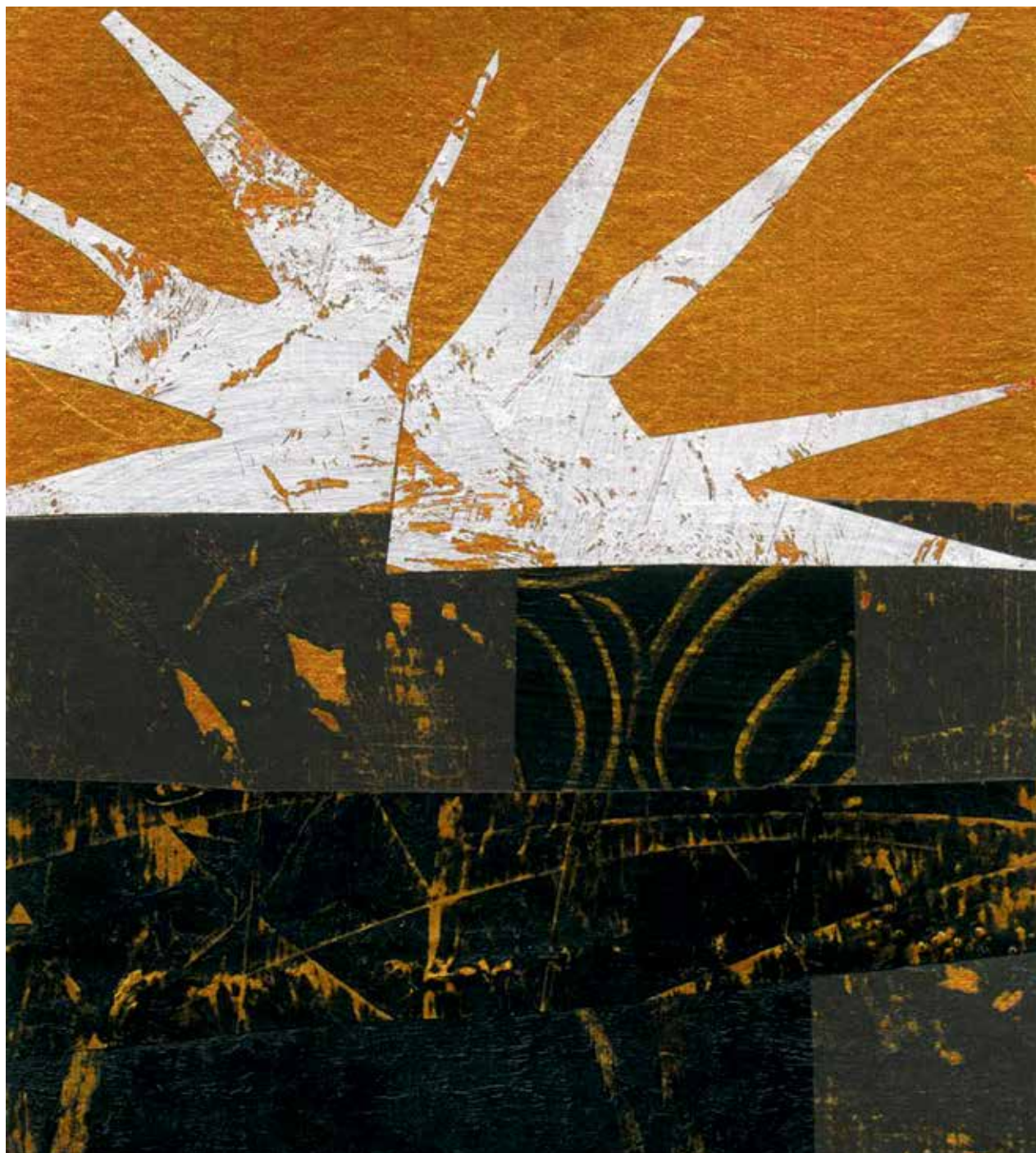


FIRST (PARK) CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UCC

April 20, 2025 Easter Sunday



Welcome all to First (Park) Congregational Church!

We pray this Resurrection Service will be a blessing unto you. While at Park Church if you need directions to the restrooms, classrooms, fellowship spaces, or you need any help at all, please speak to a greeter or usher and we will do our best to assist you. The Sanctuary and Merriam Hall are equipped with the Loop System and other hearing-assist devices are available from an usher.

