

**UPCOMING SUNDAY WORSHIP**

December 28 @ 10:00 a.m.  
*Sunday after Christmas*  
 Rev. Julie Kline  
 "Let Fear Fuel a Fire for Justice"  
 Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23

January 4 @ 10:00 a.m.  
*Epiphany*  
 Rev. Matt Weiler  
 "Fear Doesn't Stop Us"  
 Matthew 2:1-12, 16-18

**WE ARE 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 to 3-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.** You can find previous recordings of worship services on our website ([www.umc-kzo.org](http://www.umc-kzo.org)) under the Livestream tab, or find us on our YouTube page.

**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 Bolton ..... Bldg. Superintendent  
 Linda Hamill ..... Office Manager  
 Christiane Stakely ..... Office Assistant  
 Erika Jones ..... Communications  
 Cody Collmenter ..... Bookkeeper  
 Bryan Heany ..... AV Team Leader  
 Eamon Bronson ..... Building Host  
 Alison Ericson ..... Building Host  
 Samantha Lee ..... Building Host  
 Jim Tiffany ..... Custodian  
 Ruth Butters ..... Young Adult Resident

**We are a Reconciling Congregation, Welcoming ALL.**

**Worship Leaders:** Rev. Julie Kline, Rev. Matt Weiler, Julia Librizzi, Larry Stuart  
**Director of Music/Organist:** Jacqueline Stilger  
**Associate Director of Music:** Cari Miller  
**Musicians:** Evelyn Moon, First Beats, Carolyn Librizzi  
**Audio-Visual Team:** Bryan Heany, Lucas McGinnis, Kennedy Hayes

**►► We are always looking for A/V volunteers. ►►**

Training is provided. All ages welcome. We'll work around your availability. Inquire with Bryan Heany for more information: [bheany@umc-kzo.org](mailto:bheany@umc-kzo.org).

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Walk the Labyrinth** - The labyrinth will be set up in Wesley Hall today. After worship, join Pastor Julie for a shared time of devotion and walking the labyrinth. It's not a maze—there are no wrong turns—just a gentle way to center your heart during this season. Several people can walk at once; please allow space for one another as we journey together.

**Sunday School for children** meets after worship today at 11:00 a.m. in room 206.

**Manna**, our young adult ministry, gathers every Tuesday in the youth lounge from 6:30-8:00pm. Contact Ruth Butters at [RuthTButters@gmail.com](mailto:RuthTButters@gmail.com).

**New Year's Fest Call for Volunteers**

Help celebrate the 40th anniversary of New Year's Fest in Kalamazoo! We are looking for volunteers to welcome guests to First Church and direct them to the shows. Shifts are only 2 hours, and everyone who volunteers will receive a free badge to attend the other shows around the park. Sign up sheets are in the Perks area on Sundays, or contact Dan Bunker at (269) 217-8780 ([djbunker@charter.net](mailto:djbunker@charter.net)). Thanks for being part of the 40th anniversary!

**There's Still Time to Pledge!**

Your commitment to the 2026 Abounding Hope Campaign ensures we can continue vital ministries and meet the needs of our community. Every pledge—large or small—makes a real difference! You can pledge today by:

- Dropping it in the offertory
- Calling, mailing or emailing the church office
- Visiting [umc-kzo.org](http://umc-kzo.org) to donate online

Thank you for helping us share hope and serve together!

**CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP SERVICES**

*We will celebrate the Nativity with three special worship services:*

**4:00 pm - Family and Children Worship**

This worship is designed for children and families, focusing on the Christmas Story. Children will have the opportunity to choose their character and costume props at the door and participate in creating the Nativity. Worship will conclude by raising our candles and singing "Silent Night."

**7:00 pm - Lessons and Carols**

Throughout Advent, we have lit candles of hope, peace, joy, and love. This evening, we will light the Christ candle to honor that Christ is our Light. We will raise our collective voice to sing Christmas carols accompanied by brass and organ. The Chancel Singers will share Christmas anthems, and we will be assured that the God of love knows our name. we will end this worship by raising our candles and singing "Silent Night." Child care will be provided in Room 206.

**11:00 pm Lessons and Communion**

In a quieter spirit, we sing carols, listen to compelling handbell music, and gather at the communion table to receive the bread of life and the cup of blessing. If weather permits, we will take our candles to the front steps and sing "Silent Night" as a call for peace and goodwill for all.

December 21, 2025

**First United Methodist Church of Kalamazoo**

269.381.6340  
[umc-kzo.org](http://umc-kzo.org)

**FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

**Matthew 1:18-25**  
**Isaiah 41:5-10**

**WHEN YOU'RE AFRAID,  
 GIVE ME YOUR HAND**



"In the artwork, *In Too Deep*, the angel Gabriel is talking to Joseph as he sleeps, with silver locs reminiscent of God from the children's book I illustrated, *God's Holy Darkness*. This is a nod to my own work, which honors holiness as brown, coarse textured, and wise." - Nic Faison, artist

## Welcome to First United Methodist Church of Kalamazoo

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** *Gesu Bambino* (Pietro Yon)

Evelyn Moon, flute

**PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION & LIGHTING THE PEACE CANDLE**

Larry Stuart

\***HYMN #198** *My Soul Gives Glory to My God*

(UMH - red hymnal)

**WELCOME**

Rev. Matt Weiler

**CALL TO CONFESSION**

Rev. Julie Kline

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND WORDS OF FORGIVENESS**

When you were afraid, did I stay by your side? Did I offer my hand, or did I leave you alone?  
When you were afraid, did I choose solidarity? Did I see your fear, or did I only see mine?  
**Friend, none of us are perfect. We all make mistakes. Fortunately, God offers grace, and we do too. So take a deep breath, and let's start again.**

Thank you. Your mercy is a gift.

