

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 2, 2018
Advent 1C – Happy New Liturgical Year!
Communion Sunday



The United Church of Christ: What We Believe

We believe in the triune God: A Creator, the resurrected Christ, the sole Head of the church, and the Holy Spirit, who guides and brings about the creative and redemptive work of God in the world.

We believe that each person is unique and valuable. It is the will of God that every person belong to a family of faith where they have a strong sense of being valued and loved.

We believe that each person is on a spiritual journey and that each of us is at a different stage of that journey.

We believe that the persistent search for God produces an authentic relationship with God, engendering love, strengthening faith, dissolving guilt, and giving life purpose and direction.

CHRISTMAS CAROLING

WE GATHER INTO THE PRESENCE OF GOD

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS & JOYS AND CONCERNS

Lighting of the Advent Candle for the First Sunday of Advent: Hope
(liturgy adapted from a hymn by Carolyn Gillette)

One: The candle of hope we light in this hour accomplishes much.

Many: The candle of hope proclaims that Jesus is coming in truth and in love.

One: We come seeking renewed hope.

Many: We wait for a future now hidden from view...

In which God is coming to make all things new!

*HYMN #117- Lift Up Your Heads, O Mighty Gates

*CALL TO WORSHIP RESPONSE

One: Make straight the way of the Lord!

Many: The day of the Lord is drawing near.

One: Create a new world in this Advent time,

Many: For Christ is coming to change everything.

One: Get ready as you wrap presents and put up trees,

Many: For God is doing a new thing.

One: Prepare as you celebrate with family and friends,

Many: For the Holy Spirit is moving all around us.

One: The Advent of our Lord has come,

Many: Let us prepare for the coming of Christ's hope.

*PRAYER OF INVOCATION (in unison)

In obedience and trust, we approach you, God of the covenant. Day by day, your promises are fulfilled among us. Our redemption is drawing near. Help us to prepare ourselves and our communities for Christ's coming. Equip us now to worship you with all the saints, past and present, nearby and far away. Amen. (You may be seated.)

CALL TO CONFESSION

A new church year is dawning. An air of anticipation challenges us to fresh beginning. Are we weighed down by the cares of life? Are we deceptive and untrustworthy? Do we project on others our own destructive habits? This is a time to rid ourselves of old ways and embrace the newness God offers.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of promises and possibilities, we admit that we color the world according to our own limited vision. We are often unjust in our judgments and faithless in our relationships. We are haunted by sins we have not confessed. Hear us as we entrust them to your forgiving care. Help us to let go of our transgressions, to renew our covenant with you, and to live constructively with one another. In the spirit of Jesus Christ, whose coming among us we await with great expectation. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVNESS

The mercy of God is new every day. We are free to accept the difference it can make in us. God's steadfast love is waiting to embrace us as whole people, to

instruct us and to lead us in the paths of truth. Put your trust in God, for that is our only security.

***SONG OF PRAISE** There's a song of hope in my heart
There's a song of hope in my heart Hope is a gift from Jesus
There's a song of hope in my heart Hope is a gift from Jesus
ANTHEM: O Come, O Come Emmanuel

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 and 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

Debbie Gline-Allen

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

COMMUNION HYMN: #399 – When Minds and Bodies Meet as One

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 by coming forward, starting in the back of the sanctuary. Come forward to receive your morsel of bread and **eat it as soon as** you receive it. **Gluten free** option is served by the middle server. You may then move to the next server where you will receive your cup of grape juice – or water, whichever is better for you. Drink it **as soon as** you receive it. 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

Bountiful God, we give thanks that you have refreshed us at your table by granting us the Presence of our Lord. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and send us forth into the world in courage and peace, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Children are excused as we sing: **“Go now in peace. Go now in peace. May the love of God surround you everywhere, everywhere you may go.”**

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WE HEAR GOD'S WORD FOR US

OLD TESTAMENT: Jeremiah 33:14-16 NEW TESTAMENT: Luke 21:25-36

SERMON: Hope – God's Verb

WE RESPOND WITH PRAYER

PASTORAL PRAYER

HYMN: # 103- Watcher, Tell Us of the Night

WE RESPOND WITH OUR FINANCIAL GIFTS

OFFERTORY INVITATION

As our love for one another increases and abounds, so does our generosity. The circle of our concern widens. Our passion for justice expands. Our desire to join in Christ's redeeming work extends to the whole human family. What a privilege to have so much to share! We will now receive the morning offering.

OFFERTORY MUSIC

***DOXOLOGY Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise God all creatures here below; Praise God above you heavenly host: Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

Thank you, God, for this family of faith, which enriches our lives and enables us to share. Thank you for making us aware that some faint with fear and others dwell in hopelessness. We are grateful that you show us ways to lift the burdens of our sisters and brothers. May our offerings further this ministry among us and beyond our community. Amen.

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

*HYMN: # 300 – Jesus Shall Reign

COMMUNION REFLECTION

PRAYER of COMMUNION 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.

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

SENIOR PASTOR AND TEACHER

INTERIM DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRY

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION DIRECTOR

ACCOMPANIST/ORGANIST

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Members of the Congregation

Sue Lindemann, Ryan Lehoullier

Brian Williams

Diaconate

Verna Elwell

The Rev. Dr. Deborah Roof

Debbie Gline Allen

Christine Lehoullier

Chris Ferrin

Michelle Guerrin

Jeremiah 33:14-16

¹⁴ The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ¹⁵ In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. ¹⁶ In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: "The Lord is our righteousness."

Luke 21:25-36

²⁵ "There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves.

²⁶ People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

²⁷ Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in a cloud' with power and great glory.

²⁸ Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

²⁹ Then he told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees;

³⁰ as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near.

³¹ So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near.

³² Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place.

³³ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

³⁴ "Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly,

³⁵ like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth.

³⁶ Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."

*Positive Intention Words of the Congregation
selected on November 18, 2019*



