



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

ADVENT: MEETING THE TRANSCENDENT LIGHT

December 24 2023; 10 am

We would like to connect with you.

Please fill out the attendance pad and introduce yourself as you pass it to your neighbor. You are invited in these beginning moments to use the green prayer cards found in the pews. The cards will be collected by an usher during the opening hymn to be shared with clergy.

** Please rise in body or in spirit*

PRELUDE *Away in a Manger*

arr. Robert S. Frost

ADVENT BELLS

***GOSPEL READING** Luke 1:46-55

Rev. Matt Weiler

***OPENING HYMN #198** *My Soul Gives Glory to My God* (UMH-red hymnal)
During the hymn, ushers will pass through the sanctuary collecting the green prayer cards.

WELCOME

CALL TO CONFESSION

Rev. Julie Kline

KYRIE #2275

(FWS-black hymnal)

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (*praying together*)

God our Savior, we ask for your mercy. Though we have heard Mary's song, we still seek security in pride and power and possessions. Though we know your story, we resist the costs of following you. We pass by those considered lowly in this world. We turn away from hungry people who still wait to be filled. Forgive us, we pray. Help us to work for the justice you intend. Make us messengers of the peace you bring. As we wait for you, turn our apathy into acts of love and service. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, Emmanuel, Amen.

ASSURANCE/FORGIVENESS

In the name of Jesus Christ we are all forgiven! Glory to God! Amen.

We are a Reconciling Congregation, welcoming all.

First United Methodist Church of Kalamazoo invites all persons to join us on our journey of faith. Jesus Christ calls us to be an inclusive church that exemplifies the kingdom of God. We strive to move toward reconciling relationships with all, affirming those who are marginalized for any reason, including sexual orientation or gender identity.

We welcome all with *open hearts, open minds, open doors.*

REFRAIN *Christ Be Our Light*

Words and Music by Bernadette Farrell



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PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

Phil VanOrman

***GOSPEL READING** **Luke 1:26-38**

This is what the Spirit is saying to the church
Thanks be to God.

A TIME FOR THE CHILD AND LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLES Julia Librizzi

**So we gather to light a candle, because this might be the spark we need:
Love, here, with us.**

HYMN #206 vs. 3 *I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light* (UMH-red hymnal)

SERMON *The Air Love Breathes is Freedom* Rev. Matt Weiler

***HYMN #272** *Sing of Mary, Pure and Lowly* (UMH-red hymnal)

PASTORAL PRAYER AND PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE LORD’S PRAYER Interpretation by Neil-Douglas Klotz

O Birther! Father- Mother of the Cosmos, focus your light within us - make it useful. Create your reign of unity now through our fiery hearts and willing hands. Help us love beyond our ideals and sprout acts of compassion for all creatures. Animate the earth within us: we then feel the Wisdom underneath supporting all. Untangle the knots within so that we can mend our hearts' simple ties to each other. Don't let surface things delude us, but free us from what holds us back from our true purpose. Out of You, the astonishing fire, returning light, and sound to the cosmos. Amen.

CALL TO OFFERING

Loose coins received will be designated for the support of United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) for their work around the world.

OFFERTORY *The First Noel*

arr. A. Sherfield

***THE DOXOLOGY**

Tune: Duke Street

To God all glo - rious heav - en - ly light! To Christ re -
vealed in earth - ly night. To God, the Spir - it____
now we_ raise our joy - ful songs of thank - ful praise!

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION** (praying responsively, all reading the **bold**)

One: Thanks be to you, O God, maker of heaven and earth— giver of justice, lover of righteousness, hope of the afflicted, and friend of the poor.
All: **Your faithfulness never fails. Take and use these gifts we offer to further your purpose in the world and to fulfill the promise of the world to come; through Christ our Lord we pray. Amen.**

***OUR SHARED LIFE**

***CLOSING HYMN #249** *There’s a Song in the Air*

(UMH-red hymnal)

***PEACE CANDLE AND PASSING THE PEACE**

As you leave this sanctuary illuminated by the transcendent light, go now and share with all you encounter.

POSTLUDE *Christmas in Sarajevo*

arr. K. Alexander

Vedran Smailovic is a cellist from Bosnia. During the siege of Sarajevo he played for 22 days in the ruined square of a downtown marketplace, often under the threat of snipers. His bravery inspired musical numbers and a novel.

