

First (Park) Congregational Church

Sunday, December 28, 2025

Lessons
and
Carols

You are invited to join your Park Church friends on a Summer 2026 Service Trip!

The Park Church Mission Committee is pleased to announce our Summer 2026 Service Trip taking place this June. We are partnering with the Appalachia Service Project (asphome.org) to assist with home repairs for those in critical need and share God's love with our neighbors in Appalachia. This is an intentionally multi-generational experience, open to youth and adults alike. Whether you participate as an individual, a family, or with friends, you will find plenty to do! Carpentry skills are not required. (Though if you have related experience, you are most welcome to join us.) We will serve the community in a meaningful way, deepen our faith with daily worship and devotionals, immerse ourselves in Appalachian culture...and enjoy some great Bluegrass and Gospel music.

The Mission Committee reserved spots with the Appalachia Service Project for two work crews of 7-8 people each. If you would like more information or if you'd like to register for the service trip, please contact Pastor Darryl at dkistler@parkchurchgr.org.

Here are some details:

Service Trip Dates:
Sunday, June 7 - Saturday, June 13, 2026

Registration Deadline:
February 28, 2026

Who:
Any youth or adult 12 yrs+, who has completed 6th Grade

Where:
West Virginia or Kentucky

Cost:
\$375.00 per person (scholarships are available through the Missions Committee).
\$50.00 per person is due at the time of registration to reserve your spot.
This fee covers all transportation, food, and lodging.



Click the QR code for the current Congregationalist.

Order of Worship for December 28, 2025
A Service of Lessons and Carols
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

Steven B. Smith, organ
Pastoral Symphony
(from MESSIAH)
G.F. Handel

+ Prayer of Invocation and Our Savior's Prayer

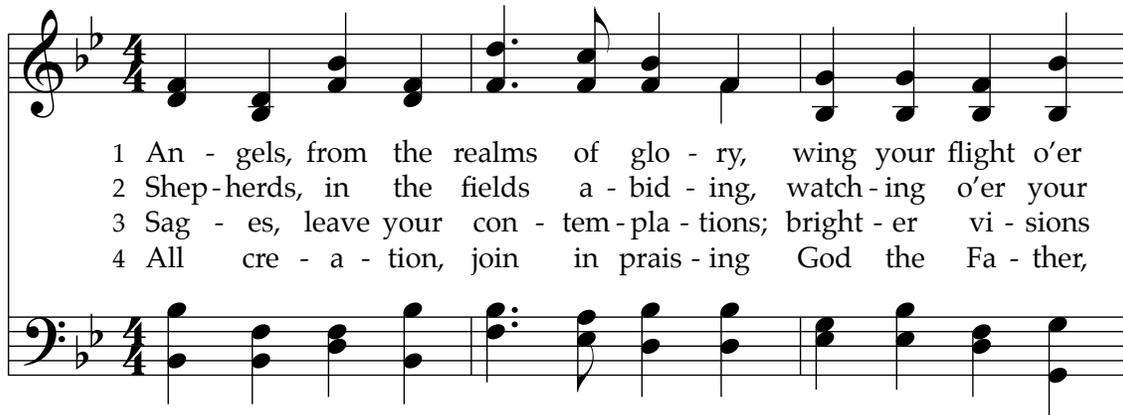
Reading Responsively

One: Loving God, we come into your presence with joy this holiday season.

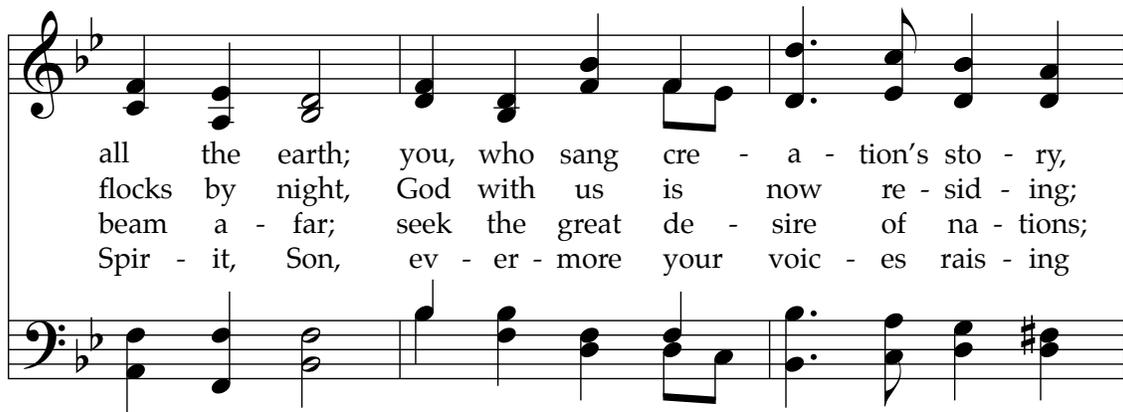
**All: But we also come with sorrow for a world struggling in pain.
Bring hope to a weary world.
Bring peace to our lives.
Bring joy to our hearts.
And help us bring hope, love, joy, and peace as we follow your Son, Christ Jesus.**

One: This we pray in the name of and with faith in the Babe of Bethlehem, who grew up teaching us to pray ...

