



Welcome!

Centenary United Methodist Church is a Reconciling Congregation, extending hospitality and encouraging full participation of all, regardless of age, race, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, education, economic background, and physical or mental ability.

We are glad that you have joined us today!

Welcome to worship! In this shared space, we trust that God meets us just as we are - drawing us together in grace, hope, and love. Whether this is your first time with us or you return often, you are welcome here.

May this time of worship open our hearts to God and to one another.

September 13, 2026 The Benediction Project: Covenant Series

Prelude 🎵

Fugue in Eb C

J. S. Bach

Choral Introit 🎵

Siyahamba

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Call to Worship 📖

Leader: We come to worship God

People: Our God who makes promises.

Movement: Hands extended outward as if offering a gift.

Leader: We come as members of God's family,

People: each shining with our own light.

Movement: Poke "holes" overhead with your index fingers

ASL: STARS

Leader: God gathers people from every place

People: and every generation.

Movement: Sweep arms wide and bring hands toward heart.

Leader: Come, let us worship the God whose love is bigger than the sky,

People: bigger than the stars and bigger than our imaginations.

Movement: Reach both hands upward toward the heavens.

Hymn No. 117 🎵

O God, Our Help in Ages Past

ST. ANNE

1. O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come,
our shelter from the stormy blast, and our eternal home!
2. Under the shadow of thy throne, still may we dwell secure;
sufficient is thine arm alone, and our defense is sure.
3. Before the hills in order stood, or earth received her frame,
from everlasting, thou art God, to endless years the same.
4. A thousand ages, in thy sight, are like an evening gone;
short as the watch that ends the night, before the rising sun.

5. Time, like an ever rolling stream, bears all who breathe away;
they fly forgotten, as a dream dies at the opening day.
6. O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come;
be thou our guide while life shall last, and our eternal home.

Welcome and Greeting 🗣️

Prayer of Gathering 🙌

Leader: God is with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: The Spirit has been poured out on all flesh.

People: We are here because it was poured out on us.

Leader: Let us pray.

**All: God who called Abram to leave everything familiar
and go toward a place you had not yet shown him,
we come this morning holding our own ideas about our lives.
Gather us as you have gathered your people for generations
stretching us to follow your leading.
We are still becoming, still learning to trust what we cannot yet hold.
In the name of Christ, in whom every covenant finds its yes, Amen.**

Passing the Peace 🎵

Into My Heart

INTO MY HEART

During this time we invite you to turn and greet those around you. You may introduce yourself with name and pronouns and/or simply say: The Peace of Christ be with you. Children may come forward during the sung response for the Children's Time.

**Into my heart, into my heart, come into my heart, Lord Jesus.
come in today, come in to stay; come into my heart Lord Jesus.**

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Children of God Moment 🗣️

We welcome children to come down front for this time and afterwards they may return to their adults or stay up front in the Kid's Covenant Zone. The Parlor, just to the left out the back of the sanctuary, is open if your child needs a place to be for a moment; there is also a bathroom in that space.

Prayer of Illumination 🙌

**Merciful God, help us hear this story's risk as much as its wonder,
a God who makes covenant with an old man and woman
who have nothing to show but trust.**

**Open our eyes this morning
to the spaces we haven't stepped into yet
and the ones that invite us to have more faith than evidence,
but might hold a joy we don't yet have words for. Amen.**

Creative Word 📖

In the Leaving

by Jan Richardson

In the leaving,
in the letting go,
let there be this
to hold onto
at the last:

the enduring of love
the persisting of hope,
the remembering of joy,
the offering of gratitude,
the receiving of grace,
the blessing of peace.

From *The Painted Prayerbook*. janrichardson.com

After the reading you are invited to pause for a moment of silent reflection.

Scripture Reading

[Psalm 105:1-15](#)

Hymn No. 116

God of Abraham Praise

LEONI

1. The God of Abraham praise, who reigns enthroned above;
Ancient of Everlasting Days, and God of love;
Jehovah, great I AM! by earth and heaven confessed;
I bow and bless the sacred name forever blest.
2. The great I AM has sworn; I on this oath depend.
I shall, on eagle wings upborne, to heaven ascend.
I shall behold God's face; I shall God's power adore,
and sing the wonders of God's grace forevermore.
3. The heavenly land I see, with peace and plenty blest;
a land of sacred liberty, and endless rest.
There milk and honey flow, and oil and wine abound,
and trees of life forever grow with mercy crowned.
4. The God who reigns on high the great archangels sing,
and "Holy, holy, holy!" cry, "Almighty King!
Who was, and is, the same, and evermore shall be:
Jehovah, Lord, the great I AM, we worship thee!"

Scripture Reading

[Genesis 12:1-3, 15:1-6, 17:1-8](#)

Sermon

God's Covenant with Abraham and Sarah

Rev. Emily Bagwell

Offertory Invitation and Prayer

Your presence is a gift. Your time, talents, and resources are all ways we offer ourselves to God and to one another. To give a financial offering, you may do so [online here](#).

Offertory

I Waited for the Lord

Felix Mendelssohn

Dr. Danielle Watson, Soprano; Dr. Carol Hill, Alto

Doxology No. 95

OLD 100th

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise God, all creatures here below;
praise God, above the heavenly hosts; Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost.**

Prayers of the People

Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kin-dom 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 that trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kin-dom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Jesus gives us this prayer as a model for connection with God. Please feel free to address God in a way that connects with your soul.

