

# *Lessons and Carols*



*Saturday, December 24, 2023*

First Congregational Church, UCC  
1201 Jefferson Street  
Muskegon, MI 49441

## *Prelude*

FCC Festival Brass,  
*Philip DeYoung, Conductor*

## *Welcome and Bidding Prayer*

Rev. Tim Vander Haar  
*Senior Minister*

**B**eloved in Christ, be it this Christmas Eve our care and delight to prepare ourselves to hear again the message of the angels: In heart and mind to go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass, and with the shepherds and the wise men adore the Child lying in his Mother's arms.

Let us read and mark in Holy Scripture the tale of the loving purposes of God from the first days of our disobedience unto the glorious Redemption brought us by this Holy Child; and in company with the whole Church let us make this chapel glad with our carols of praise.

But first let us pray for the needs of God's whole world; for peace and goodwill over all the earth; within our own nation and state, within this region and the city of Muskegon, and in this congregation. And let us at this time remember in Christ's name the poor and the helpless, the cold, the hungry and the oppressed; the sick in body and in mind and them that mourn; the lonely and unloved; the aged and the little children; and all who know not the loving kindness of the Lord.

Let us also remember before God all those who rejoice with us, but upon another shore and in a greater light, that multitude which none can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh: and let us pray that we may be counted among that communion of saints, receiving grace to offer reasonable service unto God, living in unity and communion with all God's people and giving reverence to all that God has made. These prayers and praises let us humbly offer up to heaven, in the words which Jesus Christ our Savior taught us.

**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.**

Leader: May God our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer give us grace and joy, and bring us into true communion within the commonwealth of God's love.

**All: Amen.**

Hymn  
**Silent Night**

Silent night, holy night!  
All is calm, all is bright  
round yon virgin mother and child.  
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,  
sleep in heavenly peace,  
sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night!  
Shepherds quake at the sight.  
Glories stream from heaven afar,  
heav'nly hosts sing, Alleluia!  
Christ, the Savior, is born!  
Christ, the Savior, is born!

Silent night, holy night!  
Son of God, love's pure light  
radiant beams from thy holy face  
with the dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth,  
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.



**LESSON ONE**

**Isaiah 9: 2; 6–7**

*The prophet foretells the coming of the Savior.*

**T**he people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;  
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined.  
For a child has been born for us, a son given to us;  
authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace  
for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it  
with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore.  
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

## MOTET CHOIR:

*The Sans Day Carol*, by John Rutter

Now the holly bears a berry as white as the milk,  
And Mary bore Jesus, who was wrapped up in silk,  
And Mary bore Jesus Christ our Saviour for to be,  
And the first tree in the greenwood, it was the holly.  
Holly! Holly!  
And the first tree in the greenwood, it was the holly!

Now the holly bears a berry as black as the coal,  
And Mary bore Jesus, who died for us all,  
And Mary bore Jesus Christ our Saviour for to be,  
And the first tree in the greenwood, it was the holly.  
Holly! Holly!  
And the first tree in the greenwood, it was the holly!

Now the holly bears a berry as black as the coal,  
And Mary bore Jesus, who died for us all,  
And Mary bore Jesus Christ our Saviour for to be,  
And the first tree in the greenwood, it was the holly.  
Holly! Holly!  
And the first tree in the greenwood, it was the holly!

Now the holly bears a berry as blood is it red,  
And Mary bore Jesus who rose from the dead,  
And Mary bore Jesus Christ our Saviour for to be,  
And the first tree in the greenwood, it was the holly.  
Holly! Holly!  
And the first tree in the greenwood, it was the holly!

## LESSON TWO

### Isaiah 11: 1–3a; 4a; 6–9

*The peace that Christ will bring is foreshown.*

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse,  
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.  
The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him,  
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
the spirit of counsel and might,  
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.  
His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.  
With righteousness he shall judge the poor,  
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;  
The wolf shall live with the lamb,  
the leopard shall lie down with the kid,  
the calf and the lion and the fatling together,  
and a little child shall lead them.  
The cow and the bear shall graze,  
their young shall lie down together;  
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.  
The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,  
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.  
They will not hurt or destroy  
on all my holy mountain;  
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD  
as the waters cover the sea.



