

FIRST (PARK) CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UCC

January 5, 2025

# epiphany



# Christmastide: Epiphany

First (Park) Congregational Church ~ January 5, 2025

Gathering Music

Rev. Dr. Patrick Coyle, piano

Welcome

Rev. Darryl Kistler

The Moment for the Young & Young-at-Heart

+ Invitation to Worship

Reading Responsively  
Kate Meengs, liturgist

**One:** Hear the Prophet's call, "Arise, shine for your light has come!"

Be ready for that bright light from God to light our way.

**All:** **We come to worship to connect God's light in us to God's light in Christ,  
and so illumine the world.**

**One:** How do we recognize that light?

**All:** **In compassion for all, in justice for the poor, in welcome for the stranger,  
we shine God's light into the world.**

**One:** So come let us bring the joys and hardships of life to worship and celebrate that  
God's light is already with us and within us.

*based on Isaiah 60:1-6, Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14*

Prelude

Phyllis Ann Miner, organ  
*Go, Tell It on the Mountain*  
J. Wayne Kerr

+ Prayer of Invocation

Reading in Unison

**God of promise, open our eyes this morning, that we may see your light  
in the shadows. Open our hearts, that we may perceive your promises of  
mercy and peace – promises fulfilled in the Babe of Bethlehem. May we,  
like the Magi, have a star to guide us on our journey quest to find the one  
who will truly set us free. And may this time in worship bring us closer to**

**you and each other, that the Good News of his birth may transform our lives by experiencing your love. Amen.**

+ Opening Carol - No. 147 (refrain after verses 2, 4 and 6)

*The First Nowell*  
Tune: THE FIRST NOWELL

Scripture Reading

Matthew 2: 1-12  
Kate Meengs, liturgist

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, magi from the east came to Jerusalem, asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star in the east and have come to pay him homage.”

When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him, and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it has been written by the prophet:

‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah,  
for from you shall come a ruler  
who is to shepherd my people Israel.’ ”

Then Herod secretly called for the magi and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then Herod sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.”

When they had heard the king, they set out, and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen in the east, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Sermon: *Taking a Different Route*

Pastor Darryl

## Sacrament of Holy Communion

### *Invitation to the Table and Words of Institution*

One: God be with you.

**All: And also with you.**

One: Lift up your hearts.

**All: We lift them up to God.**

One: Let us give thanks to God Most High.

**All: It is right and to give God thanks and praise.**

One: Gracious God, in you we move and have our being; for your faithful steadfast love that endures forever; for the birth of Christ, and the message of peace, justice and radical inclusivity of the realm of God he proclaimed was near; for the renewing strength and freedom of the Holy Spirit always present and available to us ...

**All: We give thanks to you, O God.**

One: We remember the tradition...

When, during a meal with his friends and companions, women and men who had walked the way with him, that Jesus would tell them of a re-imagined way of living and being.

A way that did not conform to the standards of the Roman Empire that championed might and power and status, that worshipped at the altar of cults of personality, that sanctioned the accesses of the wealthy to the deprivation of the poor.

And we remember the story...

Jesus took bread and blessed it, acknowledging with gratitude the hands that produced it and the earthly goodness that made it possible:

the warmth of the sun, the nourishment of earth, the heat of the oven, the skill of the baker, and the faithfulness of the farmer...

He broke the bread and gave it to his followers in a spirit of devotion to the new community he dreamed of.

Then, Jesus took the cup and after giving thanks, he gave it to them saying: This is the cup of the new covenant poured out for you and for all people.

Let us pray:

**One:** O God, through this bread and cup, may your Spirit

**All:** be a source of healing and consolation.

**One:** Gracious God, through table of fellowship, may your Spirit

**All:** strengthen us when we feel weak,  
warm us when we are cold-hearted,  
bend us when we are stubborn,  
move us when we are uncaring,  
guide us in the way of love.

**One:** Loving God, we come to your table now as people who have not merited our place around it but rather as women and men who have been graciously and wondrously invited to partake in this holy meal. As we eat and drink, may the elements be symbols that remind us who we are and whose we are. And may we remember, your Son, Jesus the Christ, the one who extends the invitation to us.

