

 KALAMAZOO  
**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
"A Sanctuary in the City... Living Faith"

Dear Lord, I have swept  
and I have washed but  
still nothing is as shining  
as it should be  
for you. Under the sink,  
for example, is an  
uproar of mice —  
it is the season of their  
many children. What shall I do?  
And under the eaves  
and through the walls the squirrels  
have gnawed their ragged entrances  
— but it is the season  
when they need shelter,  
so what shall I do? And  
the raccoon limps into the kitchen  
and opens the cupboard  
while the dog snores,  
the cat hugs the pillow;  
what shall I do?  
Beautiful is the new snow falling  
in the yard and the fox  
who is staring boldly  
up the path, to the door.  
And still I believe you will  
come, Lord: you will,  
when I speak to the fox,  
the sparrow, the lost dog,  
the shivering sea-goose, know  
that really I am speaking to you  
whenever I say,  
as I do all morning and afternoon:  
Come in, Come in.

Mary Oliver,  
"Making the House Ready for the Lord"



DECEMBER 14, 2025, THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

## THE GATHERING

*Wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here—with whatever joys, questions, or tears you bring today—as we worship God, who welcomes us all! You are invited to listen for God's Spirit speaking to you through the music of the Prelude as we prepare our hearts for worship.*

**Bold type** indicates congregational response.

Where there is an asterisk, we are invited to stand together in God's Spirit.

### PRELUDE

Two Settings of *Emmanuel*

Joanne Dewitt

### CALL TO WORSHIP

God's steadfast love endures forever, and God's faithfulness to all generations.  
Let us worship God.

### \* INTROIT

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

*As the choir concludes verse 1, the congregation rises in God's Spirit to sing:*

**Rank on rank the host of heaven spreads its vanguard on the way,  
as the Light of light descendeth from the realms of endless day,  
that the powers of hell may vanish, as the shadows clear away.**

### \* OPENING RESPONSES

The wilderness shall be glad, and the desert shall blossom.

**All flesh will see God's majesty and glory.**

For behold, God is coming to save the faithful.

**They will obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee.**

Let us rejoice and sing, for our God comes!

*Adapted from **Bread for the Journey**,  
ed. Ruth Duck, Pilgrim Press, 1981.*

### \* HYMN 107

Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn

Rejoice, Rejoice

### LITANY FOR ADVENT

As we watch and wait for Christ's coming, we light Advent candles  
of hope, peace, joy, and love, remembering the promises of God with prayer.

**God, come be with us in the shadows of our lives and in a world  
not flourishing abundantly, as you created and want it to be.**

**Redeem us as we feel the burden of harm we cause, or our complicity.**

*prayer continues in silence*

Hear God's promise from the prophet Isaiah:  
In days to come the heights of God's presence  
shall be raised above the highest hills and mountains.

A new shoot shall come out from the stump of God's people.  
 God's spirit of wisdom, understanding, and authority shall rest on him.  
 He shall not judge by what his eyes see and ears hear in the world around;  
 but with righteous grace he shall judge for the poor and meek of the earth.  
 The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,  
 the leopard shall lie down with the young goat,  
 the calf and the lion and the fatling together,  
 and a little child shall tend them all.

Cre - a - tor of the stars of night, your peo - ple's ev - er -  
 last - ing light, O Christ, re - deem - er of us all, we  
 pray you, hear us when we call. A - men.

Let us pray. Joyful One, we praise you for your grace that brings new life.  
**Thank you, for the ways you accept and celebrate who we are.**  
**Thank you, for the many, many ways you live among us.**  
**Teach us to recognize you and to share our joy.**  
**Come, Jesus, we are waiting for you! Amen.**

As we light these candles let us walk in the light of the Lord.  
 For Christ shall be known to the ends of the earth,  
 and Christ shall be the one of peace. The peace of Christ be with you!  
**And also with you!**

*Please stand and take a moment to share Christ's peace with others.*

\*MUSICAL RESPONSE 95 (*sung twice*)

Pre-pare the way of the Lord. Pre-pare the way of the Lord,  
 and all peo-people will see the sal - va - tion of our God.

