
AN ORDER OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

December 13, 2020 | Third Sunday of Advent

First United Methodist Church

601 North Cedar, Abilene, Kansas 67410 | 785-263-2623 | www.AbileneFirstUMC.org

A Church of Open Hearts, Open Minds, and Open Doors.

GATHERING

Gathering of the Congregation

Greeting and Announcements

Prelude

CALL TO WORSHIP

We come from a slumbering world.

We come to awaken our souls.

We come from a world of darkness

into Christ's world of light.

We come from a world of weariness

into God's strength and hope.

— Reprinted from www.umcdiscipleship.org, alt. John Collins

Opening Prayer

PROCLAMATION AND RESPONSE

Scripture Reading — Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 (NRSV)

¹ The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,
because the LORD has anointed me;
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,
to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and release to the prisoners;

² to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;

³ to provide for those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a garland instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.

⁴ They shall build up the ancient ruins,
they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities,
the devastations of many generations. . . .

⁸ For I the LORD love justice,
I hate robbery and wrongdoing;
I will faithfully give them their recompense,
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

⁹ Their descendants shall be known among the nations,
and their offspring among the peoples;
all who see them shall acknowledge
that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed.

¹⁰ I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,
my whole being shall exult in my God;
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

¹¹ For as the earth brings forth its shoots,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise
to spring up before all the nations.

HYMN* — *Angels We Have Heard On High*, UMH-238

1. Angels we have heard on high sweetly singing o'er the plains, and the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains. Glo-----ria, in excelsis Deo! Glo-----ria, in excelsis Deo!
2. Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong? What the gladsome tidings be which inspire your heavenly song? Glo-----ria, in excelsis Deo! Glo-----ria, in excelsis Deo!
3. Come to Bethlehem and see Christ whose birth the angels sing; come, adore on bended knee, Christ the Lord, the newborn King. Glo-----ria, in excelsis Deo! Glo-----ria, in excelsis Deo!
4. See him in a manger laid, whom the choirs of angels praise; Mary, Joseph, lend your aid, while our hearts in love we raise. Glo-----ria, in excelsis Deo! Glo-----ria, in excelsis Deo!

—Words: Traditional French Carol

Scripture Reading — Luke 1:46b-55 (NRSV)

⁴⁶ And Mary said,
“My soul magnifies the Lord,
⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

⁴⁸ for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.

⁵⁰ His mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.

⁵¹ He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

⁵² He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly;

⁵³ he has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.

⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,

⁵⁵ according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

HYMN* — *The Friendly Beasts*, UMH-227

1. Jesus, our brother, strong and good, was humbly born in a stable rude,
and the friendly beasts around him stood, Jesus, our brother, strong and good.
2. "I," said the donkey, shaggy and brown, "I carried his mother uphill and down,
I carried his mother to Bethlehem town; I," said the donkey, shaggy and brown.
3. "I," said the cow, all white and red, "I gave him my manger for his bed,
I gave him hay to pillow his head; I," said the cow, all white and red.
4. "I," said the sheep with curly horn, "I gave him my wool for his blanket warm,
he wore my coat on Christmas morn; I," said the sheep with curly horn.
5. "I," said the dove, from the rafters high, "I cooed him to sleep that he should not cry,
we cooed him to sleep my mate and I; I," said the dove, from the rafters high.
6. Thus all the beasts, by some good spell, in the stable dark were glad to tell
of the gifts they gave Emmanuel, the gifts they gave Emmanuel.

—Words: Traditional French Carol

Scripture Reading — John 1:6-8, 19-28 (NRSV)

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. . . .

¹⁹ This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" ²⁰ He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." ²¹ And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." ²² Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?"

²³ He said,

"I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' "
as the prophet Isaiah said.

²⁴ Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. ²⁵ They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" ²⁶ John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, ²⁷ the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." ²⁸ This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

Children's Christmas Pageant

THE APOSTLES' CREED

I commit myself to God, the Father Almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I set my heart upon Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven,
is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I place my trust in the Holy Spirit,
the holy church universal,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Amen.

RESPONSE* — *Glory Be To The Father*, UMH-71

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and
ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

— Words Lesser Doxology, 3rd-4th cent.

Call to Confession

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Merciful God, you love justice;
why, then, do we persist in wrongdoing and every form of evil?
You have given us the gift of your Spirit; why, then, do we quench the Spirit among us?
You have given us the words of the prophets and the Word himself;
why then, do we despise and ignore what we have heard from you?
You have sent light into the world; why, then, have we loved darkness rather than light?
Bring us back into the light for the sake of Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray.

Amen.

— Reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from *Feasting on the Word Worship Companion*. Copyright 2014. Alt. J. Collins, 2020.

(A time of silent prayers of confession.)

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Let us rejoice! The Lord has done great things for us!
In Jesus Christ, we are freed from slavery to sin and death.
Through Jesus Christ we have received the Holy Spirit.
In Jesus we have been brought out of our darkness and into God's marvelous light.
Amen.

Invitation to the Offering

Offertory — *Thou Didst Leave Thy Throne*, FWS-2100

1. Thou didst leave thy throne and thy kingly crown, when thou camest to earth for me;
But in Bethlehem's home there was found no room for thy holy nativity.
O come to my heart, Lord Jesus, there is room in my heart for thee.
2. Heaven's arches rang when the angels sang, proclaiming thy royal degree;
but in lowly birth didst thou come to earth, and in great humility.
O come to my heart, Lord Jesus, there is room in my heart for thee.
3. The foxes found rest, and the birds their nest in the shade of the forest tree;
But thy couch was the sod, O thou Son of God, in the deserts of Galilee.
O come to my heart, Lord Jesus, there is room in my heart for thee.
4. Thou camest, O Lord, with the living Word that should set thy people free;
But with mocking scorn, and with crown of thorn, they bore thee to Calvary.
O come to my heart, Lord Jesus, there is room in my heart for thee.
5. When heav'n's arches shall ring and its choir shall sing at thy coming to victory,
Let thy voice call me saying "Yet there is room, there is room at my side for thee!"
And my heart shall rejoice, Lord Jesus, when thou comest and callest for me.

— Words: Emily E. S. Elliott, 1864

RESPONSE — *Praise God, From Whom All Blessings Flow*, UMH-95

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise God, all creatures here below; praise God above ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

— Words: Thomas Ken, 1674

THANKSGIVING

Prayer of Thanksgiving

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, [Meaning: save us from the time of trial.]
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever.
Amen.**

GOING FORTH

HYMN* — *There's A Song In The Air*, H-249

1. There's a song in the air! There's a star in the sky! There's a mother's deep prayer and baby's low cry! And the star rains its fire while the beautiful sing, for the manger of Bethlehem cradles a King!
2. There's a tumult of joy o'er the wonderful birth, for the virgin's sweet boy is the Lord of the earth. Ay! The star rains its fire while the beautiful sing, for the manger of Bethlehem cradles a King!
3. In the light of that star lie the ages impearled; and that song from afar has swept over the world. Every hearth is aflame, and the beautiful sing in the homes of the nations that Jesus is King!
4. We rejoice in the light, and we echo the song that comes down through the night from the heavenly throng. Ay! We shout to the lovely evangel they bring, and we greet in his cradle our Savior and King!

— Words: Josiah G. Holland, 1874

Blessing

Postlude

WELCOME TO WORSHIP

Please note that **bold type** indicates congregational participation. "H" stands for *The United Methodist Hymnal* (blue book); "F" stands for *The Faith We Sing* (black book); and "W" stands for *Worship and Song* (green book).

CLOSING CREDITS

Anna Gugler (Saturday) and Angie Hoerner (Sunday), Piano
Mary Jane Oard (Saturday), and Jason Vinduska (Sunday), Liturgists
Tray Green (Saturday) and Mason Cook (Sunday), Sound
Tyler Green (Saturday) and Mason Cook (Sunday), Slides
Dean McIntyre, Offertory
Clark Williamson, Director of Music Ministries
Wendy Robinson, Director of Children and Youth Ministries
John R. Collins, Pastor

SERMON NOTES AND DOODLES

The Newsletter

December 13, 2020

First United Methodist Church, Abilene, Kansas

The mission of First United Methodist Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ as we work together toward our vision of a church of open hearts, open minds, and open doors.

PRAYER CONCERNS

Please note: prayer concerns will be listed in the bulletin for four (4) weeks unless the church office is notified otherwise.

MEMBERS AND FRIENDS: Verl Eckman [11/22], Virginia Hoffman [12/6]

COMMUNITY PRAYER CONCERNS: Ethan Gustin [12/6], Sheri Bennett (friend of Pam Simpson) [12/6], Aubrey Evans (friend of Rachel Gugler) [12/6], Sue Noland (friend of Gregg Root) [11/22], Kim Goodman [7/15/2018], doctors, nurses and other health care workers; students, teachers, administrators, school nurses, and other employees of local schools; restaurant and retail employees, postal workers and other delivery personnel; and all others working in essential industries. Those grieving the loss of Terry Mosier (son of Donna Smith) [11/29],

THOSE WORSHIPPING FROM HOME: Gary Donley, Evelyn York, Velma Becker, Joe Clemence, Steve Crump, Walt Hartman, Ray Power, Marla Rutz, Bob Murnahan, Donna Smith, Martha Zutavern, Donna Richards, Dorothy Veach, Darlene Sexton, Melvin Leckron, Dorothy Snider, Linda Chase, Barb Hawk, Verl Eckman and many of us!

