

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 9, 2018
Second Sunday of Advent



Share how you celebrate PEACE

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.

-Isaiah 9:6-7

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 THE CHRIST LIGHT

INTROIT: Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silent; MaryAnn Schroeder, violin

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS & JOYS AND CONCERNS

Lighting of the Advent Candle for the Second Sunday of Advent: **Peace**

One: Hope is a light given by God at the beginning of Creation.

All: Hope is a gift of God revealed in the life of Christ.

One: Hope is a light given by God to every Child of God.

All: We light the candle of Hope as we remember Christ's gift.

(Light the candle of Hope)

One: Peace is a flame given by God to be a light in the darkness.

All: The flame of Peace is righteousness, compassion and justice.

One: The flame of Peace, just as the Peace of Christ, is the true order of life.

All: We light the candle of Peace as we strive to live into Christ's Peace.

(Light the candle of Peace)

*HYMN #120 There's A Voice In The Wilderness

*CALL TO WORSHIP RESPONSE

One: Listen! Listen for a messenger from God.

The way is being prepared for Christ's coming.

Many: We are here to listen for a word from God.

We have gathered to prepare for Christ's advent.

One: Come with your joys and sorrows, laughter and tears.

There is a place for you in the company of seekers.

Many: We thank God for our acceptance in the church.

We rejoice to offer the love of Christ to others.

*PRAYER OF INVOCATION (in unison)

How good it is to gather where we are wrapped in the beauty of God's glory and welcomed to life at its fullest. Surely you restore us to our best, mighty God, and equip us for generous abundance. Make a difference within and among us today so we may work together for a better tomorrow. Amen

*SONG OF PRAISE There's a song of Hope

There's a song of peace in my heart,

Peace is a gift from Jesus.

There's a song of peace in my heart,

Peace is a gift from God.

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 God.

ANTHEM: On a Night of Wonder by Jay Althouse

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

Kathryn Cobban

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."** Words & Music: Natalie Sleeth, © 1976 Hinshaw Music, Inc.; All rights reserved. Reprinted under ONE LICENSE #A-708716.

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD FOR US

OLD TESTAMENT: Malachi 3:1-3

¹See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts.

²But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; ³he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness.

NEW TESTAMENT: Luke 3:1-6

¹In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, ²during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. ³He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, ⁴as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

"The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

'Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight.

⁵Every valley shall be filled,
and every mountain and hill shall be made low,
and the crooked shall be made straight,
and the rough ways made smooth;

⁶and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."

SERMON: Refiner's Fire for Peace

WE RESPOND WITH PRAYER

PASTORAL PRAYER

HYMN: #116 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

WE RESPOND WITH OUR FINANCIAL GIFTS

OFFERTORY INVITATION

What is a fitting offering that is pleasing to God? When we sense the wonder of God's majesty and realize the amazing extent of God's concern for us, how can we respond in like measure? What we place on the altar is but a small measure of our gratitude. The morning offering will now be received.

OFFERTORY MUSIC offered by MaryAnn Schroeder

***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**

Gracious God, You are so very good to us, and we have responded. You have restored our souls when we felt all was lost. You have filled our mouths with laughter and our tongues with shouts of joy. We give you thanks, and by your grace, we share in the work Christ came to accomplish among us. May love abound in and through us. Amen.

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

***HYMN: # 122 Come, O Long-Expected Jesus**

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE (Please remain seated during the Postlude)

**Indicates all that are able may stand.*

MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH	Members of the Congregation
DEACONS OF THE MONTH	Sue Lindemann, Ryan Lehoullier
LAY READER	Julie Turner
USHERS	Ken Gould, Dee Deranian, Nancy Berry, Michael Bryan
GREETER	Maury Davidson
SENIOR PASTOR AND TEACHER	The Rev. Dr. Deborah Roof
INTERIM DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRY	Debbie Gline Allen
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION DIRECTOR	Christine Lehoullier
ACCOMPANIST/ORGANIST	Chris Ferrin
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT	Michelle Guerrin



Here are ways you can embody PEACE during the second week of the Season of Advent:



Monday: BREATHE – Wonder in the presence of God’s creation and take 10 minutes for slow, cleansing breaths. Go outside (or look out a window!) and enjoy the nature around you as you reflect upon the beauty of God’s creation and the season of Advent. [#loveofcreation](#)

Tuesday: GATHER – Join in friendship. Come close. Gather together. Enjoy a movie night with friends and neighbors. Try *The Nativity Story*, *Mary of Nazareth* or *The Star of Bethlehem*. Or revisit your old favorites that capture the wonder and spirit of Christmas (*It’s a Wonderful Life*, *Miracle on 34th Street*, *Charlie Brown’s Christmas*). [#loveofneighbor](#)

Wednesday: BUILD – Work with your children to build your nativity scene slowly so that they may find peace as they ‘see’ the story of Christmas. Begin early December with the manger, then add the animals, next add Mary and Joseph. Finally, on Christmas Morning add Baby Jesus. On January 6th (Epiphany), add the wise men. [#loveofchildren](#)

Thursday: FOCUS – Focus on presence, not the presents. Give time to the children around you. Slow down. Pay attention to their needs and work to grant them peace and time to focus on their faith. [#loveofchildren](#)

