

First United Methodist Church

Welcome! We are a Congregation devoted to loving the whole city and loving the city whole!
December 14, 2025 - 10:00am - Third Sunday in Advent

GATHERING AND PRAISE

Video Prelude – “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

Nathan Bieber, Maggie Kasinger, Catherine McMichael

Organ Prelude – “Lo, How A Rose E'er Blooming”

arr. William H. Bates

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 yellow prayer card to share joys/concerns.

* Please stand if you are able.

***Opening Hymn UMH #202:** “People Look East”

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|--|---|
| 1) People, look east. The time is near
Of the crowning of the year.
Make your house fair as you are able,
Trim the hearth and set the table.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the guest, is on the way. | 3) Stars, keep the watch.
When night is dim,
One more light the bowl shall brim,
Shining beyond the frosty weather,
Bright as sun and moon together.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the star, is on the way. |
| 2) Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare,
One more seed is planted there:
Give up your strength
the seed to nourish,
That in course the flower may flourish.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the rose, is on the way. | 4) Angels, announce with shouts of mirth
Christ who brings new life to earth.
Set every peak and valley humming
With the word, the Lord is coming.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the Lord, is on the way. |

PRAYER AND PROCLAMATION

***The Lighting of the Advent Wreath:**

Bill Cowdry and Angie Smith

Based on “Almost Christmas” by Magrey R. DeVega, Ingrid McIntyre, April Casperson, and Matt Rawle

Week Three: Altogether Love:

R1: In the summer of 1741, John Wesley Preached a sermon entitled “The Almost Christian”, which drew distinction between “the almost Christian” who has an outward appearance of godliness but little depth, and “the altogether Christian” whose deep inward conviction to love God and neighbor with their whole being is lived daily in thought, word, and action.

All: In Advent and beyond, we seek to grow into altogether Christians. We come to worship today to cultivate altogether love within our spirit.

R2: When the angel appeared to a young teenager named Mary, inviting her to be the one to bring God's love made flesh into the world, she didn't make a safe choice. She certainly didn't have any guarantees. She could not have known where her choice would take her going forward. Her choice wasn't rational. It was a response to the love she'd known in her life – God's love – love she was willing to return and to pass on. Love is always a risk. It can be rejected. And it can be misinterpreted. It can be manipulated. But Mary chose altogether love – love that her Son fully embodied in his birth, his teachings, his death, and his resurrection.

All: We come to worship today to follow Jesus in embodying altogether love, that we may move beyond just trying to be good people to become deeply faithful people who love because we can't imagine living any other way.

R3: We light three candles on the advent wreath today. The first for peace, the second for hope, and the third to remind us of Christ's call to altogether love – one that risks being truly open to the full messy humanness that comprises every human soul.

All: Come, Lord Jesus, cast away our almost love that tries to control and possess experiences, and instead, fill us with altogether love that embraces the mysterious, risky, abundant, and unexpected experiences of life in Christ. Amen.

**Song: Warm is the candle we light this day in love,
As we open our hearts to the stranger.
For this is God's house, a resting place for all,
For the sake of the babe in the manger.**

Song*:



Warm is the can - dle we light this day in love, as we o - pen our
hearts to the strang - er; For this is God's house, a
rest - ing place for all, for the sake of the babe in the man - ger.

Time of Prayer – *During the Advent Chorus and/or silent meditation, ushers will collect your yellow prayer cards and deliver them to the Worship Leader.*

Silent Meditation and the Pastoral Prayer lifting Celebrations and Concerns

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. Use the QR code to the right or give online here: <https://www.firstumcsaginaw.org/give/>*



Offertory: *“Of the Father’s Love Begotten”*

arr. Larry Shackley

***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!

***Unison Prayer of Thanksgiving:** Lord Jesus, we offer our gifts to you today, trusting in your promise that you are indeed the One who heals, who proclaims good news to the poor, and who brings hope to those in despair. As we give, we are reminded of your humble presence in the world and your invitation to follow you with hearts full of trust and faith. May our offerings reflect our assurance that all things are made new through your love for us. We pray in your holy name. Amen.

Choral Anthem: *“Go to Bethlehem”*

by Susan Kochanek

Children’s Message – *A special moment just for kids*

Chorus UMH #191: *“Jesus Loves Me”*

*Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so.
Little ones to Him belong; they are weak, but He is strong.
Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.*

Scripture Lesson: Matthew 11:2-11

Pew Bible N.T. pg. 10-11

² When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples ³ and asked Jesus, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” ⁴ Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵ the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with a skin disease are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. ⁶ And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.”

