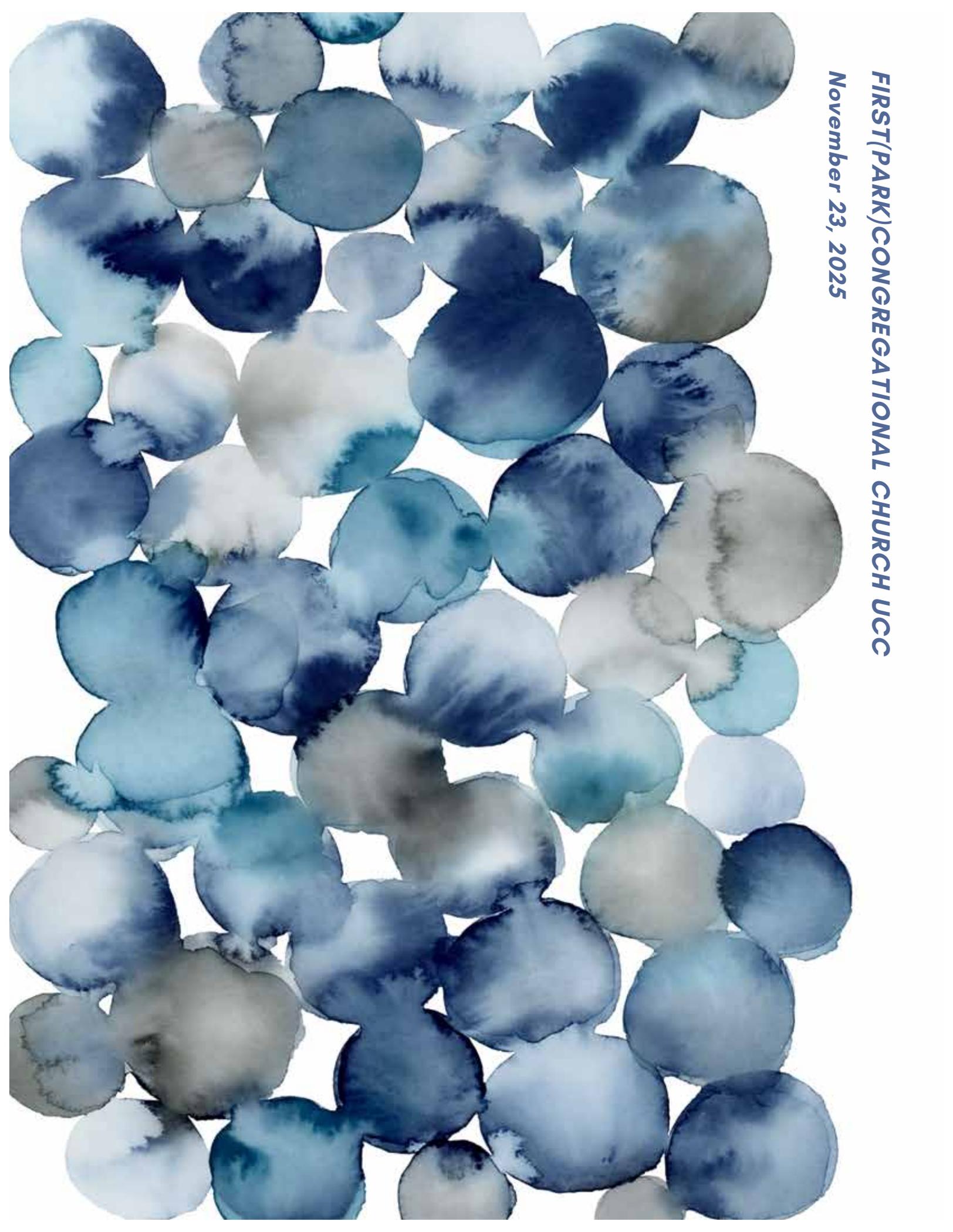


FIRST(PARK) CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UCC

November 23, 2025



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)*



Click the QR code for the current Congregationalist.

