



# First Congregational Church

United Church of Christ

*"No matter who you are,  
or where you are  
on life's journey,  
you are welcome here."*

Senior Minister  
Rev. Tim Vander Haar

**Sunday, December 3, 2023**

1201 Jefferson Street  
Muskegon, Michigan 49441  
231-726-3254

[www.fccmuskegon.org](http://www.fccmuskegon.org)

**FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT**  
**December 3, 2023**

**WELCOME AND NEWS OF THE COMMUNITY**

**PRELUDE**

*Partita on "Vom Himmel Hoch,"* Chorale I, II, & III  
by Raymond Haan

**GATHERING PRAYER**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**And also with you.**

Let us pray.

**O God, of hope, we come before you  
in the midst of a world  
that often gives little reason for hope.  
Help us to look beneath the noise of violence  
and uncertainty to see the signs of your presence,  
to discover where you are at work,  
and how we might join in.  
This we ask in Jesus' name.  
Amen.**

\*Those who wish may stand\*

## OPENING HYMN

\*Those who wish may stand\*

### *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

1. O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive  
2. O come, O Wisdom from on high, and order all things

Is - ra - el That mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here,  
far and nigh; To us the path of knowl - edge show,

un - til the Child of God ap - pear.  
and help us in that way to go.

Re - joice! Re - joice! Emmanuel  
shall come to you, O Is - ra - el.

The musical score is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It features a single melodic line for the voice and a piano accompaniment consisting of a treble and bass staff. The lyrics are provided for two parts: a soprano/tenor part (1.) and an alto/bass part (2.). The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and slurs.

Text: *Psalterium Cantionum Catholicarum*, 1710, Tune: VENI EMMANUEL, adapted from Plainsong by Thomas Helmore, 1854

## BLESSING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

**God grant that the candles of this wreath may remind us  
that your Anointed One comes into the world  
as a light shining in the darkness,  
a light that darkness cannot comprehend or overcome.  
Amen.**

# LIGHTING THE FIRST CANDLE OF ADVENT

## SCRIPTURE READING

1 Corinthians 1:3-9

**G**race to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind— just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you— so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

## CHORAL ANTHEM

*Love, Come Down, by Karen Marrolli*

Love, come down when the road is paved with grief and pain abounds.

Love, come down. When all is lost, assure us we are found.

When the cold winds wail and defenses fail, help us find the strength to know light will prevail.

Love, come down when the world is clothed in loss, in sorrow crowned.

*Come down O Love divine, seek now this soul of mine!*

Love, come down. Let us hear your voice and rise to greet the sound.

When our souls cry out, all but crushed by doubt, send your gentle breeze to calm the noise without.

*Come down O Love, divine, seek thou this soul of mine, and visit it with thine own ardor glowing.*

*O Comforter, draw near, within my heart appear, and kindle it, thy holy flame bestowing.*

Love, come down when all has come unraveled and unwound.

Love, come down. Help us stand secure upon the trembling ground.

Now we call on you; let your light break through. Help us find the strength to greet the day anew.

Guide us toward the path to journey home to you.

*And let they glorious light shine ever on my sight,  
and clothe me round, the while my path illuming.*

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## MESSAGE

I THANK GOD ALWAYS FOR YOU

\*Those who wish may stand\*

## HYMN

\*Those who wish may stand\*

### *O How Shall I Receive You*

O how shall I re - ceive you, how  
Love caused your in - car - na - tion; love  
You come, O Christ, with glad - ness, in  
meet you on your way, blessed hope of ev - ery  
brought you un - to me; your thirst for my sal -  
mer - cy and good will, to bring an end to  
peo - ple, my soul's de - light and stay?  
va - tion pro - cured my lib - er - ty.  
sad - ness and bid our fears be still.  
O Je - sus, Je - sus, give me now by your own pure  
O love be - yong all tell - ing, that led you to em -  
On pa - tient ex - pe - ta - tion we live for that great  
light, to know what - e'er is pleas - ing and  
brace in love, all love ex - cel - ling, our  
day when a re - newed cre - a - tion your  
wel - come in your sight.  
lost and fall - en race.  
glo - ry shall dis - play.

