

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 17, 2023

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

www.fccmuskegon.org

<p>THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT DECEMBER 17, 2023</p>

WELCOME AND NEWS OF THE COMMUNITY

PRELUDE

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.

**Stir up your power, O God,
and come among us with great might.**

**As we welcome you,
fill us with the joy of your saving presence
that we may be in word and in deed
the bearers of Good News
which you call us to be.**

**This we ask through our Lord Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you
and the Holy Spirit, one God,
for ever and ever.**

Amen.

Those who wish may stand

OPENING HYMN

Those who wish may stand

Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus!

The musical score is written for a four-part choir (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) in 4/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody is primarily in the Soprano and Alto parts, with the Tenor and Bass parts providing harmonic support. The lyrics are arranged in three systems, each corresponding to a line of music. The first system covers the first two lines of the hymn, the second system covers the next two lines, and the third system covers the final two lines. The lyrics are: 'Come, O long-ex-pect-ed Je-sus, born to set all Is-rael's strength and con-so-la-tion, hope to all the Born all peo-ple to de-liv-er, born a child, you By your own e-ter-nal Spir-it, come to claim us peo-ple free; From our fears and sins re-lease us; earth im-part; Dear de-sire of ev-ery na-tion, came to reign! Born to rule on earth for-ev-er, as your own; By your all-suf-fi-cient mer-it, grant us your true lib-er-ty. en-ter ev-ery long-ing heart. come, be known to us a-gain. let us share your cross and crown.'

Come, O long - ex - pect - ed Je - sus, born to set all
Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion, hope to all the
Born all peo - ple to de - liv - er, born a child, you
By your own e - ter - nal Spir - it, come to claim us

peo - ple free; From our fears and sins re - lease us;
earth im - part; Dear de - sire of ev - ery na - tion,
came to reign! Born to rule on earth for - ev - er,
as your own; By your all - suf - fi - cient mer - it,

grant us your true lib - er - ty.
en - ter ev - ery long - ing heart.
come, be known to us a - gain.
let us share your cross and crown.

Text: Charles Wesley, 1744, alt., Tune: STUTTGART, Melody attrib. to Christian F. Witt (1660-1716) from *Psalmody Sacra*, Gotha, 1715.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES

SCRIPTURE READING

Psalm 126

When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream. Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy; then it was said among the nations, "The Lord has done great things for them." The Lord has done great things for us, and we rejoiced. Restore our fortunes, O Lord, like the watercourses in the Negeb. May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy. Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, carrying their sheaves.

CHORAL ANTHEM

*Rejoice, O Judah, and in songs divine,
with cherubim and seraphim harmonious join.*

Chorus:

*Hallelujah, amen.
O Judah rejoice! In songs divine,
with cherubim and seraphim harmonious join.
Hallelujah, amen!*

WORDS: Edward H. Plumptre (1821-1891), alt.
MUSIC: Arthur H. Messiter (1834-1916)

MARION
S.M.Ref.

