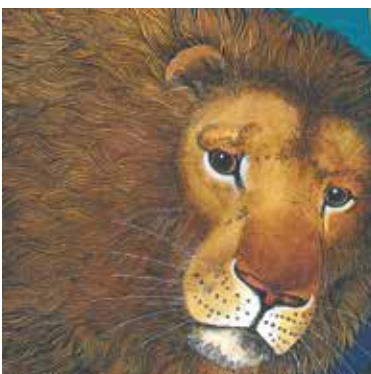
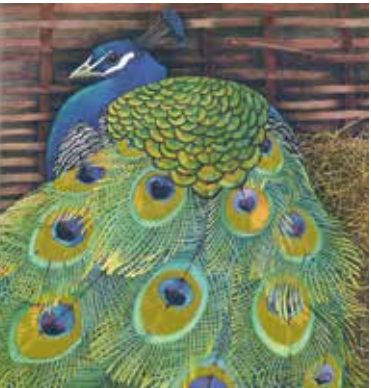
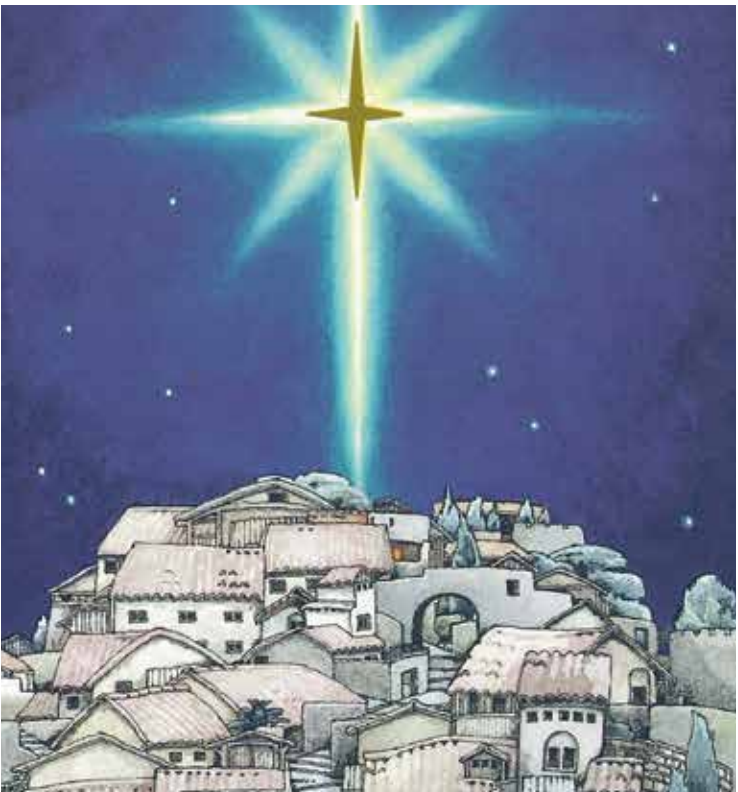


# Christmas Eve and Family Worship

FIRST (PARK) CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UCC

December 24, 2024



# Christmas Eve Family Worship Service

December 24, 2024 at 4:30pm

Gathering Music

Steven B. Smith

Welcome and Announcements

Rev. Darryl Kistler

Prelude and Moment of Reflection

Steven B. Smith, organ  
*Meditation on "The First Noel"*

Paul Fey

+ Invitation to Worship

Reading Responsively  
Peter Smith, liturgist

**One:** Welcome everyone on this holiest of nights.

Bring all that you are to worship.

Bring your prayers of hopes for every discouraged heart.

Bring your prayers of peace for every corner of the globe.

Bring your prayers of joy for every downcast spirit.

Bring your prayers for love for everything and everyone who lives and breathes.

**All:** Come, let us worship God together. God is with us. Christ is born to us this night. Thanks be to God!

+ Opening Carol - bulletin page 8 (verses 1, 3, 4)

*O Come, All Ye Faithful*

Tune: ADESTE FIDELES

+ Opening Prayer and Our Savior's Prayer

**...Our Father/Mother/God, 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.**

## The Prophecy of the Peaceable Kingdom

Isaiah 11:1-4, 6-9  
Liturgist: Peter Smith

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse,  
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him,  
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
the spirit of counsel and might,  
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.  
His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see  
or decide by what his ears hear,  
but with righteousness he shall judge for the poor  
and decide with equity for the oppressed of the earth;  
he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,  
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.

