

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

January 7, 2018 Epiphany



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)

WE GATHER INTO THE PRESENCE OF GOD

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS; SHARING JOYS & CONCERNS

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

One: We gather and together we yearn for an encounter with mystery.

Many: Our hearts thrill to the sight and our lips rejoice.

One: Let us gather together and lift up our eyes.

Many: Through us, the wisdom of God will be made known.

*HYMN: #126 – Angels from the Realms of Glory

*INVOCATION

God beyond our knowing, grant us today new glimpses of who you are and what you intend for us to be. You draw us irresistibly toward the light. We are attracted to your brilliant revelation. We need the sense of purpose you engender among us. Come, Holy Mystery, to reveal as much of your truth as we can stretch to understand and receive into our lives. 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.

CALL TO CONFESSION

The God of justice and righteousness calls us to account for the ways we invest our hours and our resources. What have we done with the commission entrusted to us by God's grace?

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (In unison)

Wonderest and Almighty God, we confess that we are often more impressed with famous people than we are with your amazing glory. Your priorities are not foremost in our lives. We reach for power and popularity more than for justice for the poor. We are more focused on prosperity than on relief for the oppressed. Cause a new epiphany among us, we pray. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

The showers of God's blessings will fall on us like rain on new-mown grass. Peace will abound in the hearts of those who give help to the poor and needy. God commissions us, as fellow heirs with Christ, to fulfill the mission given to the saints.

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.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Chris Cox

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

HYMN #330 – Let Us Break Bread Together

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

This morning we will celebrate communion by coming forward to receive both bread (gluten free option will be served by the central server) and a cup of grape juice. You will come forward to receive a marcel of bread, partake of it and move to the next server where you will receive a cup of grape juice. You may then leave the empty cup in the basket provided before returning to your seat. 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: We Three Kings (Insert)

OLD TESTAMENT Isaiah 60:1-6

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.

² For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you.

³ Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

⁴ Lift up your eyes and look around; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from far away, and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms.

⁵ Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice,^[a] because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you.

⁶ A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD.

GOSPEL Matthew 2:1-12

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men^[a] from the East came to Jerusalem, ² asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising,^[b] and have come to pay him homage." ³ When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴ and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah^[c] was to be born. ⁵ They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: ⁶ 'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd^[d] my people Israel.'" ⁷ Then Herod secretly called for the wise men^[e] and learned from them the exact time when the star had

appeared. ⁸ Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.”

⁹ When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, ^[f] until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw that the star had stopped, ^[g] they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹ On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

SERMON

“Surprised by Hope”

The Rev. Dr. Deborah Roof

WE RESPOND WITH PRAYER

CHOIR ANTHEM

“Lord, I Know I’ve Been Changed”

Arr. Shackley

PASTORAL PRAYER

CHORAL PRAYER

WE RESPOND WITH OUR FINANCIAL GIFTS

OFFERTORY INVITATION

No gift is too small, except to the giver, for we cannot receive what we are unwilling to share. The riches God entrusts to us cannot satisfy those who hoard them for their own purposes. They are a delight only when they are invested on our knees before the manger.

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

Holy One, An abundance of things does not satisfy, and the wealth of nations cannot buy peace. Therefore, we join our efforts in the church to make a difference in the world, not through instruments of oppression but through the power of love. Employ our gifts in the service of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

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

*HYMN: #154 – Go, Tell it on the Mountain (Please be seated after the hymn.)

BENEDICTION

BENEDICTION RESPONSE

POSTLUDE (Please remain seated during the Postlude)

**Indicates all that are able may stand.*

MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH

DEACONS OF THE MONTH

USHERS

GREETER(s) _____)

SENIOR PASTOR AND TEACHER

MUSIC DIRECTOR

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION DIRECTOR

ACCOMPANIST/ORGANIST

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Members of the Congregation

Ken Gould

Diaconate and Michael Bryan

Verna Elwell and Shirley Dickason

The Rev. Dr. Deborah Roof

Susan Handy

Christine Lehoullier

Chris Ferrin

Hannah Collier