

December 24, 2017

10:00PM

Christmas Eve Year B



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

## LET US ENTER INTO GOD'S PRESENCE

\*GATHERING 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!**

(Please remain **seated** for hymn singing for the remainder of this service.)

## WELCOME AND CENTERING BREATH

"Christmas Bells" written by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow in 1863

SPECIAL MUSIC: "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day"

Debbie Allen, soprano; Benjamin Allen, trumpet; Dani Allen, guitar

## 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 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 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 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**

### **WE REMEMBER OUR BELOVED STORY TOGETHER**

**“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**

**HYMN “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.**

**“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 2:16-20**

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!

**“wise men came from the east”**

**Matthew 2:1-10**

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

**“leaving by another road” and “Joseph’s dream”**

**Matthew 2:11-15**

**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)

**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.**

PASTORAL REFLECTION by Pastor Deborah

## **WE CARRY THE LIGHT INTO THE WORLD**

SPECIAL MUSIC: "Go, Tell It On the Mountain"

Benjamin Allen, trumpet; Debbie Allen, piano; Dani Allen, guitar

GIFT GIVING AND CANDLELIGHTING

We invite everyone to come forward at this sacred time. Ushers are  
available to receive your financial offering and then you will receive the  
Christmas light from Pastor Deborah. 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 *"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.

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 is 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 (Please remain seated until the conclusion of the Postlude.)  
(After the Postlude please extinguish your candle before you stand up.  
Kindly give your candle to an usher as you leave.)

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](http://Peacelight.org) for more information.

MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH  
DEACONS OF THE MONTH  
SENIOR PASTOR AND TEACHER  
CE DIRECTOR  
MUSIC DIRECTOR  
ACCOMPANIST/ORGANIST  
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Members of the Congregation  
Ken Gould and Julie Turner  
The Rev. Dr. Deborah Roof  
Christine Lehoullier  
Susan Handy  
Chris Ferrin  
Hannah Collier

**SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR MUSICIANS THIS EVENING:  
DEBBIE, DANI, AND BEN ALLEN**

**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!”  
Here at First Parish we mean it!”**

## **A MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

We have enjoyed a very busy year of Christian Education with our new CE Director, Christine Lehoullier. Not only are our Children's programs flourishing on Sunday morning, we have revitalized our Youth Program for our teens. In addition, our Adult Faith Formation programming has reached a new level of success. Adults gather on Tuesday evening to read and wonder together over sacred scripture, as well as reading books and sharing our faith journeys.

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## **A MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD OF MISSION AND OUTREACH**

We had an amazing response to this year's Angel Tree outreach. Through your generous donations we were able to provide 106 gifts for folks in need. Our congregation served 6 FPC families, including 16 children for which we bought 62 gifts. In addition, we had 22 names from 18 families from Community Caregivers for which we bought 44 gifts. Merry Christmas and Thanks be to God!

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## **A MESSAGE FROM OUR STEWARDSHIP BOARD**

We are so grateful to everyone who contributed financially to the church this year! And we are so grateful to everyone who contributed with the giving of their time and their talent. Your generosity is what helps us to finance the programming that we offer here at First Parish

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## **A MESSAGE FROM OUR FACILITIES BOARD**

We have accomplished much work on our physical plant this year. This fall we suffered two floods from different sources in the kitchen which did a great deal of damage. After four months of reconstruction, we are back in business – with some nice improvements to boot! Thank you to all for your patience throughout this process.

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## **A MESSAGE FROM OUR COUNCIL**

As you go about your annual gift-giving this year, please remember that a gift to the church is always welcome. We can't do the work of Christ without you.