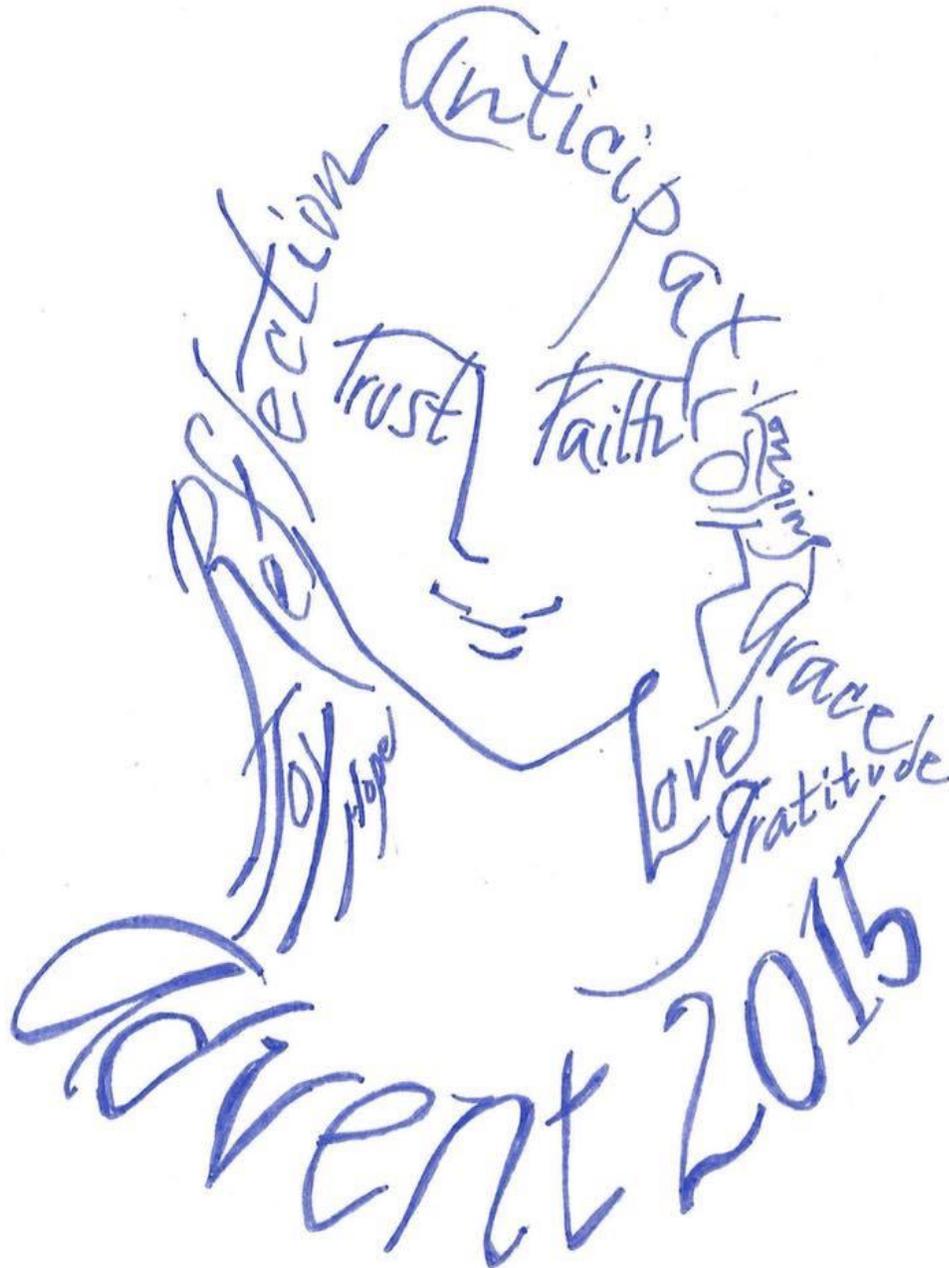


First Parish Congregational Church  
United Church of Christ  
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**December 6, 2015 Advent Year C**



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 6, 2015      Second Sunday of Advent (Year C)**

**Jesus said:** 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and **you gave me food**, I was thirsty and **you gave me something to drink**, I was a stranger and **you welcomed me**, I was naked and **you gave me clothing**, I was sick and **you took care of me**, I was in prison and **you visited me.**' (Matthew 25:34-36)

CHRISTMAS CAROLING

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS & JOYS AND CONCERNS

**WE GATHER INTO THE PRESENCE OF GOD**

MOMENT OF SILENCE

Lighting the Candles

\*HYMN NO. 116

*"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"*

\*CALL TO WORSHIP RESPONSE

One: Listen! Listen for a messenger from God.

**All: We are here to listen for a word from God.**

One: Come with your joys and sorrows, laughter and tears

**All: We rejoice to offer the love of Christ to others.**

\*PRAYER OF INVOCATION (in unison)

**God of the prophets, whose salvation is freely offered to all flesh, open our imagination to participate in these moments in the study of your truth. May ancient words hold for us a fresh message that engages our best efforts.**

\*SONG OF PRAISE #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

Beneath all the pretense and brokenness of our lives, God helps us to discover God's forgiving spirit.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (in unison)

**O God, we have tried to cover up our sins, yet you know the disorder we have caused in our lives. You have witnessed our poor choices and our destructive habits. Hear our cries of repentance and turn our lives around, that we may know the wonder of your forgiveness. Amen.**

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Good news! God has done great things for us. We are loved; we are forgiven; we are claimed by God's grace. Thanks be to God.

