

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
OF ST. CLAIR



UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST

**Where can we find peace?**

Isaiah 40:1-11

**“No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey,  
you’re welcome here.”**

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**WE GATHER TO WORSHIP GOD**  
**December 10, 2023 - Second Sunday of Advent**

† Those who are able, please stand.

**WELCOME**

Welcome to First Congregational Church of Saint Clair, United Church of Christ, where no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey you're welcome here.

**CHIMES**

Return, My People

**PRELUDE**

O How, Shall I Receive You

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

(Announcements are in the back of this bulletin.)

† **CALLING ON GOD**

Isaiah 40 and 52, Psalm 96 (NRSV), adapted

Dave Scheel

In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD! Make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up and every mountain and hill made low. Then the glory of God shall be revealed and all people shall see it together.

**How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."**

God comes in the power of love and justice. We wait with eagerness and worship with joy.

**God comes to judge the earth with righteousness. God comes to judge all peoples with truth. Let the sea roar, and all that fills it. Shout for joy, all the earth!**

† **HYMN**

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

NCH116 vs 1, 2, 6, 7

## †OPENING PRAYER

Dave Scheel

Rejoice, indeed, at the coming of Emmanuel, God with us! Let us pray.  
**Creating and sustaining God, in your presence there is life. Living water springs up and deserts blossom where you pass. Seeking the life that comes from you, we gather before you. Our hearts are ready, O God. Our hearts are ready. Delight us with your presence and prepare us for your service in the world, through the grace of Jesus, the Christ. Amen.**

## ADVENT WREATH

Bob and Kathy Rood

**The children are excused for Sunday School**

## THE FIRST READING

Isaiah 40:1-5, 11 NRSV

Dave Scheel

## MUSICAL MEDITATION

Lift Up Your Heads, O Mighty Gates

## THE SECOND READING

Mark 1:8, 14-15, Ruden

Dr. Guerreno

## SERMON

“The Meaning of Comfort”

Dr. Guerreno

## †HYMN

We Hail You God's Anointed

NCH104 vs 1, 2, 3

## JOYS, CONCERNS, AND INVITATION TO PRAY

## 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

Lo, How A Rose E'er Blooming

## † OFFERTORY RESPONSE

Emmanuel, Emmanuel

Emmanuel, Emmanuel,  
his name is called Emmanuel.  
God with us, revealed in us,  
his name is called Emmanuel.

## † PRAYER OF DEDICATION

God of Giving and Grace, God of Gifts and Goodness, these gifts, our gifts, are for you. They are for you to use in us, through us, through your church, as you see fit. These gifts are ours. We give them to you. Help us use them as you would have them used, that your grace, your gifts, your goodness would be seen in us and through us to bring hope and peace to a world desperately in need of it, in Jesus' name. Amen.

## † CLOSING HYMN

Who Would Think That What Was Needed

NCH153 vs 1, 2, 3

## † BENEDECTION

## † POSTLUDE

People, Look East



One License #A720797

## PLEASE KEEP IN YOUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS...

Barb Jeffries' family, Harrietta Thourlby-Ryan & family, Diane Liebetreu and her family, Jerry Cooley, Cal Eschenburg, Diane & Doug Johnson & Family, Carol Carroll, Susan Couch, Bryce C. DeLand, Harietta Ryan, Eric Fandrick, Matthew Pennewell, Emerson Stone, Jan Yager, Rachel O'Connor, Marge Guinther, Ann Whittaker. Also, remember to pray for all who are serving in the military, first responders, medical personnel, and our elected officials.

## **TODAY'S WORSHIP ASSISTANTS**

SUNDAY STEWARD: Don O'Connor  
SOUND AND LIVESTREAM: Tim Galvin, Don Rice  
MUSIC: Denise Gregg  
USHERS: Pat O'Connor, Don O'Connor  
READER: Dave Scheel  
POWER POINT: Pat O'Connor  
COFFEE HOUR: The Currie Family

## **NEXT WEEK'S SERMON**

Sermon: "Look For The Light"  
Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11, NRSV    John 1:6-9, 19-27, Ruden

## **12/17/23 - NEXT WEEK'S WORSHIP ASSISTANTS**

SUNDAY STEWARD: Don O'Connor  
SOUND AND LIVESTREAM: Tim Galvin, Jacie Sanders  
MUSIC: Denise Gregg  
USHERS: Nikki Perry, Tim Galvin  
READER: Kathy Rood  
POWER POINT: Kathy Cilluffo  
COFFEE HOUR: The Wegners

12/24 – READER: Pat O'Connor

## **OPEN AND AFFIRMING INCLUSIVE CHURCH COVENANT**

The members of the First Congregational Church of St. Clair, United Church of Christ, declare that we are a fully inclusive, Open and Affirming Congregation. We affirm the life and teachings of Jesus Christ and believe that all people are children of God. As such, we welcome to the community of faith all people of diverse race, physical and mental abilities, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, and socio-economic status. We covenant to provide to all a safe, loving, nurturing and compassionate community.