Order of Worship for November 23, 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 Ann Miner, piano

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.*

Prelude

Jubiloso! Handbell Ensemble
Kurt Stroh, director
For the Beauty of the Earth
Arr. Cathy Moglebust

+ Prayer of Invocation

Reading Responsively
Tim Cameron, liturgist

One: Great and giving God, come once again
and feed your flock like a shepherd.

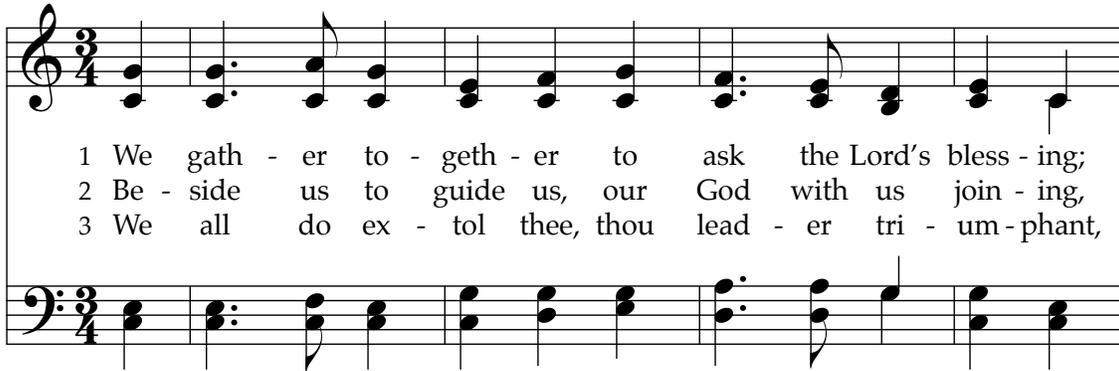
**All: Come once again,
and gather up the children, the oppressed,
the sick, the lonely, the humble,
and the rejected of the earth.
Turn our hearts to the least of your children,
for if we lose them,
we become lost as well.**

One: Reconcile us to you
and to those we have hurt.

**All: As we gather here in this place with thanksgiving,
join us together in spirit with neighbors, with strangers,
and especially with this household of faith.**

One: As you are generous, make us both generous and thankful
in times of both light and darkness.

All: Amen.



1 We gath - er to - geth - er to ask the Lord's bless - ing;
2 Be - side us to guide us, our God with us join - ing,
3 We all do ex - tol thee, thou lead - er tri - um - phant,



he chas - tens and has - tens his will to make known;
or - dain - ing, main - tain - ing his king - dom di - vine;
and pray that thou still our de - fend - er wilt be.



the wick - ed op - press - ing now cease from dis - tress - ing.
so from the be - gin - ning the fight we were win - ning;
Let thy con - gre - ga - tion es - cape trib - u - la - tion;



Sing prais - es to his name; he for - gets not his own.
thou, Lord, wast at our side; all glo - ry be thine!
thy name be ev - er praised! O Lord, make us free!

Prayers of the People and Our Savior's Prayer

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.

Response

The Chancel Choir
A Grateful Heart
Tune: ROCKINGHAM

*A grateful heart is what I bring, a song of praise, my offering.
Among the saints I lift my voice: in you, O God, I will rejoice.*

Scripture Reading

Psalm 46
Tim Cameron, liturgist

God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change,
though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea,
though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble with its tumult. *Selah*
There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy habitation of the Most High.
God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved;
God will help it when the morning dawns.
The nations are in an uproar; the kingdoms totter;
he utters his voice; the earth melts.
The Lord of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge. *Selah*
Come, behold the works of the Lord;
see what desolations he has brought on the earth.
He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;
he breaks the bow and shatters the spear;
he burns the shields with fire.

“Be still, and know that I am God!
I am exalted among the nations;
I am exalted in the earth.”

The Lord of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge. *Selah*

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

All: Thanks be to God.

