



y

*Central and Algonquin United  
Methodist Churches*

*Sunday, December 7, 2025*

*With Pastor Marty Johnston*

Mission Statement:

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

Central United Methodist  
Pastor Marty Johnston  
December 7, 2025  
Liturgical Colors: Purple/Blue  
Second Sunday of Advent  
*CCLI License# 3999519*

Ushers/Greeters: Norb Bennin,

Liturgist: Ray Bell,

Advent Readers: Wendy & Don Montag

Communion: Marcia Jenkins-Ball, Robin Myers

## PRELUDE

## WELCOME/MISSION STATEMENT

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

### **\*Call to Worship:** (Inspired by Psalm 72)

**Leader:** Come, friends—let us gather our hopes and our longings before the Lord.

Psalm 72 reminds us that God's kingdom is marked by justice, compassion, and peace.

**People:** We come hungry for that kind of world. We come longing for a King who makes things right.

**Leader:** The psalm paints a picture of a ruler who defends the vulnerable, lifts up the poor, and brings refreshment like gentle rain on parched ground.

**People:** May that righteousness flow in our day. May His peace cover the earth like morning light.

**Leader:** Blessed be the Lord, the God who alone does wondrous things—who keeps promises, heals hearts, and brings hope to every corner of creation.

**People:** Blessed be His glorious name forever.  
Let the whole earth be filled with His glory!

**All Together:** Come, Lord Jesus—reign in us, reign among us, and make all things new. Amen.

\*OPENING HYMN      “Hail to the Lord’s Anointed”

UMH 203  
HAIL TO THE LORD’S ANOINTED

## PASTOR’S OPENING PRAYER \*

Lord of justice, mercy, and peace—We have lifted our voices in Worship and sung of the Anointed One, the One who brings righteousness like rain and hope to the weary. As we enter this Advent moment, shape our hearts to receive Your kingdom. Where our world is dry, let Your compassion fall gently. Where we are restless, let Your peace settle within us. Prepare us, as John the Baptist once prepared the way, to welcome Christ with honesty, courage, and joy. Fill this time with Your presence, that every word, song, and silence may honor You.  
Amen.

## TIME FOR YOUNG CHRISTIANS

### Advent Candle Lighting - Peace

**Reader:** Advent reminds us that we are people who share a story, the story of Jesus, who enacts peace by judging in favor of the poor and deciding with equity for the meek of the earth. We long for the day when “the wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion will feed together, and a little child shall lead them” (Isaiah 11:6).

**All:** Today, we choose to live the story of peace, believing that true peace comes when we seek the flourishing of all God's creation.

**Reader:** We light this candle of peace as a sign of our commitment to bring Light to the places the world seeks to hide until that day when all creation lives together in harmony and abundance.

*Light the second candle of the Advent wreath. (Peace)*

## INTRODUCTION TO SCRIPTURE READING:

When we come to Matthew 3, the peaceful, candle-lit images of Advent suddenly give way to the voice of someone who doesn't quite fit our Christmas playlists. John the Baptist shows up in the wilderness—not in polished robes, not in Jerusalem's center of influence, but out where things are raw and honest. And people went out to him because they sensed something real.

John doesn't whisper. He calls us to prepare our hearts, to clear the clutter, to make room for the One who is coming with fire and with grace.

As we hear his words today, we're invited to ask: *What needs reshaping in us so Christ can reign more fully?*

## FIRST SCRIPTURE READING Matthew 3: 1-12

In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea

<sup>2</sup> and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."

<sup>3</sup> This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah:

*“A voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.’”*

<sup>4</sup> John’s clothes were made of camel’s hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey.

<sup>5</sup> People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan.

<sup>6</sup> Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.

<sup>7</sup> But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?

<sup>8</sup> Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.

<sup>9</sup> And do not think you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham.

<sup>10</sup> The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

<sup>11</sup> “I baptize you with<sup>[b]</sup> water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with<sup>[c]</sup> the Holy Spirit and fire.

<sup>12</sup> His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

Leader: The Word of God for the People of God

All: **Thanks be to God**

SERMON  
Communion

Clear the Way!

## Invitation to the Table

**Pastor:**

Christ our Lord invites to His table all who love Him, who earnestly repent of their sin, and seek to live in peace with one another. Therefore, let us confess our sin before God and one another.

## Confession & Pardon

**Pastor:**

We come to this moment aware that peace begins with honesty—honesty before God, and honesty with ourselves.

**All:**

God of mercy, we confess that our lives are cluttered, our priorities scattered, and our words not always aligned with Your peace. We have allowed fear to guide our decisions and impatience to shape our responses. Forgive us, and teach us again the way of Your peace.

**Pastor:**

Hear the good news: In Jesus Christ, God comes not to condemn but to restore. You are forgiven, loved, and invited to walk in peace.

**All:** In Jesus Christ, you are forgiven, loved, and invited to walk in peace.

## The Great Thanksgiving

**Pastor:** The Lord be with you.

**People:** And also with you.

**Pastor:** Lift up your hearts.

**People:** We lift them up to the Lord.

**Pastor:** Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**People:** It is right to give our thanks and praise.

**Pastor:** It is right—and a good and joyful thing—always and everywhere to give thanks to You, Almighty God, Creator of heaven

and earth. You sent the prophets to call us back to Your ways, and in these Advent days You call us again to prepare the way for Christ, our Peace.

