



5:00 PM Christmas Eve Service • Wednesday, December 24, 2025

Order of Worship

Countdown to Worship

Welcome

Rev. Jim Porter

Invitation to Worship

Marie Zendler

Leader: Tonight, Love shows up! Not from afar, not with quick answers, not in a sanitized, squeaky-clean kind of way, but with presence--- God's Presence.
That is Emmanuel: God with us.

All: Come, let us worship Emmanuel—God with us!

Worship Songs - ***“O Come All Ye Faithful (His Name Shall Be)”***

Presentation of the Christ Child

Maelyn & Marie Zendler

“Holy Forever”

Greeting One Another in Christian Love

(Before you sit down, please turn and greet your neighbor wishing them a Merry Christmas! Also, please take a moment to sign the Friendship Pad located at the end of the pew and pass it along to the person sitting next to you.)

Advent Candle Lighting

Wayne & Marcy Potter

Ryan Shively, Abby Pritchard, Noah Bogard, & Paige Peters

Reader 1: Tonight, we draw near to the manger. We draw near to wonder, to mystery, to love made flesh.

Reader 2: Tonight, we remember the promise of Emmanuel—God with us. Not watching from a distance. Not offering easy answers. But entering our world in the most vulnerable way—so we would know we are never alone.

Reader 3: In this season of Advent, we have lit the candles of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. Each one has guided us closer to this night—closer to the One who draws near.

Reader 4: Now, we light the Christ Candle, because Love has a name. Hope has a face. Peace has footsteps. Joy has come to dwell among us. It is Christ Jesus, who comes, and He is the Light of the World.

(Light all four Advent candles and then the center Christ Candle.)

Reader 5: The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

All: O God with us—on this holy night, we rejoice that your light has come. Not far away, but here. Not in the abstract, but in a child. Not just for some, but for all.

God with us. God among us. God within us. Emmanuel. Amen.

Message to the Children

Wayne Potter

(Children are invited to come forward at this time for the children's message.)

Scripture Reading – Matthew 1:18-25

Sermon

“Love Is Here!”

Rev. Jim Porter

Responsive Song – **“Advent Hymn”**

Prayer of Thanksgiving and The 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 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, forever. Amen.

Giving Back to God

- Our Offering- Your gifts honor God and help provide financial support of the ministries and mission of this church.
- Our Service- Get connected! Fill out a Connection Card to get more involved in the life and ministries of the church.
- Our Prayers- How can we help you in prayer today? Fill out a prayer card and let us know.
Please place your financial gift, Connection Card, or Prayer Card in the Offering Box in the narthex.

Closing Song – **“Silent Night”**

(The lighting of candles with the light of Christ passed throughout the congregation.)

Benediction

Postlude



Thank you. Special thanks to our ushers: Shelia Conrad, David Fosdick, Paige, Reese & Keegan Fosdick.



7:00 PM Christmas Eve Service • Wednesday, December 24, 2025

Order of Worship

Prelude – *“Son of God”* by Hayes

Welcome

Rev. Jim Porter

Invitation and Centering Words

Tonight, Love shows up! Not from afar, not with quick answers, not in a sanitized, squeaky-clean kind of way, but with presence--- God’s Presence.
That is Emmanuel: God with us.

Ringling of the Historic Church Bell

Call to Worship

Sandi Gray

Leader: On this holy night, we gather to remember:

People: In the darkness of the world, we are not alone. God is with us.

Leader: Not just in our joy, but in our questions.

People: Not only in our certainty, but in our mystery.

Leader: Not just in our joys and celebrations, but also in the difficult moments of life.

People: The Word became flesh and lived among us.

All: Come, let us worship Emmanuel—God with us!

Opening Prayer

Sandi Gray

All: Holy God, on this night of wonder, we gather in the candlelight of Your presence. You have come so near that You know every heartbeat, every question, and every tear. Let the light of Your love quiet our fears, deepen our faith, and warm our hearts. In the name of Emmanuel we pray. Amen.