Solo

Schyler Claypool, soprano
You Are God
Lionel Bourne

*You are the peace of all things calm,
You are the place to hide from harm,
You are the light that shines in dark,
You are the heart's eternal spark.*

*You are the door that opens wide,
You are the guest who waits inside.
You are the stranger at the door,
You are the calling of the poor.*

*You are my love, you are my Lord, and with me still.
You are my love, keep me from ill,
You are the light the truth, the way.
You are my Savior this day,
You are my Savior this very day.*

Sermon

Pastor Darryl

Meditation

Steven B. Smith, organ
Meditation on “A Grateful Heart”
Mark Winchester

Invitation to Generosity and Stewardship

Offertory Music

The Chancel Choir
Karen Albert, director
O Most High
Jonathan Reid

*It is good to give thanks to the Lord,
To sing praises to Your name, O Most High:
To declare Your steadfast love in the morning,
And your faithfulness by night.*

*It is good to give thanks to the Lord,
To sing praises to Your name, O Most High:
To the music of the harp and the lyre,
For you have made me glad!*

*The righteous flourish like the tree,
Planted in the house of the Lord,
They flourish in the courts of God.
They are evergreen, at Your works they sing for joy!*

*It is good to give thanks to the Lord,
To sing praises to Your name, O Most High:
To declare that the Lord is upright, and is my rock,
God is holy, holy, holy.*

~ Psalm 92

+ 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

Compassionate Shepherd, You gather us in Christ our example, and teach us to live in unity, mercy, and peace. As we bring these gifts, may they be signs of our desire to follow your way—offering peace where there is war, justice where there has been harm, and hope where there has been despair. Strengthen us to live as people waiting not in fear, but in peace and thanksgiving —serving the kin-dom of Christ on earth not just with words, but with lives shaped by generosity and love. In the name of the One who gathers and leads us always. Amen.

(Based on Jeremiah 23:1-6)

1 Now thank we all our God with heart and hands and voic - es,
2 O may this boun-tous God through all our life be near us,
3 All praise and thanks to God, who reigns in high - est heav - en,

who won-drous things hath done, in whom this world re - joic - es;
with ev - er joy - ful hearts and bless - ed peace to cheer us;
to Fa - ther and to Son and Spir - it now be giv - en:

who, from our moth-ers' arms, hath blessed us on our way
and keep us in God's grace, and guide us when per-plexed,
the one e - ter - nal God, whom heaven and earth a - dore,

with count-less gifts of love, and still is ours to - day.
and free us from all ills in this world and the next.
the God who was, and is, and shall be ev - er - more.

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
A Thankful Return
Phil Lehenbauer

**26th Annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Celebration
TOMORROW November 24 at 7:00pm @ Park Church**

We are excited to host this celebration and we hope you will be able to attend. The Kaufman Interfaith Institute, along with the interfaith community of Grand Rapids, welcomes you to enjoy an evening of celebration for the religious diversity of our community.

The Interfaith Thanksgiving celebration is a service that features musical pieces, reflections, and dances from various religious and secular traditions in our community. During the event, we will hear from members of our community, representing an array of religious, spiritual, and secular worldview identities, as they discuss the enduring need for gratitude for our shared home during this and all seasons. A free-will offering will be collected to benefit a local charity.

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 in the pew rack and place it in the offering plate.

Following Worship

Coffee Fellowship, Holiday Bazaar, and Martenson Pie Sale in Merriam Hall

Hanging of the Greens in the Sanctuary

11:45 Melodia/Camerata rehearsals

Serving With You Today

Greeters: Dave Kutsche and Wendell Kutsche

Ushers: Roger LaWarre, Brian Bradley, Jim and Nancy McGlothlin, Diane and Dick Sherlock

Audio/Video: Sam Begay-Johnson, Andrew DeBoer

Flower Care: Kathy Miller

The Thanksgiving Altar enhancements were designed by Amy Virkstis and installed by members of Allinder Ten. Thank you all for making our Thanksgiving worship space so lovely!

The bulletin cover art: an untitled digital design by LisaNohrenDesigns used with permission.

