

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) 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 BoltonBldg. 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 EricsonBuilding 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.

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.

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). 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 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

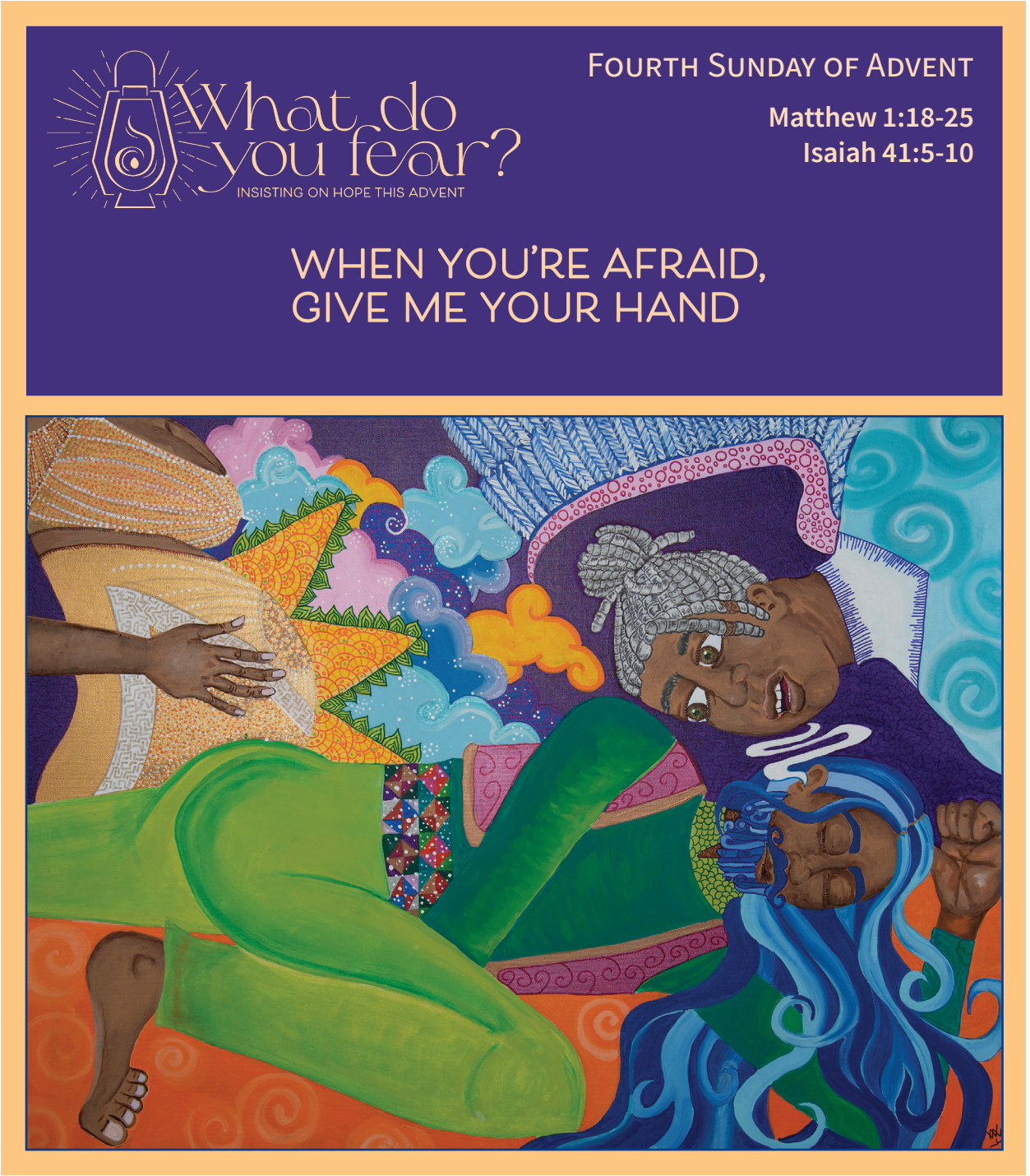
Throughout Advent, we have lit candles of hope, peace, joy, and love. This evening, we will light the Christ candle to honor that Christ is our Light. We will raise our collective voice to sing Christmas carols accompanied by brass and organ. The Chancel Singers will share Christmas anthems, and we will 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.

The “Our Story is Never Over” Project: 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!

Giving in 2025: A Greater Opportunity
Recent changes in federal law may make charitable giving more beneficial for many donors. Your generosity helps us pool resources to make a lasting impact in our community. You can give by placing your gift in the offertory plate, mailing it to the church, or giving online at umc-kzo.org. Every act of generosity adds up, and together we can bless our community in lasting ways. Please consider making your year-end gift today and help us continue sharing hope and compassion in our community.