Opening Hymn 133 – “O Come All Ye Faithful”

Presentation of the Christ Child

Addie & Garrett Seiple

Advent Candle Lighting & Lighting of the Christ Candle

Jeff & Karen Seiple Family

Addie & Garrett

Reader 1: Tonight, we draw near to the manger. We draw near to wonder, to mystery, to love made flesh.

Reader 2: Tonight, we remember the promise of Emmanuel—God with us. Not watching from a distance. Not offering easy answers. But entering our world in the most vulnerable way—so we would know we are never alone.

Reader 1: In this season of Advent, we have lit the candles of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. Each one has guided us closer to this night—closer to the One who draws near.

Reader 2: Now, we light the Christ Candle, because Love has a name. Hope has a face. Peace has footsteps. Joy has come to dwell among us. It is Christ Jesus, who comes, and He is the Light of the World.

(Light all four Advent candles and then the center Christ Candle.)

Reader 1: The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

All: O God with us—on this holy night, we rejoice that your light has come. Not far away, but here. Not in the abstract, but in a child. Not just for some, but for all. God with us. God among us. God within us. Emmanuel. Amen.

Choral Anthem – “O Holy Night” by Leavitt

Call to Confession

Sandi Gray

Leader: On this holy night, we hear again the good news: Christ is born, and love has come into the world. Yet even as we welcome the light, we confess that we do not always live as people of love and often fail to recognize the nearness of God. With this in mind, and trusting in the mercy made flesh in Jesus Christ, let us confess our sin before God and one another.

Prayer of Confession

Sandi Gray

All: God of Love-With-Us, we confess that we have often settled for believing You are a distant God—far away, observing from above. Forgive us when we forget that You chose to enter the real, messy, vulnerable, human story—the blood, sweat, and tears of our lives. Help us welcome You not just into the pretty parts of our lives, but into the real ones. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

(Please pause for prayers of silent meditation)

Assurance of Pardon

Sandi Gray

Leader: Hear the good news: Emmanuel is not just a name—it is a promise: God is with us. In our suffering, our celebration, and our ordinary days. In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven, loved, and never alone.

People: Thanks be to God!

Passing of the Peace

Sandi Gray

Leader: On this Christmas Eve, we share the peace of the One who came to dwell with us.
The peace of Christ be with you.

People: And also with you.

(Please greet those around you with the words, “Peace be with you.” Responding “And also with you.”
Also, take a moment to sign the Friendship Pad located at the end of the pew and pass it along to your neighbor.)

Choral Anthem – “*Angels We Have Heard on High*” by Anglea

Scripture Reading – Matthew 1:18-25

Sermon

“Love Is Here!”

Rev. Jim Porter

Responsive Hymn 145 – “*What Child Is This*”

Prayer of Thanksgiving and The 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 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, forever. Amen.

Giving Back to God

- Our Offering- Your gifts honor God and help provide financial support of the ministries and mission of this church.
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Doxology – “*Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow*”

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

Offering Prayer

All: God of generous presence, You have given Yourself to us—not in theory, but in your loving presence. Receive our gifts and transform them into acts of love and compassion in a world longing to know there is hope, even in the midst of darkness. In Christ we pray. Amen.

Candlelight Hymn 122 – “*Silent Night*”

(The lighting of candles with the light of Christ passed throughout the congregation.)

Charge

Leader: Go now into this holy night and into the world,
rejoicing that Christ is born and love is here!
And may the peace of God guard your hearts,
the light of Christ guide your path,
and the power of the Holy Spirit enable you
to bear love, joy, and hope to everyone you meet.

Closing Hymn 134 – “*Joy to the World*” (Verses 1-2)

Benediction

May the love of God, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the peace and fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all both now and forevermore.

Postlude



Thank you. Special thanks to our ushers: Corey, Jennifer, Abigail & Tabitha Pritchard.