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.

The cow and the bear shall graze;  
their young shall lie down together;  
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,  
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.

They will not hurt or destroy  
on all my holy mountain,  
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord  
as the waters cover the sea.

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no place in the guest room.

Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

*“Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”*

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them, and Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told them.

One: As we gather on this sacred Christmas Eve, we light all the candles, including the center candle, the Christ Candle. Together, these candles symbolize the Light of the World coming to dispel the darkness. As we light this Christ Candle, may its flame ignite the warmth of God's love within us and spread the message of joy and redemption to all.

One: Today we celebrate the birth of Jesus, the source of our hope.

**All: Let heaven and nature sing.**

One: The Prince of Peace has come to dwell among us and within us.

**All: Let heaven and nature sing.**

One: The source of our joy and our redemption is here.

**All; Let heaven and nature sing.**

One: The greatest gift of all, the gift of love, has been given.

**All: Let heaven and nature sing.**

One: Gracious God, we thank you for the love that brought Christ into our lives, for the hope his birth represents, and for the peace that his presence brings. As we celebrate the birth of Jesus, may the Christ Candle illuminate our hearts and minds, drawing us closer to you, to one another, and to your creation. In the name of the Christ Child, we pray. Amen.

+ Carol - bulletin page 9 (verses 1, 2, 4)

*Joy to the World*

Tune: ANTIOCH

Christmas Eve Moment with  
Our Young and Young at Heart

*"The Animals' Christmas Carol"*

Pastor Darryl

+ Carol - bulletin page 10

*Jesus, Our Brother, Kind and Good*

(Verse 1 – Choral Scholars,

Verse 2-6 – Congregation)

Invitation to Generosity

*Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,  
The little Lord Jesus lay down his sweet head.  
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,  
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.*

*Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask thee to stay  
Close by me forever, and love me, I pray.  
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,  
And fit us for heaven to live with thee there.*

*O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light;  
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.*

*Silent night, holy night! All is calm all is bright  
'Round yon virgin mother and child!  
Holy infant, so tender and mild,  
Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace*

Doxology

*Angels We Have Heard on High*  
(Refrain only)  
Tune: GLORIA

*Gloria, in excelsis Deo; Gloria, in excelsis Deo*

Prayer of Dedication

Reading in Unison

**Thank you, God of Love and Promise, for the joy of this night. We are ever grateful for the spirit of generosity that is aroused in us by the birth of the Christ Child into the world. May our gifts represent a new spirit of joy and justice, peace and kindness being birthed in us, for the sake of all your children of our community and all your children of the world. Amen.**

+ Sharing of the Light

+ Closing Carol - bulletin page 11 (verses 1 and 2)

*Silent Night*

Tune: STILLE NACHT

Benediction

Postlude

Steven B. Smith, organ  
*Gentle Mary Laid Her Child*

James Biery

*The service of worship concludes with the benediction.  
If you are leaving the Sanctuary during the Postlude,  
please be quietly respectful of the musician and those who are listening.*

*The bulletin cover art is from the book *The Animals' Christmas Carol* by Helen Ward  
published by Millbrook Press 2001*

# O, Come All Ye Faithful (verses 1, 3, 4)

1 O come, all ye faith-ful, joy-ful and tri-um-phal; O come  
 2 True God from true God, Light from light e-ter-nal, born  
 3 Sing, choirs of an-gels; sing in ex-ul-ta-tion; sing,  
 4 Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this hap-py morn-ing; Je -

ye; O come ye to Beth-le-hem! Come, and be-hold him,  
 of a vir-gin, a mor-tal he comes; ver-y God, be-  
 all ye cit-i-zens of heaven a-bove! Glo-ry to God, all  
 sus, to thee be all glo-ry given; Word of the Fa-ther,

*Refrain*

born the King of an-gels!  
 got-ten, not cre-at-ed!  
 glo-ry in the high-est! O come, let us a-dore him; O come, let  
 now in flesh ap-pear-ing!

us a-dore him; O come, let us a-dore him, Christ, the Lord!