Thank you to the wonderful staff and volunteers who made today's service possible. We are grateful for all the ways you serve. And we lift a prayer of thanksgiving to God for you all!

Our Congregational Commitments:

Vision Statement

...to build a community of relentless compassion and courageous hope, where all are seen and known, and the God of extravagant Love is revealed.

Inclusion Statement

Park Church is a community of faith that welcomes and values all people regardless of beliefs or doubts, age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical, mental, or emotional ability, or economic status. Park Church is a place where all are included and equal.

Safe Church Statement

Park Church is a designated Safe Church of the United Church of Christ. Park Church is committed to create a safe environment for all members, attendees, and visitors, especially children and youth, and to address any concerns about abuse, harassment or misconduct.

The wifi password is parkchurchguest

Order of Worship for April 20, 2025

Easter Sunday

Gathering, Centering, Announcements - 10:15am

Sanctuary Worship - 10:30am

Gathering Music

Phyllis Ann Miner, piano

Welcome

Rev. Darryl Kistler

The Moment for the Young & Young-at-Heart

Children are dismissed for Worship Center. Visitors, you are welcome to go with your children to see their classrooms and to meet their teachers. Then come back and join us for worship!

The youth (grades 6-12) remain in the service today.

Centering Words

Prelude

The Smith-Dively Ringers,
Kurt Stroh, director
Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee
Arr. Joel Raney/Arnold Sherman

+ Invitation to Worship

Reading Responsively
Rev. Robert Kittendorf, liturgist

One: Beloved, Christ is risen!

All: Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

One: Our Savior is risen!

All: Our Savior is risen indeed! Alleluia!

One: Steadfast Love is risen!

All: Steadfast Love is risen indeed! Alleluia!

One: This is the day that God has made;

All: Let us rejoice and be glad! Alleluia!

+ Fanfare and Processional - Hymn No. 232

Jesus Christ is Risen Today
Tune: EASTER HYMN
Arr. Gerry Senechal

One: Christ, we come to the empty tomb,
we see our own death,
we see our own tomb, we see our own emptiness.
And we remember how we have treated other people-
members of our family, friends, and neighbors.

**All: Lord, we come to your tomb,
we see a hungry world before us,
the pain of starving children,
the guilt of war on our hands,
and we know that collectively we share in those injustices.**

One: Lord, we come to the empty tomb,
we search within ourselves, and we cannot escape what we are,
people caught up in the pain of our own wrong-doing,
for some, a deep sense of loneliness
and a frustration of what we would be but are not.

**All: Lord, when we come to the empty tomb,
we lay before you our pain,
our emptiness and look to you for hope.**

One: People of God,
why do you seek the living among the dead in an empty tomb?
Are you afraid, are you uncertain,
and are you uncomfortable here?

**All: Our wounds are deep,
we have turned away from that man,
we have broken with him and seek his fellowship.**

+ Words of Grace

One: Hear the good news: Do not dwell on your wounds any longer
for he has risen to heal you,
he has risen to forgive you;
he has risen to change us all and bind us together now.
Christ has risen to forgive us.

All: Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Amen.

+ Ringing of the Chimes

*The Chimes give us an opportunity to center ourselves as we
prepare our eyes, ears, hearts and minds to receive the message God has for us.*

The Promise of the Empty Tomb

Tammie Pontsler, liturgist

The promise of the empty tomb
Rips the rug from under your feet,
And says hold on tight -
We're going for a ride
Into the deep unknown.

The promise of the empty tomb
Says the story doesn't end the way
You think it will.
Yes, your future is set in stone,
But I carved it and it's beautiful.

The promise of the empty tomb
Says you are worth so much more
Than you think you are.
You are to die for,
And I did.

The promise of the empty tomb
Drives nails through darkness
And says trust me,
I have a plan
And it is good.

The promise of the empty tomb
Rolls back the stone,
Dances on death,
And says why are you crying,
Don't you know me?

Chloe Axford

Response

Brass Quintet
A Soft Voluntary
Alfred Harry Harding
Arr. Andrew Lamb

Scripture Reading

John 20:1-18
Rev. Robert Kittendorf, liturgist

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus's head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed, for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to their homes.

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb, and she saw two angels in white sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, "Do not touch me, because I have not yet ascended to the

Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.' " Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord," and she told them that he had said these things to her.

