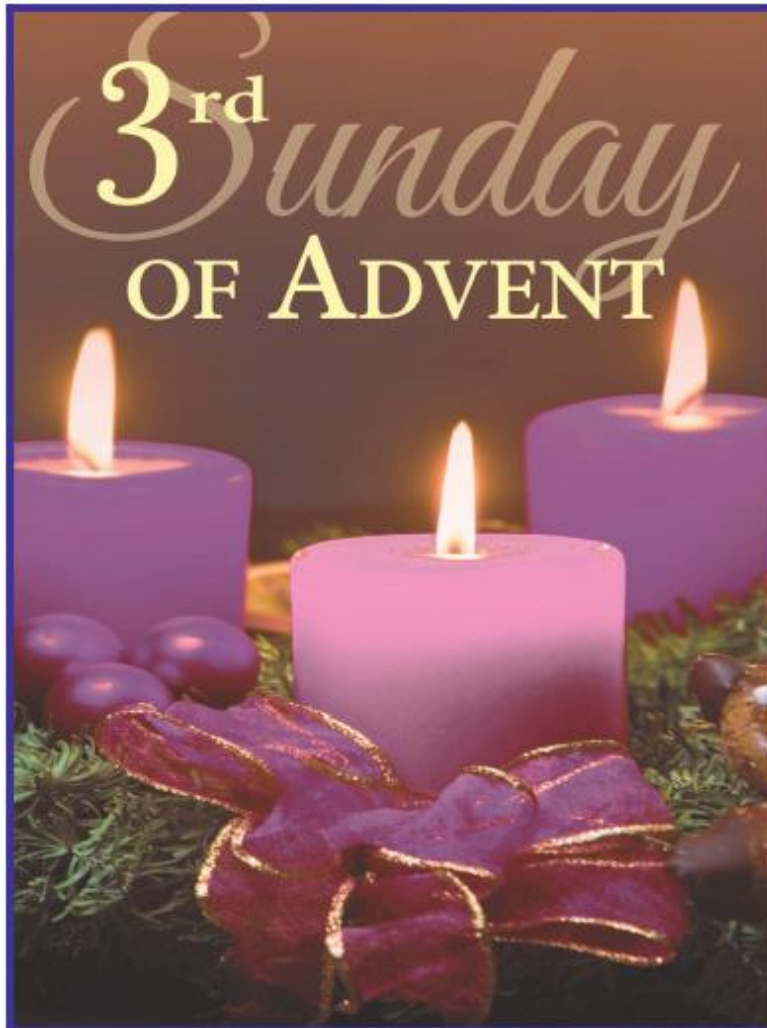


First Parish Congregational Church, United Church of Christ
P.O. Box 114, 47 East Derry Road, East Derry, NH Tel. (603) 434 – 0628

December 12, 2021 Advent 3 – Joy



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)

WE GATHER INTO THE PRESENCE OF GOD

“Good Christian Friends”

Good Christian friends rejoice, with heart and soul and voice.
Give ye heed to what we say: Jesus Christ is born today!
Ox and ass before him bow, and he is in the manger now.
Christ is born today! Christ is born today!

“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 you there.

“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!”

“Angels We Have Heard On High”

Angels we have heard on high Sweetly singing o'er the plains
And the mountains in reply Echoing their joyous strains
Gloria, in excelsis Deo (x2)

“Go Tell It on the Mountain”

Refrain: 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 silent flocks by night
Behold throughout the heavens There shone a Holy light
Sing refrain

WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP and LIGHTING THE THIRD ADVENT CANDLE – **JOY**

(Led by Lay Reader)

One: We gather around wreaths to pray our lost hopes, broken peace, limited joys, and love so hard to find during this continuing season of *coronavirus*. We affirm that our candles demonstrate how we claim the power to call this season **Advent**, *that time* when God's light comes into the world and nothing can overcome it. In faith, we light the candles of hope and peace.

(The candle of HOPE and the candle of PEACE are now lit.)

Many: **We will light the candle of joy today in spite of the losses we have experienced and the complex environment caused by this pandemic.**

One: God's joy cannot be extinguished.
(The candle of JOY is lit.)

