



First Parish Church, Congregational
On the Village Green

Manchester -by -the -Sea, Massachusetts

Rev. Dr. Marlayna Schmidt, Interim Pastor

Donald R. Dunn, Director of Music-Organist

Jessica Skidmore, Christian Ministry Coordinator

Tori Potter, Sexton

Nancy Klebart, Office Manager

978-526-7661

office.fpchurch@verizon.net

www.firstparishchurch.org

VESPERS

Saturday, December 9, 2017 5:30 PM

“While Zechariah was in the sanctuary, an angel of the Lord appeared to him and said: ‘Don’t be afraid Zechariah! God has heard your prayer’.”
Luke 1:6

GATHERING MUSIC: *“The Lord Is My Light”*
 and *“Within Our Darkest Night”* from *Songs of Taizé*

WELCOME

Rev. Dr. Marlayna Schmidt

CALL TO WORSHIP/ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

Jessica Skidmore, Christian Ministry Coordinator

“Hope” written by Rev. Martha Spong

The poet, Emily Dickinson, wrote: “Hope is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul.”

The psalmist declared: “I put my hope in You all day long.”

Hope is more than wishful thinking. Hope is the Spirit of God dwelling within us, reminding us we are never alone.

Hope is our active commitment to be God’s faithful people, whether we walk an easy path or face fiery trials.

When we light the candle of Hope, we embrace God’s presence among us, yesterday and today and always.

Whatever we face in life, we will put our hope in God.
(Jessica lights the Hope Candle)

POETRY READING: *“The Phoebe,”* by May Sarton

The Phoebe sits on her nest
Hour after hour,
Day after day,
Waiting for life to burst out
From under her warmth.
Can I weave a nest of silence,
Weave it of listening,

Listening, listening,
Layer upon layer?
But one must first become small,
Nothing but a presence,
Attentive as a nesting bird,
Proffering no slightest wish
Toward anything
That might happen or be given,
Only the warm, faithful waiting,
Beyond the question,
The silence.
Before the answer,
The silence.

ONE MINUTE OF SILENT MEDITATION

SCRIPTURE READING: Luke 6:5-15 Shawn Newman, Reader
The Announcement of the Birth of John the Baptist, the Forerunner of Christ

⁵In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly order of Abijah. His wife was a descendant of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. ⁶Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord. ⁷But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were getting on in years.

⁸Once when he was serving as priest before God and his section was on duty, ⁹he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and offer incense. ¹⁰Now at the time of the incense-offering, the whole assembly of the people was praying outside. ¹¹Then there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. ¹²When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified; and fear

