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*Central and Algonquin United
Methodist Churches*

Sunday, November 30, 2025

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
November 30, 2025
First Sunday of Advent
CCLI License# 3999519

Ushers/Greeters: Ray Bell, James Bankson

Liturgist: Marcie Gleason

Advent Readers: Sherry & Ron Hutchins

PRELUDE “How Beautiful Are the Feet” arr. Scrivener

WELCOME/MISSION STATEMENT

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

***Call to Worship:** (Inspired by Psalm 12)

Leader: Friends, as the psalmist once said, *I was glad when they said to me, Let us go to the house of the Lord.*” Today we gather with that same gladness.

People: We come with grateful hearts, ready to meet God in this place.

Leader: Advent begins with a journey—hope rising, light growing, and the promise of Christ drawing near.

People: We open our hearts to that promise.

Leader: Here we find peace for troubled minds, strength for weary days, and joy in walking together.

People: Here we seek the peace of God's household—peace within us, peace around us, peace for our world.

Leader: So come—bring your hopes, your questions, your longings, and your gratitude.

All: Let us worship the Lord with joy, for God welcomes us home again.

PASTOR'S OPENING PRAYER *

TIME FOR YOUNG CHRISTIANS

Advent Candle Lighting - Hope

First Reader: The prophet Isaiah calls to us from the past to imagine the future when God's reign will be fully realized and recognized throughout creation. When that time comes, God “shall judge between the nations and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war any more”

All: Today, we choose to live in hope, believing that the time of God's reign has come and is coming among us.

Reader: We light this candle of hope as a sign of our promise to follow the Light as we answer God's call to transform our hope into reality today and in the days to come.

Light the first candle of the Advent wreath. (Hope)

Reception of New Members

RECEPTION INTO THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH RECEPTION INTO A LOCAL CONGREGATION.

Brothers and sisters in Christ:

Through the Sacrament of Baptism we are initiated into Christ's holy Church. We are incorporated into God's mighty acts of salvation and given new birth through water and the Spirit. All this is God's gift, offered to us without price.

I present the following candidates for Membership:

RENUNCIATION OF SIN AND PROFESSION OF FAITH

On behalf of the whole Church, I ask you:

Do you renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness, reject the evil powers of this world, and repent of your sin?

I do.

Do you accept the freedom and power God gives you to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves?

I do.

Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Savior, put your whole trust in his grace, and promise to serve him as your Lord, in union with the Church which Christ has opened to people of all ages, nations, and races?

I do.

According to the grace given to you, will you remain faithful members of Christ's holy Church and serve as Christ's representatives in the world?

I will.

The pastor addresses the congregation, and the congregation responds:

Pastor: Do you, as Christ's body, the Church, reaffirm both your rejection of sin and your commitment to Christ?

We do.

Will you nurture one another in the Christian faith and life and include these persons now before you in your care?

With God's help we will proclaim the good news and live according to the example of Christ. We will surround these persons with a community of love and forgiveness, that they may grow in their trust of God, and be found faithful in their service to others.

We will pray for them, that they may be true disciples who walk in the way that leads to life.

Let us join together in professing the Christian faith as contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

Do you believe in God the Father?

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

I believe in 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.]

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

I believe in the Holy Spirit, [the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.]

RECEPTION INTO THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

As members of Christ's universal Church, will you be loyal to Christ through The United Methodist Church, and do all in your power to strengthen its ministries?

I will.

RECEPTION INTO THE LOCAL CONGREGATION

As members of this congregation, will you faithfully participate in its ministries by your prayers, your presence, your gifts, your service and your witness?
I will.

COMMENDATION AND WELCOME

The pastor addresses the congregation:

Members of the household of God, I commend these persons to your love and care. Do all in your power to increase their faith, confirm their hope, and perfect them in love.

The congregation responds:

We give thanks for all that God has already given you and we welcome you in Christian love. As members together with you in the body of Christ and in this congregation of The United Methodist Church, we renew our covenant faithfully to participate in the ministries of the Church by our prayers, our presence, our gifts, our service, and our witness that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.

The pastor addresses those received, using an appropriate gesture of blessing:

The God of all grace, who has called us to eternal glory in Christ, establish you and strengthen you by the power of the Holy Spirit, that you may live in grace and peace.

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SCRIPTURE READING

If you've ever waited for a guest to arrive—maybe someone you care about deeply—you know the mix of emotions that comes with it. You tidy the house, glance out the window every few minutes, and listen for footsteps on the porch. There's a kind of hopeful readiness in your heart, because you know something good is coming...but you just don't know exactly *when*.

Jesus speaks into that same feeling in Matthew 24.

He tells His disciples that no one knows the day or the hour of His return—not the angels, not even the Son. Only the Father knows. And instead of giving us a countdown clock, Jesus invites us to live alert, awake, and aware...not anxious, but attentive. Not fearful, but faithful. He calls us to live today in such a way that we won't be caught off guard *when* He comes—whenever that may be.

This passage reminds us that Advent isn't only about looking back to Bethlehem. It's also about looking forward—to the promise that Christ will come again, stepping into the world not as a baby but as its King. And while we can't circle a date on the calendar, we *can* shape our lives around the expectation that God is still moving, still coming, still breaking into our world with hope.

So as we hear these words from Matthew 24:36–44, we're invited to listen not with fear, but with readiness...with open hands...with hearts that say, "Lord, help me live today as if You might arrive at any moment."

