

**First Parish Church, Congregational  
United Church of Christ  
Worship Celebration  
Sacrament of Communion  
Sunday, January 3, 2021  
10:00 am**

**Prelude**                      *"How Lovely Shines the Morning Star"*                      Praetorius

**Welcome**

**Hymn**                      *"As with Gladness Those of Old"*

As with gladness those of old did the guiding star behold  
As with joy they hailed its light, leading onward, beaming bright  
So, true Morning Star, may we, ever more your splendor see

As with joyful steps they sped to that lowly manger bed  
There to bend the knee before One whom heaven and earth adore  
So may we with willing feet, ever seek your mercy seat

As they offered gifts most rare at that manger plain and bare  
So may we with holy joy, pure and free from sin's alloy  
All our costliest treasures bring, Christ, to you from whom they spring

Holy Jesus, every day keep us in the narrow way  
And when mortal things are past, bring our ransomed souls at last

Where they need no star to guide, where no clouds your glory hide

**Opening Prayer** (adapted, David Jenkins)

Shine brightly, star of God, and guide our wandering world to the place where Jesus is. Where children wish upon the night sky or wise men scan the universe in hope, let Your bright beams surround our dreams and guide our hesitating feet to where miracle is born.

Enable each of us to make a New Year's journey, leaving behind the fears, grudges and hatred of yester-year, embracing a fresh openness to the possibilities for something better. Be a sign for us of mercy and love, and lead us to the forgotten and forlorn, the grieving and the gloomy.

And as we approach our God, now seen in a straw filled bed, let us offer our best gifts – our joy, our grief, our lives.

Let us offer those, as well as the words that the One who has come - Jesus - would in the fullness of time teach us to pray...

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**

*"The Kings"*

Cornelius

Paul Knox, soloist

Three Kings appear from the East afar, to Jordan led by a guiding star.  
And in Judea are asking the Three where the newborn King of the earth  
may be?

With gold and myrrh and incense so rare they come to worship the  
Christ-child there. How brightly shines the Star on high, as to the manger  
the Kings draw nigh.

They look with wonder upon the Boy, they bow before Him, so full of joy.  
With gold and myrrh and incense so rare they kneel and adore the  
Christ-child there.

O child of man, will you also go? And with the Kings may you come to  
know the star of mercy, of peace, and of love, a guide to the gift from  
our God above.

Though Kings bring gold and incense so rare, give your heart to the  
Christ-child there.

**Prayer Intentions**

**Time of Silent and Spoken Prayer**

**Music Meditation**

*"Traumerie (Reverie)"*

Schumann

<sup>1</sup> In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup> asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage."

<sup>3</sup> When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; <sup>4</sup> and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. <sup>5</sup> They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

<sup>6</sup> 'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;  
for from you shall come a ruler  
who is to shepherd my people Israel.'"

<sup>7</sup> Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. <sup>8</sup> Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage."

<sup>9</sup> When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup> When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. <sup>11</sup> On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him



## Blessing

- We will be celebrating "Virtual Communion" this Sunday. You are invited to prepare and have ready a piece of whatever kind of bread you wish, as well as any kind of juice you have available (or if you wish, coffee or tea). Then at the appropriate time you will be invited to consume 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.

- 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/mcharity?username=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>.