God's joy will ignite its embers under great loss and sorrow this year; and God's joy will brighten the path to love.

Many: Emmanuel, God be with us, in the week to come, lighting hope, peace and joy on the wick of our lives so that we may shine on our world with a simple smile, an unexpected laughter. Amen

HYMN #102 ***"Oh How Shall I Receive" You*** (vs. 1, 2)

O how shall I receive you, how meet you on your way,
Blessed hope of every people, my soul's delight and stay?
O Jesus, Jesus, give me now by your own pure light.
To know what e'er is pleasing and welcome in your sight.

Love caused your incarnation; love brought you unto me.
Your thirst for my salvation procured my liberty,
O love beyond all telling, that led you to embrace
In love, all love excelling, our lost and fallen race.

INVOCATION (Read by lay reader)

Loving God, we rejoice in this season of anticipation, as we remember your promises and look forward to your winks into our lives. Strengthen us for the journey by renewing within us the gifts of your Holy Spirit: hope, peace and joy. We give thanks for your abiding Presence. Amen.

*SONG OF PRAISE ***Joy to the World***

Joy to the World, the Lord is come; Let Earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare him room And heaven and nature sing (x3)

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD FOR US

SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 55:1-13 (International Children's Version)

¹The Lord says, "All you who are thirsty,
come and drink.

Those of you who do not have money,
come, buy and eat!

Come buy wine and milk.

You don't need money; it will cost you nothing.

²Why spend your money on something that is not real food?

Why work for something that doesn't really satisfy you?

Listen closely to me, and you will eat what is good.

You will enjoy the food that satisfies your soul.

³ Come to me and listen.

Listen to me so you may live.

I will make an agreement with you that will last forever.

I will give you the blessings I promised to David.

⁴ I made David a witness of my power for all nations.

I made him a ruler and commander of many nations.

⁵ You will call for nations that you don't yet know.

And these nations will run to you.

This will happen because of the Lord your God.

The Holy One of Israel honors you."

⁶ So you should look for the Lord before it is too late.

You should call to him while he is near.

⁷ Evil people should stop being evil.

They should stop thinking bad thoughts.

They should return to the Lord, and he will have mercy on them.

They should come to our God, because he will freely forgive them.

⁸ The Lord says, "Your thoughts are not like my thoughts.

Your ways are not like my ways.

⁹ Just as the heavens are higher than the earth,

so are my ways higher than your ways.

And my thoughts are higher than your thoughts.

¹⁰ Rain and snow fall from the sky.

They don't return without watering the ground.

They cause the plants to sprout and grow.

And the plants make seeds for the farmer.

And from these seeds people have bread to eat.

¹¹ The words I say do the same thing.

They will not return to me empty.

They make the things happen that I want to happen.

They succeed in doing what I send them to do.

¹² "So you will go out with joy.

You will be led out in peace.

The mountains and hills will burst into song before you.

All the trees in the fields will clap their hands.

¹³ Large cypress trees will grow where thornbushes were.

Myrtle trees will grow where weeds were.

These things will be a reminder of the Lord's promise.

And this reminder will never be destroyed."

SERMON: "Go Out With Joy; Be Led in Peace"

Song of Praise: ***Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.***

WE RESPOND WITH OUR FINANCIAL GIFTS

OFFERTORY INVITATION

Today God's voice is heard through the ministries our church helps to provide. We bear witness to the light born in Bethlehem by our contribution to the least of these. May we remember God's generosity as we reach into our own. If you are joining us virtually, please use the next few moments to share joys and concerns in the chat. Our services are recorded. Please use first names. God knows who you mean.

SPECIAL MUSIC "***Lo, How A Rose E'er Blooming***" sung by Jonathan Cote

GETTING TO KNOW A CHILD OF GOD: Cathy Zylinski

DOXOLOGY: ***Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.***

PRAYER OF DEDICATION (lay reader)

We answer your call to generosity, Gracious LORD, and we ask your blessing upon them. May they be multiplied by your goodness and may even the brokenhearted be comforted. May our gifts feed the hungry, may the lonely be accompanied and may the stranger be welcomed. Thank you, God, for the blessings we are blessed to share. Amen.

