

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Third Week of Advent: Being Present with Joy

Sunday, December 14, 2025

601 North Cedar, Abilene, Kansas 67410

785-263-2623 — www.abilenefirstumc.org

GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME and GOD SIGHTINGS

Please fill out the insert in today's bulletin to register your attendance and place in the offering plate when it is passed.

BECOMING PRESENT- AN ADVENT RITUAL

PRAYER OF PRESENCE

Holy Living Light of God, you are our Joyful Presence. Let this joy grow in our lives each day, so we can be a Present of Joy to others. Unwrap and open our hearts. May it be so. Amen.

*PASSING THE PEACE

May the Peace of Christ be with you. And also with you.

***OPENING HYMN** *O Come, O Come Emmanuel* vs 1-3, 5 UMH 211

THE GIFT OF YOUNG DISCIPLES

FIRST READING Isaiah 61:1-4 and Psalm 126:1-3 (NRSV)

God has sent me to bring good news to those who are poor;

to heal broken hearts;

to proclaim release to those held captive

and liberation to those in prison;

to announce a year of favor from YHWH, and the day of God's vindication;

to comfort all who mourn, to provide for those who grieve in Zion —

to give them a wreath of flowers instead of ashes,

**the oil of gladness instead of tears, a cloak of praise
instead of despair.**

They will be known as trees of integrity, planted by YHWH to display God's glory.

They will restore the ancient ruins,

and rebuild sites long devastated;

they will repair the ruined cities,

neglected for generations...

They will be known as trees of integrity,

planted by YHWH to display God's glory.

I will joyfully exult in YHWH, who is the joy of my soul!

When YHWH brought us captives back to Zion, we thought we were dreaming!

Our mouths were filled with laughter then, our tongues with songs of joy.

And from the nations we heard, "Their God has done great things for them."

Yes — YHWH has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy.

WITNESS TO THE WORD *While By My Sheep*

Song of the Angels

Chancel Choir

GOSPEL READING

Luke 1:41-55

As soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. In a loud voice she exclaimed, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! But why am I so favored, that the mother of the Messiah should come to me? The moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed is she who believed that what our God said to her would be accomplished!" Mary said:

"My soul proclaims your greatness, O God, and my spirit rejoices in you, my Savior. For you have looked with favor

upon your lowly servant, and from this day forward all generations will call me blessed. For you, the Almighty, have done great things for me, and holy is your Name. Your mercy reaches from age to age for those who fear you. You have shown strength with your arm; you have scattered the proud in their conceit; you have deposed the mighty from their thrones and raised the lowly to high places. You have filled the hungry with good things, while you have sent the rich away empty. You have come to the aid of Israel your servant, mindful of your mercy — the promise you made to our ancestors — to Sarah and Abraham and their descendants forever.”

SERMON Rejoice in the Lord Who has Done Great Things

Rev. Libby Themis

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE *Right Here, Right Now* lyrics on screen

PRESENTING OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

***THE DOXOLOGY**

Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

UMH 95

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION** (unison)

As those whom the god of peace has sanctified, those whose hopes and dreams have been restored, let us reflect the light we have been given. May our offerings express our joy and exultation for the gift of our salvation. May our gifts to God reflect our wonder and gratitude for being clothed in the garments of salvation and the robes of righteousness. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

***CLOSING CAROL** *Hark, the Herald Angels Sing*

UMH 240

***THE BENEDICTION**

***POSTLUDE**

PRAYER CONCERNS

Prayer concerns will be listed in the bulletin for 4 weeks unless the church office is notified otherwise.

MEMBERS AND FRIENDS:

Myckie Spencer

Pam Jackson

The Family of Dennis Schwarz (nephew of Lehman's)

Cesia Berruecos (Prayers of thanks for my host family, their health & life)

Joan Stetler (Aunt of Robbie Reese)

Paul Hoerner (Father of Angie)

Barry McFadden (friend of Malorie R., heart surgery, prayers of healing)

Sue Murry (recovering from a heart attack)

The Family of Don Soeken (Brother of Diane Wyatt)

JR Soeken (Brother of Diane Wyatt, healing from heart procedure)

Ed & Velda Becker (continued prayers of strength)

Bob Dishman (BIL David Haight)

Carl Hansen

Carl & Barb Funston

Scot Budden (Pastor Libby's brother)

Delores Schmidt (Mother of Velda B.)

COMMUNITY PRAYER CONCERNS:

For safe travels for all those traveling for the Holidays, The Family of DeLyn Farr, The Family of Dan Morabito, Jane Haney Family (friends of the Lehmans), The Family of Melissa & Mark Hortman, Rachel Prichard, Tom Litke, Kathy Ducker, Barbara Webster-Haynes, Nathan Robbins, Deb Daniel, Jamye Comp, Kim Decker, Mike Jantz, Jacque Havice, Macie Heller.

THOSE WORSHIPING FROM HOME: Norris Marshall, Bonnie Byers, Karen & Steve Crump, Dorothy Veach, Dorothy Snider, Linda Chase, Carl Hansen, Myckie Spencer, Charles Spidell, Hope Higgins, Jim Leyerzapf, Evelyn Carter, Al Jones, Jolene Hunt, Glen & Joan Dawson, Don & Mary Rickley, Phyllis Welton.

