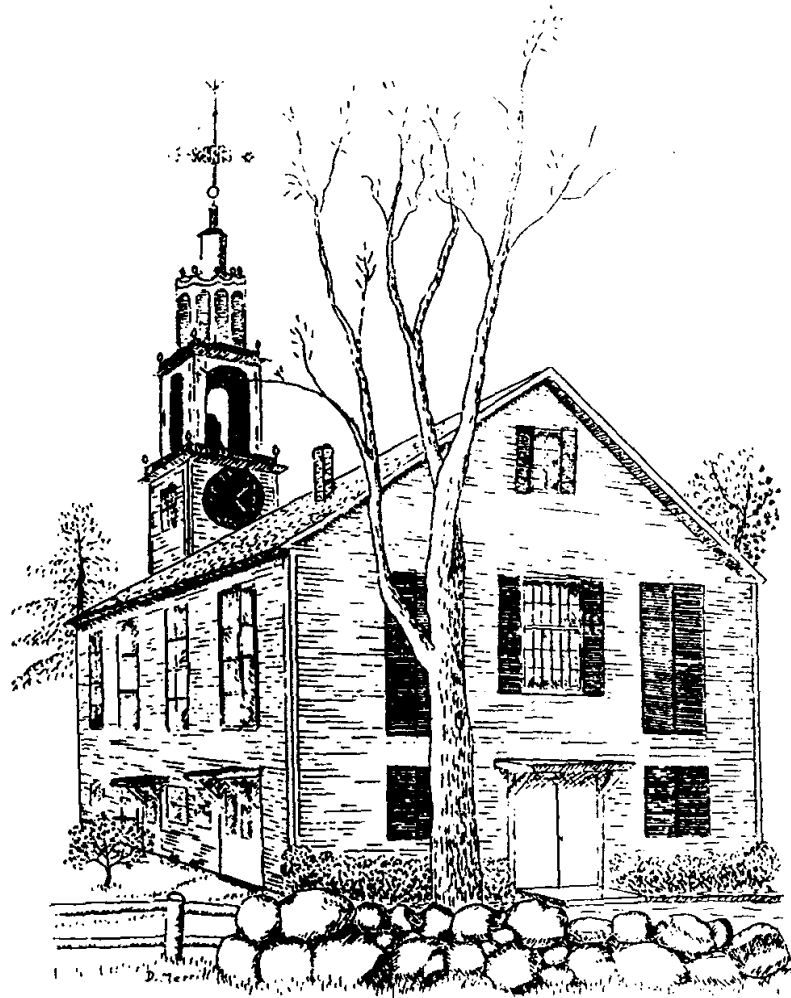


First Parish Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
P.O. Box 114, 47 East Derry Road
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December 7, 2014 Advent Year B



Doris Merrill

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)

December 7, 2014 Second Sunday of Advent Year B

Christmas Caroling

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS & JOYS AND CONCERNS

WE GATHER INTO THE PRESENCE OF GOD

Lighting of the Second Advent Candle: Peace - with help from Reni Harnden and Dawn Gilbert

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 and equity,
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 remember to live into Christ's
Peace. (Light the candle of Peace)**

*HYMN NO. 116

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" (v.1, 2, 6, & 7)

*CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Comfort, comfort my people, says our God.

All: Let us prepare the way for the One who is coming.

One: God will gather us in gentle, caring arms.

All: We are welcomed by God's steadfast love.

*PRAYER OF INVOCATION (in unison)

**Righteous and holy God, your glory is revealed to us day by day as valleys
of despair are lifted up and mountainous problems are leveled. In your
presence, we see more than our immediate situation. We catch a glimpse of
your eternal purposes. So come among us now and speak your word of
peace. Feed us with your truth, and equip us to welcome Christ's coming.
Amen.**

*SONG OF PRAISE NO. 759 **Glory to the Creator, the Christ, the Holy Spirit - Three in One;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.**

WE INVITE FORWARD GOD'S LITTLE CHILDREN

CHILDREN'S OFFERING

Hymn No. 138

Jesus, Our Brother, Strong and Good

PRAYER OF DEDICATION (in unison)

**In our thanks, 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 – Who's in the Stable today?

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.**

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

*HYMN NO. 345

"Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence" v. 1 & 2

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

PRAYER of CONSECRATION

Followed by the Serenity Prayer

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; the courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference. Living one day at a time; enjoying one moment at a time; accepting hardships as the pathway to peace; taking, as He did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it; trusting that He will make all things right if I surrender to His Will; that I may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with Him forever in the next. Amen.