WORSHIP LEADERS

Rev. Matt Weiler, Rev. Julie Kline, Julia Librizzi
Phil VanOrman

Director of Music **Organist**
Jacqueline Stilger Bernie Foulk

Director of First Strings: Anne Sherfield

Satellite Worship Coordinator: Pastor Thom Victor

AV Team: Casey Curran, Bryan Heany,
Charlie Cramer-Erbes

Acolytes: Campbell Weiler and Penelope Librizzi

Thank you to Barbara Toshalis for sharing Jerry Toshalis' crystal singing bowl. We remember him as the light and sound call us together. Thank you to Jim & Lois Richmond for sharing their trees as a backdrop for the nativity. Jim created these beautiful trees from found metal objects.

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

In our worship, we strive to witness to the wholeness of God, embracing the diversity of images of God that are found within Scriptures. We will seek to include male, female, and gender-neutral language and imagery for God, and utilize language that helps to avoid binary terms in pronouns and images of people. In our hymns and liturgy, we invite you to use pronouns that best express your practice and affirm your faith.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Christmas Eve Worship. Tonight we will celebrate the nativity with three different worship services. All services include candles and singing Silent Night.

4 pm - A service of the Christmas Story designed for children and families. Children will be invited to participate in creating the Nativity.

7 pm - Lessons and Carols. Throughout the season of Advent, we have lit the candles of hope, peace, joy, and love. Tonight, we light the Christ candle to honor that Christ is our Light. We will raise our voices to sing Christmas carols accompanied by brass instruments, listen to the Scripture lessons of the shepherd's amazement, and end our night raising our candles and singing "Silent Night."

11 pm - Lessons and Communion. In a quieter spirit we sing carols, listen to the beauty of the oboe, and come to the communion table to receive the bread of life and the cup of blessing. If the weather cooperates, we will take our candles to our front steps and sing "Silent Night" as a call for peace and goodwill for all persons.

Angel Tree update. Thank you for participating with the Salvation Army Angel Tree. Our church contributed 67 gifts for distribution by the Salvation Army.

Christmas Offering. This year our Christmas Offering will support the following organizations: Wesley Foundation, welcoming college students and offering diverse programming and collaboration with community groups; Growing Hope Globally, supporting agricultural programs that make a lasting impact in families and communities; Immigration Law and Justice Michigan, extending hospitality to low-income immigrants with legal assistance; and Helping Our Neighbors, extending a lifeline to individuals confronting the threat of homelessness or utility shut-offs.

New Year's Fest. Volunteers are needed to welcome visitors to our church during New Year's Fest. A Signup sheet is in the Perks area or contact Dan. (djbunker@charter.net, 269-217-8780) Featured events include Alan Smola with illusions and magic; the Otsego Jazz Band, and ventriloquist Richard Paul. Everyone who volunteers will receive free admission buttons to enjoy other entertainment around the park. (www.NewYearsFest.com)

Winter Weather Closing Policy. Every attempt will be made for the church to be open on Sundays. Please use discretion deciding when to venture out. Weekday meetings may be cancelled if travel is dangerous. Team and committee chairs are asked to contact the church and their team/committee if a meeting is cancelled. Please check Channel 3 news, our website, Facebook, and email for closing notices. Please note the church may be open even when area schools are closed.

Adult Sunday School Opportunities resume January 7.

Family Foundations: *I Guess I Haven't Learned That Yet* by Shauna Niequist. Using Weekly videos guided by the author, discussion questions, and reflections we join this journey of unlearning what is no longer helpful, embracing curiosity, and accepting the unknowns.

The New Storyteller! 9:00 a.m. in room 304. This study is a deep dive into the Book of Acts - the writer, Luke, was a New Storyteller. Class will resume on January 7.

UPCOMING WORSHIP

Christmas Eve Worship

4 pm Worship

Children and Family Worship

7 pm Worship

Lessons and Carols

11 pm Worship

Lessons and Communion

December 31

10 am Worship

First Sunday after Christmas

Rev. Matt Weiler

Jesus of Nazareth

Luke 2:22-40

Sunday, January 7

10 am Worship

Rev. Julie Kline

Accepting God's Claim Upon Us

Mark 1:4-11

We're glad you are our guest today!

If you are worshipping with us for the first time, please stop by the Welcome Center.

