

**First Parish Congregational Church, United Church of Christ**

**December 24, 2018    Christmas Eve 10pm**

**Welcome One and All! Merry Christmas!**

**We are so very glad that you are here!**



*HOPE*

*PEACE*

*JOY*

*LOVE*

**In affirming diversity, we are dedicated to welcoming all people who seek the Word of God, Christian fellowship and service to others. In partnership with Christ and led by the Holy Spirit, we reach out to the ever-widening community through active and loving ministry.**

## LET US ENTER INTO GOD'S PRESENCE

PRELUDE The First Noel Benjamin Allen, trumpet; Dani Allen, guitar

\*GATHERING HYMN *“O Come, All Ye Faithful”*

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,  
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;  
Come and behold Him, born the King of angels;

**O come let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord!**

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,  
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!

Glory to God, all glory in the highest;

**O come let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord!**

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born for our salvation,  
Jesus, to Thee be all glory given;

Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing.

**O come let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord!**

(Please remain **seated** for hymn singing for the remainder of this service.)

## WELCOME AND CENTERING BREATH

HYMN *“O Come, O Come Emmanuel”*

O come, O come, Emmanuel And ransom captive Israel  
That mourns in lonely exile here Until the Son of God appear  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel.

## Advent Wreath Lighting Ceremony

One: We light the candle of HOPE to remind us of the promises made by  
all the prophets that God would raise up a savior for his people Israel.

**Many: Christ is our hope and our salvation.**

**He calls us to share our hope in Him with each other.**

One: We light the candle of PEACE to remind us that it is only with God  
and by following in His path that true peace can be found.

**Many: Christ brings the Peace of God to us.**

**He calls us to share the peace He gives with others.**

One: We light the candle of JOY to remind us that God gives joy to every  
heart that abides in Him.

**Many: As Mary rejoiced in the birth of Jesus –  
so His birth in us brings us joy.**

**God calls us to share the joy He gives with each other.**

One: We light the candle of LOVE to remind us that Jesus is God's gift of  
love to us – and that in Him, the light of love triumphs over darkness.

**Many: Love never fails – it transforms all those who give it and receive it. God calls us to share his love with each other.**

One: We light the Christ candle to remind us that the light of the world was born this night.

**Many: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. Those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness – on them a light has shined.**

**Unison Prayer of Approach - Let us pray:**

**Almighty God - you have made this night holy by the gift of your son, born of the Holy Spirit and of Mary. Upon Him rested all your grace, through him has come all your mercy. Let His light shine within our hearts tonight even more brightly than it shines from the candles in this place. Help us to hear your word and to celebrate your everlasting love through Him. Amen**

### **WE REMEMBER OUR BELOVED STORY TOGETHER**

**“Greetings, favored one...”**

**Luke 1:26-33; 38**

**HYMN “Mary, Woman of the Promise”**

Mary, woman of the promise: vessel of your people’s dreams;  
Through your open willing spirit waters of God’s goodness streamed.  
Mary, song of holy wisdom sung before the world began;  
Faithful to the Word within you, as you bore God’s wondrous plan.

**“a decree went out .. all the world should be registered” Luke 2:1-7**

**HYMN “Away in a Manger”**

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed, the little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head. The stars in the sky looked down where He lay, the little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.

Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask Thee to stay close by me forever, and love me, I pray.

Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care, and fit us for heaven to live with Thee there.

**“the glory of the LORD shone around them”**

**Luke 2:8-14**

**HYMN “Angels We Have Heard on High”**

Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o’er the plains, and the mountains in reply, echo back their joyous strains.

**Gloria, in excelsis Deo, Gloria, in excelsis Deo.**

Come to Bethlehem and see Christ whose birth the angels sing; Come adore on bended knee, God, our world now entering.

**Gloria, in excelsis Deo, Gloria, in excelsis Deo.**

**“Let us go now to Bethlehem”**

**Luke 2:15**

HYMN *“O Little Town of Bethlehem”*

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light;  
the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.  
For Christ is born of Mary, and gathered all above  
while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.  
O morning stars together proclaim the holy birth.  
Your voices raise to God in praise; and peace to all on earth!