(This prayer was written by Reinhold Niebuhr, a pastor and professor of theology in the early history of our denomination.)

OUR SACRED STORY: JESUS in the BREAKING of the BREAD and CUP Poured out

SHARING the MEAL

We celebrate Communion this morning by inviting you to come forward to receive the Bread of Life and the Cup of Salvation starting in the back of the sanctuary.

The appropriate response when receiving the gifts or elements is "**Amen**" or "**Thanks be to God.**" As you receive the bread, you will hear words like "The Bread of Life" or "Take and eat." You may eat the bread right then.

As you then take a cup of grape juice, hearing the words "The Cup of Salvation" or "The Cup of Love", you will drink it and then return the empty cup to the next server.

If you are accompanying your children: they are invited to participate with traditional elements or by taking a gold fish cracker and a grape.

Gluten-free bread is available. Let the server know.

PRAYER of THANKSGIVING (in unison)

In deep gratitude, for this moment, this meal, these people, we give ourselves to You. Take us out to live as changed people because we have shared the Living Bread and cannot remain the same.

Ask much of us, expect much from us, enable much by us, encourage many through us. May we live the LOVE you have shown us - to God's glory and to the betterment of God's children of every kind. Amen.

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD FOR US

HEBREW SCRIPTURE

Malachi 3:1-7

(O.T. p. 995-996)

GOSPEL

Mark 1:1-8

(N.T. p. 35)

SERMON

"Preparation is Hard Work!"

The Rev. Dr. Deborah Roof

CHOIR ANTHEM

"Lift up Your Heads"

John Bell

WE RESPOND WITH OUR STEWARDSHIP AND OUR PRAYERS

PASTORAL PRAYER

CHORAL RESPONSE

"Come to Me"

WE RESPOND WITH OUR FINANCIAL GIFTS

OFFERTORY INVITATION One way we prepare for Christ's appearance is to support the church's mission in our community and beyond. Our church's programs share good news, our outreach provides comfort and practical help, and our goals are nothing less than newness of life for all God's children. May our gifts reflect God's generosity.

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

While we are waiting and preparing for Christ to appear, we are seeking, O God, to act as faithful followers. May these gifts offer hope to all whose suffering and loss seem too heavy to bear. May our church be a listening, caring presence for all its members, and through us for all those we meet in our work and leisure. Amen.

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

*HYMN NO. 104

"We Hail You God's Anointed"

BENEDICTION

BENEDICTION RESPONSE

"Christ, Be Our Light"

POSTLUDE

**Indicates all that are able may stand.*

MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH

DEACONS OF THE MONTH

LAY READER

USHERS

GREETER(s)

PASTOR

AFFILIATE PASTOR

MUSIC DIRECTOR

ACCOMPANIST/ORGANIST

OFFICE MANAGER

NEWSLETTER/CE CONSULTANT

Members of the Congregation

Diana Sweeney and Sandy Carter

Ashley Cox

Diaconate

Michael Bryan

Verna Elwell

The Rev. Dr. Deborah Roof

Rev. Chester R. Ham

Susan Handy

Jeff DeLangie

Lindsey Roman

Julie Daysa

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Office Hours: Tues, Wed & Fri: 9:00-3:00pm; Thurs 10:30-6:00

Our website www.fpc-ucc.org Find us and 'friend us' on Facebook www.facebook.com/fpcucc



Scriptures – December 7

Malachi 3.1-7

³See, 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. ⁴Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

⁵ Then I will draw near to you for judgement; I will be swift to bear witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired workers in their wages, the widow, and the orphan, against those who thrust aside the alien, and do not fear me, says the LORD of hosts.

⁶ For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, have not perished. ⁷Ever since the days of your ancestors you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you, says the LORD of hosts. But you say, 'How shall we return?'

Mark 1.1-8

¹The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

² As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way;

³ the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

"Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight" ,

⁴John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵ And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷He proclaimed, 'The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. ⁸I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.'