## **~CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS~**

**CHRISTMAS WORSHIP SCHEDULE**  
Christmas Eve, December 24, 5 p.m.  
Christmas Day, December 25, 10 a.m.

### **WELCOME CHUCK GUERRENO**

Chuck can be reached at the church 10:00 – 4:30 Thursday through Friday, 11:00 – 4:30 on Saturday, and 8:00 – noon on Sunday. Chuck can be reached at [stclairinterim@gmail.com](mailto:stclairinterim@gmail.com) and (989) 980-0061.

### **SEARCH COMMITTEE**

The Search Committee invited a prospective minister to tour St. Clair in October. The search committee members are Co-Chairs Avery Skonieczny & Don Rice, Rose Crowley, Mike Kennedy, Don O'Connor, Kathy Rood, Kathy Cilluffo, Sam Tricomo, Vicki Kling and Ash Currie. We are available for your questions and concerns regarding the pastoral search in person or email at [firstconggsc@gmail.com](mailto:firstconggsc@gmail.com).

### **CURIOUS ABOUT CHURCH MEMBERSHIP?**

If you're wondering about becoming a church member, please speak with Pat O'Connor or Chuck to set up a time to chat. Your questions about the United Church of Christ and this church specifically will be answered.

### **SUNDAY SCHOOL**

There will be no Sunday School December 24 and December 31. There are pew packs located under the table in the back of the sanctuary for the children. Beginning 2024, Sunday School will be held the 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month.

### **PASTOR'S EMERGENCY FUND**

Our Communion Offerings are usually placed in a Pastor's Emergency Fund. Those needing emergency assistance are screened and, when available, funds are provided.

## **THE LITTLE RED FOOD PANTRY**

**This small pantry is a community outreach program sponsored by The Mission Team of this church. It is stocked twice weekly with non-perishable food. Donation requests may change but the need to feed does not.**

**Do you remember  
the story of December?  
The guiding light?  
The holy night?**

**Jesus's birth  
defines our worth.  
We must be aware  
of others' despair.**

### **December food pantry needs**

**Cereal  
Canned Chicken  
Canned Tuna  
Canned Pasta w/Meat  
Peanut Butter  
Spaghetti  
Spaghetti Sauce (canned)  
Hearty Soups**

### **December holiday extras**

**Canned Fruit  
Muffin/Biscuit Mix  
Cake Mix/Frosting Tub  
Cookie Mix  
Candy**

**Please leave donations in the elevator room on any one of the shelves  
labeled LITTLE RED FOOD PANTRY.**

## **COFFEE HOUR**

**Coffee hour is each Sunday immediately following worship. There are several Sundays available to host coffee hour. Please be sure to check out the sign-up sheet on the back table of the sanctuary.**

## **MISSIONS**

**We have received our list of adopted families for Thanksgiving and Christmas. We have 3 families, consisting of 5 adults and 6 children. We will send each family a gift card for Thanksgiving, and a gift card and presents for the children for Christmas. The Giving Tree is set up in the lounge, with tags for Christmas gifts for the children. Please remember to sign up on the white papers, corresponding to the number(s) of your tags. These gifts (wrapped, no bow, please) need to be returned to church by December 10, to the marked shelves in the elevator room. They will be delivered by Karen and Tim Galvin and the delivery team. Thank you for your generous spirit; any questions, please call Cathy Light, 810-329-4875.**

## **BLUE CHRISTMAS**

**The annual Ecumenical Blue Christmas Service will be held at Holy Family Episcopal Church Sunday, December 17, at 2 p.m.**

## **CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS**

**Poinsettia time is approaching. If you'd like to contribute to the purchase of a poinsettia plant to decorate our church during Advent, please contact Beverly Stewart when you see her at church or call 810-329-2147. You may also use the poinsettia envelopes that are on the table at the back of the sanctuary. Place them in the collection plate. Please include name and phone number so we can get information on those you are honoring or remembering.**