

First United Methodist Church

Welcome! We are a Congregation Caring For and About God's Community
December 15, 2024 - 10:00am - Third Sunday in Advent

GATHERING AND PRAISE

Prelude: "What Is This Lovely Fragrance?"

French Carol; by Henry Kihlken

Welcome and Announcements – Please sign in on the attendance pads, or use your phone and the QR Code to the right to sign in electronically or use this link: <https://form.jotform.com/211785166356159>

Please fill out your yellow prayer cards



***Opening Hymn UMH #244:** "Twas In the Moon In Wintertime"

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|---|---|
| 1) Twas in the moon of wintertime,
When all the birds had fled,
That mighty Gitchi Manitou
Sent angel choirs instead;
Before their light the stars grew dim,
And wondering hunters heard the hymn:
Jesus your king is born,
Jesus is born, in excelsis gloria. | 3) The earliest moon of wintertime
Is not so round and fair
As was the ring of glory on
The helpless infant there.
The chiefs from far before him knelt
With gifts of fox and beaver pelt.
Jesus your king is born,
Jesus is born, in excelsis gloria. |
| 2) Within a lodge of broken bark
The tender babe was found,
A ragged robe of rabbit skin
Enwrapped his beauty round;
But as the hunter braves drew nigh,
The angel song rang loud and high:
Jesus your king is born,
Jesus is born, in excelsis gloria. | 4) O children of the forest free,
O seed of Manitou,
The holy child of earth and heaven
Is born today for you.
Come kneel before the radiant boy,
Who brings you beauty, peace and joy.
Jesus your king is born,
Jesus is born, in excelsis gloria. |

PROCLAMATION AND RESPONSE

***The Lighting of the Advent Wreath**

Erlene Kimber and Matt Martinez

One: During Advent, we are mindful of the brokenness of the world around us.

All: We long for the peace that surpasses all understanding.

One: We are all too aware of the hostility between neighbors and nations.

All: We long for the peace and goodwill about which the angels sang.

One: As we look around us, we see fractured relationships and closed hearts.

All: We long for the peace that is born of gentleness and grace.

** Please stand if you are able*

One: As we look within ourselves, we confess the reconciling words we have yet to speak and the restoring deeds we have yet to do.

All: We long for the Prince of Peace, who heals, forgives, and restores to new life.

One: This morning, we light three purple candles. The first candle reminds us of the hope born on a starry night in a quiet stable when God changed the course of human history. The second candle reminds us of the love that is made flesh in Jesus. The third candle reminds us of the peace promised by the prophets, a peace Jesus himself embodied when he calmed the storm and quieted the sea, saying: "Peace, be still."

All: Prince of Peace, we pray that you will help us to see glimpses of your peace in our fractured world. Help us to remember this holy season that we can also be agents of peace to those around us and in our world. Lead us to your peace which passes all understanding, we pray in your name. Amen.

SONG:

Peace waits for us at Advent. Peace waits for us to rest. Peace waits for our acceptance of the truth that we are blessed. In this time of preparation for the work of co-creation, for the birthing of a world of gentleness and play, peace is born in us each day.

Original source of liturgy unknown; Music/lyrics © 2020 Amanda Udis-Kessler. Used by permission

ALL SINGING:

The musical score is written for a single voice in the treble clef, with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics written below the notes. Chord symbols are placed above the staff to indicate accompaniment. The score is divided into four systems, with measure numbers 6, 10, and 15 marked at the beginning of their respective lines. The final system includes a change in time signature from 4/4 to 6/4 and back to 4/4.

D D/F# G A D D/F# G A Bm G
Peace waits for us at Ad-vent. Peace waits for us to rest. Peace waits for

6 A D Em Cmaj7 Asus A G2 D/F#
our ac - cep-tance of the truth that we are blessed. In this time of

10 Em7 D/F# G2 D/F# Em7 D/F# G2 D/F# G A Bm
pre - par-a-tion for the work of co - cre-a-tion, for the birth-ing of a world of

15 C G D2 Em7 D/F# G G/B Bm A D
gen - tle - ness and play, Peace is born in us each day.

Time of Prayer – *During the silent meditation, ushers will collect your yellow prayer cards to deliver to the pastor.*

Silent Meditation and Lifting our Celebrations and Concerns In Prayer

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.

