

First Parish Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
P.O. Box 114, 47 East Derry Road
East Derry, New Hampshire 03041
Tel. (603) 434 – 0628

December 24, 2014 10:00 PM Christmas Eve Year B



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)

LET US ENTER INTO GOD'S PRESENCE

WELCOME AND CENTERING BREATH

"In the beginning..."

John 1:1-5

HYMN "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!

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born for our salvation,

Jesus, to Thee be all glory 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!

"darkness turns to light..."

Isaiah 9:2,6 ,7

Special Music "O Come, O Come Emmanuel"

Debbie Gline Allen, piano; Benjamin Allen, Trumpet

Advent Wreath Lighting Ceremony

One: We light the candle of hope to remind us of the promises made by all the prophets that God would raise up a savior for his people Israel.

Many: Christ is our hope and our salvation. He calls us to share our hope in Him with each other.

One: We light the candle of peace to remind us that it is only with God and by following in His path that true peace can be found.

**Many: Christ brings the Peace of God to us.
He calls us to share the peace He gives with others.**

One: We light the candle of love to remind us that Jesus is God's gift of love to us – and that in Him, the light of love triumphs over darkness.

**Many: Love never fails – it transforms all those who give it and receive it.
God calls us to share his love with each other.**

One: We light the candle of joy to remind us that God gives joy to every heart that abides in Him.

Many: As Mary rejoiced in the birth of Jesus – so His birth in us brings us joy. God calls us to share the joy He gives with each other.

One: We light the Christ candle to remind us that
the light of the world was born this night.

**Many: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. Those
who dwelt in a land of deep darkness – on them a light has shined.**

Unison Prayer of Approach - Let us pray:

**Almighty God - you have made this night holy by the gift of your son, born
of the Holy Spirit and of Mary. Upon Him rested all your grace, through him
has come all your mercy. Let His light shine within our hearts tonight even
more brightly than it shines from the candles in this place. Help us to hear
your word and to celebrate your everlasting love through Him. Amen**

LET US REMEMBER OUR BELOVED STORY

“Greetings, favored one...”

Luke 1:26-33; 38

HYMN “Mary, Woman of the Promise”

Mary, woman of the promise: vessel of your people’s dreams;
Through your open willing spirit waters of God’s goodness streamed.
Mary, song of holy wisdom sung before the world began;
Faithful to the Word within you, as you bore God’s wondrous plan.

“a decree went out ... all the world should be registered”

Luke 2:1-7

HYMN “Away in a Manger”

Away in a manger, no crib for a 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.
Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask Thee to stay close by me forever, and love me,
I pray. Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,
and fit us for heaven to live with Thee there.

“the glory of the LORD shone around them”

Luke 2:8-14

CHIME CHOIR: “Angels We Have Heard on High”

“Let us go now to Bethlehem”

Luke 2:15

HYMN “O Little Town of Bethlehem”

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light;
the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary, and gathered all above
while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars together proclaim the holy birth.
Your voices raise to God in praise; and peace to all on earth!

“they found the child lying in the manger”

Luke 2:16-18

HYMN *“What Child is This?”*

What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary’s lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet while shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this, the angels sing, is Christ, God’s holy offering;
Hail, hail, the Word made flesh, the babe, the child of Mary!

“glorifying and praising God”

Luke 2:19-20

HYMN *“Joy to the World”*

Joy to the World, the LORD is come Let earth its praises bring;
Let every heart prepare Him room, And heaven and nature Sing,
And heaven and nature Sing, and heaven and nature Sing.

Joy to the world! the Savior reigns Let men 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 and wonders of His love.

“Wise men came from the east”

Matthew 2:1-2; 2:9b-11

HYMN *“We Three Kings of Orient Are”*

We three kings of Orient are bearing gifts we traverse afar
Field and fountain, moor and mountain Following yonder star
O Star of wonder, star of night Star with royal beauty bright
Westward leading, still proceeding Guide us to thy Perfect Light
Glorious now behold Him arise, King and God and Sacrifice.
Alleluia, alleluia! Sounds through the earth and skies.

O Star of wonder, star of night Star with royal beauty bright
Westward leading, still proceeding Guide us to thy Perfect Light

PASTORAL REFLECTION

WE RESPOND TO GOD’S LOVE

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

O God, we come back to hear the story once again for ourselves, for our faith,
for our lives. We pray now for others and ask that you hear our prayers, O God.

May those who are lonely hear an angel song of hope drawing near,
and the footsteps of kindly people on the way.

May those who are homeless find at least a sheltering stable on this night
and the company of a God who stays fast beside them.

May those who are rejected, be embraced by unexpected neighbors
and the lost, see a guiding star overhead.

May those who are hungry be filled with the gifts of those who have much
and justice rise up in all the earth around them.

May those who are powerless and without voice, who suffer in the silences
be given the wise and the prophets to speak for them.

Praise be to you, O God. Gather us all into your loving presence now and help us to cherish the life of the vulnerable Child in all the world.

PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR (debts)

CHIME CHOIR: "Carol of the Bells"

WE CARRY THE LIGHT INTO THE WORLD

FINANCIAL OFFERING AND CANDLELIGHTING

(As you come forward **with your financial offering**, please take a candle-light back to your seats as we sing together.)

