



**CENTRAL REFORMED CHURCH
SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT
DECEMBER 10, 2023**

REFLECTION

"There is no way to peace; peace is the way."

-A.J. Muste, 1885-1967, Dutch clergyman, as quoted in "Debasing Dissent" in *The New York Times* (16 November 1967), p. 46; later quoted as "There is no way to peace, peace is the only way" in *The Peasant's Revolt: McCarthy 1968* by William P. McDonald. This quote has also been attributed to Mahatma Gandhi.

Sources and Credits:

Cover Art: contemporary woodcut image by heritage artist Sr. Mary Charles McGough, OSB.

Assurance of Pardon: Isaiah 12:3-4

Affirmation of Faith: Our World Belongs to God, 23

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ORDER OF WORSHIP | SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT | DECEMBER 10, 2023 | 10:00 A.M.

GATHERING IN LOVE

The prelude is a call for personal preparation for the worship of God.

Prelude

"Church Sonata in F Major, K. 244" | W. A. Mozart
"Pastoral Symphony" from the oratorio "Messiah" | G.F. Handel

Introit

"Dona Nobis Pacem (Grant Us Peace)" | traditional

***Processional Hymn**

"Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus" | 2

***Votum, Sentences, Salutation**

One: Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.
Many: Amen.
One: Comfort, O comfort my people!
Many: We welcome God's tender words to us today.
One: Prepare the way for your God!
Many: We gather for worship to prepare ourselves for Christ's coming.
One: Christ is coming! The glory of God will be revealed!
Many: Thanks be to God for this good news!
One: May grace, mercy, and God's peace be ours, from God our Father,
Jesus our Redeemer, and through the Holy Spirit.
Many: Amen!

***Invitation to Confession**

One: God promises forgiveness through Jesus Christ. On this second Sunday of Advent, let us approach God in humility and faith.

***Prayer of Confession**

Many: Eternal God, John the Baptist prepares the way by calling upon us to repent. We have failed to share as we should. We have failed to honor the poor and the oppressed. We have failed to bear fruit worthy of your salvation. Have mercy upon us, God. Heal and forgive us so we can welcome Christ with pure and genuine hearts. Amen.

**Please stand in body or in spirit.*

*Assurance of Pardon

One: With joy, let us draw water from the springs of salvation. Give thanks to the Lord! Call on God's name.

Many: **We offer our thanks and praise for God's unending mercies.**

*Hymn

"Gloria, Gloria/Glory to God" (singing in Latin, then in English)



① Latin Glo - ri - a, glo - ri - a, in ex - cel - sis De - o!
English Glo - ry to God, glo - ry to God, in the high - est heav - en!

②

③ Glo - ri - a, glo - ri - a, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!
Peace be on earth, peace be on earth, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

④

*Peace

One: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

Many: **And also with you.**

Children's Moment and Lighting of the Advent Candle

Children 4 years-old through 3rd grade are invited to join Carol Austin and Ryan Rinvolt for a story titled, "Mary and Joseph Show the Way." Children will be brought back to the atrium following the conclusion of the Second Hour. Visiting parents are encouraged to go with their students to meet their teachers.

One: These are the Sundays of Advent. We light a candle each week as we progress toward Christmas.

Many: **We join with hopeful people the world over, lighting the candles which are symbols of our faith and signs of God's faithfulness.**

One: Last week we lit the candle of hope. Today we light the candle of peace.

Many: **In an age when people so seldom experience inner peace, and when peace is absent in so much of the world, we prepare our hearts for the Prince of Peace.**

Children's Response

"Come and Light This Candle" | Joseph Martin

*Come and light this candle, let it shine so bright.
See it glow with promise, (hope/peace) will be our light.
God will send us Jesus when the time is right.
Till that morning let his candle shine so bright.*

LISTENING IN EXPECTATION

First Lesson Isaiah 40:1-5 (page 581)

One: The Word of the Lord.

Many: **Thanks be to God!**

Meditation

Hymn “Comfort, Comfort You My People” | 3 (v. 1-2)

Second Lesson Isaiah 40:6-9 (page 582)

One: The Word of the Lord.