Child care with trained and fully vaccinated staff is provided on the second floor for infants through three-year-olds.

Worship activities for children can be found on a cart outside the said sanctuary doors.

LARGE print bibles and Hymnals are available at the Park Street entrance.

Hearing assistance devices are available at the Welcome Center.

Today's service is being livestreamed and recorded. You may request a free copy of the DVD from the office. Previous worship services may be found on our website: www.umc-kzo.org. You may view worship services on our YouTube channel: [Kalamazoofirstunitedmethodistchurch](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCkalamazoofirstunitedmethodistchurch)

Clergy & Directors

Rev. Julie Kline

Lead Pastor

Rev. Matt Weiler

Pastor of Community Formation

Jacqueline Stilger

Director of Music

Julia Librizzi

Director of Children and Families Ministries

Thom Victor

Pastor of Congregational Care

Ruth LaMachia

Director of Business Administration

OUR MISSION

We are called to
Experience God's love
Celebrate God's love
Share God's love

OUR VISION

We are Christ-centered
community where our stories are
woven with God's story.

OUR VALUES

Love: God is Love and all
creation is made in love,
by love, for love.
Community: Sacred relationship
with God and one another.
Inclusion: All identities belong
and are loved in Christ.
Justice: Restoration of equity
and wholeness.

THIS WEEK'S EVENTS

Office Hours this week will be Tues - Thurs, 10 - 2

Sunday, December 24

10:00 am Worship - Sanctuary
10:00 am Friendship Village Satellite Worship
4:00 pm Christmas Eve Worship - Sanctuary
7:00 pm Christmas Eve Worship - Sanctuary
11:00 pm Christmas Eve Worship - Sanctuary

Monday, December 25

The church building will be closed

Tuesday, December 26

Office hours 10 am - 2 pm

Wednesday, December 27

Office hours 10 am - 2 pm
12:00 pm Cuppa Inspiration - Facebook Live
12:30 pm Food Pantry

Thursday, December 28

Office hours 10 am - 2 pm

Friday December 29

Saturday December 20

Sunday, December 31

10:00 am Worship - Sanctuary
10:00 am Friendship Village Satellite Worship

Monday, January 2

The church building will be closed

Winter Weather Closing Policy

We share closures on WWMT, Facebook, our webpage, and email.

My Soul Gives Glory to My God 198

1. My soul gives glo - ry to my God. My
 2. My God has done great things for me: yes,
 3. From age to age, to all who fear, such
 4. Love casts the might - y from their thrones, pro -
 5. Praise God, whose lov - ing cov - e - nant sup -

heart pours out its praise. God lift - ed up my
 ho - ly is this name. All peo - ple will de -
 mer - cy love im - parts, dis - pens - ing jus - tice
 motes the in - se - cure, leaves hun - gry spir - its
 ports those in dis - tress, re - mem - ber - ing past

low - li - ness in man - y mar - ve - lous ways.
 clare me blessed, and bless - ings they shall claim.
 far and near, dis - miss - ing self - ish hearts.
 sat - is - fied, the rich seem sud - den - ly poor.
 prom - is - es with pres - ent faith - ful - ness.

WORDS: Miriam Therese Winter, 1987 (Lk. 1:46b-55)
 MUSIC: Wyeth's *Repository of Sacred Music*, Part Second, 1813;
 harm. by Charles H. Webb, 1988

MORNING SONG
 CM

Words © 1978, 1987 Medical Mission Sisters; harm. © 1989 The United Methodist Publishing House

Kyrie

Ky - ri - e, Ky - ri - e e - le - i -

son. Ky - ri - e, Ky - ri - e

e - le - i - son. Chri - ste, Chri - ste

e - le - i - son. Chri - ste, Chri - ste

e - le - i - son. Ky - ri - e, Ky - ri - e

e - le - i - son. Ky - ri - e, Ky - ri - e

e - le - i - son, e - le - i - son.

WORDS: Ancient Greek
MUSIC: Based on Mvt. II from *Symphony No. 9* by Antonín Dvořák;
arr. by Ruth Elaine Schram
Arr. © 1998 Alfred Publishing Co.

NEW WORLD
Irregular

206 I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light

1. I want to walk as a child of the light.
 2. I want to see the bright-ness of God.
 3. I'm look - ing for the com - ing of Christ.