**All:** Amen.

*Sharing in the Bread and Cup*

Phyllis Ann Miner, harp

*Prayer after Communion*

concluding, the congregation prays in unison:

**...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.**

Offertory Anthem

The Chancel Choir  
*Ding Dong! Merrily on High*  
Daniel E. Schwandt

*Ding dong, merrily on high!  
In heav'n the bells are ringing;  
ding dong, verily the sky  
is riv'n with angel singing.  
Gloria, hosannah in excelsis!  
Gloria, hosannah in excelsis!*

*E'en so here below, below,  
let steeple bells be swungen,  
And io, io, io,  
by priest and people sungen.  
Gloria, hosannah in excelsis!  
Gloria, hosannah in excelsis!*

*Pray ye dutifully prime  
your matin chime, ye ringers;  
may ye beautifully rhyme  
your evetime song, ye singers.  
Gloria, hosannah in excelsis!  
Gloria, hosannah in excelsis!*

+ 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 Light and Promise, we bring out gifts to further your work in the world. May they bring your love to those who are overwhelmed by suffering, pain, and isolation. Bless these gifts. May they shine for all to see and be brought into the sphere of your love and mercy. Amen.**

Closing Carol - No. 127

*Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*  
*(Jesus, the Light of the World)*

Tune: WE'LL WALK IN THE LIGHT

+ 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

Phyllis Ann Miner organ  
*Postlude on "Gloria"*

Traditional French Carol

Jason D. Payne

### **Our 2024 Christmas Offering was a massive success!**

Due to your amazing generosity, Park Church met our goal of \$15,000 raised for our Christmas Offering partner, Undue Medical Debt. The finance office is still doing a final tabulation and we will announce the final amount raised in the coming days. By meeting our goal, we will be able to "forgive" over \$1.5 million in medical debt for our neighbors in Kent County and West Michigan. This gift of debt relief is literally the answer to our neighbor's prayers. Thank you and Merry Christmas!

## ***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

Confirmation Class

Removal of the Greens

***Attention Star Seekers!*** There are 30 stars made out of dollar bills hidden in the common areas of the church on the main level and outside of the sanctuary. (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!

**The 2025 Budget Summary is available in the Narthex of the sanctuary.**

It will be published in this week's newsletter. Detailed budgets are available upon request from Gene Gess, Director of Finance. The Annual Budget meeting will be Sunday, January 26, following worship when Pastor Darryl will also deliver his annual State of the Church Address.

### **Deacon's Fund Collection**

The Deacon's Fund provides confidential short term emergency assistance for Park Church members, friends, and neighbors in crisis. **On the first Sunday of each month**, we invite you to make a designated gift to the Deacon's Fund in support of this work. You can scan the QR code on the back of this bulletin to give online or use a pew envelope and place it in the offering plate. Requests for those experiencing an unexpected hardship should be sent to Pastor Darryl directly.

### **A Note about Pastor Darryl's Schedule:**

Pastor Darryl will be attending two conferences back-to-back starting Thursday, January 9 through Saturday, January 18 in St. Pete Beach, Florida, and Lansing, MI. During this time, he will be responding to correspondence as best he can. Please be patient as it may take longer than expected for him to get back to you. If you are in need of pastoral care while he is away, please contact the church office. We welcome Rev. Dr. Riley Jensen back to our pulpit on Jan 12, and Pastor Darryl will be in worship on January 19.



## ***Joys and Concerns***

**Please keep Sherrie and Tom Peterson and their family in your prayers.** Sherrie's father, Jim Wildey, passed away on December 26 at the age of 90. Arrangements are pending. Send condolences to the family at 1524 Giddings SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49507.

**Please keep Sara and Maurice Fetty and their families in your prayers.** Sara has been diagnosed with advanced liver cancer and is in the care of hospice in her home at Beacon Hill. Please send your love and support to Sara and Maurice at 1919 Boston SE, Apt. A220, Grand Rapids, MI 49506.