WE RESPOND WITH GRATITUDE AND PRAYER

SHARING JOYS AND CONCERNS and PASTORAL PRAYERS, 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.

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

ANY FINAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

HYMN # 4 *Joyful, joyful, We Adore You*

Joyful, joyful, we adore You, God of glory, Lord of love;
Hearts unfold like flow'rs before You, Op'ning to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness; Drive the dark of doubt away;
Giver of immortal gladness, Fill us with the light of day!

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 Hinshaw Music, Inc.; All rights reserved. Reprinted under ONE LICENSE #A-708716.*

MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH - Members of the Congregation
SENIOR PASTOR AND TEACHER - The Rev. Dr. Deborah Roof
LAY READER – Cathy Zylinski
GREETERS – Cyndi Gray, Jack Martin - virtually
MUSICIAN – Jonathan Cote
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION DIRECTOR - Christine Lehoullier
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT - Michelle Guerrin
AV/ TECHNICAL – Mike Schroeder and Brian Williams

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

IN OUR PRAYERS – December 12, 2021

PRAYERS OF JOY

Advent workshop was a wonderful experience for all!
Christmas decorations were a hit! Many enjoyed “new to them” treasures!
The Family Promise event this week was an extraordinary display of generosity!
“Card Angels” – Pastor Deborah delivered over 90 cards of appreciation and gratitude to the staff of Parkland Medical Center. They were overwhelmed by this loving gesture!
Sugar Plum Angels – thanks to organizers and worker bees – one and all!
Church Wifi was upgraded – with joy and appreciation to Paul and Dani
New Walkway on the west side of the connector! Thanks to Bill and Fred!
Beautiful flooring and fresh paint – inside and out!!! Gratitude to Facilities and to the BAC for their hard work!
Dangamvura – UCCZ – Zimbabwe African Church has been in touch with us
Gratitude for members and friends in Georgia, Zimbabwe, and Northern Ireland.

PRAYERS OF CONSOLATION

For the family of Joe Merrill; For the family of Beverly Gosselin (Aunt of Michelle G.’s friend Uke); For the families of Oxford, OH shooting victims: Tate Myre, 16, Hana St. Juliana, 14, Madisyn Baldwin, 17, Justin Shilling, 17; For family and friends of Brian, especially Wendy W. & Jeff S.; For the families of the **787,064** people who have died in the US due to COVID. (12/8/21)

PRAYERS OF STRENGTH, HEALTH, AND HEALING

Betty Burnell taken to Parkland on 12/2; Lincoln, Karen W’s nephew, struggling with Autism and other mental health concerns; Jenny, friends of Jeff S; Davida, Jo’s friend, suffering from migraines after surgery.
Thavy, friend of the Guerrin family, during her high-risk pregnancy- third trimester.

Nancy's friend Erin H.- Prayers that her medical condition will improve enough that her boys will be able to return to live with her

Benjamin Plouff, Dick's brother, suffering from cardiac issues, breathing now difficult

Jim, Jeff S.'s father, for prayers of confidence and healing

For those with covid: Pammy (ICU), Peter, Renee & their family (Cousins of Michelle G.'s friend Uke) Mary L.; Aleigha; Jennie, Jim and Lynn

For those with cancer: BB Dinan (friend of the Bob and Karen) – approaching the end of his life; Bruce with stage 4 colon cancer; Janice P needs another round of chemo; Priscilla with colon cancer; Tracey with aggressive cancer who has 3 children/ only 46 years old; Liza D's husband's Uncle Walt has Stage 4 cancer; Martha, close friend of Pat and Dick P, recurring leukemia; Danny with stage 4 cancer, brother of Mary Jane (friend of Rachel and Alec.)

SPECIAL ONGOING PRAYERS

Law Enforcement, fire fighters; first responders, active military

Prayers for peaceful resolution to conflict situations around the world

Parkland Hospital personnel, and all nurses and doctors, Hospice workers and

Southern NH Family Promise; Sonshine Soup Kitchen; Marion Gerrish; Upper Room

United Theological College in Zimbabwe, as well as our friend Kennedy Gondongwe

Tim B – Health & strength and Bonnie H, friend of Tim B

Friends of the Meetinghouse Board of Directors