

# 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 8, 2024**

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

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

**SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT  
DECEMBER 8, 2024**

**WELCOME AND NEWS OF THE COMMUNITY**

**SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST**

**PRELUDE**

*Prepare the Royal Highway, by Paul Manz*



**LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES**

Judy Tierney & Barb Wenk

**OPENING HYMN**

*\*Those who wish may stand\**

*O Come, O Come Emmanuel*

*\*Those who wish may stand\**



1. O come, O come, O A - do - nai, who came to all on  
2. O come, O shoot of Jes - se, free your own from Sa - tan's



Si - nai high, And from its peak a sin - gle law  
tyr - an - ny, From depths of hell your peo - ple save,



pro - claimed in maj - es - ty and awe.  
and give them vic - tory o'er the grave.

Re - jice! Re - jice! Em - man - u - el shall  
 come to you, O Is - ra - el.

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

## 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.

**Merciful God, in every generation you send messengers  
 to preach repentance and call us to obedience.  
 Heeding their call to love prepares the way for our salvation.**

**May we greet the presence of your Word  
 in our hearts with hope  
 and embrace the peace that can bring to us.**

**This we ask in Jesus' name.**

**Amen.**

## SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 3:1—6

**I**n the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'"

## CHORAL ANTHEM

*Prepare the Way of the Lord*, by Michael Larkin

Prepare the way of the Lord. Prepare the way of the Lord.  
Make straight in the desert a highway, a highway for our God.

He shall feed his flock like a shepherd, and carry the lambs in his arms,  
For he is meek and lowly of heart, and we shall find rest for our souls.

Prepare the way of the Lord. Prepare the way of the Lord.  
Make straight in the desert a highway, a highway for our God.

Every valley shall be exalted, every mountain and hill made low;  
The crooked made straight, the rough places plain.

Prepare the way of the Lord. Prepare the way of the Lord.  
Make straight in the desert a highway, a highway for our God.  
Prepare the way.

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## MESSAGE

A VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS

\*Those who wish may stand\*

## HYMN OF RESPONSE

\*Those who wish may stand\*

### *The Baptist Shouts on Jordan's Shore*

1. The Bap - tist shouts on Jor - dan's shore, the  
2. The earth and sky and sea now feel that  
3. Clean up your hearts, lay down the way, for  
4. O One who comes to set us free, O

earth shakes with the might - y roar, A - wake, let laz - y  
which their Au - thor will re - veal: The Child now leap - ing  
God ap - proach - es day by day; Pre - pare for such a  
Child, to you, our song will be, With Fa - ther, Spir - it

sleep now flee: be - hold, the voice of proph - e - cy!  
in the womb as God does hu - man form as - sume.  
wor - thy heir, for such a guest your house pre - pare.  
moth - er - ing, to you shall praise for - ev - er ring!

Text: Charles Coffin, 1736, Transl. © 1993 The Pilgrim Press, Tune: WINCHESTER NEW, *Musikalisches Handbuch*, Hamburg, 1690

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

(After each petition:) Leader: Lord in your mercy,  
**All: Hear our prayer.**

. . . ending with the Lord's Prayer:

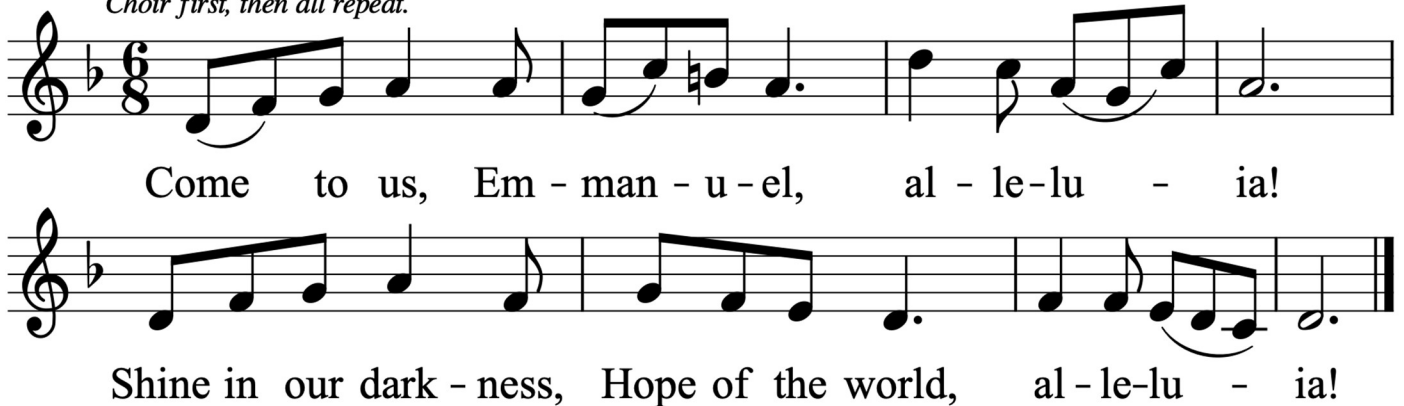
**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we  
forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us  
from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power,  
and the glory, forever. Amen.**

## OFFERTORY INVITATION

### OFFERTORY MUSIC

*Chant for Advent, by Steven Van Wye*

*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.

## DOXOLOGY

**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

\*Those who wish may stand\*

## CLOSING HYMN

\*Those who wish may stand\*

### *Now Bless the God of Israel*

Now bless the God of Is - ra - el, who comes in love and power,  
Re - mem - ber - ing the cov - e - nant, God res - cues us from fear,  
In ten - der mer - cy, God will send the day - spring from on high,

who rais - es from the roy - al house de - liv - erance in this hour.  
that we might serve in hol - i - ness and peace from year to year;  
our ris - ing sun, the light of life for those who sit and sigh.

Through ho - ly proph - ets God has sworn to free us from a - larm,  
And you, my child, shall go be - fore to preach, to proph - e - sy,  
God comes to guide our way to peace, that death shall reign no more.

to save us from the heav - y hand of all who wish us harm.  
that all may know the ten - der love, the grace of God most high.  
Sing prais - es to the Ho - ly One! O wor - ship and a - dore!

# BLESSING AND SENDING

## POSTLUDE

*People, Look East*, by Kristina Langlois

## 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 |
| Blake Filius         | Audio and Video                 |

## + TONIGHT +

### *Annual Candlelight Christmas Concert*

Please join us **this evening at 7:00 PM** for our musical tradition of over eight decades! The Motet Choir and Canterbury Ringers will be joined by Chamber Orchestra for a very special holiday presentation and gala reception afterwards. No tickets are required! Sanctuary doors will open at 6:30 PM.

**GSA Group** meets every Monday night from 7-8 PM at FCC. Tomorrow evening (Dec. 9) we are excited to host other GSA groups from the area for a Christmas Party.

**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.

**Let's Paint Class** will be held December 18 at 1pm. Please sign up at the Welcome Center and pick up your material list. Newcomers, we will have extra tiles from our Nov. class!

### **Upcoming Events**

*Saturday, December 14: Meijer Harvey St. Simply Give Donations Double Match*

*Sunday, December 15: Muskegon Chamber Choir Concert (3:00 PM)*

*Sunday, December 22: Interactive Christmas Pageant (10:30 AM)*

*Tuesday, December 24: Christmas Eve Lessons & Carols (11:00 PM)*

**First Congregational Church, UCC is an 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*