



AN ORDER OF **CHRISTIAN WORSHIP**

December 19, 2021 | Fourth Sunday of Advent

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

A Church of open hearts, open minds, and open doors
that seeks to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

601 North Cedar, Abilene, Kansas 67410

785-263-2623 — www.abilenefirstumc.org

GATHERING

Gathering of the Congregation

Welcome and Announcements

Prelude [8:15]

Bell Choir Prelude [10:30]

Carol of the Bells

CALL TO WORSHIP

Not in the mighty places of power,
but in little Bethlehem,
in a room out back:

The Messiah is coming.

Not born in nobility and wealth,
but of Mary and Joseph,
who pondered and planed wood:

The Messiah is coming.

Not announced by prophets, priests, and kings,
but by two women,
who were the first to know:

The Messiah is coming.

Nothing will be impossible for God,
but when and where we least expect it
look among the straw and stars:

The Messiah is coming.

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OPENING PRAYER

Lord, in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.

PROCLAMATION AND RESPONSE

Scripture Reading

Luke 1:39-55 (NRSV)

³⁹ In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, ⁴⁰ where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴² and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³ And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? ⁴⁴ For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord." ⁴⁶ And Mary said,

⁴⁷ "My soul magnifies the Lord,

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* *My Soul Gives Glory to My God* UMH-198

Children’s Message

Choral Anthem [10:30] *Noel Festival*

HYMN* *The Friendly Beasts, vss 1-3, 6* UMH-227

Scripture Reading Micah 5:2-5a (NRSV)

² But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,
who are one of the little clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
one who is to rule in Israel,
whose origin is from of old,
from ancient days.

³ Therefore he shall give them up until the time
when she who is in labor has brought forth;
then the rest of his kindred shall return
to the people of Israel.

⁴ And he shall stand and feed his flock
in the strength of the LORD,
in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.
And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great
to the ends of the earth;

^{5a} and he shall be the one of peace.

Sermon

A STATEMENT OF FAITH*

We are not alone, we live in God’s world.

We believe in God:

**who has created and is creating,
who has come in Jesus, the Word made flesh,
to reconcile and make new,
who works in us and others by the Spirit.**

We trust in God.

We are called to be the church:

**to celebrate God’s presence,
to love and serve others,
to seek justice and resist evil,
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,
our judge and our hope.**

In life, in death, in life beyond death,

God is with us.

We are not alone.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

RESPONSE*

Gloria Patri

UMH-71

Prayer of Confession

(A time of silent prayers of confession.)

Words of Assurance

Invitation to the Offering

Presentation of Our Tithes and Offerings

(If you are a guest, please feel no obligation to give.)

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

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,
but deliver us from evil.**
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory, forever.
Amen.**

GOING FORTH

HYMN*

Angels We Have Heard On High

UMH-238

Dismissal with Blessing*

Postlude*

** "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil" is better translated as save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

TO THOSE WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

- Relax! God put the wiggle in children; don't feel you have to suppress those wiggles in God's house.
- Consider sitting toward the front where it is easier for your little ones to engage.
- Quietly explain the parts of the service and actions of the pastors, musicians, and leaders.
- Sing the hymns, pray and voice the responses. Children learn by mimicking you.
- If you have to leave the sanctuary with your child, feel free to do so, but please come back. As Jesus said, "Let the children come to me."
- If you need or want some time to yourself, there is a nursery available during each service. It is located in Room 205 at the south end of the church. Our ushers and greeters will be happy to direct you.

TO THE LARGER CONGREGATION

- Remember that the presence of children is a gift of hope for the future.
- Remember that the way we welcome children in worship directly affects the way they think about the church, Christianity, and even God.
- Let children know that they are at home in God's house.
- A smile of encouragement is always welcome to parents with small, active children.

FEEL FREE TO REMAIN SEATED

If, for any reason (health, comfort, personal preference, etc.), you need/prefer to remain seated throughout the service, please do so. Don't give into peer pressure. You be you!

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: Myckie Spencer [12/12], Sondra Murnahan [12/5], Ellouise Marshall [11/28].

COMMUNITY PRAYER CONCERNS: Those grieving the loss of William “Mike” Burton (Will Burton’s father) [12/12], Kris Heger and family (brother of Michael Heger) [11/28], Rhoda Frasier [11/21]

THOSE WORSHIPING FROM HOME: Gary Donley, Evelyn York, Velma Becker, Joe Clemence, Steve Crump, Margie Miller, Ray Power, Marla Rutz, Donna Smith, Martha Zutavern, Donna Richards, Dorothy Veach, Darlene Sexton, Melvin Leckron, Dorothy Snider, Linda Chase, Verl Eckman.

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, Jackson Randles, and James L. Wise, Jr.

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

DISTRICT PRAYER CALENDAR: Today we pray for the Alida-Wakefield United Methodist Churches and their pastor Maria D Foerschler.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES — We'll have two Christmas Eve Services on December 24, 2021. One at 7 p.m. and one at 11 p.m. The communion table will be open to everyone who wants to receive it (the plan right now is to offer both intinction and lurchables). Please let the church office know if you need a ride. You can call 785-263-2623 or email office@abilenefirstumc.org.

SHEPHERD'S RUN 2021 — The Shepherd's Run is First UMC's way of expressing appreciation to those who work on Christmas Eve. Following our Christmas Eve services, we deliver plates of Christmas goodies to those who are working at nursing homes, the hospital, the police and fire stations, convenience stores, etc.

Please have all cookies, bread, candies to the church before the 7 p.m. service. They can be placed in the kitchenette off of the narthex. The plates are assembled at this time and placed on tables in the narthex for delivery after the services. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Nancy Kelly.

Thank you for being a part of this outreach to our community.