Many: **Thanks be to God!**

Meditation

TO US A CHILD IS BORN- CANTATA NO. 142

Christmas Cantata No. 142 - “To Us a Child Is Born” | Composer Unknown | see end of order

RESPONDING IN FAITH

***Affirmation of Faith**

Many: **Remembering the promise to reconcile the world to himself, God joined our humanity in Jesus Christ—the eternal Word made flesh. He is the long-awaited Messiah, one with us and one with God, fully human and fully divine, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary.**

Announcements

Moment for Mission

Giving of Our Tithes and Offerings

In a spirit of gratitude and thanksgiving, let us worship God through the giving of our tithes and offerings. During this time, please fill out the friendship pads and pass them. To receive weekly updates and announcements, please include your e-mail address.

Offertory “Meditation on ‘All Glory Be to God on High’” | Wilbur Held

***Doxology**

Praise God, from whom all bless - ings flow; praise him all crea- tures here be - low;
praise him a- bove, ye heaven-ly host; praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost. A - men.

***Offertory Prayer**

Prayers of the People

*During the prayers each week, we remember our neighboring faith communities and their leaders.
Today we are praying for the YWCA West Central Michigan.*

One: The Lord be with you.
Many: And also with you.

During the prayer:

One: Lord, in your mercy,
Many: Hear our prayer.

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.

DEPARTING IN JOY

***Hymn**

"Hark, the Glad Sound! The Savior Comes" | see end of order

***Charge and Blessing**

One: Whoever you are, wherever you go in God's wide world,
Whatever happens to you of good or ill, always remember . . .
Many: Jesus is Lord!

One: May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you always.
Many: Amen!

Postlude

"Finale on 'All Glory Be to God on High'" | Wilbur Held

WORSHIP PARTICIPANTS

Principal Organist: Norma de Waal Malefyt

Director of Music Ministries: Taemin Han

Chancel Choir

Crucifer: Britta Bailey

Acolyte: Anya Bailey

Liturgist: Jodi MacLean

First Lesson Reader: Brayden Cloutier

Pastors: Pastor Steven D. Pierce and Matt Shults

Moment for Mission: Jennifer Timmer, YWCA

West Central Michigan

Offertory Prayer: Ethan Wheeler

Children's Choir

Joyful Noise

See Cantata program for additional musicians

Video Tech: Megan Noorman

Sound Tech: Michael Beachy

"TO US A CHILD IS BORN (UNS IST EIN KIND GEBOREN)"

Composer Unknown, possibly by Johann Kuhnau, formerly attributed to Johann Sebastian Bach

Kathryn Becksvoort, alto Carlos Lemagne, tenor Jung Woo Kim, baritone
Grace Kim, Kimia Ghaderi-violin Olga Ziabrikova-violola Andrew Laven-cello
Chris Kantner, Ruth Bylsma-flute
Marlen Vavrikova, Jeremiah K. Quarles-oboe

I. CONCERTO

II. CHORUS

To us a Child is born, to us a Son is given.

III. AIR (Baritone)

Thus, thy day of birth appeareth, now my promise I renew. Thee to honor,
thee to hallow, thee to worship, thee to honor, hallow, worship. Poor and
needy, in darkness gropes my soul. Seeking, searching, never finding
offerings I may set before thee, fit to serve as holy gifts, this my heart,
O God, accept.

IV. CHORUS

Unto his holy name sing praises. Praise him with songs of great joy.
For his is the glory, and his is the honor, for his is the glory, the honor
and thanks.

V. AIR (Tenor)

Lord, to thee be thanks, Lord, to thee may thanks be given. To thy name be
praise and fame. To thy name shall thanks be sung, unto thy name be praise
and fame. For my fortune thru thy goodness has been raised to highest
measure, all my fervent hope thou art, my hope thou art.

VI. RECITATIVE (Alto)

Immanuel! In thy great mercy grant thy servant that which my spirit now is
humbly seeking, I would discover how to tell thee of the gladness, which
this most holy day awakens; let this imperfect voice be raised that I may sing
thy praises.

VII. ARIA (Alto)

Lord, to thee be praise, Lord, to thee may praise be given, for thru thee am I
redeemed. To thy name be praise forever, for thru thee am I redeemed. Now
my spirit is untroubled since my heart thru thy compassion draws
unbounded strength from thee.

VIII. CHORUS

Alleluia! May God now be praised, with thankful heart and voice sing out
his praises; for God today has given such joy, may we with grateful hearts
forget him never.

