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

Awaken to the Light and Love of God;
Be a Joyful Beacon to the World

Rev. Dr. Mark Boyea, Minister
Dr. Herman Weiss, Director of Music and Organist
First Parish Church, Congregational
United Church of Christ
Worship Celebration
Fourth Sunday of Advent
“Once Upon a Night”
Sunday, December 19, 2021
10:00 am

Prelude “Angels from the Realms of Glory” Unkel

Welcome

Lighting the Fourth Candle of Advent – LOVE
Diane Houghton and Rebecca Shrimpton

Leader: Let us share these words from the prophet Isaiah:

All: For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, says the Lord, who has compassion for you.

Lighting of the Candles of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love

Leader: With the lighting of the Candle of Love,

All: We proclaim God’s love for all Creation - a love so deep and unconditional it is offered to all people for all time through the coming of Jesus.

God’s light brings love, and where there is love there is light.

Hymn “When in Our Music God Is Glorified”
(printed in bulletin)
Opening Prayer

Come, Jesus, and make a home in our lives.

Come, God-with-us, and free us from the false claims of the material, emotional and spiritual tyrants that seek to rule us.

Come, Emmanuel, and welcome us to abide with You. Make us Your people. Inspire us to bring Your love into the world.

Come, Jesus, and lead us. Claim Your rightful place in our hearts, homes, communities and nation. Plant in us Your seeds of hope for a better tomorrow.

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

Prayer Intentions

Time of Silent and Spoken Prayer

The Prophets Micah 5:2-5a

(New Revised Standard Version Bible Translation)

John Feuerbach

2 But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.
Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel.

And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth;

and he shall be the one of peace.

The Gospels

Luke 1:1-4

(New Revised Standard Version Bible Translation)

1 Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, 2 just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, 3 I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, 4 so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed.

“Once Upon a Night” (bulletin insert)
A Cantata by Pepper Choplin
Performed by the First Parish Church Choir

Blessing

Choral Response “God Be With You” Vaughan Williams

• TODAY, Sunday, December 19, our Worship time will be centered around the performance of the cantata, “Once Upon a Night”, by Pepper Choplin, by the First Parish Choir, under the direction of Dr. Herman Weiss.
First presented here in 2019, the cantata tells the story of the birth of Jesus and the great anticipation that led to that joyous event. Told through the eyes of Luke (here portrayed by Rev. Dr. Mark Boyea) the biblical characters Mary, Elizabeth and Zechariah come to life in drama and song.

- **Later this week, on Christmas Eve, Friday, December 24,** we will once again feature two in-person Worship celebrations which will also be streamed on Facebook Live for those who wish to watch from elsewhere.

At **5pm, a presentation of, “Star Bright - A Christmas Story”**, directed by Jeanne Westcott, and based on the book of the same name by Allison McGee and Peter Reynolds, will be offered for all, but especially for families with children and grandchildren from First Parish and the wider community. Carols and solos from Rebecca Shrimpton and Paul Knox will also be a part of this special time.

Then, at **7pm, we will welcome Jesus into the world with a candlelight celebration** of carols, anthems, solos, Scripture and Dramatic Reflection led by Rev. Mark, Dr. Weiss, and the First Parish Choir.

Lastly, **On Sunday, December 26**, our celebration of Christmas will continue with a Worship time featuring a **“Carol Sing”!** You will have the opportunity to request some of your **“Greatest Christmas Hits”**, which Dr. Weiss will lead us in singing at various points throughout the morning.

In addition, come ready to share your stories! In place of a Message from Mark, and as a follow up to Mark’s Message from December 12, you will be invited to share your stories in response to the following:

**“What is your most memorable Christmas and why?”**
“What was your most memorable moment from this Christmas and why?”

And if that’s not enough, we will also celebrate the Baptisms of Brady Jerris Cook and Benjamin Isaac Cook, sons of David and Karla Cook, and grandsons of Mary Ellen and Jerris Cook.

- Spiritual Growth and Exploration

Our special Advent Spiritual Exploration Unit concludes this Tuesday.

“Oh, Baby!: Characters in the Advent and Christmas Stories”
Tuesday, December 21
7:00-8:15 on Zoom

Angels, shepherds and kings are just some of the characters we find in the Gospel stories surrounding Jesus’ birth. Over the course of these three weeks, we will explore a number of those characters, examine their words and actions, and discuss their role and importance from a literary, theological and spiritual perspective. We will also consider how they might speak to us in our time and place.

- Our second Prayer and Meditation session for the month of December will take place this Wednesday, December 22, at 7pm on Zoom.

As last year, this time will have a special “Silent Nights” theme. Often referred to in other places as “Blue Christmas”, its intent is to acknowledge and reflect upon the fact that the Advent and Christmas seasons are also a time of struggle for many people due to current and past loss. Kelsey Boyea will provide live music. Please consider joining us for this special sacred time.
**Bible Study** meets this Thursday, December 23 at 4pm on Zoom.

