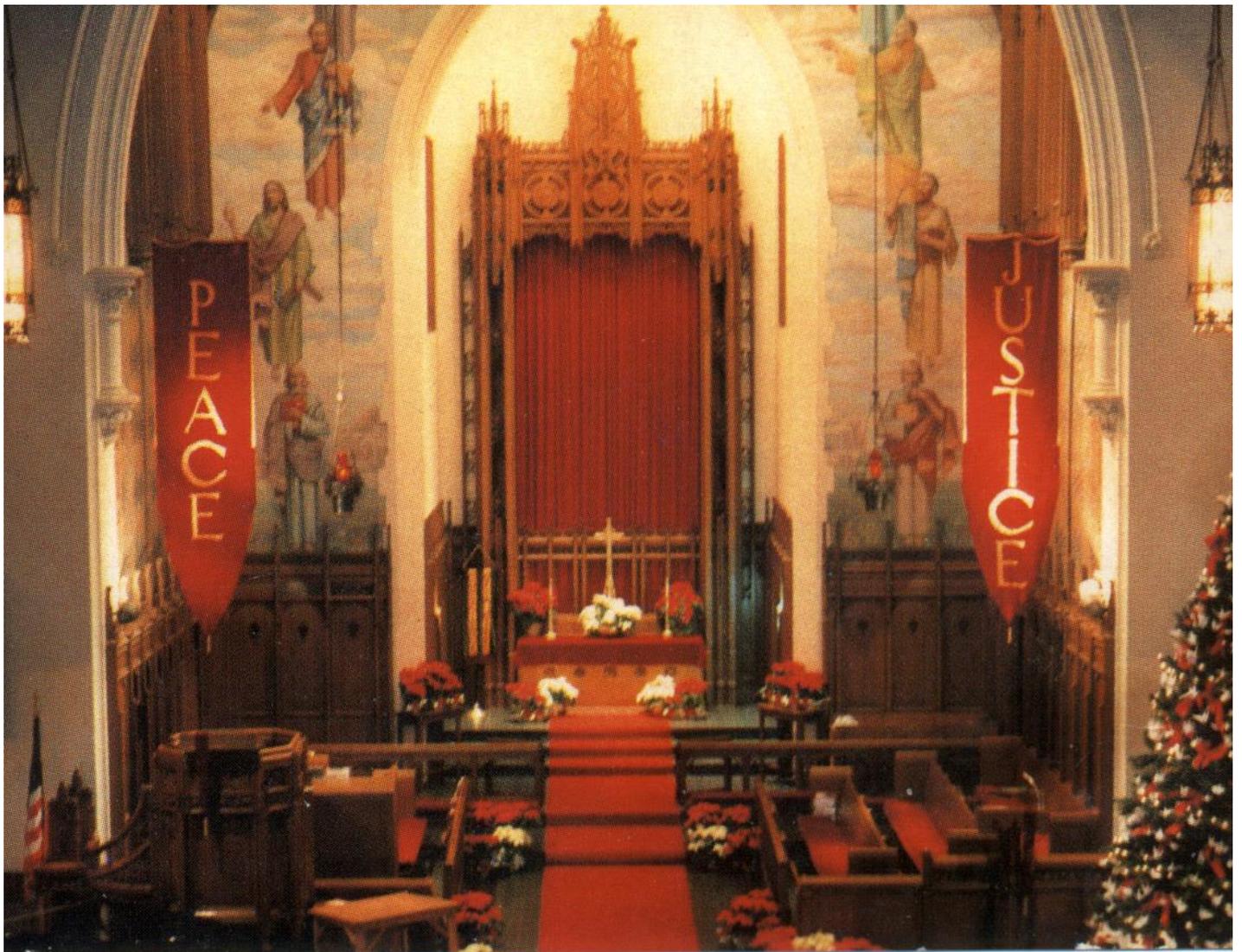




*A Brief History
of*

Central United Methodist Church:

“The Conscience of A City”





Central United Methodist Church

A Reconciling Congregation

Organized 1810
Incorporated 1822
Sanctuary
Completed 1867

Working for Peace and Justice in Three Centuries

First Protestant Congregation in Michigan



Peace Cranes on Central's Xmas tree.