Text: Paul Gerhardt, 1653, Transl. Catherine Winkworth, 1863, alt, Tune: SALLEY GARDENS, Traditional Irish Melody

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

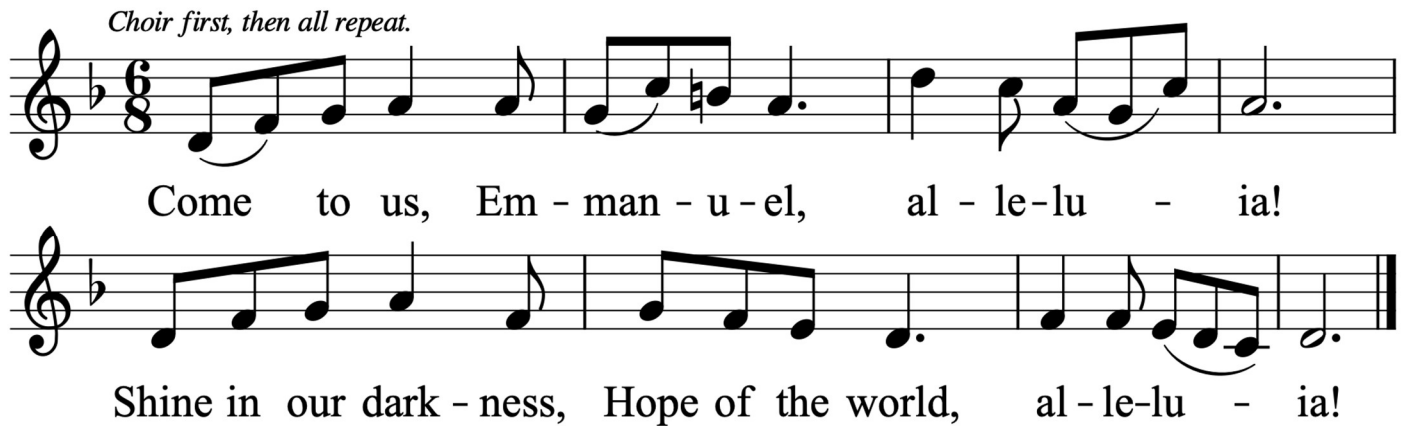
*After each petition: Leader: Lord in your mercy.*

***All: Hear our prayer.***

## OFFERTORY INVITATION

### OFFERTORY MUSIC

*Choir first, then all repeat.*



Come to us, Em - man - u - el, al - le - lu - ia!

Shine in our dark - ness, Hope of the world, al - le - lu - ia!

Text and Music by Stephen Van Wye, © 2015 by GIA Publications, Inc.

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise God all creatures here below!  
Praise God above, ye heavenly host;  
Praise Father (*Creator*), Son (*Christ*), and Holy Ghost.  
Amen.**

