

**First Parish Church, Congregational  
United Church of Christ  
Worship Celebration  
Second Sunday of Advent  
*"The Family Christmas Tree"*  
Sacrament of Communion  
Sunday, December 6, 2020  
10:00 am**

**Prelude**                                      *"The Day is Surely Drawing Near"*                                      Praetorius

**Welcome**

**Lighting the Second Candle of Advent – Peace**

**Leader:** Let us share these words from Psalm 85:

**All:** Show us your steadfast love, O Lord, and grant us your salvation. Let us hear what God the Lord will speak. For God will speak peace to those who turn to God in their hearts.

Lighting of the Candle

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

**All:** We proclaim the peace which God calls the world to share in; peace built on the foundations of justice and compassion; the peace that

Jesus lived and calls us to live.

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

## **Hymn**

*"O How Shall I Receive You"*

O how shall I receive you, how meet you on your way  
Blessed hope of every people, my soul's delight and stay?  
O Jesus, Jesus, give me, now by your own pure light  
To know what-e'er is pleasing and welcome in your sight

Love caused your incarnation; love brought you unto me  
Your thirst for my salvation procured my liberty  
O love beyond all telling, that led you to embrace  
In love, all love excelling, our lost and fallen race

You come, O Christ, with gladness, in mercy and goodwill  
To bring an end to sadness and bid our fears be still  
In patient expectation we live for that great day  
When a renewed creation your glory shall display

## **Opening Prayer**

God of these Advent days, we wait and prepare once again to receive  
You into our lives in the person of Jesus.

Give us patience to remember and seek what this season is really about  
in the midst of the distractions that come our way. Give us compassion  
for those who are struggling to get by, let alone celebrate. Give us

courage and strength to keep watch for You when our watching threatens to turn into disappointment and disillusion. Give us hope that sharing Your gifts of love, joy and peace through Jesus can and will transform our lives and the world.

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.

**Solo**

*"Sing a New Song!"*

Lovelace

Paul Knox, soloist

Sing a new song, sing a new song! Praise our God for wondrous things. Praise His power, praise its justice and the triumph that it brings. For He shows us His salvation, shows His righteousness divine; great His faithfulness and mercy; great His love for Humankind!

Shout to God with hearts rejoicing, let your praises echo long. Sound the trumpets, sweep the harp-strings, raise your hymns and sing your songs: grateful songs to God the Father that he sends the earth His Son. Let the earth ring out our gladness, let the song be never done!

Let the seas roar and their fullness; let the rivers clap their hands; let the hills rejoice as praises fill the world and all its lands, for the Lord, the Lord

is coming; He will judge and save the earth; heav'nly Love will guide His measure, heav'nly mercy prove our worth.

## **Prayer Intentions**

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

**Music Meditation**                      *"In the Bleak Midwinter"*                      Cranham, arr. Cook

## **The Gospels**

### **Luke 1:5-25**

#### **(New Revised Standard Version Bible Translation)**

<sup>5</sup>In 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. <sup>6</sup>Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord. <sup>7</sup>But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were getting on in years.

<sup>8</sup>Once when he was serving as priest before God and his section was on duty, <sup>9</sup>he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and offer incense. <sup>10</sup>Now at the time of the incense offering, the whole assembly of the people was praying outside. <sup>11</sup>Then there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. <sup>12</sup>When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified; and fear overwhelmed him. <sup>13</sup>But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John.

<sup>14</sup> You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, <sup>15</sup> for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He must never drink wine or strong drink; even before his birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit. <sup>16</sup> He will turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. <sup>17</sup> With the spirit and power of Elijah he will go before him, to turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

<sup>18</sup> Zechariah said to the angel, "How will I know that this is so? For I am an old man, and my wife is getting on in years." <sup>19</sup> The angel replied, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. <sup>20</sup> But now, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time, you will become mute, unable to speak, until the day these things occur."

<sup>21</sup> Meanwhile the people were waiting for Zechariah, and wondered at his delay in the sanctuary. <sup>22</sup> When he did come out, he could not speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the sanctuary. He kept motioning to them and remained unable to speak. <sup>23</sup> When his time of service was ended, he went to his home.

<sup>24</sup> After those days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she remained in seclusion. She said, <sup>25</sup> "This is what the Lord has done for me when he looked favorably on me and took away the disgrace I have endured among my people."

## **Message**

## **The Sacrament of Communion**

**Solo**

*"Hymne a l'Amour" (Hymn to Love)*

Monnot/Piaf

Rebecca Shrimpton, soloist

(Sung in French)

English lyrics:

If the sky should fall into the sea and the stars fade all around me, all the times that we have known here I will sing a hymn to love. We have lived and dreamed we two alone in a world that's been our very own with its memories ever grateful, just for you I sing a hymn to love.

I remember each embrace, the smile that lights your face and my heart begins to sing. Your eyes have never lied and my heart begins to sing. If one day you should ever disappear, always remember these words: if one day we had to say goodbye and our love should fade away and die, in my heart you will remain here and I'll sing a hymn to love.

O for love, we live eternally in the blue we'll roll this harmony with every day we are in heaven; as stars shall fade from the sky - all the times that we have known here I will sing a hymn to our love, oh darling, just for you, I sing a hymn to love.

## **Blessing**

- The flowers on the altar are given in loving memory of our fathers, Dr. Joachim Kraft and Stewart Alsop, by Christiane and Joe Alsop.

- We are celebrating “Virtual Communion” today. You are invited to prepare and have ready a piece of whatever kind of bread you wish, as well as any kind of juice (or coffee, tea, etc.) you have available. Then at the appropriate time you will be invited to share those.
- 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](https://www.paypal.com/US/merchorder?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>.