One: The Word of God for the People of God.

All: Thanks be to God.

Solo

Rachel Mills, soprano

From the Ashes (Something Beautiful He Brings)

Lloyd Larson

I was drowning in the darkness; he brought light and I could see.

Left alone, I sat in silence: he called out and spoke to me.

When my failure held me captive, he arose to set me free.

From the ashes he created something beautiful in me.

Rejoice! He brings good news!

The dead are raised, the blind can see.

The forgotten are remembered. Every prisoner is set free.

Give thanks, my soul. He comes to you with healing in his wings;

And from the ashes of my life, something beautiful he brings.

I believed my life was over, and he offered one more chance.

I was paralyzed by sorrow, and he taught my feet to dance.

He arranged the broken fragments of my heart more perfectly.

From the ashes he created something beautiful in me. (Refrain)

Pamela Stewart

Sermon: *While It Was Still Dark ...*

Pastor Darryl

Meditation

Steven B. Smith, organ

Easter Hymn

Robert A. Hobby

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.**

Invitation to Generosity and Stewardship

Offertory Music

The Chancel Choir
Thine Be the Glory
G.F. Handel/Arr. J. Marty Cope

(For text, see hymn 238)

+ Doxology

Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow
Tune: LASST UNS ERFREUEN

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

+ Prayer of Dedication

Reading in Unison

**Radiant God, whose love endures forever, we gather today in the light
of resurrection hope, offering these gifts as a response to the grace we
have received. In this period of spiritual renewal, may our giving reflect
the joy of the empty tomb and the promise of life everlasting. Trans-
form our offerings into acts of love that bring light to the world, just
as Christ's light dawned in our hearts. We dedicate these gifts to your
service, trusting that, in your hands, they will bring forth new life. Amen.**

+ Hymn - No. 268

Crown Him with Many Crowns

Tune: DIADEMATA

Arr. Jeremy Bankson

+ 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.

Anthem

The Chancel Choir and Friends

Hallelujah

(from the oratorio MESSIAH)

G.F. Handel

Recessional

Brass Quintet-in-Residence

Steven B. Smith, organ

The Trumpet Shall Sound

(from the oratorio MESSIAH)

G.F. Handel/Arr. Hal Hopson

We welcome our instrumentalists in worship today:

Trumpet: Thomas Hubel, Morgan Hare

Horn: Erich Peterson

Trombone: Daniel Mattson

Bass Trombone: Robert Ward

Percussion: Jack Latta

The Holy Week art is *Blessing the Dust, Still, Those Who Walked in Darkness and Where Hope Lives*

by Jan Richardson. Used by permission. janrichardson.com

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 in Spindler Dining Room

Sign up for the Blood Drive

Notice is hereby given that the Annual Meeting of the Congregation of First (Park) Congregational Church, United Church of Christ will take place on Sunday, May 4, 2025, immediately following worship in Merriam Hall.

The Congregation will elect officers and members of the Boards of Trustees and Deacons, receive the annual report, vote on Articles of Association, Spiritual Foundations, and a revision to the Park Church Bylaws, and consider for congregational affirmation the Accessible to All Statement.

Printed versions of all documents and reports will be available in the Narthex of the sanctuary starting on April 27. Digital versions can be found in the Congregationalist and the website.

Childcare is available for the duration of the meeting. Lunch with gluten free and vegan options will be provided. If you are considering membership, visiting, or just curious, coming to an Annual Meeting is great way learn more about all aspects of the ministry and mission of Park Church. You are welcome to attend. Please note: church membership is a requirement to vote.

Would you like to hear more about the proposed revised Bylaws, Articles of Association, and Spiritual Foundations? You may attend one of the following informational sessions with members of the Bylaws Committee, Trustees, and Pastor Darryl. Each session will be about an hour. (Email office@parkchurhcgr.org for the zoom link.)