*Joy to the World (verses 1, 2, 4)*

1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re - ceive  
 2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let all their songs  
 3 No more let sins and sor - rows grow, nor thorns in - fest  
 4 He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the na -

her king; let ev - ery heart pre - pare him room,  
 em - ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains  
 the ground; he comes to make his bless - ings flow  
 tions prove the glo - ries of his rich - teous - ness

and heaven and na - ture sing, and heaven and na - ture  
 re - peat the sound - ing joy, re - peat the sound - ing  
 far as the curse is found, far as the curse is  
 and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his  
 and heaven and na - ture sing,

and  
 sing, and heaven, and heaven and na - ture sing.  
 joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.  
 found, far as, far as the curse is found.  
 love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.  
 heaven and na - ture sing,

## Jesus, Our Brother, Kind and Good

verse 1 – Choral Scholars, verses 2-6 – Congregation



1. Je - sus our broth - er, kind and good, Was hum - bly  
2. "I," said the don - key, shag - gy and brown, "I car - ried his  
3. "I," said the cow, all white and red, "I gave him my



born in a sta - ble rude, And the friend - ly beasts a -  
moth - er up - hill and down. I car - ried his moth - er to  
man - ger for his bed. I gave him my hay to



round him stood, Je - sus our broth - er, kind and good.  
Beth - le - hem town. I," said the don - key shag - gy and brown.  
pil - low his head. I," said the cow all white and red.

4. "I," said the sheep with curly horn,  
"I gave him my wool for his blanket  
warm.  
He wore my coat on Christmas morn.  
I," said the sheep with curly horn.

5. "I," said the dove from rafters high,  
"I cooed him to sleep, so he should  
not cry.  
We cooed him to sleep, my mate and I.  
I," said the dove from rafters high.

6. Thus every beast by some good spell,  
in the stable dark was glad to tell  
of the gift he gave Emmanuel,  
the gift he gave Emmanuel.

## Silent Night (verses 1 and 2)

1 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! All is calm, all is bright  
 2 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Shep - herds quake at the sight;  
 3 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Son of God, love's pure light  
 4 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Won - drous star, lend thy light;

'round yon vir - gin moth - er and child! Ho - ly In - fant, so ten - der and  
 glo - ries stream from heav - en a - far, heav - en - ly hosts sing "Al - le - lu -  
 ra - diant beams from thy ho - ly face, with the dawn of re - deem - ing  
 with the an - gels let us sing Al - le - lu - ia to our

mild, sleep in heav - en - ly peace, sleep in heav - en - ly peace.  
 ia: Christ the Sav - ior is born; Christ the Sav - ior is born!"  
 grace, Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth, Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth.  
 King; Christ the Sav - ior is born; Christ the Sav - ior is born.



**We are an Open and Affirming Congregation**

No matter who you are,  
or where you are on life's journey,  
you are welcome here.

## **Park Church Christmas Offering 2024**

*The Christmas Offering takes place every December. You can make your donation by cash or check using the designated envelope in the bulletin or by using the QR code below. Please make checks out to "Park Church" and write "Christmas Offering" on the memo line.*

We are thrilled to name Undue Medical Debt (<http://unduemedicaldebt.org>) as our 2024 Christmas Offering recipient. Undue Medical Debt is the leading 501(c)3 non-profit working to eliminate the medical debt of neighbors in our country. They have worked closely with many congregations in the United Church of Christ.

For every \$1 donated, \$100 in medical debt will be erased. Our goal is \$15,000 so that we can eliminate \$1,500,000 in debt for our neighbors. We have asked Undue Medical Debt to allocate the money raised in our Christmas Offering to assist folks living with debt in West Michigan, prioritizing Kent, Ottawa, Ionia, and Muskegon Counties. The process is income-based. Undue Medical Debt uses data analytics to pinpoint the debts of those experiencing financial hardship. Relief cannot be requested, and recipients don't have to apply — they're simply notified of debt. Thank you for your generosity and care for our neighbors.

**December 25 - January 1:** The church office will be open intermittently with staff available limited hours to process correspondence and year end giving. Please call ahead if you are stopping by. Voicemail/email is monitored 24/7 with priority given to pastoral care concerns.

Office Hours: Monday - Thursday 9:00 - 3:00

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616-459-3203

[office@parkchurchgr.org](mailto:office@parkchurchgr.org)

[www.parkchurchgr.org](http://www.parkchurchgr.org)

[www.facebook.com/parkchurchgr](https://www.facebook.com/parkchurchgr)

The wifi password is parkchurchguest.



Access the online donor portal for the 2024 Christmas Offering by using the camera on your phone and clicking the link that appears.