**“they found the child lying in the manger”**

**Luke 2:16-18**

HYMN *“What Child is This?”*

What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary’s lap is sleeping?  
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet  
while shepherds watch are keeping?  
This, this, the angels sing, is Christ, God’s holy offering;  
Hail, hail, the Word made flesh, the babe, the child of Mary!

**“glorifying and praising God”**

**Luke 2:19-20**

HYMN *“Go, Tell It On The Mountain”*

Go, tell it on the mountain Over the hills and everywhere  
Go, tell it on the mountain That Jesus Christ is born!  
While shepherds kept their watching O'er their silent flocks night  
Behold throughout the heavens here shone a holy light  
Go, tell it on the mountain Over the hills and everywhere  
Go, tell it on the mountain That Jesus Christ is born!  
The shepherds feared and trembled When lo! Above the Earth  
Rang out the angel chorus That hailed our Savior's birth  
Go, tell it on the mountain Over the hills and everywhere  
Go, tell it on the mountain That Jesus Christ is born!

**“wise men came from the east”**

**Matthew 2:1-10**

HYMN *“We Three Kings of Orient Are”*

We three kings of Orient are bearing gifts we traverse afar  
Field and fountain, moor and mountain Following yonder star  
O Star of wonder, star of night Star with royal beauty bright  
Westward leading, still proceeding Guide us to thy Perfect Light.  
Glorious now behold Him arise, King and God and Sacrifice.  
Alleluia, alleluia! Sounds through the earth and skies.  
O Star of wonder, star of night Star with royal beauty bright  
Westward leading, still proceeding Guide us to thy Perfect Light

**“leaving by another road” and “Joseph’s dream”**

**Matthew 2:11-15**



## WE RESPOND TO GOD'S LOVE

### PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

O God, we come back to hear the story once again for ourselves, for our faith, for our lives. We pray now for others and ask that you hear our prayers, O God.

May those who are lonely hear an angel song of hope drawing near,  
**and the footsteps of kindly people on the way.**

May those who are homeless find at least  
a sheltering stable on this night

**and the company of a God who stays fast beside them.**

May those who are rejected, be embraced by unexpected neighbors  
**and the lost, see a guiding star overhead.**

May those who are hungry be filled  
with the gifts of those who have much

**and justice rise up in all the earth around them.**

May those who are powerless and without voice,  
who suffer in the silences

**be given the wise and the prophets to speak for them.**

Praise be to you, O God. Gather us all into your loving presence now and help us to cherish the life of the vulnerable Child in all the world.

### PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR (debts)

**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.**

### PASTORAL REFLECTION by Pastor Deborah

#### HYMN *"In the bleak midwinter"*

In the bleak midwinter Frosty winds made moan  
Earth stood hard as iron, Water like a stone;  
Snow had fallen; Snow on snow; Snow on snow  
In the bleak midwinter, Long ago

Angels and archangels May have gathered there  
Cherubim and Seraphim Thronged the midnight air;  
But His mother only In her maiden bliss  
Worshipped the Beloved With a kiss

What can I give Him, Poor as I am?

If I were a shepherd, Would I bring a lamb?

If I were a wise man, Would I do my part

Yet what I can I give Him - Give my heart

HYMN *"It came upon the midnight clear"*

It came upon the midnight clear, That glorious song of old,  
From angels bending near the earth, To touch their harps of gold:  
"Peace on the earth, goodwill to men, From heaven's all-gracious King."  
The world in solemn stillness lay, To hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come, With peaceful wings unfurled,  
And still their heavenly music floats O'er all the weary world;  
Above its sad and lowly plains, They bend on hovering wing,  
And ever o'er its babel sounds The blessed angels sing.  
Yet with the woes of sin and strife The world has suffered long;  
Beneath the angel-strain have rolled Two thousand years of wrong;  
And man, at war with man, hears not The love-song which they bring;  
O hush the noise, ye men of strife, And hear the angels sing.

## **WE CARRY THE LIGHT INTO THE WORLD**

A Child Is Born Benjamin Allen, trumpet, Dani Allen, guitar

### GIFT GIVING AND CANDLELIGHTING

We invite everyone to come forward at this sacred time. Ushers are available to receive your financial offering and then you will receive the Christmas light from Pastor Deborah. Please take a candle-light back to your seats as we sing together.

