

FIRST (PARK) CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UCC

Homecoming ~ September 7, 2024



Welcome to First (Park) Congregational Church!

We pray this worship service will be a blessing to you. While at Park Church if you need directions to the rest rooms, 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. The wifi password is parkchurchguest.

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

As Jesus demonstrated by his life and teachings, we fully welcome into the life of Park Church and value all people regardless of beliefs or doubts, age, race, ethnicity, immigration status, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical, intellectual or emotional ability, or economic status. Park Church is a place where all are welcome and equal. We value and celebrate the rich diversity of all God's creation. *(adopted 2015, updated 2020 and 2025)*

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.

Accessible to All (A2A) Statement

Park Church welcomes people of all abilities and disabilities into the full life of the congregation. Called to participate in Christ's ministry, we pledge to continue expanding our views and attitudes as we evolve to meet the needs of our church and community.

In this way, Park Church is fully committed to being *Accessible to All*. *(adopted 2025)*

The Sanctuary Flowers

The flowers on the Altar

In honor of Michelle Hodde's birthday.

Given by Bruce and Doris Robey.

The flowers at 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

Order of Worship for September, 2025

Gathering and Centering 10:20am

Announcements and Sanctuary Worship - 10:30am

The + symbol indicates standing in body or in spirit.

Words in **bold type** are spoken or sung in unison.

Gathering Music

Phyllis Miner and
Patrick Coyle, piano duo

Welcome

Rev. Darryl Kistler

Ringling 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.*

Fanfare and Processional

Brass Quintet-in-Residence
Fanfare and Flourishes for a Festive Occasion
James Curnow

+ Prayer of Invocation

Reading Responsively
Dee Casanova, liturgist

One: It is always good to come home, O God.

All: It is wonderful to return to our roots and to celebrate the sense of joy and familiarity we feel when we go there.

One: We thank you for the things about home that remain comfortable to us...

All: The good people we know, the memories that are rekindled, the places where we walk and talk and study, the worship where we sing the old songs and learn new ones, pray heartfelt prayers, and explore great mysteries.

One: And we thank you for what those who are beginning to explore faith here...

All: A sense of freshness, a reminder that there is a world out there beyond the one we know, a witness to the pull of beloved community, and a testament to the way that faith goes out from this place to the farthest corners of the earth.

One: Grant us peace, knowing that life goes on and is good, with the knowledge that our fellowship in you can never be broken, regardless of how far we roam or what we do.

All: Let the spirit of Christ reign in our hearts today and make us glad together. For you are our God and our home. Amen.

Tune: TWO OAKS



1 Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can
 2 Let us build a house where proph - ets speak, and words are
 3 Let us build a house where love is found in wa - ter,
 4 Let us build a house where hands will reach be - yond the
 5 Let us build a house where all are named, their songs and

(D) (A) (D) (Bm7) (Em) (A)
 F C F Dm7 Gm C



safe - ly live, a place where saints and chil - dren tell
 strong and true, where all God's chil - dren dare to seek
 wine, and wheat; a ban - quet hall on ho - ly ground
 wood and stone to heal and strength-en, serve and teach,
 vi - sions heard and loved and trea - sured, taught and claimed

(Em) (A7) (G) (D) (F#m) (Bm)
 Gm C7 Bb F Am Dm



how hearts learn to for - give. Built of hopes and dreams and
 to dream God's reign a - new. Here the cross shall stand as
 where peace and jus - tice meet. Here the love of God, through
 and live the Word they've known. Here the out - cast and the
 as words with - in the Word. Built of tears and cries and

(Em) (A) (D) (G)
 Gm C F Bb



vi - sions, rock of faith and vault of grace; here the
 wit - ness and as sym - bol of God's grace; here as
 Je - sus, is re - vealed in time and space; as we
 strang - er bear the im - age of God's face; let us
 laugh - ter, prayers of faith and songs of grace; let this

F Bb A7 Dm Gm Dm



love of Christ shall end di - vi - sions:
 one we claim the faith of Je - sus:
 share in Christ the feast that frees us: all are wel - come;
 bring an end to fear and dan - ger:
 house pro-claim from floor to raf - ter:

(F#m) (Em) (D) (Em) (A7) (D) (G) (D)
 Am Gm F Gm C7 F Bb F



all are wel - come; all are wel - come in this place.