MESSAGE

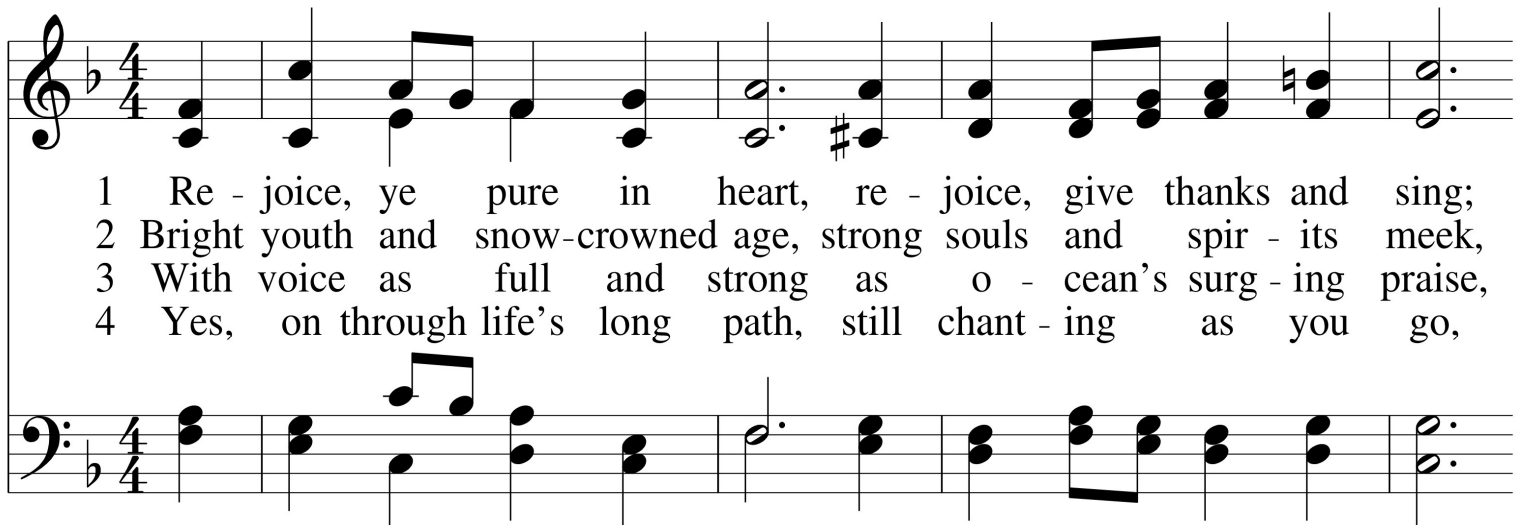
SHOUTS OF JOY

Those who wish may stand

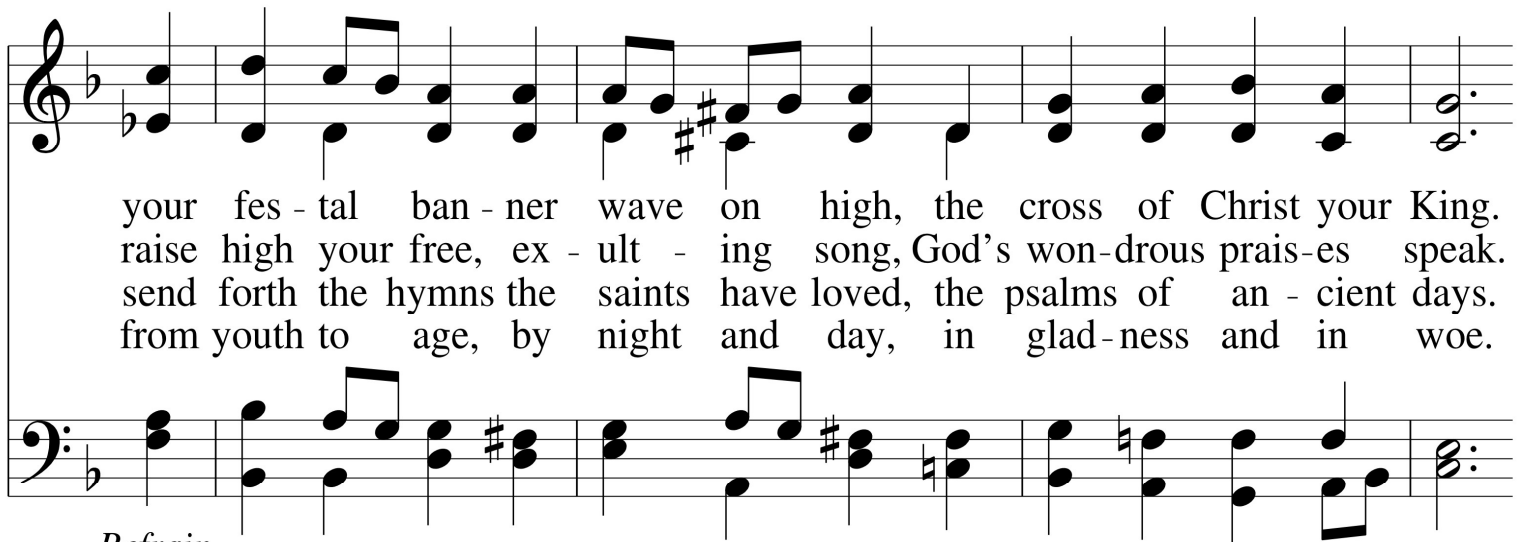
HYMN

Those who wish may stand

Rejoice You Pure in Heart



1 Re - joice, ye pure in heart, re - joice, give thanks and sing;
2 Bright youth and snow-crowned age, strong souls and spir - its meek,
3 With voice as full and strong as o - cean's surg - ing praise,
4 Yes, on through life's long path, still chant - ing as you go,



your fes - tal ban - ner wave on high, the cross of Christ your King.
raise high your free, ex - ult - ing song, God's won-drous prais-es speak.
send forth the hymns the saints have loved, the psalms of an - cient days.
from youth to age, by night and day, in glad-ness and in woe.

Refrain



Re - joice, re - joice, re - joice, give thanks and sing.
Re - joice, re - joice,

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

. . . 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

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

My Heart Sings out with Joyful Praise

The musical score is written on a single staff in treble clef, with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a time signature of 8/8. The melody is simple and folk-like, with a mix of quarter, eighth, and half notes. The lyrics are written below the staff, aligned with the notes. The text is in a serif font, with hyphens used for syllables that span across notes. The score consists of seven lines of music, each with three lines of lyrics underneath. The final line of music ends with a double bar line.

My heart sings out with joy - ful praise to
The arm of God is strong and just to
The prom - ise made in a - ges past at
God who rais - es me, Who came to me when
scat - ter all the proud. The ty - rants tum - ble
last has come to be, for God has come in
I was low and changed my des - ti - ny.
from their thrones and van - ish like a cloud.
power to save, to set all peo - ple free.
The Ho - ly One, the Liv - ing God, is
The hun - gry all are sat - is - fied; the
Re - mem - bering those who wait to see sal -
al - ways full of grace To those who seek their
rich are sent a - way. The poor of earth who
va - tion's dawn - ing day, Our Sav - ior comes to
Mak - er's will in ev - ery time and place.
suf - fer long will wel - come God's new day.
all who weep to wipe their tears a - way.

BLESSING AND SENDING

POSTLUDE

Today's Service

Rev. Tim Vander Haar	Senior Minister
Dr. Michael Match	Music Director
John Mattson	Organist
The Motet Choir	Leaders of Song
John Scheid	Guest Soloist
Bonnie Lipan	Liturgist/Prayers of the People
The Wiles Family & Deb Vanderwier	Advent Readers
Blake Filius	Audio and Video

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Altar Flowers are sponsored by Rick Brott and Barbara in honor of our church family.

Westshore GSA Youth Group will be meeting on Monday, Dec. 18th. from 7 to 8 pm.

Please join us for Muskegon Chamber Choir Concert today at 3:00 pm.

We hope to begin the No Name monthly dinners in January and we're looking for individuals/couples willing to serve as hosts who will select the restaurant. In the past this event has been held on the second Thursday of the month. Interested individuals can sign up at the welcome center or contact the church office for more details.

The Women's Single Group will meet at the Valkyrie Restaurant at the 4 corners in North Muskegon on January 2, 2024, at 1 PM.

A signup sheet is in the welcome center or contact Judy Dewall.

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.

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