

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.”**

**300 Adams Street, St. Clair, MI 48079
810-329-4142**

**www.firstcongsc.org
firstcongsc@gmail.com**

WE GATHER TO WORSHIP GOD
December 24, 2023 – Christmas Eve

† 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

Glad Tidings

PRELUDE

O Morning Star How Clear and Bright

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Don and Nancy Rice

†HYMN OF ADORATION

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 heaven above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest;
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!

Child, for us sinners poor and in the manger,
We would embrace you, with love and awe;
Who would not love you, loving us so dearly?
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!

† INVOCATION AND LORD'S PRAYER

Glory to God in the highest!

For out of God's own being, Jesus has come to bring love and light to all people.

Jesus is Emmanuel—God With Us—come to gather our tears and laughter, our work and play, into God's love.

How amazing is your love, Great God!

You are not distant from us in some faraway heaven.

You have come close to us in a child born of simple parents and cradled in a borrowed bed of straw.

When we stand by while the earth you love is despoiled and its destruction threatened, God, forgive.

When we abuse or neglect our own bodies, God, forgive.

By your great love, O God, draw us into new ways of living.

Teach us to cherish and nurture life in this fragile world, in the manner of Jesus, the Christ, whose birth we celebrate this night.

“ 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.”

† ACT OF PRAISE

Yea, Lord, we greet you, born this happy morning,

Jesus, to you shall all glory be given;

Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing;

O come, let us adore him,

O come, let us adore him,

O come, let us adore him,

Christ, the Lord!

WELCOME AND GREETING

SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

FIRST LESSON

Genesis 3:8-15

Dr. Guerreno

God's Judgment Of Creation

CAROL

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

O come, O come, Emmanuel
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here,
Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer
Our spirits by thine advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

O come, Desire of nations, bind
All peoples in one heart and mind;
Bid envy strife and quarrels cease;
Fill the whole world with heaven's peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

SECOND LESSON

Isaiah 40:1-5

Dr. Guerreno

The Prophet Speaks Of Comfort And Hope To God's People

CAROL

Comfort, Comfort O My People

“Comfort, comfort O my people,
Tell of peace,” thus says our God:
Comfort those whose hearts are shrouded,
Mourning under sorrow’s load.
Speak unto Jerusalem
Of the peace that waits for them;
Tell them that their sins I cover,
And their warfare now is over.

Straight shall be what long was crooked,
And the rougher places plain!
Let your hearts be true and humble,
For Messiah’s holy reign.
For God’s glory evermore
Shall be known o’er all the world;
And all flesh shall see the token
That God’s word is never broken.

THIRD LESSON

Luke 1:26-38

Dr. Guerreno

The Birth Of Jesus Is Announced

CAROL

Once In Royal David’s City

Once in royal David’s city
Stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her baby
In a manger for a bed;
Mary was the mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little child.

We at last shall meet our Savior,
Fount of God's redeeming grace,
For that Child so dear and gentle
Reigns within a glorious place;
Leading all God's children on
To the heaven where saints have gone.

EVENING PRAYERS

SERVICE OF GIVING

OFFERTORY

Born In The Night, Mary's Child
As With Gladness Those Of Old

FOURTH LESSON

Luke 2:1-7

Dr. Guerreno

The Birth Of Jesus

HOMILY

"Would Jesus Come Here?"

Dr. Guerreno

CAROL

Away In A Manger

Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the sky looked down where he lay,
The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love you, Lord Jesus, protect me I pray,
And stay by my side until night turns to day.

FIFTH LESSON

Luke 2:8-14

Dr Guerreno

An Angel Proclaims Christ's Birth

CAROL

Angels, From The Realms Of Glory

Angels, from the realms of glory,
Wing your flight o'er all the earth;
You who sang creation's story,
Now proclaim Messiah's birth:
Come and worship, come and worship,
Worship Christ, the newborn King.

Saints before the altar bending,
Watching long in hope and fear,
Suddenly the Lord, descending,
In his temple shall appear;
Come and worship, come and worship,
Worship Christ, the newborn King.

SIXTH LESSON

Luke 2:15-20

Dr. Guerreno

The Shepherds Go To Bethlehem And See The Child.

CAROL

It Came Upon The Midnight Clear

It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth
To touch their harps of gold;
Peace on the earth, good will to all,
From heaven's all-gracious King.
The world in solemn stillness lay
To hear the angels sing.

For lo, the days are hastening on,
By prophet bards foretold
When with the ever-circling years
Comes 'round the age of gold;

When peace shall over all the earth
Its ancient splendors fling,
And the whole world send back the song
Which now the angels sing.

SEVENTH LESSON

Luke 2:22-33

Dr. Guerreno

Jesus Is Presented In The Temple, And Simeon Gives Thanks To God

CAROL

Angels We Have Heard On High

Angels we have heard on high
Sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply
Echo back their joyous strains
Gloria, In excelsis Deo
Gloria, In excelsis Deo

Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
Say what may the tidings be,
Which inspire your heavenly song.
Gloria, In excelsis, Deo
Gloria, In excelsis, Deo

Come to Bethlehem and see
Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come adore on bended knee,
Christ, the Lord, the newborn King.
Gloria, In excelsis, Deo
Gloria, In excelsis, Deo

EIGHTH LESSON

John 1:1-5,14

Dr. Guerreno

Jesus, The Word Of Life

CAROL

Silent Night, Holy Night

When all candles are lit, please join in singing these carols.

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, Heavenly 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 the birth.

EXTINGUISH YOUR CANDLES AND PLEASE RISE IF YOU ARE ABLE

† CAROL

Joy To The World! The Lord Is Come

Joy to the world! the Lord is come:
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare him room,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the earth! The Savior reigns
Let all 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.

† **BENEDICTION**

† **POSTLUDE**

Oh, How Joyfully



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 Fandrck, 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.

THIS EVENING'S WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

SUNDAY STEWARD: Don O'Connor

SOUND AND LIVESTREAM: Tim Galvin, Kathy Cilluffo

MUSIC: Denise Gregg USHERS: Tim Galvin, Jim White

POWER POINT: Jacie Sanders

NEXT WEEK'S SERMON

Sermon: "The Stubborn, Patient Love Of God"

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 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.

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 31, 2023. 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, Tuna, and Pasta w/Meat
Peanut Butter
Spaghetti and 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.