And so, with Your people on earth and all the company of heaven, we praise Your name and join their unending hymn:

**All:**

*Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of Your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.*

**Pastor:**

Holy are You, and blessed is Your Son Jesus Christ. He came among us as Light in our darkness and Peace in our turmoil. By His baptism, suffering, death, and resurrection You gave birth to Your Church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

On the night in which He gave Himself up for us, He took bread, gave thanks to You, broke the bread, gave it to His disciples, and said:

“Take, eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

When the supper was over, He took the cup, gave thanks to You, gave it to His disciples, and said:

“Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

And so, in remembrance of these Your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving —as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ’s offering for us —as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

**All:**

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

**Pastor:**

Pour out Your Holy Spirit on us gathered here and on these gifts of bread and cup. Make them for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, as we walk in the way of peace until Christ comes again in final victory.

**All: Amen.**

*Communion is shared*

### **Prayer After Communion**

**All:**

**Prince of Peace, You have fed us with grace and strengthened us for the journey. Send us out as people of peace—renewed, forgiven, and ready to prepare the way of the Lord.**

**Amen.**

### **INVITATION TO OFFERING**

As Christ has fed us at His table with grace that knows no measure, let us now offer our gifts in gratitude, that His peace and justice might take root in our community and beyond.

### **OFFERTORY**

### **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**

Gracious God,

You have met us at this Table with a love we did not earn and a peace we cannot manufacture. Receive now these gifts—simple, tangible signs of our thanksgiving. Use them to lift the lowly, to comfort the weary, and to shine Your light in the places still waiting for hope. Make us generous people, shaped by Your Spirit and sent in Your name, that the world may glimpse Your kingdom through our lives. In Christ our Lord we pray. Amen.

HYMN

“ Fairest Lord Jesus”

UMH 189

FASIREST LORD JESUS

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE,

**Leader:** Lord, in your Mercy

**All:** Hear our prayer.

**Pastor:**

With gratitude for the great cloud of witnesses who have gone before us, and with confidence in the God who still makes all things new, let us pray for the Church, the world, and all who are in need.

**For the Church**

Eternal God, You sent John the Baptist to call Your people to prepare the way, and You send Your Church today to embody that same message of repentance, hope, and peace. Make us a people who live what we proclaim—clearing space in our hearts for Christ, and making room in our communities for all who seek Your grace.

Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

**For the World**

Lord of all nations, In this season when we light the candle of Peace, we remember how far our world is from the harmony You desire. Where conflict rages, raise up peacemakers. Where leaders cling to power rather than justice, turn their hearts toward mercy. Where the cries of the poor go unheard, let righteousness roll down like waters. Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

### **For Creation**

Creator of heaven and earth, From wilderness paths to rivers that refresh the land, all creation bears witness to Your goodness. Teach us to cherish this world as the gift it is—  
to tend what You have made,  
to heal what we have harmed,  
and to honor the earth that sustains us.  
Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

### **For Our Community**

God of the generations,  
Thank You for this congregation and the faithful ones who shaped its life long before we arrived.  
Strengthen us now to prepare the way in our own time—  
to be a beacon of Christ's peace,  
a refuge for the weary,  
and a community where grace takes root.  
Make us bold in our mission and tender in our care.  
Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

### **For Those in Need**

Compassionate Savior,  
You stand with the vulnerable, the hurting, and the afraid.  
Draw near to all who need Your peace today—  
the sick, the grieving, the anxious, the overwhelmed.  
Especially in this season of bright lights and deep shadows,  
let Your comfort be real,  
Your healing be near,

and Your hope rise like dawn.  
Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

### **For Ourselves**

Faithful God,  
You know the wilderness places in each of us—  
the fears we carry, the habits we need to release,  
the places where Your peace has yet to take root.  
Give us courage to participate in Your refining work  
and humility to welcome the Christ who comes with fire and with  
grace.  
Shape us into people who prepare the way not just with our words  
but with our lives.  
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 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 – December 7, 2025**

**Thank you to all who helped with assembling the  
December/January Flame.  
Your help was greatly appreciated.**

**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 today after the service to collect a Mission Love Offering and new this year, we now have a *Misson's Change Jar* (located on the table at the top of the stairs). All proceeds will go toward helping elementary school children with their needs. \$579.00 has been collected so far this fall and \$620.00 has been spent on food and hygiene purchases. There was a carryover balance from last spring to cover the difference. The Borad of Education and Elementary school have sent a Thank You card for all our church has done.

**Missions:** is collecting shelf stable foods for elementary schools and also personal hygiene items. The kind of items needed are; small bottles of combined shampoo and conditioners, bar soap, small deodorant, as well as food items; such as oatmeal packets, pop tarts, granola bars, cracker packs, Chef Boyardi, canned soup and vegetables, 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 it's time to get *Poinsettias Orders* in. If you would like to purchase a Poinsettia plant this year, just fill out the form (located at each entrance) and bring it to the office with your check.

*The orders are due by today - Sunday Dec. 7<sup>th</sup>.*

*Join us for Bible Study*  
*Sunday at 9:30 AM in the CUMC lounge led by Raymond Bell.*

## **Central Birthday/Anniversary**

**Dec., 8<sup>th</sup>** – Karen Atkins   **Dec., 15<sup>th</sup>** – Gwen Worley  
**Dec., 15<sup>th</sup>** – Mary Arfstrom   **Dec., 16<sup>th</sup>** – Pastor Marty

**Dec., 10<sup>th</sup>** – Karen & Jim Aikins ( 3<sup>rd</sup>)

### **Save the Date**

**Sun., Dec. 14<sup>th</sup>** – The Children’s Christmas program will be during worship service.

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

**Thurs., Dec. 18<sup>th</sup>** - Blue Christmas Service, 6:30 p.m. @ AUMC

**Wed., Dec 24<sup>th</sup>** – 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 “Let There Be Peace on Earth” (2x) UMH 431  
LET THERE BE PEACE ON EARTH

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](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: [marty.johnston16@gmail.com](mailto:marty.johnston16@gmail.com)