



*Central and Algonquin United  
Methodist Churches*

*Sunday, December 28, 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 28, 2025  
Liturgical Colors: White  
First Sunday After Christmas  
*CCLI License# 3999519*

Ushers/Greeters: Norb Bennin, Dell Carter  
Liturgist: James Bankson

PRELUDE                                      “ NOEL ecosais”                                      arr. Chesterton

WELCOME/MISSION STATEMENT

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

**\*Call to Worship:** (Inspired by Psalm 148)

**Leader:** The world tells us Christmas is finished.

**People:** But praise is not.

**Leader:** Psalm 148 tells us the song continues—from heaven to earth, from angels to ordinary people.

**People:** From joy and celebration to uncertainty and waiting.

**Leader:** Even when life feels unfinished—

**People:** God is still worthy of praise.

**All (or People):** Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.  
Praise the Lord!

\* OPENING HYMN      “Good Christian Friends Rejoice”      UMH 224  
GOOD CHRISTIANS FRIENDS REJOICE

### \*PASTOR’S OPENING PRAYER \*

Faithful God, we come to You still carrying the sounds of Christmas—the carols, the stories, the wonder—and also carrying the realities of everyday life.

Some of us arrive joyful, some of us tired, some unsure what this new season will bring.

Your word reminds us that praise continues—in heaven and on earth, in celebration and in waiting.

So receive our worship today, not because it is perfect, but because it is offered with honest hearts.

### TIME FOR YOUNG CHRISTIANS

#### INTRODUCTION TO SCRIPTURE READING:

After the joy of Christmas—the angels, the singing, the light—we might expect the story to slow down and settle.

But it doesn't. Matthew moves us quickly from the manger to the road, from celebration to fear.

This is the part of the Christmas story we don't see on greeting cards. There's no stable here, no shepherds, no star hanging quietly in the sky.

Instead, there is danger. A warning in a dream. A ruler threatened by a child. And parents doing what parents have always done—protecting their child at all costs.

Matthew reminds us that Jesus did not enter a peaceful world—He entered a world like ours.

So as we listen, hear not only a story from long ago, but a story about God's presence in times of uncertainty and fear.

Let us listen for the Word of God.

#### FIRST SCRIPTURE READING Matthew 2: 13-23

13 When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him."

14 So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt,

15 where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Out of Egypt I called my son."

16 When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and

its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi.

17 Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

18 “A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more.”

### *The Return to Nazareth*

19 After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt

20 and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child’s life are dead.”

21 So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel.

22 But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee,

23 and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets, that he would be called a Nazarene.

24 When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife.

25 But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

Leader: The Word of God for the People of God

All: Thanks be to God

SERMON

When Christmas Gets Complicated

INVITATION TO OFFERING

As we offer our gifts today, we remember that God often works through ordinary acts of generosity to bring light and protection into a complicated world.

OFFERTORY

“Noel Languedocirn”

Roques

DOXOLOGY

UMH 95  
OLD HUNDREDTH

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.

**\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

Gracious God, receive these gifts and the lives they represent. Use them to bring hope where fear has taken hold, care where there is vulnerability, and light where the road ahead feels uncertain. May all that we offer—our resources, our compassion, and our faith—be used for Your purposes of healing and redemption, through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

HYMN

“What Child Is This”

UMH 219  
WHAT CHILD IS THIS

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE,

**Leader:** Lord, in your Mercy

**All:** Hear our prayer.

**Pastor:**

With confidence in the God who remains with us when joy gives way to uncertainty, whose presence steadies us when life becomes complicated, let us pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

### For the Church

**Faithful God,**

You come to Your people not only in moments of celebration, but also on the road, in disruption, and in fear. Like Joseph, You call Your Church to trust You even when the way forward is unclear.

Strengthen us to listen for Your voice, to act with courage when obedience requires sacrifice, and to follow You beyond comfort into faithfulness. Remind us that Emmanuel is still with us—guiding, protecting, and redeeming.

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

### For the World

**God of all nations,**

In a world shaped by fear, power, and division, speak Your word of peace. Where leaders are tempted to act out of self-preservation or pride, grant wisdom rooted in humility and care for the vulnerable.

Where violence threatens the innocent, where communities are unsettled, and where the powerful silence the weak, let Your justice

and compassion break through.  
**Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.**

### **For Creation**

**Creator God,**

You formed a world that reflects Your goodness and generosity, yet too often it bears the marks of neglect and exploitation. Restore the lands and waters that sustain life. Teach us to live as grateful stewards, to protect what You have entrusted to our care, and to honor the rhythms of the world You declared good. May all creation rejoice in Your sustaining presence.

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

### **For Our Community**

**God of steadfast love,**

We lift before You Sault Ste. Marie and our surrounding communities.

Be near to families facing uncertainty, to workers navigating change, and to neighbors who feel weary or overlooked. Make this community a place where compassion is practiced, where kindness is shared freely, and where Your presence is made visible through care for one another.

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

### **For Those in Need**

**Merciful Lord,**

Draw near to all who carry heavy burdens—those who are sick, grieving, anxious, displaced, or afraid. Speak Your word of reassurance once more: *Do not be afraid.*” Strengthen those who feel overwhelmed, comfort those who mourn, and grant hope to all who

wait for relief and renewal. Let each one know that Emmanuel—  
God with us—walks beside them even now.

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

**Pastor:**

Into Your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy and faithfulness through Jesus Christ, our Emmanuel, 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 28, 2025**

**\*\* Please Remember** that the youth will be outside on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month after the service to collect a Mission Love Offering and new this year, we now have a *Mission'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

**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 Boyardee, 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.*

*Join us for Bible Study*

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

**Central Birthday/Anniversary**

**Dec. 27<sup>th</sup>** – Kristen Hartman      **Dec. 30<sup>th</sup>** – Bernie Arbic  
**Jan., 1<sup>st</sup>** -Marge Tomlinson      **Jan., 3<sup>rd</sup>** -Kathy Packman  
**Jan., 4<sup>th</sup>** -Doris Kelly      **Jan., 7<sup>th</sup>** – Tony McLain

**Dec. 24** – Doris and Mike Kelly (54<sup>rd</sup> )  
**Jan., 2<sup>nd</sup>** – Evelyn & Pete Bush (49<sup>th</sup> )



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      “Hark! The Hearld Angels Sing”      UMH 240  
HARK! THE HEARLD ANGLES SING

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE      “ Born Is He, the Divine Christ Child”      arr. Harris