

FIRST (PARK) CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UCC

December 29, 2024

carols

lessons



Christmastide: A Service of Carols and Lessons

First (Park) Congregational Church ~ December 29, 2024

Gathering Music

Steven B. Smith, piano

Welcome

Rev. Darryl Kistler

Gathering and Blessing of the Children and Youth

+ Invitation to Worship

Reading Responsively
Dave Wells, liturgist

One: The season of Christmas is upon us. Now is a time of fulfillment and celebration.
We light a candle of hope:

All: hope for ourselves, and for God's beloved world.

One: We light a candle of peace:

All: peace in our hearts, and on earth.

One: We light a candle of joy:

All: joy to the world, and within our whole being.

One: We light a candle of love:

All: The promise of God's love for us, and for all creation.

One: We light the Christ candle,

All: the light of the world, the light of possibility, the light of salvation. Let us worship!

Prelude

Steven B. Smith, organ
Good Christian Friends, Rejoice
Paul Manz

+ Prayer of Invocation (attributed to Robert Louis Stevenson)

Pastor Darryl

“Loving God, help us remember the birth of Jesus,
that we may share in the song of the angels,
the gladness of the shepherds,
and adoration of the magi.

Close the door of hate and open the door of love all over the world. Let kindness come with every gift and good desires with every greeting. Deliver us from evil by the blessing which Christ brings and teach us to be merry with clear hearts.

May this morning make us happy to be your children, and this evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts, forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus' sake."

This we pray in the name of Christ Jesus, the Babe of Bethlehem, who grew up teaching us to pray ...

...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.

+ Opening Carol - No. 143 (verses 1, 2, and 3)

Angels From the Realms of Glory

Tune: REGENT SQUARE

Introduction to a Service of Carols and Lessons

The First Lesson

Creation and the Original Blessing

John 1:1-5, Genesis 1:26-2:4

Carol

The Star Carol

Verse 1 - Choral Scholars /Verse 2 - Congregation

The Second Lesson

The Prophecy of the Prince of Peace

Isaiah 9:1-7

Carol - No. 88 (verses 1, 2, 6, and 7)

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

The Third Lesson

The Prophecy of Bethlehem

Micah 5:2-4a

Carol - No. 121 (verses 1 and 4)

O Little Town of Bethlehem

The Fourth Lesson

The Annunciation

Luke 1:26-35

Carol

The Choral Scholars

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

The Fifth Lesson

The Birth of Christ

Luke 2:1-20

Carol - No. 119

Hark, the Herald Angels Sing

The Sixth Lesson

The Visitation

Matthew 2:1-11

Carol - No. 145

What Child is This

The Seventh Lesson

The Work of Christmas

by Rev. Dr. Howard Thurman

When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:

To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among others,
To make music in the heart.

Invitation to Generosity

Offertory Music

Steven B. Smith, organ
What is This Lovely Fragrance
Paul Manz

+ Doxology

Praise God, From Whom All Blessings Flow
Tune: OLD HUNDREDTH

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures high and low;
Praise God in Jesus fully known:
Creator, Word, and Spirit one. Amen.**

+ Prayer of Dedication

Reading in Unison

God of generosity, may your hope and peace, joy and love seep into our hearts and our offerings, that we might become shining examples of your light in a broken and hurting world. By your grace, may our gifts and our very lives bring your blessings of mercy and justice to the world. Amen.

Closing Carol - No. 136

Go, Tell it On the Mountain
Tune: GO TELL IT

+ Common Commission

Reading in Unison

Let us now go forth into the world in peace; being of good courage; holding fast to that which is good; rendering to no one evil for evil; strengthening the faint hearted; supporting the weak; helping the afflicted; honoring all people; loving and serving the Lord and rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Postlude

Steven B. Smith, organ
Hark! The Herald Angels Sing
Phil Lehenbauer

Thank you for joining us this morning!

We'd like to know that you were here, answer any questions you have, and support you in prayer. Please fill out the information card and place it in the offering plate.

