

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

November 26, 2017 Proper 29



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)

November 26, 2017 Proper 29
WE GATHER INTO THE PRESENCE OF GOD

GATHERING MUSIC: PRAISE GOD FROM WHOM ALL BLESSINGS FLOW!

LIGHTING THE CHRIST LIGHT

Acolyte: Heather Richardson

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: Come, God is seeking to gather us together.

All: Like a shepherd searching for lost sheep, God calls us.

One: God reaches out to rescue all who have strayed.

All: Scattered, weak, and injured ones are drawn to God.

One: We come, in need of healing, seeking a blessing.

All: God's steadfast love becomes real to us here.

*HYMN: (insert) All Creatures of Our God and King

*INVOCATION

We come with gladness, loving God, drawn by a desire to praise you and give thanks. Enlighten the eyes of our hearts that we may be full of hope. Enlarge the circle of our concern that we may see the stranger as next of kin, the hungry person as part of our own family, the one who is sick as a whole individual deserving of our care. Grant us the presence of Christ that we may learn more fully to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. Amen.

*SONG OF PRAISE #236

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

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

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

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: #507 Jesus, the Very Thought to Me

NEW TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 34:11-24

¹¹ For thus says the Lord GOD: I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out.

¹² As shepherds seek out their flocks when they are among their scattered sheep, so I will seek out my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places to which they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. ¹³ I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the watercourses, and in all the inhabited parts of the land. ¹⁴ I will feed them with good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel shall be their pasture; there they shall lie down in good grazing land, and they shall feed on rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. ¹⁵ I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord GOD. ¹⁶ I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with justice. ¹⁷ As for you, my flock, thus says the Lord GOD: I shall judge between sheep and sheep, between rams and goats: ¹⁸ Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture, but you must tread down with your feet the rest of your pasture? When you drink of clear water, must you foul the rest with your feet? ¹⁹ And must my sheep eat what you have trodden with your feet, and drink what you have fouled with your feet? ²⁰ Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD to them: I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. ²¹ Because you pushed with flank and shoulder, and butted at all the weak animals with your horns until you scattered them far and wide, ²² I will save my flock, and they shall no longer be ravaged; and I will judge between sheep and sheep. ²³ I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. ²⁴ And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them; I, the LORD, have spoken.

GOSPEL

Matthew 25:31-46

³¹ "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. ³² All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, ³³ and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. ³⁴ Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; ³⁵ 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, ³⁶ 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.' ³⁷ Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? ³⁸ And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? ³⁹ And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' ⁴⁰ And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, ^[a] you did it to me.' ⁴¹ Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; ⁴² for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' ⁴⁴ Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?' ⁴⁵ Then he will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' ⁴⁶ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

SERMON

“Giving God Thanks”

The Rev. Dr. Deborah Roof

WE RESPOND WITH PRAYER

CHOIR ANTHEM

“God’s Gonna Build Up Zion’s Walls”

Arr. Carter

PASTORAL PRAYER

CHORAL RESPONSE

WE RESPOND WITH OUR FINANCIAL GIFTS

OFFERTORY INVITATION

The riches we enjoy grant to us an exciting opportunity to be generous and work for good. Through our offerings, we seek to share the good news, to bind up the injured, strengthen the weak, secure justice for the oppressed, and bring back those who have strayed. Join in this venture as we present our gifts.

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

God of steadfast love, receive these expressions of our thanks for the glorious inheritance entrusted to us. We hereby enlist ourselves and our resources toward the realization of your eternal purpose for all humanity. May this congregation become more and more a source of hope for each of us and for all we meet. Amen.

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

*HYMN: #301 Crown with Your Richest Crowns

BENEDICTION

BENEDICTION RESPONSE

POSTLUDE

**Indicates all that are able may stand.*

MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH

Members of the Congregation

DEACONS OF THE MONTH

Reni Harnden and Cindy Pingree

LAY READER

Beth Hunter

USHERS

Ken Gould, Dee Deranian, Shirley Dickason

Reni Harnden and Michael Bryan

GREETER(s)

Diane Dunn

SENIOR PASTOR AND TEACHER

The Rev. Dr. Deborah Roof

MUSIC DIRECTOR

Susan Handy

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION DIRECTOR

Christine Lehoullier

ACCOMPANIST/ORGANIST

Chris Ferrin

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Hannah Collier