

First (Park) Congregational Church

March 8, 2026

Third Sunday of Lent



Welcome to First (Park) Congregational Church!

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)*

Bulletin Cover Art: Marsden Hartley, *Hall of the Mountain King*, ca. 1908-1909, oil on canvas, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

To find out about what is happening in the coming weeks at Park Church, click the QR code.



Order of Worship for March 8, 2026

The + symbol indicates standing in body or in spirit.

Words in bold type are spoken or sung in unison.

Gathering Music

Marcus Hoekstra, 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

Phyllis Ann Miner, piano
Steven B. Smith, organ
Sheep May Safely Graze
J.S. Bach/arr. E. Power Biggs

+ Prayer of Invocation

Reading Responsively
Libby Wahlstrom, liturgist

One: Look at the birds of the air;
they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns,
and yet God provides for the basic sustenance of life.

All: May our hearts be open to trust you, O God.

One: Look at the birds of the air;
they neither study nor plan nor plot their course,
and yet God writes the instinct for migration into their hearts.

All: May our eyes be open to see you, O God.

One: Look at the birds of the air;
they neither talk nor vote nor debate their responsibility,
yet God weaves them into communities that nurture and defend.

All: May our hands be open to serve you, O God. Amen.

+ Hymn of Praise - No. 53 (See bulletin page 7)

O God Who Gave Us Life
Tune: NOEL

Moment for the Young and Young-at-Heart

Pastor Darryl

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
We Walk by Faith and Not by Sight
Tune: DUNLAP'S CREEK

*We walk by faith and not by sight;
with gracious words draw near,
O Christ, who spoke as none e'er spoke:
"My peace be with you here."*

*Help then, O Lord, our unbelief;
and may our faith abound
to call on you when you are near
and seek where you are found.*

Scripture Reading

Matthew 6: 25-34
Libby Wahlstrom, liturgist

Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by worrying can add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' For it is the gentiles who seek all these things, and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own.
Today's trouble is enough for today.

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

All: Thanks be to God.

Anthem

The Chancel Choir

Look at the Birds

Marianne Forman

*Look at the birds of the air, how they fly.
They neither sow nor reap, yet your heavenly Father feeds them.
Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow,
They neither toil nor spin, yet your heavenly Father clothes them.*

*Are you not as beloved as they?
And your heavenly Father knows your need.*

~Matthew 6

Sermon: *The Sermon on the Mount Part 3*

Pastor Darryl

Meditation

Steven B. Smith, organ

If You But Trust in God to Guide You

Helmut Walcha

Invitation to Generosity and Stewardship

Offertory Music

The Choral Scholars

The Wayfaring Stranger

Arr. Paul Smith

*I am a poor wayfaring stranger,
While traveling through this world of woe,
Yet there's no sickness, toil, or danger
In that bright world to which I go.
I'm going there to see my Father;
I'm going there no more to roam,
I'm only going over Jordan, I'm only going over home.*

*I know dark clouds will gather round me;
I know my way is rough and steep,
But golden fields lie out before me*

*Where God's redeemed shall ever sleep.
I'm going there to see my Mother;
She said she'd meet me when I come.
I'm only going over Jordan, I'm only going over home.*

*I'll soon be free from every trial,
My body sleep in the churchyard.
I'll drop the cross of self-denial
And enter on my great reward.
I'm going there to see my Saviour,
To sing His praise for evermore.
I'm only going over Jordan, I'm only going over home.*

—American Folk Song

+ 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

Generous God, in abundance you give us things both spiritual and physical. Help us to hold the fading things of this earth lightly and grasp the lasting things of your kingdom tightly, so that what we are and what we do and what we say may be our joyful gifts to you and our generous gifts to our neighbors. In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.

+ Closing Hymn - No. 441 (See bulletin page 8)

Hear the Good News of Salvation

Tune: NETTLETON

+ 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

Chaconne

Louis Couperin

53 O God, Who Gives Us Life

1 O God, who gives us life and breath, who shapes us in the womb,
 2 O God, who calls your peo-ple out to ven-ture and to dare,
 3 O God of cov-e - nant and law, re - vealed in cloud and flame,

who guards our lives from birth to death, then leads us from the tomb:
 to plumb the bleak a - byss of doubt and find you e - ven there:
 your might - y deeds e - voke our awe; we dare not speak your name.

de - liv - er us from fears that kill the life we have from you.
 when we de-spair in wan - der - ing through wastes of emp - ty lies,
 Yet we by faith are drawn to you and will your peo - ple prove,

Help us to know your Spir - it still is mak - ing all things new.
 re - fresh us with the liv - ing spring of hope that nev - er dies.
 as on our hearts you write a - new the cov - e - nant of love.

Christians often fail to appreciate how much we can learn about God from the Hebrew Scriptures. This text draws on a variety of passages that call attention to God's faithfulness toward the Chosen People and the promise of a new covenant written on the heart (Jeremiah 31:31-34).