Nursery and Little Lambs

Matthew Lester
 Sherri Peterson
 Alicia Sweezie
 Morgan Kingma
 Jan Edwards
 Mindy Peterson

Youth Group (6th-12th grade)

Peter Smith
 Heather Peterson

Worship Center (4yrs - 5th grade)

Alicia Johnson
 Tim Johnson
 Becca Johnson
 Katy Urquhart
 Donna Boersma
 Sue West
 Paula Ellison
 Rachel Borgman
 Megan Cottrell
 Natalie Tomlin
 Mary Hoksbergen
 Liz Winter
 Megan Riksen

One: Friends in faith, there is no greater calling than the nurturing and care of each other. There is no greater privilege than growing in faith together. There is no greater responsibility than reinforcing in our children and youth that they are beloved of God and their church family. We are told that faith without works is dead, so as we study together, pray together, sing together, we empower our souls to be people of grace, compassion and love in our world. So we come today for a blessing of the leaders and volunteers of our program this new season, and of our children, youth and adults who will evolve in our commitment to be the hands and feet of Christ.

All: God of new beginnings, empower us in this new season to live out the divine love we claim in this family of faith. By diving into the Word, hearing stories of the historical and contemporary heroes of justice, in fellowship over meals and moments, in crafts and creativity, and in sacred silence, tune us to the calling, the privilege and the responsibilities of following the spirit of Christ. Bless this new season of spiritual formation, so that every encounter with You is fertile ground for growth. Amen.

*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!*

concluding, the congregation prays in unison (continued...)

...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.

Prayer Response

The Chancel Choir

A Grand Amen

Patrick Coyle

Scripture Reading

Philemon(selected verses from the *Common English Bible*)

Dee Casanova, liturgist

From Paul, who is a prisoner for the cause of Christ Jesus, and our brother Timothy.

To Philemon our dearly loved coworker,

May the grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

Philemon, I thank my God every time I mention you in my prayers because I've heard of your love and faithfulness, which you have both for the Lord Jesus and for all God's people.

Therefore, though I have enough confidence in Christ to command you to do the right thing, I would rather appeal to you through love. I, Paul—an old man, and now also a prisoner for Christ Jesus— appeal to you for my child Onesimus. I became his father in the faith during my time in prison. I'm sending him back to you, which is like sending you my own heart. I considered keeping him with me so that he might serve me in your place during my time in prison because of the gospel. However, I didn't want to do anything without your consent so that your act of kindness would occur willingly and not under pressure. Maybe this is the reason that Onesimus was separated from you for a while so that you might have him back forever—no longer as a slave but more than a slave—that is, as a dearly loved brother. He is especially a dearly loved brother to me. How much more can he become a brother to you, personally and spiritually in the Lord!

So, if you really consider me a partner, welcome Onesimus as if you were welcoming me. If he has harmed you in any way or owes you money, charge it to my account. I, Paul, will pay it back to you (I'm writing this with my own hand). Of course, I won't mention that you owe me your life. Yes, brother, do me this favor in the Lord! Refresh my heart in Christ.

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

All: Thanks be to God.

Solo

Karen Albert, mezzo-soprano

One Bread, One Body

Arr. Mark Hayes

(For text, see Hymn 530.)

Sermon: **Living With Gospel Vision**

Pastor Darryl

Meditation

Brass Quintet-in-Residence

Largo (from “Xerxes”)

G.F. Handel/Arr. Matt Kingston

Invitation to Generosity and Stewardship

Offertory Music

The Chancel Choir

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

Arr. Dan Forrest

(For text, see hymn 39.)