THOSE SERVING IN THE ARMED FORCES: Greg Austin, Tim Barns, Kayla Berven, Billy Brockman, Matthew Brinker, Ross Covington, Jessica and James Green, Christopher Griffith, Gavin Hanna, Cameron Hoskins, David Hoskins, Ryan Kriesch, Colby Miller, Samuel Miller, and James L. Wise, Jr.

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

DISTRICT PRAYER CALENDAR: Today we pray for the Gypsum United Methodist Church and their pastor, Susan Murithi.

GENERAL NEWS

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES — These plans have not been finalized yet, but I wanted to share with you what I'm thinking for Christmas Eve 2020. Because of the popularity of Christmas Eve services and the necessity of social distancing, I don't see any way we can hold enough services in the sanctuary to accommodate everyone who would want to come. For that reason, I plan to have a complete Christmas Eve service available online for streaming. We won't have a radio broadcast, but we can put it on audio CDs for those who don't have access to the internet. The little handheld candles we use when singing "Silent Night" will be made available to the congregation for both pick-up and delivery.

I also know that this is one of the most meaningful worship services of the liturgical year for many of you. For that reason, those who are willing to brave the cold (maybe) and the dark of night (guaranteed) will be invited to join together in the East parking lot at 7:00 p.m. or 11:55 p.m. (there will be two services). There we'll pass the light of Christ and sing "Silent Night" together (while wearing masks and social distancing).

— John Collins, 12/13/20

CHILDREN AND YOUTH — Any young person who does not have an advent calendar, please contact Wendy and she will get one to you.

— Staff 12/13/20

CANDLES FOR SILENT NIGHT — The handheld candles that we use when singing silent night are available for everyone celebrating Christmas Eve at home this year. You can swing by the church office during our regular hours, or you 785-263-2623 for delivery.

— Staff 12/13/20

MISSION AND OUTREACH TEAM MEETING NOTES — The Hospital project (taking snacks as a way of saying thanks to everyone who works there) was successfully completed. The team is looking for someone to be the project director for the Shepherd's Run. Because of concerns about sharing homemade food items during the pandemic, we'll do boxes of Chocolates from Russell Stovers. Finally it was decided the Christmas Eve Offering will be divided between the Abilene Food Bank and Neighbor to Neighbor.

— John Collins, 12/6/20

THANK YOU — To the FUMC Youth, Wendy Robinson (Youth Director), and Karlene Taylor for raking the leaves on our lawn. Also, thank you for the Thanksgiving gift! Love in Christ — Verl and Betty Eckman

— Staff 12/6/20

ADVENT IN A BOX — COVID-19 is going to upend our Advent, but the Great Plains Conference has very helpfully developed a series of activities for children and their families. You can download it at: <https://bit.ly/2J7hcUw>.

— John Collins, 11/29/20

CONTINUED IMPROVEMENTS IN ONLINE WORSHIP — We continue to improve the quality of our online and radio worship services. The quilts on the pews have cut down on the echos in a mostly empty sanctuary. This week (thanks to a special donation) we're adding an additional Mevo video camera to allow those watching online a better view of the liturgist. Stick with us, it's going to keep getting better.

— John Collins, 11/29/20

I ENCOURAGE YOU TO WORSHIP FROM HOME — I've been asked what difference Dickinson County's new mask mandate (Health Order #DK11-01) will make in our services. The only thing that has to be changed is that the signs requiring masks currently posted on our doors must be enlarged from 8" x 8" to 8.5" x 11". That's it. Otherwise, we're already compliant.

I urge everyone who can watch online or listen on the radio instead of coming in-person to do so. I know that worship is important to many of you—it's really important to me too. I understand that the experience of in-person worship is far superior to "virtual" worship. But, because of the increasing spread of COVID-19, Dr. Holmes, Bishop Saenz, and I all urge you to refrain from in-person worship for at least a month. That said, we will have services at 10:30 a.m. on both Saturday and Sunday, we have plenty of extra masks, and I do not intend to turn anyone away.* In our present situation, you are the person best able to weigh your spiritual needs against the risks of in-person attendance. All I know is that the potential danger of attending in-person is both real and dire.

