

WELCOME Rev. Julie Kline

*SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST
We invite you to turn to those nearby and offer a greeting as we share the Peace of Christ with one another.

LIGHTING THE PEACE CANDLE Rev. Matt Weiler

SUNG RESPONSE *Shalom Chevarim* First Beats
(translation: “Peace to you, my friends”)

*SCRIPTURE Luke 18: 1-8 “The Message” Jeremy Welter

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

HYMN #2233 *This is Where Children Belong* (FWS-black hymnal)

A TIME FOR THE CHILD WITHIN US ALL Julia Librizzi
The children are invited to come forward to the front to hear a message. After A Time For the Child, children 4 years old to 6th grade are invited to their own kind of worship on the second floor called “Godly Play.” Children will return to the sanctuary before the closing hymn.

BLESSING CHILDREN WITH BIBLES: Hazel Welter and Jude Watkins

ALL: **We rejoice with you as you continue on your journey of faith. We hold the Bible in our hands, hearts and minds, and discover God’s love for us. May we each be open to learning about God’s relationship with us.**

HYMN #191 *Jesus Loves Me* (verse 1) (UMH-red hymnal)

MESSAGE “The Gift of Persistence” Rev. Julie Kline

HYMN *O God of Justice, Love and Grace* First Beats

O God of jus - tice, love and grace, You
A - wake in us a gener - ous heart, that
May ev - ery gift we have be used to

call us to your way, Where mer - cy walks with
dares to free - ly give; To feed the poor, up -
break the chains of wrong. And may our lives pro -

stead - fast truth and peace shall have the day.
lift the weak, so all may fair ly live.
claim your truth in clear and joy - ful song.

Land of Rest, USA folk melody

PASTORAL & PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE Rev. Matt Weiler

THE LORD’S PRAYER
Please use all terms of affirmation as we pray:

**Our God, Father, Mother, 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 trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

GENEROSITY CAMPAIGN Dick Shilts
*“We are inviting you to invest in yourself through the resources that God has given you - your energy, your prayers, and your money - in this work to which God has called us.”
- A Spirituality of Fundraising - Henri Nouwen*

CALL TO OFFERING

OFFERTORY ANTHEM *Rock-A My Soul* (African American spiritual, arr. Valerie Stephenson)

*DOXOLOGY #94 *Praise God, From Whom All Blessings Flow*
**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below: Alleluia! Alleluia!
Praise God, the source of all our gifts!
Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts!
Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

**Persistent and just God, you do not turn away when your people cry out.
Receive these gifts as acts of our faith—faith that keeps moving, faith that keeps hoping, faith that keeps working for justice, even when the world says it’s too late or too little. Make us a people who do not lose heart.
Shape our prayers into action and our generosity into grace, until your kingdom comes—on earth, as it is in heaven. In the name of Christ, Amen.**

OUR SHARED LIFE

*HYMN #2186 *Song of Hope* (FWS-black hymnal) Soloist: Neela Parthasarathy
*Soloist will sing the hymn one time in Spanish.
The congregation is then invited to join in singing it in English.*

BLESSING
At the close of worship, the acolytes take the Light of Christ down the center aisle to symbolize that as Christ’s followers we bear the Light of Christ to the world.

POSTLUDE *Hornpipe from Water Music* (G.F. Handel)

UMH - United Methodist Hymnal FWS-The Faith We Sing

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, October 19
10:00 am Worship Service - Sanctuary
11:00 am Sunday School for all ages
11:15 am Membership Class
12:30 pm Confirmation Class
4:00 pm Hope for Creation, Wesley Hall
6:00 pm Youth Group - Youth Center

Monday, October 20
11:40 am Similarities (NA) - Wesley Hall
5:00 pm Finance/Trustees - Zoom

Tuesday, October 21
9:30 am Worship Planning - Zoom
11:40 am Similarities (NA) - Wesley Hall
12:30 pm Staff meeting - Parlor
4:15 pm First Beats - Choir Room
4:30 to 6:30 pm - Food Pantry Open
6:30 pm Manna - Youth Center

Wednesday, October 22
8:00 am Yoga - Zoom
9:00 am - Dawn Patrol
11:40 am Similarities (NA) - Wesley Hall
12:00 pm Fourscore & More Luncheon, Wesley Hall
12:00 pm Cuppa Inspiration - Facebook Live
12:30 to 2:30 pm - Food Pantry Open
6:30 pm Church Council Meeting - Zoom

Thursday, October 23
9:30 am First Stitchers - Fellowship Room
11:40 am Similarities (NA) - Wesley Hall
4:00 pm Outreach Team - Parlor
5:45 pm Handbell Choir - Wesley Hall
7:15 pm Chancel Singers - Choir Room

Friday, October 24 - Sunday, October 26
Youth Group Retreat - Wesley Woods
No Sunday evening Youth Group

UPCOMING WORSHIP

October 26 @ 10:00 a.m.

Rev. Julie Kline
Consecration Sunday
“An Abounding Hope”
Romans 15:4-13, Psalm 65

November 2 @ 10:00 a.m.

