

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
OF ST. CLAIR



UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST



**“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 24, 2023 - Fourth 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**

Watcher, Tell Us Of The Night

**PRELUDE**

On A Night Of Wonder

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

(Announcements are in the back of this bulletin.)

**† CALLING ON GOD**

Pat O'Connor

Clear a path in the desert! Make a straight road for our God. Fill in the valleys, and the glory of God will appear for all to see.

**How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who brings good news, who announces peace, who says to all in 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 fairness. God comes to judge all peoples with truth. Let the sea roar, and all that fills it. Shout for joy, all the earth!**

**†HYMN**

Angels We Have Heard On High  
NCH125 All

**†OPENING PRAYER**

Pat O'Connor

Truly, there are tidings this day which inspire heavenly song. Let us pray.

**Loving God, we thank you that you have come into our lives and that you act with saving power to make all things new. We thank you for pouring out your life into the human form of Jesus, and for the continual rebirth of Christ in the human heart. Touched by your word**

made flesh, we would embody, incarnate and signify your love in our lives. May the joy of Christmas never end, but continue through the ages until at last your reign of justice and peace is fully established on this earth. We pray in the name of Jesus, the Word. Amen.

**ADVENT WREATH**

Jacie Sanders & Nikki Perry

**THE FIRST READING**

Matthew 1:18-25, NRSV

Pat O'Connor

**MUSICAL MEDITATION**

O How Shall I Receive You

**THE SECOND READING**

Luke 2:1-20, NRSV

Dr. Guerreno

**SERMON**

“Where Christmas Happens”

Dr. Guerreno

**†HYMN**

O Little Town Of Bethlehem  
NCH133 All

**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**

Let The Christ Child In

**† 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

Holy One, our God, you are Always. You are Eternal. You are Forever. You are Beyond Imagining, Beyond Comprehending. Because you are Love, we can imagine and we can comprehend. You give, and our eyes open and our hearts beat faster and our imaginations go where they've never been before. You give, and we are made new. In giving also, we are made new. Help us to know and to live as people who have given gifts and received them, all to the glory of the fullness of the reign of your Son, in whose name we pray, now and forever. Amen.

## †CLOSING HYMN

Angels, From The Realms Of Glory  
NCH126 All

## †BENEDICTION

## †POSTLUDE

Now Bless The God Of Israel



**One License #A720797**

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

Barb Jeffries' family, Diane Liebetreu and her family, Jerry Cooley, Carol Carroll, Susan Couch, Bryce C. DeLand, 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: Dave Scheel, Tom Pennewell

READER: Pat O'Connor POWER POINT: Jody Skonieczny

## **NEXT WEEK'S SERMON**

Sermon: "How To Keep Christmas"  
Isaiah 61:10a-11. TEV    Luke 2:25-33, TEV

## **12/31/23 - NEXT WEEK'S WORSHIP ASSISTANTS**

SUNDAY STEWARD: Don O'Connor  
SOUND AND LIVESTREAM: Tim Galvin, Don Rice  
MUSIC: Denise Gregg    USHERS: Jim Light, Jacie Sanders  
READER: Kathy Rood    POWER POINT: Kathy Cilluffo

READER 1/7/24 – Elsa Pennewell

## **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~**

### **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 [firstcongsc@gmail.com](mailto:firstcongsc@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 today 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.

**CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS**

Our sanctuary is beautifully decorated for the Christmas season, from Advent through Epiphany. Our thanks to those who donated Poinsettias.

Karl Heilman and Ken Van Northwick

In memory of Don and Lilly Carlesimo, Louis and Elizabeth Heilman.

Carol LaVigne

In memory of her family.

Deana Currie

In memory of Donna Jasmin and Theodore Currie.

Marge Guinther  
In memory of her husband, Karl Guinther.

Dennis and Kathleen Wegner  
In memory of their friend, Rob Butz.

Kenneth and Denise Gregg  
In memory of Alfred Gregg.

Travis and Christina Baker  
In memory of Norman and Helen Grob.

**HOLIDAY OFFICE HOURS**

The office will be closed the week of December 25. The office will reopen January 2, 2024.