* To comply with #DK11-01, I will reluctantly turn people away in the unlikely event that we have more than 30 people show up. — John Collins, 11/8/20

RESTARTING THE PRAYER VIGIL — We're restarting the Prayer Vigil in virtual form from our homes. It's a full day of prayer every Thursday from 5 a.m. to 7 p.m. We have the following openings. Please email John or call the church office if you are interested in participating. Here are the two slots that remain open: 8 a.m. to 9 a.m., 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. — John Collins, 9/27/20, updated 11/15/20

WORSHIP ON AUDIO CD — Are you having trouble streaming online or listening on the radio? We're delivering audio CDs with the same service that is broadcast on the radio. Contact John Collins or call the church office if you would like one. — Staff

WEDNESDAY EVENING COMMUNION — We have a Zoom meeting scheduled for the Wednesday Evening Communion Service at 6:00 p.m. Here are the details:

Join Zoom Meeting	Manually Dial In With a Touch-Tone Phone
https://bit.ly/38bf9qZ	+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)
Meeting ID: 937 0998 7388	Meeting ID: 937 0998 7388
Password: 67410	Password: 67410

— Staff

WEDNESDAY EVENING BIBLE STUDY — We have a regular, ongoing Bible Study on the Gospel of Luke on Wednesday Evenings at 6:15. You don't have to make every meeting and you can start anytime—including this Wednesday. Here are the details for how to log on or dial in through Zoom:

Join Zoom Meeting	Manually Dial In With a Touch-Tone Phone
https://bit.ly/2BTwgBn	+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)
Meeting ID: 931 9116 5788	Meeting ID: 931 9116 5788
Passcode: 67410	Passcode: 67410

— Staff

EMAIL UPDATES — John uses a service called TinyLetter to send out blog posts by email every day or so. This way, you can keep up with their blog at revcollins.com by simply checking your email inbox. You can also reply with an email of your own and let us know what you think. You can sign up at tinyletter.com/jcollins11 — Staff

UPCOMING EVENTS

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12

10:30 a.m. Recording the Online Service/In-Person Worship Service

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13

10:30 a.m. In-Person Worship Service

10:30 a.m. Via KABI 1560 AM / Facebook and Vimeo (abilenefirstumc.org/onlineworship/)

MONDAY, DECEMBER 14

6:00 p.m. Board of Trustees Meeting Via Zoo

7:00 p.m. Worship Design

7:00 p.m. Boy Scouts - Peatling

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 15

10:00 a.m. Parkinson's Group Exercise - Narthex

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16

1:30 p.m. Staff Meeting Via Zoom

3:30 p.m. Power & Light

6:00 p.m. Communion Via Zoom

6:00 p.m. Youth Group

6:15 p.m. Luke Bible Study Via Zoom

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17

5:00 a.m. Prayer Vigil Begins @ Homes

10:00 a.m. Parkinson's Group Exercise - Narthex

6:00 p.m. Cub Scouts - Peatling

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 18

Offices Closed at Noon

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 19

10:30 a.m. Recording the Online Service/In-Person Worship Service

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20

10:30 a.m. In-Person Worship Service

10:30 a.m. Via KABI 1560 AM / Facebook and Vimeo (abilenefirstumc.org/onlineworship/)

MONDAY, DECEMBER 21

5:15 p.m. Memorials Committee

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 22

10:00 a.m. Parkinson's Group Exercise - Narthex

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 23

1:30 p.m. Staff Meeting Via Zoom

6:00 p.m. Communion Via Zoom

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24 — CHRISTMAS EVE

5:00 a.m. Prayer Vigil Begins @ Homes

10:00 a.m. Parkinson's Group Exercise - Narthex

7:00 p.m. Candlelight Silent Night in the parking lot

11:55 p.m. Candlelight Silent Night in the parking lot

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 25 — CHRISTMAS DAY — OFFICES CLOSED

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 26

10:30 a.m. Recording the Online Service/In-Person Worship Service

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27

10:30 a.m. In-Person Worship Service

10:30 a.m. Via KABI 1560 AM / Facebook and Vimeo (abilenefirstumc.org/onlineworship/)

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 29

10:00 a.m. Parkinson's Group Exercise - Narthex

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 30

1:30 p.m. Staff Meeting Via Zoom

6:00 p.m. Communion Via Zoom

STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

John Collins, Pastor — Mobile Phone: 620-252-9622 / Email: john@revcollins.com

Pam Simpson, Office Administrator — Email: office@abilenefirstumc.org

Wendy Robinson, Director of Children and Youth Ministries — Email: wendy@abilenefirstumc.org

Clark Williamson, Director of Music Ministries — Email: clark@abilenefirstumc.org

Pam Jackson, Parish Visitor — Email: parishvisitor@abilenefirstumc.org