A Gift for You. As you leave this evening, please pick up a copy of "Joy to the World" by John Piper for your family. Please add this to your Christian library at home. This is our gift to you from the adult education ministry team.

One Service at 10:30AM on Sunday, December 28

Join us on the last Sunday of the year, Sunday, December 28 for **ONE Service at 10:30 a.m.** Wayne Potter, our Director of Youth & Family Life Ministries, will be sharing the message on his last Sunday with us, and Cheryl Knight, our Music Director, has planned a great selection of gospel music to celebrate the Birth of Christ. End your year by worshipping with us!

Season 5 of The Chosen is on its way! We'll be starting that series on Monday evenings beginning January 5th at 6:00 p.m. for 8 weeks. Mark your calendar now for Monday evenings. Books and more information will be available soon.

Did You Know?

The decorated tree displayed in the Narthex is called a Chrismon Tree.

A Chrismon Tree is an evergreen tree which symbolizes eternal life. White lights are used to symbolize Jesus as the light of the world. The handmade gold and white ornaments convey the life of Christ and were made by members of our church in the 1970's. In recent years, a dedicated team including Phyllis Staley and Gloria Wheeler have decorated this tree for Advent.

Look for these ornaments on our tree: The cross, dove, shepherd's staff, crown, star, lamp, shell, candle, keys, angel, and more!

YOUR Stephen Ministry – There are times when we experience difficulties: loss of a loved one, cancer, hospitalization, disability, discouragement, loneliness, and others. God never intended for us to go through these experiences alone. Stephen Ministers have received 50 hours of care giving training to minister to people experiencing a crisis, facing a challenge, or simply going through a tough time.

Did you know that over the years, 72 people have completed the training for Stephen Ministry and 21 people have completed the training to be Stephen Ministry Leaders. Your church family has been blessed with caring members who have studied and completed this training.

Community Cupboard – Help with Community Cash program! Village Market Community Cash starts September 1st and runs through May 31st. Save your receipts and drop them in the church donation box (lower left corner of the mail boxes in the Narthex) or mail them to PO Box 572, Elk Rapids, MI 49629. Those receipts help us purchase up to 3 months of food for our families. Thank you!

Thanks to feedback from a recent client survey, the Elk Rapids Community Cupboard is expanding its hours to ensure greater accessibility. It will now be open every other Saturday from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m., starting November 22. These new hours are in addition to existing hours every other week on Tuesdays from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. and Fridays from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. Visit elkrapidscommunitycupboard.com or call Pam Coleman at 847 445 8239 for more information.

Poinsettias—To Honor & Remember

Asiala, Elmore & Wonacott Families

In remembrance of Robert G. Wonacott, Sam & Virginia Pfeiffer, and George & Barbara Wonacott

Judy Brummeler & Norm Veliquette

In remembrance of Marjory Veliquette and Bob Brummeler, and in honor of the Brummeler & Veliquette children & grandchildren

Conrad Family

In remembrance of Roger Conrad and John Conrad

John & Diane Flatley

In remembrance of loved ones

Dick Gray

In remembrance of Charl and our parents

Gary & Edna Hubbell

In loving memory of Tammy Hubbell Papp

Mike & Judy Husby

In remembrance of our parents Don & Barb Bellinger, and Derold & Jean Husby

Ken Kohlman

In remembrance of Bud & Fern Kohlman

Garry & Marcia Sumerix

In remembrance of Jeffrey Sumerix

Les & Joanne Teague

In honor of Wayne & Marcy Potter for their unending vision and passion for helping children

Betty, Adam, & Andy Tezak

In remembrance of Robin Tezak

Betty, Adam, & Andy Tezak

In remembrance of Jack White and John White

Gloria Jean Wheeler

In remembrance of Owen & Viola Wheeler, Glenn & Millie Miller, and Jack & Scott Wheeler

Chris & Sarina White, Amy White & Pete Boet

In remembrance of Vern White