Hymn No. 127

Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah

CWM RHONDDA

1. Guide me, O thou great Jehovah, pilgrim through this barren land.
I am weak, but thou art mighty; hold me with thy powerful hand.
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven, feed me till I want no more;
feed me till I want no more.
2. Open now the crystal fountain, whence the healing stream doth flow;
let the fire and cloudy pillar lead me all my journey through.
Strong deliverer, strong deliverer, be thou still my strength and shield;
be thou still my strength and shield.
3. When I tread the verge of Jordan, bid my anxious fears subside;
death of death and hell's destruction, land me safe on Canaan's side.
Songs of praises, songs of praises, I will ever give to thee;
I will ever give to thee.

Benediction

Choral Response

Siyahamba

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Postlude

God of Grace

Paul Manz

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***The altar flowers this morning are given by Florence Clay Bishop
in memory of Mr. & Mrs. Walter R. Bishop.***

Assisting in worship this morning are:

Liturgist – Jonathan Fuller A/V tech – Chris Junker Centenary Kids Serving - Karisia
Ushers – Ryland Bailey, Kim Golden, Troy & Jan Nelson, Jane Newell,
Doug Wilson, Chris Wimbush

Large print bulletins and hearing assistive devices are available at the back of the sanctuary. Please let an usher know if either of those would better suit your needs.

Announcements

COFFEE AND COOKIES - Today following worship. Join us in the Fellowship Hall to reconnect with old friends, welcome new ones, and enjoy coffee and cookies.

GREETERS TEAM - A new Greeters Team is launching at Centenary! A training meeting is today following Coffee and Cookies! Let's be honest — it can be a bit daunting to know where to go if you've never been here before. We'd love to create a warm, welcoming environment for everyone who walks through our doors. Consider being a friendly face and guide for folks as they arrive for worship on Sundays. This isn't an every-week commitment — we'll build a rotation, so even one Sunday a month makes a difference! Interested? Email Emily at srpastor@centumc.org.

WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY IS BACK! Wednesdays on Zoom at 10am! Join Pastor Emily for a lively, open conversation around scripture — digging into the passages we'll hear in worship in the weeks ahead. Come wrestle, question, and discover together as we explore what God is doing in the world (and in us!). Want the link? Email Laura at admin@centumc.org to be added to the list.

JOHNNY CASH SUNDAY SCHOOL SERIES Johnny Cash sang a lot about trains, Jesus, gratitude, regret, and murder. Join Tim Bagwell at 9:15 in the Adult Sunday School classroom on **September 20 and 27** as we dig into the music of Johnny Cash. Each week we'll listen to at least two songs and ask what Cash was trying to convey — what theological and biblical currents run underneath the lyrics, and whether his words still ring true for us today. All are welcome!

MEMBERSHIP - Is Centenary starting to feel like home to you? Join us for a **Membership Inquiry Class on September 20**, after worship — a chance for us to get to know you, and for you to learn more about Centenary and the United Methodist Church. We'll then celebrate **Membership Sunday on October 11** during worship. Questions? Reach out to Emily at srpastor@centumc.org.

CENTENARY KIDS GODLY PLAY - Every 3rd Sunday 9:15am-10:00am in Room 206. Join us next week as explore the biblical art of storytelling with Mrs. Erin, during Godly Play. For more information contact Melissa - children@centumc.org.

PRIDE BUILD — UPDATE - The two upcoming Pride Builds are filling up! There are only 3 spots left for the build on October 24. The build on November 7 has 8 spots left. Sign up today by emailing: serving@centumc.org

PEW PALS - A great way to support our current The Benediction Project: Covenant Series is to consider being a Pew Pal. Pew Pals will accompany the kids to help them stay engaged and wondering throughout our time of worship. A weekly commitment is not necessary. If you are interested or have questions, contact Melissa - children@centumc.org.

WE ARE ON INSTAGRAM! Centenary has its very own Instagram now! Be sure to give it a follow. We'll have community resources, educational opportunities, and a calendar of events coming soon to the church posted there weekly. [@centenarydowntown](https://www.instagram.com/centenarydowntown)

CARE PACKAGES - Centenary welcomes all our community members to join us in worship. If you're in need of an extra snack or resources, we have care packages located on our welcome table. Please ask an usher for assistance.

FRIDAY WALK IN LUNCH PROGRAM - Our Friday lunch program has been feeding the hungry for *over 45 years*. On September 4 we served 107 guests as volunteers from Centenary prepared, served, and cleaned up. Please keep this ministry in your prayers.

This Week at Centenary

Today	11:30am	Coffee and Cookies - Fellowship Hall
	11:30am	Greeter Team Training - Hodges/Rm 106
September 14	5:00pm	Change the World/RVA
September 15	Noon	AA
September 16	10:00am	Bible Study - Zoom
	7:00pm	Choir Rehearsal
September 18	10:30am	Walk In Lunch
	Noon	AA
September 20	9:15am	Adult Sunday School - Hodges/Rm. 106
		Children's Sunday School - Room 206
	10:30am	Worship - In person and online
	11:30am	New Member Inquiry Class - Hodges/Rm 106

Connections

Rev. Emily Bagwell srpastor@centumc.org	Senior Pastor
Carina Brackin dirmusic@centumc.org	Director of Music and Organist
Monica Hunasikatti engagement@centumc.org	Director of Engagement
Melissa Martinez children@centumc.org	Director of Children's Ministry
Lana van Essen operations@centumc.org	Director of Operations
Office/Laura Nealley admin@centumc.org	Administrative Assistant
Al Richardson	Facilities Manager
Shawntay White	Child Care Worker
Shannon Hocutt	Child Care Worker