

**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
OF ST. CLAIR**



**“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 22, 2024

Fourth Sunday of Advent

† Those who are able, please stand.

**CHIMES**

*O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

**GATHERING SONG**

*Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*  
*NCH144*

**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 and loved here.

† **CALLING ON GOD**

Pat O'Connor

Leader: God, thank You that in this season of Advent we can experience Your gift of peace.

**People: Help us to live in the peace You provided through Jesus, rest in the peace You give in the midst of life, and trust in the peace of knowing You have overcome the world.**

Leader: Fill us and hold us with Your peace as we encounter You and experience the depth and richness of life You provide both now and forever. ALL: Amen!

† **HYMN**

*The First Nowell*  
*NCH139 vs 1, 2 & 3*

**PRAYER OF TRANSFORMATION**

**&**

**ASSURANCE OF GRACE**

Pastor Julia DiFiore

Pastor: Let us turn our hearts to the One who makes all things new...

**People: Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer, we lay our hearts, minds and bodies upon your throne room of grace. We confess that we have been the opposite of peace in our representation of you. Help us Oh God, to still ourselves in your presence. Help us to be reminded that we are image bearers of the author of PEACE. Forgive us Oh Lord, for times that we neglected being peace pursuers and remained silent when injustice happened in our midst. Help us to walk humbly, and justly as you desire.**

Pastor: Hear your people Oh Lord, have mercy as we offer you our silent repentant reflections....

It is God's promise, that a genuine heart of repentance is not only forgiven the sins confessed but also forgotten. Because our Lord wants nothing in the way of the love between you and God. Know this truth, you are forgiven!

**People: Amen.**

†**OPENING PRAYER**

Pat O'Connor

Eternal God, we thank you for all the years you have given peace to your people. Help us to have your peace in our lives. We pray that, in this Advent season, we may, by what we do, show your presence to the sick, to the hungry, and to the lonely, so that they too may have peace. As we hear your word, may we be transformed even more into image bearers of your peace.

**ALL: Amen.**

**FIRST READING**

2 Thessalonians 3:3-5, 16; Romans 5:1-2

Pat O'Connor

**MUSICAL MEDITATION**

Let The Christ Child In

UCC Choir

**FCC ROCK TIME**

**SECOND READING**

Philippians 4:4-9

Pastor Julia DiFiore

*Listen Here, Listen Here*

UCC Choir

**SERMON**

Experiencing The Gift Of PEACE

Pastor Julia DiFiore

**LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH:**

Mary Paquette & Jacie Sanders

Leader: Soon we shall celebrate the birth of Jesus. We worship God with joy in our hearts as we are reminded of the words the angel said on that first Christmas Day: "Behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people."

We light this candle to proclaim the coming of the light of God into the world. With the coming of this light there is joy, JOY that is our not only at Christmas but always.

Light The Advent Candle by Mary Lu Walker

V1. Light the Advent candle, one:  
Now the waiting has begun;  
We have started on our way,  
Time to think of Christmas Day,

Refrain: Candle, candle, burning bright,  
Shining in the cold winter night;  
Candle, candle, burning bright,  
Fill our hearts with Christmas light.

V2. Light the Advent Candle, two:  
Think of humble Shepherds, who  
Filed with wonder at the sight  
of the child on Christmas night.

Refrain: Candle, candle, burning bright,  
Shining in the cold winter night;  
Candle, candle, burning bright,  
Fill our hearts with Christmas light.

V3. Light the Advent candle, three:  
Think of heavenly harmony;  
Angels singing “Peace on earth”  
At the blessed Savior’s birth.

Refrain: Candle, candle, burning bright,  
Shining in the cold winter night;  
Candle, candle, burning bright,  
Fill our hearts with Christmas light.

V4. Light the Advent candle, four:  
Think of joy forevermore;  
Christ child in a stable born,  
Gift of love that Christmas morn.

Refrain: Candle, candle, burning bright,  
Shining in the cold winter night;  
Candle, candle, burning bright.  
Fill our hearts with Christmas light.

## INVITATION TO PRAY FOR JOYS, CONCERNS

### 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:** please place your offering in the box at the back table at your convenience upon entering or leaving. Or use the QR code on the pew by the envelopes.

### PRAYER OF BLESSING FOR TITHES & OFFERINGS

†HYMN

*O Little Town Of Bethlehem  
NCH133 vs 1 & 2*

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Announcements are in the back of this bulletin.)

†BENEDICTION (open hands)

**ALL: Help us God to go forth into the world with footsteps of peace. To Be of good cheer, holding fast to that which is good.**

**With your help Oh Lord, we will render to no one evil for evil. We will strengthen the fainthearted, support the weak, and help the afflicted. We will show your love to everyone. For we desire to serve you Lord, rejoicing in the power of Your Holy Spirit!**

Pastor: And the blessing of almighty God, the Creator, the Son, and Holy One, be upon you and remain with you always. Amen.

