

First United Methodist Church

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

December 28, 2025 - 10:00am - Christmas I

GATHERING AND PRAISE

Video Prelude: *"What Child Is This"*

Nathan Bieber, Maggie Kasinger, Catherine McMichael

Organ Prelude: *"The Snow Lay On the Ground"*

Traditional Carol; arr. Wilbur Held

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

**Please stand if you are able.*



***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:

Refrain: Come and worship, Come and worship,
Worship Christ, the newborn king.

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]*

PROCLAMATION AND RESPONSE

The Lighting of the Advent Wreath:

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

First Sunday After Christmas: Altogether Holy

One: 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 holiness within our spirits.

One: In the first letter of Peter, the Apostle writes, “Therefore beloved, prepare your minds for action; discipline yourselves; set all your hope on the grace that Jesus Christ will bring you when he is revealed. Like obedient children, do not give in to the desires that you formerly had in ignorance. Instead, as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct.” As we approach the new year, we seek ways to deepen and discipline our faith so that we may continue to grow into altogether Christians. [1 Peter 1:13-15]

All: We come to worship today to follow Jesus in embodying altogether holiness by covenanting with God once again to follow with devotion in spite of the challenges, temptations, pressures, and roadblocks that we encounter both within ourselves and in the world around us.

One: We light all the candles on the advent wreath today – the candles of peace, hope, love, and joy, and the Christ candle in the center representing the presence of Emmanuel, God-With-us. As we light them, we are aware of Jesus’ call to let our light shine, that others may see the good we do and come to know God as Savior, Friend, Partner, and Lord.

All: Come, Lord Jesus, empower us to move beyond almost holiness to altogether holiness.

I am no longer my own, but yours.

Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will;

Put me to doing, put me to suffering;

Let me be employed for you or laid aside for you,

Exalted for you or brought low for you;

Let me be full, let me be empty,

Let me have all things, let me have nothing;

I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things to your pleasure and disposal.

And now, glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,

You are mine and I am yours. So be it. Amen. [Wesley’s Covenant Prayer]

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

Prayer Chorus W&S #3117:

Do all the good you can, by all the means you can,

In all the ways you can, in all the places you can,

At all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can!

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: “I Saw Three Ships”

Traditional English Carol; arr. Jeanne Cotter

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: Lord of Light and Love, we offer these gifts with hearts transformed by the miracle of your son’s birth. As the shepherds returned with joy and praise, may these offerings spread your joy and love. Use them to bless those in need and to further your kingdom, through Christ our Lord, Amen.

Video Special Music: “O Holy Night”

Nathan Bieber (Violin) and Catherine McMichael (Piano)

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:

John 1:1-14

Pew Bible N.T. pg. 86

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴ in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. ⁶ There was a man sent from God whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸ He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹ The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world came into being through him, yet the world did not know him. ¹¹ He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹² But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of human will, but of God. ¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth.

Response to the Word

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

All: Thanks be to God!

Hymn UMH #221: *“In the Bleak Midwinter”*

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|---|--|
| 1) In the bleak midwinter,
Frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron,
Water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,
Snow on snow,
In the bleak midwinter, long ago. | 3) Angels and archangels
May have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim
Thronged the air;
But his mother only,
In her maiden bliss,
Worshiped the beloved with a kiss. |
| 2) Our God, heaven cannot hold him,
Nor the earth sustain;
Heaven and earth shall flee away
When he comes to reign.
In the bleak midwinter
A stable place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty, Jesus Christ. | 4) 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. |

Wesley’s Covenant Renewal Service:

Brothers and sisters in Christ, the Christian life is redeemed from sin and consecrated to God. Through baptism, we have entered this life and have been admitted into the new covenant of which Jesus Christ is the Mediator. He sealed it with his own blood, that it might last forever. On the one side, God promises to give us new life in Christ, the Source and Perfecter of our faith. On the other side, we are pledged to live no more for ourselves but only for Jesus Christ, who loved us and gave himself for us. From time to time we renew our covenant with God, especially when we reaffirm the Baptismal Covenant and gather at the Lord's table. Today, however, we meet at the beginning of a new year, as the generations before us have met, to renew the covenant that binds us to God. Let us make this covenant of God our own.

INVITATION

Commit yourselves to Christ as his servants. Give yourselves to him, that you may belong to him. Christ has many services to be done. Some are more easy and honorable, others are more difficult and disgraceful. Some are suitable to our inclinations and interests, others are contrary to both. In some we may please Christ and please ourselves. But then there are other works where we cannot please Christ except by denying ourselves. It is necessary, therefore, that we consider what it means to be a servant of Christ. Let us, therefore, go to Christ, and pray:

**Let me be your servant, under your command. I will no longer be my own.
I will give up myself to your will in all things.**

Be satisfied that Christ shall give you your place and work.

Lord, make me what you will.

I put myself fully into your hands:

put me to doing, put me to suffering,

let me be employed for you, or laid aside for you,

let me be full, let me be empty,

let me have all things, let me have nothing.

I freely and with a willing heart give it all to your pleasure and disposal.