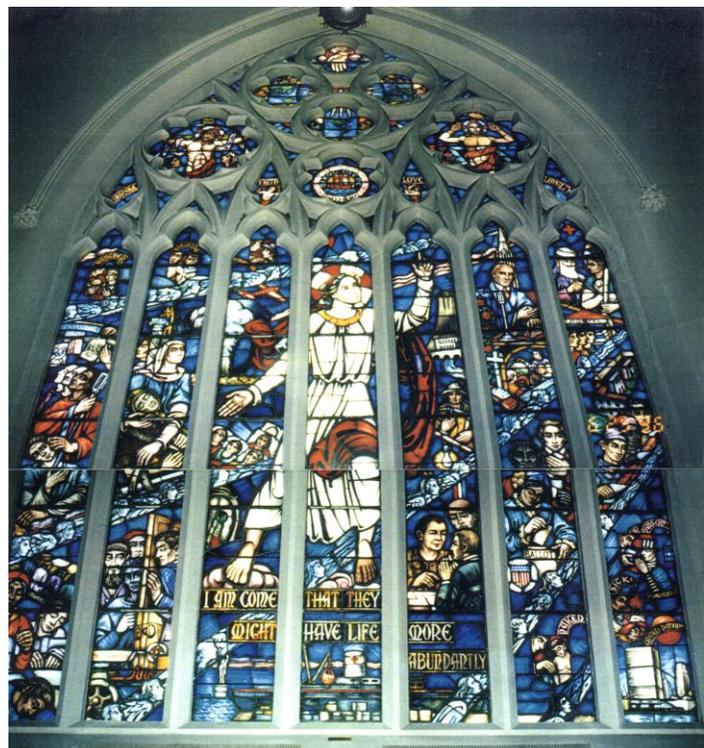
Staff

Rev. Edwin A Rowe, Senior Pastor
Dr. Edward Maki-Schramm,
Minister of Music
Bobby Thompson, gospel singer/pianist
Nina Scott, Central Ensemble Director
Debra Eaton, Office Manager

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Also like us on facebook!

Great West Window



Beginnings

Detroit was founded in 1701 by Antoine Sieur de Cadillac, a Frenchman, and for the next hundred years it was a Catholic city. In 1804, just 17 years after the Ordinance of 1787 provided territorial government for this area, the first Methodist, indeed the first protestant, sermon in Michigan was delivered to a very small group by an elderly circuit rider from Canada, Daniel Freeman, who came of his own accord (he wasn't sent to Detroit). He stayed only a few days and was paid only \$50/year. Later that same year another circuit rider, Rev. Nathan Bangs visited three times. Bangs would later become a well-known leader in the Methodist Church, authoring a history of Methodism in the United States and a hymnal. He was not much impressed by Detroit, however, calling it, "a most abandoned place." On his third visit, only a few "children" came to hear him preach, and they were not much interested in what he had to say. Luckily his sermon was not so long that the candles on the altar burned all the way down, because some of the children had put gunpowder in the candleholders. Bangs later wrote that he "left shaking the dust off his feet in testament against them." No more Circuit Riders were sent until 1809, five years later!



Rev. Nathan Bangs returns to Detroit in 2004 for commemoration of his first visit 200 years earlier.

After youths sheared the mane and tail off his horse, the next circuit rider, Rev. William Case,

complained of the difficulty of finding any serious people in Detroit. But he also wrote Bishop Asbury that "some few were brought under the awakening and three or four had found peace in believing and expect to join in a society when a minister shall again be sent among them." In 1810 the First Methodist Society, the first Protestant society in the Michigan territory, was formed shortly after the Rev. William Mitchell arrived. It had seven members. **That is the beginning of Central.** From the zeal, devotion, and constancy of those first seven, the society grew not only Central Church, but also all Methodism and indeed all Protestantism in Michigan.

The First Meeting Places



First Methodist house of worship in Michigan, on banks of the Rouge River.

Worship was in the Council House (near where Campus Martius is today) on approval of Territorial Governor Lewis Cass. However when the society constructed the first Protestant church building in Michigan in 1818, the site chosen for the simple log structure was the bank of the Rouge River near its confluence with the Detroit River, in what is now Dearborn. It was 24' x 36' in size. Circuit Riders covered so much territory that services could be held only once every three weeks. By 1820 a committee was established to procure a site for a Methodist church within the confines of the City of

Detroit. A few stayed at the log church and founded Dearborn's First Methodist Church.

The Charter

On March 21, 1822, the efforts of the first seven culminated in the incorporation of the First Methodist Episcopal Society of the City of Detroit, under the laws of the Territory of Michigan.

Central moves from the suburbs into the city!

Construction of a new church building began in 1825, this time in Detroit right on the Commons, near the intersection of what are now Gratiot and



The Brick Church on the Commons—the first Methodist church built within the confines of Detroit.

Farmer Streets, not far from the Council House. In a reversal of the common recent trend, Central moved from the suburbs to the city early on in its history. From 1825 to present the congregation has worshipped in the downtown Detroit area, albeit in five different buildings.



The third house of worship at Woodward and Congress Streets.