The Sanctuary Flowers

The flowers at the Pulpit

In honor of Emmett Robert Butler on his 12th birthday.

Given by his grandparents Jim and Marty Butler.

The flowers at the Children's Altar

In honor of Gideon Burke's 9th birthday.

Given by grandparents Donna and David Boersma.

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

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



Joys and Concerns

Dear Park Church

Thank you so much for all of the wonderful wedding cards! We are so lucky to be a part of your community.. Best wishes, Andy MacGregor and Devon Goetz

I have only been a member of Park Church for about 3 years, so I was overwhelmed with the cards and wishes I received from Park Church members after my recent surgery. Thank you for the get-well wishes and your prayers. It truly is a Park Church Family! Pat Schaub

Annie Hager fell and fractured her elbow. Send your encouragement and best wishes for a quick recovery to her at 2510 Lake Michigan Dr. NW, Apt A315, G R mi 49504

Dan Pettee has come home from the hospital to continue his recovery. Please send your get well wishes to him at 5972 E Lyn Haven Dr. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49512.

Nancy Miller is a member of Jubilosio! Her father Clifford Beckman lives in Illinois and has been placed on a ventilator for pneumonia. Send cards and prayers for healing to Nancy at 4601 Deerhaven Park Dr. Lowell, MI 49331

Kathy Osborn is a member of the Chancel Choir. Kathy's husband Tom Rysko has suffered a traumatic medical event and is embarking on a complicated recovery. Please send your love and support to Kathy and Tom at 3530 Water Walk Dr. SW, Grandville, MI 49418.

Please pray for those navigating illness/treatment including: Ron Bickel, Marcia Bishop, Doug Gammage, Ruth McCarty, and Tom VandenBosch

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

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

The stewardship campaign for 2026 is underway.



Thank you to everyone who has already submitted their giving intentions and, if you have not, please prayerfully consider how you can continue to support the work of Park Church financially in the coming year. Please note: The mission budget is dependent on your response as is it 12% of pledges received.

Click QR Code to read Pastor Darryl's appeal, access a digital pledge card, and view the stewardship moments delivered in the worship services.

***All Is Calm, All is Bright* by Joey Styron**

**Advent reflections for the LGBTQIA Community along with their friends and allies.
Sunday November 30 after worship.**



Joey Styron has published the Advent devotional you didn't know you needed and he will be with us, in person, on November 30 to talk about it! The kick-off for this study will take place on Sunday, November 30, after worship in the Spindler Dining Room and will include lunch. Joey will be with us. Seats are limited so please use the QR code or contact the office to reserve your seat on November 30.

Following this session, the group will meet via Zoom at 7:00 PM on Mondays, December 1, 8, 15 and 22. The Zoom link will be sent to you by email.

All is Calm, All is Bright is a series of four reflections - corresponding to the weeks of Advent. Joey invites us to ponder the angels' message: good tidings and great joy for all people. He weaves together sacred texts, carols, and portions of his own journal to share that God's love is for everyone, not a select few. The reflections are brief but inspiring and thought-provoking, respectful of your individual spirituality and religious wounds. Having survived the trauma of his own coming out and alienation from his beloved church, Joey encourages the thoughtful deconstruction and reconstruction of faith, ridding ourselves of all that is not love.

Books will be distributed free of charge to series participants at the event on Sunday, November 30. If you are not participating in the series but would like to purchase a copy of the book as a gift or for your own study, please contact the main office at office@park-churchgr.org or 616-459-3203.

Calling all cookie monsters!

Ongoing through December 14

We need cookies for the reception for the Candlelight Service on December 14. If you are able, please make 2 dozen cookies and bring them to the morning service or, if they can be refrigerated or frozen, drop them off ahead of time. Mark your contributions "Candlelight".

Candlelight Christmas: *Wander in Wonder*

Sunday, December 14 at 4:30

Join us for the 108th Annual Candlelight Christmas at 4:30pm on Sunday, December 14. All of the Park Church music ensembles joined by our string and brass musicians-in-residence participate. The public is warmly invited (there is no charge) and parking is free in our lot and on the surrounding streets while space is available. A cookie reception will follow.

