

Welcome to Worship!

** Please stand as you are able.*

Please silence cell phones and other alarms.

You are invited in these beginning moments of worship to offer prayers, using the prayer cards if desired, and passing them to an usher. Please take a moment to sign in using the gray registration pad found in the pew pocket near the outside aisle, and passing it to your neighbors.

“And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in the manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.” ~ Luke 2: 7 (NRSV)

PRAISE

PRELUDE “Hark the Herald Angels Sing,” “O Come, O Come Emmanuel” Joel Raney
“God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen”

CALL TO WORSHIP *(all reading the bold)*

We gather in preparation

for good news is about to be proclaimed!

We gather in expectation

for joy is about to break forth in our midst.

We gather in celebration

**for we are those people who have said, “yes to the manger,
yes to the One incarnate for others, yes to the wholeness of God.”**

In preparation,

and in expectation... let us celebrate!

***HYMN OF PRAISE 202** *(red hymnal)* “People, Look East”

***LIGHTING OF THE PEACE CANDLE**

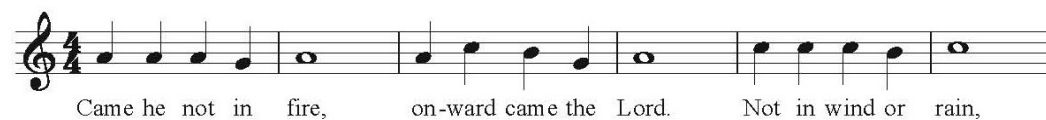
***GREETING and the PASSING OF THE PEACE**

The Lord be with you!

And also with you!

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLES

Onward Came the Lord



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UNISON PRAYER *(praying together)*

Love shall be our token, God. Love be yours and love be mine. Love to God and all God's people. Thank you, God for this wondrous sign. Amen.

PROCLAMATION

GOSPEL LESSON

This is what the Spirit is saying to the church.

Thanks be to God!

Luke 2: 1-7, (NT, p. 58)

A PAGEANT OF CHRISTMAS *(see insert)* “Joy in the Stable”

MESSAGE “The Loving Community”

RESPONSE

SONG OF RESPONSE 2095 *(black hymnal)* “Star-Child”

PASTORAL and THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

**Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.**

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

OFFERING INVITATION

SHARING OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

Coins received will be designated for the support of United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) for our work around the world. Please sign the attendance pads as they are passed down the aisle.

OFFERTORY “Christ Has Come”

D. Linda McKechnie

***DOXOLOGY 221 v. 4** *(red hymnal)* “In the Bleak Midwinter”

*What can I give him, poor as I am? If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
if I were a Wise Man, I would do my part; yet what I can, I give him; give my heart.*

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION** *(praying together)*

Gracious God, receive the gifts we give today. Cleanse them of our selfishness and greed so that they may become proclamations of your love for us and the world, for which you gave your only Son, Jesus the Christ for whom we wait. Amen.

***OUR SHARED LIFE - Ministry Shares with David Lundquist**

***HYMN OF SENDING FORTH 220** *(red hymnal)* “Angels from the Realms of Glory”

BENEDICTION

GOING FORTH “Gloria”

G. Gabrieli

UPCOMING WORSHIP

Christmas Eve (Dec. 24)
5:00, 7:00, 11:00 p.m.

Childcare will be available at 5 & 7 p.m.

Christmas Day Worship (Dec. 25)
4:00 p.m.

Rev. John Boley
“The Customs of Christmas”

Sunday, January 1
10:00 a.m.

Rev. Julie Kline
“An Invitation to New Life”
A Service of Covenant & Renewal
Holy Communion
Romans 12: 1-3

THE WEEK AHEAD

SUNDAY, December 18

8:30 a.m. Worship - Sanctuary
9:30 a.m. Park Street Perks - Perks Gathering Area
9:30 a.m. Sip 'n Sing - Parlor
9:30 a.m. Sunday School for children and youth
11:00 a.m. Worship - Sanctuary
12:15 p.m. Hospitality Team - Parlor
4:00 p.m. Martha's Table - First Congregational Church
6:00 p.m. First Singers Rehearsal - Choir Room
6:00 p.m. Youth Tribe Christmas Party - Youth Center

MONDAY, December 19

7:00 a.m. Sunrise Patrol - Fellowship Room

TUESDAY, December 20

10:00 a.m. Worship Planning - 305
12:00 p.m. All Staff Meeting - Parlor
2:30 p.m. UMW New Year's Fest Planning
4:15 p.m. Children's Choir Rehearsal - Choir Room
5:00 p.m. Advocacy Services - 3rd floor
7:00 p.m. NA - Fellowship Room

WEDNESDAY, December 21

7:30 a.m. Dawn Patrol - Fellowship Room
9:30 a.m. Anna Circle - Parlor
10:30 a.m. Community for Healing Counseling - 304
12:00 p.m. Advent Concert Series - Sanctuary
1:00 p.m. Julia-Phoebe Circle - Parlor
1:00 p.m. Miriam Circle - Dorothy Dykema's home
1:00 p.m. Lydia Circle - Friendship Village
5:15 p.m. Finance Committee - Parlor
7:00 p.m. NA - Fellowship Room
7:00 p.m. Disciple II - 304

THURSDAY, December 22

9:30 a.m. First Stitchers - Fellowship Room
1:30 p.m. Prayer Group - Chapel
5:30 p.m. Depression/Bipolar Support - Youth Center
6:00 p.m. NA - Wesley Hall
7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir - Choir Room

FRIDAY, December 23

4:00 p.m. Kaylor/Peters Wedding - Sanctuary

SATURDAY, December 24

5:00 p.m. Family service of song and story
7:00 p.m. Lessons, carols and candlelight
11:00 p.m. Christmas story, carols, Holy Communion

OUR MISSION

We are called to

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

OUR VISION

We are a Faith Community

- Alive in Christ
- Open to all
- Growing in faith
- Serving our neighbors
- Active in the world

We're glad you are our guest today!

