



First Parish Church, Congregational
On the Village Green

Manchester-by-the-Sea, Massachusetts

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Vesper Service

December 3, 2014

PRE-SERVICE MUSIC

CALL TO WORSHIP

We wait in darkness, expectantly, longingly, anxiously, thoughtfully.
The darkness is a womb, from which
we all have been nurtured and protected.

*In the darkness of the womb, the Christ-Child
was made ready for the journey into light.*

All: You are with us, O God, in darkness and in light.

It is only darkness that allows us to see
the splendor of the universe – blankets of stars,
the solitary glow of distant planets.

*It was the darkness that allowed Magi to find
the star that guided them to where the Christ-child lay.*

All: You are with us, O God, in darkness and in light.

In the darkness of the night, desert people find relief
from the cruel, relentless heat of the sun.

*In the blessed desert darkness, Mary and Joseph
were able to flee with the infant Jesus to safety in Egypt.*

All: You are with us, O God, in darkness and in light.

In the darkness of sleep, we are soothed and
restored, healed and renewed.

*In the darkness of sleep, dreams rise up.
God spoke to Jacob and Joseph through dreams.*

All: You are with us, O God, in darkness and in light.

In the solitude of night, we remember those in need –
the sick, the unemployed, the bereaved, the persecuted,
the homeless, those lost in cynicism and bitterness.

*In darkness, we remember our colleagues, partners,
parents, children, neighbors, friends. We thank God
for their presence in our lives.*

All: You are with us, O God, in darkness and in light.

In solitude, our fears and concerns, our hopes and visions
rise to the surface and we realize them face to face.

*In that darkness, we allow ourselves to worry
and to wonder where we are going.*

All: You are with us, O God, in darkness and in light.

SCRIPTURE READING **Psalm 80**

REFLECTION: *"make your face shine"*

THE LIGHTING OF VESPER CANDLES

(O Come, O Come, Emmanuel)

O GRACIOUS LIGHT (Phos hilaron)

O gracious Light,
pure brightness of the everlasting Father in Heaven,
O Jesus Christ, holy and blessed!

Now as we come to the setting of the sun,
and our eyes behold the vesper light;
We sing your praises, O God;
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

You are worthy at all times to be praised
by happy voices,
O Son of God, O Giver of Life,
and to be glorified throughout all the worlds.

HYMN: *"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!"*

POST SERVICE MUSIC

Psalm 80

**Hear us, O Shepherd of Israel,
you who lead Joseph like a flock;
you who sit enthroned between the
cherubim, shine forth
before Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh.
Awaken your might;
come and save us.**

**Restore us, O God;
make your face shine upon us,
that we may be saved.**

**O Lord God Almighty,
how long will your anger smolder
against the prayers of your people?
You have fed them with the bread of tears;
you have made them to drink tears by the bowlful.
You have made us a source of contention
to our neighbors;
and our enemies mock us.**

**Restore us, O God Almighty;
make your face shine upon us,
that we might be saved.**