Sunday, April 27, following worship (in-person only)

Tuesday, April 29, 7:00pm in Spindler Dining Room (zoom available)

Wednesday, April 30, 12:00pm in Spindler Dining Room (zoom available)

Thursday, May 1, 5:30pm in Spindler Dining Room (zoom available)

Joys and Concerns

Dr. Judith Meyer passed away on Saturday, April 12 at the age of 92. She was a member of the Chancel Choir for over 40 years and a member of Park Church for 15. Judith served the Grand Rapids community as a doctor at a time when only 6% of practicing physicians were women and she shared her love of classical music as both a talented musician and a faithful supporter of the arts. Please keep her family and friends in your prayers. Services will be held on Monday, April 28 at 11:30am at Park Church with Rev. Darryl Kistler presiding. The visitation is at 10:30 and a luncheon will follow the service. Condolences may be sent to the family in care of her niece, Nancy Rhodes, 3961 Hancock Forest Trail, Annandale, VA 22003.

Ruth McCarty suffered a small fall recently and is healing at home. Send cheerful greetings to her at 2510 Lake Michigan Dr. NW, B307, Grand Rapids, MI 49504.

Keep Steven Smith and his husband Eric Ringquist in your prayers. Eric has had a recent surgery and is convalescing at home. Send your good wishes to them at 857 Chancel Circle, Glen Ellyn, IL 60137.

Please pray for those navigating illness/treatment including: Ron Bickel, Grace McClary, Kurt Myers, Judy Strock, Liz Taylor, and Dave Tulos.

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.

Pastor Led Bible Study

Wednesdays, April 23-May 14 at 7:00pm

Join Pastor Darryl and your Park Church friends for a four-week study on the Prophecy of Isaiah. We will be exploring the themes of Isaiah's prophecy, why it was so influential to Jesus' ministry and the establishment of the early church, and what good word it has for us today. You can join the Bible study in person or on zoom.

The Sanctuary Flowers

The flowers at the Pulpit

In loving memory of
Lloyd and Josephine Hulst and Roland and Alyce Robey.
Given by the Robey family.

The flowers on the Children's Altar

In honor of all the children.
Given by Kathy Miller.

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

Park Church Semi-Annual Blood Drive

Sunday, April 27 before, during, and after worship

Roll up your sleeves! Our Park Church semi-annual blood drive will be held on April 27. If you have historically been deferred for one reason or another, it is very possible that you are now eligible to donate. Please check the most recent FDA eligibility guide-lines to see if your deferral has changed. Call or text Dave Kutsche at 616-901-3550 to sign up or check the Congregationalist for a link.

Do You Have a Name Tag?

We have many new faces joining us in worship, which gives us the perfect opportunity to remind everyone to wear their name tags! Remembering names can be a challenge so let's help each other out! If you need a name tag (Anyone can request one. No need to be a member.) send an email to Terrie Hunter. (thunter@parkchurchgr.org)

Do You Have a Graduate?

Graduation Sunday is June 1 and we would like to recognize your graduate! Please let us know if you or someone you love is graduating from high school or completing post secondary education or certification programs. We would like to know your graduate's name, school or institution and, if applicable, field of study and degree. Send an email to office@parkchurchgr.org.

Silent Reading Group
Ongoing beginning April 27
Sundays from 9:00-10:00am

Have you heard of the “silent reading club”? Perfect for all types of readers and thinkers, this is your opportunity to read alone together! You will have a disciplined time to quietly center, read and reflect without pressure to discuss or expectation. You are welcome to read whatever you would like but we suggest you consider reading *The Tears of Things, A Prophetic Wisdom for the Age of Outrage* by Richard Rohr.

You can pace your own reading supported by a reader's guide. Pastor Darryl will join the group on May 18 to talk you through any thoughts or questions you might have so you may want to take notes. The book is available from bookstores for about \$25.00. Library stock is limited. If you have trouble obtaining a copy, see Terrie.

Volunteer Opportunity: Summer 2025 Grounds Crew

It's time to recruit our Grounds Crew for the season! We need willing hands to help with deadheading, weeding and litter pick up. You don't need to be a master gardener and all ages are welcome to help! Volunteers sign up for 2 week shifts and agree to stop by once a week to take care of the grounds, so grab your work gloves and a trash bag or two and come help Park Church look her best! Sign up online by clicking the QR code or contact Kelly Jasperse at 616-288-8047 or by email kellyjjasperse@gmail.com.



Volunteer Opportunities: Children and Youth Ministry

For information about any of these opportunities, please contact Peter Smith.
psmith@parkchurchgr.org - 616-459-3203

Summer Sunday Fun Day @ The Worship Center (begins June 1)

This is our third summer offering consistent summer programming for children and youth. And we need volunteers! You could be a leader or an assistant and support planned activities like reading books aloud, assisting with a craft or activities, and serve snacks. The materials are prepped ahead of time. While the youth will be working with the children throughout the summer, we need some adults to join them in supporting this curriculum. If everyone takes one Sunday, we will have more than enough help!