+ Doxology - No. 609

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

Rev. Dr. Patrick Coyle

Tender and knowing God, you have searched us and known us—every thought, every fear, every hope that stirs within. You wove us together with care, claiming us before we could speak your name. Receive these gifts, offered not from perfection but from hearts seeking you. Use them to shape a world more reflective of your love and shape us, too, into a people more open, more generous, more faithful. May our giving become a response to your knowing and our generosity a reflection of your grace. In the name of the one who knows us still. Amen.

1 Guide me, O thou great Je - ho - vah, pil - grim through this
2 O - pen now the crys - tal foun - tain, whence the heal - ing
3 When I tread the verge of Jor - dan, bid my anx - ious

bar - ren land. I am weak, but thou art might - y. Hold me
stream doth flow. Let the fire and cloud - y pil - lar lead me
fears sub - side. Death of death, and hell's de - struc - tion, land me

with thy power - ful hand. Bread of heav - en, bread of heav - en,
all my jour - ney through. Strong de - liv - erer, strong de - liv - erer,
safe on Ca - naan's side. Songs of prais - es, songs of prais - es

feed me till I want no more; feed me till I want no more.
be thou still my strength and shield; be thou still my strength and shield.
I will ev - er give to thee; I will ev - er give to thee.

Few Welsh hymns are as well known or loved as this 18th-century text that did not gain its popular tune until the early 20th century. In both its original text and in English translation, it is a stirring hymn of pilgrimage filled with vivid imagery from Hebrew Scripture.

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
Brass Quintet-in-Residence
La Rejouissance
(from Music from the Royal Fireworks)
G.F. Handel/Setting by David Marlatt

Instrumentalists:

Steven B. Smith, organ
Phyllis Ann Miner, piano
Jubiloso! (Handbell Ensemble), Kurt Stroh, director
Charley Lea, trumpet
Alex Wilson, trumpet
Erich Peterson, horn
Daniel Mattson, trombone
A.J. Muusse, bass trombone
Erik Peterson, percussion

Inquire and Connect

Sunday, September 14 from 11:45am-1:30pm in Thompson Chapel

Have you thought about becoming a member of Park Church? Come to *Inquire and Connect* to learn more! At this informal get-together, members of the church will share their stories about membership, including ways to become involved and serve within the church and in the wider community. New members will be received into the church family on Sunday, September 28, during the worship service. Please RSVP to mbutler@parkchurchgr.org or by calling Marty in the church office, 459-3203, Ext. 10, by Wednesday, September 10.

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.

Serving With You Today:

Greeters: Tom Johnson, Pat Schaub, Susan Sochanek, Beth Wilson, Harlan Wilson

Ushers: Paul Davison, Colleen Czarnecki, Amy Rains, Diane Sherlock, Richard Rowe, John Miller

Audio/Video: Sam Begay-Johnson, Kevin Arnett, Camille DeBoer

Flower Care: Jan Edwards

Following Worship

Homecoming Celebration Picnic following worship

POP Table: Sign up to be an ArtPrize Volunteer

Together West Michigan collection drive and project information

Joys and Concerns

We share the sad news that **Mary Forslund** passed away on **Thursday, September 4** at the age of **90**. Mary has considered Park Church her home since 1940 and was a steadfast member of many committees and boards including her dear Martenson Ten. Service arrangements are pending and will be announced soon.

Dear Park Church Family, We were all deeply touched by the outpouring of sympathy cards following the recent passing of our Dad. Thank you for reaching out to each of us during this difficult time. Your kind gesture is very much appreciated.

Blessings, Liz Casey Bode, Jim Casey, Cindy Casey Myers

Doug Gammage, father of Jeff Gammage, has been diagnosed with advanced multiple myeloma and is undergoing treatment. Please send your support to the family at 37 Auburn Ave. NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503.

Ongoing Prayer List: Ron Bickel, Marcia Bishop, and Ash Hales.

Military Personnel: Jesse Campbell, Devon Goetz, Andy MacGregor, and Matthew Quick.

