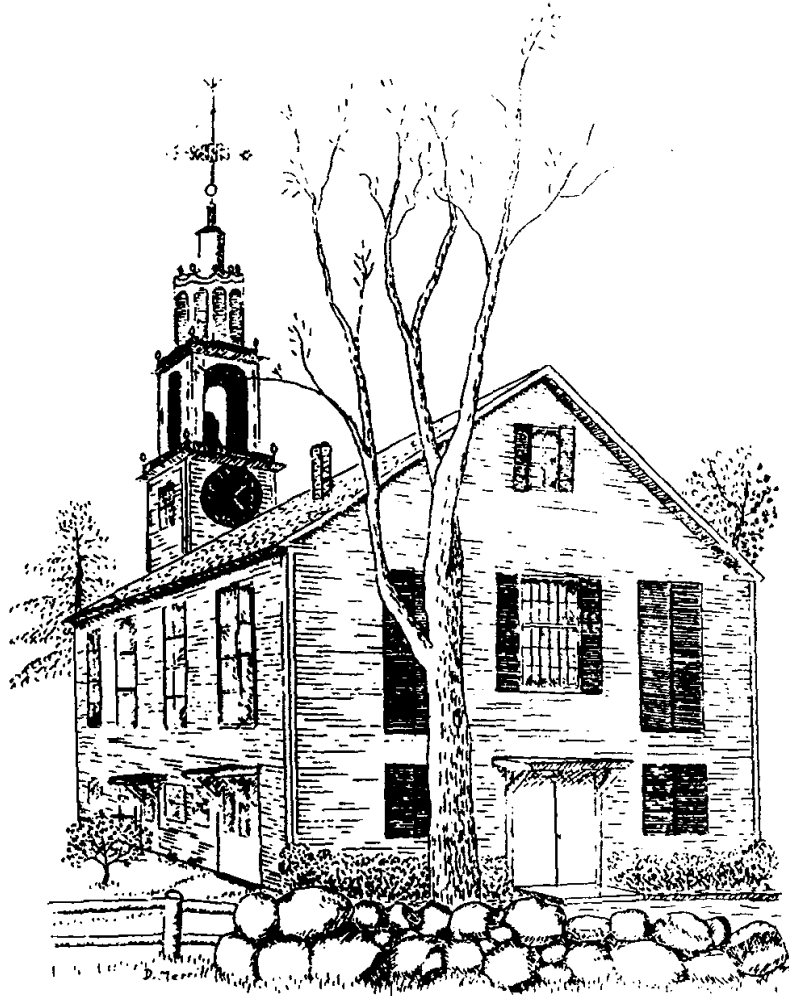


First Parish Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
P.O. Box 114, 47 East Derry Road
East Derry, New Hampshire 03041
Tel. (603) 434 – 0628

January 4, 2014 Epiphany



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)

January 4, 2014 Epiphany

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS & JOYS AND CONCERNS

WE GATHER INTO THE PRESENCE OF GOD

*HYMN NO. 126

"Angels From the Realm of Glory"

*CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Come, join the search for all God will reveal.

All: God has sent light to dispel our fears.

One: The gospel of Christ reveals God's grace.

All: Let us gather together and lift up our eyes.

*PRAYER OF INVOCATION (in unison)

God beyond our knowing, grant us today new glimpses of who you are and what you intend for us to be. Come, Holy Mystery, to reveal as much of your truth as we can stretch to understand and receive into our lives. 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.**

CALL TO CONFESSION

The God of justice and righteousness calls us to account for the ways we invest our hours and our resources. God listens for our voices and watches for our works.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (in unison)

God of sovereigns and commoners, we confess that we are often more impressed with famous people than we are with your amazing glory. We reach for power and popularity more than for justice for the poor. We are more focused on prosperity than on relief for the oppressed. Cause a new epiphany among us, we pray. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

The showers of God's blessings will fall on us like rain on new-mown grass. Peace will abound in the hearts of those who give help to the poor and needy. God commissions us, as fellow heirs with Christ, to fulfill the mission given to the saints.

AND ALL GOD'S PEOPLE SAY: **Thanks be to God.**

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 – The Kings Arrive! Organized by Anne-Marie Merrill

Sarah Keller

Hymn No. 139 *The First Noel* (v. 3)

And by the light of that same star, three sages came from country far;

To seek for a king was their intent, and to follow the star wherever it went.

