

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Fourth Week of Advent: Being Present with Love

Sunday, December 21, 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.

PRELUDE (10:30) *Ukrainian Bell Carol* Bell Choir

BECOMING PRESENT- AN ADVENT RITUAL

PRAYER OF PRESENCE

Holy Living Light of God, you are our Loving Presence. Let this love grow in our lives each day, so we can be a Present of Love 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** *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming* UMH 216

THE GIFT OF YOUNG DISCIPLES

FIRST READING 2 Samuel 7:1-11 and Psalm 89:1-4 (NRSV)

When David finally settled into the palace, and YHWH gave him rest from enemies on every side, he said to the prophet Nathan, "Here I am living in this house of cedar while the Ark of God sits in a tent!" Nathan replied to David, "Go, do whatever you have in mind, for YHWH is with you." That night the word of YHWH came to Nathan, and said, "Go and tell my servant David that this is what YHWH wants: 'Are you the one to build me a Temple? I have been without a Temple from the day I brought the Israelites up out of Egypt to this day. I have been moving from place to place with a Tent as my dwelling place. Wherever I traveled with the

people of Israel, did I ever say to the governors whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, “Why have you not built me a Temple made out of cedar?” “Now then, tell my servant, David, ‘This is what YHWH Omnipotent says: I took you from the pastures and from following sheep to be the ruler of my people Israel. I have been with you wherever you went, and destroyed all your enemies in your path. I will give you fame like the fame of the great ones on the earth. I will provide a place for my people Israel. I will plant them where they will have a home of their own — a place where they will never be disturbed. Never again will the sinners oppress them as they did in the past ever since the time I appointed judges to lead my people Israel. I will give you security from all your enemies. . . . Furthermore, I alone will establish your house.’”

Forever I will sing the wonders of your love, YHWH, proclaiming your faithfulness to all generations!

I’ll tell them that your love stands firm forever, your fidelity is fixed in the heavens.

“I have made a covenant with my chosen; sworn an oath to David, my faithful one:

‘I will establish your line forever, and make your throne firm throughout all generations.’”

WITNESS TO THE WORD (8:15) *Carol of the Bells* Piano Duet
Anna Gugler & Clark Williamson

GOSPEL READING

Luke 1:26-38

Six months later, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a young woman named Mary; she was engaged to a man named Joseph, of the house of David. Upon arriving, the angel said to Mary, “Rejoice, highly favored one! God is with you! Blessed are you among women!” Mary was deeply troubled by these words and wondered what the angel’s greeting meant. The angel went on to say to her, “Don’t be afraid, Mary. You have found favor with God. You’ll conceive and bear a son, and give him the name Jesus — ‘Deliverance.’ His dignity will be great, and he will be called the Only Begotten of God. God will

give Jesus the judgment seat of David, his ancestor, to rule over the house of Jacob forever, and his reign will never end.” Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I have never been with a man?” The angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you — hence the offspring to be born will be called the Holy One of God. Know too that Elizabeth, your kinswoman, has conceived a child in her old age; she who was thought to be infertile is now in her sixth month. Nothing is impossible with God.” Mary said, “I am the servant of God. Let it be done to me as you say.” With that, the angel left her.

SERMON

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)

Faithful God of unfolding plans, when our certainty falters and our expectations collapse, you are still at work, inviting us into grace that redefines and redeems. Like Mary, we bring our gifts and lay down our plans, trusting that your Spirit can shape our offering into something greater than we imagined. Let these gifts and our lives be signs of obedience, humility, and hope. May they help carry Christ into a world still longing for peace, hungry for love, and needing redemption. We pray in the name of the one who is Emmanuel—God with us. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

***CLOSING CAROL** *Love Came Down at Christmas* UMH 242

***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:

Wendy Robinson (knee replacement 12/9)

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 on 11/24, 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 (Ed is now back at home, 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

The small Christmas trees among the poinsettias are in honor of Jane (Danner) Inman and Jean (Danner) Gurucharri for their 80th birthday, remembering trees given by Emma-Jane and Scottie 80 years ago in honor of their birth.

END OF YEAR GIVING

Thank you for your continuing support of our ministries here at Abilene First! The last day to give for 2025 should be placed in the offering plate or brought to the church office by Tuesday, December 30th by noon. Any giving after that will be credited to your giving in 2026. Thank you for being part of Abilene First UMC!

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 had a poinsettia to remember a loved one, please pick it up by December 28 or after the 11:00 p.m. service on December 24.

DON'T FORGET TO TURN OUT THE LIGHTS!

To help keep costs down, please remember to turn off lights and fans and turn down the heater when you are finished in a room. If you have a room reserved and then end up not needing it, please let the office know.

REMEMBER OTHERS

Just a reminder to send a Christmas card or small gift or visit those who are alone this holiday season. It might be a friend or neighbor or someone in the nursing home who does not have family. Share the love of Jesus' birth with the lonely.

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.

CARD MINISTRY

The Card Ministry Group meets on Monday mornings at 10:00 in room 208. They have been busy making beautiful cards that are available to purchase. The display rack in the Narthex has been restocked, so be sure to take a look. Everyone loves getting 'real mail', a card can really make someone's day.

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 - \$6229.00
December EFT \$ 3035.00

CHURCH CALENDAR

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21

- 8:15 a.m. In-Person Worship Service
9:20 a.m. Small Groups & Sunday School Classes
9:30 a.m. Directory Photos - Office
10:30 a.m. In-Person Worship Service / KABI 1560 AM or 95.9 FM

MONDAY, DECEMBER 22 OFFICE HOURS 8-12 NOON

- 10:00 a.m. Card Ministry Group - 208
6:30 p.m. Women's AA/NA Meeting - B9

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 23 OFFICE HOURS 8-12

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24 OFFICE HOURS 8-12 NOON

- 3:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service
6:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service
11:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 25 OFFICE CLOSED

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 26 OFFICE CLOSED

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 27 OFFICE CLOSED

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 28

- 8:15 a.m. In-Person Worship Service
9:20 a.m. Small Groups & Sunday School Class
10:30 a.m. In-Person Worship Service / KABI 1560 AM or 95.9 FM

MONDAY, DECEMBER 29 OFFICE CLOSED



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: Anna Gugler

Liturgists: Heather Heger & Toni Schwarting

Slides/Sound/Livestream: Linda Kolacny & Steve Schwarting

Advent Wreath: 8:15 Michael & Jamie Linenberger

10:30 Betty Eckman & Jonielle Frazier

Gospeltality Greeters 8:15: Heather Heger & Judy Jones

10:30: Chuck & Sandy Zernickow

FIRST UMC STAFF

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Pam Jackson, Parish Visitor Emeritus