# THE WORD

## MOMENT WITH YOUNG WORSHIPPERS AND BLESSING

*All children are invited to join us at the front of the sanctuary.*

Children: You are loved!

Congregation: **You are loved!**

*Sunday School is available for preK-5th graders this morning.*

*The nursery is open for children age 3 and under.*

## PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

**Speak to us, Lord.**

**Speak to us in the waiting, the watching,  
the hoping, the longing,  
the sorrow, the sighing, the rejoicing.**

**Speak to us by your Word in these Advent days,  
and walk with us until the day of your coming. Amen.**

*From Rev. Andy James,  
First Presbyterian Church of Whitestone, New York*

## FIRST READING

Isaiah 35:1-10

Old Testament, p.663

The Word of God for the people of God.

**Thanks be to God!**

## ANTHEM

Comfort, Comfort Ye My People

arr. John Ferguson

“Comfort, comfort ye my people, tell of peace!” so says our God.  
Comfort those who sit in darkness mourning under sorrow’s load.  
To God’s people now proclaim that God’s pardon waits for them!  
Tell them that their war is over; God will reign in peace forever!

For the herald’s voice is crying in the desert far and near,  
Calling us to true repentance, since the Kingdom now is here.  
Oh that warning cry obey! Now prepare for God a way!  
Let the valleys rise to meet him, and the hills bow down to greet him!

Straight shall be what long was crooked, and the rougher places plain!  
Let your hearts be true and humble, as befits his holy reign!  
For the glory of the Lord now o’er earth is shed abroad,  
And all flesh shall see the token that God’s Word is never broken.

## SECOND READING

Matthew 11:2-11

New Testament, p.11

For the word of God in scripture, for the word of God among us,  
for the word of God within us.

**Thanks be to God!**

## SERMON

What Are You Waiting for?

“Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?”  
(Matthew 11:3)

## \* HYMN 88

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Veni Emmanuel

## THE THANKSGIVING

### TIDINGS OF THE CHURCH

We give thanks to God and live faith, offering ourselves through worship,  
work, service, and love in all its forms.

### OFFERTORY INVITATION

Freely we receive at the hand of God; freely let us open our hands  
for the work of God. Let us worship God with our offerings.

### OFFERTORY MUSIC

While Shepherds Watched

arr. Brenda Austin

### \* OFFERTORY RESPONSE In the Bleak Midwinter (v.4)

Cranham

**What can I give Him, poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;  
if I were a wise man, I would do my part;  
yet what I can, I give Him: give my heart.**

### \*OFFERTORY PRAYER

**We trust that you are the one who heals, who brings good news to the poor, and who brings hope to a weary and broken world. Use these gifts, given from our abundance, to build up your church. As we await the coming of the Christ child, may we use the strength of our hands and courage of hearts to witness to your redeeming grace. Amen.**

## PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION

The Lord be with you,  
**and also with you.**

Let us pray...

**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 debts, as we forgive our debtors,  
And lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, now and forever. Amen.**

## THE SENDING

\*HYMN 100

My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout

Star of the County Down

## BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

People, Look East

Wayne L. Wold

## PARTICIPANTS

### WORSHIP LEADERS

Meredith Alspach  
Liz Candido  
Seth Weeldreyer  
Chrissy Westbury

### READER

Sandra Dennehy

### ACOLYTE

Rick Wielopolski

### MUSIC

The Choir  
The Red Door Ringers  
Joanne Dewitt, piano  
Autumn, organist  
Michael Montgomery, director

### ADVENT CANDLE READERS

Jennie Barry and Darah Dorman

### GREETERS

JoAnn Yochim, South Street  
Janet Lawing, Lovell Street

### SOUND TEAM

Dana Underwood  
Dirk Westbury

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## DEACON'S PRAYERS

One of the great gifts of a community of faith is that we take time and intention to pray for one another. This week, we pray especially for SANNY NUTTER and the parish group listed below, that they may feel God's presence and power in their lives. Next week, we will pray for another Deacon and parish group.

