

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

December 24, 2021 5:00pm and 7:00pm

Christmas Eve Service



“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 ENTER INTO GOD’S PRESENCE WITH SINGING

HYMN “O Come, All Ye Faithful”

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant, O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold Him, born the King of angels; O come let us adore Him, O come let us
adore Him, O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord!

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation, Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest; O come let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord!

“In the beginning...” John 1:1-5

WELCOME AND CENTERING BREATH

Lighting the Advent Wreath (Left = left side; Right =right side)

One: We light the candle of HOPE to remind us of the promises made by all the prophets that God would raise up a savior for his people Israel.

Left: Christ is our hope and our salvation.

He calls us to share our hope in Him with each other.

One: We light the candle of PEACE to remind us that it is only with God and by following in His path that true peace can be found.

Right: Christ brings the Peace of God to us.

He calls us to share the peace He gives with others.

One: We light the candle of JOY to remind us that God gives joy to every heart that abides in Him.

**Left: As Mary rejoiced in the birth of Jesus –
so His birth in us brings us joy.**

God calls us to share the joy He gives with each other.

One: We light the candle of LOVE to remind us that Jesus is God's gift of love to us – and that in Him, the light of love triumphs over darkness.

Right: Love never fails – it transforms all those who give it and receive it.

God calls us to share his love with each other.

One: We light the Christ candle to remind us that the light of the world was born this night.

All: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

**Those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness
– on them a light has shined.**

Let us pray: Almighty God - you have made this night holy by the gift of your Son, born of the Holy Spirit and of Mary. Upon Him rested all your grace, through Him has come all your mercy. Let His light shine within our hearts tonight even more brightly than it shines from the candles in this place. Help us to hear your word and to celebrate your everlasting love through Him. Amen

SPECIAL MUSIC with gratitude to Benjamin Allen and Danielle Allen

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

In Jesus' name we pray, even as we pray together the prayer that he taught us:

**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.**

OUR SACRED STORY

SPECIAL MUSIC with gratitude to Eric Stern

A READING: The Gospel of Luke Chapters 1 & 2

HYMN “*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!
So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh, Come, peasant, king to own Him.
The King of kings salvation brings; Let loving hearts enthrone Him.
This, this is Christ, the King, Whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
Haste, haste to bring Him laud, The Babe, the Son of Mary!

A READING: The Gospel of Matthew 2:1-15
With gratitude to Alec Cobban, our reader

A Christmas Reflection by Pastor Deborah

SPECIAL MUSIC with gratitude to Debbie Allen

SINGING OUR SACRED STORY

Please Note: We invite you to sing the words softly or hum them gratefully. You will be invited to come forward with your family unit to receive your candle from Pastor Deborah when you are called forward. Please remain seated until that time. If you have a financial gift at this time, you may leave it in the basket when you receive your candle or in the back as you exit.

HYMN “*O Come, O Come Emmanuel*”

O come, O come, Emmanuel And ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here Until the Son of God appear
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, O Wisdom from on high, who ordered all things mightily;
to us the path of knowledge show and teach us in its ways to go.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel.

HYMN “*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.

For Christ is born of Mary, and gathered all above
while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars together proclaim the holy birth.
And praises sing to God the king; and peace to all on earth!

HYMN “*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.

HYMN “*The First Noel*”

The first Noel, 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.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.

They looked up and saw a star shining in the east, beyond them far,
And to the earth it gave great light, and so it continued both day and night.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.

HYMN “*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.

Come to Bethlehem and see Christ whose birth the angels sing;
Come adore on bended knee, Christ the Lord, the newborn King.
Gloria, in excelsis Deo, Gloria, in excelsis Deo.

HYMN “*We Three Kings of Orient Are*”

We three kings of Orient are bearing gifts we traverse afar
Field and fountain, moor and mountain Following yonder star
O Star of wonder, star of night Star with royal beauty bright
Westward leading, still proceeding Guide us to thy Perfect Light.

Glorious now behold Him arise, King and God and Sacrifice.
Alleluia, alleluia! Sounds through the earth and skies.
O Star of wonder, star of night Star with royal beauty bright
Westward leading, still proceeding Guide us to thy Perfect Light.

HYMN “*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 newborn King!”

Christ, by highest heaven adored; Christ, the everlasting Lord!
Late in time behold Him come, off-spring of the virgin’s womb.
Veiled in flesh the God-head see; hail the incarnate Deity,
Pleased with us in flesh to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel.
Hark! the herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”

HYMN “*It Came Upon the 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 men, From heaven's all-gracious King."
The world in solemn stillness lay, To hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come, With peaceful wings unfurled,
And still their heavenly music floats O'er all the weary world;
Above its sad and lowly plains, They bend on hovering wing,
And ever o'er its babel sounds The blessed angels sing.

HYMN “*Silent Night, Holy 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.

Silent night, holy night, shepherds quake at the sight,
glories stream from heaven afar, heavenly hosts sing alleluia;
Christ, the Savior is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!

Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from thy holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

HYMN “*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,
And heaven and nature Sing, and heaven and nature Sing.

Joy to the world! the Savior reigns Let men their songs employ
While fields and floods Rocks, hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy, Repeat the sounding joy;
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

BENEDICTION Pastor Deborah

PLEASE REMAIN SEATED WITH YOUR CANDLE BURNING.

**A DEACON WILL INVITE YOU TO EXIT – CARRYING YOUR LIT CANDLE
TO THE TABLE IN BACK.**

**LEAVE YOUR LIT CANDLE ON THE TABLE ON YOUR WAY
OUT OF THE SANCTUARY.**

PLEASE GREET ONE ANOTHER IN THE PARKING LOT.

OFFERING: There are envelopes on the back table if you need one. You may leave your offering in a basket in the front or in the offering box on the back table.



Photo by Paul Lindemann

MERRY CHRISTMAS!
GOD BLESS US, EVERY ONE!