

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 31, 2017 First Sunday after Christmas



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 31, 2017

First Sunday After Christmas

WE GATHER INTO THE PRESENCE OF GOD

**GATHERING MUSIC: PRAISE GOD FROM WHOM ALL BLESSINGS FLOW!
LIGHTING THE CHRIST LIGHT**

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS; SHARING JOYS & CONCERNS

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

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

One: God gathers us from the farthest parts of the earth.
God brings together a great variety of people.

All: Surely God will meet us here.

Surely God will save the people.

One: Some come weeping, in need of consolation.
Some are confused, needing to find a straight path.

All: We are a great company of seekers.

All have stumbled and need a blessing.

One: Come with radiant delight before our God.
Come with joyous dancing and singing.

All: God offers us life in a watered garden.

God brings us joy and gladness and abundance.

***HYMN: #144 - Hark! the Herald Angels Sing**

***INVOCATION**

We praise you, O God, for the comfort you offer and the bounty you bestow. Grant wisdom and insight to your gathered people, that we might know the mystery of your will. We have welcomed a baby in Bethlehem. Now we seek to learn more fully our responsibility in Christ. Lead us, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

***SONG OF PRAISE #759**

Glory to the Creator, the Christ, the Holy Spirit, Three-in-One; As it is in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

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 Hymn #138 Jesus, Our Brother, Strong and Good
Jesus, Our Brother, Strong and Good, was humbly born in a stable rude, and the friendly beasts around him stood, Jesus our brother, strong and good.

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.

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.

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD FOR US

*HYMN: #148 - What Child is This?

OLD TESTAMENT Ecclesiastes 3:1-13

¹For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:
²a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;
³a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;
⁴a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
⁵a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
⁶a time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to throw away;
⁷a time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
⁸a time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace.

GOSPEL John 1:1-9

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, ^[a] and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. ⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

SERMON

"Testify to the light"

The Rev. Dr. Deborah Roof

WE RESPOND WITH PRAYER

PASTORAL PRAYER

WE RESPOND WITH OUR FINANCIAL GIFTS

OFFERTORY INVITATION

How will the nations hear God's word if the church is unfaithful? Who will seek the lost if we do not care? Who will teach the young if we have no time for them? Who will uphold true values against the compromises that demean human life? What we return to God can make a difference.

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**

Use our gifts, holy God, to sound a word of hope in our world. Let them reach beyond this place to care for lonely, frightened, hurting people. Lift up among us those lasting values that enrich lives and make them whole. To these ends, we dedicate our offering and ourselves. Amen.

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

*HYMN: #129 - Good Christian Friends, Rejoice
(Please be seated after the hymn.)

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE (Please remain seated during the 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

Ken Gould and Julie Turner

Julie Turner

Ken Gould, Dee Deranian, Shirley Dickason

Joan Crimlisk, and Michael Bryan

Liz Greenberg

The Rev. Dr. Deborah Roof

Susan Handy

Christine Lehoullier

Chris Ferrin

Hannah Collier