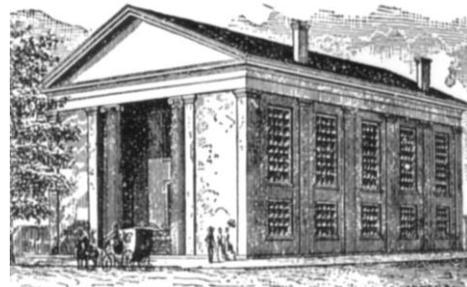
As the congregation grew a new, larger church building was erected at Woodward and

Congress in 1833. By 1843 the congregation had swelled so much that something had to be done. Rather than build a larger church building, this time the congregation decided to form a second congregation, the Congress Street Society. In 1848 a Congress Street Church had been built at Congress and Randolph. Meanwhile the first



Congress Street Society Church

congregation continued to grow and built yet another larger church at Woodward and State in 1849.



First Society Church at Woodward and State Streets.

A Phoenix Rises From The Ashes—Congress and First Methodist societies merge.

When the Congress Society Church burned down in 1863, the First and Congress Street Societies decided to merge and erect a grand edifice under the auspices of the First Society with the new name of Central Methodist Episcopal Church. They built the new structure at Woodward and Adams, on five lots which had been purchased by the Congress Society for \$8,600 several years earlier and two additional lots that were purchased. Although some argued that the location was so far north that the church would be out in the suburbs, the proponents of the site carried the day. A 500-seat chapel was built first in 1865. The congregations had back-to-back services in the chapel each Sunday

because it was too small to hold both congregations at one time.

The cornerstone of Central's present sanctuary was laid on July 3, 1866. A parsonage and office building were erected next to the chapel on Adams Avenue.



Earliest photo of present building showing the adjacent chapel. The cone-shaped hood covers a fountain.

Thus it happens that Central Church today stands on a tract of land on which its trustees have been several times asked to name a price—such offers coming from business leaders well able to pay most any price that might be asked. All such proposals have fallen on deaf ears that believed Detroit needs Central United Methodist Church and its influence at this location more than any other use to which the site might be put.

The cost of the chapel was \$28,000 and the sanctuary \$136,000. The exterior is Ohio limestone and sandstone. The bell tower is 180-foot tall, cost \$3, 200 to build and houses a 460-pound bell. The pews were hewn from the trees felled on the site. Since Edison did not introduce the electric light bulb until 1879, the original illumination was from gaslights. Capped-off pipes can be seen around the periphery of the sanctuary today.

Mission Churches, new organ installed, 6-story Church House erected

Central launched two mission churches, Cass United Methodist in 1822 (near Wayne State University) and Metropolitan United Methodist 3 miles north on Woodward, in the new center area.

The present Skinner organ was installed in 1914 (replacing the original E. & G. Cook organ) with a gift of \$25,000 from the George O. Robinson family (\$1 million in 1997 dollars!). It has 70 ranks, 57 stops, and 50 miles of insulated wire. The smallest pipe is the diameter of a pencil and the largest as big around as the pillars that hold up the balcony (and 34 feet tall—4 feet taller than the reredos).

With young adults flocking to the city, the church rose to meet the need for social activities. In 1916 the chapel and parsonage were demolished and the present 6-story church house erected complete with an auditorium, gymnasium, bowling alleys, handball courts, residential area for a live-in manager and six street level storefront shops. Central sponsored championship men and women's basketball teams.



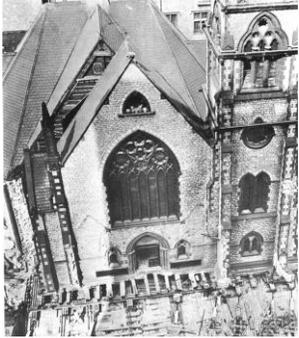
Central's Church House as it dedication in 1916 (no awning over stores at that time!)

The "Great Split" in the Methodist Church

In 1936-37 Woodward Avenue was widened. Rather than lose the church steeple and west wall, a 28.4 foot section on the Adams side was torn down and the steeple and west wall moved 29.5 feet east and 8.5 feet south, thus shortening the nave. The papers at the time made much of the "great split in the Methodist church." The move was made so skillfully, according to Welthy Fisher, wife of the senior pastor at the time, that not even the pigeons in the belfry, nervous creatures by nature, were even once disturbed from their roosts.

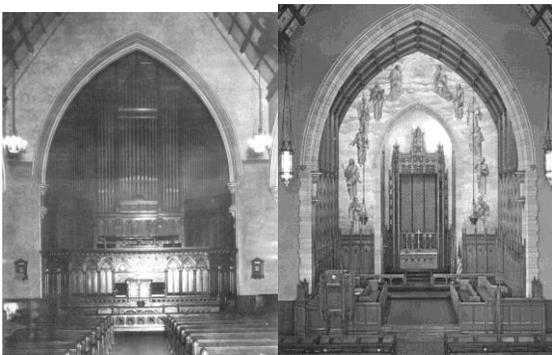


... the split move on tracks with jackscrews.



Coming back together.