**Congratulations to Renae and TJ Hurtman** on the birth of their son Julian Ray who arrived on Christmas Day. Julian is the grandchild of Carolyn and Doug Rubingh and the 21st great-grandchild of Ruth Kutsche. Send your good wishes to Renae and TJ at 1015 Northlawn St. NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49505.

**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](mailto:dkistler@parkchurchgr.org).

### ***The Sanctuary Flowers***

#### **The flowers at the Pulpit**

In loving memory of my parents Kenneth H. and Florenz L. Smith.  
Given by their daughter, Marcia E. Bishop.

#### **The flowers at the Lectern**

In honor of Doug and Carolyn Rubingh's 43rd wedding anniversary.  
Given by Pat and Paula Ellison.

If you would like to dedicate Sanctuary flowers, email Marcia Streeter. [mabiti1@gmail.com](mailto:mabiti1@gmail.com)

### **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](mailto: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!*

### **United Church Outreach Ministries (UCOM) Collection Drive**

Martenson Ten is sponsoring a collection drive for all manner of soaps for UCOM clients. You can help in this effort! On **Wednesday, January 15 at 1:00pm** you are invited to attend the Martenson Ten meeting in Spindler Dining Room to hear guest speaker Erik Keener, new executive director of UCOM, talk about the state of UCOM and how we can all help our partner in ministry support our neighbors. We will save you a seat! On **Sundays, January 19 and 26** at the POP Table, you can drop off donated soaps for delivery to UCOM. Specifically requested items are laundry soaps, dish soaps, bar soaps, and shampoo. Donations of some...or all of these items are most welcome.

## **Coming up at Park Church**

- 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  
POP Table: Sign up to dedicate Sanctuary flowers  
Birthday Cake and coffee in Merriam Hall after worship
- Tues. Jan 14** at 6:30pm Board of Trustees meeting
- Wed. Jan. 15** at 1:00pm Martenson Ten meeting
- Thurs. Jan 16** at 8:30am Men's Discussion Group  
at 2:00pm Days for Girls Kit Creation Workday  
at 6:30pm Smith-Dively Ringers rehearsal  
at 7:30pm Chancel Choir rehearsal
- Fri. Jan. 17** at 9:00am Cooking for Degage at Park
- Sat. Jan. 18** at 7:00am Serving breakfast at Degage
- Sun. Jan. 19** at 10:30am Sanctuary Worship ~ Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. 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  
Drop off cookies for Degage  
Martenson Ten soaps collection for UCOM
- Mon. Jan. 20** the office is closed in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day  
at 9:00am Cooking for Degage at Park
- Tues. Jan. 21** at 11:30am Serving lunch at Degage
- Wed. Jan 22** at 4:30pm Mobile Food Pantry  
at 7:00pm Bible Study in Spindler Dining Room
- Thurs. Jan 23** at 8:30am Men's Discussion Group  
at 6:30pm Smith-Dively Ringers rehearsal  
at 7:30pm Chancel Choir rehearsal



*We are an Open and Affirming Congregation*

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

### ***Serving With You Today***

Ushers: Paul Davison, Captain; Colleen Czarnecki, Amy Rains, Doris Robey,  
Richard Rowe, Doug Rubingh

Communion Servers: Pastor Darryl, Rev. Tracey Taylor-Kunst, Heather Peterson,  
Rosanne Holton, Gina VanderHeiden, Tom Zvirgzds, Chris Krive

Parking Lot Greeter: Chris Camfferman

Greeters: Jim and Nancy Beaver

Sound: Sam Johnson-Begay

Video: Kevin Arnett

Flower Care: Nancy Beaver

### ***Ministerial and Office Staff:***

Rev. Darryl Kistler, Senior Minister

Rev. Dr. Patrick Coyle, Minister of Music

Peter Smith, Spiritual Formation & Education Minister

Terrie Hunter, Congregational Life Coordinator

Gene Gess, Finance Director

Camille DeBoer, Communications Coordinator

Tim Persenaire, Lead Custodian

Marty Butler, Parish Life Assistant

Phyllis Ann Miner, Events Coordinator

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

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

The wifi password is parkchurchguest.



Access the online donor and  
payment portal by using the  
camera on your phone and  
clicking the link that appears.