

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

**December 19, 2021**  
**Advent 4 – 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)

**CAROLING INTO THE PRESENCE OF GOD**

***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 is Christ the King Whom shepherds guard and angels sing  
Haste, haste to bring him laud The babe, the son of Mary

### ***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.

### ***It Came upon a 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 goodwill to all. From heaven’s all gracious King.”  
The world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angel’s sing.

### ***Joy to the World***

Joy to the world! The Lord is come; Let earth receive her King;  
Let ev’ry heart prepare him room. And heav’n and nature sing,  
And heav’n and nature sing, And heav’n and heav’n and nature sing.

### ***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 bright sky Looked down where He lay  
The little Lord Jesus Asleep on the hay

WELCOME

SPECIAL MUSIC offered by Kevin Foster and Tom Wood:

***“Angels From the Realms of Glory”***

CALL TO WORSHIP and LIGHTING THE FOURTH ADVENT CANDLE - **LOVE**

(Led by Lay Reader)

One: We gather around wreaths to pray into our lost hopes, so we light the candle of hope; to pray through the broken peace in our world, so we light the candle of peace; and we pray through our limited joys, so we light the candle of joy.

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.

Many: **We now light the candle of love even when many things dim our sparkling love.**

One: The light of God’s love cannot be extinguished.

(The candle of LOVE is lit.)

God’s love will ignite its embers under great loss and sorrow this year.  
God’s love will lead us on our path to a fulfilling life.

**Many: Emmanuel, God be with us in the week to come lighting hope, peace, joy and love on the wick of our lives, so that we may shine on our world your unconditional welcome to all. Amen**

**HYMN (Honoring Hope) #609 “Now Is The Time Approaching”**

Now is the time approaching, By prophets long foretold,  
When all shall dwell together, secure and manifold.  
Let war be learned no longer, Let strife and tumult cease,  
All earth a blessed garden that God shall tend in peace.

**INVOCATION (Led by Lay Reader)**

Loving God, we rejoice in this season of anticipation, as we remember your promises. Your light breaks into our darkness, so we look forward to your winks of light breaking into our lives. Strengthen us for the journey by renewing within us the gifts of your Holy Spirit: hope, peace, joy and love. We are so very grateful for your abiding Presence in our lives. Amen.

**\*SONG OF PRAISE #125 *Angels We Have Heard on High* (Refrain)**

Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!

**WE HEAR GOD’S WORD FOR US**

**SCRIPTURE: John 1:1-18 (NRSV)**

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being <sup>4</sup> in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. <sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

<sup>6</sup> There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup> He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup> He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. <sup>9</sup> The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

<sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. <sup>11</sup> He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. <sup>12</sup> But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

<sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth. <sup>15</sup> (John testified to him and cried out, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.’”) <sup>16</sup> From his fullness we have all received,

grace upon grace. <sup>17</sup> The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup> No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

### **HYMN (Honoring Peace)**

Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me  
Let there be peace on earth - the peace that was meant to be  
    With God, our Creator - Family all are we  
    Let me walk with my neighbor in perfect harmony.  
Let peace begin with me let this be the moment now.  
With every step I take let this be my solemn vow  
To take each moment and live each moment in peace eternally  
Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.

**SERMON:** Grace upon Grace

### **WE RESPOND WITH OUR FINANCIAL GIFTS**

OFFERTORY INVITATION (Lay Reader)

God gives us responsibilities in the church and the world to carry God's love to all who will listen. We are called to build up, to feed the hungry and to house the homeless. Our offerings are just one sign of our faithfulness. 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.

GETTING TO KNOW A CHILD OF GOD: Fred Merrill

DOXOLOGY ***O Come, All Ye Faithful (refrain)***

O come, let us adore him (x3), Christ is Lord!

**PRAYER OF DEDICATION** (Lay Reader)

May our offerings proclaim Jesus in ways that will be received with joy. May the gifts that we offer today be multiplied and spread far and near - even as we here are blessed beyond anything we might imagine. 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.

## **Hymn #4 (Honoring Joy)**

Joyful, joyful, we adore you, God of glory, Lord of love;  
Hearts unfold like flowers before you, Opening to the sun above.  
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness; Drive the storms of doubt away;  
Giver of immortal gladness, Fill us with the light of day!

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

### ANY FINAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

## **HYMN (Honoring Love)**

Jesus loves me this I know. For the Bible tells me so.  
Little ones to God belong. They are weak but He is strong.  
Yes, Jesus loves me. (x3) The Bible tells me so.

### BENEDICTION

### POSTLUDE Jesus Loves Me

MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH - Members of the Congregation  
SENIOR PASTOR AND TEACHER - The Rev. Dr. Deborah Roof  
LAY READER – Fred Merrill  
NOVEMBER GREETERS – Sue Brown, Sue Lindemann (Remote)  
MUSICIAN – Jonathan Cote  
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION DIRECTOR - Christine Lehoullier  
OFFICE MANAGER - Michelle Guerrin  
AV/ TECHNICAL – Paul Lindemann with Brian Williams and Mike Schroeder

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

## ***IN OUR PRAYERS - December 19, 2021***

### **PRAYERS OF JOY**

The Meetinghouse lit up at night is AMAZING! (Thank you, Paul L)  
“Card Angels” sent nearly two hundred cards of care to staff at Elliot Hospital.  
FPC received a thoughtful Christmas donation from the Derry Village Rotary.  
Advent workshop was a wonderful experience for all! (Thank you, Christine and CE)  
Christmas decorations were a hit! Many enjoyed “new to them” treasures!  
The Family Promise event 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  
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**

The family of Betty Burnell (died on 12.11.21); 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 **793,937** people who have died in the US due to COVID. (12/13/21)

### **PRAYERS OF STRENGTH, HEALTH, AND HEALING**

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 (out of ICU!), Peter, Renee & their family (Cousins of Michelle G.'s friend Uke) Mary L.; Aleigha; Jennie, Jim and Lynn

**For those with cancer:** Caroline M, who just received a cancer diagnosis. As soon as possible a surgery will be scheduled. 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, Elliot 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