



Lisa Greenleaf 2009

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**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*

**First Parish Church, Congregational  
United Church of Christ  
Worship Celebration  
Third Sunday of Advent  
Sunday, December 11, 2022  
10:00 AM**

**Prelude** Pastoral Symphony (from 'The Messiah') – G. F. Handel (1685 – 1759)

**Welcome by Deacon Nancy Peterson**

**Call to Worship**

Leader: God has promised to come to us  
with saving grace.

**People: God breaks into the deserts of our despair  
with springs of water to quench our thirst.**

Leader: God grant us strength and patience

**People: to await God's coming and receive  
the good news.**

**All: We wait with mighty visions for the coming  
of the Holy Spirit of the Messiah to bless us.**

**Hymn** Watcher, Tell Us of the Night #103

**Opening Prayer** (Unison)

Gracious God,  
you have made us and all things to serve you.  
Now prepare the world for your rule.  
Come quickly to save us  
so that wars and violence shall end,  
and your children may live in peace,  
honoring one another with justice and love;  
through Jesus Christ  
who lives and reigns with you  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and forever. Amen.

**Lighting the Advent Candle: Love -The Lumsdens**

**Hymn** O Come All Ye Faithful (one verse)  
O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant!  
O come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem  
Come and behold Him  
Born the King of Angels  
O come, let us adore Him  
O come, let us adore Him  
O come, let us adore Him  
Christ the Lord!

**Children's Moment (for young and young at heart) Jeanne Westcott**  
(Children will head to the Sunday School classrooms following)

**Recitatives and Chorus** There Were Shepherds Abiding in the Field/Glory to God (from 'The Messiah') – G. F. Handel  
Erin Merceruio Nelson, solo

Recits: There were shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heav'nly host praising God and saying,  
Chorus: Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth, goodwill toward men.

### **Prayer Intentions**

Silent prayer, Pastoral prayer and Lord's Prayer.

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.

### **Call for the Offering**

**Meditation** Recitative and Air - Then Shall the Eyes/He Shall Feed His Flock/Come Unto Him (from 'The Messiah') – G. F. Handel  
Rebecca Shrimpton and Erin Merceruio Nelson, solos

Recit: Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing.

Air: He shall feed his flock like a shepherd and He shall gather the lambs with his arm, with his arm. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd and He shall gather the lambs with his arm, with his arm, and carry them in his bosom and gently lead those that are with young; and gently lead those that are with young. Come unto Him, all ye that labour, come unto Him, ye that are heavy laden and He will give you rest. Take his yoke upon you and learn of Him, for He is meek and lowly of heart: and ye shall find rest, and ye shall find rest unto your souls; take his yoke upon you, and learn of Him; for He is meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

## **Prayer of Dedication**

### **Scripture David Lumsden**

(New Revised Standard Version Translation)

#### **Isaiah 35:1-10**

<sup>1</sup> The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,  
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;  
like the crocus <sup>2</sup> it shall blossom abundantly,  
and rejoice with joy and singing.

The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,  
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.

They shall see the glory of the LORD,  
the majesty of our God.

<sup>3</sup> Strengthen the weak hands,  
and make firm the feeble knees.

<sup>4</sup> Say to those who are of a fearful heart,  
'Be strong, do not fear!

Here is your God.

He will come with vengeance,  
with terrible recompense.

He will come and save you.'

<sup>5</sup> Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,  
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;

<sup>6</sup> then the lame shall leap like a deer,  
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.  
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,  
and streams in the desert;  
<sup>7</sup> the burning sand shall become a pool,  
and the thirsty ground springs of water;  
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp,  
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.  
<sup>8</sup> A highway shall be there,  
and it shall be called the Holy Way;  
the unclean shall not travel on it,  
but it shall be for God's people;  
no traveller, not even fools, shall go astray.  
<sup>9</sup> No lion shall be there,  
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;  
they shall not be found there,  
but the redeemed shall walk there.  
<sup>10</sup> And the ransomed of the LORD shall return,  
and come to Zion with singing;  
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;  
they shall obtain joy and gladness,  
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

### **Matthew 11: 2-11**

<sup>2</sup> When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples <sup>3</sup> and said to him, 'Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?' <sup>4</sup> Jesus answered them, 'Go and tell John what you hear and see:

<sup>5</sup> the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. <sup>6</sup> And blessed is anyone who takes no offence at me.'