†POSTLUDE

*Go Tell It On The Mountain*



One License #A720797

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

Diane Liebetreu and her family, David McCreary, Carol Carroll, Susan Couch, Bryce C. DeLand, Eric Fandrlick, Matthew Pennewell, Emerson Stone, Ann Whittaker. Also, remember to pray for all who are serving in the military, first responders, medical personnel, and our elected officials.

**12/22/24 – TODAY’S WORSHIP ASSISTANTS**

SUNDAY STEWARD: Don O’Connor  
SOUND AND LIVESTREAM: Tim Galvin, Don Rice  
MUSIC: Denise Gregg  
USHERS: Jim Light, Jacie Sanders  
READER: Pat O’Connor  
POWER POINT: Jody Skonieczny  
COFFEE HOUR: Krysta & Adam Roborzilk

**12/24/24 – WORSHIP ASSISTANTS**

SUNDAY STEWARD: Don O’Connor  
SOUND AND LIVESTREAM: Tim Galvin, Kathy Cilluffo  
MUSIC: Denise Gregg  
USHERS: Pat O’Connor, Don O’Connor  
READER: Jacie Sanders  
POWER POINT: Anthony Currie

READER 12/29 – Bonnie Landschoot

**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~**

**LEADERSHIP MEETING**

There will be a leadership meeting immediately following worship today.

**CURIOUS ABOUT CHURCH MEMBERSHIP?**

Please let Pastor Julia know([pastorjuliad@gmail.com](mailto:pastorjuliad@gmail.com)) and she will set up a time to chat. Your questions about the United Church of Christ and this church specifically will be answered.

**BIBLE STUDY: Wednesdays 6 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. ON HOLD UNTIL JANUARY**

Come learn more about Jesus, the Prince of Peace. What did Jesus say about peace? How can His way of nonviolence transform our daily lives and what is happening in the world? Come experience the Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love of this Advent Season? Come and See what Jesus’ Way has to offer.

## **SUNDAY SCHOOL**

Sunday school will be held the 2nd and 4th Sunday each month unless otherwise noted.

## **LEADERSHIP POSITIONS AVAILABLE**

We have several positions opening up on the Leadership Committee. If you are interested in applying for one of them, please see Jody Skonieczny. If you have questions, please reach out to Pat OConnor or to one of the other Leadership Committee members. It's a wonderful way to become even more involved in the future of our church. The positions that are open are as follows:

Moderator Vice-Moderator  
Treasurer Member at Large

The only real requirements are that you be 18 and a member. The position will start in February after the annual meeting, so if you are interested in a position, but are not a member yet, you still have time to become one before February. Please consider!!

## **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.

December is a gift  
In so many ways  
With family and friends  
To share the days

Remember December  
And remember this, too  
God's Son was born  
For me and you.

## **PANTRY NEEDS FOR DECEMBER**

Cereal  
Fruit  
Mac & Cheese  
Instant Mashed Potato Pouches  
Pasta with or without Meat  
Peanut Butter  
Spaghetti and Spaghetti Sauce  
(no glass, please)

Hearty Soups – Crackers  
Canned Stew-Beef, Chicken Tuna, Vegetables  
Tea Bags

**PANTRY EXTRAS FOR DECEMBER  
CHRISTMAS**

Christmas Dinner Side Dishes:

Quick Bread Mixes  
Muffin Mixes  
Cake/Frosting Mixes  
Cookie Mixes  
Holiday Candy

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

Any questions? Please call Nancy Kennedy (810-329-3790).

**COFFEE HOUR**

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.

**SOCIAL MEDIA**

Do you have something you would like shared to our social media platforms? For any news, events, or stories you'd like to share with our community, please reach out to our Social Media Minister Karl Heilman in person, message our Facebook page or email him at [kheilman84@yahoo.com](mailto:kheilman84@yahoo.com).

Let's continue to spread God's love together! Feel free to like, share, and engage with our content as we strive to connect and uplift one another through the power of social media. Check out our Facebook page at

[@First Congregational Church UCC of St. Clair](#) and our Instagram page at

[@firstcong.churchofst.clair](#).

**HOLIDAY OFFICE HOURS**

The office will be closed Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, as well as New Years Eve and New Years Day.



## **POINSETTIAS**

The beautiful poinsettias that decorate the sanctuary were provided this holiday season by the following:

Ken & Denise Gregg  
In memory of Norman & Helen Grob

Carol LaVigne  
In honor of Deuane & Mary Ann Martin and Family

Carol LaVigne  
In memory of her parents, Ervand & Ruth and Brother, Allan

Deana Currie  
In memory of Theodore Corbin Currie  
(on the tenth anniversary of his passing)

Deana Currie  
In memory of Donna June Jasmin  
(one the 10th anniversary of her passing)

Ralph & Mary Paquette  
In memory of Paquette & Nicolai Family

Jim & Cathy Light  
In memory of loved ones

Shannon Porter  
In memory of Douglas Porter who passed away  
December 11, 1993, husband of Debbie  
and Father of Shannon and Lesley

Beverly Stewart  
In memory of Karl and Marge Guinther

Colleen & Kevin Prokop  
In Memory of The Barnett & Prokop Families