

7First Parish Congregational Church, United Church of Christ
P.O. Box 114, 47 East Derry Road East Derry, NH 03041
Tel. (603) 434 – 0628

December 26, 2021

For unto
us a
Child ✨
is born
ISAIAH 9.6

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

CENTERING MUSIC (***Hark! The Herald Angels Sing***)

LIGHTING THE CHRIST LIGHT

WELCOME by Beth Hunter

CALL TO WORSHIP (Based on Psalm 95) (Led by Cathy Zylinski)

- One: O come, let us sing to the Lord;
let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!
- Many: Let us come into God’s presence with thanksgiving;
let us make a joyful noise to God with songs of praise!
- One: The Lord is high above all nations, and God’s glory above the heavens.
For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods.
- Many: In God’s hand are the depths of the earth;
the heights of the mountains are God’s also.

HYMN: O Come All Ye Faithful

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant; O come ye, o come ye to Bethlehem
O come and behold Him, born the King of Angels
O come, let us adore Him (x 3) Christ the Lord!

Sing choirs of angels, sing in exultation; O come ye, o come ye to Bethlehem
O come and behold Him, born the King of Angels
O come, let us adore Him (x 3) Christ the Lord!

INVOCATION (Led by lay reader please join in.)

Lord of Lords, King of Kings, we gather in thanksgiving for a year of bountiful blessings and mysterious God-winks. We acknowledge that things have been difficult: disease and discord run rampant. And yet, in the midst is your Presence and your promise of a new day. We are truly grateful for the child of hope, faith, joy and love. In your holy name and in your holy love. Amen.

SONG OF PRAISE: *Gloria, in excelsis Deo, Gloria, in excelsis Deo.*

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD FOR US

SCRIPTURE: John 1:19-34 NIV

¹⁹ Now this was John's testimony when the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. ²⁰ He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, "I am not the Messiah."

²¹ They asked him, "Then who are you? Are you Elijah?"

He said, "I am not."

"Are you the Prophet?"

He answered, "No."

²² Finally they said, "Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?"

²³ John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, "I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way for the Lord.'"

²⁴ Now the Pharisees who had been sent ²⁵ questioned him, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?"

²⁶ "I baptize with water," John replied, "but among you stands one you do not know. ²⁷ He is the one who comes after me, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie."

²⁸ This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

²⁹ The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! ³⁰ This is the one I meant when I said, ‘A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’ ³¹ I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel.”

³² Then John gave this testimony: “I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. ³³ And I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’ ³⁴ I have seen and I testify that this is God’s Chosen One.”

REFLECTION by Beth Hunter

WE RESPOND WITH OUR FINANCIAL GIFTS

OFFERTORY INVITATION (lay reader)

Prophets urge us to pay attention to the Presence of God that breaks into our daily lives. God’s gifts surround us: family, friends, faith and the air we breathe. Let us be mindful of the abundance that is ours to share.

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 MEMBER - Cathy Zylinski

DOXOLOGY:

Joy to the World, the LORD is come
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And heaven and nature Sing,
And heaven and nature Sing, and heaven and nature Sing.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION (Led by lay reader, please join in.)

For the wondrous gift of life, we are thankful, O God. Your generous outpouring of grace reminds us of the fruitful life we are called to bear. May these gifts of time, treasure and talent, therefore, embody our desire to share and contribute to your Presence among us. Amen.

WE RESPOND WITH GRATITUDE AND PRAYER

SHARING JOYS AND CONCERNS and PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE,
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: *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

The shepherds feared and trembled When, lo! Above the Earth

Rang out the angel chorus That hailed our Savior's birth

Sing Refrain!

BLESSING

POSTLUDE: Reprise – Go, Tell it on the Mountain!

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

MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH - Members of the Congregation

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

WORSHIP LEADER – Beth Hunter

LAY READER – Cathy Zylinski

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

IN OUR PRAYERS - December 26, 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 **809,300** people who have died in the US due to COVID. (12/24/21)

PRAYERS OF STRENGTH, HEALTH, AND HEALING

Ruthlee Root, hospitalized on 12/20; 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. Surgery is 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