

First United Methodist Church

Welcome! We are a Congregation Caring For and About God's Community

December 22, 2024 - 10:00am - 4th Sunday in Advent / All Music Sunday

GATHERING AND PRAISE

Bells on High Prelude: “Carol of the Bells / God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen” *arr. Lloyd Larson*

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>.



***Opening Hymn UMH #220:** “Angels From the Realms of Glory”

- 1) Angels from the realms of glory,
Wing your flight o'er all the earth;
Ye who sang creation's story,
Now proclaim Messiah's birth:
 - 2) Shepherds, in the field abiding,
Watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with us is now residing;
Yonder shines the infant light: *[Refrain]*
 - 3) Sages, leave your contemplations,
Brighter visions beam afar;
Seek the great Desire of nations;
Ye have seen his natal star: *[Refrain]*
 - 4) Saints, before the altar bending,
Watching long in hope and fear;
Suddenly the Lord, descending,
In his temple shall appear: *[Refrain]*
- Refrain: Come and worship, Come and worship,
Worship Christ, the newborn king.

PROCLAMATION AND RESPONSE

The Lighting of the Advent Wreath – *Bill Cowdry and Angie Cowdry Smith*

One: In a world where we often seek personal happiness, Advent beckons us to a deeper expression of our faith in Christ.

All: For the Lord our God is with us both now and forevermore.

One: Advent beckons us to seek after peace; to be still and know God, that we may live peaceably with others.

All: For the Lord our God is with us as we work for justice and equity in the world.

One: Advent beckons us to remember God's unconditional love, even when we stumble

All: For the Lord our God is with us in our fears and temptations

One: Advent beckons us to remember we always have hope, even when it seems as if our world is caving in around us.

All: For the Lord our God is with us even in our bleakest moments.

One: Advent beckons us to rejoice and give thanks in all circumstances, especially the hard times.

All: For the Lord our God is with us both now and forevermore.

** Please stand if you are able.*

One: This morning, we light four candles. The first candle reminds us of the hope we find in God, whose light never ceases to shine. The second candle reminds us of the matchless love and compassion God has for us. The third candle reminds us of the peace promised in Emmanuel, God with us. The fourth candle – the pink candle – reminds us that our joy abides in God, who gently whispers to each human heart, “Come and follow me, for I have come that you might have life, and have it to the fullest measure...”

All: Eternal God, in a world where the message is “be happy”, we are reminded that only you grant the gift of true joy. This morning, let us hear again with joyful hearts and proclaim with elated voices the wondrous refrain of your coming: The Lord our God is with us both now and forever more; we pray in Christ. Amen.

SONG:

Joy waits for us at Advent. Joy waits for us to sing. Joy waits for our amazement at the grace in everything. In this time of preparation for the work of co-creation, for the birthing of a world where wonder is restored, joy is born in us once more.

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

ALL SINGING:

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (D major) and a 4/4 time signature. It consists of four staves of music with lyrics and guitar chords written above the notes. The lyrics are: "Joy waits for us at Ad-vent. Joy waits for us to sing. Joy waits for our a - maze-ment at the grace in e - very-thing. In this time of pre - par-a - tion for the work of co - cre-a - tion, for the birth - ing of a world where won-der is re-stored, Joy is born in us once more." The guitar chords are: D, D/F#, G, A, D, D/F#, G, A, Bm, G, A, D, Em, Cmaj7, Asus, A, G2, D/F#, Em7, D/F#, G2, D/F#, Em7, D/F#, G2, D/F#, G, A, Bm, C, G, D2, Em7D/F#G, G/B, Bm, A, D.

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

♪ *Please help support your church family. Enjoy the musical selection as a time to give thanks to God for all with which you have been blessed.*

Use the QR code to the right or give online here:

<https://www.firstumcsaginaw.org/give/>



Offertory: “*Caroling, Caroling*”

by Alfred Burt, arr. Carrie Craft

Bryan Latimer and Catherine McMichael, 4-hand piano duet

***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:** Giving God: when your children were in deep despair, you promised a Savior. As we bring you our tithes and offerings this day, we know so many are discouraged and longing for a new song among the ruins. We need what only a Savior can give us. Instill your song in our hearts, until we rejoice in your glory and reflect your love; through Christ our Savior. Amen.