I want to fol - low Je - sus.
 I want to look at Je - sus.
 I want to be with Je - sus.

God set the stars to give light to the world. The
 Clear Sun of Righ-teous-ness, shine on my path, and
 When we have run with pa-tience the race, we

star of my life is Je - sus.
 show me the way to the Fa - ther.
 shall know the joy of Je - sus.

Continues on next page

Refrain

In him there is no dark - ness at all. The

night and the day are both a - like. The

Lamb is the light of the cit - y of God.

Shine in my heart, Lord Je - sus.

WORDS: Kathleen Thomerson, 1966
MUSIC: Kathleen Thomerson, 1966

© 1970, 1975 Celebration

HOUSTON
10 7.10 8 with Refrain

Unison

1. Sing of Ma - ry, pure and
 2. Sing of Je - sus, son of
 3. Joy - ful moth - er, full of

low - ly, maid - en moth - er, wise and mild. Sing of
 Ma - ry, in the home at Naz - a - reth. Toil and
 glad - ness, in thine arms thy Lord was borne. Mourn - ful

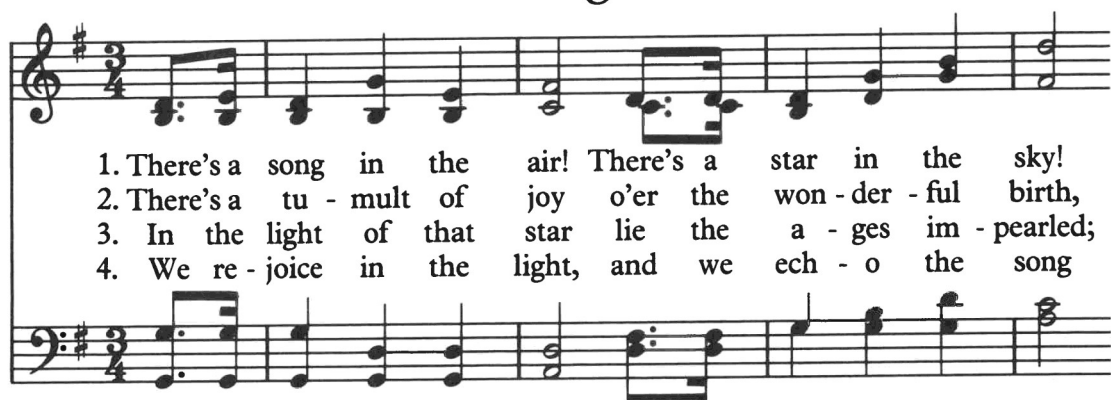
God's own Son most ho - ly, who be - came her lit - tle
 la - bor can - not wea - ry love en - dur - ing un - to
 moth - er, full of sad - ness, all thy heart with pain was

child. Fair - est child of fair - est moth - er, God the
 death. Con - stant was the love he gave her, though it
 torn. Glo - rious moth - er, now re - ward - ed with a

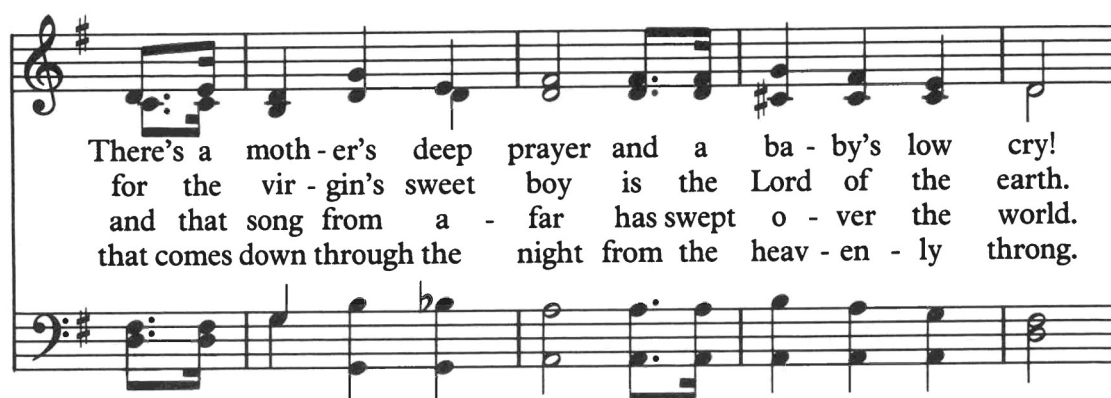
Lord who came to earth, Word made flesh, our ver - y
 drove him from her side, forth to preach, and heal, and
 crown at Je - sus' hand, age to age thy name re -

broth - er, takes our na - ture by his birth.
 suf - fer, till on Cal - va - ry he died.
 cord - ed shall be blest in ev - ery land.