Living Our Gratitude

♪ *You can support your church family by giving in person or online.
Enjoy the musical selection as a time to give thanks to God
for all with which you have been blessed. Thank you!
Use the QR code to the right or give online here:
<https://www.firstumcsaginaw.org/give/>*



The Offertory: “Do You Hear What I Hear?” *by Neil Regnry & Gloria Shayne; arr. Neil Archer*

The Doxology: Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; **UMH #94**
Praise God all creatures here below: Alleluia! Alleluia!
Praise God, the source of all our gifts! Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts!
Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

The Unison Prayer of Thanksgiving: Prince of Peace, we bring our offerings with hearts open to your transformative call. In this season of anticipation, may our gifts help mend what is broken and share the promise of redemption. Empower us to live fully present, giving generously and acting justly. Let these offerings be seeds of peace that will draw us closer to your kingdom. Bless our giving, that it may reflect your love and bring light to our world. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Special Music: “O Holy Night” *John Sullivan Dwight*
Bethany Tomasino, Soloist

Scripture Lesson: Luke 3:1-18 *Pew Bible N.T. pg. 56*

¹ In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, ² during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. ³ He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, ⁴ as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, “The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight. ⁵ Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth, ⁶ and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.” ⁷ John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee the coming wrath? ⁸ Therefore, bear fruits worthy of repentance,

and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor,' for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ⁹ Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire." ¹⁰ And the crowds asked him, "What, then, should we do?" ¹¹ In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none, and whoever has food must do likewise." ¹² Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" ¹³ He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." ¹⁴ Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what should we do?" He said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages." ¹⁵ As the people were filled with expectation and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, ¹⁶ John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water, but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷ His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." ¹⁸ So with many other exhortations he proclaimed the good news to the people.

Response to the Word

One: This is the Word of God for the people of God.

All: **Thanks be to God!**

Hymn FWS #2095: "Star Child"

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|---|--|
| <p>1) Star-Child, earth-Child,
Go-between of God,
Love Child, Christ Child,
Heaven's lightning rod.</p> <p><i>Refrain: This year, this year
Let the day arrive
When Christmas comes
For everyone, everyone alive!</i></p> <p>2) Street child, beat child,
No place left to go,
Hurt child, used child,
No one wants to know. <i>Refrain</i></p> | <p>3) Grown child, old child,
Memory full of years,
Sad child, lost child,
Story told in tears. <i>Refrain</i></p> <p>4) Spared child, spoiled child,
Having, wanting more,
Wise child, faith child,
Knowing joy in store. <i>Refrain</i></p> <p>5) Hope-for-peace Child,
God's stupendous sign,
Down-to-earth Child,
Star of stars that shine. <i>Refrain</i></p> |
|---|--|

The Message:

"REPENT!"

Pastor Amy Terhune

WE GO AS WITNESSES FOR CHRIST IN THE WORLD

***Closing Hymn UMH #218: “It Came Upon A Midnight Clear”**

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|---|--|
| 1) It came upon the midnight clear,
that glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth
to touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, good will to men,
from heaven's all-gracious King."
The world in solemn stillness lay,
to hear the angels sing. | 3) And ye, beneath life's crushing load,
whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way
with painful steps and slow,
Look now! for glad and golden hours
come swiftly on the wing.
O rest beside the weary road,
and hear the angels sing! |
| 2) Still through the cloven skies they come
with peaceful wings unfurled,
And still their heavenly music floats
o'er all the weary world;
Above its sad and lowly plains,
they bend on hovering wing,
And ever o'er its Babel sounds
the blessed angels sing. | 4) For lo! the days are hastening on,
by prophet seen of old,
When with the ever-circling years
shall come the time foretold
When peace shall over all the earth
its ancient splendors fling,
And the whole world send back the song
which now the angels sing. |

***Benediction:**

(adapted from Rev. Richard J. Fairchild, <https://re-worship.blogspot.com>)

One: Beloved, go in peace, and may the power of the Holy Spirit make the rough places in your life smooth; may the peace of Christ fill the dark valleys of your soul, that the way of the Lord be made ready in you; and may the light of God bless you and shine forth from you both now and forevermore.