"HARK, THE GLAD SOUND! THE SAVIOR COMES"

Descant

4 Our glad ho - san - nas, Prince of Peace, your wel - come

1 Hark, the glad sound! The Sav - ior comes, the Sav - ior
 2 He comes the pris - oners to re - lease, in Sa - tan's
 3 He comes the bro - ken heart to bind, the wound - ed
 4 Our glad ho - san - nas, Prince of Peace, your wel - come

shall pro - claim, and heaven's e - ter - nal

prom - ised long! Let ev - ery heart pre -
 bond - age held; the gates of brass be -
 soul to cure, and with the trea - sures
 shall pro - claim, and heaven's e - ter - nal

arch - es ring with your be - lov - ed name.

pare a throne, and ev - ery voice a song.
 fore him burst, the i - ron fet - ters yield.
 of his grace to en - rich the hum - bled poor.
 arch - es ring with your be - lov - ed name.

Words: Philip Doddridge (1735); based on Isaiah 61:1-2, P.D.
 Music (RICHMOND 8.6.8.6): Thomas Haweis (1792); adapt. Samuel Webbe (1808); descant Craig S. Lang
 (1891-1971) used by permission of Novello and Company, Ltd, admin. G. Schirmer, Inc.

OUR CONSISTORY

Elders

Nancy Hager
Burt VanderLaan

Patricia Duthler
Jodi MacLean
Helen Phillips

Kanu Jigo
Dawn Tillema

Deacons

Fritz Gearhart
Ethan Wheeler

Paul Bukaweski
Martha Norden Harvey
Ryan Rinvelt

Cindy DeVrou
Jay Harsevoort

OUR STAFF

Mark and Sally Bulthuis, Addie's Pantry co-directors
Norma de Waal Malefyt, principal organist
Steffany Dunker, Faye's Diner coordinator
Taemin Han, director of music ministries
Jay Harsevoort, Faye's Diner coordinator
Diane Kersjes, Faye's Diner coordinator
Ava Koebel, office coordinator
Nick Loubert, director of youth and children's ministries
Megan Noorman, communications coordinator
Steven D. Pierce, senior minister
Matt Shults, minister for congregational care
Dallas Toth, maintenance specialist
Jana Trees, financial administrator
Jennifer Webb, lead wedding coordinator

THIS WEEK AT CENTRAL

12/10/23–12/16/23

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
12/10	12/11	12/12	12/13	12/14	12/15	12/16
Worship 10:00 a.m.			Women's Bible Study (parlor) 9:30 a.m.			VOX GR Rehearsal 10:00 a.m.
Second Hour 11:15 a.m.			Staff Meeting (Conference Room) 10:00 a.m.	Men's Group (parlor) 12:00 p.m.		
Prayer Partner Cookie Delivery 11:00 a.m.		Addie's Pantry 1:00 p.m.– 3:00 p.m.	Property Committee Meeting 4:00 p.m.	Celebration Ringers 6:00 p.m.		
		Music Committee Meeting 5:15 p.m.	Vox GR Rehearsal 6:00 p.m.	VOX GR Rehearsal 6:00 p.m.	Youth Christmas Party 5:30 p.m.	
Youth Group 6:00 p.m.	VOX GR Rehearsal 6:00 p.m.	VOX GR Rehearsal 6:00 p.m.	CDT (zoom) 8:00 p.m.	Chancel Choir 7:15 p.m.	VOX GR Rehearsal 6:00 p.m.	

ADULT EDUCATION SAVE THE DATES

DECEMBER 2023–FEBRUARY 2024

SUNDAYS IN DYKSTRA CHAPEL AT 11:15 A.M.

Prepare Him Room: Songs of the Season (December 10 and 17):

Norma de Waal Malefyt, Burt VanderLaan, and Pastor Steve Pierce will share the history of some of our favorite Advent / Christmas hymns. Come prepared to sing, too!

Israel and Palestine—Five Key Understandings for Americans (December 31):

Bart Den Boer will be teaching this class on the facts of happenings in Israel-Palestine.

What it means to be Reformed and why it still matters (January 7, 14, 21, and 28):

Pastor Steve Pierce will be teaching this four-week series.

Sports and Faith (Super Bowl Sunday, February 11):

Dr. Chad Carlson of Hope College will lead this class.

Conversation on the future of Christian higher education (February 18):

Matthew Scogin, president of Hope College, will lead this class.

LIFE at CENTRAL

(Week of Sunday, December 10, 2023)

WELCOME

New to Central? Thank you for joining us for worship! Our mission is to connect all people to God and to one another through scripture, sacrament, song, and service. We have been in ministry since 1840 and are a part of the Reformed Church in America, a Christian denomination that began in New Amsterdam (now New York City) in 1628. To learn more, please visit our website: www.centralreformedchurch.org.