LESSONS AND CAROLS — On the second day of Christmas (Sunday, December 26, 2021), we'll hold our traditional Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols at both the 8:15 and 10:30 services. If you would like (or are even just willing) to participate by reading one of the nine scripture lessons please contact Clark Williamson.

NO BIBLE STUDY OR COMMUNION DECEMBER 22 — We will not have the Wednesday Bible Study or Holy Communion on Wednesday, December 22, 2021. Instead we'll look forward to seeing everyone on Friday, December 24.

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF — The following is from a series of daily devotions from the writings of Frederick Buechner.

“LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR as yourself is part of the great commandment. The other way to say it is, 'Love yourself as your neighbor.' Love yourself not in some egocentric, self-serving sense but love yourself the way you would love your friend in the sense of taking care of yourself, nourishing yourself, trying to understand, comfort, strengthen yourself. Ministers in particular, people in the caring professions in general, are famous for neglecting themselves with the result that they are apt to become in their own way as helpless and crippled as the people they are trying to care for and thus no longer selves who can be of much use to anybody. If your daughter is struggling for life in a raging torrent, you do not save her by jumping into the torrent with her, which leads only to your both drowning together. Instead you keep your feet on the dry bank—you maintain as best you can your own inner peace, the best and strongest of who you are—and from that solid ground reach out a rescuing hand. "Mind your own business" means butt out of other people's lives because in the long run they must live their lives for themselves, but it also means pay mind to your own life, your own health and wholeness, both for your own sake and ultimately for the sake of those you love too. Take care of yourself so you can take care of them. A bleeding heart is of no help to anybody if it bleeds to death.”

— Frederick Buechner,

www.frederickbuechner.com/quote-of-the-day/2021/12/9/take-care-of-yourself

DEADLINE FOR 2021 GIVING — The collection counters have set December 30, 2021 at 2 p.m. as the deadline for gifts to be received and counted for 2021. Anything received after that will be counted for 2022. Our apologies for any inconvenience.

WANT TO TALK TO THE PASTOR? — John's mobile number is 620-252-9622 and his email is john@revcollins.com, or you can write a note on the back of the attendance insert.

NURSERY — A nursery is provided for children during each service. It is located in Room 205 near the south entrance to the church. If you need assistance locating the nursery, our ushers and greeters will be happy to direct you, but please note our "to those with young children" section.

WE'RE ON THE RADIO AND STREAMING ONLINE — If you can't make it to church, but would like to listen to one of our services live, simply tune into KABI 1560 AM at 10:30 a.m. You can also stream the worship service at abilenefirstumc.org.

INTERESTED IN MEMBERSHIP? — Are you interested in joining the Abilene First United Methodist Church as a member and making a formal commitment to God, the church, and yourself? If so, please communicate with the pastor in person or by using the contact information found on the back of the bulletin.

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 the 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.

CHURCH CALENDAR

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19

- 8:15 a.m. In-Person Worship Service / Online Streaming
- 9:20 a.m. Small Groups & Sunday School Classes
- 10:30 a.m. In-Person Worship Service / KABI 1560 AM

MONDAY, DECEMBER 20

- 5:15 p.m. Memorials Committee
- 6:00 p.m. Church Council Meeting

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 22

- 1:30 p.m. Staff Meeting

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 23

- 5:00 a.m. Prayer Vigil begins
- 9:00 a.m. Card Ministry Group

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 24-CHRISTMAS EVE

- Shepherds' Run
- 7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Worship Service
- 11:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Worship Service

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26

- 8:15 a.m. In-Person Worship Service / Online Streaming
Lessons and Carols Service
- 9:20 a.m. Small Groups & Sunday School Classes
- 10:30 a.m. In-Person Worship Service / KABI 1560 AM
Lessons and Carols Service

MONDAY, DECEMBER 27

Offices Closed for Christmas Holiday

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 29

- 1:30 p.m. Staff Meeting
- 5:15 p.m. Bible Study
- 6:00 p.m. Communion (in-person and Zoom)
- 6:15 p.m. Chancel Choir

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 30

- 5:00 a.m. Prayer Vigil begins
- 7:00 p.m. Youth Lock-In

SUNDAY, JANUARY 2

- 8:15 a.m. In-Person Worship Service / Online Streaming
- 9:20 a.m. Small Groups & Sunday School Classes
- 10:30 a.m. In-Person Worship Service / KABI 1560 AM

MONDAY, JANUARY 3

Offices Closed for New Year's Holiday

TUESDAY, JANUARY 4

- 10:00 a.m. Parkinson;s Group Exercise - Narthex
- 6:30 p.m. Outreach Committee Meeting - 200

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 5

- 9:30 a.m. Prairie Art Quilters
- 1:30 p.m. Staff Meeting
- 3:30 p.m. Power & Light
- 5:15 p.m. Bible Study
- 6:00 p.m. Communion (in-person and Zoom)
- 6:00 p.m. Youth Group
- 6:15 p.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal
- 7:00 p.m. Bell Choir Rehearsal

SERMON NOTES

“You are enough” in the same way that a loaf of bread and a fish was enough. — Sharon Hodde Miller [1]

[1] Sharon Hodde Miller, December 4, 2021, 2:17 p.m., twitter.com/SHoddeMiller.

DOODLES

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.

CLOSING CREDITS

Kristy Engle and Angie Hoerner, Piano

Heather James, Michael & Easton Heger, Advent Candle [8:15]

Joann Hettenbach and Kari Bowers, Advent Candle [10:30]

Mary Jane Oard and Kent Wyatt, Liturgists

Kaylee Weibert and Jackson Green, Sound

Chantay Porter and Tyler Green, Slides

CONTACT INFORMATION

John Collins, Pastor

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Wendy Robinson, Director of Children and Youth Ministries

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