

**First (Park) Congregational Church  
Epiphany Sunday, January 4, 2026**



## 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](http://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](mailto: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.

The bulletin cover art is *Bethlehem Star* © 2016 James Fissel | Eyekons



Click the QR code for the current Congregationalist.

Order of Worship for January 4, 2026

The + symbol indicates standing in body or in spirit.

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

Gathering Music

Phyllis Ann Miner, harp  
Steven B. Smith, organ

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  
*What Star Is This?*  
Michael Burkhardt

+ Prayer of Invocation

Reading in Unison  
Tim Kroll, liturgist

**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 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.**

+ Hymn of Praise

*All Hail to God's Anointed*

*All hail to God's anointed, great David's greater Son!  
All hail, in time appointed, your reign on earth begun!  
You come to break oppression, to set the captive free,  
to take away transgression and rule in equity.*

*You come with rescue speedy to those who suffer wrong,  
to help the poor and needy and bid the weak be strong;  
to give them songs for sighing, their darkness turn to light,  
whose souls, condemned and dying, are precious in your sight.*

*(continued...)*

*You shall come down like showers upon the fruitful earth;  
love, joy, and hope, like flowers, spring in your path to birth.  
Before you on the mountains shall peace, the herald, go,  
and righteousness in fountains from hill to valley flow.*

*All rulers bow before you, and gold and incense bring.  
All nations shall adore you; your praise all people sing.  
To you shall prayer unceasing and daily vows ascend.  
Your rule is still increasing; your rule is without end.*

Moment for the Young and Young-at-Heart

Scripture Reading

Isaiah 60:1-6  
Tim Kroll, liturgist

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For darkness shall cover the earth and thick darkness the peoples, but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you. Nations shall come to your light and kings to the brightness of your dawn. Lift up your eyes and look around; they all gather together; they come to you; your sons shall come from far away, your daughters shall be carried in their nurses' arms. Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice, because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you; the wealth of the nations shall come to you. A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense and shall proclaim the praise of the Lord.

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

All: Thanks be to God.

Sermon: "A Little Light in the Darkness"

Pastor Darryl

Meditation

Phyllis Ann Miner, harp  
Steven B. Smith, organ  
*What is This Lovely Fragrance?*  
arr. Daniel Burton

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.**

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 worshiped 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.**

*Serving of the Bread and Cup*

Steven B. Smith, organ

*Coventry Carol*

Charles Callahan

*O Sing a Song of Bethlehem*

M. Winchester, R. Benson, C. Callahan

*Prayer after Communion/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.**

Invitation to Generosity and Stewardship

Offertory Music

The Chancel Choir

Karen Albert, director

*How Great Our Joy*

Arr. John Rutter

*While by the sheep we watched at night,  
Glad tidings brought an angel bright.*

*(Refrain) How great our joy! Great our joy!*

*Joy, joy, joy! Joy, joy, joy!*

*Praise we the Lord in heav'n on high!*

*Praise we the Lord in heav'n on high!*

*There shall be born, so He did say,  
In Bethlehem a Child today.*

*There shall the Child lie in a stall,  
This Child who shall redeem us all.*

*This gift of God we'll cherish well,  
That ever joy our hearts shall fill.*

+ 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 Hymn - No. 127 (see bulletin pages 8 and 9)

*Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*

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

Steven B. Smith, organ

*As with Gladness Those of Old*

Robert A. Hobby

# 127 Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Jesus, the Light of the World

*With a gospel feel*

1 Hark! the her - ald an - gels sing.  
2 Joy - ful all you na - tions, rise. Je - sus, the  
3 Christ by high - est heaven a - dored;  
4 Hail, the heaven - born Prince of Peace!

light of the world. Glo - ry to the  
Join the tri - umph  
Christ, the ev - er -  
Hail, the Sun of

new - born King,  
of the skies. Je - sus, the light of the world.  
last - ing Lord;  
righ - teous - ness!

Refrain

We'll walk in the light, beau - ti - ful light.

Come where the dew - drops of mer - cy shine bright.

O, shine all a - round us by day and by

night. Je - sus, the light of the world.

This blues-tinged setting of a familiar Christmas carol participates in a longstanding African American practice of adapting Anglo-European texts, as is done here by incorporating a repeated internal line and by appending a refrain that expands that line's language and imagery.

## ***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 Merriam Hall

Removal of the greens in the Sanctuary. (If you have a few minutes after worship to help, just pop up to the Sanctuary and there will be a job for you.)

**Note:** The Youth Group will not meet today. Youth are welcome to help in the Sanctuary.

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

**Greeters:** Carla Siegle, Nancy Beaver

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

**Communion Servers:** Pastor Darryl, Andrew Bialk, Mark Jackson, Heather Peterson, Luis Torres, Rosanne Holton, Tom Zvirgzds

**Audio/Video:** Sam Begay-Johnson, Andrew DeBoer

**Flower Care:** Nancy Beaver

### ***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.

**Please pray for those navigating illness/treatment**

**Military Personnel:** Jesse Campbell, Devon Goetz & Andy MacGregor, 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 44th 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)

## **The “Sow and Sews”:** Sowing with kindness, Sewing with purpose

**Thursday, January 8 from 1:00pm-7:00pm**

*Note Expanded Hours:* The hours of the monthly Sow and Sew work days have been expanded to accommodate volunteer schedules. Do you have afternoon commitments? Do you sing in Chancel Choir? This schedule works for you! Come when you can; leave when you must.

The Sow and Sews make bags for the mobile food pantry, wound and dental kits for Cherry Health and emergency menstrual kits. We meet the second Thursday of each month from 1:00 – 7:00. No experience required. Any questions, ask Terrie thunter@parkchurchgr.org.

## **Church-Wide Potluck**

**Sunday, January 11 after worship**

Join us for fellowship over a potluck meal after worship next Sunday in Merriam Hall. Please share your favorite midwinter comfort foods: festive breakfast casseroles, colorful fruit salads, signature coffee cakes, and the like. Everyone is welcome to join! Park Church is a “loaves and fishes” kind of congregation. There is ALWAYS plenty of food, so if you’d rather not bring a dish this time around, then simply bring yourself.

## **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.

**Coming Up @ Park Church**

- 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 work day  
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
- Thurs. Jan. 15 6:30pm Jubiloso! rehearsal  
7:30pm Chancel Choir rehearsal
- Fri. Jan. 16 at 9:00am Cooking at Park for Degage
- Sat. Jan. 17 at 7:00am Serving breakfast at Degage



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

**Ministerial and Office Staff:**

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

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.