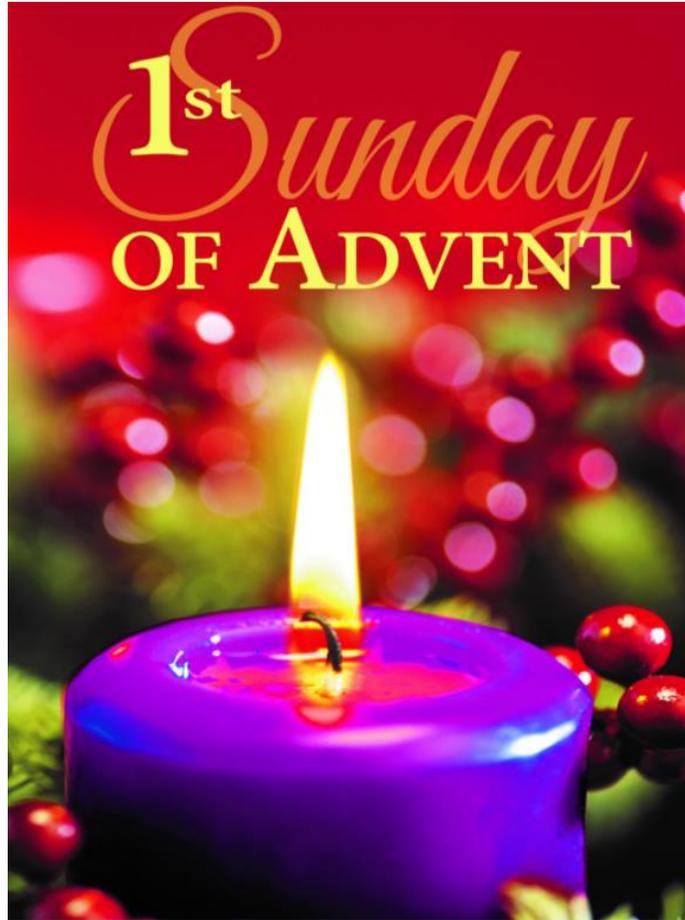


First Parish Congregational Church, United Church of Christ
P.O. Box 114, 47 East Derry Road, East Derry, NH Tel. (603) 434 – 0628

November 29, 2020 – 10:00am Virtual Service
Advent 1 – Hope



CHRISTMAS CAROLING

The Friendly Beasts (Jesus, Our Brother, Strong and Good)

Jesus, our brother, strong and good, was humbly
Born in a stable rude, and the friendly beasts
Around him stood, Jesus our brother, strong and good.

The First Nowell

The first Nowell, 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.
Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell, Born in a manger, Emmanuel.

Angels, from the Realms of Glory

Angels, from the realms of glory of glory, wing your flight o'er all the earth;
As you sang creation's story, now proclaim Messiah's birth:
Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, give thanks and sing.

Mary Did You Know

Mary, did you know that your Baby Boy would one day walk on water?
Mary, did you know that your Baby Boy would save our sons and daughters?
Did you know that your Baby Boy has come to make you new?
This Child that you delivered will soon deliver you.

Mary, did you know that your Baby Boy will give sight to a blind man?
Mary, did you know that your Baby Boy will calm the storm with His hand?
Did you know that your Baby Boy has walked where angels trod?
When you kiss your little Baby you kissed the face of God?

The blind will see. The deaf will hear. The dead will live again.
The lame will leap. The dumb will speak The praises of The Lamb.

Mary, did you know that your Baby Boy is Lord of all creation?
Mary, did you know that your Baby Boy would one day rule the nations?
Did you know that your Baby Boy is heaven's perfect Lamb?
The sleeping Child you're holding is the Great, I Am.

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;
Haste, haste your praise to bring the babe, the child of Mary!

WE GATHER INTO THE PRESENCE OF GOD

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP and LIGHTING THE FIRST ADVENT CANDLE - HOPE

One: During the season of Advent, we talk about the light conquering the darkness.

Many: Instead of looking at darkness as an evil to be overtaken, what if we chose to honor the gifts that darkness can yield?

One: After all, out of darkness God created everything - including light.

Many: In faith Daniel faced the darkness of the lion's den,

One: With the help of God our hope can grow in the darkness.

Many: Throughout this darkest and holiest time of year, may we discover hope.

(The first candle – the candle of HOPE – is lit.)

HYMN #116 "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel.

That mourns in lonely exile here, until the Child of God appear.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel!

O come, O Wisdom from on high, and order all things far and nigh;

To us the path of knowledge show and help us in that way to go.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel!

INVOCATION (Read by Lay Reader. Feel free to join in at home.)

In compassion and trust, we approach you, God of the Covenant. Day by day, your promises are fulfilled among us. Help us to prepare ourselves and our communities for Christ's coming. Amen.