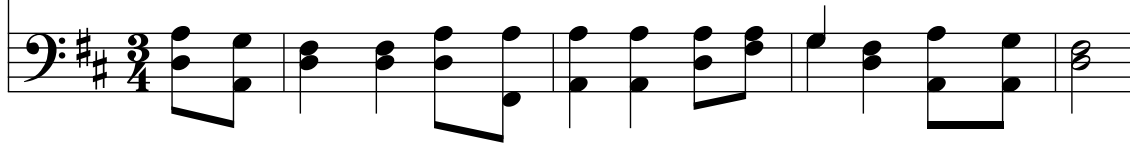
Hear the Good News of Salvation 441

Wotanin waste nahon po



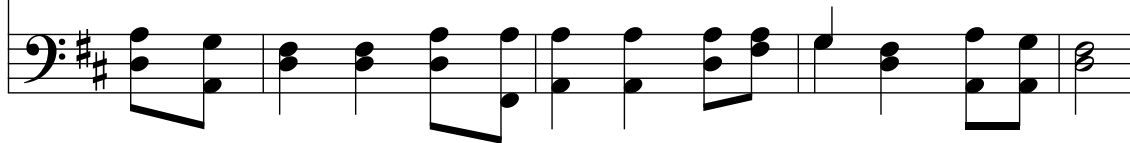
1 Hear the good news of sal - va - tion: Je - sus died to show God's love.
2 All the sins I have com - mit - ted, to my Sav - ior now I bring.

1 *Wo - tan - in wa - ste na - hon po, Je - sus he wa - i - hdu - sna:*
2 *Wo - a - hta - ni kin e - ca - mon, hdu - ha Je - sus si - ha en,*



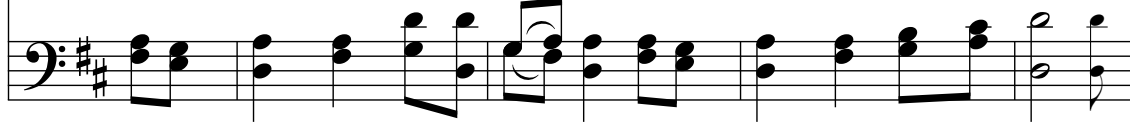
Such great kind - ness! Such great mer - cy! Come to us from heaven a - bove.
I bow down with tears of an - guish; Christ for - gives and so I sing:

to - wa - o - si - da kin tan - ka, he de - han i - yo - ma - hi.
kun i - wa - hpa - mda wa - ce - ya, Je - sus on - si - ma - da ce.



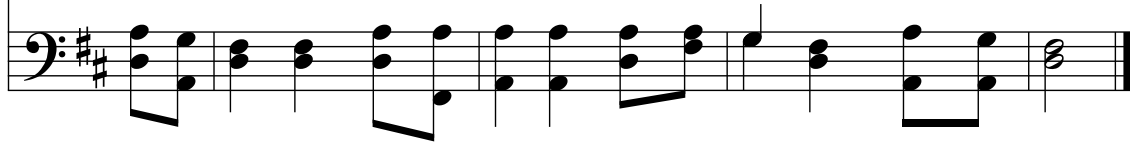
Je - sus Christ, how much I love you! Je - sus Christ, you save from sin!

Je - sus Christ wa - ste - wa - da - ka, Je - sus Christ ni - ma - yan: han, wa -



How I love you! Look up - on me. Love me still and cleanse with - in.

ste - wa - da - ke a - ma - ton - we is e - ya wa - ste - ma - da.



This text, originally appearing in four stanzas, was written by the first Native American Dakota to be ordained to the Presbyterian ministry and was published in the Dakota hymnal he edited. Both the Dakota and English versions have been associated with this shape note tune.

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.

Our Gathering Music today:

Marcus Hoekstra and his fiancé Emma Oonk are among Park's newest members. Marcus studied piano at Wabash College, where he earned his B.A. degree, magna cum laude, in Religious Studies before earning his juris doctorate from Indiana University Maurer School of Law in 2023. Marcus is an attorney with Miller Johnson in Grand Rapids.

Following Worship

Coffee Fellowship after worship in Merriam Hall

Time and Talent Job Fair in Merriam Hall

P.O.P. Table: Lenten Almsgiving

Serving With You Today

Greeters: Rob Campbell, Jack Boss, Bill Streeter

Ushers: Mike Mitchell, Jan Edwards, Jeff Liggett, Janet Mitchell, Gary VanderHeiden, Bob Wolford

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

Flower Care: Ellie Pettee

- **Order Tulips for Easter**

The cost is \$10.00 per plant(white tulips in a 6 inch pot). Order by calling the church office (616-459-3203), or by emailing mbutler@parkchurchgr.org by Wed. March 25. Order forms are also available on the tables in the Narthex. Tulips may be taken home after the Easter service. Please designate if the plants are in memory or in honor of your loved one(s).

Joys and Concerns

From the Heth Family

We want to thank all who participated for the meaningful visitation and memorial service for Jeff on January 9 and 10. It was very beautiful! Thank you to the congregation for their support, cards, kind words, and prayers. It is much appreciated!!

Mary Heth, David, Melissa, Kristin, Katie, Kelly, Maggie, and families.