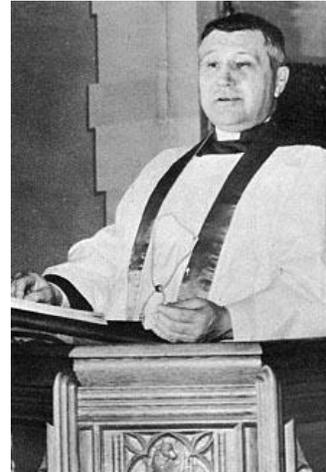
At the same that same time the sanctuary was remodeled. The impressive new recessed chancel, with its elevated pulpit and lectern, and its high altar were unique in Midwestern Methodism and the sanctuary with its cathedral-like pillars and gothic arches is one of the few Methodist houses of worship of this type in the world. The chancel was redesigned by senior minister, Dr. Frederick Bohn Fisher and architect Bruce Werner.



Sanctuary front then and now

The main altar has a reredos (rah-ray-doze) or altar frame nearly 30 feet high carved out of Appalachian White Oak by Alois Lang of Grand Rapids (who immigrated and was trained as a carver in Oberammergau, Germany's --Bavaria). On the arched walls enclosing the altar is a mural of the 12 apostles with Christ, as the lamb, at the top painted by twin brothers and Central members, Elliot and Davis Skinner.

Thomas DiLorenzo painted the 230 ceiling panels with religious symbols taken from the Temple of Heaven in Peking, the Mosque of Omar in Jerusalem, and the Vatican's Sistine Chapel. Di Lorenzo also painted murals in the Guardian and New Center buildings.



Dr. Fisher in "his" pulpit.

Dr. Fisher, pastor at the time and former bishop of India, explained that:

"We have taken (from) the beauty and richness of all faiths... there is nothing like it in the world... I believe symbolism is the

most beautiful approach to reality. Reality is eternal and therefore this beautiful sanctuary is a symbol of the eternity of God."

The Stained Glass Windows

Stained glass windows were installed in 1956 during the twenty golden years of Dr. Henry Hitt Crane's ministry. They were produced by the Henry Willet studio of Philadelphia. The windows were clear glass before that. The Great West Window (back balcony) contrasts the evils of the world with the blessings of Christian living. Among the evils depicted are the atom bomb, a lynching, preventing people from voting, sweatshop labor, and closing the door of opportunity to people because of race. The blessings include the United Nations, free speech depicted by a minister who looks a lot like Dr. Crane speaking into a WJR microphone, people of different races working together, and labor negotiations including a depiction of UAW founder Walter Reuther, who often spoke at Central and whose brother, Victor, was a long time member. Central is intentionally and proudly a multi-racial, multi-everything church believing that our diversity is "God's work of art," as a sanctuary banner proclaims.

Conscience of A City.

Called the “Conscience of A City,” Central is known for its long history of work of peace and justice locally and around the world. After witnessing a hanging on the commons in 1830, the members of the First Methodist Episcopal Society helped lead the effort to abolish the death penalty in Michigan, the first English-speaking territory in the world to do so. That execution was Michigan’s last! The sheriff, a member of the church, resigned rather than make preparations for the hanging.

A Chinese Bible Study Class was established by Deaconess Alice Shirey in 1915 during the pastorate of Dr. H. Lester Smith (1912-1920). It grew into the Chinese Church, which was part of Central until 1962 when a bequest enabled that congregation built its own church building.

Under Smith’s leadership, the six-story church house was built to meet the social needs of the growing young adult population in the church’s neighborhood. Dr. Lynn Harold Hough, pastor from 1920-28 lambasted the U.S. for not joining the League of Nations and accused the Daughters of the American Revolution of trying to “gag critics of the U.S.” In 1929, during the pastorate of Dr. Joseph M. M. Gray (1928-33), the Chinese Church welcomed its first full-time pastor, Rev. Ching Chong Hung.

Fred and Welthy Fisher, Citizens of the World.

Dr. Fredrick Bohn Fisher, pastor from 1934-38, had been bishop of India before renouncing his bishop post to go back to the local church, because he felt it was time that an Indian was bishop of India. The ministry of he and his wife Welthy reached out and drew from Detroit’s many ethnic communities including African Americans, Polish and Chinese (Welthy had been a missionary in China). Fisher was a friend of Gandhi, Indian poet Tagore, Henry Ford, and the labor movement. In the latter months of his ministry he spoke in favor of unions and against exploitation of workers. The funeral of a labor advocate, radio talk show host

and Methodist minister who worked at the Ford Rouge Plant was held at Central and he gave the eulogy. *The Forgotten*, an opera about this man who was probably murdered by Ford thugs, won wide acclaim when it premiered in 2003.

Portions were performed at Central’s 2005 Labor Day Sunday service. Fisher spoke to Catholics, Protestants and Jews about the evils of both communism and fascism but still was accused of being a “Red,” by the local media. After Fred’s death, Welthy went back to India at the behest of Gandhi to found Literacy Village which she ran well into her 90s! India issued a stamp and coin in her honor. Portions of each of their ashes are interred in the chancel behind plaques in their honor.