## Hymn

### Lo How A Rose E'er Blooming

Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming  
From tender stem hath sprung!  
Of Jesse's lineage coming,  
As seers of old have sung.  
It came, a floweret bright,  
Amid the cold of winter,  
When half spent was the night.

Isaiah 'twas foretold it,  
The Rose I have in mind,  
With Mary we behold it,  
The Virgin Mother kind.  
To show God's love aright,  
She bore to us a Savior,  
When half spent was the night.

This Flow'r, whose fragrance tender  
With sweetness fills the air,  
Dispels with glorious splendor  
The darkness ev'rywhere.  
True man, yet very God,  
From sin and death he saves us,  
And lightens ev'ry load.

Text: Isaiah 11:1; *Es ist ein' Ros' entsprungen*; *Speier Gesangbuch*, 1599; tr. sts. 1-2 by Theodore Baker, 1851-1934, alt.; st. 3, Friedrich Lakritz, 1808-1859; tr. By Harriet Reynolds Kruith, 1845-1925, alt.

### LESSON THREE

#### Luke 1: 26–35; 38

*The angel Gabriel salutes the Blessed Virgin Mary.*

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

## MOTET CHOIR:

*Christmas Lullaby*, by John Rutter

Clear in the darkness a light shines in Bethlehem:  
Angels are singing, their sound fills the air.  
Wise men have journeyed to greet their Messiah;  
But only a mother and baby lie there.  
'Ave Maria, Ave Maria':  
Hear the soft lullaby the angel hosts sing.  
'Ave Maria, Ave Maria,  
Maiden, and mother of Jesus our King'.

Where are his courtiers, and who are his people?  
Why does he bear neither sceptre nor crown?  
Shepherds his courtiers, the poor for his people,  
With peace as his sceptre and love for his crown.  
'Ave Maria, Ave Maria':  
Hear the soft lullaby the angel hosts sing.  
'Ave Maria, Ave Maria,  
Maiden, and mother of Jesus our King'.

What though your treasures are not gold or incense?  
Lay them before him with hearts full of love.  
Praise to the Christ child, and praise to his mother  
Who bore us a Saviour by grace from above.  
'Ave Maria, Ave Maria':  
Hear the soft lullaby the angel hosts sing.  
'Ave Maria, Ave Maria,  
Maiden, and mother of Jesus our King'.



## LESSON FOUR

**Luke 2: 1; 3–7**

*St. Luke tells of the birth of Jesus.*

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

**CANTERBURY RINGERS:** *Go Tell it on the Mountain*, Arr. by Lloyd Larson

## LESSON FIVE

### Luke 2: 8–16

*The shepherds go to the manger.*

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see-- I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

**MOTET CHOIR:**      *Ding, Dong, Merrily on High*, Arr. by Howard Helvey

Ding! Dong! Merrily on high In heaven the bells are ringing;  
Ding! Dong! Verily the sky Is riven with angels singing.  
Gloria! Hosanna in excelsis!  
Gloria! Hosanna in excelsis!

E'en so here below, below, Let steeple bells be swungen,  
And "Io, io, io!" By priest and people sungen.  
Gloria! Hosanna in excelsis!  
Gloria! Hosanna in excelsis!

Pray you, dutifully prime Your matin chime, ye ringers!  
May you beautifully rime Your eve-time song, ye singers!  
Gloria! Hosanna in excelsis!  
Gloria! Hosanna in excelsis!  
Gloria!





## LESSON SIX

### Matthew 2: 1-12

*The wise men are led by the star to Jesus.*

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;  
for from you shall come a ruler  
who is to shepherd my people Israel."



Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

**Canterbury Ringers:**     *God Rest You Merry*, Arr. by Paul McKlveen

## LESSON SEVEN

### John 1: 1-14

*St. John unfolds the great mystery of the Incarnation.*

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.