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.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

*HYMN NO. 417

"This is the Day of New Beginnings"

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

PRAYER of CONSECRATION

Followed by the Serenity Prayer

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; the courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference. Living one day at a time; enjoying one moment at a time; accepting hardships as the pathway to peace; taking, as He did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it; trusting that He will make all things right if I surrender to His Will; that I may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with Him forever in the next. Amen.

(This prayer was written by Reinhold Niebuhr, a pastor and professor of theology in the early history of our denomination.)

OUR SACRED STORY: JESUS in the BREAKING of the BREAD and CUP POURED OUT

SHARING the MEAL

We celebrate Communion this morning by bringing you the Bread of Life and the Cup of Salvation. As you pass the trays, try to make eye contact with your neighbor.

As you pass the bread, please say the words "**The Bread of Life**" or "**Take and eat.**" The appropriate response when receiving the gifts or elements is "**Amen**" or "**Thanks be to God.**" You may eat the bread when you receive it. This symbolizes that we, each, have a private relationship with God.

As you pass the tray of grape juice, please say the words "**The Cup of Salvation**" or "**The Cup of Love**". Again, your response will be "**Amen**" or "**Thanks be to God.**" Please hold the cup until everyone is served. We will drink the Cup of Salvation in unison, which symbolizes that we are together in a community of faith.

If you are accompanying your children: they are invited to participate with traditional elements or by taking a gold fish cracker and a grape.

Gluten-free bread is available. Let the server know.

PRAYER of THANKSGIVING (in unison)

In deep gratitude, for this moment, this meal, these people, we give ourselves to You. Take us out to live as changed people because we have shared the Living Bread and cannot remain the same.

Ask much of us, expect much from us, enable much by us, encourage many through us. May we live the LOVE you have shown us - to God's glory and to the betterment of God's children of every kind. Amen.

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD FOR US

HEBREW SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 60:1-6

(O.T. p. 766)

GOSPEL

Matthew 2:1-12

(N.T. p. 2)

SERMON

"Renew Us, O God"

The Rev. Dr. Deborah Roof

CHOIR ANTHEM

"Renew Us"

Fromach/Lantz

WE RESPOND WITH OUR STEWARDSHIP AND OUR PRAYERS

PASTORAL PRAYER

CHORAL RESPONSE

"Come to Me"

WE RESPOND WITH OUR FINANCIAL GIFTS

OFFERTORY INVITATION

No gift is too small, except to the giver, for we cannot receive what we are unwilling to share.

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**

We reach for the boundless riches of Christ, even as we give the tithes and offerings we have pledged. An abundance of things does not satisfy, and the wealth of nations cannot buy peace. Therefore, we join our efforts in the church to make a difference in the world, not through instruments of oppression but through the power of love. Employ our gifts in the service of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

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

*HYMN NO. 154

"Go, Tell it on the Mountain"

BENEDICTION

BENEDICTION RESPONSE

"Christ, Be Our Light"

POSTLUDE

**Indicates all that are able may stand.*

MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH

USHERS

GREETER(S)

PASTOR

AFFILIATE PASTOR

MUSIC DIRECTOR

ACCOMPANIST/ORGANIST

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

NEWSLETTER/CE CONSULTANT

Members of the Congregation

Diaconate

Michael Bryan

Verna Elwell

The Rev. Dr. Deborah Roof

Rev. Chester R. Ham

Susan Handy

Jeff DeLangie

Lindsey Roman

Julie Daysa

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



Scriptures – January 4

Isaiah 60.1-6

⁶⁰ Arise, shine; for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.

² For darkness shall cover the earth,
and thick darkness the peoples;
but the LORD will arise upon you,
and his glory will appear over you.

³ Nations shall come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

⁴ Lift up your eyes and look around;
they all gather together, they come to you;
your sons shall come from far away,
and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms.

⁵ Then you shall see and be radiant;
your heart shall thrill and rejoice,
because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you,
the wealth of the nations shall come to you.

⁶ A multitude of camels shall cover you,
the young camels of Midian and Ephah;
all those from Sheba shall come.

They shall bring gold and frankincense,
and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD.

Matthew 2.1-12

² In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, ² asking, 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.' ³ When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴ and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵ They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

⁶ "And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel."'

⁷ Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸ Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.' ⁹ When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the

star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was.¹⁰ When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy.¹¹ On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.¹² And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.