Rev. Matt Weiler
All Saints Day
Ephesians 1:11-14

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.**

Worship Leaders: Rev. Matt Weiler, Rev. Julie Kline, Julia Librizzi, Jeremy Welter, Dick Shilts
Director of Music/Organist: Jacqueline Stilger
First Beats: Grace Harthorn, Penny Librizzi, Neela Parthasarathy, Kaden Seals, Cora Welter, Hazel Welter
Associate Director of Music: Cari Miller
Audio-Visual Team: Bryan Heany, Drew Eaton, Jamie Gruber, Kennedy Hayes, Mark Stucky

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Youth Group: Sunday evenings from 6:00-7:30pm in the lower-level youth lounge. Youth Group is open to all youth 6th–12th grades. Contact Pastor Matt Weiler for more information.
Sunday School Classes for all ages meet today after the 10am worship service.
Manna, our young adult ministry, gathers every Tuesday evening in the youth lounge from 6:30–8:00pm. Contact Ruth Butters at ruthbutters@gmail.com.
Fall Academy Classes: Rev. John Boley and others of our retired clergy are facilitating an Adult Academy Class after worship in the parlor entitled “A Potluck of Hot Potatoes.” All of these Hot Potatoes present different understandings of God and the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit. The last class will meet today, and the topic will be “Process Theology.”

New Membership Opportunity: A new membership class will begin right after worship today in the chapel. Class will continue through November 9, with the reception of new members in worship on November 16. If you would like to explore further the commitment and joy of membership in First United Methodist Church, please contact Pastor Julie at jkline@umc-kzo.org.

The “Our Story is Never Over” Project continues! This is a series of creative opportunities inspired

by *The Four Pivots: Reimagining Justice, Reimagining Ourselves* by Dr. Shawn Ginwright. Look for the easel outside the sanctuary that invites your response to pivot-related questions. Keep an eye on the bulletin board for details, dates, and new opportunities!

Christi Landreville, our Office Manager, re-tires today, October 19. We thank her for her many years of dedicated service and wish her all the best in her well-deserved retirement.

First United Methodist Church Conference: This annual business meeting will be held on Nov. 1 at 3pm at Westwood UMC, presided over by District Superintendent Rev. Dean Prentiss. We will gather as Branch 5 of the Greater Southwest District, which includes Milwood, Sunnyside, Westwood, Otsego, Parchment, Plainwell, and FUMC. Members will vote on the 2026 elected lay leadership roster, clergy and staff salaries, any membership deductions, and celebrate our past year of ministry accomplishments. Please plan to attend and be part of this significant event. We need your presence and input as we make important decisions for the governance of our church community.

Four Score & More Luncheon: Wednesday, October 22, noon - 2:00 p.m. Invitations have been sent out to honor our members who are 80 years or more, along with a guest, for a special luncheon. If you have received an invitation, please RSVP to cstakely@umc-kzo.org or call the church office 381-6340. Reservations will help us plan for food preparation.

Free Event, happening at FUMC today:

Date change from Saturday to Sunday!

You are invited to Hope for Creation's annual Harvest of Unity event

Water is Life

Sunday, Oct. 19, 5 pm

Featuring Dr. Nichole Keway Biber, Water Protector, tribal citizen of the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians, speaking about the struggle against Enbridge oil company that threatens Michigan waterways:
“Minogame nibi (the water is good)”

Free and open to the public
A vegetarian meal and drinks provided
Location: First United Methodist Church downtown Kalamazoo

Learn more and RSVP at hopeforcreation.net/events

October 19, 2025

10:00 a.m.



First United Methodist Church

212 S. Park Street | Kalamazoo, Michigan | 269.381.6340 | umc-kzo.org

“All flourishing is mutual.” ~The Serviceberry, Robin Wall Kimmerer

The Gift of Persistence

Luke 18:1-8

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 Autumn, from *The Four Seasons* (G.F. Handel)

***CALL TO WORSHIP** Jeremy Welter (Generosity Team Member)

ONE: Children of God: welcome!
ALL: **Welcome to this place of love and grace.**
ONE: Welcome to this place of hope and perseverance.
ALL: **God invites all of us to be a part of the beloved community.**
ONE: God invites all of us to share in the good news:
ALL: **We are welcome, just as we are. We are loved, just as we are.**
ONE: In gratitude for all of this, let us worship God.

***OPENING HYMN #73** O Worship the King (UMH-red hymnal)
We light the Christ Candle to remember Jesus as the light of the world—conquering darkness and offering new life.

Church Staff

Rev. Julie Kline.....Lead Pastor
Rev. Matt Weiler.....Community Formation
Jacqueline Stilger ..Organist/Dir. of Music
Cari Miller.....Associate Dir. of Music
Julia Librizzi.....Children & Families
Drew BoltonBldg. Superintendent
Linda Hamill.....Office Manager
Christiane StakelyOffice Assistant
Erika JonesCommunications
Cody CollmenterBookkeeper
Bryan Heany.....AV Team Leader
Eamon Bronson.....Building Host
Alison Ericson.....Building Host
Samantha LeeBuilding Host
Jim TiffanyCustodian
Ruth Butters.....Young Adult Resident