Doris Robey has undergone knee surgery. Meals have been sorted, but your cheerful best wishes for a successful surgery and comfortable recovery are very welcome. Send your cards to 2639 Golfbury Dr. SW, Wyoming, MI 49519.

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

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

The Sanctuary Flowers

The flowers on the Altar
In memory of Chuck Furman.
Given by his family.

The flowers on the Children's Altar
In loving honor of my Grandchildren, Benjamin, Emily, Ethan and Hunter Bishop.
Given by Marcia Bishop.

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

- **Time and Talent Stewardship Campaign**

We are pleased to launch the 2026 Park Church Time & Talent Campaign!

You are asked to reflect on what you enjoy doing and where you feel called to participate in the life of Park Church and our greater community. Scan the QR code and fill out the google form in response. (Please note that the form has two pages. They are both important!) The information form is simply a way for you to indicate interest in the existing and potential groups and initiatives at Park Church. It is an invitation to a conversation so you are encouraged to consider your interest in the broadest possible sense. You will be connected with those who can tell you more. Paper forms are available in the Narthex and can be left in the offering plate or in the church office.



2026 Lenten Almsgiving Taking Care of EveryBODY a collection for United Church Outreach Ministries



Basic necessities aren't basic when you can't afford them. Hygiene products are not a luxury; they are necessary for maintaining health and well-being, both physical and mental. The 2026 Almsgiving recipient is United Church Outreach Ministries* with a focus on specific personal care items requested by UCOM clients.

You are invited to support the almsgiving by giving a designated gift in the offering, giving a gift using the QR code, and collecting requested items for distribution: All sizes of shampoo, conditioner, body lotion, bar soap, razors.

**We are grateful to the Park Church Women for their support of the Lenten Almsgiving and their selection of the recipient. The PCW Spring Thank Offering has merged with Almsgiving.*

- **Pi (Pie) Potluck and March Madness Selection**

NEXT WEEK: Sunday, March 15 after worship in Merriam Hall

Join us after worship on March 15 for a Pi (Pie) pot luck! There is no need to bring anything except yourselves but if you would like to contribute to the meal and if your last name begins with A-M, please bring savory pie. If your last name begins with N-Z, please bring a sweet pie....homemade, store-bought, whatever suits you.

- **Together West Michigan: Show Me the Public Money**

March 16 and 26 at Noon

“Brown Bag” presentations of the Together West Michigan program *Show Me the Public Money* are scheduled for Monday, March 16 and Thursday, March 26. Both sessions will begin at noon in the Spindler Dining Room. Bring your lunch and share in the discussion that follows.

- *Belong*, the LGBTQIA+ fellowship of Park Church, will gather in the parlor on Saturday, March 21, from 10:00-11:30 AM. We'll have a mix-and-mingle over coffee, juice, and pastries, followed by a discussion of *Bridging the Gap Between God and Gay*. Many of us come from faith communities and families that required us to hide or shrink our authentic selves, or forced us completely out. Many are still on that journey and need support, encouragement, and healing. Those who have deconstructed and reconstructed their faith and sexual orientation or gender identity have so much to offer to others. All are welcome, including friends and allies of the LGBTQIA community.

- **The Park Church Leadership Council is excited to announce the formation of the Search Team for our new Associate Minister of Outreach and Justice.** The Search Team is comprised of *Gregg Hampshire, Michael Holton, Emma Oonk, Carolyn Rubingh, Timothy Torres, Rev. Judy Whitwer, Pastor Darryl*. We are grateful that each of these members of Park Church agreed to serve on this important committee. Leadership Council balanced many different criteria so that the entire church was represented on the team. Please hold the Search Team in your prayers as they do this good work on behalf of our congregation. The search is underway!

- **Inquire and Connect Class**

Sunday, March 29 11:45am-1:30pm in Spindler Dining Room

Join us for Inquire and Connect to learn more about membership at Park Church! At this informal meeting, friends will share their stories about membership and service. Light refreshments with vegetarian and gluten-free options will be provided. New members will be received into the church family on Sun., April 19, during the worship service. RSVP to mbutler@park-churchgr.org or by calling 616-459-3203, by Wed., March 25. All are welcome to attend.

Coming Up @ Park Church

- Tues. March 10 at 12:15pm Music at Midday: Dr. Larry Visser, organ
at 6:30pm Board of Trustees meeting
- Wed. March 11 at 10:00am Park Church Women board meeting
at 7:00pm Bible Study: World Religions
- Thurs. March 12 at 8:30am Men's Discussion Group
at 1:00pm Sow and Sews work day
at 6:30pm Jubiloso! rehearsal
at 7:00pm West Michigan Survivors of Suicide Loss Support Group
at 7:30pm Chancel Choir rehearsal
- Sun. March 15 at 10:30am Sanctuary Worship
Coffee Fellowship before worship in Merriam Hall
P. O. P. Table: Lenten Almsgiving
Pi Potluck and March Madness after worship in Merriam Hall
- Mon. March 16 at 9:00am Cooking for Degage
at 12:00pm Brown Bag *Show Me the Public Money* presentation

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
Robert Rieger, Lead Custodian	rrieger@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.