

UPCOMING SUNDAY WORSHIP

December 28 @ 10:00 a.m.

Sunday after Christmas

Rev. Julie Kline

“Lessons and Laughter”

Psalm 148

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 Beth Croak.....	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

Director of Music/Organist:

Jacqueline Stilger

Associate Director of Music:

Cari Miller

Musicians:

Larry and Carla Sue, handbells

Audiovisual Team:

Bryan Heany, Lucas McGinnis, Kennedy Hayes

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

In our worship we strive to witness to the wholeness of God, embracing the diversity of images of God that are found within scripture. We will seek to include male, female, and gender-neutral language that helps to avoid binary terms in pronouns and images of people. In our hymns and liturgy, we invite you to use pronouns that best express your practice and affirm your faith.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome! If you are visiting First United Methodist Church of Kalamazoo for the first time or are visiting us for the holidays, we bid you welcome! If you are seeking a church home, please consider worshipping with us again and discovering more about the journey of faith offered to all by our loving and seeking God. We worship on Sundays at 10am. Christian education classes for all ages follows worship.

Labyrinth Walk. A Chartres labyrinth is set-up in Wesley Hall located in the lower level. We invite you to try this ancient prayer practice this evening after worship to quiet your mind, center yourself, and allow your spirit to be in prayer, curiosity, and expectation. Prayer stations are also set-up around the labyrinth to enhance your time of prayer and contemplation.

Christmas Special Offering. This year’s Christmas offering is designated to four ministries we partner with: The Wesley Foundation (student Christian programming), Growing Hope Globally (supports agricultural programs that enable families to grow nutritious food and improve income), Immigration Law & Justice (legal assistance and hospitality to low-income immigrants), and Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes. Envelopes for your gift are available in the pew pockets. Please designate your check in the memo and the outside of the pew envelope with “Christmas offering.”

CUPPA. On Wednesdays at noon, Pastor Julie shares a time of reflection and spiritual rejuvenation live on our Facebook page. We welcome you to view these uplifting messages at any time on our Facebook page or join her live.

- Join Us for Worship**
- Sunday, December 28.** We’d love to see you at 10:00am for a joyful time of worship! Godly Play and Sunday School will take a holiday break, but our nursery will be open for infants through age four so families can relax and enjoy the service.
 - Sunday, January 4.** Christian education classes for all ages, Godly Play, and Youth Group will resume Sunday, January 4.

Children’s Sunday School for preschool through 5th graders meets September through May in room 206 (second floor) following worship until 12:30pm. A safe and secure nursery is available each Sunday during worship. Sunday School for infants through 4 year olds meets from 9:45am to 12:30pm in room 208 (second floor).

We have a multi-sensory, imaginative worship experience for children during most worship services called Godly Play. Children will leave sanctuary worship after “The Child Within Us All” for Godly Play. Children will return to their families before the end of worship, usually during the offertory. Please contact Director of Children and Family Ministries, Julia Librizzi, at jlibrizzi@umc-kzo.org to find out more about Children’s Ministry at FUMC of Kalamazoo!

Youth Group is open to all 6th-12th grade students and meets every Sunday evening during the school year from 6pm-7:30pm in a dedicated space called “The Youth Lounge.” If you wish to join or know more about our youth ministry at Kalamazoo FIRST UMC please contact Pastor Matt Weiler at mweiler@umc-kzo.org.

We would love to have new youth join us in the New Year! On the 11th we’ll share a meal together and the next two weeks we’ll begin a small group series exploring the Fruit of the Spirit.

Young Adults. Manna is a weekly gathering for young adults every Tuesday evening in the Youth Lounge from 6:30-8pm. If you are a young adult looking for deeper connection, contact our Youth and Young Adult Resident 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).





First United Methodist Church of Kalamazoo



Christmas Eve
The Nativity of Our Savior

11:00 pm

212 S. Park St. | Kalamazoo, MI | 269.381.6340 | umc-kzo.org

Good News Is Louder Than Fear

In a quiet spirit, we sing carols, listen to beautiful 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.

