



*Central and Algonquin United  
Methodist Churches*

*Sunday, December 22, 2024*

*With Pastor Marty Johnston*

Mission Statement:  
Connecting all people to God by building bridges of  
caring, outreach, and acceptance.

Central and Algonquin UMC's Worship Gathering  
Pastor Marty Johnston  
December 22, 2024  
Fourth Sunday of Advent - Love  
*CCLI License# 3999519*

Ushers/Greeters: Tom Brwon/

Liturgist: Jim Bankson

Advent Readers: Jim & Kathy Bankson

PRELUDE "Be Comforted" arr. Smith

CHOIRAL INTROIT "Rejoice, Rejoice With Music" J. Martin / S. Nordmeyer

WELCOME/MISSION STATEMENT

Connecting all people to God by building bridges of  
caring, outreach, and acceptance

**\*CALL TO WORSHIP<sup>1</sup>**

Leader:

Let us hear what the Lord our God will speak, for He promises peace to His faithful people.

**People:**

**His salvation is near to those who revere Him, that His glory may dwell among us.**

Leader:

Steadfast love and faithfulness meet together; righteousness and peace embrace.

**People:**

**Faithfulness springs up from the ground, and righteousness looks down from the heavens.**

Leader:

The Lord will give what is good, and the land will yield its abundance.

**People:**

**Righteousness will go before Him, and His love will prepare the way for our steps.**

**All:**

**Come, Lord Jesus, and fill us with Your steadfast love, that we may walk in Your peace and share Your hope with the world. Amen.**

**\*OPENING HYMN "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" (v1,5-7) UMH 211**

## \*PASTOR'S OPENING PRAYER

*Let us pray:*

*Loving and faithful God, as we gather on this fourth Sunday of Advent, we are reminded of Your steadfast love that surrounds us and sustains us. In this sacred season, we give thanks for the gift of Your Son, who brings light into our darkness and hope into our waiting hearts.*

*Fill this time of worship with the peace of Your presence. Open our hearts to receive Your love so that we may share it freely with a world longing for kindness and compassion. May all we say and do this morning reflect the joy and anticipation of Your coming. In the name of Jesus Christ, Emmanuel, we pray. Amen.*

## ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING                      Love

Leader:

Today we light the fourth candle of Advent, the Candle of Love. As we light it, we remember that God's love is steadfast and never-ending.

People:

**God's love surrounds us, goes before us, and invites us to walk in His ways.**

Leader:

The psalmist reminds us: "Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will kiss each other."

People:

**We rejoice in the love that comes from God, a love that brings healing, hope, and peace.**

Leader:

In this season of Advent, we prepare our hearts to welcome Jesus, the ultimate expression of God's love.

People:

**May this flame remind us of His light, which shines in the darkness and cannot be overcome.**

Leader:

Let us walk in love, as Christ has loved us, so the world may know His peace.

All:

**Come, Lord Jesus, fill our hearts with Your love, and help us to share it with everyone we meet. Amen.**

*Three purple candles and the pink candle are lit.*

## TIME FOR YOUNG CHRISTIANS

### INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SCRIPTURE READING

*In this morning's reading, Mary visits her relative Elizabeth, who is pregnant with John the Baptist. When Mary arrives, John leaps in Elizabeth's womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, blesses Mary for her faith in God's promise. In response, Mary praises God with a song, celebrating His greatness, mercy, and care for the humble. She declares how God lifts the lowly, fills the hungry, and keeps His promises to His people. Mary's song reflects her joy and trust in God's faithfulness.*

FIRST SCRIPTURE READING: Luke 1:39-55

#### **Mary Visits Elizabeth**

**39** At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea,

**40** where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth.

**41** When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

**42** In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear!

**43** But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

**44** As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy.

**45** Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!"

#### **Mary's Song**

**46** And Mary said: "My soul glorifies the Lord

**47** and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

**48** for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed,

**49** for the Mighty One has done great things for me— holy is his name.

**50** His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation.

**51** He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.

52 He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble.

53 He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty.

54 He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful

55 to Abraham and his descendants forever, just as he promised our ancestors.”