Friday: PURGE – With an influx of new goodies coming in (through gift buying and receiving), spend some time looking at what you already have. Repurpose, reuse, or re-gift what you don’t need. Give to charity, give to friends and look for new ways to repurpose so that others may enjoy it. [#loveofcreation](#)

Saturday: VISIT – Engage in outreach with members of your congregation. Make phone calls, send postcards or visit with those that are in nursing homes, rehabilitation centers, or area hospitals. Bring them the gift of comfort and peace. [#loveofneighbor](#)

~Stephanie Rader-Titzel, 3 Great Loves Ambassador, Penn Central Conference



Here are ways you can embody HOPE during the first week of the Season of Advent:



Monday: SERVE – The season is always a great time for you to gather your family and friends to volunteer at a local soup kitchen, warming shelter or your local church. You will give hope to those you meet. [#loveofneighbor](#)

Tuesday: UNPLUG – It’s time to celebrate a new season. Unplug yourself from the digital world and go on an outdoor adventure with the children in your life – for they are the hope of tomorrow. [#loveofchildren](#)

Wednesday: UPCYCLE – Magazines and books often get tossed in the trash, or recycle bin. By donating your old magazines and books to prisoners, you will encourage them to learn and grow. At the same time, you are reducing waste in our landfills, and the energy used to transport and dispose of them. [#loveofcreation](#)

Thursday: GIVE – It’s the season of giving gifts; your gift of hope can make a wonderful difference in someone’s life. Send a card to a deployed soldier, giving thanks for their service. [#loveofneighbor](#)

Friday: FEED – Earth, God’s wonderful creation, is full of beauty. Set up a birdfeeder, then watch the colors of God’s glorious winged animals unfold before your eyes. [#loveofcreation](#)

Saturday: ARRANGE – Get together with other congregations, families and churches of different denominations to take children Christmas Caroling. [#loveofchildren](#)

~Gary M. Barraco, 3 Great Loves Ambassador, Penn Northeast Conference

First Parish Congregational Church
IN OUR PRAYERS - December 9, 2018

PRAYERS OF JOY

Café Church was so much fun!!!

Uplifting Service by Rev. Rankin – great reminder about love.

Sugar Plum fun! Lots of hard work and good spirits abound!

Congratulations to Travis and Kate Gleason on the birth of their son, Andrew Warren Gleason, born on 11/15 at 8 lbs and 9 oz.

Rev. Slater, who joined us for a Special Council meeting and Task Force

Interfaith Peace and Unity Service at Etz Hayim!

Food for the pantry! Hats, gloves, mittens. They are in much need.

All of the mission work that FPC does! Linus project!

PRAYERS OF HEALTH and HEALING

Prayers of comfort to Doris Williams on the death of her sister.

Dawn Gilbert and family on the death of Dawn's father Joseph Berube 12/4/18.

Joanne Worthen's friend's grandson, Noah.

Rev. Dr. Menson Mpfu, for the loss of his beloved wife, Mrs. Ellen Mpfu. She died shortly after Rev. Mpfu returned from leading the UCCZ delegation on a visit to the NH Conference.

Rhonda, Rachel Cobben's friend, had major surgery this week and is awaiting results.

Carolyn Mansolf (Beth Keene's mom) surgery on 11/7 for a brain mass

Tree of Life Synagogue – their members, families and friends

For the members of **First Baptist Church in Wakefield, MA**

Sue & Randy Brown's daughter & granddaughter - healing from a car accident.

Jane Kirkland, on the death of her husband, Donald

Debbie Gline Allen, on the death of her mother

SPECIAL ONGOING PRAYERS

Victims of floods and fires; Refugees and their families

People of color and members of the LGBTQ+ community

Victims of the shootings throughout the US.

Friends of the Meetinghouse Board of Directors

Victims of violent attacks

Our Covenant Partner: Pastoral Counseling Services, Inc

Dangamvura – UCCZ – Zimbabwe African Church

Tim Beers – Health & strength

Jay Bingel – Health & strength

General Announcements December 9, 2018

Interfaith Choir Concert – Today! At 4:00 at the Triumphant Cross Lutheran Church, 171 Zion Hill Rd in Salem.

Funeral arrangements for Dawn Gilbert's father: Calling hours will be held on Sunday, December 9, 2018 from 4:00-6:00 PM at the Brewitt Funeral Home, Raymond, NH. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated on Monday, 12/10/18 at 10 AM at St. Joseph Church, Epping, NH. Family and friends can visit with the family from 9:00 AM until the start of the Mass at the church. Graveside services with military honors will be Monday, at 1:30 PM at the NH State Veterans Cemetery, Boscawen, NH.

Adult Faith Formation – We will meet one last time in December. **Tuesday evening** at 6:20 we continue our **bible study of the Book of Acts**, which was written by the same writer as the Gospel of Luke. This book is astonishing! We are going to begin reading at Chapter 11. So far, we've read about the stoning of Steven, the conversion of Saul, and much more! Join us. We arrive early to check in with one another.

Want to join the church? We will welcome a few more new members on December 23rd. Please let Pastor Deborah know if you are interested in joining the church.

Readers needed Christmas Eve! Please see Pastor Deborah if you can read at the 7 or 10 service.

Mark your calendars!

Blue Christmas Service on December 18th at 7pm.

Christmas Eve Services

4:00 – Children's Pageant

7:00 – Lessons and Carols Candlelight with choir

10:00 – Lessons and Carols Candlelight