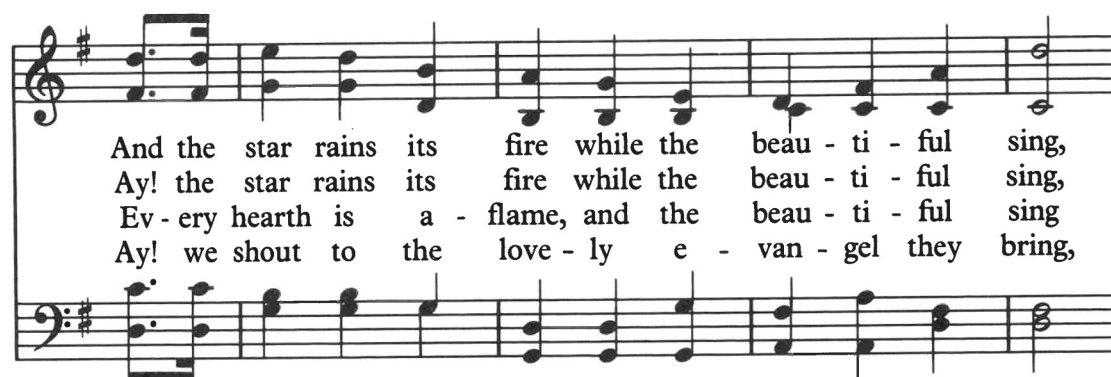
There's a Song in the Air



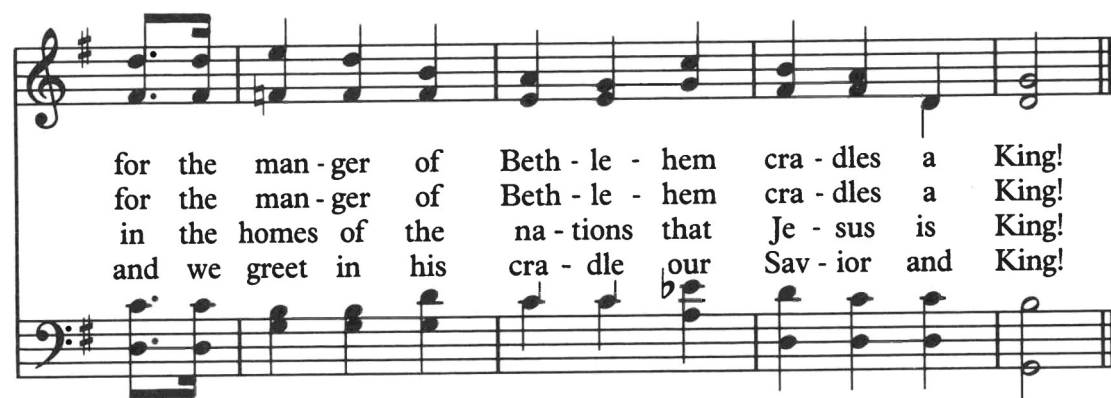
1. There's a song in the air! There's a star in the sky!
 2. There's a tu - mult of joy o'er the won - der - ful birth,
 3. In the light of that star lie the a - ges im - pearled;
 4. We re - joice in the light, and we ech - o the song



There's a moth - er's deep prayer and a ba - by's low cry!
 for the vir - gin's sweet boy is the Lord of the earth.
 and that song from a - far has swept o - ver the world.
 that comes down through the night from the heav - en - ly throng.



And the star rains its fire while the beau - ti - ful sing,
 Ay! the star rains its fire while the beau - ti - ful sing,
 Ev - ery hearth is a - flame, and the beau - ti - ful sing
 Ay! we shout to the love - ly e - van - gel they bring,



for the man - ger of Beth - le - hem cra - dles a King!
 for the man - ger of Beth - le - hem cra - dles a King!
 in the homes of the na - tions that Je - sus is King!
 and we greet in his cra - dle our Sav - ior and King!