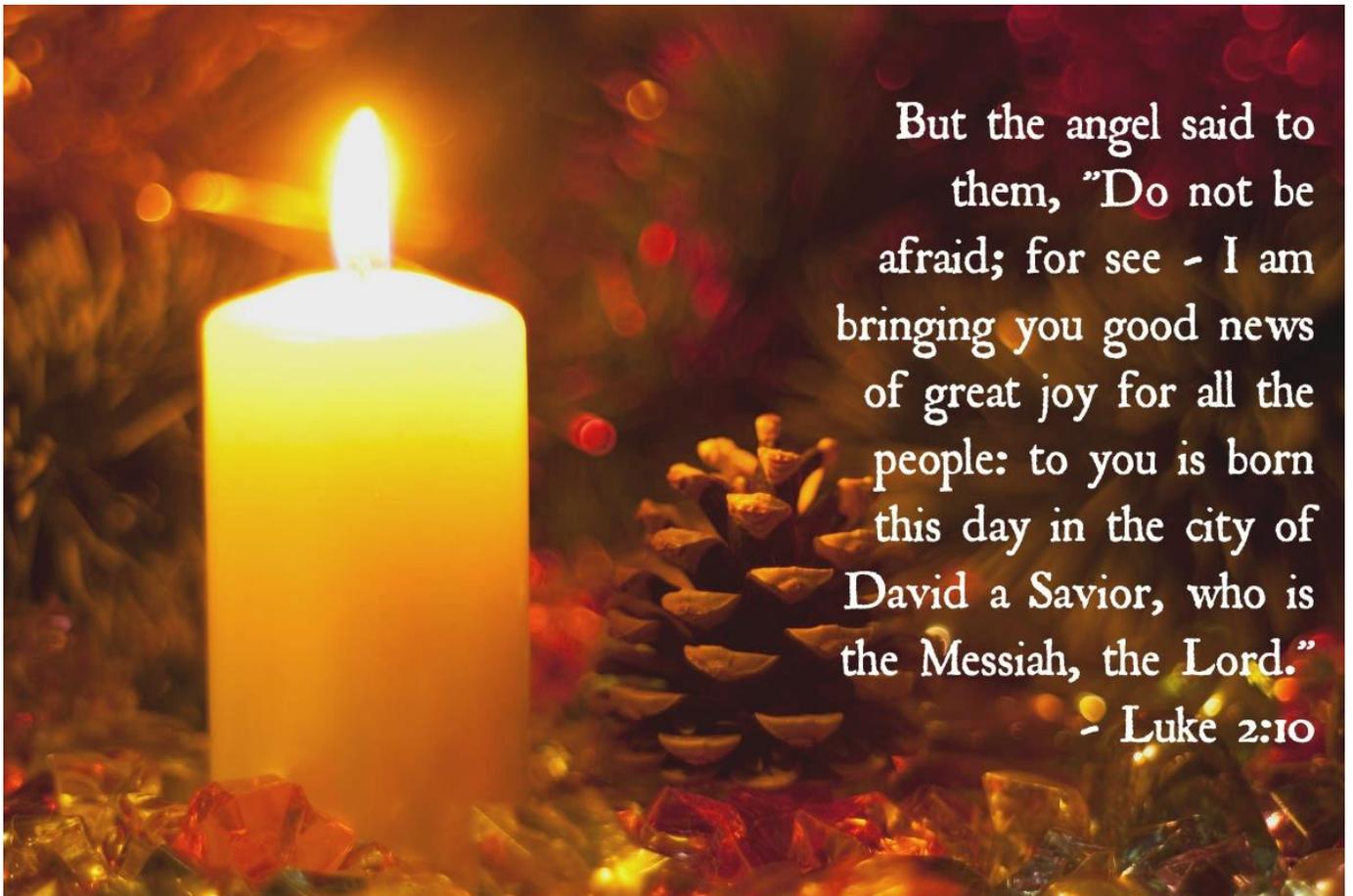


First Parish Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
P.O. Box 114, 47 East Derry Road
East Derry, New Hampshire 03041
Tel. (603) 434 – 0628

December 24, 2015 4:30 PM Christmas Eve Year C



But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see - I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord."
- Luke 2:10

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)

WE GATHER AS GOD'S PEOPLE

WELCOME

The Rev. Heidi Carrington Heath

Lighting of Advent Wreath

One: We light the candle of hope to remind us of God's promises.

Many: Christ is our hope and our salvation.

One: We light the candle of peace to remind us Jesus is the Prince of Peace.

Many: Christ brings the peace of God to us with the Holy Spirit.

One: We light the candle of joy to remind us that God gives joy to every heart!

Many: As Mary rejoiced in the birth of Jesus – so do we!

One: We light the candle of love to remind us that Jesus is God's gift of love.

Many: Love never fails – it transforms all those who give it and receive it.

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.

*CALL TO WORSHIP (adapted from Ann B. Day)

One: Through lush farmlands and bleak alleys,

Many: sweeps good news of great joy!

One: Through empty wants and desperate needs,

Many: blazes a star to light our way

One: Through pounding turmoil and blazing fear

Many: sounds an angel chorus: Glory to God in the highest; peace to God's people on earth!

One: Receive the news! Follow the star! Heed the angel!

Many: Through song, silence, wonder, and the laughter of children, let us make our way to Bethlehem.

One: Let us worship the Holy One, who beckons in an infant's cry.

SPECIAL MUSIC

O HOLY NIGHT

Debbie and Ben Gline-Allen

THE LITTLE PAGEANT

The music below is disbursed throughout the pageant – we will invite you into singing for each one

HYMNS

"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!

“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.

“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.

Come to Bethlehem and see Christ whose birth the angels sing; Come adore on bended knee, God, our world now entering.

Gloria, in excelsis Deo, Gloria, in excelsis Deo.

“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.

(Children will return to their families at this time.)

WE RESPOND TO GOD’S LOVE

A CHRISTMAS PRAYER

Rev. Heidi Carrington Heath

OFFERTORY INVITATION

Just as God gave God’s Son as a precious gift to us, we are called to give generously to God’s work in this world.

OFFERTORY MUSIC

First Parish Children’s Choir

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

O God, to you we dedicate these gifts with our love and thanks. Turn our coins into a shower of mercy. Transform our cash into streams of love and beauty. Make our checks instruments of justice and peace in your world. Most of all may they glorify you and your son born to us this night so long ago. In His name we pray, Amen.

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

CHRISTMAS LITANY – *Candle Lighting* (Welcome to the Light, written by Jennifer Phillips)

One: In a little town, known for nothing much, God's holy child was born.

All: Welcome the Light!

One: By the faint light of the moon, Mary and Joseph found their way.

All: Welcome the Light!

One: Shown by a courtyard fire, the open stable door.

All: Welcome the Light!

One: In the shadowy stable stall, Joseph kindled a lamp.

All: Welcome the Light!

One: There Mary gave birth to Jesus, called God-With-Us.

All: Welcome the Light!

One: Angels opened the doors of heaven, sang, "Glory to God in the heights!"

All: Welcome the Light!

One: Shepherds saw the sky ablaze, left their sheep and came to see.

All: Welcome the Light!

One: In the darkest winter night, God set a brilliant star.

All: Welcome the Light!

One: Magi from the East divined God's shining sign.

All: Welcome the Light!

One: And on this Christmas night with joy, we greet the Child.

All: Welcome the Light!

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.

THE BENEDICTION

Rev. Heidi Carrington Heath

THE POSTLUDE