The Together West Michigan (TWM) Spring Delegate's Assembly Saturday, April 26

9:30 AM – Registration and Community Building

10:00 AM to 12:00 PM – Assembly and Program

Hosted by St. Francis Xavier/Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish
(250 Brown St. SE, Grand Rapids)

The Delegate's Assembly is an opportunity for members of TWM's participating institutions to gather to build relationships, approve the 2025 focus issues, and affirm the 2025 budget for Together West Michigan. The three proposed areas of focus in 2025 are:

- Immigrant and refugee support and advocacy
- Governmental accountability and transparency
- Public Safety, with focus in Grand Rapids 3rd Ward.

The theme of the April Delegate's Assembly is "Consecrating Chaos". The morning will focus on how we organize to build power together to effectively and strategically impact public policy and decisions in Grand Rapids and West Michigan, so the chaos does not overwhelm us.

Please make plans to attend and participate in the Together West Michigan Delegate Assembly on Saturday, April 26. Let's have a strong representation from Park! For more information about TWM or the delegate assembly, please reach out to Rev. Forrest Hoppe at forresthoppe@gmail.com.

From Pastor Darryl

Our Director of Finance, Gene Gess, has submitted his notice to retire to Pastor Darryl and the Board of Trustees. Although there is no set date, Gene is hoping to retire sooner rather than later. Park Church is immensely grateful to Gene for the over 18 years he served as our Director of Finance. He has fulfilled his duties with the utmost integrity, professionalism, and kindness. His work has been guided by an abiding faith in God (essential for any good stewardship campaign!) and deep love for Park Church and its people. Please take a moment to thank Gene for his years of dedicated service and congratulate him on his retirement.

Coming up at Park Church

- Mon. April 21 The Office is Closed
- Tues. April 22 at 12:15 Music at Midday: Eric Strand, organ
- Wed. April 23 at 4:30pm Mobile Food Pantry
 at 7:00pm Bible Study Book of Isaiah
- Thurs. April 24 at 8:30am Men's Discussion Group
 at 6:30pm Smith-Dively Ringers rehearsal
 at 6:30pm Parkmeisters rehearsal
 at 7:30pm Chancel Choir rehearsal
- Sun. April 27 at 10:30am Sanctuary Worship
 Blood Drive in Merriam Hall
 at 9:00am Silent Reading Group in Martenson Parlor
 at 9:30am Carol Choir and Chapel Choir rehearsals
 Continental breakfast before worship/coffee fellowship after worship
 at 11:45 Carnation Caller meeting in Martenson Parlor
- Mon. April 28 at 11:30 Judith Meyer Memorial Service
- Tues. April 29 at 12:15 Music at Midday: Bruce Robey and Friends
- Wed. April 30 at 7:00pm Bible Study Book of Isaiah
- Thurs. May 1 at 8:30am Men's Discussion Group
 at 6:15pm Smith-Dively Ringers rehearsal
 at 6:30pm Parkmeisters rehearsal
 at 7:30pm Chancel Choir rehearsal
- Sun. May 4 at 10:30am Sanctuary Worship - Communion and Deacon's Offering
 Annual Meeting after worship in Merriam Hall
 at 9:00am Silent Reading Group in Martenson Parlor
 at 9:30am Carol Choir and Chapel Choir rehearsals
 Continental breakfast before worship/coffee fellowship after worship
 Youth Group after worship



Click the QR code to sign up for Degage cooking and serving.



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: John Miller, captain; Jim Butler, Cindy Dexter, Kathy Miller, Susan Sochanek,,

Harlan Wilson

Greeters: Roger LaWarre, Diane LaWarre, Gary Olsen, Kathy Olsen

Parking Lot Greeter: Fritz Crabb

Sound: Sam Johnson-Begay

Video: Kevin Arnett

Live stream: Andrew DeBoer

Carol Choir: Cheryl Wells

Chapel Choir: Heidi Hertel

Flower Care: Gail Bickel

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

Judi Stroh, Events Coordinator

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

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www.parkchurchgr.org

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.