He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

### *Hymn*

#### **O Come, All Ye Faithful**

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,  
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem!  
Come and behold him, born the king of angels!  
*O come, let us adore him, O come let us adore him,  
O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord!*

Sing, choirs of angels; sing in exultation;  
Sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above!  
Glory to God, in the highest!  
*O come, let us adore him...*

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning;  
Jesus, to thee be glory giv'n!  
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing!  
*O come, let us adore him...*

#### **LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE**

#### **BLESSING AND SENDING**



*Hymn*  
**Joy to the World**

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!  
Let earth receive her King;  
let ev'ry heart prepare him room  
and heav'n and nature sing,  
and heav'n and nature sing,  
and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!  
Let men their songs employ,  
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains,  
repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

He rules the world with truth and grace  
and makes the nations prove  
the glories of his righteousness  
and wonders of his love,  
and wonders of his love,  
and wonders, wonders of his love.



*Postlude*

*Flourish on Joy to the World*, Arr. by Robert Hobby  
FCC Festival Brass and John Mattson, *Organist*



# *Service Participants*

Rev. Tim Vander Haar, *Senior Minister*

Dr. Michael Match, *Director of Music*

John Mattson, *Organist*

Donna Hood, *Pianist*

The Motet Choir, *Leaders of Song*

The Canterbury Ringers, *Handbell Ensemble*

Blake Filius, *Audio-Video Engineer*

Elisabeth Major, *Reader 1*

Scott Peterson, *Reader 2*

Deborah VanderWier, *Reader 3*

Deb Collett, *Reader 4*

David Wikman, *Reader 5*

Eddie Jankowski, *Reader 6*

Rev. Tim Vander Haar, *Reader 7*



## **FCC Festival Brass**

Philip David DeYoung, *Conductor*

Steve Haines, *Trumpet*

Matt Lintula, *Trumpet*

Paul Krause, *Trumpet*

Chloe Meisch, *Horn*

Amy Fett, *Horn*

Brian Krause, *Trombone*

Scott Lachniet, *Trombone*

Jon Witmer, *Trombone*

Julia Krause, *Euphonium*

Nathaniel Hayes, *Tuba*

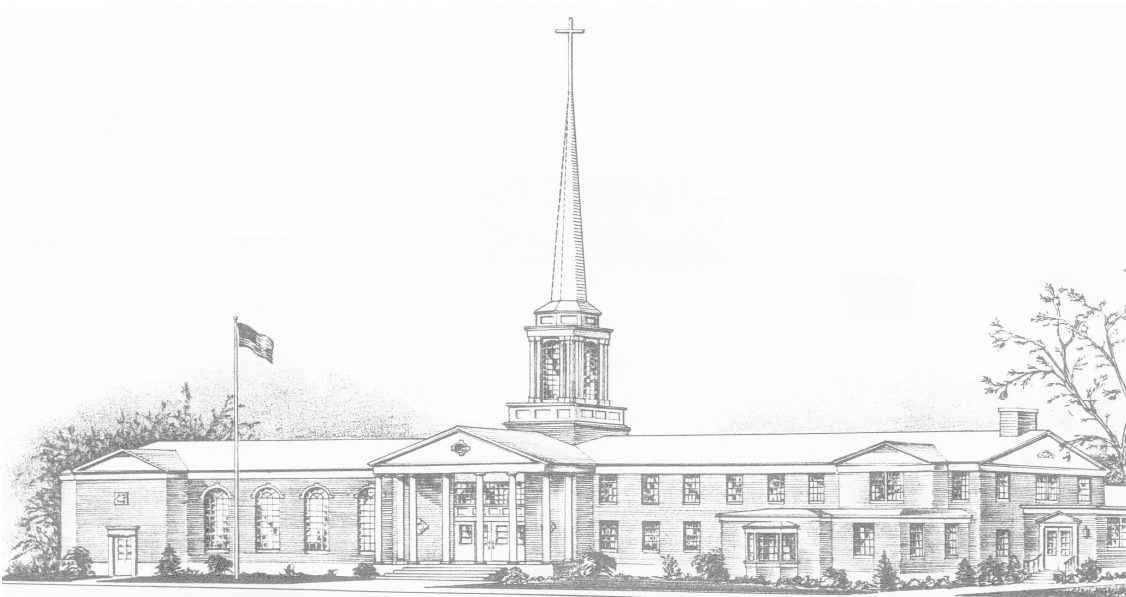
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*Please join us in person or online  
Sundays at 10:30 AM*

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

YouTube Channel: FCCMusic

Facebook Page: First Congregational Church, U.C.C.



**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*