Christ calls us to be his servants, but he will have no servants except by consent; Christ will not accept anything except full consent to all that he requires. Christ will be all in all, or he will be nothing. To make this covenant a reality in your life, listen to these admonitions:

- First, set apart some time, more than once, to be spent alone before the Lord; in seeking earnestly God's special assistance and gracious acceptance of you; in carefully thinking through all the conditions of the covenant; in searching your hearts whether you have already freely given your life to Christ. Consider what your sins are. Consider the laws of Christ, how holy, strict, and spiritual they are, and whether you, after having carefully considered them, are willing to choose them all. Be sure you are clear in these matters, see that you do not lie to God.
- Second, be serious and in a spirit of holy awe and reverence.
- Third, claim God's covenant, rely upon God's promise of giving grace and strength, so you can keep your promise. Trust not your own strength and power.
- Fourth, resolve to be faithful. You have given to the Lord your hearts, you have opened your mouth to the Lord, and you have dedicated yourself to God. With God's power, never go back.
- And last, be then prepared to renew your covenant with the Lord. Kneel before God, lift your hands toward heaven, open your hearts to the Lord, as we pray:

COVENANT PRAYER

O righteous God, for the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, see me as I bow before you. Forgive my unfaithfulness in not having done your will, for you have promised mercy to me if I turn to you with my whole heart.

God requires that you shall put away all your idols.

I here from the bottom of my heart renounce them all, covenanting with you that no known sin shall be allowed in my life. Against your will, I have turned my love toward the world. In your power, I will be cautious of all temptations that will lead me away from you. For my own righteousness is riddled with sin, unable to stand before you.

Through Christ, God has offered to be your God again if you would let him.

Before all heaven and earth, I here acknowledge you as my Lord and God. I take you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for my portion, and vow to give up myself, body and soul, as your servant, to serve you in holiness and righteousness all the days of my life.

God has given the Lord Jesus Christ as a way and means of coming to God.

Jesus, I do here accept you as the living Way, and sincerely join myself in a covenant with you. O blessed Jesus, I come to you, hungry, broken, and sinful, unworthy even to wash your feet. I do here, with all my power, accept you as my Lord and Head. Rule my heart, spirit, mind, and body in your holy wisdom.

Christ has told you that you must suffer with him.

I do here covenant with you, O Christ, to take my lot with you as it may fall. Through your grace, I promise that neither life nor death shall part me from you.

God has given holy laws as the rule of your life.

I do here willingly put my neck under your yoke, to carry your burden. Your teachings are holy, just, and good. I therefore take them as the rule for my words, thoughts, and actions, promising that I will strive to order my whole life according to your direction, and not allow myself to neglect anything I know to be my duty.

The almighty God searches and knows your heart.

O God, you know that I make this covenant with you today without guile or reservation. If any falsehood should be in it, guide me and help me to set it right. And now, glory be to you, O God the Father, whom I, from this day forward, shall look upon as my God. Glory be to you, O God the Son, who has loved me and washed me from my sins in your own blood, and now is my Savior and Redeemer. Glory be to you, O God the Holy Spirit, who by your power has turned my heart from sin to God. O mighty God, the Lord Omnipotent, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, you have now become my Covenant Friend. And I, through your infinite grace, have become your covenant servant. So be it. And may the covenant I have made on earth be ratified in heaven. Amen.

You are advised to make this covenant not only in heart and voice, but in writing. Therefore, with all reverence, lay the service before the Lord as your act and deed. And when you have done this, sign it. Then keep it as a reminder of the holy agreement between God and you that you may remember it during doubts and temptations.

Name

Date

WE GO AS WITNESSES FOR CHRIST IN THE WORLD

***Closing Hymn UMH #251: “Go Tell It on the Mountain”**

- Refrain: Go, tell it on the mountain,
Over the hills and everywhere;
Go, tell it on the mountain,
That Jesus Christ is born.
- 2) The shepherds feared and trembled,
When lo! Above the earth,
Rang out the angel chorus
That hailed the Savior’s birth. *[Refrain]*
- 1) While shepherds kept their watching
O’er silent flocks by night,
Behold throughout the heavens
There shown a holy light. *[Refrain]*
- 3) Down in a lowly manger
The humble Christ was born,
And God sent us salvation
That blessed Christmas morn. *[Refrain]*

***Benediction:**

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

One: Beloved, may God bless you with transformation, because together we have encountered the incarnate Christ who makes a home among us and sends us home never to be the same again. Amen.

All: We go in peace 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

First United Methodist Church

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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: Bill Cowdry / Greeters: Judy Briggs, Belinda Hatch / Ushers: Bob Bula, Chuck Priem, Cal & Pam Mott, John Nestell / Welcome Desk: Dee Mills / Coffee Hour: Carla Piazza-Wistehuff / Nursery: Karissa Schultz / Sound System: Angie Smith

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 family of Mark Abbe, who passed away November 25. A Memorial Service will be held here on Saturday, January 10 at 2:00pm, with visitation for an hour beforehand.

Help Needed for a catered meal to be held here after the service to a) make coffee, b) help the caterer find everything they need, and c) serve food in the buffet line during the meal.

FREE COMMUNITY MEALS on the 2nd Tuesday of each month, continuing January 13. On the menu for January: Lasagna. Sign up to donate food and/or help with clean-up at the Welcome Desk

NEXT SUNDAY, January 4, 2026 is Epiphany Sunday. We will celebrate Communion next Sunday.

THE TAIZÉ WORSHIP SERVICE will be held as usual on the first Wednesday of the month, January 7, 2026 at 7:00pm.

HELP NEEDED – the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan will deliver our next pallets of food for children's weekend backpacks on Wednesday, Jan. 14th. 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>.

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/>



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.

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

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