



November 2025

The First Word



Vol. 40, No. 11

First United Methodist Church • 212 S. Park Street • Kalamazoo, MI 49007 • (269) 381-6340 • www.umc-kzo.org

Advent Worship Services and Events, Nov - Dec. 2025

Sunday Worship Services - 10 am

Nov. 30 - Advent 1

“In the Time of Herod, We Long for God to Break in”

Dec. 7 - Advent 2

“When We’re Running Out of Hope, God is at Work”
with Chancel Choir

Dec. 14, Advent 3

“Even in Our Fear, We Are Called Forward”
with Chancel Choir & handbells

Dec. 21 - Advent 4

“When You’re Afraid, Give Me Your Hand”
with Christmas Pageant

Candlelight Worship Service

Wednesday, Dec. 10, 7pm



Christmas Eve Worship Services

Wednesday, Dec. 24 at 4 pm, 7 pm, and 11pm

Walk the Labyrinth in Wesley Hall

First three Sundays in December: 8:30am – 12:30pm and 5:30 – 7:30pm (morning only on Dec. 7)

Kalamazoo Community Chorale Concert

The Kalamazoo Community Chorale presents their holiday concert **December 7 at 3:00 at FUMC.**

Join us for “There’s Still Our Joy” as we sing holiday favorites, some new tunes and have an audience sing.

The Chorale is an 80-member strong ensemble made up of women from around the area who enjoy four-part harmonies and the community aspect of singing together. Please join us and kick off your holiday season with us!

Classes

“Looking Deeply: A Meditative Journey with Our Stained Glass Windows”

November 23, December 7 and 14

“Seeing the Possibility in Hope” Hands-On Community Mosaic Workshop

December 10 (*sign-up required*)

Making Gingerbread Houses

Sunday, Dec. 7 at 2pm (*more information on p. 2*)

Kalamazoo Community Chorale

Sunday, Dec. 7, 3pm

Kalamazoo Ringers

Saturday, Dec. 13 at 3pm & 7pm (*more information on p. 4*)

Kalamazoo Children’s Chorus

Sunday, Dec. 14 at 3pm

Advent Concerts

Thursdays at noon in the Sanctuary

Dec. 4: “Through the Eyes of a Child”

Guitarist, singer, and ringer David Brown

Dec. 11: “Choral Scholar Christmas”

Soprano Emily Barron and friends

Dec. 18: “Brass for Christmas”

The Kalamazoo Concert Brass Quintet



Youth Ministry News

Scheduled Events

November 23: Youth Group in Youth Lounge

11:15am - 2pm (no evening youth group) Youth will eat pizza together following worship, and will then travel around Kalamazoo delivering Thanksgiving food baskets to families in partnership with Communities in Schools.

November 30 - No Youth Group Thanksgiving weekend.

Children and Family/Youth Group Joint Event

GINGERBREAD HOUSES

The Youth Group will meet on Sunday, December 7 in Wesley Hall, 2-4pm (no evening youth group). This is a joint Youth Ministry and Children and Family Ministry event. We will work with our small groups (high school/ middle school) to make the best gingerbread houses.

Please park on the street (it's free on Sunday) or in the Kalamazoo Institute of the Arts parking lot next door so we leave the parking lot free for the Kalamazoo Community Chorale concert happening the same day.



Members of First Beats singing at the November 16 worship service: Michael, Kaden, Penelope, Cora, Zachary, Grace, Hazel, and Neela (photo by Keith Mumma)

First United Methodist Church of Kalamazoo - Financial Update

	2023	2024	Month Ending 10/31/25	Year to Date 10/31/25	2025 Annual Budget	% of Annual Budget
TOTAL INCOME (\$)	1,155,208	1,053,747	90,383	991,676	1,152,334	86.06
TOTAL EXPENSE (\$)	1,118,942	1,166,950	91,866	887,301	1,202,200	73.81
EXCESS/ (DEFICIT) (\$)	36,266	(113,203)	(1,483)	104,375	(49,866)	

Our sympathy and prayers to the family and friends of:

Nancy Douglas
Paul Cutler
Jeanne McCaw

Please keep these friends in your prayers:

Wayne Conner
Robin Entenman
Carol Hurley & family
Nancy Hyde
Jan Kayser & family
Rev. Gene & Marilyn Lewis
Judy McClelland
Ellie Miller
Mumma Family
Susan Noble
Sue Paul
Peavler Family
Anna Rasmussen
Lois & Jim Richmond
Hank Rohs
Mary Lou Sanderson
Gerry & Tom Schaberg
Michael Seals
Carol Shilts
Barb Skuza
Sally Stevens Family
Jacqueline Stilger and family
Marcia Stobie and family
Lori Valkema
Christine VanOstran

New Prayer Requests

If you would like to share a prayer request with our clergy and prayer ministry team, please visit www.umc-kzo.org/contact-us/prayer-request/ or call the church at (269) 381-6340.

Email List

Would you like to stay up-to-date on our latest news and events? Sign up to receive *Around the Corner*, FUMC's weekly email newsletter. Contact Erika Jones at ejones@umc-kzo.org to be added to our list.

First Word for December

Submissions for the next issue of *First Word* should be emailed to our Communications Coordinator, Erika Jones, at ejones@umc-kzo.org, by **December 4**. Articles may be edited for space and content.

