

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE & TIME FOR THE CHILD WITHIN US ALL

One: In a weary and worn world, how do we begin again? Where do we start?

All: Let us begin with the good news! Let us begin by trusting that we are a blessing, loved by a gracious God. Let us begin with music and singing! Let us begin with warmth and welcome. Let us begin with hope.

One: Yes, let us begin with hope. Today we light the candle of hope to shine a light in a worn and weary world.

All: May this be our foundation. May this be our fresh start. May this be our new beginning.

One: May hope flow forth from here. Amen!

HYMN *View the Present Through the Promise*



View the pres - ent through the prom - ise, Christ will come a -



gain. Trust de spite the deep - ening dark - ness,



Christ will come a - gain. Lift the world a - bove its griev - ing



through your watch - ing and be - liev - ing in the hope past



hope's con - ceiv - ing: Christ will come a - gain.

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*SCRIPTURE

Luke 1:26-38

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

MESSAGE "You Are a Blessing"

Rev. Julie Kline

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Affirming God, Your first words to creation were words of love. You looked at this earth and said, "It is good." You spoke affirmations through the prophets. You spoke blessings over Mary. You spoke belonging through Christ. At every turn, you have reiterated that we are a blessing, made in your image, held in your love. Forgive us for forgetting this truth. Forgive us for measuring our worth by society's measuring stick instead of yours. We believe. Help our unbelief. In Christ's name we pray, amen.

WORDS OF FORGIVENESS

ONE: Family of faith, I don't know the last time someone told you that you are good, just as you are. I don't know the last time you heard that you are loved and created in the image of God. I don't know the last time you trusted those words and truly believed that you are a blessing. However, in case it has been a while, hear these words from Isaiah: God says,

ALL: "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you. I have called you by name. You are mine."

ONE: We are forgiven. We are loved. Let it leave you awestruck.

ALL: Thanks be to God! May we believe it. Amen.

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

RECEIVING THE BREAD AND THE CUP

Holy Communion will be served by intinction. You are invited to come by the center aisle to receive the elements. Please return to your pew by the side aisles. Music during communion: *For You O Lord, My Soul in Stillness Waits* (M. Haugen)

GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

THE LORD'S PRAYER

CALL TO OFFERING

We pass the plates as an expression of worship and thanksgiving to God. Our loose change will be given to UMCOR, the denominational disaster response and recovery.

OFFERTORY *The Angel Gabriel*

Basque Carol arr. by John Raymond Howell

*DOXOLOGY

Tune: *Wareham* by William Knapp, 1738



To God, all glor - ious hea - ven - ly light, To Christ re - vealed in



earth - ly night. Bright Dove of peace and love, we raise the



strain, our voice of prayer, our hymn of praise.

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION (Please follow words on screen)

OUR SHARED LIVES

*HYMN #203 *Hail to the Lord's Anointed*

(UMH, red hymnal)

BLESSING

As a gong is played we breathe in... INHALE: Lead me, O God; EXHALE: My hope is in you.

POSTLUDE *God Now be Glorified*

J.S. Bach

MISSION

We are called to:
· Experience God's Love
· Celebrate God's Love
· Share God's Love

VISION

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

CORE 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

Sunday, December 1

10:00 am Sunday Worship
11:15 am Sunday School for all ages
11:15 am Confirmation Class - 305
11:30 am Youth Orchestra Rehearsal - Wesley Hall

Monday, December 2

Tuesday, December 3

9:30 am Worship Planning - Zoom
12:30 All Staff Meeting - Parlor
4:15 pm First Beats - Choir Room
4:30 pm Food Pantry Open - Food Pantry
6:30 pm Manna - Youth Center
6:30 pm SPRC - Parlor/Zoom

Wednesday, December 4

8:00 am Yoga
9:00 am Dawn Patrol - Parlor
9:00 am Immigration Law & Justice Clinic - 304
10:00 am OLLI Curriculum Committee - Fellowship Room
11:30 am Prayer Group - Chapel
12:00 pm Cuppa Inspiration - Facebook
12:30 pm Food Pantry Open - Food Pantry

Thursday, December 5

9:00 am First Stitches - Fellowship Room
12:00 pm Advent Concert: Frank Silva Trio - Sanctuary
5:45 pm Handbell Ensemble - Wesley Hall
6:00 pm Grief Group - Chapel
7:15 pm Chancel Singers - Choir Room

Friday, December 6

6:00 pm Children & Families Ministry Family Fun Event
Gingerbread house making - Wesley Hall



First United Methodist Church of Kalamazoo

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First Sunday of Advent

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 *Come Now Savior of Nations* J.S. Bach
Advent signifies the coming of the Light. We will begin our Advent worship by passing lanterns through the congregation to the acolytes, who will place them on the altar, symbolizing the light of Christ within us. May we keep this light bright by kindling it in one another.

***CALL TO WORSHIP** Mary Whittaker Duncan, Co-Lay Leader

ONE: God says,
ALL: "Do not be afraid."
ONE: God says,
ALL: "I have called you by name."
ONE: God says,
ALL: "You are precious and honored in my sight."
ONE: At the beginning of this season,
ALL: at the start of this week,
ONE: at the top of this hour,
ALL: may we wrap ourselves in these words.
ONE: May we begin again.
ALL: Let us worship our Holy God!

***OPENING HYMN #196** *Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus*

WELCOME AND PASSING THE PEACE Rev. Julie Kline

***THE CALL OF PEACE & AFFIRMATION OF FAITH** Rev. Matt Weiler

We believe in a blessing God who calls us Beloved. We believe that this blessing showed up in the life of Mary, and was also bestowed upon the hemorrhaging woman, the poor in spirit, the children, the crowds, the Jews, the Gentiles, the faithful and the doubting. So in faith, we trust that God's blessing, like ripples on the water, forever reaches toward us. And with wild hope, we believe that because of this blessing, we are covered in love. We are more than enough. Thanks be to God! Amen.