WORSHIP NOTES

About the Season of Advent: The word advent is derived from the Latin word *adventus*, meaning “coming,” which is a translation of the Greek word *parousia*. According to author Justin Holcomb, during the fourth and fifth centuries in Spain and Gaul, Advent was a season of preparation for the baptism of new Christians at the January feast of Epiphany, the celebration of God’s incarnation represented by the visit of the Magi to the baby Jesus (Matthew 2:1), his baptism in the Jordan River by John the Baptist (John 1:29), and his first miracle at Cana (John 2:1). During this season of preparation, Christians would spend forty days in penance, prayer, and fasting to prepare for this celebration. Originally, there was little connection between Advent and Christmas. By the sixth century, however, Roman Christians had tied Advent to the coming of Christ. But the “coming” they had in mind was not Christ’s first coming in the manger in Bethlehem, but his second coming in the clouds as the righteous judge of the world. It was not until the Middle Ages that the Advent season was explicitly linked to Christ’s first coming at Christmas.

Next Sunday, December 17: Worship begins at 10:00 a.m., and livestream will be available. On this Third Sunday of Advent, Pastor Steve Pierce will preach on the subject, “As We Worship in Joy” based on I Thessalonians 5:16-24.

MINISTRY FOR CONGREGATIONAL CARE

Prayers of the People: for peace in war-torn countries, especially Israel, Palestine, Ukraine; comfort for loved ones who are actively dying; continued healing for Diane Kersjes and Ron Beuker; for Larry Gerbens and George Boerigter who are both battling cancer; for those who have recently undergone surgery; for those with mental health challenges; for those battling addictions; for YWCA West Central Michigan.

Pastoral Care: To notify pastoral staff of personal concerns, illness, hospitalization, deaths, or to request prayer, contact Pastor Matt. (Hospitals do not inform churches when a member is admitted.) Those experiencing difficult times may leave a confidential message with Pastor Matt. 616.889.4265 (cell).

Central Prayer Chain: If you have a prayer request to share through the Central prayer chain, please contact Carol Bergman at clstaff67@gmail.com or call the church office at 616.456.1773 to leave a message. If you wish to be added to the prayer chain email list, please e-mail the church office at office@centralreformedchurch.org.

ADULT DISCIPLESHIP

Prepare Him Room–Carols of the Season: Today, December 10, at 11:15 a.m. in Dykstra Chapel, join elder Burt VanderLaan, principal organist Norma de Waal Malefyt, and Pastor Steve Pierce to learn more about some of our favorite songs and carols of the Advent/Christmas seasons. We will be singing them, too! All are welcome. The class will also meet on Sunday, December 17.

Women's Bible Study : Women of Central and friends are warmly invited to join in the Parlor on Wednesdays at 10:00 am. Refreshments and fellowship begin at 9:30. We are enjoying a four-week study, *Christmas in the Four Gospel Homes: An Advent Study*, by Cynthia Campbell. Cynthia takes a very creative approach, imagining each of the four Gospels as a "house" which the church visits at Christmas. In each section, we will reflect on the distinctive perspective of the birth of Jesus offered in that week's Gospel. We will conclude on December 20, and will resume again in January with a Bible Study on James and Galatians by Scot McKnight. We hope you will join us!

Men's Group: The men will gather on Thursday, December 14 at 12:00 pm in the parlor. They are reading Henri Nouwen's book *The Return of the Prodigal Son: A Story of Homecoming*. Tom Roe will facilitate the conversation.

OUTREACH

Christmas Card Ministry (Dec. 10): Today, the Senior Life Committee will collect Christmas cards that will be delivered later this afternoon. Thank you, in advance, for making a difference.

Advent Giving Tree: This year we will collect gifts for those fleeing domestic violence and living temporarily in the YWCA Sojourners House. The procedure is to select an ornament from the tree, purchase the requested item and return it to church. Gifts for the residents should be wrapped with the ornament attached to assure proper delivery. Items for the house need not be wrapped. The YWCA will pick up the gifts on December 19. If you are unable to pick up an ornament in person, contributions can be mailed to the church, noted for the Advent Giving Tree and YWCA staff will fulfill a request on your behalf. Today, Jennifer Timmer from Sojourners House will present a Mission Moment and be available after the service to answer any question you may have.