Following Worship

Coffee Fellowship and the Epiphany Star Hunt.

If you requested offering envelopes, they are in the Narthex.

Make a Note:

Chancel Choir rehearsals resume on January 9 at 7:30pm.

Men's Group resumes meeting on January 16 at 8:30am.

Bible Study resumes on January 22 at 7:00pm.

Annual Budget Meeting is after worship on January 26.

Joys and Concerns

Please pray for those navigating illness/treatment including: Ron Bickel, Margaret Bilsky, Kurt Myers, Liz Taylor, and Mike VanDuinen.

Remember our young people away at college including: Luke Barnum, Laura DeBoer, Mallory Hagemann, Lily Kugler, Jack O'Malley, and Drew Wolford.

Remember those serving in the military including: Jesse Campbell, Devon Goetz, Andy MacGregor, and Matthew Quick.

Pastoral care is always available. Contact Pastor Darryl at dkistler@parkchurchgr.org.

The Sanctuary Flowers

The flowers at the Pulpit

In celebration of Dick and Diane Sherlock's wedding anniversary.

The flowers at the Lectern

In memory of Mildred Furman.

Given by Judy Furman.

If you would like to dedicate Sanctuary flowers, email Marcia Streeter. mabiti1@gmail.com

Stars for Epiphany

Sundays, December 29 and January 5

Attention Star Seekers! Today and next week, there will be 30 stars made out of dollar bills hidden in the common areas of the church on the main level and outside of the sanctuary. Those who seek will find them! (If you spot one, you get to keep it, but please leave the rest so others can have the joy of finding one as well.)

Thank you to Jim McGlothin for making these stars with his origami skills!

From the Finance Committee:

Our 2025 Stewardship Campaign is wrapping up. It has been a successful campaign thus far, but there is still time to turn in your pledge card. Pledge Cards are available in the Narthex of the sanctuary or by contacting Gene Gess, our Director of Finance. The Board of Trustees is so very grateful for your amazing commitment to the ministry and mission of Park Church. Your generosity is inspiring. Thank you!

Birthday Sunday

Sunday, January 12 after worship

We have so much to celebrate and this week it will be our birthdays! Join us after worship in Merriam Hall where you will find 12 festive tables; one for each month of the year. There will be a celebration cake at each table. Please sit and enjoy a piece of cake with your fellow birthday month Park people.

If you would like to bake (or buy) a cake for this celebration, please let Terrie Hunter know. thunter@parkchurchgr.org

Days for Girls Afternoon Kit Creation Day

Thursday, January 16 from 2:00-4:00pm

The January Days for Girls work session is in the afternoon. If you haven't been able to join us, but always wanted to give it a try, this is your chance. In fact, you could bring a friend or two to help. Our fearless leader, Christina, is unable to be with us in January so we are charging ahead on our own! Please bring your serger or regular sewing machine and join in the fun! No machine? No problem! This is so much to do! We will have ripping and ironing and marking and measuring...**OH MY!**



We are an Open and Affirming Congregation

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

Coming up at Park Church

- Sun. Jan. 5** at 10:30am Sanctuary Worship - Communion Sunday
(please note: The table is open to all; we always offer gluten-free bread)
Continental breakfast before worship/coffee fellowship after worship
Star Seekers Epiphany Star Hunt
Removing of the greens after worship
- Tues. Jan 7** at 6:30pm Board of Deacons meeting
- Wed. Jan. 8** at 10:00am Park Church Women board meeting
- Thur. Jan. 9** at 6:30pm Smith-Dively Ringers rehearsal
at 7:00pm West Michigan Survivors of Suicide Loss meeting
at 7:30pm Chancel Choir rehearsal
- Sun. Jan. 12** at 10:30am Sanctuary Worship - Birthday Sunday
at 9:30 Carol Choir rehearsal in the Children's Worship Center
at 9:30 Chapel Choir rehearsal in the 3rd floor youth choir room
Continental breakfast before worship/coffee fellowship after worship
Confirmation Class meets
Birthday Cake and coffee in Merriam Hall after worship

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

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