The Crane Years (1938-1958)



Dr. Henry Hitt Crane, who served Central for twenty golden years, its longest serving pastor, was noted for his pacifism in both World War I and II, for founding the Detroit Roundtable of Protestants, Catholics and Jews (which in recent years has been expanded to include Muslims and is now called the “Interfaith Roundtable.”), heading the local chapter of the ACLU, and for integrating Central. When one parishioner complained that too many Blacks were joining the church and vowed to take the matter to the Administrative Board, Crane told him that since the church was run democratically he could have his say, but warned him that once he finished, that he would ask several members of the board to join him in fervent prayer that the “prejudice which is poisoning you may extirpated and that you may become an honest-to-goodness Christian, and I guarantee that you are going to be prayed for as you never have been prayed for in your life, and I think God will answer the prayers quite promptly.” Replied the member, “If you didn’t want me to bring it up, why didn’t you say so?” Crane thought he lost the member, but the man



Dr. Crane after being handed a note about Pearl Harbor as he dedicates the Belle Isle Peace Carillon.

continued to be part of the congregation. Crane and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. were

good friends carrying on an active correspondence and speaking frequently in each other's churches. In fact Crane often told folks that he had pushed hard for King to succeed him as Central's senior pastor. King told him he was flattered but regretted that his civil rights work would cause him to be absent too much, but might consider an offer later in his life.

The Laird Years (1958-1967)



Those who disagreed with his courageous stand against the Vietnam War hanged Dr. Laird in effigy in Grand Circus Park. He also wrote a weekly column, *From the Pulpit*, for the Detroit Free Press. Through

the years he and several other pastors and members of the congregation have been arrested because of their peace and justice witness.



Dr. Laird greets Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. after one of King's sermons at Central.



Dr. Laird leads Peace March through Grand Circus Park.



Right-wing hate groups protest Central's civil rights and anti-war stands.

The Large Years (1967-71)



Called to care for all of God's creation, in 1969 Dr. Dwight Large orchestrated a demonstration of the need for returnable bottle law by filling the sanctuary with empty bottles for a service

focused on protecting the earth, a years before the first "Earth Day." A picture of the chancel lined with bottles (some not very "Methodist") made the front page of the *Detroit Free Press*. Large spoke eloquently of the spiritual power of art forms to move us to social action. During his pastorate buses were arranged to take a good number of congregation to Washington D.C. for anti-war protests. Dr. King spoke at Central for the last time during Large's pastorate (just two weeks before his assassination). Large was known for his "What Then Are We To Do Sheets," that suggested ways to implement teachings from the Sunday sermon. He also talked of Jesus at "The Man for Others."



Dr. Large and Central member Dick Miller at a peace rally in Washington D.C.

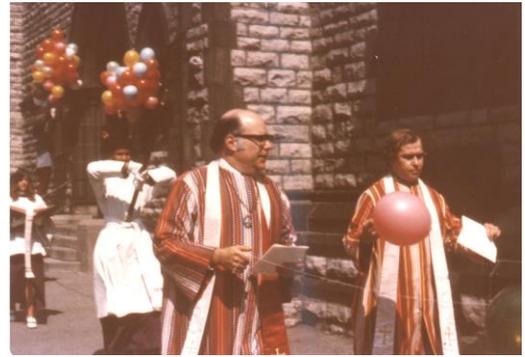


The Devor Years (1971-1980)

Richard C. Devor, a Ph.D. in New Testament, preached sermons that both taught theology and “troubled the waters on behalf of the faith.” During his pastorate Central produced a white paper on busing

for the Detroit Annual Conference, continued anti-war protests, hosted workshops on “Doing Prophetic Theology,” housed a ministry to those just released from prison and worked to keep Michigan death penalty-free. Devor also added contemporary celebration, a Sunday School curriculum that included dance and art, college courses, and an intentional group of Centralites who lived together at the parsonage. Devor was also instrumental in pushing Michigan to be one of the first states to adopt a holiday to honor Dr. King.

Devor also opened Central’s doors to house the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC), which reaches out to serve the gay, lesbian, transsexual and transgendered communities. Like the Chinese Church so many years before it, MCC has now moved into a building of its own as well.



Devor & Associate Rev. Bill Mate lead the Easter Recessional into Grand Circus Park.

The Kidd Years (1981-1991).



Rev. David Kidd led Central in its bold move to house the Downtown Detroit Senior Center. Kidd also inspired the establishment of Co-Creators, an intergenerational Sunday School to explore earthy,

creative approaches to spirituality. That year culminated with Matthew Fox, a Dominican priest and theologian and proponent of Creation Spirituality who was silenced for a year by the Vatican preaching at Central, in of his very first speaking engagements after the silencing period ended. Kidd, originally trained as a horticulturalist, established Central’s Memorial Garden for interment of the ashes of members and friends of Central. Central sent delegations to Haiti and Nicaragua (during the Contra War) and participated in numerous rallies against the contra war and development of cruise missiles (at Williams International in Walled Lake) during his pastorate.