FIRST SCRIPTURE READING Matthew 24: 36-44

³⁶ "But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son,^[f] but only the Father.

³⁷ As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.

³⁸ For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark;

³⁹ and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.

⁴⁰ Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left.

⁴¹ Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.

⁴² “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.

⁴³ But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into.

⁴⁴ So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

Leader: The Word of God for the People of God

All: Thanks be to God

SERMON

The Unexpected Hour

INVITATION TO OFFERING

As we begin Advent with the candle of Hope, we remember that hope is something we practice.

Our giving reflects our readiness for Christ to come among us.

With hopeful hearts, let us offer our gifts to God.

OFFERTORY

“Contemplation”

Belland

DOXOLOGY

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

UMH 95
OLD HUNDREDTH

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

God of Hope,
bless these gifts and use them to shine Your light in our world.
Keep us awake to Your presence and ready for Your coming.
Amen.

*HYMN “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus” UMH 196
COME, THOU LONG-EXPECTED JESUS

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE,

Leader: Lord, in Your Mercy,
All: Hear our prayer.

Pastor:

With confidence in the God who holds all things together, whose mercy endures even when the world trembles,
let us pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

For the Church

Faithful God,

You are the Lord of both the living and the dead.
When temples crumble and certainties fade, keep Your Church rooted in the hope that does not fail.
When we grow anxious or weary, remind us that You are still I AM—ever present, ever faithful, ever alive.
Give us courage to speak Your word and to endure with grace.
Lord, in Your mercy, *hear our prayer.*

For the World

God of all nations,

Teach the leaders of the earth humility instead of pride,
justice instead of vengeance,

and compassion instead of indifference.

In a world of upheaval and fear, plant seeds of peace.

Let Your kingdom break through where hatred reigns,
and Your mercy rise where despair has taken root.

Lord, in Your mercy, *hear our prayer.*

For Creation

Creator of all that is,

You have made a world of beauty that testifies to Your glory.

Guard our land, air, and water from harm.

When we take creation for granted, turn us toward gratitude and care.

Help us live as faithful stewards until all creation joins in praise.

Lord, in Your mercy, *hear our prayer.*

For Our Community

God of steadfast love,

Bless this community of Sault Ste. Marie and all our neighbors.

Strengthen bonds of kindness and trust.

Where there is division, bring understanding;

where there is loneliness, bring friendship;

and where there is need, awaken generosity.

Lord, in Your mercy, *hear our prayer.*

For Those in Need

Merciful Lord,

Draw near to those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit.

Give strength to the persecuted and hope to the fearful.

Comfort the grieving, heal the sick,

and grant peace to those who are weary.

Remind each one that not even trouble or trial can separate us from Your love.

Lord, in Your mercy, *hear our prayer.*

★ For Our Advent Preparation

God of Hope,

as we begin this season of watching and waiting,

prepare our hearts to welcome Christ with readiness and joy.

Sweep away all fear, distraction, and weariness.

Shape us into people who stay awake to Your presence,

attentive to Your Word,

and eager to walk in Your light.

Make room within us for the One who comes.

Lord, in Your mercy, *hear our prayer.*

Pastor:

Into Your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray,

trusting in Your mercy through Jesus Christ our risen Lord,

who taught us to pray:

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 – November 30, 2025

The Worship Committee is looking toward the new year and is always looking for additional ushers, liturgists, and communion stewards. Also, Robin Myers appreciates help with hosting the online service (it's REALLY easy to do!). If you cannot attend the service in person, but watch online regularly, this would be perfect for you. Contact Robin at (906)632-0682) if you would be willing to help.

****Please Remember** that the youth will be outside after the service on the **1st Sunday of the month** to collect a Mission Love Offering and new this year, we now have a **Misson's Change Jar** (located on table at top of stairs) to use any time. All proceeds will go toward helping elementary school children with their needs.

Missions: is also collecting shelf stable foods for the elementary school. The kind of food needed is: oatmeal packets, pop tarts, granola bars, cracker packs, Chef Boyardi, canned soup and vegetable's, easy Mac and cheese, and ramen noodles. There is a tub outside the elevator upstairs and in the fellowship hall that food can be left in. *They would also like to Thank the members who have drop off items.*

The Holiday Season is fast approaching us, and the **Poinsettias Orders** are already being taken. If you would like to purchase a Poinsettia plant, just fill out the form enclosed in the bulletin and bring it to the office with your check. These orders are due by **Sunday Dec. 7th.**

Join us for Bible Study

Sunday at 9:30 AM in the CUMC lounge led by Raymond Bell.

Central Birthday/Anniversary

Dec., 1st – Earl Tomlinson Dec., 8th – Karen Atkins

Dec., 10th – Karen & Jim Aikins (3rd)

Save the Date

Wed., Dec. 17th – Family Night at CUMC Fellowship Hall
5:30 PM – 7 PM. Dinner is served before the lesson.

Thurs., Dec. 18th - Blue Christmas Service, 6:30 p.m. @ AUMC

Wed., Dec 24th – Christmas Eve service @ 7 p.m. Social gathering after services



Nursery is available for infants through age 3 during worship with Mallory Baier. The nursery is located downstairs, and ushers will be happy to assist you.

* CLOSING HYMN

“People, Look East”

UMH 202
PEOPLE, LOOK EAST

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

“ How Great Our Joy”

arr. Mansfield

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

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

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

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