New Feature: FUMC Staff Introductions

Linda Hamill - Office Manager

If your call to the church is answered by a cheerful voice who can simultaneously manage a calendar, solve a puzzle, and direct a small army of grandchildren... that's Linda Hamill, the new Office Manager who started on October 1st.



While she's a pro at organizing the office, her heart is truly in connecting with people. The stories, the laughter, and the fellowship within these walls are what she enjoys most. Her schedule is in-office Monday-Thursday, 9-4, and remote on Friday (though she's available by appointment any day!).

Her home life in Gull Lake is a joyful, full-house affair

with her husband, John, their extensive family (including 5 children, 7 grandchildren, and 3 great-grandchildren!), and their pack of 7 furry misfit dogs. Her hobbies include finding hidden gems while thrift shopping, getting lost in a good book, playing a competitive hand of cards and hitting the open road for an adventure. She's so grateful to be part of this community, both in Gull Lake and here at the church, and she looks forward to connecting with each of you soon!

Save the Date: ASP Trip 2026 - July 19-25!

Next year's ASP trip will be July 19 through 25. As always, please plan for the possibility of an extra travel day on the 18th. Sign ups for ASP will begin sometime before Christmas.



Erika Jones - Communications Coordinator

Erika Jones, our new Communication Coordinator, joined us at the end of August. She works in her first-floor office Tuesday – Thursday 9-5 and remotely on Mondays. She



handles all the church news, including the weekly bulletins, *Around the Corner* email newsletter, and the monthly *First Word* publication.

She has enjoyed meeting everyone and learning about all the diverse activities that happen here at FUMC.

Erika lives on the west side of Kalamazoo with her husband, Paul, teenage son Gaja, and their two tabby

cats, Benji and Maude. While not a trained musician, she has been recording spiritual music for many years with her mother, Frances Kozlowski, which they post on YouTube, and her son has recently joined them on saxophone. She also plays and sings at her own church, Kalamazoo Meditation Group in Paw Paw.

ANNUAL LOAVES & FISHES

CONCERT

~ November 22, 2025 ~

New Location: **First United Methodist Church**
212 S. Park St., Kalamazoo

Doors open at 4:30pm, **Show starts at 5:30pm**

Featuring musicians:

- **Joshua Tree** (traditional folk)
- **His Boy Elroy** (oldies)
- **Hoot Owls** (Americana)
- **Mojo** (funk, blues, rock and roll)
- **Schlitz Creek** (bluegrass)



No ticket needed! Just bring in a shelf-stable food item or monetary donation.

A collaborated project of First United Methodist Church, Great Lakes Acoustic Music Association, and K'zoo Folklife Organization.

FUMC Supports Literacy in All Families throughout the Year

Twelve years ago, Dolores Hedanus and the Outreach team of FUMC approved the distribution of new books to the children who visit our food pantry. Since 2013, approximately 7,000 books have been chosen by children who otherwise may not have had a book of their own.

In Kalamazoo County 13% of our residents over 18 read at the lowest literacy rate and there are at least 25,000 people who are considered struggling readers. To bring about change to those statistics, our Outreach Team remains committed to giving new or very gently used, engaging books. We believe all children need to see themselves in books and offer multiracial books, both fiction and nonfiction.

We are grateful to have purchased the majority of the books from Scholastic Literacy Partners and to Ladies Library Association for its contributions to our pantry distribution.

November is National Family Literacy Month so if you have any questions or would like to support literacy in all Kalamazoo families by contributing new books, please contact Dawn Wheaton, who is the new coordinator of the book distribution.

-The Outreach Team

“Above All this Bustle...Silver Bells” The Kalamazoo Ringers in Concert

Saturday, December 13th @ 3:00 PM and 7:00PM

FREE TO THE PUBLIC

Join us as we share with you a handbell concert full of glorious holiday music in beautiful downtown Kalamazoo! The Kalamazoo Ringers just celebrated their 44th year of ringing on seven octaves of handbells, six octaves of choir chimes, and now a brand new set of beautiful Silver Melody Bells. Please join us for our annual Christmas Concert “Above All This Bustle...Silver Bells” in the sanctuary of First United Methodist Church. The group of 17 ringers will present a concert filled with your holiday favorites. Our Christmas Concert is a thank you to the greater Kalamazoo Community whose generous support allows us to spread the joy of handbells to all who want to listen. This year the Kalamazoo Ringers will offer two Saturday concerts, a 3:00 matinee and a 7:00 evening show. Both are open to the public and free of charge with an offering taken during intermission. To stand by our firm commitment to give back to the community, The Kalamazoo Ringers will collect donations of hats, scarves, mittens and gloves for area schools and shelters.

November Mission of the Month: Angel Tree

FUMC is participating in the Salvation Army Angel Tree again this year.

The Angel Tree is in the Perks area. If you would like to purchase a gift, please select a tag from the tree and return the gift, unwrapped and with the tag, by Monday, Dec. 8th. Gift cards should be turned in to the office.



Thank you for helping to make Christmas brighter for children and families in need!

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

ADVENT CONCERTS



THURSDAYS AT NOON

Dec. 4 “Through the Eyes of a Child”

Guitarist, singer and ringer David Brown

Dec. 11 Choral Scholar Christmas

Soprano Emily Barron and friends

Dec. 18 Brass for Christmas

The Kalamazoo Concert Brass Quintet

212 SOUTH PARK STREET, KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN
FREE WILL OFFERING