

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 24, 2019 Christmas Eve 4:00



HOPE

PEACE

JOY

LOVE

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)

Christmas Eve Children's Pageant

WE GATHER INTO THE PRESENCE OF GOD

WELCOME

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH

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.**

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

One: The grace of God was born among us.

Many: How splendid is God's gift to us!

One: Let us sing of God's steadfast love for all God's people.

Many: We will proclaim God's faithfulness to all generations.

*HYMN: "Silent 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.

*INVOCATION

**God of unseen angels and unheard greetings, whose love for humankind
continues even when we are inattentive, favor us now with a message we cannot
ignore. Reign among us that we may respond to your call and serve with
faithfulness in the ways you envision for us. Make us instruments of your peace.
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.

WE RESPOND WITH OUR FINANCIAL GIFTS

OFFERTORY INVITATION: God gives us responsibilities in the church and the world to carry good news, to build up, to feed the hungry and house the homeless, to be faithful in all things. Our offerings are one sign of love and faithfulness.

OFFERTORY MUSIC

*DOXOLOGY #780 - Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Our best we give to you, loving God, for you have given your best to us in the mystery of the Incarnation. May our offerings proclaim Jesus in ways that will be received with joy. Send your Word into the world in this season through our caring service. May we share it with one another in ways that help us all to grow. We are your servants. The gifts we dedicate here now are already yours. Thank you for all the ways you have provided for us. Amen.

WE RESPOND WITH PRAYER

Christmas Litany: "First Coming" by Madeleine L'Engle

One: God did not wait till the world was ready, till nations were at peace.

Many: God came when the Heavens were unsteady and prisoners cried out for release.

One: God did not wait for the perfect time.

Many: God came when the need was deep and great.

One: God dined with sinners in all their grime, turned water into wine.

Many: God did not wait till hearts were pure.

One: In joy God came to a tarnished world of sin and doubt.

Many: To a world like ours, of anguished shame, God came and God's Light would not go out.

One: God came to a world that did not mesh; to heal its tangles, shield its scorn.

Many: In the mystery of the Word made Flesh, the maker of the stars was born.

One: We cannot wait till the world is sane to raise our songs with joyful voice, or to share our grief.

Many: God came with Love to touch our pain.

One: In spite of our tears we can for that rejoice.

Many: Let us rejoice in the confidence that God comes to us still today.

PASTORAL PRAYER followed by 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.

*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!"

THE LITTLE PAGEANT

The music below is disbursed throughout the pageant.
We invite you to remain seated as you sing along with us.

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!**

PRAYER:

HYMN: "Mary Heard the Angel's Message"

Mary heard the angel's message: "Greetings, Mary, favored one!
Do not fear, for God is with you; You will one day bear God's Son."
Filled with questions, filled with wonder, She proclaimed her faith in God:
"May it be as you have spoken; I'm the servant of the Lord!"

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.

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.
The cattle are lowing the poor Baby wakes but little Lord Jesus No crying He makes
I love Thee, Lord Jesus Look down from the sky and stay by my side 'Til morning is nigh

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 good will to men from Heaven's all-gracious King
The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the Angels sing.

WE ARE SENT OUT TO LOVE AND SERVE A LOVING, SERVING GOD

*HYMN: # 132 Joy to the World!

Joy to the world! The Lord is come:
Let earth its praises bring
Let every heart prepare Christ room,
and Heaven and nature sing, and Heaven and nature sing,
and Heaven and Heaven and nature sing.

BENEDICTION

Senior Pastor and Teacher: The Rev. Dr. Deborah Roof
Christian Education Director: Christine Lehoullier Musician: Joan Virga
Pageant Director: Katie Cobban Assistant: Holly Gorgol

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO YOU AND YOURS!
MAY YOU LIVE THIS CHRISTMAS LOVE INTO THE COMING YEAR
– AS THE CHILDREN SAY EVERY SUNDAY –
"IN ALL YOU SAY AND ALL YOU DO!"