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

Park Church Prayer Fence

In the coming weeks, you will be invited to participate in a prayer project. Multi color ribbons will represent five areas of tension/concern in the life of our community. You may meditate on the concerns most pressing in your lives and tie the corresponding ribbons to the Park Church Prayer Fence on the west side of the parking lot. By visually representing our community cares, we can share the load in support of each other. Ribbons will be available on Sept. 21 and 28.

Together West Michigan \$2000.00 Funding Drive

The Park Church TWM core team set a \$2000.00 fundraising goal to be used to expand efforts to have the Commissioners of the City of Grand Rapids and Kent County support the policy goals determined by the Together West Michigan member institutions. A major focus for 2025 is the Accountability and Transparency of elected officials, especially as they provide tax incentives for projects. Park's core team for Together West Michigan will be at the POP table after worship today and next week to answer questions about the work of TWM.

Introducing: The "Sow and Sews"

Second Thursdays (starting Sept. 11) from 1:00-3:00 in Spindler Dining Room

The new sewing group will be making bags for the mobile food pantry, wound and dental kits for Cherry Health and emergency menstrual kits. Bring your sewing machine, scissors, iron or rotary cutters but most importantly bring yourself to find out how you can be involved! No experience required. Any questions, ask Terrie thunter@parkchurchgr.org

ArtPrize 2025 @ Park Church

September 18 - October 4 hours vary

The ArtPrize committee connected with 23 artists who will be displaying their work in Merriam Hall. We need several people each day to help welcome guests. You can sign up in person at the POP Table on September 7 and 14, online at the link in the Congregationalist, or just call the office and we will help you sign up.

If you can help with setup Sept. 14-16 during the day. Let Mike Mitchell know! (votrepair@gmail.com). We provide the artists and volunteers with refreshments throughout their shifts. Donations of individually wrapped treats, candy and snacks are much appreciated.

Bible Study

Wednesdays from 7:00-8:00 starting September 17

Join Pastor Darryl and your Park Church friends at our weekly Bible Study, Wednesday evenings from 7:00-8:00 PM starting September 17. You can attend in person in Spindler Dining Room, or online via Zoom (link in the Congregationalist). This Fall, we will be studying the Gospel according to Luke. We'll dive into the Nativity Story, ponder parables of lost things, and meet the Risen Christ on the Emmaus Road, and much more.

Men's Discussion Group

Thursdays 8:30-9:30am starting September 18

Pastor Darryl leads a Men's Group on Thursday mornings from 8:30 AM-9:30 AM in Spindler Dining Room starting September 18. This weekly gathering is centered around discussing a variety of thoughtful and thought-provoking topics from the perspective of our faith. Topics are chosen by the group collectively. For more information, please contact Pastor Darryl.

Coming up at Park Church

- Tues. Sept 9** at 6:30pm Trustees and Deacons joint meeting
- Wed. Sept. 10** at 10:00am Park Church Women board meeting
- Thurs. Sept. 11** at 1:00pm Sow and Sews
at 6:30pm Jubiloso! rehearsal
at 7:00pm West Michigan Survivors of Suicide Loss support group
at 7:30pm Chancel Choir rehearsal
- Sun. Sept. 14 at 10:30am Sanctuary Worship and Communion**
Coffee Fellowship before and after worship
Inquire and Connect class after worship
POP Table: ArtPrize volunteer sign up
Together West Michigan collection drive and project information
- Mon. Sept. 15** The church office is closed for a staff development day.
ArtPrize installations (day one)
at 9:00am Cooking for Degage at Park



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

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
Julie Anderson, Finance Director
Camille DeBoer, Communications Coordinator
Tim Persenaire, Lead Custodian
Marty Butler, Parish Life Assistant
Judi Stroh, Office Administrator & Event Coordinator.

dkistler@parkchurchgr.org
pcoyle@parkchurchgr.org
psmith@parkchurchgr.org
thunter@parkchurchgr.org
janderson@parkchurchgr.org
cdeboer@parkchurchgr.org
tpersenaire@parkchurchgr.org
mbutler@parkchurchgr.org
jstroh@parkchurchgr.org

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

10 E Park Pl. NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503

616-459-3203

office@parkchurchgr.org

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.