<sup>7</sup> As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: 'What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? <sup>8</sup> What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. <sup>9</sup> What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. <sup>10</sup> This is the one about whom it is written,

"See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,  
who will prepare your way before you."

<sup>11</sup> Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

## **Sermon *Visions, Hopes and Dreams* Rev. Dr. Llewellyn P. Smith**

**Recitative/Air/Chorus** O Thou, That Tellest Good Tidings to Zion (from 'The Messiah) – G. F. Handel  
Rebecca Shrimpton, solo

Recit: Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his son Emmanuel, God with us.

Air: O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, get thee up into the high mountain; O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, behold your God! O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.

Chorus: O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, good tidings to Jerusalem, O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, arise, say unto the cities of Judah, behold your God! Behold, the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, say unto the cities of Judah, behold, the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.

**Hymn** Now Bless the God of Israel #110

### **Blessing**

**Closing Song** God Be with You – Ralph Vaughn Williams (1872-1958)  
God be with you 'till we meet again; by His counsels guide, uphold you,  
with His sheep securely fold you; God be with you 'till we meet again.

Welcome to all who are new to our Worship time, we invite everyone to join us for “**Coffee Fellowship**” following the service.

**Our Worship this morning is led by Rev. Dr. Llewellyn P. Smith**, retired pastor of Mass. U.C.C. congregations in East Milton and West Gloucester. In the wider church, she taught Field Education at Yale Divinity School and Andover Newton Theological School and led the area Peer Pastoral Support Committee. Lelly has been active in our congregation, singing in the Choir, and chairing and serving on our Education, Nominating, Mission and Executive Committees. She and her husband George have three children: Singer/Drama Educator, Putnam Smith, Dr. Sarah Gerritz and Rev. Abigail Smith. They have seven grandchildren aging from infant to graduate school.

**This morning we welcome back soprano Erin Merceruio Nelson.**

Hailed as “secure and sonorous” with a “bright, flexible voice” (Boston Musical Intelligencer), soprano Erin Merceruio Nelson is quickly becoming known for her signature blend of impeccable musicianship and strong dramatic instincts across a broad range of challenging repertoire. An avid performer of new and contemporary music, Erin’s 2021 - 2022 season performances include creating the role of The Nymph in the world premiere of *NIGHTTOWN* by Benjamin P. Wenzelberg with Lowell House Opera at Harvard University and creating the role of The Mother-In-Law in Byron Asher’s new opera *The Bedbug* with Promenade Opera Project.

In past seasons, Erin has premiered the chamber work *Tide Flowers* by composer Geoffrey Gibbs at the University of Rhode Island as the soprano soloist, appeared as Bea in Jake Heggie’s *Three Decembers* with TBD Opera Project under the direction of Sharon Daniels, performed the role of Margaret in *The Clever Artifice of Harriet and Margaret* by Leanna Kirchoff with Opera del West, and sang Beth March in Mark Adamo’s *Little Women* with Boston Opera Collaborative. Other recent performances include Lady Clarence in Odyssey Opera’s concert production of Saint-Saëns’ *Henry VIII*, First Lady and Papagena in *The Magic Flute* with the Nahant Music Festival. Erin was also featured in Odyssey Opera’s production of Strauss’ *Die ägyptische Helena* and covered the role of Cunégonde in Opera del West’s production of Bernstein’s *Candide*. Throughout the pandemic, Erin took part in several outdoor concerts with NEMPAC and Opera on Tap Boston. Also recently, Erin was thrilled to be named a Finalist in the Vermont Vocal Competition in Brandon, VT.

[www.erinmerceruionelson.com](http://www.erinmerceruionelson.com).

**Our Deacon this morning is Nancy Peterson.**

**Listening devices** are available for those in need; they are at the back of the Sanctuary. Feel free to address a Deacon should you need help.

**To join our mailing list**, fill out a “Welcome Card” to place in the collection plate.

**The Church Bell Newsletter** [click to read](#) the most recent edition.

**Learn more about First Parish online:**

Facebook [www.facebook.com/FirstParishChurchManchesterMa/](http://www.facebook.com/FirstParishChurchManchesterMa/)

Instagram [www.instagram.com/fpcmanchesterbythesea/](http://www.instagram.com/fpcmanchesterbythesea/)

Website [www.firstparishchurch.org/](http://www.firstparishchurch.org/)

YouTube Worship Services



**Tonight!** First Parish will hold its first annual **Messiah Sing** in the Sanctuary on **December 11, 2022, at 7 PM**. Singers and listeners are welcome to join us in the glorious music of G. F. Handel. Featured will be soloists and orchestra, conducted by our Music Director, Dr. Herman Weiss. This event is open to the public and will be followed by a reception in the Chapel Hall. It also will be live streamed and recorded. A free will offering will be accepted at the door. You are encouraged to bring your musical scores. Additional scores will be available if needed.