THOSE SERVING IN THE ARMED FORCES:

Please contact the office or write the name of your loved one serving on the back of your attendance sheet. Cory Donley, Colby Miller, Evan Middleton, Kayla Lee, Derek Lipson, Daelan McKnight

THOSE IN AUTHORITY: The World Leaders, The President, the Governor, the Mayor, County Commissioners, the County Attorney, and other elected officials and the judiciary (1 Timothy 2:1-4).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

We ask that if you use the church at times not on our calendar, you let the office know in advance. We have found some lights and appliances on, and doors unlocked in various parts of the building, and we didn't know anyone had been in those spaces. Please help us keep our guests, congregation, staff, and building safe by keeping us informed.

SHEPHERD'S RUN

This is an outreach program that we do every year to take goodies to places that are open on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day who are working and not spending the holiday with their family. Some of those places include the hospital, police/fire station, nursing homes and convenience stores open all the time. Thank you for sharing with others on Christmas. **Please have donations to the church by NOON Christmas Eve.**

POINSETTIAS

If you would like to bring a poinsettia for Christmas Eve, please have them here by the 10:30 worship service Dec. 21. There are a limited number of poinsettias for sale in the office, they are \$10.00 ea. Please write your name on them and pick them up by Dec. 28 or after the 11:00 p.m. service on Dec. 24. If you would like them to be in honor or memory of someone, please let the church office know by Dec.16.

MITTEN, HAT, SOCKS & UNDERWEAR TREE

Once again, we will be collecting NEW mittens, gloves, hats, socks, and underwear for those in our schools this holiday season. Sizes toddler to adult XL. They will be taken to the school by December 19. Place them on the tree in the Narthex or the box below the tree.

AUBURN MEDICINE LIDS AND BEST CHOICE LABELS

The Questors Sunday School class continues to collect Best Choice labels and Auburn Medicine lids to raise money. You can bring your donations to the office any time during regular hours or on Sunday mornings.

BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE

Holiday television ads, movies, and music tell us this is the time of year when everyone should be happy, and everything should be perfect. The message is that it is a joyful time of year, but joy may not be what some of us are feeling during the holiday season. For many, this may be a time of struggle for various reasons. Perhaps a loved one has recently died, one's health could be declining, or it could be because of loneliness. Whatever the reason, if you are struggling to find Christmas joy, the First United Methodist Church of Abilene invites you to attend a Blue Christmas Service. This service is held at the beginning of winter when the sunlit days are short, and the dark nights are long. Join us at the First United Methodist Church, 601 N. Cedar, on December 16, at 7:00 p.m. for this Blue Christmas Service. It will be a time of gathering with others and acknowledging that you are not alone in struggling with the holidays. If you have questions, please contact the church office at 785-263-2623.

BREAD MINISTRY

To all who are able to support the Bread Ministry for first time visitors, please bring loaves of homemade bread to the church on Sunday. All types & sizes of bread are appreciated, quick bread, yeast bread, artisan bread. Please wrap in Saran wrap &/or baggies. Your willingness to help donations are greatly appreciated. Visitors have been very pleased.

WE ARE ON THE RADIO AND STREAMING ONLINE

If you can't make it to church, but would like to listen to our service live, simply tune into KABI 1560 AM or 95.9 FM at 10:30 a.m. You can also stream the worship service at abilenefirstumc.org.

OFFERING

Needed each Sunday - \$ 5870.81 Last Sunday - \$ 8357.00

CHURCH CALENDAR

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14

- 8:15 a.m. In-Person Worship Service
- 9:20 a.m. Small Groups & Sunday School Classes
- 10:30 a.m. In-Person Worship Service / KABI 1560 AM or 95.9 FM
- 11:45 a.m. Fast Track Disciple Bible Study - Pastor's Office

MONDAY, DECEMBER 15 OFFICE HOURS 8-12 NOON

- 10:00 a.m. Card Ministry Group - 208
- 10:00 a.m. Healthy Congregation Meeting - 200
- 5:30 p.m. Core Meeting - 204
- 6:30 p.m. Women's AA/NA Meeting - B9

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16 OFFICE HOURS 8-12

- 10:00 a.m. Parkinson Exercising - Narthex- All Invited
- 7:00 p.m. Blue Christmas Service - Sanctuary

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 17 OFFICE HOURS 8-12 NOON

- 10:00 a.m. Staff Meeting - Office
- 5:15 p.m. Bell Choir Practice - Sanctuary

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18 OFFICE HOURS 8-12

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 19 OFFICE CLOSED

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21

- 8:15 a.m. In-Person Worship Service
- 9:20 a.m. Small Groups & Sunday School Class
- 9:30 a.m. Directory Photos - Office
- 10:30 a.m. In-Person Worship Service / KABI 1560 AM or 95.9 FM
- 11:45 p.m. Fast Track Disciple Bible Study - Library

WELCOME TO WORSHIP

Please note that **bold type** indicates congregational participation. An asterisk (*) indicates that you are invited to stand as you are able. "UMH" stands for *The United Methodist Hymnal* (blue book); "FWS" stands for *The Faith We Sing* (black book); and "WS" stands for *Worship and Song* (green book).

OUR MISSION AND VISION

Mission: to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

Vision: a church of open hearts, open minds, and open doors.

ASSISTING IN TODAY'S WORSHIP

Piano: Angie Hoerner

Liturgists: Kevin Bailey & Kent Wyatt

Slides/Sound/Livestream: Heather Heger & Cecilia Clemence

Advent Wreath: 8:15 Tim and Brenda Holm

10:30 Anna Gugler, Elizabeth and Brenna Bryant

Gospeltality Greeters 8:15: Kevin & Ann Bailey

10:30: Dwight & Leslie Hoffman

FIRST UMC STAFF

Libby Themis, Pastor

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Cecilia Clemence, Treasurer

treasurer@abilenefirstumc.org

Pam Jackson, Parish Visitor Emeritus