SONG OF PRAISE: Praise our God together singing Alleluia! (repeat twice)

WE SPEAK TO GOD'S YOUNGER DISCIPLES

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE "Waiting, Waiting, Waiting"

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.

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD FOR US

OLD TESTAMENT: Daniel 6: 6-27 The Message (MSG)

⁶⁻⁷ The vice-regents and governors conspired together and then went to the king and said, "King Darius, live forever! We've convened your vice-regents, governors, and all your leading officials, and have agreed that the king should issue the following decree:

For the next thirty days no one is to pray to any god or mortal except you, O king. Anyone who disobeys will be thrown into the lions' den.

⁸ "Issue this decree, O king, and make it unconditional, as if written in stone like all the laws of the Medes and the Persians." ⁹ King Darius signed the decree.

¹⁰ When Daniel learned that the decree had been signed and posted, he continued to pray just as he had always done. His house had windows in the upstairs that opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he knelt there in prayer, thanking and praising his God.

¹¹⁻¹² The conspirators came and found him praying, asking God for help. They went straight to the king and reminded him of the royal decree that he had signed. “Did you not,” they said, “sign a decree forbidding anyone to pray to any god or man except you for the next thirty days? And anyone caught doing it would be thrown into the lions’ den?” “Absolutely,” said the king. “Written in stone, like all the laws of the Medes and Persians.”

¹³ Then they said, “Daniel, one of the Jewish exiles, ignores you, O king, and defies your decree. Three times a day he prays.”

¹⁴ At this, the king was very upset and tried his best to get Daniel out of the fix he’d put him in. He worked at it the whole day long.

¹⁵ But then the conspirators were back: “Remember, O king, it’s the law of the Medes and Persians that the king’s decree can never be changed.”

¹⁶ The king caved in and ordered Daniel brought and thrown into the lions’ den. But he said to Daniel, “Your God, to whom you are so loyal, is going to get you out of this.”

¹⁷ A stone slab was placed over the opening of the den. The king sealed the cover with his signet ring and the signet rings of all his nobles, fixing Daniel’s fate.

¹⁸ The king then went back to his palace. He refused supper. He couldn’t sleep. He spent the night fasting.

¹⁹⁻²⁰ At daybreak the king got up and hurried to the lions’ den. As he approached the den, he called out anxiously, “Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve so loyally, saved you from the lions?”

²¹⁻²² “O king, live forever!” said Daniel. “My God sent his angel, who closed the mouths of the lions so that they would not hurt me. I’ve been found innocent before God and also before you, O king. I’ve done nothing to harm you.”

²³ When the king heard these words, he was happy. He ordered Daniel taken up out of the den. When he was hauled up, there wasn’t a scratch on him. He had trusted his God. (Then the King punished the conspirators for causing trouble for no good reason.)

²⁵⁻²⁷ King Darius published this proclamation to every race, color, and creed on earth:

Peace to you! Abundant peace!

I decree that Daniel’s God shall be worshiped and feared in all parts of my kingdom.

He is the living God, world without end. His kingdom never falls.

His rule continues eternally.

He is a savior and rescuer.

He performs astonishing miracles in heaven and on earth.

He saved Daniel from the power of the lions.

SERMON: Holding on to Hope

HYMN #283 Spirit of the Living God

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me;

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me.

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me. (Sing twice through.)

WE RESPOND WITH OUR FINANCIAL GIFTS

OFFERTORY INVITATION (lay reader)

As our love for one another thrives and increases, 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 – Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring

J.S. Bach

DOXOLOGY # 303 Rejoice, Give Thanks and Sing

Rejoice, give thanks and sing; your Sovereign God adore!

For Christ has robbed death's sting and triumphs evermore.

Lift up your heart, lift up your voice! Rejoice, again I say, rejoice.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION (lay reader)

Thank you, God, for this family of faith, which enriches our lives and enables us to share. Thank you for helping us to reach outside ourselves. 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 RESPOND WITH PRAYER

SHARING JOYS AND CONCERNS and PASTORAL PRAYER

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

HYMN # 117 Lift Up Your Heads, O Mighty Gates

Lift up your heads, O mighty gates; behold the glorious Ruler waits!

The Sovereign One is drawing near; the Savior of the world is here.

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE "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

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MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH - Members of the Congregation

SENIOR PASTOR AND TEACHER - The Rev. Dr. Deborah Roof

LAY READER – Sue Lindemann

GREETERS –Anne-Marie Merrill, Sue Brown
CHOIR DIRECTOR/ ORGANIST - Joan Virga
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION DIRECTOR - Christine Lehoullier
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT - Michelle Guerrin
AV/ TECHNICAL – Paul Lindemann

Visit our Facebook page or our website for recent videos of services and moments of Christian Faith Formation and inspiration.

