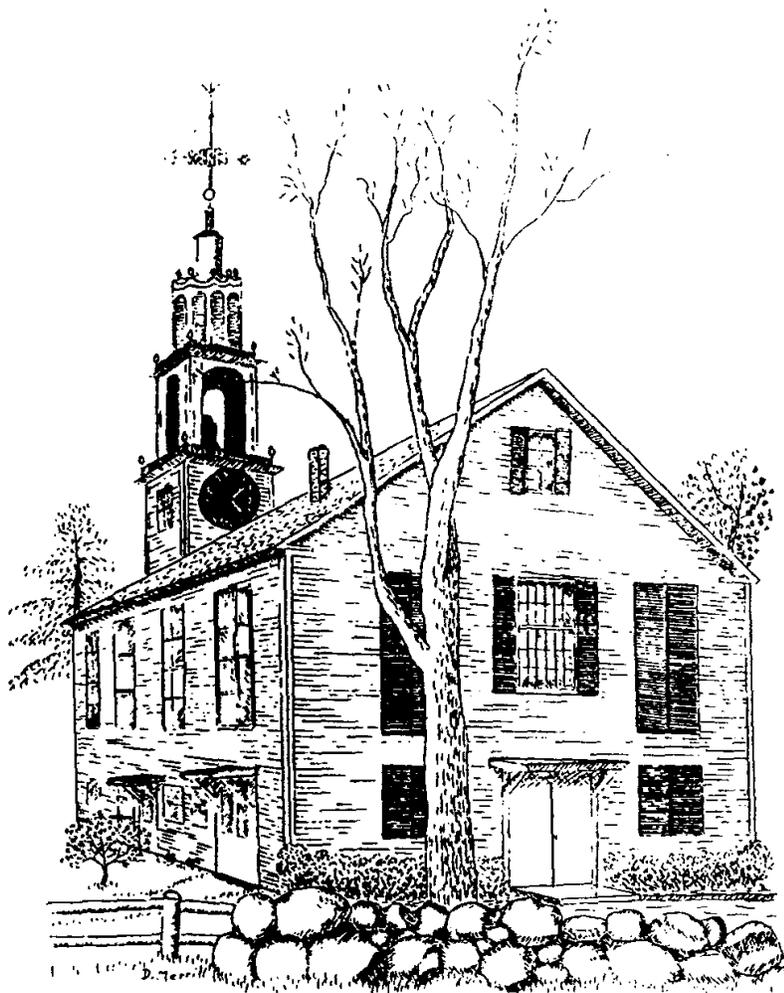


First Parish Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
P.O. Box 114, 47 East Derry Road
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December 14, 2014 Advent 3 Year B



Doris Merrill

ALL ARE WELCOME

*“Friend, you enter this church not as a stranger, but as a guest of God.
Come, then, with joy in your heart and thanks upon your lips,
and offer God today your love and your service.”*

(Adapted from a 12th Century Church in Hampshire, England)

December 14, 2014 Third Sunday of Advent Year B

Christmas Caroling

WE GATHER INTO THE PRESENCE OF GOD

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS & SHARING OF OUR JOYS AND CONCERNS

Lighting of the Advent Candle: Third Sunday of Advent: Joy

- with help from Beverly Lawson, Betsy McCall, and Webb and Margery Palmer

One: Hope is a light given by God to every Child of God.

All: We light the candle of Hope as we remember Christ's gift.

(Light the candle of Hope)

One: The flame of Peace, just as the Peace of Christ, is the true order of life.

All: We light the candle of Peace as we remember to live in Christ's Peace.

(Light the candle of Peace)

One: Joy is the celebration given by God through the light of the world.

All: Joy is the celebration given by God at the birth of the Christ Child.

One: Joy is the celebration when the angels sang "Glory to God in the highest!"

All: Let us dance and sing and shout for joy. Christ is coming again!

(Light the candle of Joy)

*HYMN NO. 107

"Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn"

*CALL TO WORSHIP

One: God rejoices to renew our lives in steadfast love.

All: God gathers us for this time of worship.

One: Trust in God who is our strength and life.

All: Let us sing praises and exalt God's name.

*PRAYER OF INVOCATION (in unison)

Loving God, we rejoice in this season of anticipation as we remember your promises and look forward to ways that you reveal yourself to us. May your presence be real to us in this hour. Strengthen us for victories over temptation, for renewal of our love for you and one another, for leadership and service in your church. We give thanks that you have called us into community and commissioned us to make a difference in the world. Amen.

*SONG OF PRAISE NO. 759 **Glory to the Creator, the Christ, the Holy Spirit - Three in One; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.**

WE INVITE FORWARD GOD'S LITTLE CHILDREN

CHILDREN'S OFFERING

Hymn No. 138

Jesus, Our Brother, Strong and Good

PRAYER OF DEDICATION (in unison)

In our thanks, these gifts we bring, for you give us everything. Teach us how to follow you, in all we say, and all we do. Amen.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE – We are on our way to Bethlehem. Who Is in the Stable today?