All: ...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.



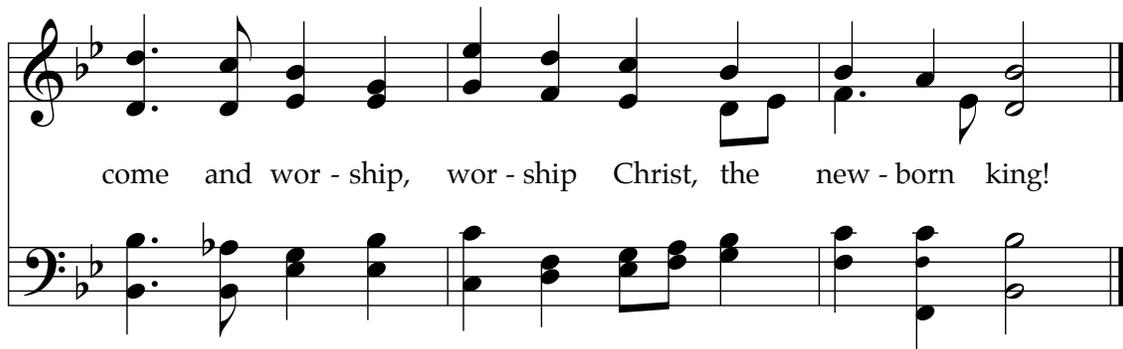
1 An - gels, from the realms of glo - ry, wing your flight o'er
2 Shep - herds, in the fields a - bid - ing, watch - ing o'er your
3 Sag - es, leave your con - tem - pla - tions; bright - er vi - sions
4 All cre - a - tion, join in prais - ing God the Fa - ther,



all the earth; you, who sang cre - a - tion's sto - ry,
flocks by night, God with us is now re - sid - ing;
beam a - far; seek the great de - sire of na - tions;
Spir - it, Son, ev - er - more your voic - es rais - ing



now pro - claim Mes - si - ah's birth:
yon - der shines the in - fant light: come and wor - ship,
you have seen his na - tal star:
to the e - ter - nal Three in One:



come and wor - ship, wor - ship Christ, the new - born king!

This familiar carol was first published as a poem in the Christmas Eve 1816 issue of a newspaper the author edited in Sheffield, England. The tune name celebrates the location of a prominent Presbyterian Church in London, sometimes called the "Presbyterian cathedral."

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.

Moment for the Young and Young-at-Heart

Sacrament of Baptism

Sydney McNamara

child of Krista and David McNamara

Prayer for the Baptized

Reading in Unison

Gracious and loving God, we pray for the newly baptized, Sydney. She is a child made in your image, and we offer our love and blessing to her. Grant her strength for life's journey, the joy of faith, the freedom of love, and hope of new life. Let her know your abiding presence as she continues to grow and emerge into who you have called her to be. In Christ Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

A Service of Carols and Lessons

The First Lesson

Creation and the Original Blessing
John 1:1-5, Genesis 1:26-2:4

Verse 1 - Choral Scholars / Verse 2 - Congregation

1 Star - Child, earth - Child, go - be-tween of God,
 2 Street child, beat child, no place left to go,
 3 Grown child, old child, mem-ory full of years,
 4 Spared child, spoiled child, hav-ing, want-ing more,
 5 Hope - for - peace Child, God's stu - pen-dous sign,

5

love Child, Christ Child, heav-en's light-ning rod,
 hurt child, used child, no one wants to know,
 sad child, lost child, sto - ry told in tears,
 wise child, faith child, know-ing joy in store,
 down - to - earth Child, Star of stars that shine,

9

this year, this year, let the day ar - rive when

13

Christ-mas comes for ev-ery-one, ev-ery-one a - live!

