

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 3, 2017      First Sunday of Advent**



**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 3, 2017*      **First Sunday of Advent**

**WE GATHER INTO THE PRESENCE OF GOD**

GATHERING MUSIC: PRAISE GOD FROM WHOM ALL BLESSINGS FLOW!

LIGHTING THE CHRIST LIGHT

Acolyte: Emily Raymond

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS; SHARING JOYS & CONCERNS

(Please introduce yourself; give a brief description at this time; ask people to seek you out after worship.)

**LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH**

**One:** Christ is coming. Christ is always coming, always entering a wounded heart or a troubled world. Therefore, we light the first candle of Advent, the candle of hope, because we dare to express our longing for peace, for healing, and the well-being of all creation.

**All:** **Loving God, as we enter this Advent season, we open all the dark places in our lives and memories to the healing light of Christ. Show us the creative power of hope. Prepare our hearts to be transformed by You, O God, that we may walk in the light of Christ.**

\*CALL TO WORSHIP (Please stand in body or Spirit.)

One: Awake, people of God, and stay alert for Christ's coming.

**All: Make your ways known to us, O God.**

One: We are all God's people; no one is excluded.

**All: Come together as God's family for worship and prayer.**

\*HYMN: #122 – Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus

\*INVOCATION

Amid threatening clouds of anger and selfish strife, come, O God, to bring light. Into our days of worry and anxiety, send a confident hope. Enrich us with spiritual gifts that transcend disappointments and spill out in generous compassion for all your suffering children. Meet us today where we are so we may be equipped for trials yet to come and for joys yet to be revealed. In Jesus' name. Amen.

\*SONG OF PRAISE #236

**Halle, halle, halleluja. Halle, halle, halleluja.**

**Halle, halle, halleluja. Halle, halle, halleluja.**

CALL TO CONFESSION

As a new year begins in the church, we seek to leave behind our past unfaithfulness. We remember our doubts and neglect, the empty times when prayer is forgotten and our focus is narrowed to petty concerns. God is waiting to hear from us. Let us pray.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (in unison)

**Awesome God, we confess that we have blamed you for hiding from us when in truth we have failed to see You in the thousands of ways you are revealing yourself to us every day. Open our eyes to You, we pray. Amen.**

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

God's grace has come to us in Jesus Christ. God restores us to a right relationship with the eternal, that we might rightfully value ourselves and all persons. Praise God, the source of all things!

## **WE INVITE FORWARD GOD'S YOUNGER DISCIPLES**

*At this time, all children are invited to come forward for the children's offering, and children's time. An offering is not required for participation. All are welcome, especially first time visitors.*

### **CHILDREN'S OFFERING**

*"Come as a Child"*

**Come as a child, when He calls you to follow.**

**Just come as a child, for His love is untold. Come as a child, when you seek His communion, for then, all His blessings unfold.**

### **PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

**In our hearts 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**

Pastor Deborah

## ***THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION***

### **INVITATION TO THE TABLE**

#### **ANTHEM**

*"All are Welcome at the Table"*

Mary McDonald

### **OUR SACRED STORY with the PRAYER of CONSECRATION**

#### **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.**

#### **SHARING the MEAL**

We celebrate Communion this morning by Intinction (dipping your morsel of bread into the cup). This morning we will use BOTH gluten AND **gluten free** bread for Communion. **The gluten free bread will be served by Pastor Deborah.** You are invited to come forward where you will be invited to receive a morsel of bread and dip it into the grape juice. Your children are invited to participate and we trust that you will teach them the sacred meaning of this holy meal.

#### **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: #103 – Watcher, Tell Us of the Night

OLD TESTAMENT    Isaiah 64:1-9    (Insert)

GOSPEL    Mark 13:24-37    (Insert)

SERMON    "Waiting with Mark"    The Rev. Dr. Deborah Roof

## WE RESPOND WITH PRAYER

CHOIR ANTHEM

“I Hear The Prophet Calling”

Pepper Choplin

PASTORAL PRAYER

CHORAL RESPONSE

## WE RESPOND WITH OUR FINANCIAL GIFTS

OFFERTORY INVITATION

We have been enriched and strengthened in so many ways by the gifts of God. Now we have the privilege of sharing God's Word with the world. Our offerings enable our church's witness in this community and a caring outreach around the globe. Let us give as we have been blessed.

OFFERTORY MUSIC

\*DOXOLOGY #562 – Take My Gifts

**Take my gifts and let me love you, God who first of all loved me,  
gave me light and food and shelter, gave me life and set me free,  
now because your love has touched me, I have love to give away,  
now the bread of love is rising, loaves of love to multiply!**

\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Gracious God, we give our best to you, not out of guilt or fear, but with gratitude and faith. You have been our support in times of need. Every breath we take is a gift from you. We dedicate these symbols of thankfulness and all the days of our lives to those purposes. Amen.

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

\*HYMN: #102 – O How Shall I Receive You

BENEDICTION

BENEDICTION RESPONSE

POSTLUDE

*\*Indicates all that are able may stand.*

MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH

DEACONS OF THE MONTH

LAY READER

USHERS

GREETER(s)

SENIOR PASTOR AND TEACHER

MUSIC DIRECTOR

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION DIRECTOR

ACCOMPANIST/ORGANIST

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Members of the Congregation

Ken Gould and Julie Turner

Ryan Lehoullier

Diaconate and Michael Bryan

Verna Elwell and Shirley Dickason

The Rev. Dr. Deborah Roof

Susan Handy

Christine Lehoullier

Chris Ferrin

Hannah Collier