IN OUR PRAYERS - November 29, 2020

PRAYERS OF JOY

Melanie Pawl is home from the hospital!

Thanksgiving and Spaghetti Supper

Council is grateful for all of the positive things that are happening – despite Covid!

The exterior of the connector is practically finished!!

Pastor Deborah had an incredibly inspirational Study Leave!

Walking prayer circles around Meetinghouse! We ended with a service of gratitude!

New Book Group began: Unbinding the Gospel! Books are still available.

Gratitude from Pastor Deborah for everyone who pitched in and helped in the office!

Gratitude texting groups: three groups uphold one another in prayer and gratitude

Labyrinth finger walks and growing appreciation in this ancient spiritual practice.

Paul Lindemann's on-going help with our virtual worship.

PRAYERS OF CONSOLATION

Family and friends of Colleen Robbins, who died on 11.7.20 (relative of the Guerrin Family)

Family of Molly Rockwell, who died in a car accident. Chris Cox was her Scout Leader and friend of the Robinson Family.

Suzanne MacGibbon on the death of her 62-yr-old son Kevin who died 11.2.20

Families of the 257,016 deaths in the US due to COVID 19.

PRAYERS OF STRENGTH, HEALTH, AND HEALING

Pauline Gorgol (Stan's mother)

Kathleen McFadden (friend of Trudie Bergeron) recently diagnosed with cancer on her lung will have surgery after Thanksgiving.

Alan Pawl hospitalized with Covid and pneumonia

Beth and her daughter Allison - both have Covid - friends of Nancy Murdock

Everyone in this post-election USA; Teachers and all school personnel; Medical Professionals of all levels and in all locations; pastors; world and local leaders

Pat Crowell: knee surgery on 11.4.20; 29 St Andrew's Way, Londonderry, 03053

Edie Cefaly (Pat Cefaly's) sister and her family: Edie is experiencing memory loss.

John Stewart, long-time member and friend of First Parish. Cards would be welcome:

1 Oak St.; Derry 03038

Lindsay Huber recovering at Brigham Health and Rehab, 77 High St, Newburyport, MA 01950 but is facing serious health issues. Cards of encouragement needed.

Dillingham Family (friends of Diana Sweeney) who lost their home in Oregon and at the same time a joy that they and pets are all safe.

McKeil Family (friends of Diana Sweeney) for comfort and healing in the coming days due to a challenging diagnosis

Trina & Terrance Brand's nephew Nathan and his family (wife, young daughter, parents, and sister) At 32, he has been diagnosed with glioblastoma (brain cancer) and has 6-24 months to live. We pray for comfort and peace.

For those with cancer: Rosemary, friend of Marge Palmer, dying of Stage 4 lung cancer with congestive heart failure; Verna Elwell has stage 1 lung cancer (along with some other health concerns) cards can be sent to: 3 Hood Rd, #507; Derry; Kate, Jesse's friend is battling terminal cancer; Steph Lesko, friend of Pastor Deborah's daughters: 30-yr-old mother of a 1-yr old, diagnosed with advanced breast cancer that has spread to lymph nodes – had mastectomy - prayers for Steph and her whole family; Jay, Marjorie Palmer's friend, a 41-yr old father of 3 young children who has been recently diagnosed with multiple cancers and given possibly a year to live. Hanson, Marjorie Palmer's cousin's wife; Martha, close friend of Pat and Dick Plouff, recurring leukemia; Janice Paradzick; Bob Dinan (friend of the Wilson's), Danny with stage 4 cancer, brother of Mary Jane (friend of Cobban family)

SPECIAL ONGOING PRAYERS

Paula Robinson

Andrea Cooper health & strength

For the families of those who are hospitalized and are unable to visit them.

For teachers, staff, & students the uncertainty of going back to school.

For those who choose hate and those who choose violence

For people who are losing their livelihood due to this pandemic

Parkland Hospital Personnel, and All Nurses and Doctors, Hospice workers and employees of Nursing Homes and Extended care facilities

First Responders; National Guard Active Military

Aghadowey Rural Kinship

Our Covenant Partner: Pastoral Counseling Services, Inc.

Southern NH Family Promise; Sonshine Soup Kitchen; Marion Gerrish; Upper Room Dangamvura – UCCZ – Zimbabwe African Church

Union Theological College in Zimbabwe, as well as our friend Kennedy Gondongwe Everyone in Zimbabwe, a country riddled with revolution and pandemic.

Tim Beers – Health & strength

Bonnie Hillsgrove, friend of Tim Beers

Brian Krantz and ALL of the Wildland Firefighters this fire season

Victims of floods and fires and Covid and violence; Refugees and their families

People of color and members of the LGBTQ+ community

Friends of the Meetinghouse Board of Directors