**Now we must ask – when you were afraid, did we stay by your side? Did we offer our hands, or did we leave you alone? When you were afraid, did we choose solidarity? Did we see your fear? Or did we only see ours?**

Friends none of us are perfect. We all make mistakes. Fortunately, God offers grace, and I do too. So take a deep breath, and let's start again.

**Thank you. Your mercy is a gift. We accept your grace and would love to start again.**

May it be so, with God's help.

**Alleluia, Amen.**

**\*PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST**

*As we have experienced God's forgiveness and reconciliation let us now rise and share signs of peace and reconciliation with one another.*

**LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLES**

The Warzybok family

*The Advent wreath holds five candles: four for the Sundays leading to Christmas and a center candle for Christmas. One new candle is lit each week, symbolizing the growing light of Christ approaching. The four outer candles traditionally signify hope, peace, joy, and love, marking our journey of anticipation and preparation. The center candle, called the Christ Candle, represents the light of Christ coming into the world and is lit during our Christmas Eve worship.*

In a world of fear, where do you see the presence of love?

**We see love all around us. We see love when people hold open the door. We see love in a warm embrace, a homemade casserole, a phone call after a long day. We see love in random acts of kindness and intentional acts of empathy. We see love all around us.**

You are right. Even in a fearful world, love is all around us.

**Today we light the candle of love as a reminder of this good news. May this flicker of light help us remember that even in a fearful world, love is here. Love is world-changing love is shining bright. We only have to look for it.**

**Thanks be to God for a love like that! Amen.**

**HYMN #2090** *Light the Advent Candle (Advent Song)* - refrain only

(FWS - black hymnal)

**CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PAGEANT** - see program insert

**HYMN #238** *Angels We Have Heard on High*

(UMH - red hymnal)

**\*GOSPEL READING** Matthew 1:18-25 NRSV

Larry Stuart

This is what the Spirit is saying to the church.

**Thanks be to God.**

**MESSAGE** "When You Are Afraid, Give Me Your Hand"

Rev. Matt Weiler

**HYMN #2099** *Joseph Dearest, Joseph Mine*

(FWS - black hymnal)

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

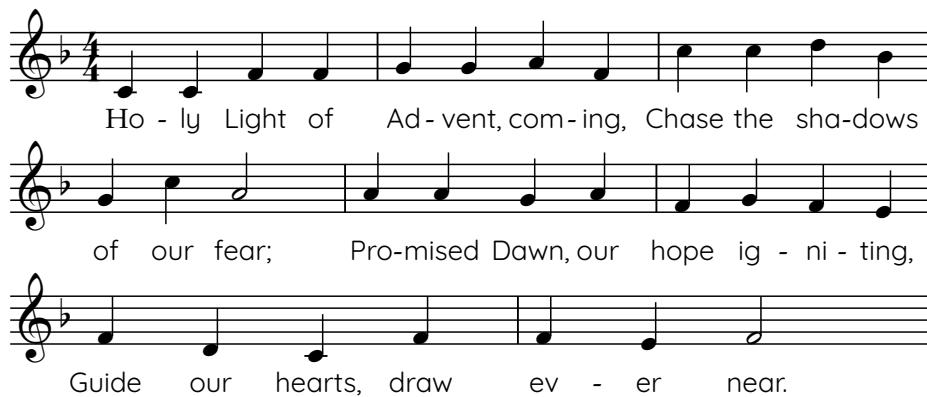
**CALL TO OFFERING**

**OFFERTORY** *O Little Town of Bethlehem*

(Lewis Render, arr. by Ricky and Julie Valadez)

Carolyn Librizzi, cello

**\*DOXOLOGY** *Holy Light of Advent* (Tune: Stuttgart, 1715)



**\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

**Holy God, you bless us with many gifts, you visit us with surprising good news and you intend for us good things. Thank you for all the signs of your love. These gifts are an act of our love for you, in hopes that they bring comfort and justice to those in need. Amen.**

**OUR SHARED LIFE**

**\*HYMN #251** *Go, Tell It on the Mountain*

(UMH - red hymnal)

**\*BENEDICTION**

**POSTLUDE** *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing* (arr. by Emma Lou Diemer)

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, and for love.