The Strong Years (1991-1994).



Dr. David Strong emphasized concerns of the community as the centerpiece of worship, added a gospel choir, and installed a sand trough with vigil candles to help make visual the

congregation’s prayers for peace during the Gulf War.

The Present



Rev. Edwin A. Rowe continues Central's prophetic leadership, emphasizing conscientious objection to the war taking place in the streets of Detroit as well as around the world.

During his pastorate, Central began a Saturday night jazz service, Saturday Night Central. While that service was discontinued after several years, jazz, gospel, and folk music are now regular features of the Sunday morning service, along with traditional classical organ and choir pieces.



Rowe led the church in hosting and supporting the locked out *Detroit News* and *Free Press* workers, including being arrested several times for civil disobedience as he crossed the line to pray at the newspapers' headquarters and at its presses. He was outspoken in his opposition to the sanctions placed on Iraq, which resulted in the deaths of as many as 500,000 innocent children, decrying the use of food as a weapon. He was part of peace delegations to Iraq, Palestine and Cuba. Later he led Central in becoming a focal point for anti-Iraq War activities. Central plays host to many peace rallies, workshops and worship services and again participates in marches on Washington, and hosts the annual Martin Luther King Day rallies that fill the church. Central also helped host the Detroit contingent of

Camp Casey in solidarity with Cindy Sheehan's encampment in Crawford, Texas.



Rev. Rowe with Lila Lipscomb, mother of soldier who died in Iraq, and who was featured in the film, *Fahrenheit 9/11*.



Ed with Rev. Bernice King, daughter of Dr. Martin Luther King at Central's Celebration of the 175th anniversary of its incorporation in 1997.

Rev. Rowe is often a key speaker or even master of ceremonies for numerous peace rallies. He also led Central members in speaking out against the death penalty at a state legislative hearing in the Oakland County commission chambers. He continues to lead the church in opposing cuts to government programs for the poor.

In 2000 Central became a Reconciling Church, fully opening all facets of its ministry, employment and care to those who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered and transsexual. From 1999 to 2002 Associate Minister Da Vita McCallister was the first and only avowed, and out lesbian pastor in the United Methodist Church. Sadly the greater United Methodist Church was not as fully embracing of her ministry as Central. She resigned in order to marry her partner and now is pastor in the United Church of Christ.

Central's present ministries include the **Swords Into Plowshares Peace Center and Gallery**, which relates the several arts to transforming the world

from one of war and violence to one of peace and justice; **NOAH** (Networking, Organizing to Assist the Homeless) which includes serving a bag lunch twice a week, art programs, a parish nurse and social services, and The Green Team leads the church in celebrating and caring for God's creation.

The Value Shop makes clothing and other essentials available to city residents at affordable prices, while contributing profits to the church; while the **Grace Paisely Small World Shop** (run by United Methodist Women) sells handicrafts made by refugees around the world. The church provides office space for the Women's Justice Network, Westside Mothers, National Welfare Rights Organization, and the Midwest Labor Library, which emphasizes the history of African Americans in the labor movement. Central also rents two of its storefronts by a sports memorabilia shop bringing needed income to the church. Premium rates for parking right next to Comerica Park brings needed income to Central's budget as do the volunteers who sell peanuts before each game collectively known as "Peanut Central" (and they bag them too).

NOTABLE GUEST SPEAKERS & MUSICIANS



Because Central offers its meeting space to any group not advocating the violent overthrow of the government, it has often been called the church of the First Amendment. Central's pulpit or second floor podium has attracted such notable national and world

Phil Berrigan

leaders as Norman Thomas, Walter and Victor



Reuther, William Sloane Coffin, Phillip and Daniel Berrigan, Matthew Fox, Malcolm Boyd, Rosemary Radford Reuther, Harvey **Al Gore speaks at a Labor Day breakfast.**



Governor Jennifer Granholm at Martin Luther King Day rally in Central's Sanctuary Jan. 16, 2006

Cox, Dr. Ralph David Abernathy, John Haynes Holmes, John Swomley, Dr. James Lawson, Dr. Joseph Lowry, Dr. Benjamin Spock, Dr. Martin Marty, Richard Deats, Yvonne Delk, Janet Wolfe, Angela Davis, Jane Fonda, Sr. Jose Hobday, Dr. Chad Myers, Dr. Greg Dell, Sam Reese Shepard, Rev. Janet Wolfe, Dr. Lucille Levin, Dr. Jerry Levin, Howard Thurman, Eugene McCarthy, Rev. Troy Plummer (head of the National Reconciling Church Network), Vice-President Al Gore, Bishop Thomas Gumbleton, Arun Gandhi (the Mahatma's grandson), Imam Eluhi, Marietta Jaeger-Lane, Hafsad Abiola (daughter of imprisoned and deposed democratically elected president of Nigeria), then Attorney General and subsequently Governor Jennifer Granholm, Imam Abdullah El-Amin, Grace Lee Boggs, Maryann Mahaffey Sam Reese Shepherd and many more.