**Thursday Spiritual Study** Join in a lively discussion, Thursdays, 4 PM, on Zoom using The Daily Word as a resource. Questions or to join in contact Paul Lengieza 978-526-4765, [lengiezap@hotmail.com](mailto:lengiezap@hotmail.com).

### **First Parish Staff**

Dr. Herman Weiss, Director of Music, [hweiss05@comcast.net](mailto:hweiss05@comcast.net)  
Jeanne Westcott, Director of Youth and Children's Ministry  
[jeanne.fpchurch@gmail.com](mailto:jeanne.fpchurch@gmail.com)  
Nancy Klebart, Office Manager, [office.fpchurch@gmail.com](mailto:office.fpchurch@gmail.com)  
978-526-7661 ext. 1

**Readers and Greeters** are always needed. To volunteer speak to the Deacons, or you can also sign up [online](#).  
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30e0c4caba822a1f49-diaconate>

**Contribute to the work of First Parish Church** by going to <http://www.PayPal.Me/FPChurchManchester> and clicking the "send" button.

**First Parish is looking for help with streaming** our worship services. Can you volunteer? Full training is provided! Not sure? Sign up to be an assistant to the volunteer who is streaming. We need your help to continue to provide online access to Worship services. Sign up [here](#) or contact Richard Smith at [richard.w.smith@gmail.com](mailto:richard.w.smith@gmail.com).

**Our Online Prayer Wall** Give it a try! Request prayers and pray for others through the Prayer Wall on our website. Feel more connected to the Joys and Concerns of our congregation, and hear what's on each other's hearts. You will be touched to receive notifications every time someone prays for you. <https://www.firstparishchurch.org/prayer-wall/>

Our **FPCC Compassion child**, Chepkirwok needs supporters for 2023, [sign up now](#), questions can be directed to Sue Parker, [sueparker33@aol.com](mailto:sueparker33@aol.com).



### ***Burgers and Bingo New Year's Eve party***

Did you know that New Year's Eve is the loneliest holiday?

Vitality and Outreach & Service are teaming up to address this pain by hosting a fun, festive and light-hearted *Burgers and Bingo* New Year's Eve party in the Chapel on **Saturday, December 31 from 4 to 6 PM.**

The entire community is welcome to this FREE event (sponsored by the Laura Ells Fund). First Parish will provide rides for seniors (who can RSVP thru the Council on Aging -- drivers needed), as well as a Burger Bar and Sundae Bar, Bingo, a Fire Pit, and other festive games. Ending with, of course, Auld Lang Syne.

Volunteers needed for serving and enjoying.

Come with a joyful spirit! You'll be home nice and early, to boot!

**Book Group News** This is a time for church members as well as non-church friends to come together and engage with one another, build relationships, and share in a discussion of books that are of interest to people of various backgrounds. We have fun visiting, conversing about the book and sharing stories and would love to have you join us! Questions? Call Mary Ellen Cook 978-500-0018.

**December 19, 6:00 PM Book Group Christmas Gathering** We will get together for a potluck dinner at Liz Loomis' home 34 Bennett St. Manchester. Bring a favorite dish and a wrapped used book for a book swap. Optional book read – ***"Small Things Like These"* by Claire Keegan.**

**January 20 "The Two-Family House" by Lynda Cohen Loigman**  
location TBD.

**Christmas Eve Family Service Help Needed!** Ever wish you could be someone else for a minute? Here's your opportunity! Faith Formation needs 4 singers for the 5 pm service on Christmas Eve. You don't have to memorize any lines. You'll have everything you need to just have fun! Please consider joining us in our rendition of *The Carolers!* A fun three scene play about joy, friendship, acceptance and worship. If you are interested, please contact Jeanne at [jeanne.fpchurch@gmail.com](mailto:jeanne.fpchurch@gmail.com).

**Health clinic the 1st & 3rd Thursdays of the month, 10:00 - noon** at the Chapel building, by The Visiting Nurses Association. Services offered include health assessments, blood pressure screenings, B12 administration, pulse, heart and lung monitoring, blood sugar screenings for diabetics, medication and diet consults. Drop in, free.