“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

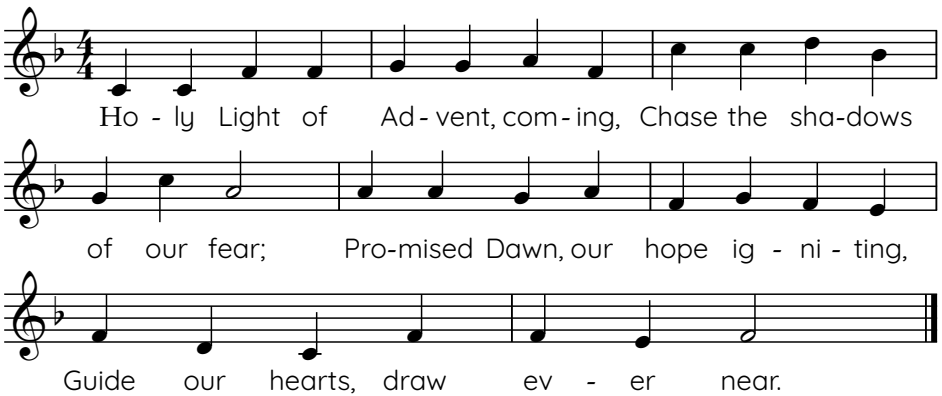
HYMN #2099 Joseph Dearest, Joseph Mine (FWS - black hymnal)

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

CALL TO OFFERING

OFFERTORY O Little Town of Bethlehem Carolyn Librizzi, cello
(Lewis Render, arr. by Ricky and Julie Valadez)

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



Ho - ly Light of Ad - vent, com - ing, Chase the sha - dows
of our fear; Pro - mised Dawn, our hope ig - ni - ting,
Guide our hearts, draw ev - er near.

*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)

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 announcing Christ's Birth</i>
God's Fanfare	
Angel Choir and Congregation	*#238 <i>Angels We Have Heard on High</i> (UMH - red hymnal)

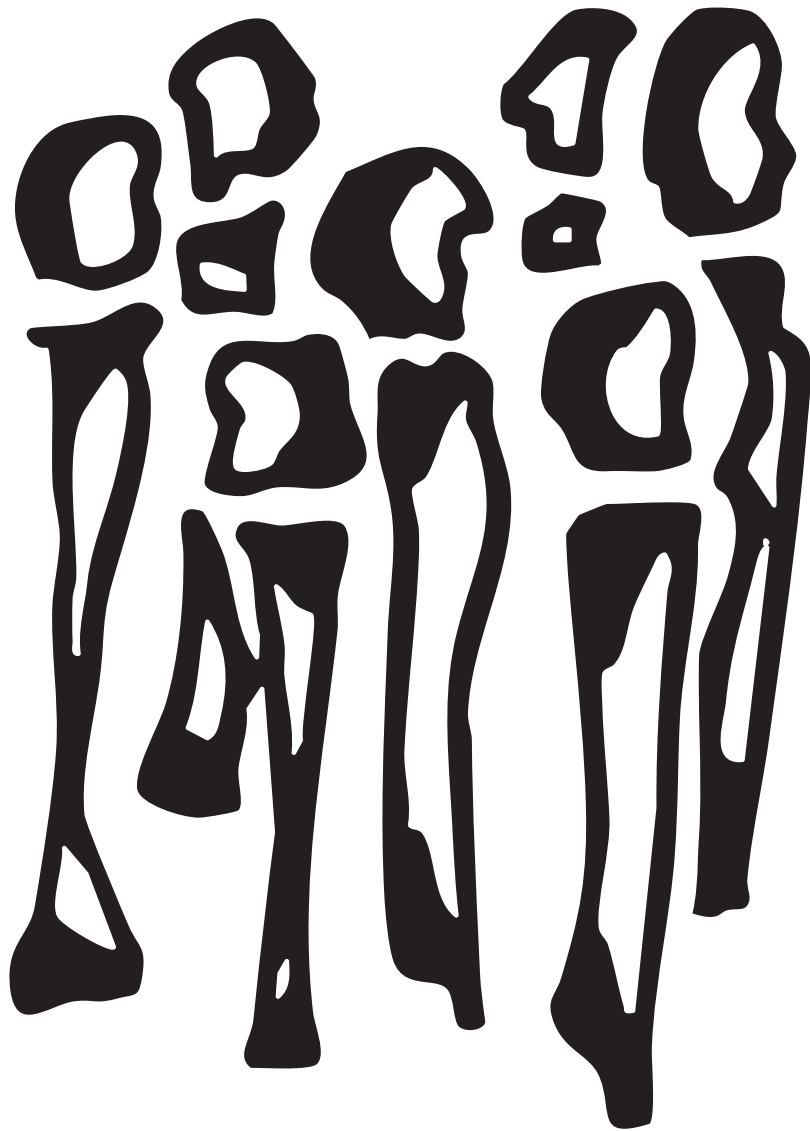
CAST

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

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.

EXPERIENTIAL BULLETIN | 4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT



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.



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
ANGEL
AWOKE
BY
DID

DREAM
EMMANUEL
HAD
HER
HOLY

HUSBAND
JESUS
JOSEPH
NAMED
NOW

SAVE
TO
TOGETHER
US
WAY

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