All: We go in peace to love and serve the Lord and all God’s creation. Thanks be to God. Amen.

*** Postlude: “Good People All, This Christmas Time”**

Irish Carol; arr. Jack Jones

First United Methodist Church

**4790 Gratiot Road, Saginaw, MI 48638-6242; (989) 799-0131; Fax (989) 799-4240
e-mail: firstumsag@aol.com website: <http://firstumcsaginaw.org>**

Senior Pastor Rev. Amy Lee Brun Terhune
..... pastoralbt@outlook.com / (989) 274-6363 (cell phone)
Office Administrator/Treasurer..... Dina Draper
Custodian..... Tina Castle
Organist..... Bryan Latimer
Director of Music & Chancel Choir..... Rod Bieber
Bell Choir Director..... Catherine McMichael
Nursery Supervisors..... Katie Moon and Karissa Schultz
Audio Visual Technicians..... Andy Sharrow, Angie Smith, Izzy Terhune

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

TODAY'S VOLUNTEERS: Thank you for your service!! Liturgist: Cal Mott / Advent Wreath: Erlene Kimber & Matt Martinez / Greeters: Jane MacQueen, Stacy Sharrow / Ushers: Tom Kraynak, Bill Draper, Carla Piazza-Wistehuff, Austin Tomlinson / Welcome Desk: Dina Draper / Coffee Hour Hosts: Jacquie Matlock & Dee Mills / Nursery: Karissa Schultz / Sound System: Izzy Terhune

OUR SYMPATHY is extended to the family of Ruth Ann Hilton, who entered eternal life on Dec. 11. Information about a Memorial Service will be available after the new year.

HOSPITALIZED THIS WEEK: Sharon Mueller, Peter Pape, Ron Southgate

PLEASE HOLD IN YOUR PRAYERS: Marilyn Ashmall, Ed Babinski, David Barker, Barry Brown, Tom Brubaker, Bernie Buggia, Myrna Cammin, Judy Dawe, Bonnie Dole, Esther Cavendish Fisher, Don Hammond, Wayne Henney, Dr. Kirk Herrick, Marion Hoffman, Sue Johnson, Sharon Ketcham, ZoAnn Kraynak, Barb Kropp, Mark Leffler, Joyce Maltman, Bonnie Markley, Kay Mertz, Merlyn Mondol, Bob & Sharon Mueller, Madge Richmond, Eugenia Shek, Ron & Noreen Southgate, Kathy Winkowski, and Dorothy Woods. Also, please pray for UMCOR, and for war to end in Ukraine and in Israel/Gaza.

ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD – Monday, December 16 at 7:00pm.

ADVENT BOOK STUDY (4 WEEKS) will wrap-up this week in person at 6pm on Tues. 12/17 and online at 7:30pm on Wed. 12/18. The book is entitled “Keep Watch With Me” by Claire Brown and Michael T. McRay.

THE CHRISTMAS COOKIE WALK will take place NEXT SUNDAY, December 22. Cookies will be \$5/dozen. All proceeds go to fund the Youth Mission Trip to Milwaukee this June 2025. Please consider baking/donating cookies for the walk to help the kids out. Thank you!

COUNTERS NEEDED to count the offering after worship beginning in January. Counters work in teams of 2, and the task generally takes 20-30 minutes. Light record-keeping also involved. A training will be held after worship on January 5, 2025. This work helps us maintain fiscal safety protocols. Please speak with Dina Draper or Pastor Amy at (989) 799-0131 if you're willing and able to help. Thank You!

BIBLE EXCHANGE – We now have a bookshelf in the lobby area with copies of Scripture available for free. If you need a bible, or see a translation you've not studied before, please feel free to take a bible. If you have extra copies of Scripture around your home that aren't being read/used, please consider donating them for others who don't own a copy of the Bible, or want to study more in depth.