## PRAYER OF DEDICATION

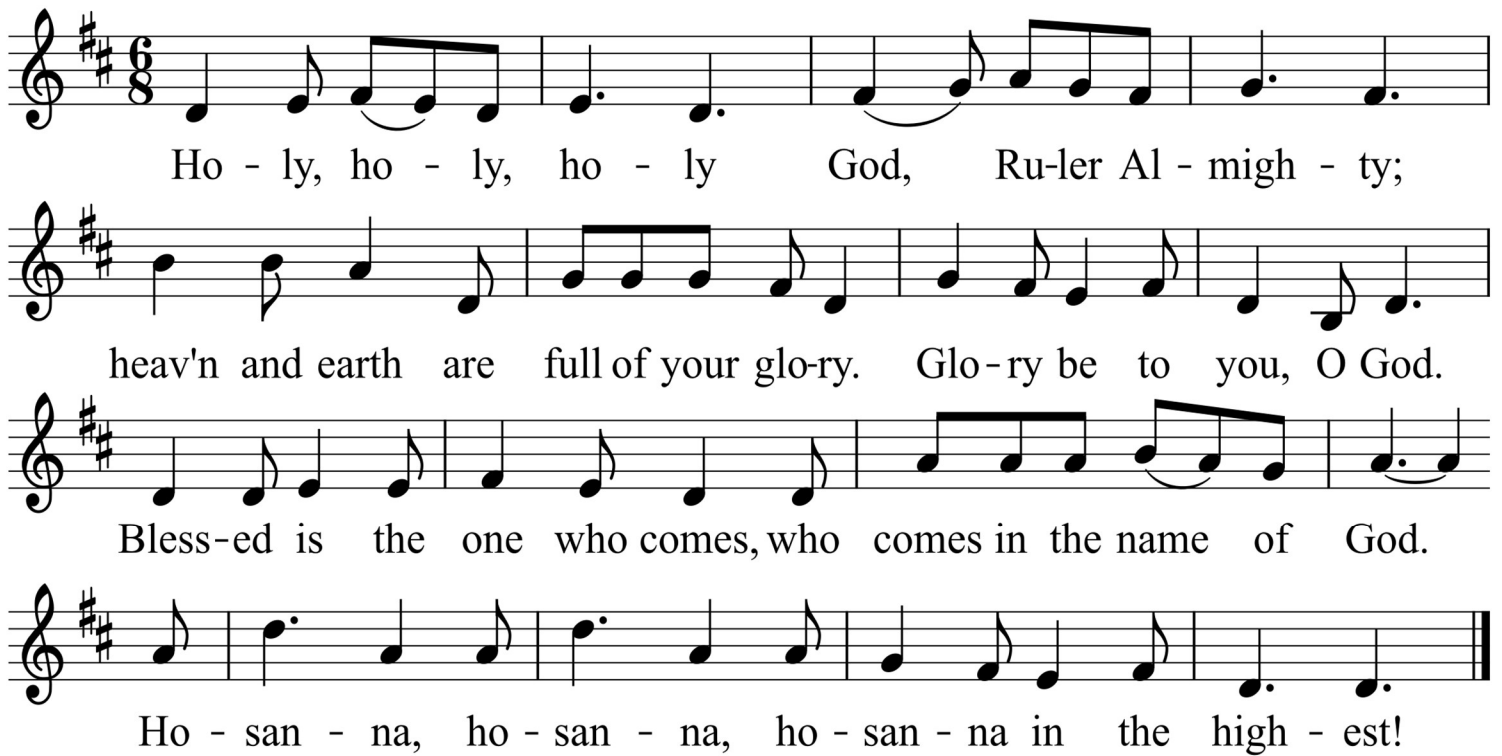
### CELEBRATING THE LORD'S SUPPER

#### Meaning of the Sacrament

#### Communion Prayer

It is truly fitting and right...  
...and so, with all your people on earth  
and with all the company of heaven,  
we join in this unending hymn of praise:

## Sanctus



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly God, Ru-ler Al - migh - ty;  
heav'n and earth are full of your glo-ry. Glo-ry be to you, O God.  
Bless-ed is the one who comes, who comes in the name of God.  
Ho - san - na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est!

Music © 1991 Martha McMane

Merciful God, we recall anew...

And now as Christ our Savior taught us, we  
are bold to say

**Our Father, 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.**

*(Many Congregationalists in the early days felt that using the Lord's Prayer as a fixed part of worship was far too "liturgical." The traditional form in this Congregation uses "debts" and "debtors," but you are free to join in with whatever version you know.)*

**Sharing the Bread and Cup**

\*Those who wish may stand\*

## CLOSING HYMN

\*Those who wish may stand\*

### *Watcher, Tell Us of the Night*

1. Watch-er, tell us of the night, what its signs of prom - ise are.  
2. Watch-er, tell us of the night, high - er yet that star as - cends.  
3. Watch-er, tell us of the night, for the morn - ing seems to dawn.

Trav - eler, O a won-drous sight! See that glo - ry - beam - ing star!  
Trav - eler, bless - ed - ness and light, peace and truth its course por - tends.  
Trav - eler, shad - ows take their flight, doubt and ter - ror are with - drawn.