Noted musicians who have performed at Central are Marcus Belgrave, Josh White, Jr., Burl Ives, Stevie Wonder, Detroit's George Benson, Teddy Harris, Ange Smith, Bobby Thompson, Second Opinion, Marcel Dupre, Richard Webster, Junius Harris, Joe Reilly, Julie Beutel, Janis Ian, and native American singing/drumming groups, the Tree Top Singers and the Swamp Singers. Central's organist in the 1950s and 1960s, Frederick Marriott was a member of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, as was more recent member Caen Thomas-Redus. Marriot was also internationally known for his carillon-playing. In 2004, Richard Webster was commissioned to write a new hymn, "With Hearts of Reconciling Love," based on Rev. Rowe's words that form the basis of Central's mission statement, and which also often serves as our Call-to-Worship

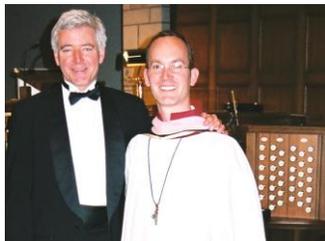
Central has long been called, “The Conscience of A City.” One might add, “and of the world as well.” Responding to God’s love, faithful to the gospel of Christ, Central has sought to bring reconciliation, liberation and healing to the world as the servant church during each era through which it has passed.

At the occasion of the centennial of the present sanctuary, former pastor Dr. Dwight Large wrote, “History doesn’t just happen. It is determined by people who make a response to what God is doing.”

Now in its third century of service, Central not only celebrates its past but is continually seeking new ways to be the church, new ways to be empowered through worship and discerning new ways God would have us serve. Thus we carry the torch of our peace and justice witness into this new millennium—a beacon of hope on Woodward and Adams radiating out to all the world.



Beans Bowles plays a service.



Richard Webster & Dr. Maki-Schramm.



Don Mayberry, Bobby Thompson & Ange Smith add jazz and gospel stylings to Central’s worship.



Rep. John Conyers, Central Youth members Cameron Davis, Jr., and Jason Wilson and Dr. Michael Eric Dyson. Dyson was keynote speaker for Central's first annual Peace and Justice Awards Banquet, Dec. 4, 2005.

Rev. Rowe gives Pastor's Award to City Council President and Central Member Maryann Mahaffey, Peace and Justice Awards Banquet Dec. 4, 2005.



Crosses symbolize U. S. soldiers who have been killed in the Iraq War—placed for Camp Casey Detroit, August 2005.

An osprey in flight looks down on a river flowing over the Communion table, a wetland (with heron and ducks) and a forest, all part of a tableau of creation in Central's sanctuary on Earth Day Sunday.





A giant puppet of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. leads a peace march on MLK Day 2006. The march starts and ends at Central each year.

Swords Into Plowshares Peace Center & Gallery Reception after concert.

Singer Howard Shapiro (from Hawaii), SIP board member Jim Bull, SIP founder Rev. Dr. James Bristah, & singer Josh White Jr.



Value Shop. Wilbur Bull helps Al Hayes and Rikki Belew. (circa 1980).

After the Easter Recessional Hymn brings people, balloons and banners to Grand Circus Park, Rev. David Kidd gets ready to lead an earth dance as the benediction.



Rev. Kidd and Associate Rev. Barbara Lewis-Lakin lead a service of protest at Williams International in Walled Lake—a cruise missile guidance factory.



Giant balloons fly by Central in Detroit's Annual Thanksgiving Day Parade.

Come to Central and Witness the Marriage of Faith, Action and Compassion

If you are not already part of the Central community, I invite you to come and witness the power of a wonderfully caring congregation.

Central has a well-deserved reputation for being there for each other in joy and in sorrow. Central also is well-known for taking that concern and care beyond its sanctuary into the community. Whether the need is found among the victims of poverty or within the lives of our new neighbors in the many lofts and apartments that now surround Central, Central also could be there for you!

All that we need do and all that we are is celebrated in our 10:30 am Sunday worship.

If you have been staying away from church because you think that Pat Robertson or Jerry Falwell define what the church is, come to Central! You will find a different church with different understanding of scripture.

