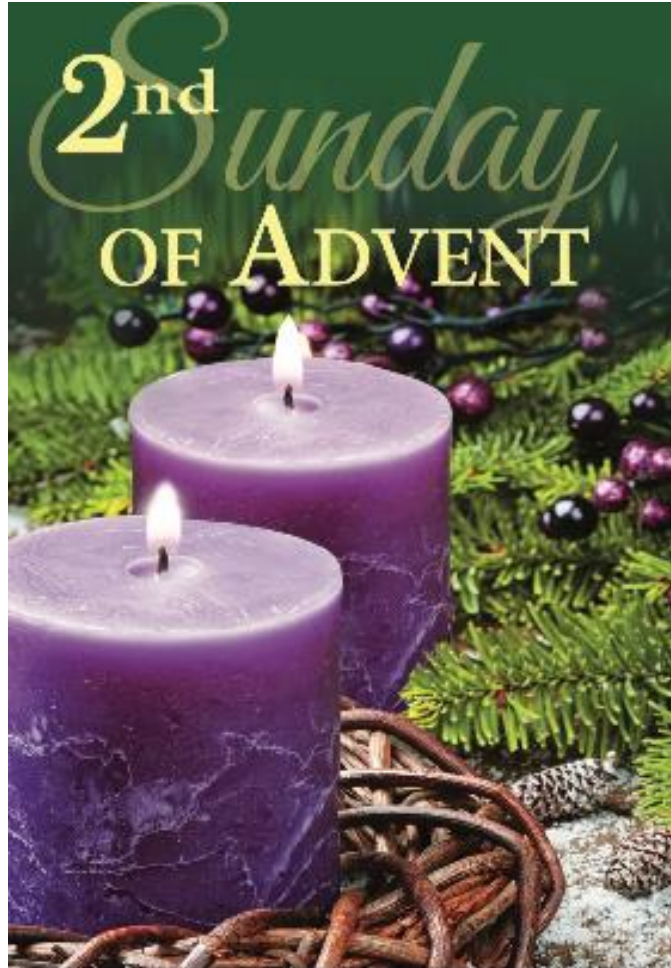


First Parish Congregational Church, United Church of Christ
P.O. Box 114, 47 East Derry Road, East Derry, NH Tel. (603) 434 – 0628

**December 5, 2021
Advent 2 – Peace
Communion**



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

O Little Town of Bethlehem

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light;
the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

Angels We Have Heard On High

Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,
and the mountains in reply, echo back their joyous strains.

Gloria, in excelsis Deo, Gloria, in excelsis Deo.

"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!"

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.

WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP AND LIGHT THE ADVENT CANDLE OF PEACE

(Led by Lay Reader)

One: Psalm 33:20 says: "We wait in hope for the LORD;
who is our help and our shield."

**Many: As we await the coming of our savior, may our Eternal God grant us
the courage to hope.**

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

One: Colossians 3:15 says: "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as
members of one body you were called to peace."

**Many: May our Almighty God offer rest for our hearts, and peace for our
souls. May we draw upon God's grace to seek peace in our lives,
peace in this community, and peace in the world.**

(The second candle – the candle of PEACE – is lit.)

INVOCATION (Read by Lay Reader)

Come, O God, to bring light into our days of worry and anxiety. Enrich us with spiritual
gifts that transcend disappointments and spill out in generous compassion for all your
suffering children. Meet us today where we are so we may be equipped for trials yet to
come and for joys yet to be revealed. In Jesus' name. Amen.

HYMN # 438 ***When Peace, Like a River*** (vs. 1, 4)

When peace like a river, uphold me each day, when sorrows like sea billows roll,
whatever my lot, you have taught me to say, "It is well, it is well with my soul."

Refrain: It is well with my soul; it is well, it is well with my soul.

O God, speed the day that is filled with your light, when clouds are rolled back as a
scroll; The trumpet shall sound and the Lord shall appear, "even so" - it is well with
my soul. [Sing Refrain]

CALL TO CONFESSION (lay reader)

When God invites us out of our privilege, we want to act as if we do not truly
understand. Let us confess the honesty of our fears.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (led by lay reader)

**Holy God, You show us over and over again that your Word is for our good.
We hold on to our imagined comfort and we argue, or we try to get away.
Thank you, God, for giving us this opportunity to see our error, to turn and
grow closer to your will for our lives. Amen.**

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS (lay reader)

Hear, oh Children of God: no amount of avoiding – not even trying to destroy the
Word of God – can separate you from the love of God. God's steadfast love will
pursue you to the ends of time.

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

Gloria in excelsis Deo

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

COMMUNION HYMN #336 ***Here, O My Lord, I See You Face to Face*** (vs. 2, 3)

Here would I feed upon the bread of God,
Here share the cup, the gracious gift of heaven;
Here would I lay aside each earthly load,
Here taste a fresh the calm of sin forgiven.