If you are worshipping with us for the first time, please stop by the Welcome Center as you exit the side sanctuary doors so that we may personally welcome you and present a gift of love from First Church. Please register your attendance in the gray pad found in the pew pocket.

Child care is provided on the second floor. There is also a family room in the right balcony.

Worship activities for children can be found on a cart outside the side sanctuary doors.

LARGE print Bibles and United Methodist Hymnals are available at the Park Street entrance.

Hearing assistance devices are available at the Welcome Center. If you need assistance, please speak with one of the ushers. Please return hearing devices to the Welcome Center following worship.

Today's service is being recorded. You can request a free copy from the office. A basket on the table near the parking lot entrance has previous Sunday recordings on CD. You can also access Sunday worship recordings from our website: <http://www.umc-kzo.org/mp3.asp>.

Worship CDs

Recordings of past Sunday morning services are available in the Perks gathering area. If you would like to be on a mailing list for CD recordings, please contact

John Ross, jross@umc-kzo.org

Worship Leaders

Rev. John Boley, Rev. Sandy Elfring, Ginnie Hessler

Pianists

Cari Miller, Carol Grant, Connie Lyszyk

Ushers

Dan Bunker, Michael Seals, Jay Gross, Jim Treece, Lois Miles, Noah Gross, Michael Deaton

Greeters

John & Wanda Boekhout

Sharon Dougan & Terry Mishler

Acolytes

Lukas Bolton

Christopher Aranda

Welcome Center

Joyce Treece

Van Driver

Jay Gross

Audio/Lighting

Greg Anderson

The flowers on the altar are given to the glory of God and in celebration of the 64th wedding anniversary of Margaret & Jim Hastings.

The rosebud on the altar is in celebration of the December 7 birth of Whittaker Henry Lewis, grandson of Gene and Marilyn Lewis. Parents are Brian and Jessica Lewis.

The new Advent wreath is a gift to the church in loving memory of Mary Cooper.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

"Joy at the Stable" Children's Christmas Pageant. Today during the 11 a.m. worship service the children will offer a Christmas program that tells the story of the miraculous birth of Jesus through song and spoken word.

2012 Offering Envelopes. Boxed envelopes are available for pick up on the desk in the Jesus Lounge for those who ordered them.

New Year's Eve Fest. We need volunteers! Sign-up at the table in the hall for the time of your choice to help direct guests during the downtown Kalamazoo New Year's Eve Fest and get free admission for the evening! Contact Dan Bunker, 329-1196 with questions.

A Kalamazoo Christmas: Give the Gift of Warmth. TODAY at Stockbridge Avenue UMC (located at 1009 East Stockbridge Ave.) they will be serving guests in need a full Christmas dinner from 3-7 p.m. as well as provide warm coats, hats and mittens. Children will receive a toy. If you would like to help volunteer, just stop by and lend a helping hand! Many hands make the work easier.

Advent Concert Series. Please join us for our last Advent concert at noon. Our Wednesday, December 21st concert will feature classical and holiday music by brass trio The Kalamazoo Brass Collective. Refreshments will be available after the concert. A free will offering will be accepted for future music and arts programming.

Christmas Eve Greeters. If your family is interested in greeting on Christmas Eve at one of our three services, please contact the office. We have no one scheduled at 5:00 or 7:00 at this time.

First United Methodist Church

212 S. Park St.
Kalamazoo, MI 49007
Phone 269-381-6340; Fax 269-381-1678
www.umc-kzo.org

Christmas Eve Worship

Join us for a Christmas Eve celebration! Saturday, December 24 at 5:00, 7:00 and 11:00 p.m. we will celebrate the birth of the babe in the manger. Child care for infants and toddlers will be available at the 5 and 7 p.m. services. Family and friends are always welcome!

5 p.m. Family service of song and story

7 p.m. Lessons, carols, candlelight, with the Chancel Choir and Western Brass Quintet

11 p.m. Christmas story, carols candlelight, Holy Communion, with the First Singers Choir

Christmas Day Worship @ 4 p.m. Join us on Christmas Day for a celebration of "The Customs of Christmas," by Rev. John Boley (no Sunday School).

Ministry Shares 100%. Your Christmas Offering will help us reach our tradition of paying 100% of our ministry shares.

Pledge Cards. A big thank you to all those who have responded to our "Live A God-Pleasing Life" stewardship campaign. As of December 15 we have heard from 267 pledging units for \$712,688. If you have not done so yet, please return your 2012 pledge card to the office as soon as possible so that we may finalize the process of setting the budget for next year.

New Year's Day Worship. There will be one worship service at 10 a.m. led by Rev. Julie Kline. No Sunday School that morning.

Companions in Christ. *The Way of Blessedness* small group study will begin Thursday, Jan. 5. They will meet in the chapel from 7-9 p.m. It is open to all those who have taken a previous Companions study. Contact Miriam Downey or Mary Bullock if you would like to participate.



FIRST UNITED
METHODIST
CHURCH OF KALAMAZOO

December 18, 2011

11:00 a.m.

Experience, Celebrate and Share God's love



Art work by Emma Winchell

We are a Reconciling Congregation.

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.