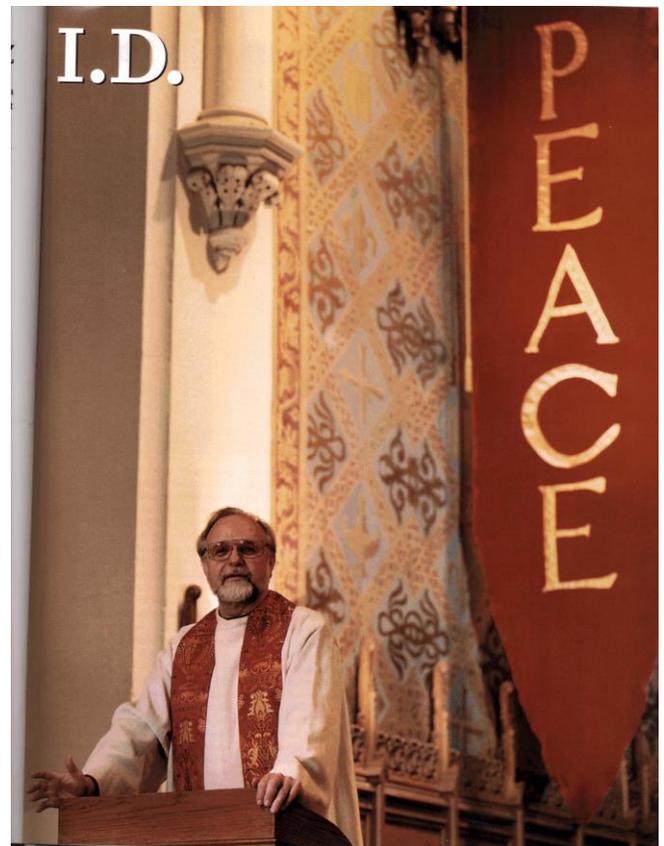
If you have been staying away from church because the church you were once part of was not there for you in a time of need, come to Central! Experience the embrace of a congregation that believes in unconditional love and care.

If you have been staying away from church because you think the church does not address the issues of justice and peace that are critical to

your life, then come to Central! Your prayers have been answered!

And when you come, let me know you are in the house! I look forward to meeting you, to welcoming you, and to introducing you to this unique, active, caring, committed and blessed congregation!

Pastor Rowe



Dr. Henry Hitt Crane's Farewell Message to Central Church June 29, 1958 concluding "20 Golden Years at Central:

Dear Each of You;

This is a very intimate, personal, ardent "heart message" to You!

Although I write you quite openly, because what I want to say involves so many of you, I hope you won't generalize my words to the extent of missing the poignancy of the personal note.

First of all, let me tell you how deeply grateful I am for your share in making these past two decades so unforgettably vital, valorous, and creatively adventurous. Your loyalty, your understanding, your generosity, your cooperation, your undiscourageable Christian idealism, your unfaltering faith in a Christ-like God—for all this—and much more, you have made these last twenty years golden indeed—quite literally "The best years of our lives." We are very thankful—to You!

To reciprocate as royally as I can, I would share with you again the very essence of my most obsessive conviction—that you might forever hold it close to your heart as my most cherished gift to you. Of course, I have tried in innumerable ways to express this titanic truth as clearly and as cogently as I could. Doubtless you have already "got" the idea. But I want more than that. I want the idea to "get" You—completely. Once that takes place, you possess the Pearl of great price, and what is more, you are possessed by it.

The key word of the universe that unlocks more barriers, opens more doors of opportunity, solves more problems, reflects more beauty, releases more power, reveals more truth, and redeems more mortals, is Love.

Love is the fulfilling, not only of the law, but of life itself. Really to live is to love greatly, wisely, beautifully. Love is not merely one of life's functions: it is life's essence. Where there is no love, there is no life.

This world and the heaven above it, is for lovers. To default in love is to defy the cosmic forces and to court defeat in all human enterprises. When we love nobly, wholly, loyally, gladly, we have all the Ten Commandments, moral precepts, and high religious principles operating in our hearts.

We have it on the highest authority that God Almighty is Love Almighty. So love is essential power, goodness, truth and beauty. These are the ultimate virtues and they are invincible. He who would win the world must risk all he is and has and hopes to be—on love. This is precisely what God himself did—In Christ. "Go thou and do likewise!"

Devotedly,
Henry Hitt Crane

Editor's Note: We have two banners that are displayed periodically in the sanctuary that have quotes from this final message of Dr. Crane.



**Martin Luther King Day Rally
January 16, 2006**

Central Sanctuary circa 1960

Worship:

10:30 a.m. Sunday
9 a.m. Church School, Sunday.
Free Attended Parking!

**Swords Into Plowshares
Peace Center & Gallery**

33 E. Adams
313-963-7575
Open Thur, Fri, Sat 12-6 p.m.
Wendy Hamilton, Director.

Value Shop, 5th floor
313-961-6193. M-F 11-4
good used clothing & household
items.

Tours of Church, call Historian
Jim Bull, 313-928-2950.

Contributions: Tax
Deductible--send to Central UMC,
23 E. Adams Ave.,
Detroit, MI 48226.