WORSHIP LEADERS

Rev. Julie Kline, Rev. Matt Weiler, Mary Whittaker Duncan
Director of Music: Jacqueline Stilger
Organist: Bernie Foulk
Soloist: Kameran Long
Audio-Visual Team: Bryan Heany, Drew Eaton, Lucas McGinnis, Zachary Jackson
Acolytes: Campbell Weiler, Grace Harthorn

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Perks! Please stop in the Perks Café area by the parking lot after worship for refreshments and fellowship!

Advent Devotional. You are invited to pick up an Advent Devotional that will correspond with our Advent Worship Series, "Words for the Beginning." Each week of Advent will include art, reflections, poetry, and hymns to give you strength, courage, and grace on the journey through Advent. May all find words for belovedness and hope, and words for beginning again. Devotionals will be available at the Welcome Desk every Sunday in Advent. If you would prefer a virtual copy of the devotional, please leave a note in the office for Chris to email it to you.

Adult Academy Class. DOUBT is a class based on the book/video, "Wrestling with Doubt: Finding Faith" by Adam Hamilton. Meets on Sundays through Dec. 8.

December Mission of the Month: Angel Tree. Thank you for taking a tag to help support the Salvation Army's Angel Tree. Please return gifts unwrapped, with the gift tag attached, to the church by Sunday, December 15. Gift cards should be placed into the lock box (below the key box, besides Chris Stakely's desk) for safekeeping.

Immigration Naturalization Clinic. On Wed., Dec. 4 from 9am-4pm in room 304, the Immigration Law & Justice Team will need volunteers to help the clinic with hospitality. Contact Ann Sweany by emailing rasweany@iljmi.org if you would like to help with food or greeting.

Advent Concert Series. Enjoy your lunch hour on Thursdays during Advent with an uplifting 50-minute concert. Meet the musicians and share in refreshments after the concerts. Freewill offering. For our first concert on Dec. 5, we welcome back the popular Frank Silva Jazz Trio, presenting tunes of the season.

Kalamazoo Community Chorale Concert. Directed by our own Jackie Stilger, "Tree of Peace" Concert will be in our sanctuary on Sunday, Dec. 8 @ 3pm. Freewill offering and open to the public.

Children & Families Advent Fun Event!

Mark your calendar to join us on Fri., Dec. 6 from 6-8pm in Wesley Hall to create your family's Christmas gingerbread house. Please RSVP to Ms. Julia at jlibrizzi@umc-kzo.org to reserve a gingerbread house for your child by Wed., Dec. 4. Please also bring a dish to pass so we can share a potluck dinner together also. Drinks and place settings will be provided.
Christmas Caroling. Manna, Youth, Children and Families will be caroling on Sunday, Dec. 15. No sign-ups necessary, just meet at the church at 5pm and we will caravan around the community to church member's homes, and to Friendship Village. Plan on returning to the church around 7:30pm.

Generosity Capital Campaign. Thank you to all those who have submitted their 2025 Estimate of Giving card for 2025! Your pledge is invaluable in helping us build a balanced budget for 2025. If you need an Estimate of Giving card, they can be found in the pew pockets. You can also uphold the church and its work in the community by submitting your pledge on our website, www.umc-kzo.org, using the Generosity tab.

Audio/Visual Team Members Needed! The church's A/V Team offers ongoing opportunities to learn audio and video production skills through assisting with worship services, weddings, memorials, and occasionally for other rental events. All skill levels are welcome. Training is provided to all volunteers. Sign-up to help in accordance with your availability and interest. Please contact Lead A/V Technician, Bryan Heany, for more information by emailing bheany@umc-kzo.org.

Children's Clothes Closet. This free clothing ministry of St. Luke's is asking for donations of fall and winter clothing for children's sizes newborn to teen. You can drop off donations at any time the St. Luke's church office is open. The Children's Clothes Closet is open to the public on Thursdays from 10am to 1pm. Once a month, the community is able to "shop" for children in their household. .

Kalamazoo Ringers Concert. Enjoy this annual Christmas Concert in our sanctuary on Saturday, Dec. 14. Two identical concerts of "Let it Snow" will be offered at 3 and 7pm.

UPCOMING WORSHIP

Sunday, December 8

10:00 a.m. Worship

Second Sunday of Advent

Rev. Matt Weiler

"We Can't Go Alone"

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Sunday, December 15

10:00 a.m. Worship

Third Sunday of Advent

Rev. Julie Kline

"Do the Good That is Yours to Do"

Luke 3:7-16 | Isaiah 58:9b-12

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 side 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 can request a free copy of the DVD from the office. You can find previous worship services on our website: <http://www.umc-kzo.org/mp3.asp>. You may view worship services on our YouTube channel: YouTube.com/c/KALAMAZOOfirstunitedmethodistchurch

Church Staff

Rev. Julie KlineLead Pastor
Rev. Matt Weiler.....Comm. Formation
Jacqueline Stilger..... Director of Music
Julia Librizzi Children & Families
Thom Victor Tech Support Specialist
Bernie FoulkOrganist
Drew Bolton Bldg. Superintendent
Christine Landreville Office Manager
Christiane Stakely..... Office Assistant
Jennifer Stupica Communications
Walt WhitfieldBookkeeper
Bryan Heany Lead A/V Technician
Andrew Weare.....Building Host
Ava Loncharte.....Building Host
Eamon BronsonBuilding Host
Jim Tiffany.....Custodian
Ruth Butters.....Young Adult Resident