HYMN *"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"*

Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King;  
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"  
Joyful all ye nations rise, join the triumph of the skies;  
with the angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"  
**Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born King!"**  
Christ, by highest heaven adored; Christ, the everlasting Lord!  
Late in time behold Him come, off-spring of the virgin's womb.  
Veiled in flesh the God-head see; hail the incarnate Deity,  
pleased in flesh with us to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel.  
**Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born King!"**

HYMN *“Joy to the World”*

Joy to the World, the LORD is come Let earth its praises bring;  
Let every heart prepare Him room, And heaven and nature Sing,  
And heaven and nature Sing, and heaven and nature Sing.

Joy to the world! the Savior reigns Let men their songs employ  
While fields and floods Rocks, hills and plains  
Repeat the sounding joy, Repeat the sounding joy;  
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

He rules the world with truth and grace And makes the nations prove  
The glories of His righteousness And wonders of His love;  
And wonders of His love; And wonders and wonders of His love.

HYMN *“The First Noel”*

The first Noel, the angel did say, was to certain poor shepherds in fields  
as they lay; in fields where they lay keeping their sheep, on a cold  
winter’s night that was so deep.

**Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.**

They looked up and saw a star shining in the east, beyond them far, and  
to the earth it gave great light, and so it continued both day and night.

**Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.**

This star drew nigh to the northwest, o’er Bethlehem it took its rest, and  
there it did both stop and stay, right over the place where Jesus lay.

**Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.**

HYMN *“Silent Night, Holy Night”*

Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright  
round yon virgin mother and child, holy infant so tender and mild,  
sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night, shepherds quake at the sight,  
glories stream from heaven afar, heavenly hosts sing alleluia;  
Christ, the Savior is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!

Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love’s pure light  
radiant beams from thy holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE: Silent Night, recorder and guitar, in honor of the 200<sup>th</sup>  
Anniversary tonight of the writing of Silent Night

Please remain seated until the conclusion of the Postlude.

After the Postlude please extinguish your candle before you stand up.  
Kindly give your candle to an usher as you leave.

## **A MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

Our Children's programs continue to flourish on Sunday morning with many thanks to our incredible staff of teachers and volunteers! The Youth program is now evolving into a tri-church gathering with the participation of the Atkinson and Hampstead UCC churches.

Our Adult Faith Formation program continues to thrive, as we wonder together, sharing our faith journeys, reading scripture and current books.

With thanks to a multitude of volunteers, the Board of Christian Education was able to offer programs like a Lenten Workshop, Vacation Church School and the Advent Workshop! Thanks be to God!

---

## **A MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD OF MISSION AND OUTREACH**

We give every dollar that is given to Mission. We are a "5 for 5" church in the United Church of Christ, giving to all 5 UCC missions. Locally, we support the Derry Friendship Center, Sonshine Soup Kitchen, First Baptist Food Pantry, Community Caregivers, Pastoral Counseling, Pinkerton Homeless Program, Upper Room, Family Promise of Nashua and Liberty House in Manchester.

---

## **A MESSAGE FROM OUR STEWARDSHIP BOARD**

May the birth of the baby Jesus bring joy to your heart  
and renew your loving spirit.

---

## **A MESSAGE FROM OUR FACILITIES BOARD**

We have accomplished many repairs and improvements to our physical plant this year. To name just a few: new plumbing fixtures in the kitchen and lower level girls room, new evacuation signs posted, transitioning to LED bulbs throughout, and recently, new ceiling fans and sound system in Currier.

Thank you to everyone who helped, and everyone for their patience throughout this process.

---

## **A MESSAGE FROM OUR COUNCIL**

We cannot do the work of Christ without you. Please pray about how YOUR gifts of time or talent or treasure might help us continue this mission as Christ's hands and feet here in Southern New Hampshire.

---

If you are curious about our efforts to preserve the 1769 Meetinghouse next-door please pick up a brochure in the lobby.

Or check out [www.nutfieldhistory.org](http://www.nutfieldhistory.org) or NutHist on Facebook.

**MERRY CHRISTMAS from FIRST PARISH CONGREGATIONAL!**