Park Throughout the Holidays Dinner
Friday, December 5 at 6:00 PM in Merriam Hall.

Come celebrate 190 years of Christmas at Park Church at a church-wide holiday dinner on Friday, December 5. You will enjoy fellowship with your Park Church friends over a delicious gourmet dinner, special entertainment, and presentations on the various ways Park Church has made Christmas a special time of year. You will also have the opportunity to support this year's Christmas Offering recipient, the new Grand Rapids Community and Service Center.

The dinner is \$25.00 per person and reservations are due by December 2. The price covers the event related costs. Attendees are invited to bring a bottle of wine or beer for themselves to drink during dinner. (please consume alcohol responsibly). Reserve your place(s) by contacting Marty Butler by email at mbutler@parkchurchgr.org, or by phone at 616-459-3203. Payment for the dinner can be made by using the QR code below, by check (please put Holiday Dinner in the memo line) or by cash using an offering envelope. If this event is cost-prohibitive for you at the moment, please contact Pastor Darryl about sliding scale options.



Attendees are invited to bring a beloved Nativity set or Creche to display that evening in Merriam Hall during the dinner. Please circle the date and join us for this festive evening!

Cookie Walk and BBQ Lunch
Sunday, December 7 after worship

Allinder Ten will sponsor the annual Cookie Walk and BBQ Lunch on December 7 after worship. Cookies will be prepackaged in small assortments. (cash appreciated). You KNOW how talented the Park Church resident bakers are, so start saving those nickels and dimes and kick off your holiday celebrations with some delicious Christmas cookies.

Christmas Worship Service Schedule

- Candlelight Christmas Service: Sunday, December 14 at 4:30pm
- Children's Christmas Pageant: Sunday, December 21 at 10:30am
- Christmas Eve Meditative Service: Wednesday, December 24 at 4:00pm
- Christmas Eve Festival Service: Wednesday, December 24 at 9:00pm

Palmer School Night of Giving (NOG)

December 9 at 4:00pm

Night of Giving 2025 will be held on December 9, 2025 at 4pm. The event will be held in the school playground area, weather permitting or in the gym if necessary. As you may recall last year Palmer had a Snow Day on the Night of Giving. We are praying that is not the case this year. We will set up outside at 3:00, with a 4pm start. More information will be available closer to the event as to what time to arrive at church to transport to Palmer etc.. Please contact Sara Haines at 616.560.4756 if you are interested in volunteering on December 9, or can help organize & assemble items for the family bags prior to December 9. We will be working out of the Parlor. Feel free to stop in and say hello and see what NOG is all about.

Blessings, Sara Haines

NOG 2025 Wish List:

- Drivers to help transport NOG bags and other items to Palmer on December 9
- Girls & boys underwear all sizes
- Kids Waterproof winter Gloves & Mittens
- Personal Care Items; soap, shampoo, misc personal care items
- Unused new toys
- Perishable Fruits & Vegetables i.e. Potatoes, Apples, Oranges etc.
- Home Goods Style Large Shopping Bags - new
- Reusable Grocery Bags (Meijer or Aldi)
- Quart & Gallon zip lock bags

Santa Claus Girls

Saturday, December 13

Did you know that Santa Claus Girls was founded right here at Park Church in 1908? Let's honor that heritage and support the Santa Claus Girls of today! There are two opportunities for Park people to serve the children that Santa Claus Girls serves.

December 13: Be a driver and deliver gift bags to the children's homes or be a loader and help fill up the delivery cars. Drivers are assigned to a 30 minute queue during which the presents will be loaded for a 12 - 14 house route in the greater Grand Rapids area. Loaders will gather at 7:30 at the DeltaPlex and carry organized batches of gift bags to assigned vehicles. The Park Church Youth Group will be involved with loading. They would love to have you join them! To volunteer, fill out the registration form at www.santaclausgirls.org/volunteer.