New Year's Eve Concert with Concert Organist Isabelle Demers: Mark your calendars for this annual tradition here at Central. We will enjoy the talented and beloved organist, Isabelle Demers. The program includes selections from "The Nutcracker" by Tchaikovsky, "In dulci jubilo" by Sigfrid Karg-Elert, and one major work by Johann Sebastian Bach. The concert will be held at 7:30 p.m. on December 31, 2023, in the Central's sanctuary.

MINISTRY TO CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Youth and Children's Ministry this Morning (December 10):

If you need help finding any of these locations, look for an usher, a pastor, or someone with a nametag! They would be more than happy to help.

Nursery: Our nursery is available to families with children from birth to three years old, from 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Our trained volunteers this morning are Nancy Norden and Vivian TerMaat, and Ingrid TerMaat will be interning. Our nursery is located directly beneath the atrium.

Children and Worship: Our leaders this week are Carol Austin and Ryan Rinvelt who will be sharing the story, "Mary and Joseph Show the Way." Children will be brought back to the atrium after the conclusion of second hour. Worship Binders are available in the atrium for kids to use during the Worship service, stocked with materials related to today's message.

4,5,6er Second Hour: The 4th, 5th, and 6th graders will meet Libby Stacey and Ellen Bylsma in the fellowship hall directly after Worship to assist in the card delivery ministry!

Middle School Second Hour: The 7th and 8th graders will meet at 11:15 a.m. this Sunday morning in the Middle School room (downstairs at the end of the hallway!) for a lesson on the Moses and the Passover Lamb led by Duncan and Callie MacLean. The class usually wraps up at 12:00 p.m.

High School Second Hour: The high schoolers will meet in the Youth Room (downstairs, just past the kitchen) at 11:15 a.m. for a conversation about God, suffering, and why we are comforted by him.

Youth and Children's Ministry this week (and Beyond!):

Youth Group (December 10): This is the final youth group of the semester! We will gather from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., play games, have fellowship, and wrap up the semester.

Christmas Party (December 15): On Friday, December 15, the youth group will meet at Central to celebrate the birth of Christ with fun, Christmas-themed games, gifts, prizes, and more! Friends are most welcome to this event.

GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Advent Devotionals: This year's Advent devotional includes inspiring thoughts by the late Henri J.M. Nouwen. Copies are available in the atrium.

Central Bus Trip to Frankenmuth (Saturday, January 27, 2024): Central has chartered a bus that will take us to the fun Bavarian town of Frankenmuth. The bus will leave Central at 8:30 a.m. and return at 10:00 p.m. You will have most of the day to shop all the quaint downtown shops or check out the famous Christmas Store, Bronner's. The day will conclude with a chicken dinner at Zehnder's Family Restaurant. If you have never been to Frankenmuth, you are in for a treat. If you have been there before, you already know how fun it is. The cost of the trip is \$60 per person which includes bus ride, bus driver tip, morning snack on bus (coffee, donuts, and orange juice), and an all-you-can-eat family style chicken dinner at Zehnder's. We will meet at 5:00 p.m. in the lobby at Zehnder's. Please sign up in the atrium. Contact Pastor Matt Shults or Paul Bukaweski if you have any questions.

Central Office Hours: The office will be open Monday through Thursday from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. Should you have any questions, please contact our office coordinator Ava Koebel - 616.585.0628, or email akoebel@centralreformedchurch.org.

Announcements: Please send announcements for Life at Central to akoebel@centralreformedchurch.org by noon on Wednesday. (Announcements may be edited for consistency, clarity, and conciseness.)

MINISTRY OF MUSIC

Children's Choir and Joyful Noise: will sing for worship services on **December 24** at 10 a.m. Rehearsal times will be as follows:

- > 11:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.- Children's Choir
- > 11:45 a.m.-12:00 p.m.- Children' Choir and Joyful Noise

Join our Music Ministry: We would welcome new singers and ringers throughout this choir year. Please contact Taemin Han, director of music ministries, at than@centralreformedchurch.org or his church office phone at 616-585-0676. Or please speak with a choir member if interested. Thursday rehearsal schedule for adult musical groups is as follows:

- > 6:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m.-Celebration Ringers (adult bell choir)
- > 7:15 p.m.-8:45 p.m.-Chancel Choir (adult vocal choir)

STEWARDSHIP



Giving: To make a one-time or recurring gift, either via credit card or via your bank account, please visit Central's online giving platform: bit.ly/central give, also accessible via QR code.



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Connecting all people to God and to one another through scripture, sacrament, song, and service.