You will continue to receive details on times and how to participate in all our offerings from the Church Office either on the day of or day before each gathering.

**CURRENT COVID PROTOCOLS CONTINUE**

Please note our current Covid protocols for Sunday morning Worship.

The Council will continue to reassess these on a regular basis.

**Sunday Morning Gathering Procedures:**

- Attendees are expected to wear masks and distance if possible.

- Worship Leaders will not need to be masked.

- The congregation may participate in hymn singing and the Opening Prayer.

- In addition, we will continue with the following:
  - Contact info for attendees will still be taken in the event contact tracing becomes necessary.
  - Hand sanitizer will be available in the narthex should you wish to use it.
  - There will continue to be no formal Offering for now, but attendees are invited to place any offering they wish as they leave Worship in a plate which will be placed at the back of the Sanctuary.

- At the same time, remember that **“Virtual Worship” is also here to stay** so that we can continue to be one in Worship wherever you may be on any Sunday.
• Click to read *The Church Bell Newsletter* of First Parish Church Congregational.

• “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 in 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 and mortgage 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 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).
• The Outreach and Service collection continues for The Open Door and Grace Center. Bring items to the Chapel or Church. There is a box outside by the Church Office at the Chapel:

Baking Mixes - Cake, Brownie, Cookie, Muffin, Pancake
Peanut Butter
Canned Tuna, Chicken, and Turkey
Healthy Snack Items
100% Juice/Juice Boxes
Breakfast Cereal
Hearty Soups
Canned Vegetables and Fruits
Spaghetti Sauce, Macaroni and Cheese
Rice, Noodles, Pasta

Gift Cards from local grocery markets so they can purchase butter, cream and other perishables.

• The Annual Fund Drive 2022 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 or use the one below.

Cards can be dropped in the offering plate, the mailbox outside the Church Office or mailed to P.O. Box 187 Manchester, MA 01944
Thank you to all who have so generously donated.
Book group is open to everyone! Consider joining us. We are now meeting again in person on the last Monday of the month. Next meeting **January 31, 6:30 PM**. Location to be announced later. Questions can be directed to Mary Ellen Cook at 978-500-0018.

In January the book discussed will be “Vanderbilt: The Rise and Fall of an American Dynasty” by Samantha Silva. The Manchester Library has copies but the book is very popular so Book Group members may want to put in a hold for it.

*When eleven-year-old Cornelius Vanderbilt began to work on his father’s small boat ferrying supplies in New York Harbor at the beginning of the nineteenth century, no one could have imagined that one day he would, through ruthlessness, cunning, and a pathological desire for money, build two empires—one in shipping and another in railroads—that would make him the richest man in America. His staggering fortune was fought over by his heirs after his death in 1877, sowing familial discord that would never fully heal. Though his son Billy doubled the money left by “the Commodore,” subsequent generations competed to find new and ever more extraordinary ways of spending it. By 2018, when the last Vanderbilt was forced out of The Breakers—the seventy-room summer estate in Newport, Rhode Island, that Cornelius’s grandson and namesake had built—the family would have been unrecognizable to the tycoon who started it all.*

*Now, the Commodore’s great-great-great-grandson Anderson Cooper, joins with historian Katherine Howe to explore the story of his legendary family and their outsized influence. Cooper and Howe breathe life into the ancestors who built the family’s empire, basked in the Commodore’s wealth, hosted lavish galas, and became synonymous with unfettered American capitalism and high society. Moving from the hardscrabble wharves of old Manhattan to the lavish drawing rooms of Gilded Age Fifth Avenue, from the ornate summer palaces of Newport to the courts of Europe, and all the way to modern-day New York, Cooper and Howe wryly recount the triumphs and tragedies of an American dynasty unlike any other.*

*Written with a unique insider’s viewpoint, this is a rollicking, quintessentially American history as remarkable as the family it so vividly captures.*
When in Our Music God Is Glorified

1 When in our music God is glorified, and adoration leaves no room for pride, It is as though the whole creation in the world of sound, As worship moved us to a love, through centuries of wrong, Borne witness to the truth in joy who have a voice to raise! And may God give us faith to

2 Flow often, making music, we have found a new disposition

3 So has the church, in liturgy and song, in faith and action cried: Alleluia!

4 Let every instrument be tuned for praise! Let all action cried: Alleluia!

more profound Alleluia!
ev'ry tongue: Alleluia!
sing always: Alleluia!

Fred Pratt Green wrote this text at the request of British editor and composer John Wilson, who asked for a “festival” hymn to be set with Engelberg. Charles Villiers Stanford originally composed the tune for the text “For All the Saints” in Hymns Ancient and Modern of 1904.

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Tune: ENGELBERG 10.10.10.4.
Charles V. Stanford, 1904