Welcome to First United Methodist Church of Kalamazoo

Welcome to our Christmas Eve time of worship! We would like to connect with you. Please fill out the attendance pad located at the end of the pews and introduce yourself as you pass it to your neighbor.

*Please rise in body or in spirit.

Carla and Larry Sue, handbells

PRELUDE

In the Bleak Midwinter (Gustav Holst, arr. Larry Sue)

’Twas in the Moon of Wintertime (traditional Canadian, arr. Larry Sue)

O Holy Night (Adophe Adam, arr. Larry Sue)

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear (Richard S. Willis, arr. Larry Sue)

Still, Still, Still (Felix Mendelssohn, arr. Larry Sue)

CALL TO CHRISTMAS

“The One Star Night” by Ann Weems

Rev. Julie Kline

*OPENING HYMN #234

O Come, All Ye Faithful - verses 1,3,4 and 6

(UMH - red hymnal)

*WELCOME AND PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

We invite you to turn to those nearby and offer a greeting. You may use a simple gesture such as a nod of the head, a wave, a smile, handshake, or a verbal greeting with the words, “Peace of Christ be with you.”

LIGHTING THE PEACE CANDLE AND THE FIRST LESSON - Micah 5:2-5a

CAROL #230

O Little Town of Bethlehem

(UMH - red hymnal)

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES AND CHRIST CANDLE

Derek and Dawn Wheaton

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.

**We see God's fingerprints all around us.
We see God in the beauty of the stars.
We see God in the love of this community.
We see God in the dreams we hold for a better world.**

***CAROL #238** *Angels We Have Heard on High* (UMH - red hymnal)

***CAROL #219** *What Child Is This* (UMH - red hymnal)

***CAROL #224** *Good Christian Friends Rejoice* (UMH - red hymnal)

All are welcome to the meal Jesus hosts. There is no one here who is ineligible or unwelcome; no one too old or too young; no one who has too many doubts or too few beliefs. You, who are part of God's creation, are welcome to receive Holy Communion this morning. Come forward by the center aisle, take a piece of bread, dip it in the cup of juice and eat it. Servers will offer the bread by saying, "the bread of life," and "the cup of love." You may respond with "Amen." Gluten-free bread is available at the station closest to the communion table.

HYMN #221 *In the Bleak Midwinter* (UMH - red hymnal)
will be interspersed throughout the communion liturgy.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

This evening's offering is designated to four ministries we partner with: The Wesley Foundation (student Christian programming), Growing Hope Globally (supports agricultural programs that enable families to

OFFERTORY ANTHEM *Creator of the Stars of Night* (9th-century Latin, arr. Larry Sue)

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

SERVICE OF LIGHT

If the weather permits, we will sing "Silent Night" on our front steps to proclaim the Good News that Christ the Savior is born. Please follow the Clergy down the center aisle to receive the light for your candle. As you light your candle, please tilt the UNLIT candle into the flame. If necessary, we will re-light our candles on the front steps, receiving the light from one another. Please bring your bulletins for the singing of "Silent Night."

**Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright
round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy infant, so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.**

**Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love's pure light.
Radiant beams from thy holy face
with the dawn of redeeming grace.
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.**


**Silent night, holy night, wondrous star, lend thy light;
with the angels let us sing,
"Alleluia" to our King;
Christ the Savior is born; Christ the Savior is born!**

(Please extinguish your candle after the blessing)

MISSION
We are called to:

- Experience God's love
- Celebrate God's love
- Share God's love

CORE VALUES

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

Justice: Restoration of equity and wholeness.

by Carmelle Beaugelin Caldwell

Reflection

Euphoria, the fear of good news, often stems from past losses, fear of change, or the pressure of new expectations. Joy and relief may come first, but they're often followed by a quiet dread. What now? What could this mean?

The word “new” is nestled in “good news” - a reminder that even the best gifts lie beyond our control. In the birth of Jesus, we witness the mystery of it all: the terrifying, the unexpected, the good, and the new that hope often brings.