This is the hour of banquet and of song;
This is the heavenly table spread anew;
Here let me feast, and, feasting still prolong
The brief, bright hour together here with you.

OUR SACRED STORY

PRAYER OF CONSECRATION 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.

SHARING the MEAL

At home, you will use the elements of your choosing to represent the bread and the cup. If you are with your family, please serve one another. Here in our Sanctuary, we will be using the individual cups that you picked up at the entrance. Lift one tab to retrieve the "bread". Carefully lift the second tab in order to drink the juice. You will be able to discard the empty cup as you leave the sanctuary.

As we celebrate Communion today, you will first be invited to take the "bread" – which you will hold. Once everyone is served, we will ALL take the bread at the same time. This act symbolizes that we are ONE BODY and that we are all one in the Spirit of Christ.

You will then be invited to take the cup of love which symbolizes the cup of wine that Jesus shared with his friends, saying "This is the cup of love poured out for you." You are invited to prayerfully drink from the cup at your own pace, in your own time. This demonstrates that we are each individuals in God's Presence - each one doing the best that he/she/they can to be the hands and feet of Christ on this earth.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD FOR US

SCRIPTURE: Ezekiel 37:1-14 (International Children's Version)

¹ I felt the power of the Lord was on me. He brought me out by the Spirit of the Lord. And he put me down in the middle of a valley. It was full of bones. ² The Lord led me around among the bones. There were many bones on the bottom of the valley. I saw the bones were very dry. ³ Then he asked me, "Human being, can these bones live?"

I answered, "Lord God, only you know."

⁴ The Lord said to me, "Prophecy to these bones. Say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.' ⁵ This is what the Lord God says to the bones: I will cause breath to enter you. Then you will live. ⁶ I will put muscles on you. I will put flesh on you. I will cover you with skin. Then I will put breath in you, and you will live. Then you will know that I am the Lord.'"

⁷ So I prophesied as I was commanded. While I prophesied, there was a noise and a rattling. The bones came together, bone to bone. ⁸ I looked and saw

muscles come on the bones. Flesh grew, and skin covered the bones. But there was no breath in them.

⁹ Then the Lord said to me, "Prophecy to the wind. Prophecy, human being, and say to the wind: 'This is what the Lord God says: Wind, come from the four winds. Breathe on these people who were killed so they can live again.'" ¹⁰ So I prophesied as the Lord commanded me. And the breath came into them, and they came to life. They stood on their feet. They were a very large army.

¹¹ Then the Lord said to me: "Human being, these bones are like all the people of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope has gone. We are destroyed.'" ¹² So, prophecy, and say to them: 'This is what the Lord God says: My people, I will open your graves. And I will cause you to come up out of your graves. Then I will bring you into the land of Israel. ¹³ This is how you, my people, will know that I am the Lord. I will open your graves and cause you to come up from them. ¹⁴ And I will put my Spirit inside you. You will come to life. Then I will put you in your own land. And you will know that I, the Lord, have spoken and done it, says the Lord.'

SERMON: "When Our Bones Feel Dried Up"

HYMN: *LET THERE BE PEACE ON EARTH*

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, we are family,
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.

WE RESPOND WITH OUR FINANCIAL GIFTS

OFFERTORY INVITATION

We have been enriched and strengthened by the gifts of God in so many ways. Now we have the opportunity and privilege of sharing God's Word with the world. Our offerings enable our church's witness to shine brightly in this community and around the globe. Let us give as we have been blessed.
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: Kevin Foster

DOXOLOGY # 135 *O Come, All You Faithful* (refrain)

O Come, let us adore Him. (3 times) Christ is Lord!

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Thank you, God, for this family of faith, which enriches our lives and enables us to share. Thank you for making us aware that some faint with fear and others dwell in hopelessness. 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 GRATITUDE AND PRAYER

SHARING JOYS AND CONCERNS and PASTORAL PRAYER

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

ANY FINAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

HYMN: #80 ***Savior, Again to Your Dear Name*** (vs.1, 4)

Savior, again to your dear name we raise
With one accord our parting hymn of praise;
We join to bless you ere our worship cease;
Then, in the silence, wait your word of peace.

Grant us your peace throughout our earthly life,
Our balm in sorrow, and our stay in strife;
Then, when your voice shall bid our conflict cease,
Call us, O Lord, to your eternal peace.

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 – Kevin Foster
GREETERS - Sue Brown; Sue Lindemann
MUSICIAN – Jonathan Cote
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 - December 5, 2021

PRAYERS OF JOY

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 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 **780,131** people who have died in the US due to COVID. (12/2/21)

PRAYERS OF STRENGTH, HEALTH, AND HEALING

Betty Burnell taken to Elliott 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. 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: 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