⁷ As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸ What, then, did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. ⁹ What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰ This is the one about whom it is written: ‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.’ ¹¹ “Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

Response to the Word

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

All: Thanks be to God!

The Message: “*WHAT DO YOU SEE AND HEAR?*”

Pastor Amy Terhune

***Hymn UMH #242:** “*Love Came Down At Christmas*”

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|---|---|
| 1) Love came down at Christmas,
Love all lovely, Love divine;
Love was born at Christmas;
Star and angels gave the sign. | Worship we our Jesus,
But wherewith for sacred sign? |
| 2) Worship we the Godhead,
Love incarnate, Love divine; | 3) Love shall be our token;
Love be yours and love be mine;
Love to God and others,
Love for plea and gift and sign. |

The Sacrament of Holy Communion:

Musical Setting A, UMH pg. 17-18

One: The Lord be with you,

All: And also with you.

One: Lift up your hearts.

All: We lift them up to the Lord.

One: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All: It is right to give our thanks and praise!

One: It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere,

to give thanks to you, Almighty God, creator of heaven and earth.

You formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life.

When we turned away, and our love failed, your love remained steadfast.

You delivered us from captivity, made covenant to be our sovereign God,

and spoke to us through your prophets, who looked for the day

when a voice would cry out in the wilderness,

and the glory of the Lord would be revealed.

And so with your people on earth and all the company of heaven,

we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**All: *Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest!
Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!***

One: Holy are you, and blessed is your son, Jesus Christ,
Whom you sent in the fullness of time to be a light to the nations.
He humbled himself in obedience to your will, and feely accepted death on a cross.
On the night he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you,
broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said:
“Take; eat; this is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”
Likewise, when the supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks to you,
gave it to his disciples, and said: “Drink from this all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant poured out for you and for many
for the forgiveness of sins. As often as you drink of this, remember me.
And so, in remembrance of these, your mighty acts in Christ Jesus,
we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving, as a holy and living sacrifice,
in union with Christ’s offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

All: *Christ has died; Christ is risen, Christ will come again!*

One: Let us pray: Holy God, pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here.
And on each person within reach of my voice.
Bless our offerings of bread and juice,
that they may be for us the body and blood of Christ;
that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood.
By your Spirit, make us one with Christ, one with each other,
and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory,
and we feast together at his heavenly banquet.
Through your son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church,
all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and forever. **Amen.**

*Those who worship with us in person this morning are invited to come forward via the center aisle,
take a piece of bread and a dip it into the chalice and partake.*

Gluten free wafers are available for those who need them. Then return to your seats via the side aisles.

If you’re unable to come forward, please raise your hand and communion will be brought to you.

*Those who worship online from home this morning are invited to use what you have in your home (bread,
crackers, juice, etc.) to participate in the sacrament along with the congregation.*

Communion Anthem: “Advent Alleluia”

by Jay Althouse

WE GO AS WITNESSES FOR CHRIST IN THE WORLD

***Closing Hymn UMH #244:** *“Twas In the Moon In Wintertime”*

- | | |
|---|---|
| 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. |

***Benediction:**

(adapted from Dr. Lisa Hancock, <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org>.)

One: Advent people, go forth in love to serve as Jesus did, confident that the day we await is close at hand and ready to cooperate with God in building the kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

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

*** Postlude:** *“Love Has Come, A Light in the Darkness”*

arr. David M. Cherwein

First United Methodist Church

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Organist..... Bryan Latimer
Director of Music & Chancel Choir..... Rod Bieber
Bell Choir Director..... Catherine McMichael
Nursery Supervisors..... Karissa Schultz
Audio Visual Technicians..... Brian Hatch, Andy Sharrow, Angie Smith, Izzy Terhune

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

TODAY'S VOLUNTEERS: Thank you for your service!! Liturgist: Lexi Sharrow / Greeters: Judy Gerken, Jackie Moore / Ushers: Keith Courier, Bonnie Arnst, Marc Cesere, Kathy Winkowski / Welcome Desk: Robin Schwellenbach / Coffee Hour Host: Carla Piazza-Wistehuff / Sound System: Angie Smith / Nursery: Karissa Schultz / Counters: Marc Cesere, Bonnie Arnst

PLEASE HOLD IN YOUR PRAYERS: Marilyn Ashmall, Ed Babinski, Tom Brubaker, Bernie Buggia, Myrna Cammin, Sue Cooper, Bonnie Dole, Esther Cavendish Fisher, Wayne & Phyllis Henney, Marion Hoffman, Bill Johnson, Erlene Kimber, ZoAnn Kraynak, Barb Kropp, Mark Leffler, Jane MacQueen, Bonnie Markley, Kay Mertz, Trinity & Audri Miller, Merlyn Mondol, Bob & Sharon Mueller, Madge Richmond, Eugenia Shek, Noreen Southgate, Rita Taylor, & Dorothy Woods. Also, please pray for UMCOR, and for peace in Ukraine/Russia and Israel/Gaza.