FREE COMMUNITY MEALS on the 2nd Tuesday of each month, continue Tuesday, January 14 from 5:30-6:30pm. On the menu for January: Chili. Clean-up helpers are needed. Volunteer to work here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60B044DAFAC2BA0FD0-community>

THE BACKPACK PROGRAM for children struggling with food insecurity has begun. Sponsor a child for \$150/year. Buy Christmas things in the Narthex. Sign up to pack food and help deliver to area schools at: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60B044DAFAC2BA0FD0-44603782-backpack>

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

Be sure to check in on Facebook! The more of us that do, the more people learn about who we are!

YouTube: **Saginaw First UMC**

Bluesky: **FirstUMCSaginaw.bsky.social**

Facebook: **@firstumcofsaginaw**

Instagram: **saginawfumc**



Worship Schedule

- *Third Advent 12/15/2024 – Worship 10:00am*
- *Fourth Advent 12/22/2024 – All Music Sunday 10:00am*
- **CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE – 7:30pm**
(Pre-service music begins at 7:00pm)
- *Christmas I Sunday 12/29 – Worship 10:00am – Tatyana Spaulding, Guest Preacher*
- *Epiphany Sunday 1/5/2025 – Worship/Communion 10:00am*

Mission

THE CHRISTMAS MIRACLE OFFERING will be divided this year between a) the Partnership Center and b) the purchase gift cards and needed Christmas Meals for the families of our 48 Backpack Children. **Give online** at <https://www.firstumcsaginaw.org/give/> or use the QR code to the right.



Education

CHRISTMAS COOKIE SALE for Youth Mission Trip – Sunday 12/22 after All Music Sunday Worship. **COOKIE DONATIONS WELCOME!!!!**

FOUR-WEEK ADVENT ADULT BOOK STUDY on *Keep Watch With Me* by Claire Brown and Michael T. McRay. Books available from the Office for \$15.
6:00-7:00pm in person on Tuesdays: 11/26, 12/3, 12/10, 12/17
7:30-8:30pm online on Wednesdays: 11/27, 12/4, 12/11, 12/18



Facing the Holidays with a Grieving Heart



The holidays are not always a happy, enchanting, joyous time for everyone.

As the holidays approach, many who have lost a loved one may experience a wide array of emotions, including anxiety, stress, fatigue, guilt, sadness/depression, and feeling isolated. These emotions, in turn, can affect our ability to cope with the pain and to utilize resources available to us. Following are some tips for facing the holidays in a time of grief:

- **Begin early to think about your holidays.** This is painful because we cannot help but to think about how things will be different this year without our loved one here. But putting it off doesn't allow time for us to process our thoughts and feelings or to grieve our loss. Talk to the family early about how you will observe the holidays this year.
- **Be patient with yourself.** Leave the words "I should..." or "I ought to..." out of your planning process. There is no right or wrong way to handle your celebrations.
- **Make your wishes known upfront.** There will be many people who may think they know what's best for you and want to make plans for you. This may be helpful to some and irritating to others. **Pay attention to what you are feeling and listen to your heart.** Be honest and make your feelings known before major plans get made. If you're not sure about something, give it a try. If it's too painful, that's okay. You can always step away. On the other hand, if you find yourself having fun, this does not mean you don't care about the loved one who has died. It's okay to go on with living.
- **Recognize that family get-togethers and certain traditions may be difficult.** Keep the memory of your loved one alive. Share stories and memories together. Spend time with people you find supportive and comforting.
- **Remember that everyone grieves in their own way.** What is right for you may not be right for someone else, and vice versa. Allow one another the freedom to feel whatever each is feeling, and to do what each needs to cope with the grief.
- **Be prepared** for the fact that well-meaning people who don't know your situation will wish you 'Happy Holidays!' or 'Merry Christmas!' All the standard décor of the season will be around you in stores and restaurants. There is no escaping the trappings of the season, so **pace yourself** when you're out and about during the holiday season.
- **Don't be afraid to ask for help.** Seek out professional services if you feel you need it.
- Keep in mind that **the anticipation of the holiday** is often worse than the holiday itself.
- **Take care of yourself.** Remember that grieving is both emotional work and physical work. Get plenty of rest, eat right, exercise, take a hot bath—do whatever you need to do to care for yourself. And allow the tears to come. This is a very normal expression of grief and can help with the healing.