

**First Parish Church, Congregational  
On the Village Green  
Manchester-by-the-Sea, Massachusetts  
VESPERS**

Saturday, December 22, 2018, 5:30 PM

**TEN MINUTES OF GATHERING MUSIC** (starting at 5:20 PM)

From *December Recollections* by Bryan Sircho

*Once the music starts to play, we invite you to be in silence.*

**WELCOME**

Rev. Dr. Marlayna Schmidt

**CALL TO WORSHIP/ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING**

The Angels' Candle (adapted from *Touch Holiness*)

Jessica Skidmore, Christian Ministry Coordinator, Reader

READER: This evening we light the fourth candle of Advent, the  
Angels' candle. [*READER lights candle*]

**PEOPLE: This candle reminds us of the angels that told the  
good news to the shepherds.**

READER: The angels sang so that all who heard would be filled with  
the joy of the birth of the Christ. Today is a time to reflect on  
Mary's words "let it be" and remember that we do not decide  
when or how Christ will come into our lives.

**PEOPLE: If we open ourselves to God, God will come to us.**

READER: We re-light the first candle remembering that we wait for  
Christ. [*READER lights candle*]

READER: We re-light the second candle remembering that we must  
also prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ. [*READER  
lights candle*]

READER: We light the third candle to remind us to bear witness to  
Christ's Love. [*READER lights candle*]

READER: Let us pray.

**ALL: Dear God, our time of waiting is nearly over. We pray  
that we have prepared well, and have born witness to your  
love. Help us now to welcome Christ in our hearts, and  
live a life filled with joy. Thank you for the angels, and the  
message they brought to the world. Amen.**

**MEDITATIVE READING:** A prayer/poem by Christine Rodgers  
Bethany Woods, Reader

**ANOTHER SUGGESTION FOR PEACE**

Please stop talking.  
Please stop.  
Let's write notes  
instead. Just the  
quiet sound of the pen  
connecting us. Let's  
have one huge moment  
of silence and see  
what rises up—what  
new thing might be born  
if we create the silence  
And the space.

**ONE MINUTE OF SILENT MEDITATION**

**REPEAT READING** (*In the tradition of "Lectio Divina," another reader will repeat the above poem, so it can be heard in "a different voice." As it is read, listen for the words/phrases that the Spirit is calling your attention to.*)

Jason Smith, Reader

**ONE MINUTE OF SILENT MEDITATION**

**SCRIPTURE READING:** Luke 1:67-79 Bethany Woods, Reader

Zechariah's Prophecy

<sup>67</sup> Then John the Baptist's father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke this prophecy:

<sup>68</sup> "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,  
for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them.

<sup>69</sup> He has raised up a mighty savior for us  
in the house of his servant David,

<sup>70</sup> as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,

<sup>71</sup> that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of  
all who hate us.

<sup>72</sup> Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors,  
and has remembered his holy covenant,  
<sup>73</sup> the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham,  
to grant us <sup>74</sup> that we, being rescued from the hands of our  
enemies,  
might serve him without fear, <sup>75</sup> in holiness and righteousness  
before him all our days.  
<sup>76</sup> And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;  
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,  
<sup>77</sup> to give knowledge of salvation to his people  
by the forgiveness of their sins.  
<sup>78</sup> By the tender mercy of our God,  
the dawn from on high will break upon us,  
<sup>79</sup> to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of  
death,  
to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

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Jason Smith, Reader

### **ONE MINUTE OF SILENT MEDITATION**

**MEDITATIVE READING:** A prayer/poem by Christine Rodgers

Bethany Woods, Reader

#### **CANTICLE**

The time has come  
to be only Light  
in the world  
to be only Love  
in the world  
to be only Peace  
In the world.  
It is what this  
sacred season

calls us to.  
Light.  
Love.  
And a deep  
abiding  
Peace.

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**REPEAT READING** *(In the tradition of “Lectio Divina,” another reader will repeat the above poem, so it can be heard in “a different voice.” As it is read, listen for the words/phrases that the Spirit is calling your attention to.)*

Jason Smith, Reader

## **LIGHTING OF VESPER CANDLES** (10 minutes)

*You are invited to come forward and light a candle(s) for people or situations you want to hold in the Light of God’s Love. When you light the candle feel free to whisper the name of the person(s)/situation(s) for whom you are praying.*

**MUSIC DURING CANDLE-LIGHTING** *is from Songs of Taizé*

## **BENEDICTION**

Rev. Schmidt

*If you wish, you are invited to remain in the sanctuary after the benediction and listen to the music, which will play for another ten minutes.*

*We invite you to leave the worship service in silence. However, Rev. Schmidt will stay in the church for a time in case you would like her to say a word of prayer with you following the service. Just let her know if you would like to pray.*

*This year our Advent Vespers will be featuring the poems of Christine Rodgers, from her book, “Upon a Luminous Night”. The Christian Education Committee of FPCC has bought 20 copies of her book to give away to people who come to Vespers.*

*If you would like a copy, see Rev. Marlayna.*