

First Parish Congregational Church, United Church of Christ
P.O. Box 114, 47 East Derry Road East Derry, NH 03041
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January 2, 2022



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 // LIGHTING THE CHRIST LIGHT

WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP (Led by Reni Harnden)

One: True light has entered our world through a babe in a manger.

Many: **Sing for joy and praise God, all people.**

One: The Word became flesh to dwell with humanity.

Many: **We come to walk with the Christ child and to learn.**

One: Receive the Word, and believe so that you may be transformed.

Many: **Our hearts are open to receive the Good News.**

INVOCATION (Led by lay reader please join in.)

From near and far, we come to worship. Amid our joys and sorrows, we come to praise. In our strength and in our weakness, we gather for refreshment and renewal. Praise be to you, O God, for your protecting love and freeing grace. Shine upon us here that we may know your truth and receive it into our lives. Amen.

CALL TO CONFESSION

God has set before us straight paths to follow, but we stumble along our own byways. God shows us the way of peace, but we choose the vanity of competition and strife. God is calling us now to repentance and new life.

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

Infinite God, look upon your finite creatures, broken and bereaved, with compassion and consolation. We view your world with unseeing eyes. We listen but do not hear. You offer wisdom and insight, but we misunderstand your counsel. O God, help us change the direction of our lives so we may act like your children and reflect your love into the world. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

God's gift of new life is ever available. The Holy Spirit is at work in our midst. God grant that we may open our eyes, unstop our ears, and live with empathy for all of God's children. With faith, we can live our beliefs, praising God who has blessed us with the peace of Christ.

HYMN: #478 *I've Got Peace Like A River*

I've got peace like a river, (x2)

I've got peace like a river in my soul. (Repeat)

I've got joy like a fountain, (x2)

I've got joy like a fountain in my soul. (Repeat)

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 an individual 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

Thank you, God, for life in the Spirit of Jesus:

For gladness in this bread and cup, for love that cannot die,

For peace the world cannot give, for joy in the company of friends,

For the glory of creation, for the mission of justice you have made our own.

In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD FOR US

SCRIPTURE: John 1:35-51 NIV

³⁵ The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. ³⁶ When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!"

³⁷ When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. ³⁸ Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?"

They said, "Rabbi" (which means "Teacher"), "where are you staying?"

³⁹ "Come," he replied, "and you will see."

So they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent that day with him. It was about four in the afternoon.

⁴⁰ Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. ⁴¹ The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ). ⁴² And he brought him to Jesus.

Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which, when translated, is Peter).

⁴³ The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, "Follow me."

⁴⁴ Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. ⁴⁵ Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

⁴⁶ "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked.

"Come and see," said Philip.

⁴⁷ When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, "Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit."

⁴⁸ "How do you know me?" Nathanael asked.

Jesus answered, "I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you."

⁴⁹ Then Nathanael declared, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel."

⁵⁰ Jesus said, "You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You will see greater things than that." ⁵¹ He then added, "Very truly I tell you, you will see 'heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on' the Son of Man."

SERMON: "Getting Off to a Great Start"

HYMN: #488 ***Be Still My Soul***

Be still, my soul: for God is on your side; bear patiently the cross of grief or pain;
Leave to your God to order and provide; in every change God faithful will remain.
Be still, my soul: your best eternal friend through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.

Be still, my soul: for God will undertake to guide in future days as in the past.
Your hope, your confidence let nothing shake;
all now mysterious shall be clear at last.

Be still, my soul: the waves and winds still know
how Jesus' power ruled them long ago.

WE RESPOND WITH OUR FINANCIAL GIFTS

OFFERTORY INVITATION (lay reader)

In these moments, we are challenged - not just to reach for a contribution, but to reorder our lives. Let us look beyond pledges to productivity. Will we be enlightened by the gifts we dedicate here? How will the world be changed by our investment in this community of faith?

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

DOXOLOGY: ***Gloria, in excelsis Deo, Gloria, in excelsis Deo.***

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

Your goodness, O God, has satisfied us with abundance beyond our deserving. The return on your investment in us is not adequate to express our thanks. Use our lives as channels of your grace. May our individual efforts and the combined outreach we can accomplish together turn mourning into joy and hopelessness into purposeful living. In Jesus' name, 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: #476 ***My Life Flows On In Endless Song***

My life flows on in endless song; above earth's lamentation,
I hear the sweet, though far off hymn that hails a new creation.
Through all the tumult and the strife, I hear the music ringing;
It finds an echo in my soul-- how can I keep from singing?

What though my joys and comforts die? My Savior still is living.
What though the shadows gather 'round? A new song Christ is giving.
No storm can shake my inmost calm, while to that Rock I'm clinging;
Since Love commands both heaven and earth, how can I keep from singing?

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE: ***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
LAY READER – Reni Harnden
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 - January 2, 2021

PRAYERS OF JOY

Beautiful Christmas Eve Service- many thanks to the special music from Debbie Gline Allen, Eric Stern and everyone who participated!
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 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 **820,355** people who have died in the US due to COVID.
(12/31/21)

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: 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