Monetary donations. Santa Claus Girls is an entirely volunteer run organization. Donations enable the purchase of each years' gifts for the children and pay the occupancy expenses for the large warehouse and storage facilities necessary to operate efficiently and safely.

Christmas Offering Community and Service Center ongoing through December 31

The Park Church Christmas Offering takes place every December and benefits one or more organizations selected by the Park Church Mission Committee.

We are thrilled this year to name the Community and Service Center as our 2025 Christmas Offering Recipient. The Community and Service Center is a collaborative ministry of Dégagé, Mel Trotter, and seven downtown churches (including Park Church!). It is a weekday center established for Heartside neighbors to gather for warmth, welcome, and to be a place to set down burdens, rest, and share a meal. It is a service center connecting clients with essential services like securing safe housing, medical referrals, employment, assistance with paperwork, and much more. The Community and Service Center is located at Westminster Presbyterian Church where it will operate M-F from 8:00-3:00 through to March 31, 2026.

Our Christmas Offering is part of a coordinated effort to expand the Community and Service Center to a year-round program in a permanent home supported by volunteers, donors, churches, businesses, and neighbors, with professional staffing and an independent board of directors. Thank you for your tremendous generosity and care for our neighbors. Thank you for your generous support of the 2025 Christmas Offering.

One of the immediate needs for the Community and Service Center guests is socks: Warm, dry...NEW socks for men and women! Let's fill the stockings in Allinder Commons with new socks in adult sizes and make the winter months just a little bit easier for our neighbors.

Advent @ the P.O.P. Table

Pick up your very own personal Park Church Advent Devotional each week starting November 30. Read the selections throughout the week in preparation for each upcoming Advent service. There will be room to journal, draw, and reflect on your journey through the Advent season.

Annual Cocoa and Piñata Party

Sunday, December 21 after morning worship

The youth are hosting a church-wide celebration on December 21 following the morning worship service. Please plan to stay for some cocoa, fellowship...and to take a whack at a piñata. You can help out by donating CANDY! Leftover Halloween candy is just perfect and can be left in Peter's office anytime.

This Week at Park Church

- Mon. Nov. 24 at 7:00pm Interfaith Thanksgiving Service
Tues. Nov. 25 at 12:15pm Music at Midday
Rhonda Edgington, organ/Carolyn Koebel, percussion
Wed. Nov. 26 at noon - Fri. Nov. 28 The church office is closed
Sun. Nov. 30 at 10:30am Sanctuary Worship - First Sunday of Advent
Coffee Fellowship before and after worship
P.O.P Table Holiday Poinsettia information and orders
Pick up your copy of the Park Church Advent Devotional for the week
11:45 All is Calm, All is Bright discussion with author Joey Styron
11:45am Melodia/Camerata rehearsals
Tues. Dec. 2 at 12:15pm Music at Midday Caledonia Choralaires
at 6:30pm Board of Deacons meeting
Wed. Dec. 3 at 7:00pm Bible Study Book of Luke in person or online
Thurs. Dec. 4 at 8:30am Men's Discussion Group
at 6:00pm Jubiloso! rehearsal
at 7:30pm Chancel Choir rehearsal
Fri. Dec. 5 at 6:00pm Christmas Through the Years 190th Anniversary Dinner

Ministerial and Office Staff:

Rev. Darryl Kistler, Senior Minister	dkistler@parkchurchgr.org
Rev. Dr. Patrick Coyle, Minister of Music	pcoyle@parkchurchgr.org
Peter Smith, Spiritual Formation & Education Minister	psmith@parkchurchgr.org
Terrie Hunter, Congregational Life Coordinator	thunter@parkchurchgr.org
Julie Anderson, Finance Director	janderson@parkchurchgr.org
Camille DeBoer, Communications Coordinator	cdeboer@parkchurchgr.org
Tim Persenaire, Lead Custodian	tpersenaire@parkchurchgr.org
Marty Butler, Parish Life Assistant	mbutler@parkchurchgr.org
Judi Stroh, Office Administrator & Event Coordinator	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.