Leader: The Word of God for the People of God

**All: Thanks be to God**

CHOIR ANTHEM

"Thou Shalt Know Him"

M. Sirett

SERMON

Lifting the Lowly

INVITATION TO OFFERING

As Mary sang of God's mercy and provision, we are reminded of how richly God blesses us. In this season of love and anticipation, let us offer our gifts with joyful hearts, so His love may shine brightly in the world.

CHORAL OFFERTORY

"Star of the East"

arr. Shea

DOXOLOGY

UMH 95

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;**

OLD HUNDREDTH

**Praise him, all creatures here below;**

**Praise him above, ye heavenly host;**

**Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

**\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION<sup>2</sup>**

Loving God, we dedicate these gifts to You, trusting that they will bring hope, peace, joy, and love to those in need. Use what we offer today to magnify Your name and fulfill Your purpose in the world. Amen.

HYMN

"My Soul Gives Glory to My God"

UMH 198

MORNING SONG

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE,

Leader: Lord, in your mercy,

**All: receive our prayer.**

As we prepare for Emmanuel, God-with-us, Lets pray for all people and places that long for God's Presence.

*A brief silence.*

God our uniter, increase communication and cooperation in our relationships with those of other traditions and religions. Root your church in the radical message of your incarnation, and enable us to pursue your justice in the world. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

God our creator, we praise you for the beauty that surrounds us. Awaken in us a renewed sense of care for the wildlife in our communities. Form us into faithful stewards of what you have made. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

God our sovereign, Mary proclaims a new way of life that lifts up the lowly and fills the hungry with good things. Nurture in local governments and municipalities a desire to care for all who are overlooked and ignored. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

God our beacon, as the northern hemisphere begins its slow turn toward more daylight, remind us that even in the deepest nights, you are there. Comfort the lonely and bereaved. Hold closely the frightened, anxious, depressed, and ill. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

God our guide, shepherd the leadership of this congregation. Bless the council and staff in discerning future ministry and open their hearts to the voices of the community. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

Savior of the nations, come, and receive these prayers and the pleas of our hearts, in the name of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

## 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.**

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS – December 22, 2024**

### **REMINDER**

#### **Past Holiday Photos Wanted!**

Cathy Wilkinson is putting together a fun slideshow featuring cherished holiday memories. Please send your past holiday photos to Cathy at [wilkinsoncathy@ymail.com](mailto:wilkinsoncathy@ymail.com) to be included in the slideshow.



## Join Us for a Christmas Eve Social Gathering!



After the 7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service, we invite you to a festive social gathering to celebrate the season! Finger Foods, Hot Cider, Hot Chocolate & Treats Robin Myers will have a sign-up sheet available for you to contribute to the refreshments. Feel free to bring your favorite holiday snacks and drinks!

We look forward to celebrating with you  
and sharing the joy of Christmas!

### Birthday/Anniversary

Dec 27<sup>th</sup> – Kristen Hartman

Dec 24<sup>th</sup> – Doris and Mike Kelly 53rd Anniv.

### This Week

**Tuesday** – Christmas Eve service, 7:00 p.m.  
– Social gathering after the service.

\*CLOSING HYMN “Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates”

UMH 213  
TRURO

### BENEDICTION

*God be with you till we meet again, by his council guide, uphold you,  
with his sheep securely fold you; God be with you till we meet again.*

CHOIRAL BENEDICTION “Share The Light”

J. Martin/ Nordmeyer

### POSTLUDE

“Veni Emmanuel”

Lachenauer

Adult Bible Study, Sunday mornings at 9:30 AM  
led by Ray and Diane Bell - ALL are welcome.

Financial gifts can be mailed to Algonquin UMC or Central UMC at:  
111 E. Spruce St., Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783

Website: [www.cumcsoo.org](http://www.cumcsoo.org)

Online Giving: <https://cumcsoo.org/give/>

**Office Hours:**

**Mon.-Thurs 9:00 a.m.- 2:00 p.m.**

Office Phone: 906-632-8672

Pastor’s Cell Phone: 906-440-0288

Office Email: [centralumc632@gmail.com](mailto:centralumc632@gmail.com)

Pastor’s Email: [pastormartyj@yahoo.com](mailto:pastormartyj@yahoo.com)