



First United Methodist
Church of Kalamazoo

Dec. 24, 2025

4:00 pm

Welcome all to the celebration of Christ's birth!

Children are invited to participate in this evening's service! Please have your child choose a headpiece and prop piece for the character they wish to be on the way into the sanctuary. During the service Ms. Julia will call the children by character to leave their pew and come down the aisle with our helpers or their parents up to the manger for the telling of the Christmas Story.

* Please rise in body or in spirit

Bold denotes all reading together

PRELUDE

Marty and George Yeung, piano

Coventry Carol, Theme and Variation
(traditional English Carol)

Neela Parthasarathy, piano

Joy to the World (Isaac Watts)

Penelope and Carolyn Librizzi,
violin and cello

Mary Did You Know? (Mark Lowry & Buddy Greene)

Youth Orchestra

The Holly and the Ivy (Arr. by Anne Sherfield)

WELCOME

Rev. Julie Kline

***CALL TO WORSHIP** (reading responsively, all reading the **bold**)

Leader: Animals came to prepare your bed

People: **Welcome, Lord Jesus!**

Leader: Shepherds stood guard, marveled and said,

People: **Welcome, Lord Jesus!**

Leader: Angels sang to calm your cries

People: **Welcome, Lord Jesus!**

Leader: And all the world exclaimed

People: **Welcome, Lord Jesus!**

***CHRISTMAS CAROL #234** *O Come All Ye Faithful* (verses 1, 3 and 6)

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,

O come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem.

Come and behold Him, born the King of angels;

O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,

O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

**Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation;
O sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest;
O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.**

**Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning,
Jesus, to thee be all glory given.
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing
O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.**

THE LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

The English family

THE ADVENT SONG #2090 (refrain only)

**Candle, candle, burning bright,
shining in the cold winter night;
candle, candle, burning bright,
fill our hearts with Christmas light.**

THE CHRISTMAS STORY

Julia Librizzi

Please join in singing the hymns, as announced during the pageant.

The characters are invited forward in this order:

Joseph(s) and Mary(s)

CAROL #230 *O Little Town of Bethlehem* (v. 1 and 2)

**O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie;
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light;
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.**

**For Christ is born of Mary, and gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars together, proclaim the holy birth,
And praises sing to God the King, and peace to all on earth!**

Animals

CAROL #217 *Away in a Manger* (v. 1 and 2)

**Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the sky looked down where he lay,
The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.**

**The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes;
I love thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.**

Shepherds and Angels

CAROL #238 *Angels We Have Heard on High* (v. 1, 2 and 4)

**Angels we have heard on high sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains.
Gloria, in excelsis Deo! Gloria, in excelsis Deo!**

**Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be which inspire your heavenly song?
Gloria, in excelsis Deo! Gloria, in excelsis Deo!**

**See him in a manger laid, whom the choirs of angels praise;
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid, while our hearts in love we raise.
Gloria, in excelsis Deo! Gloria, in excelsis Deo!**

Wise Ones

CAROL #254 *We Three Kings* (v. 1 and 2)

**We three kings of Orient are; bearing gifts we traverse afar,
Field and fountain, moor and mountain, following yonder star.
O star of wonder, star of light, star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.**

**Born a King on Bethlehem's plain, gold I bring to crown him again,
King forever, ceasing never, over us all to reign.
O star of wonder, star of light, star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.**

PRAYER

**Thank you, God, for the wonderful gift of Jesus.
Wherever we travel, help us to follow Jesus.
Amen.**

CHRISTMAS CAROL #240 *Hark! the Herald Angels Sing* (verses 1 and 2)

First Bells

**Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King;
peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations rise, join the triumph of the skies;
with th'angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"**

**Christ, by highest heaven adored; Christ, the everlasting Lord;
late in time behold him come, offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; hail th' incarnate Deity,
pleased with us in flesh to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel.
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"**

PRAYER

Rev. Julie Kline

OFFERING INVITATION

Rev. Matt Weiler

OFFERTORY ANTHEM *What Child Is This and Carol of the Bells*
(arr. by Robert S. Frost)

Youth Orchestra

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Loving God, we thank you for this night, a night of celebrating the birth of Jesus. We thank you for the joyful sounds and songs of this season, the warmth of being together in this sanctuary, and the blessing of your presence with us. May our gifts help us share Jesus' love with the world. Amen.

THE SERVICE OF LIGHT

Rev. Matt Weiler

On this special evening, we light our candles remembering that Jesus is the light of the world that the darkness cannot overcome. Once all the candles are lit, we will sing *Silent Night*. (Please also remember to tip only the UNLIT candle.)

CHRISTMAS CAROL #239 *Silent Night* (verses 1, 2 and 3)

**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, shepherds quake at the sight;
glories stream from heaven afar,
heavenly hosts sing Alleluia!
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born!**

**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.**

BLESSING

Rev. Matt Weiler

ONE: When the song of the angels is stilled, the star in the east has diminished its brightness, and the shepherds are back with their flocks, then the work of Christmas begins:

ALL: **to find the lost, heal the broken, feed the hungry, bring release to the captives, proclaim peace among all people, and make music in the heart.**

Please extinguish your candles. As you leave, place them in the baskets near the exits of the church.

***CLOSING CHRISTMAS CAROL #246 – Joy to the World**

**Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
let every heart prepare him room,
and heaven and nature sing,(2x)
and heaven, and heaven, and nature sing.**

**Joy to the world, the Savior reigns!
Let all their songs employ;
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
repeat the sounding joy, (2x)
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.**

**He rules the world with truth and grace,
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness,
and wonders of his love, (2x)
and wonders, wonders of his love.**

***BENEDICTION**

Rev. Julie Kline

LEADING US IN WORSHIP

Rev. Julie Kline, Lead Pastor

Rev. Matt Weiler, Pastor of Community Formation

Jacqueline Stilger, Director of Music

Cari Beth Croak, Associate Director of Music

Julia Librizzi, Director of Children & Families Ministries

Advent candle lighters: the English family

Prop helper & children's shepherd: Deb Search Willoughby, Joyce Moore

Children/Youth story readers: Cora Welter, Hazel Welter, Neela Parthasarathy,
Campbell Weiler, Kaden Seals

Youth Orchestra: Coulter Weiler and Penny Librizzi, violin; Bixler Weiler, viola;
Carolyn Librizzi, cello; Neela Parthasarathy, bass; Evelyn Moon, flute

Director of Youth Orchestra: Anne Sherfield



Welcome to First United Methodist Church!

212 S. Park Street, Kalamazoo, MI 49007
www.umc-kzo.org | 269.381.6340

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 each Sunday at 10:00 a.m.

Upcoming Worship

Sunday, December 28 10:00 a.m.

Psalm 148

Rev. Julie Kline

Join us as we celebrate the Christmas season, a time of great joy. Our worship is inspired by a "Lessons & Carols" format and will embody a spirit of "Lessons & Laughter." We'll explore three Scripture lessons, each paired with beloved hymns and a creative response rooted in joy. Together, we will respond to the good news just as they did so long ago: the angels sang, the shepherds ran and Mary cherished the miracle of Christ's birth. Come, let us gather together in a celebration of hope, joy, and community.

Merry Christmas!

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.**

OUR MISSION

We are called to
Experience God's love
Celebrate God's love
Share God's love

OUR VISION

We are a Christ-centered community
where our stories are woven
with God's story.

OUR 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.