

**First Parish Church, Congregational  
United Church of Christ  
Worship Celebration  
Third Sunday of Advent  
*"The Family Christmas Tree"*  
Sunday, December 13, 2020  
10:00 am**

**Prelude**

*"The Advent of Our King"*

Willan

**Welcome**

**Lighting the Third Candle of Advent – JOY**

**Leader:** Let us share these words from Psalm 96:

**All:** Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice. Let the sea roar, and all that fills it. Let the field exult, and everything in it. Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy before the Lord, for he is coming.

Lighting of the Advent Candles

**Leader:** With the lighting of the Candle of Joy,

**All:** We proclaim the joy God offers to all Creation – a joy so vibrant It lights a path from the heavens to earth and back. It is the

joy that Jesus, the One who is coming, offers us.

God's light brings joy, and where there is joy there is light.

## **Hymn**

*"We Hail You God's Anointed"*

We hail you God's anointed, the long awaited One!  
Hail in the time appointed, you reign on earth begun!  
You come to break oppression, to set the captive free  
To take away transgression, and rule in equity

You shall come down like showers upon the fruitful earth  
And joy and hope, like flowers, spring in your path to birth  
Before you on the mountains shall peace, the herald, go  
And righteousness, in fountains, from hill to valley flow

The wise shall bow before you and gold and incense bring  
All nations shall adore you, and praise all peoples sing  
To you shall prayer unceasing and daily vows be said  
Your realm is still increasing, with you, O Christ, as head

O'er every foe victorious, you on your throne shall rest  
From age to age more glorious, all blessing and all blessed  
The tide of time shall never your covenant remove  
Your name shall stand forever, you changeless name of Love

## **Opening Prayer**

Holy One, may this Advent time bring Your light into our lives and Your world. May it inspire us to let hope in. May it lead us to let love in. May it move us to let joy in.

Help us in these days to fully open our hearts, heads, hands and spirits so we can receive the gift of Jesus fully, reverently, and gratefully. Help us take hold of and trust in Your Advent promise of hope, love and joy through Him – a promise of new and better life for us and all Your people.

We pray all this in the name of the One we wait for, and offer You the words He would one day teach His followers to say...

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

### **Blessing of the Blankets**

**Solo**

*"Breath of Heaven"* Eaton and Grant, arr. Larson  
Rebecca Shrimpton, soloist

I have traveled many moonless nights, cold and weary with a babe inside and I wonder what I've done. Holy Father, you have come and chosen me now to carry your Son. I am waiting in a silent prayer; I am frightened by the load I bear. In a world as cold as stone, must I walk this path alone? Be with me now, be with me now.

Breath of Heaven, hold me together, be forever near me, Breath of Heaven. Breath of Heaven, lighten my darkness, pour over me your holiness, for you are holy, Breath of Heaven.

Do you wonder as you watch my face, if a wiser one should have had my place? But I offer all I am for the mercy of your plan. Help me be strong, help me be me, help me.

Breath of Heaven, hold me together, be forever near me, Breath of Heaven. Breath of Heaven, lighten my darkness, pour over me your holiness, for you are holy. Breath of Heaven, hold me together, be forever near me, Breath of Heaven. Breath of Heaven, lighten my darkness, pour over me your holiness, for you are holy. Breath of Heaven.

## **Prayer Intentions**

### **Time of Silent and Spoken Prayer**

**Music Meditation**      *"What Child is This" (Greensleeves)* arr. Hartman

### **The Hebrew Scriptures      2 Samuel 6:1-5, 14-22 (New Century Version Bible Translation)**

<sup>1</sup>David again gathered all the chosen men of Israel—thirty thousand of them. <sup>2</sup> Then he and all his people went to Baalah in Judah to bring back the Ark of God. The Ark is called by the Name, the name of the LORD All-Powerful, whose throne is between the gold creatures with wings. <sup>3</sup> They put the Ark of God on a new cart and brought it out of Abinadab's house on the hill. Uzzah and Ahio, sons of Abinadab, led the new cart <sup>4</sup> which

had the Ark of God on it. Ahio was walking in front of it. <sup>5</sup> David and all the Israelites were celebrating in the presence of the LORD. They were playing wooden instruments: lyres, harps, tambourines, rattles, and cymbals.