**Come, thou long-expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art;
dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.**

**Born thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a king,
born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all-sufficient merit raise us to thy glorious throne.**

The Third Lesson

The Prophecy of Bethlehem
Micah 5:2-4a

Carol - No. 121 (verses 1 and 4)

O Little Town of Bethlehem

**O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light;
the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.**

**O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in; be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us; abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!**

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. 113

Angels, We Have Heard on High

**Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,
and the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains.
Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!**

**Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be which inspire your heavenly song?
Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!**

**Come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing;
come, adore on bended knee Christ, the Lord, the newborn King.
Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!**

The Sixth Lesson

The Magi's Journey
Matthew 2:1-11

Carol - No. 145

What Child is This

**What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet while shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary!**

**Why lies he in such mean estate where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here the silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear, shall pierce him through; the cross be borne for me, for you.
Hail, hail, the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mary!**

**So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh; come, one and all, to own him.
The King of kings salvation brings; let loving hearts enthrone him.
Raise, raise the song on high. The virgin sings her lullaby.
Joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mary!**

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 and Stewardship

Offertory Music

The Choral Scholars
Ding, Dong, Merrily on High
Arr. Daniel Schwandt

+ 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

**Refrain: Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere;
go, tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!**

**While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night,
behold, throughout the heavens there shone a holy light. (Refrain)**

**The shepherds feared and trembled when lo! above the earth
rang out the angel chorus that hailed our Savior's birth. (Refrain)**

**Down in a lowly manger the humble Christ was born,
and God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn. (Refrain)**

+ 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

In Dulci Jubilo

Dennis Bedard

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 in Allinder Commons

Serving With You Today

Readers: Deb McDonald, Heather Peterson

Choral Scholars: Jason Coffey, Mark Jackson, Grace McLary, Rachel Mills, Schyler Claypool

Greeters: Ben Lunquist, Sally Lundquist, Deb McDonald

Ushers: Bob Nichols, Brian Bradley, Mike Mitchell, Janet Mitchell, Diane Sherlock, Dick Sherlock

Audio/Video: Sam Begay-Johnson, Andrew DeBoer

Flower Care: Kathy Miller

Joys and Concerns

Tom Vandenberg's memorial service will take place at Park Church on January 8 at 11:00am with a visitation at 10:00 and a luncheon following. Condolences can be sent to his daughter Jennifer's family. Jennifer and Mark Hagemann and Mallory and Avery at 289 Lloyd Court, Middleville, MI, 49333-8117.

Please pray for those navigating illness/treatment including: Ruth McCarty

Military Personnel: 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

**Christmas Offering
Community and Service Center
ongoing through December 31**



The Community and Service Center is a collaborative ministry of Dégagé, Mel Trotter, and several downtown churches. It is a weekday center established for Heartside neighbors to gather for warmth, rest and a meal. It is a service center connecting clients with essential services like securing safe housing, medical referrals, and employment. 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 with professional staffing. Please contribute by clicking on the QR code or by using the envelope in the Narthex.

**Women's Discussion Group @ Park Church
Third Tuesdays from 6:30-8pm starting January 20
at Park Church**

New for 2026, the women of our community are invited to meet together on the third Tuesday of the month for fellowship and discussion. Facilitated by Cheri Stanard, the January 20 meeting will be a time of orientation and introduction. The topics will vary but for the first few months we will focus on women in the Bible. For more information, please contact Peter Smith at psmith@parkchurchgr.org).

**Survey of World Religions Class
Wednesdays at 7:00pm starting January 21**

Join your Park Church friends as we explore the rich diversity and beauty of religious traditions from around the globe. This is a hybrid class that gathers in person in Spindler Dining Room or on Zoom each week at 7:00 PM starting January 21 and running through early May. These classes are recorded and are available on our YouTube Channel.

Pastor Darryl will guide the class in an overview of differing faiths as we respectfully explore the core tenets of belief, sacred texts, rituals, holy days, and more of the religious traditions of our neighbors. The hope of this class is that by learning more about the faiths of our neighbors, we may help build more loving relationships with our neighbors, increase acceptance and understanding in our community, and maybe even learn more about ourselves. This class is open to all. For more information, please contact Pastor Darryl at dkistler@parkchurchgr.org.

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 @ Park Church

- Sun. Jan. 4 at 10:30am Sanctuary Worship - Epiphany and Communion
Coffee Fellowship before and after worship in Merriam Hall
Removal of the Greens
Youth Group after worship
- Tues. Jan. 6 at 6:30pm Board of Deacons meeting
- Thurs. Jan. 8 at 11:00am Thomas VandenBerg Memorial Service
from 1:00 - 7:00pm Sow and Sews meeting
6:30pm Jubiloso! rehearsal
7:00pm West Michigan Survivors of Suicide Loss Support Group
7:30pm Chancel Choir rehearsal
- Sun. Jan. 11 at 10:30am Sanctuary Worship
Coffee Fellowship before worship in Merriam Hall
Church wide potluck in Merriam Hall after worship
- Tues. Jan. 13 at 6:30pm Board of Trustees meeting
- Wed. Jan. 14 at 10:00am Park Church Women board meeting

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

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portal by using the camera on your phone
and clicking the link that appears.

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