THE WORD IN MUSIC

Choral Anthem:

“*Gaudete*”

by Pia Cantiones, arr. Richard Lakey

Bell Anthem:

“*Be All Merrie*”

by Catherine McMichael

Special Music:

“*Make Room*”

by Matt Maher and Mark Hall

Bryan Latimer, Terry Moon, and Peg Wilken

Bell Anthem:

“*I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day*”

arr. Cynthia Dobrinski

Hymn UMH #224: “*Good Christian Friends, Rejoice!*”

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|---|------------------------------|
| 1) Good Christian friends, rejoice | Ox and ass before him bow, |
| With heart and soul and voice; | And he is in the manger now. |
| Give ye heed to what we say: | Christ is born today, |
| News, news! Jesus Christ is born today! | Christ is born today! |

2) Good Christian friends, rejoice,
With heart and soul and voice;
Now ye hear of endless bliss:
News, news!
Jesus Christ was born for this!
He has opened heaven's door,
And we are blest forevermore.
Christ was born for this,
Christ was born for this!

3) Good Christian friends, rejoice,
With heart and soul and voice;
Now we need not fear the grave:
News, news!
Jesus Christ was born to save!
Calls us one and calls us all
To gain his everlasting hall.
Christ was born to save,
Christ was born to save!

Scripture Lesson:

Luke 1:26-38

Pew Bible N.T. pg. 53

²⁶ In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And the angel came to her saying, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." ²⁹ But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰ The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³ He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴ Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵ The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁶ And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. ³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸ Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

Special Music:

"Mary, Did You Know?"

by Lowry and Greene

Isabelle Terhune, soloist – Domingo Vasquez and Bryan Latimer, accompanists

Choral Anthem:

"Go To Bethlehem"

by Susan Kochanek

Special Music:

"Silent Night"

arr. Catherine McMichael

Ethan Hagerl, Trombone

Special Music:

"Unto Us"

by Larry & Lesa Bryant

Kathy Jimenez, soloist

Choral Anthem:

"The Jesus Gift"

by Gilbert Martin

WE GO AS WITNESSES FOR CHRIST IN THE WORLD

***Closing Hymn UMH #246: “Joy to the World”**

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|--|---|
| 1) Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare him room,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven, and heaven, and nature sing! | 3) No more let sins and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make his blessings flow
Far as the curse is found,
Far as the curse is found,
Far as, far as the curse is found. |
| 2) Joy to the world, the Savior reigns!
Let all their songs employ;
While fields and floods,
rocks, hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy. | 4) He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness,
And wonders of his love,
And wonders of his love,
And wonders, wonders of his love. |

***Benediction:**

One: Beloved, go from here to share your deep joy. Strengthen the weary and exhausted; comfort those who are anxious and fearful. Have courage and confidence, and go with the blessings of Emmanuel, God-with-us.

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

*** Postlude: “Ding, Dong, Merrily On High”**

Traditional French Carol; arr. Jack Jones

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<i>First United Methodist Church</i>	
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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
Lyrics Reproduced in Bulletin by permission: CCLI#1003593.	

ANNOUNCEMENTS

TODAY'S VOLUNTEERS: Thank you for your service!! Liturgist: Judy O'Dell / Advent Wreath: Bill Cowdry & Angie Smith / Greeters: Judy Briggs and Belinda Hatch / Ushers: Bob Bula, Cal & Pam Mott, Chuck Priem, Andy Sharrow / Welcome Desk: Betty Jo Cloud / Coffee Hour Hosts: NEEDED / Nursery: Karissa Schultz / Sound System: Angie Smith

OUR SYMPATHY to Noreen Southgate and the family of Ron Southgate, who entered eternal life on Monday, Dec. 16. Visitation is tomorrow 12/23 at Skorupski's Funeral Home at 1550 Midland in Saginaw from 1:30-5:00pm. The funeral will be held at Skorupski's at 5:00pm tomorrow.

OUR SYMPATHY is extended to the family of Ruth Ann Hilton, who entered eternal life on Dec. 11. A Memorial Service will be held here at First U.M.C. on Saturday, January 18 at 11:00am.

OUR SYMPATHY to Elliott and Lauren Visuri and family on the death of Elliott's father David Visuri on December 17, 2024 after a battle with cancer. A celebration of life is being planned for spring.

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, Noreen Southgate, Kathy Winkowski, and Dorothy Woods. Also, please pray for UMCOR, and for war to end in Ukraine and in Israel/Gaza.

CHRISTMAS COOKIE WALK TODAY. Cookies are \$5/dozen. All proceeds go to fund the Youth Mission Trip to Milwaukee this June 2025.

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP will take place this Tuesday, December 24 at 7:30pm for a traditional service of lessons, carols, and candlelight. Pre-service music will begin around 7:00pm.

TAIZÉ WORSHIP will be held on Wednesday, January 1, 2025 at 7:00pm. Join us in person or online for a meditative and worshipful way to begin the new year.

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. 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** Facebook: **@firstumcofsaginaw** Instagram: **saginawfumc**



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.