Watch-er, does its beau-teous ray news of joy or hope fore - tell?  
Watch-er, will its beams a - lone gild the spot that gave them birth?  
Watch-er, you may go your way; Has - ten to your qui - et home.

Trav - eler, yes; it brings the day, prom - ised day of Is - ra - el!  
Trav - eler, a - ges are its own; see, it bursts o'er all the earth!  
Trav - eler, I re - joice to - day, for Em - man - u - el has come!



# **BLESSING AND SENDING**

## **POSTLUDE**

*Partita on "Vom Himmel Hoch," Chorale IV, by Raymond Haan*

## **Today's Service**

Rev. Tim Vander Haar	Pastor
Dr. Michael Match	Music Director
John Mattson	Organist
The Motet Choir	Song Leaders
David Wikman	Liturgist/Prayers of the People
Dan, Holly, & Madison Stewart	Advent Readers
Blake Filius	Audio and Video

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*Altar flowers are sponsored by Beth Carrozza in honor and in memory of the Carrozza, Paone families.*

*Cookies for Sunday Fellowship - Those whose last names begin with the letters E through J please bring cookies or treats during the month of December. Gluten free and/or sugar free cookies are also appreciated.*

*Women's Single Group will meet for lunch at 1:00 pm Tuesday, December 5, 2023 at Judy Dewall's home. Please bring a \$10-\$15 white elephant or a gift for gift exchange. Sign up at the Welcome Center for food assignments or call Judy Dewall at 734-478-3716.*

*Please join us for our Candlelight Concert on Sunday, December 10 at 7:00 pm.*

*This is a wonderful way to celebrate the holiday season.*

*Looking to help defer costs of the concert? We are offering multiple levels of sponsorship. All donors or those In Memory will be listed in our concert program. Also, score donations will be labeled and archived in our Music Library with the family name of your choosing. Please direct any questions to Michael Match at the church office or [michaelm@fccmuskegon.org](mailto:michaelm@fccmuskegon.org) Many thanks.*

*Triple your Love pantry donations on Dec. 16 at North Muskegon Meijer.*

*A \$20 "Simply Give" purchase creates a \$60 value for FCC supplies.*

*Westshore GSA Youth Group will be meeting again on Monday, Dec 4 from 7 to 8 pm.*

## **Open and Affirming Community**

"We, the people of First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, of Muskegon, care for the welfare of our community and welcome everyone, no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey. We welcome into our community people of every age, race, nationality, mental and physical ability, economic and social status, faith background, marital standing, family structure, gender identity and expression, and sexual orientation. We also invite you to share in the life, leadership, worship, fellowship, sacraments, responsibilities, blessings, and joys of our congregation as we seek to grow together in faith and love."

*Adopted by congregational vote 10/17/21*



# Candlelight Fundraiser 2023

Over EIGHTY wonderful Candlelight Concerts have passed over the years, inspiring and entertaining thousands of attendees. To ensure that our next eighty years are a reality, we are once again offering a new way for individuals or families to establish a musical legacy at First Congregational Church! Beginning this Fall, we are offering multiple levels of sponsorship for this highly anticipated annual concert.

All donors or those *in memory of* will be listed in our **December 10, 2023** concert program. Additionally, *score* donations will be labeled and archived in our Music Library with the family name of your choosing. It requires a great deal of funding to produce this concert each year, so every contribution makes a huge difference, no matter the amount! Please pass this along to your friends, family, and neighbors who look forward to this concert year after year. Please direct any questions to Michael Match at the church office (231-726-3254) or [tenormatch@aol.com](mailto:tenormatch@aol.com). Thank you!



## Levels of Sponsorship

____ \$25.00	Candlelight Contributor
____ \$50.00	Bell Benefactor
____ \$100.00	Instrumental Underwriter
____ \$200.00	Score Sustainer
____ \$500.00+	Legacy Leader

Please select a sponsorship level, fill out this form and return to the church office or in collection plate on Sunday mornings. Please be sure to LABEL envelope clearly:  
"Candlelight Fundraiser"  
*Thank you!*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