*Lighting of the Advent Candle: Second Sunday of Advent: Peace – with help from Bill & Lynne Mann*

One: The candle of hope we light in this hour...

**All: Proclaims that Jesus is coming in power...**

One: We come seeking renewed hope.

**All: We wait for a future now hidden from view...**

**All: In which God is coming to make all things new!**      *(Light the candle of Hope)*

One: Peace is a flame given by God to be a light in the darkness.

**All: The flame of Peace is righteousness and equity,  
compassion and justice.**

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 into Christ's Peace.**

*(Light the candle of Peace)*

## WE INVITE FORWARD GOD'S LITTLE CHILDREN

CHILDREN'S OFFERING

*"Away in a Manger"*

PRAYER OF DEDICATION (in unison)

**Dear God, we offer you our gifts with thanks and praise, be with us and guide us all of our days. Teach us how to love each other, and to shine your light into the world. Amen.**

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Sue Handy

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.** (Children K-5<sup>th</sup> grade (5<sup>th</sup> graders optional) may now go to their classes in the Noyes Building.)

## THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

HYMN NO. 336

*"Here, O My Lord, I See You" (Communion, v. 1, 2, & 5)*

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

PRAYER of CONSECRATION

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

SHARING the MEAL

Pastor Deborah says the words of institution: **"This is the body of Christ, broken for you."**

You may eat the bread when you receive it. This symbolizes that we, each, have a private relationship with 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.

To the best of your ability and comfort level please participate in this sacrament with your eyes and your voice. Make eye contact with your neighbor and say the words **"The Bread of Life."** Respond with: **"Amen"** or **"Thanks be to 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 is: **"Amen"** or **"Thanks be to God."**

If you are accompanying your children: they are invited to participate and we trust that you will teach them the meaning of this sacred meal.

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

PRAYER of THANKSGIVING (in unison)

**Thank you, God, for life in the Spirit of Jesus:**

**For gladness in this bread and cup, for love that cannot die,**

**For peace the world cannot give, for joy in the company of friends,**

**For the glory of creation, for the mission of justice you have made our own.**

**In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.**

## WE HEAR GOD'S WORD FOR US

\*HYMN NO. 108

*"Isaiah the Prophet Has Written"*

NEW TESTAMENT

Philippians 1:3-11

(N.T. p. 209)

GOSPEL

Luke 3:1-6

(N.T. p. 61)

SERMON

Hidden Sacred Story

CHOIR ANTHEM

*"O Come to Set Us Free"*

Arr. McDonald

## WE RESPOND WITH OUR PRAYERS

PASTORAL PRAYER  
CHORAL RESPONSE

*"Come to Me"*

Bell

## WE RESPOND WITH OUR MONETARY GIFTS

OFFERTORY INVITATION

When we sense the wonder of God's majesty and realize the amazing extent of God's concern for us, we can only respond with all that we have and all we are. What we offer now is a small measure of our gratitude.

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 (UNISON)

**How good you have been to us, gracious God! You have filled our mouths with laughter and our tongues with shouts of joy. We give thanks, not only with a portion of our income, but also through renewed commitment to righteous living. By your grace, we share in the work Christ came to accomplish among us. May love abound in and through us. Amen.**

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

\*HYMN NO. 126

*"Angels from the Realm of Glory"*

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)

SENIOR PASTOR

ASSOCIATE PASTOR

AFFILIATE PASTOR

MUSIC DIRECTOR

ORGANIST

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Members of the Congregation

Fred Merrill and Julie Turner

MacKenzie Kittery

Diaconate

Michael Bryan

Verna Elwell and Shirley Dickason

The Rev. Dr. Deborah Roof

Pastor Heidi Carrington Heath

Rev. Chester R. Ham

Susan Handy

Jeff DeLangie

Lindsey Roman

## Welcome Visitors!

**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!" Please introduce yourself to an usher and come meet Pastor Deborah. Feel free to join us for refreshments in Currier Hall immediately following the service.**

**Thank you for worshipping with us. We are honored to have you with us today.**

## Scriptures – December 6

### Philippians 1.3-11

<sup>3</sup> I thank my God every time I remember you, <sup>4</sup> constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, <sup>5</sup> because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. <sup>6</sup> I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. <sup>7</sup> It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel. <sup>8</sup> For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. <sup>9</sup> And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight <sup>10</sup> to help you to determine what is best, so that on the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, <sup>11</sup> having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

### Luke 3:1-6

<sup>3</sup> In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Iturea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, <sup>2</sup> during the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. <sup>3</sup> He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, <sup>4</sup> as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

'The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

"Prepare the way of the Lord,  
make his paths straight.

<sup>5</sup> Every valley shall be filled,  
and every mountain and hill shall be made low,  
and the crooked shall be made straight,  
and the rough ways made smooth;

<sup>6</sup> and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.' "