred & Duaine Freng, and Irene & George Joyce, Sr.
Joan Kelly & Jane Lonergan	In memory of Doris, Bernard, and Dale Schleiter.
Russell Lundeen	In memory of Ardis, Lawrence, and Frank Lundeen.
James Olson	In memory of Sandy Olson.
Marlene R. Peterson	In memory of Sandy Brophy.
Lynda Petrie	In honor of my children and grandchildren.
Rick Ponthan	In memory of Diane, Beryl, & Harold Ponthan.
Sharon Roberts	In honor of Norman & Dorothy Radanke.
Susan Rostkoski	In memory of Tom Rostkoski.
Susan Seymour	In memory of Larry Seymour.
Dan & Jean Shively	In memory of Dick & Eileen Momsen.
Audrey Thompson-Amarteifio	In honor of Benjamin Ayitiah.
Avis Tilden	
Jim Wheeler	In memory of my parents, Dick & June Wheeler.
Sharon & David Zopfi-Jordan	In honor of Bill & Florence Zopfi, William & Nicole, and in memory of Phyllis & Ken Jordan.

ADULT FAITH FORMATION

JANUARY 7 @ 11:30 AM

NEXT MONTH'S TOPIC: ECONOMIC RIGHTS

The idea of economic rights is foreign to many Americans, but the idea of rights to housing, employment, food, and other economic needs are an important part of the global landscape since the Second World War. In an age of increasing economic insecurity for people on the margins, this conversation is as important as ever.

The Bible was written thousands of years ago in largely agrarian economies, so what could it say about a modern economy in the wake of thinkers like Adam Smith, John Maynard Keynes, and John Nash? Does the Bible have anything meaningful to say about an idea as seemingly new as economic rights.

Join us on January 7 at 11:30 a.m. in the upstairs Meeting Lounge for a discussion with Pastor Chris encompassing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, ancient Hebrew law, and implications for policy in the modern world for the ability of people to have basic economic security.

Upcoming Calendar

SUNDAY 12/24 - Christmas Eve

4:00 p.m. Worship with Live Manger
7:00 p.m. St. Paul AA Speaker Meeting
10:30 p.m. Candlelight Worship Service

MONDAY 12/25 - Christmas Day

The office will be closed.

TUESDAY 12/26

The office will be closed.

WEDNESDAY 12/27

There will not be Wednesday Community Lunch on this day.

FRIDAY 12/29

4:00 p.m. Wedding Rehearsal

SATURDAY 12/30

4:00 p.m. Reisnig / Zopfi-Jordan
Wedding

SUNDAY 12/31 - New Year's Eve

10:30 a.m. Worship
(No nursery care this day)
11:30 a.m. Coffee & Fellowship
7:00 p.m. St. Paul AA Speaker Meeting

MONDAY 01/01 - New Year's Day

The office will be closed.

WEDNESDAY 01/03

No Wednesday Community Lunch
7:15 p.m. Choir Rehearsal

In Worship Next Week

Get ready for the New Year by joining us for a relaxed service of hymn singing and scripture with Jennifer Anderson playing piano. There is no children's ministry or fellowship hour this day .

Central is You. Every day of the week, and especially Sundays, **we rely on one another to minister** through worship, education, fellowship, and more.

Following are a few ways we need you. (Simply sign up on our website at: www.centralforgood.org/volunteer)

PRAY

Support our children and youth by writing notes of encouragement, pray for them, and connect with them in church.

ASSIST IN WORSHIP

Serve during worship as a liturgist - leading prayers, reading scripture, and speaking from the pulpit (no prior public speaking experience necessary).

SERVE FELLOWSHIP

Prepare coffee and refreshments for the fellowship hour before church from 10 - 10:30 a.m., or serve after worship.

NURSERY CARE

Care and play with our youngest members of the Central community in the nursery during worship or other upcoming events.

USHER AND GREET

Welcome guests to worship, distribute bulletins, help with wayfinding, and assist with receiving the offering.

SUPPORT OUR LIVE STREAM

Help as a camera operator and editor for our worship video broadcast. Don't worry, training is provided!

We also **reach out into our community** in service, witnessing to God's generous love-without-walls. Here are a few ways you can join alongside:

HELP PREPARE LUNCH

Each Wednesday, volunteers work alongside Chef Barb Westman to prepare and serve a meal for guests from the surrounding community. Central Closet also distributes clothing at no cost to our guests.