Jean Appel	Gail Fitzpatrick-Fox	Jerre James	Jim Mitchell
Deb Bender	Evelyn Garner	Ralph Jarl	Patricia Mullen
Kim Cummings	Nancy Harwood	Joan Keep	Marion Palmer
			Carol Schreiner

## IN MEMORIAM

Louise McCallum

*September 4, 1939—December 5, 2025*

With gratitude for her life and faith, we remember Louise, who entered eternal rest on December 5. A memorial service celebrating her life will be held here at First Presbyterian Church this coming spring. Details will be shared as plans are finalized. Please keep her family and loved ones in your prayers.

## TODAY

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### CHRISTMAS CHOCOLATE!

At 5 p.m., before the Candlelight Lessons & Carols Service today, the Congregational Life Committee will again host Christmas Chocolate this year. Come to the Gathering Place before Vespers to enjoy holiday fellowship with friends and family while enjoying delicious homemade Christmas cookies and hot chocolate!

### CANDLELIGHT LESSONS AND CAROLS

**Today at 6 p.m.** (the nursery will be available), we'll share our traditional service of music and readings which recall the wider narrative of salvation. We line the center aisle and front of our sanctuary with candles, opening our hearts to the beauty and wonder of Divine Light. We proceed through ten scripture readings, alternating with choral anthems and congregational carols of the season. And through this wondrous worship, we prepare our hearts to welcome the birth of our loving Savior Jesus Christ.

## CHILDREN & YOUTH

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### NURSERY

The nursery is open each Sunday morning, starting at 9:45, for children age 3 and under (Room 204). Parents will be given a pager in the event they need to be contacted during worship.

### SUNDAY SCHOOL

There will be classes available for PreK—5th grade students after the Moment with Young Worshippers. *All Sunday School children will be heading to the sanctuary immediately following worship for a quick Christmas Program rehearsal TODAY. Parents can pick their children up there approximately 15 minutes after the end of worship.*

### THE CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

**Reminder that there is rehearsal immediately following service today!**

The Christmas Program will take place during worship on December 21. *ALL CHILDREN PARTICIPATING MUST BE AT CHURCH THAT MORNING IN ROOM 304 BY 9 AM TO GET IN COSTUME AND PREPARE FOR THE PROGRAM!*

## ADULT FAITH FORMATION

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### ADVENT WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

On Thursday mornings, in Room 306— 9:30 coffee, 9:45 prayer

Reading and discussing *A Child is Born: A Beginner's Guide to Nativity Stories* by Amy-Jill Levine. The book is able to be ordered through your favorite local bookstore or online retailer.

### NOODLING AT NOON

Tuesdays in the Library... Reflection on *The People's History of Christianity*, by Diana Butler Bass ends this coming Tuesday, December 16. We'll center in Chapters 3 and 13—connecting practices of faith in the early church with how we seek to live meaningfully in our time. Join us, whether you've been before or pick up the fruitful conversation now. And watch for more information about what we'll Noodle next, beginning Tuesday, January 13. See Pastor Seth with any questions.

### MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Every Tuesday at 7 a.m. in the Archives (Room 207). Returning and new faces welcome for coffee, donuts, and conversation to begin the day!

## CTV CHRISTMAS SHOP

### **Help us make this Christmas extra special for our neighbors!**

On December 17 we will host the annual Christmas store where our guests are able to shop our free gifts for themselves and loved ones. Your donations will help stock the shelves and make this a memorable experience for our CTV guests. We ask for small practical items that can be easily carried in bags and on bikes.

#### **Items that would be most helpful include:**

*NEW* long underwear (Sizes L, XL, XXL)

*NEW* hoodie sweatshirts (Sizes L, XL, XXL)

Small giftable items for adults and children

Fleece blankets

Tarps (10 x 10)

Let's brighten the holiday for our neighbors. Donations can be dropped off to Meredith's office and are **due by the 15th**. If you have a question or need to coordinate donations, please contact [mereditha@fpckzoo.org](mailto:mereditha@fpckzoo.org)

## MITTEN, HAT & SOCK TREE

Help keep our CTV neighbors warm this winter! Martha Circle is collecting socks (most requested), plus warm hats, gloves, and mittens for men, women, and children. **Lined and waterproof items are especially appreciated.** Hang your gifts on the tree in the Gathering Place, or leave them nearby. On Dec. 17, the tree moves to the dining room for guests to choose what they need. Thank you for sharing warmth this season!