HYMN *"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"*

Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King; peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!" Joyful all ye nations rise, join the triumph of the skies; with the angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!" Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born King!"

Christ, by highest heaven adored; Christ, the everlasting Lord! Late in time behold Him come, off-spring of the virgin's womb. Veiled in flesh the God-head see; hail the incarnate Deity, pleased in flesh with us to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel. Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born King!"

HYMN *"Go, Tell It on the Mountain"*

**Refrain: Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere;
Go, tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born.**

While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night,
behold throughout the heavens there shone a holy light.

Refrain

The shepherds feared and trembled, when lo! above the earth,
rang out the angel chorus that hailed the Savior's birth.

Refrain

Down in a lowly manger the humble Christ was born,
and God sent us salvation, that blessed Christmas morn.

Refrain

HYMN *"The First Noel"*

The first Noel, the angel did say, was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay; in fields where they lay keeping their sheep, on a cold winter's night that was so deep.

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.

They looked up and saw a star shining in the east, beyond them far, and to the earth it gave great light, and so it continued both day and night.

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.

This star drew nigh to the northwest, o'er Bethlehem it took its rest, and there it did both stop and stay, right over the place where Jesus lay.

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, born in the King of Israel.

HYMN *"Silent Night, Holy Night"*

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 thy birth.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

*All that are able may stand.

PEACE LIGHT: The candles at this service were lit from a flame given to First Parish Congregational, UCC from Boy Scout Troop 405. This same flame originated in the grotto of Jerusalem several weeks ago and connects to flames across the world. Go to Peacelight.org for more information.

MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH

DEACONS OF THE MONTH

USHERS, GREETER(S)

PASTOR

AFFILIATE PASTOR

MUSIC DIRECTOR

ACCOMPANIST/ORGANIST

OFFICE MANAGER

NEWSLETTER/CE CONSULTANT

Members of the Congregation

Diana Sweeney and Sandy Carter

Ken Gould, Beth Hunter, Diana Sweeney, Bill & Janice Burke

The Rev. Dr. Deborah Roof

Rev. Chester R. Ham

Susan Handy

Jeff DeLangie

Lindsey Roman

Julie Daysa

Welcome Visitors! Merry Christmas! We are so very glad that you are here!

**First Parish Congregational MISSION STATEMENT:
First Parish Congregational Church, United Church of Christ,
is a community of faith built upon a firm foundation of
worship, prayer and education.**

**In affirming diversity, we are dedicated to welcoming all people
who seek the Word of God, Christian fellowship and service to others.
In partnership with Christ and led by the Holy Spirit,
we reach out to the ever-widening community
through active and loving ministry.**

As members of the United Church of Christ we say:

“No matter who **you are
or where **you** are on life’s journey,
you are welcome here!”
We mean it!”**

If you would like information about our church or would like to be added to our mailing list, please fill out a bright yellow “How May We Serve You”/ “Communication Options” card located in the pews and at the back of the Sanctuary.

Heartfelt thanks to all of the Deacons and to Diane Breeden whose assistance and support this Advent Season has been so welcomed and so appreciated. Your help with all of the services has been invaluable. Christmas Blessings! Pastor Deborah

Membership: Interested in joining us as a new member of First Parish? We will be accepting new members into our church family on **January 11** during the worship service. Please contact Pastor Deborah at pastordeborah@fpc-ucc.org for more information!

SoulCollage®: SoulCollage® is a fun, creative, intuitive and absorbing process of creating cards with collated images. Liz Greenberg recently returned from an intensive weekend workshop in which she was trained to share this process with others. Her excitement and passion is overflowing and she would love to share her enthusiasm and knowledge with her church family by **offering a 3-hour introductory workshop from 9-noon on Saturday, January 10 in A/B.** SoulCollage® is *stress-free* fun, with all materials provided. **Advanced registration is necessary:** please RSVP by e-mailing Liz at lizgreenberg26@gmail.com.

ANNUAL REPORT deadline is January 1, 2015.

A MESSAGE FROM THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY

If you want contributions to be included in your tax returns for 2014, they must be at the church on or before **January 11, 2015** and should be dated **December 31, 2014.** The books will be **closed Monday, January 12, 2014.**

Thank you, Pat Crowell

P.S. We deeply appreciate end-of-the-year charitable giving.

A Note from our Stewardship Board:

We have received **101** pledge cards. Our goal is **148**. It's not too late!

Fran Berube, John Bartel, Carl Hepworth, Pat Crowell and Pastor Deborah

A Note about using your God-given gifts to serve the church:

Are you a foodie? Check out the Community Life Committee!

Do you like to tinker around the house? Check out the Facilities committee!

Are you passionate about hospitality? Talk to the Membership folks!

There is a place for you – no matter your interests. Talk to Stewardship or Nominating to find out about other opportunities to serve.

Liz and I want to thank all those who sent us cards and gifts during this Christmas Season. We approach our 1 year anniversary with First Parish Congregational UCC. We appreciate your faithfulness and your friendship. God has blessed us in amazing ways this year. May God's blessing continue to warm us and challenge us to do great things in God's name! Thank you, Pastor Deborah and Liz

Merry Christmas!
God Bless Us – Every One!