Followed by 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. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory forever. Amen.

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD FOR US

EPISTLE	Isaiah 61:1-4, 10-11	(O.T. pp. 767-768)
GOSPEL	John 1:6-8, 19-28	(N.T. pp. 94-95)
SERMON	"Testify to the Light"	The Rev. Dr. Deborah Roof
CHOIR ANTHEM	"Come, Emmanuel"	Pepper Choplin

WE RESPOND WITH OUR STEWARDSHIP AND OUR PRAYERS

STEWARDSHIP MOMENT: Nominating News by Sarah Keller (Insert)

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

One: Today, when we light the candle of Joy, we give you thanks and praise, most loving God for all faithful souls who maintain their joy and express it through attitudes, hard decisions, and long term commitments.

All: For those who with joy adopt handicapped and unwanted children, and all who happily minister to misfits and the more unlikeable characters. Most generous God, receive our thanks and praise.

One: For those who through personal tragedy maintain a smile, and each person whose joy shines through pain, grief and tears. Most generous God, receive our thanks and praise.

All: For those who dare give thanks even for their severest setbacks, and all whose laughter refuses to be quelled by misunderstanding, abuse or persecution. Most generous God, receive our thanks and praise.

One: For those who by faith can joke at their own doubts, and all who in times of spiritual dryness commit themselves to positive deeds of justice and compassion. Most generous God, receive our thanks and praise.

All: For those who can laugh at themselves without becoming cynical, and all who stay good humored when fate seems to play bad tricks on them. Most generous God, receive our thanks and praise.

One: Best of all we thank you for your Son Jesus, for the joy that flowed from Bethlehem and Nazareth, from Galilee to Jerusalem.

All: We rejoice in his gracious humor that drew souls to him, and spread mercy and hope. We thank you that when enemies were closing in on him, and the cross loomed terrible ahead of him, he blessed bread and wine and shared his most profound joy with his friends. Most generous God, receive our thanks and praise. Amen.

CHORAL RESPONSE

"Come to Me"

WE RESPOND WITH OUR FINANCIAL GIFTS

OFFERTORY INVITATION

Today God's voice is heard through the ministries we help to provide, here in our church, and in outreach to all the world's people. We bear witness to the light that is coming into the world through personal caring and corporate sharing. May all our giving be generous!

OFFERTORY MUSIC

***DOXOLOGY #780 Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise God all creatures here below; Praise God above, you heavenly host: Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.**

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

In our unworthiness, O God, may we yet bring worthy gifts to honor the Messiah. By your mercy, may the hungry be fed not only with bread but also with opportunities to feed others. We give ourselves as your servants, for no gift is complete without personal commitment. Thank you, God, for expecting great things of us. Our spirits rejoice in the coming of our Savior. Amen.

WE ARE SENT OUT TO LOVE AND SERVE A LOVING, SERVING GOD

*HYMN NO. 122

"Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus"

BENEDICTION

BENEDICTION RESPONSE

"Christ, be our Light"

POSTLUDE

**Indicates all that are able may stand.*

MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH

DEACONS OF THE MONTH

LAY READER

USHERS

GREETER(s)

PASTOR

AFFILIATE PASTOR

MUSIC DIRECTOR

ACCOMPANIST/ORGANIST

OFFICE MANAGER

NEWSLETTER/CE CONSULTANT

Members of the Congregation

Diana Sweeney and Sandy Carter

Reni Harnden

Stanley and Holly Gorgol

Tom and Andrea Cooper

Michael Bryan

Diane Breeden

The Rev. Dr. Deborah Roof

Rev. Chester R. Ham

Susan Handy

Jeff DeLangie

Lindsey Roman

Julie Daysa

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Office Hours: Tues, Wed & Fri: 9:00-3:00pm; Thurs 10:30-6:00

Our website www.fpc-ucc.org Find us and 'friend us' on Facebook www.facebook.com/fpcucc



Scriptures – December 14

Isaiah 61.1-4, 10-11

⁶1 The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,
because the LORD has anointed me;
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,
to bind up the broken-hearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and release to the prisoners;
² to proclaim the year of the LORD's favour,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;
³ to provide for those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a garland instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.
⁴ They shall build up the ancient ruins,
they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities,
the devastations of many generations.

¹⁰ I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,
my whole being shall exult in my God;
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
¹¹ For as the earth brings forth its shoots,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise
to spring up before all the nations.

John 1.6-8, 19-28

⁶ There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

¹⁹ This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?' ²⁰He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, 'I am not the Messiah.' ²¹And they asked him, 'What then? Are

you Elijah?’ He said, ‘I am not.’ ‘Are you the prophet?’ He answered, ‘No.’²² Then they said to him, ‘Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?’²³ He said, ‘I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, “Make straight the way of the Lord”’, as the prophet Isaiah said.

24 Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.²⁵ They asked him, ‘Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?’²⁶ John answered them, ‘I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know,²⁷ the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.’²⁸ This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.