## SHINE THE LIGHT ON JOY

This season, let's celebrate the joy that surrounds us! Everyone is encouraged to help create a colorful "String of Joy" on the bulletin board in the church office hallway (across from Room 208). Participating is simple: write something that makes you happy on one of the paper bulbs provided and add it to the string. Together, let's fill the board—and our hearts—with reminders of joy and gratitude.

## PINE ISLAND WORSHIP

**December 21** - The Longest Night Service is a time to acknowledge the grief often accompanying the joy of the holiday season. Together we will honor both the light and the shadows, share prayers, seek peace and remember that even in the longest night, God's light shines.

“

Social justice is the sure guarantor of peace in the world. —Guy Ryder

## BEWARE SCAMS

A variety of fake emails are circulating, which look like they are from Pastor Seth and/or the church in some way. **Do not engage or respond to ANY messages asking you to purchase gift cards!**

Even a reply to an email can be dangerous, so we advise you delete them immediately.

To help you identify legitimate communication:

- **Only trust emails from the official @fpckzoo.org domain.**
- **If you cannot see the pastor's original church email as the sender, be cautious.**
- **All official church emails will include gold seals in the closing.**

Again, we will not ask you to purchase gift cards, or to make any donations online. If you have questions about seasonal donations to the church, just give us a call to check the details.

## PILGRIMAGE 2026 UPDATE

Plans for our 2026 pilgrimage are being finalized—thank you to everyone who attended the informational meeting last week! If you missed the meeting or have questions, we're here to help:

### Iona Abbey

August 26—September 8, 2026 // approximate cost: \$3650, plus airfare

We will begin with a few days touring the Scottish Highlands, including prehistoric cairns, castles, and other places of distinctive culture and natural beauty on our way out to the Isle of Iona. Then the centerpiece of this pilgrimage is a week together in the Iona Abbey. We will worship morning and evening, with opportunities to share numerous conversations of faith, a pilgrimage hike, and boat trip to sit with puffins! The final few days conclude again with more touring of significant historical sites in Scotland, centering in staying at Abbotsford, the home of Sir Walter Scott. Contact Pastor Seth for more information. Deposit to hold a spot will be due by January 1.

### English Mystics

October 15-23, 2026 // approximate cost: \$2500, plus airfare

The trip will begin and end in London, and be primarily based in Norwich. We will spend time experiencing architecture, folklore, and the mystic traditions of the medieval period in England, focusing on the stories of Christina of Markyate, Julian of Norwich, and Margery Kempe.

Contact Pastor Chrissy for more information.

## NEW YEAR'S FEST 2025 – VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

First Presbyterian Church has a long history of supporting New Year's Fest, and we are excited to continue that tradition this year. Volunteers are needed for a variety of roles, and shifts are only two hours long, so you'll still have time to enjoy the celebration.

If you sign up, please **be sure to select First Presbyterian Church** so you can be assigned to our site. Register at <https://www.newyearsfest.com/volunteer>

Thank you for your continued support of this wonderful Kalamazoo tradition.

Your help makes a real difference for our community.

Questions? Contact [kellys@fpckzoo.org](mailto:kellys@fpckzoo.org)



## WEEKLY CALENDAR

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14

9:00 a.m. **Choir Rehearsal**, Sanctuary  
9:00 a.m. **Connections**, #301  
9:45 a.m. **Child Care/Nursery**, #208  
10:00 a.m. **Worship**, Sanctuary  
10:15 a.m. **Sunday School**  
11:30 a.m. **New Elder Orientation**,  
Archives  
5:00 p.m. **Christmas Chocolates**,  
Gathering Place  
6:00 p.m. **Candlelight Lessons and  
Carols**, Sanctuary  
7:00 p.m. **Music Ensemble Christmas  
Party**, Choir Lounge

### MONDAY, DECEMBER 15

9:00 a.m.—4:30 p.m. **Recovery Institute**,  
Dining Room/#308  
12:00 p.m. **AA**, #314/315  
12:00 p.m. **Walking Group**, Lovell Street  
4:30 p.m. **Stewardship Committee**,  
Archives  
6:30 p.m. **Deacons**, Gathering Place  
7:00 p.m. **Scouts**, Dining Room

### TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16

7:00 a.m. **Men's Fellowship**, Archives  
9:00 a.m.—4:30 p.m. **R.I.**, Dining Rm/#308  
11:00 a.m. **Staff Meeting**, Archives  
12:00 p.m.—4:00 p.m. **Organ Practice**  
12:00 p.m. **Noodling at Noon**, Library  
4:00 p.m. **KSO Orchestra Rouh**  
6:00 p.m. **Kal Pipe Band**, Dining Room

### WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 17

9:00 a.m.—4:30 p.m. **R.I.**, Dining Rm/#308  
12:00 p.m. **Prayer Service**, Sanctuary  
1:00 p.m.—4:00 p.m. **Organ Practice**  
5:00 p.m. **CTV Dinner**, Dining Room  
6:30 p.m. **Session Meeting**, #306

### THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18

9:00 a.m.—4:30 p.m. **R.I.**, Dining Rm/#308  
9:00 a.m. **Library Work Time**  
9:30 a.m. **Women's Bible Study**, #306  
12:00 p.m. **AA**, #314/315  
4:30 p.m. **Food Addicts**, #314/315  
5:30 p.m. **Red Door Ringers**, Gathering Pl  
7:00 p.m. **Church Choir Rehearsal**, Choir  
Room

### FRIDAY, DECEMBER 19

9:00 a.m.—4:30 p.m. **R.I.**, Dining Rm/#308

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21

9:00 a.m. **Cards on Display**, Gathering Pl.  
9:00 a.m. **Choir Rehearsal**, Sanctuary  
9:45 a.m. **Child Care/Nursery**, #208  
10:00 a.m. **Worship / Children's Christmas  
Program**, Sanctuary  
5:00 p.m. **Pine Island Worship**,  
8882 W Q Ave, Mattawan

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS:

MONDAY - THURSDAY

9 A.M. - 3 P.M.

CLOSED FRIDAY & SATURDAY

KALAMAZOO FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
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KALAMAZOO FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH STAFF  
(IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER)

<b>Meredith Alspach</b> , Director of Youth, Families & Outreach, x208	<a href="mailto:mereditha@fpckzoo.org">mereditha@fpckzoo.org</a>
<b>Autumn</b> , Organist, x214	<a href="mailto:autumn@fpckzoo.org">autumn@fpckzoo.org</a>
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<b>The Reverend Chrissy Westbury</b> , Associate Pastor, x204	<a href="mailto:chrissyw@fpckzoo.org">chrissyw@fpckzoo.org</a>

**South Lobby Receptionists, x221:** Kailynn Bachman, Jennie Barry, Bob Brush,  
Sandy Sinotte, Deb Weurding

**Custodians:** Logan McCafferty, Randy Randt

**Library:** [library@fpckzoo.org](mailto:library@fpckzoo.org)

## UPCOMING WORSHIP SCHEDULE

### December 21

**10 a.m. - Fourth Sunday of Advent**  
Children and Youth Christmas Program  
**5 p.m. - The Longest Night**  
Pine Island / 8882 W Q Avenue, Mattawan

### December 25

**10 a.m. - Carols, Scripture, Prayer**

### December 28

**10 a.m. - First Sunday of Christmas**  
The Rev. Dr. Seth Weeldreyer  
Jeremiah 31:15-17, 31-34; Matthew 2:13-23

### December 24

**Christmas Eve / Communion**  
**7:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m.**  
The Rev. Dr. Seth Weeldreyer  
Isaiah 9:2-7; Luke 2:1-20

### January 4

**10 a.m. - Epiphany / Communion**  
The Rev. Dr. Seth Weeldreyer  
Isaiah 60:1-6; Matthew 2:1-12

*Grounded in living faith, receiving diversity as a gift, we seek to reflect Christ's light in God's world.  
Continually discerning God's vision of grace and peace, we share inspirational worship, spiritual nurture,  
compassionate service to others, and the pursuit of justice... all to the glory of God.*