<sup>14</sup> Then David danced with all his might before the LORD. He had on a holy linen vest. <sup>15</sup> David and all the Israelites shouted with joy and blew the trumpets as they brought the Ark of the LORD to the city.<sup>16</sup> As the Ark of the LORD came into the city, Saul's daughter Michal looked out the window. When she saw David jumping and dancing in the presence of the LORD, she hated him.

<sup>17</sup> David put up a tent for the Ark of the LORD, and then the Israelites put it in its place inside the tent. David offered whole burnt offerings and fellowship offerings before the LORD. <sup>18</sup> When David finished offering the whole burnt offerings and the fellowship offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD All-Powerful. <sup>19</sup> David gave a loaf of bread, a cake of dates, and a cake of raisins to every Israelite, both men and women. Then all the people went home.

<sup>20</sup> David went back to bless the people in his home, but Saul's daughter Michal came out to meet him. She said, "With what honor the king of Israel acted today! You took off your clothes in front of the servant girls of your officers like one who takes off his clothes without shame!" <sup>21</sup> Then David said to Michal, "I did it in the presence of the LORD. The LORD chose me, not your father or anyone from Saul's family. The LORD appointed me to be over Israel. So I will celebrate in the presence of the LORD. <sup>22</sup> Maybe I will lose even more honor, and maybe I will be brought down in my own opinion, but the girls you talk about will honor me!"

## Message

**Solo**                                *"Emmanuel, God With Us"* Nathan and Cristy Nockels  
Paul Knox, soloist

O Emmanuel, God with us; spirit revealed in us, that we may be your hope to the world! O Emmanuel, God with us; with a light to break the darkness that we may show your hope to the world! Be God in us.

O Emmanuel, with us; spirit revealed in us, that we may your hope to the world! O Emmanuel, God with us; with a light to break the darkness that we may show your hope to the world! Be God in us.

Emmanuel, Wonderful Counselor, Lord of life, Lord of all, He is the Prince of Peace, Mighty God, Holy One, Emmanuel.

## Blessing

- We encourage all members and friends of First Parish to remain with us immediately after the conclusion of our Worship this morning for our Virtual Friendship Time on Zoom. You can join the meeting by computer, tablet, iPad, or smart phone by clicking this link <https://zoom.us/j/720983063> Password- 244108

Dial in with your phone and join using just audio at this number 1-301-715-8592 (Meeting ID- 720 983 063, Password- 244108). We welcome you for this time of additional community connection. Do

you miss gathering after worship with everyone? Check out our Virtual Friendship Time from [October 11](#).

- Annual Fund Drive 2021 letters and pledge cards have been sent. If you didn't receive one, please call the Church Office 978-526-7661 ext. 1 or Mary Ellen Cook at 978-500-0018 to have another sent. You can also download a pledge card [here](#)
- "Deacon Fund" Support and Assistance – the "Deacon Fund" remains a vital means of assistance to FPC members in need, especially in this difficult and uncertain time. Contributions can be made "First Parish Church" with "Deacon Fund" in the memo section, and mailed to First Parish Church P.O. Box 187 Manchester, MA 01944. In addition, if a member of our spiritual community is need, please contact Rev. Mark to discuss available support.
- You can contribute to the work of First Parish Church or pay your pledge @ [PayPal.Me/FPChurchManchester](#)
- Manchester Affordable Housing Trust Announces Emergency Rental Housing Payment Assistance - The Manchester Affordable Housing Trust (MAHT), in collaboration with Action, Inc., a Gloucester-based human and social services agency, is offering short-term rental housing payment assistance to income eligible Manchester residents in response to job and income loss related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Consistent with its mission to support and promote community affordable housing, the MAHT is reaching out to income eligible residents who are experiencing housing rent payment issues.

The MAHT can and wants to help during this difficult and uncertain time. For further information please contact Action, Inc. at 978-282-1000 or live chat at [www.actioninc.org](http://www.actioninc.org)<<http://www.actioninc.org>.