SERVE HOUSING NEEDS

Along with our other service and justice projects, our Beacon Interfaith Housing team works to advocate and provide housing for low-income people around the metro area.

WORK FOR ANTI-RACISM

Our Anti-Racism Task Force resources the congregation and our community to advocate for justice and do the hard work of turning away from systemic racism.

If you have a musical itch, explore one of our many music ensembles. Enjoy it as an audience or **share your talents** with others in worship or other events.

CENTRAL CHOIR

This SATB adult choir sings in worship weekly from September – May. While reading music isn't required, this choir moves quickly, learns a lot of repertoire, and throughout the year sings some challenging music, often highlighting the work of local composers! Rehearsals are Wednesdays at 7:15 p.m.

HANDBELL ENSEMBLE

This is an ensemble for adults and high school youth with music-reading experience. This group experiments with sounds and timbres, playing an interesting bell repertoire. Come experiment with us when rehearsals resume as needed Wednesdays at 6:00 p.m.

CHAMBER ENSEMBLE

Open to adults and youth (grade 8 and up) who have played traditional band/orchestra instruments for at least three years. We rehearse on Sundays as necessary at 11:45 a.m. for about 30 minutes and play in worship every-other-month or so.

CABARET

This year Central will again create a fun, semi-staged musical production featuring our children, choir, and chamber ensemble! This intergenerational event welcomes singers, musicians, and support 'backstage' in production design. Show announcement coming soon!

YOUTH PERCUSSION ENSEMBLES

At various times, children and youth are invited to share in percussion ensembles in worship, with an emphasis on discovering unique sounds.

If you are interested in being a part of our music ministry or one of our ensembles, please reach out to Jennifer Anderson, Director of Music & Youth Ministry at jennifera@centralforgood.org or call (651) 224-4728 ext. 103.

The Central Team

(651) 224-4728

PASTOR

Rev. Christopher Chatelaine-Samsen
chriscs@centralforgood.org, ext. 102

ADMINISTRATION

Anna Sanchez, Church Administrator
office@centralforgood.org, ext. 100

Christie Rachelle,
Director of Communications
christier@centralforgood.org, ext. 105

Laura Nichols-Endres, Treasurer
William Zopfi, Treasurer Emeritus
Mary Lange, Receptionist

Custodians: Lavar Jones, Peter Evarts

MINISTRIES

Jennifer Anderson,
Director of Music & Youth Ministry
jennifera@centralforgood.org, ext. 103

CHILDREN & YOUTH

Child Care Staff: Megan Beese,
Jess Garner, Maria Stokes

Laura Walls,
Sunday Connection Coordinator
lauraw@centralforgood.org

MUSIC LEADERSHIP

Eric Bartlett, Abbie Betinis, Paul Damico-Carper,
Shanta Hejmadi, Tonia Hughes Kendrick,
Melanie Ohnstad, Clara Osowski,
Adam Van der Sluis, Alexander Woods

Maureen Smith, Bible Study Leader
maureens@centralforgood.org

Barb Westman, Community Lunch
Chef & Kitchen Manager

We invite you to explore the Central community!

Do you have children and youth in your home?

- Check out our nursery for children age 0 - 6 open Sunday mornings.
- Engage kids in grades K-5 in Sunday Connection during worship hour.
- Grow in faith formation with our children and youth groups which include Life Boats, Compass, and Spark!

Do you want to build new relationships and connections?

- Join our monthly Adult Formation class led by Pastor Chris.
- Learn and engage with others during Adult Bible Study.
- Meet others during our coffee and fellowship hour after worship.
- Share a fun meal in the city with the Women's Networking Group.
- Connect and craft with our monthly knitting group.
- Enjoy a community lunch every Wednesday and Third Sunday.

Perhaps music is your passion?

- Join the Central Choir and uplift your voice in song during worship.
- Share your talents as an instrumentalist in our Chamber Ensemble.
- Try something new and join our Handbell Ensemble.
- Explore our youth choir, drum, and orchestra opportunities.
- Be a part of our intergenerational cabaret musical events!

Are you an advocate for volunteerism and social justice?

- Work with Central's Beacon team to create affordable housing.
- Connect with the Hunger Initiative to address food insecurities.
- Volunteer with our meals programs serving community lunches.
- Learn from the Anti-Racism Task Force on ways to drive change.
- Become a hospitality volunteer and welcome others into the church.

www.centralforgood.org