OUR SYMPATHY is extended to the families of Barry Brown (11/10), Jill Charlton (11/11), and Mark Abbe (11/25). Please hold their grieving families in prayer during this holiday season.

THE CHRISTMAS COOKIE WALK will take place this year on Sunday, December 21st following All Music Sunday. Cookies will be \$5/dozen. All proceeds go to fund the Youth Mission Trip for this Summer 2026. Please consider baking/donating cookies for the walk to help the kids out. Thank you!

FREE COMMUNITY MEALS on the 2nd Tuesday of each month, continuing January 13. On the menu for December: TBD.

2026 FREE COMMUNITY MEAL PLANNING MEETING TODAY following worship. Thank you!

YOUTH GROUP TONIGHT – 6:00-7:30pm – all teens in 6th-12th grades welcome!

ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD – Monday, December 15 at 7:00pm.

REBECCA CIRCLE WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON – Tuesday, December 16 at 11:00am. Bring a salad dish to pass. Contact Betty Jo Cloud at jbjcloud@yahoo.com OR contact the church office at 989-799-0131 to RSVP.

SENIOR GAME DAY – Wednesday, December 17 from 3:00-5:00pm. Join us for a social time playing board games – all are welcome!

REMINDER: There will NOT be a December All-Church Breakfast on 12/21. The next All-Church Breakfast will be held Sunday, January 18, 2026 at 8:30am

SAGINAW CHORAL SOCIETY YOUTH CHOIR – Holiday Concert HERE today at 3:30pm.

HELP NEEDED – the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan will deliver our next pallets of food for children's weekend backpacks on Wednesday, Dec. 17th Sign up online to help out with:

- a) People to meet the truck between 10am-11am every other Wednesday, help organize the food, and then pack up the food bags.
- b) People to deliver 22 food bags to Westdale Elementary and 31 food bags to Arrowwood Elementary school EVERY Thursday morning. Larger delivery this week due to Christmas Vacation.
- c) Sign up to help out online 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**

Bluesky: **FirstUMCSaginaw.bsky.social**



Worship Schedule

- **Third Advent 12/14/2025** – *Worship and Communion 10:00am*
- **Fourth Advent 12/21/2025** – *All Music Sunday 10:00am*
Youth Cookie Walk Fundraiser to follow worship 12/21/2025
- **CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE – 7:30pm**
Pre-Service Music begins at 7:00pm
 - **Christmas I Sunday 12/28** – *Worship 10:00am*
- **Epiphany Sunday 1/4/2026** – *Worship/Communion 10:00am*

Education

ADVENT BOOK STUDY - “Almost Christmas” by Magrey R. DeVega, Ingrid McIntyre, April Casperson, & Matt Rawle is a four (4) week collaborative study rooted in John Wesley’s famous Sermon “The Almost Christian”, using advent themes of peace, hope, love, and joy. Books are \$15 and are available at the welcome desk. **6:00-7:00pm in person on Tuesdays: 11/25, 12/2, 12/9, 12/16**
7:30-8:30pm online on Wednesdays: 11/26, 12/3, 12/10, 12/17



PARENTS’ NIGHT OUT - leave the kids with youth/adults here and have some adult time on Friday, December 19 from 5:30-10:30pm. Cost is \$10 per kids, no more than \$20 per family. Proceeds benefit the Youth Mission Trip. Register kids online at: https://form.jotform.com/pastoralbt/parents_night_out or use the QR code to the left.

YOUTH GROUP TONIGHT – December 14 from 6:00-7:30pm. All teens in 6th–12th grades welcome!

Mission

THIS YEAR’S CHRISTMAS MIRACLE OFFERING will go to purchase gift cards and needed Christmas Meals for the families of our 53 Backpack Children. Use the QR code to the right or give online at <https://www.firstumcsaginaw.org/give/>