**Community:** Sacred relationship with God and one another



**Inclusion:** All identities belong and are love in Christ.



**Justice:** Restoration of equity and wholeness.

## THIS WEEK'S EVENTS

**Sunday, December 21**  
8:30 am - 12:30 pm Labyrinth - Wesley Hall  
10:00 am Worship Service with Children's Christmas Pageant- Sanctuary  
11:00 am Sunday School for all ages

**Monday, December 22**  
11:40 am Similarities (NA) - Wesley Hall

**Tuesday, December 23**  
9:30 am Worship Planning - Zoom  
11:40 am Similarities (NA) - Wesley Hall  
4:15 pm First Beats - Choir Room  
4:30 to 6:30 pm - Food pantry open

**Wednesday, December 24**  
8:00 am Yoga - Zoom  
11:40 am Similarities (NA) - Wesley Hall  
12:00 pm Cuppa Inspiration - Facebook Live  
12:30 to 2:30 pm - Food pantry open  
4:00 pm - Christmas Eve Worship #1  
7:00 pm - Christmas Eve Worship #2  
11:00 pm - Christmas Eve Worship #3

**Thursday, December 25**  
Building closed - Merry Christmas!

**Saturday, December 27**  
10:00 am First Strings Practice - Fellowship Rm

# *Children's Christmas Pageant*

## *"Calling All Angels"*

by Helen Kemp

Directed by Jacqueline Stilger

Prologue	Luke 1:26-38
God's Fanfare	
Gabriel's Aria	<i>I Do! Yes, I Do!</i>
Gabriel's Arioso	<i>What Can I Do?</i>
Angel Choir	<i>We Are Singing Angels</i>
Gabriel's Recitative	<i>Calling All Angels</i>
Angel Choir	<i>What Do You Want?</i>
'Idea' Angel/Angel Choir	<i>I Have an Idea</i> <i>We Could Sing, We Could Fly</i>
Angel Choir	<i>Gloria Refrain</i> announcing Christ's Birth
God's Fanfare	
Angel Choir and Congregation	*#238 <i>Angels We Have Heard on High</i> (UMH - red hymnal)

### **CAST**

Grace Harthorn	Angel Gabriel
Hazel Welter	'Idea' Angel
Penny Librizzi	Narrator and Angel Choir
Neela Parthasarathy	Raphael of the Angel Choir
Michael Bovid	Michael of the Angel Choir, chimes
Kaden Seals	Voice of God and Angel Choir
Cora Welter	Angel Choir, chimes
Zachery Bovid	Joseph and Angel Choir
Lilly Nolan	Mary and Angel Choir
Campbell Weiler	Angel Choir
Sunday School Children	Littlest Angels

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### ***Many thanks to:***

Deb Search Willowby for costume help.  
Drew Bolton for stage set-up and behind the scenes management.  
Bryan Heany and crew for sound and tech support.  
Julia Librizzi for CFM support and organization.  
Erika Jones for program assistance.  
First Beats families/parents for engaging your child in the sacred arts and for raising wonderful, curious, and enthusiastic children.

## Color

Color the people in the community in all different colors.



## Prayer

Dear God, you created us for community. When we notice fear in ourselves and in others, give us the courage to reach out to one another. Amen.



Matthew 1:18-25  
Joseph chooses to keep his promise to Mary after an angel comes to him in a dream.

### Main Idea:

We can look to other people for help when we're scared.



Color in the story of Joseph & Mary. | Illustration by Rev. Anna Strickland

## Story

When Joseph found out Mary was pregnant, he was not going to marry her. But then, an angel came to him in a dream and told him to stay with Mary because the child was God's son. Joseph decided to listen to the angel and marry Mary like he had promised.

## Color

Color the word "LOVE" below. Around the word, draw pictures of people you love.

LOVE

## Wonder

Would you tell people about the dream if you were Joseph?



## Find

Find the words from scripture when you hear them spoken in worship. Words can be vertical, horizontal, or diagonal, and they can overlap each other.

A	P	V	A	U	G	O	T	L	K	S	M	B	H	D
D	A	L	A	Q	Y	C	L	W	S	N	Z	U	J	S
B	H	N	U	L	L	A	B	T	A	R	S	K	L	Y
R	Y	P	M	S	D	Q	Z	M	J	B	P	E	B	H
E	J	N	E	M	S	X	E	K	A	I	G	Q	A	B
H	E	Z	G	S	A	D	Q	N	R	N	B	D	M	W
T	S	P	N	B	O	E	D	X	A	I	Y	I	O	U
E	U	I	V	S	E	J	R	G	I	B	L	X	E	B
G	S	S	U	I	N	L	D	D	C	J	O	X	M	K
O	V	Q	A	I	G	D	H	T	M	W	H	H	O	Q
T	V	P	N	W	U	D	I	P	C	G	N	K	E	X
H	R	G	W	S	O	E	B	D	Z	F	O	T	R	R
T	H	X	N	S	H	K	W	I	M	O	W	V	I	T
L	L	N	D	W	A	Y	E	M	G	A	Y	N	L	C
E	V	A	S	U	E	M	M	A	N	U	E	L	Q	W

ALL	DREAM	HUSBAND	SAVE
ANGEL	EMMANUEL	JESUS	TO
AWOKE	HAD	JOSEPH	TOGETHER
BY	HER	NAMED	US
DID	HOLY	NOW	WAY

This word search was generated using [dictionary.com](http://dictionary.com)