

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Sunday after Christmas: Being Present with Assurance

Sunday, December 28, 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 Reassuring Presence. Let this assurance grow in our lives each day, so we can be a Present of Assurance 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** *Go, Tell It on the Mountain* UMH 251

THE GIFT OF YOUNG DISCIPLES

FIRST READING Isaiah 62: 1-3 and Galatians 4: 4-7 (NRSV)

For Zion's sake, I will not be silent; for the sake of Jerusalem, I will not rest —not until her integrity shines like the dawn, her deliverance like a flaming torch. The nations will see your vindication, and the rulers your splendor; you will have a new name that God's mouth will bestow. You will be a garland of beauty in YHWH's hands, a solemn crown worn by your God.

When the designated time had come, God sent forth the Christ — born of a woman, born under the Law — to deliver from the Law those who were subjected to it, so that we might receive

our status as adopted heirs. The proof that you are children of God is the fact that God has sent forth into our hearts the Spirit of the Child who calls out "Abba!" You are no longer slaves, but descendants! And if you are descendants, you are also heirs, by God's design.

SONG OF PREPARATIONS *Blessed Assurance* UMH 369

GOSPEL READING Luke 2:22-40

When the day came for them to be purified, as laid down by the Law of Moses, the couple took Jesus up to Jerusalem and presented him to God. For it's written in the Law of our God, "Every firstborn heir is to be consecrated to God." They likewise came to offer in sacrifice "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons," in accord with the dictate of the Law of our God. Now there lived in Jerusalem a man named Simeon. He was devout and just, anticipating the consolation of Israel, and he was filled with the Holy Spirit. She had revealed to Simeon that he wouldn't see death until he had seen the Messiah of God. Prompted by her, Simeon came to the Temple; and when the parents brought in the child to perform the customary rituals of the Law, he took the child in his arms and praised God, saying, "Now, O God, you can dismiss your servant in peace, just as you promised; because my eyes have seen the salvation which you have prepared for all the peoples to see — a light of revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of your people Israel." As the child's mother and father stood there marveling at the things that were being said, Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, the mother, "This child is destined to be the downfall and the rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that is rejected, so that the secret thoughts of many may be laid bare. And a sword will pierce your heart as well." There was a woman named Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher, who was also a prophet. She had lived a long life, seven years with her husband, and then as a widow to the age of

eighty-four. She never left the Temple, worshiping day and night, fasting and praying. Coming up at that moment, she gave thanks to God and talked about the child to all who anticipated the deliverance of Jerusalem. When the couple had fulfilled all the prescriptions of the Law of God, they returned to Galilee and their own town of Nazareth. The child grew in size and strength. He was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was with him.

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)

Gracious God, thank you for these gifts and for the gift of your Son. As we offer you these gifts, we also offer you our very lives. Bless these gifts, that they may be signs of your redemption and your hope to a world in need. Bless our lives abundantly, that we may shine with your glory, and light up the world with your love. In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

***CLOSING CAROL**

We Three Kings

UMH 254

***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:

Al Jones

Jim Leyerzapf

Wendy Robinson (knee replacement 12/9)

Myckie Spencer

Pam Jackson

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

Paul Hoerner (Father of Angie)

Ed & Velda Becker (continued prayers of strength & determination)

Carl Hansen

Carl & Barb Funston

Scot Budden (Pastor Libby's brother)

Delores Schmidt (Mother of Velda B.)

COMMUNITY PRAYER CONCERNS:

Bob Dishman, Rachel Prichard, Tom Litke, Kathy Ducker, Barbara Webster-Haynes, Nathan Robbins, Deb Daniel, Jamye Comp, Kim Decker, Mike Jantz, Jacque Havice, Macie Heller.

THOSE WORSHIPPING 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

TODAY'S RADIO BROADCAST IS SPONSORED BY

Anonymous Sponsor. If you would like to sponsor a radio broadcast, contact Chris in the office. The cost is \$70.00 a Sunday. You can choose who you want in honor or memory of.

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!

COMMUNITY MEAL

The next community meal will be Monday, January 12, 2026. Going forward all meals will be served at Sterl Hall, 619 N. Rogers St, Abilene.

POINSETTIAS

If you had a poinsettia to remember a loved one, please pick it up by December 28.

FIRST UMC POWER & LIGHT

3:30 p.m. every Wednesday following the school calendar. This is designed for Kindergarten-5th grade kids. Wendy and her crew will make sure fun is had by all with Bible stories, crafts, snacks, and games.

YOUTH GROUP

Designed for grades 6-12. Meets every Wednesday, following the school calendar, at 6:00 p.m. in Peatling Hall. We have dinner, games and Bible discussion. Bring a friend or two!

JANUARY NEWSLETTER

The January newsletter will be out soon, look for it in your email or pick a copy up on the sign in table next time you are here.

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.

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.

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 - \$8089.11

CHURCH CALENDAR

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 28

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

MONDAY, DECEMBER 29 OFFICE CLOSED

6:30 p.m. Women's AA/NA Meeting - B9

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 30 OFFICE HOURS 8-12

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 31 OFFICE HOURS 8-12 NOON

THURSDAY, JANUARY 1 OFFICE CLOSED

FRIDAY, JANUARY 2 OFFICE CLOSED

SATURDAY, JANUARY 3

SUNDAY, JANUARY 4

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
11:45 a.m. Fast Track Disciple Bible Study - Pastor Libby's Office

MONDAY, JANUARY 5 OFFICE HOURS 8-12

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: Ray Wyatt & Larry Divel

Slides/Sound/Livestream: Tim Holm & The Green Family

Advent Wreath: 8:15 Kevin & Ann Bailey

10:30 TBD

Gospeltality Greeters 8:15: TBD

10:30: Kent & Diane Wyatt

FIRST UMC STAFF

Libby Themis, Pastor

Phone: 785-564-1977 — libbythemis@gmail.com

Chris Seets, Administrative Assistant

Phone: 785-263-2623 — office@abilenefirstumc.org

Wendy Robinson, Director of Children and Youth Ministries

wendy@abilenefirstumc.org

Clark Williamson, Director of Music Ministries

clark@abilenefirstumc.org

Darrol Dunham, Director of Maintaining the Church

Cecilia Clemence, Treasurer

treasurer@abilenefirstumc.org

Pam Jackson, Parish Visitor Emeritus