**The Outreach and Service collection continues for -  
The Open Door and The Grace Center items needed**

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  
Spaghetti Sauce  
Canned Vegetables and Fruits  
Macaroni and Cheese  
Rice, Noodles, Pasta  
Pet Food

Gift Cards from local grocery markets (Shaw's, Stop & Shop, Market Basket, etc.) so they can purchase butter, cream, and other perishables.

**Troop items for December** Coffee, Tea, Sugar, Creamer, Crackers

**The Seaside Parish Knitters meet each 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday (Jan 5 & 19) of the month at the Chapel, from 1-5 pm.** We welcome all to stop by anytime during that time. Over the years we have enjoyed our time knitting and crocheting items for baptismal events at the church, shawls and blankets for friends at home, scarves, neck gators, and helmet liners for our veterans in combat, and mittens and hats for Cape Ann children. We are always looking for knitting needles and yarn that you might be considering "casting" aside, especially wool. Contact Penny Lapham at 978-526-7128.

**Manchester Seniors - Drop in for Coffee and Conversation**

Starting September 12<sup>th</sup> and continuing every Monday 10 AM-12:30 PM (except holidays) at the First Parish Chapel Hall located behind Santander Bank. Hospitality provided by *The Friends of The Manchester Council on Aging*. Come sit down and talk!

**Upcoming Guest Worship Leaders**

**Today, December 11, Rev. Dr. Llewellyn Smith**

December 18, 24 7 PM and 25, Rev. Dr. Llewellyn Smith

December 24, 5 PM Jeanne Westcott, FPC Director of Youth and Children's Ministry

## **You Are Invited to Participate in the Stephen Ministry at First Parish**

A number of members are organizing a Stephen Ministry at First Parish. The Stephen Ministry—named for Stephen, who in Acts 6 was appointed to assist members of the community suffering acute hardships—is a 50-year-old interdenominational Christian tradition. The service trains lay members of the congregation in psychology and theology to be a Christian presence with any in the community suffering acute challenges. Typical examples would include bereavement, divorce, terminal illness, substance abuse, or mental illness. Fully details of the program are here: [Stephen Ministries](#)

A Stephen Minister's objective is not to "solve" the challenge but rather to ensure that none feel alone in their struggles. (Jesus, after all, did not come to "fix" all of our challenges, but rather to be *with* us in our struggles.)

At the same time, the Stephen Ministry in a congregation develops a network of specialized services suitable to assist individuals with particular problems. For example, someone struggling with alcoholism would be introduced to a local AA group, while the Stephen Minister would continue to meet with that individual as a friend and witness. The team is currently working closely with the Outreach & Service Committee and the Care Team on this project. Two of us are planning to participate in the 25-hour live training program for team leaders offered by the Stephen Ministry headquarters. In the short term, as the leadership is trained and the program develops, our intention is to augment the work of the Care Team and develop our network of local services to which we can refer people for specialized support. Our tentative expectation is that during the current program year we will assist people within the congregation, with the goal of offering a fully trained and developed service to the broader local community in the following program year. Currently the group meets virtually at 5 pm the first and third Tuesdays of each month to develop the program. In person training and social events will follow! There are many ways to participate depending upon your gifts and availability, so if you think you might be interested, please feel free to just attend and listen. If you are interested in learning more about this project, call Linda Crosby at 978-314-1526 or Steve Carhart at 978-407-8454.

**Annual Fund Drive** It is the time of year when the Stewardship Committee and the Board of Trustees work together to plan the upcoming year and the yearly budget. Our Church budget is dependent upon your pledges, thank you for your generosity! You can also email your pledge to [office.fpchurch@gmail.com](mailto:office.fpchurch@gmail.com)



You are invited to purchase a traditional **Poinsettia**, (6 & 1/2" plant with 3-6 flowers, \$15) to decorate our sanctuary for the Christmas services. The Diaconate also offers the option of donating to *The Diaconate Fund* to assist people in our community, who are in need.

Following the Christmas Eve/Christmas service, the plant may be taken home or left to be given to our members and friends who are ill or unable to leave their home. A complete list of donors and those remembered will be included in the Christmas Eve bulletin.

I (we) wish to donate a plant(s) *please circle one*:

**In Memory of**

**In Celebration of**

**In Honor of**

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Name of Loved One(s)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Name of Donor(s)*

Please check:      \_\_\_\_\_ I will take plant(s) home  
                                 \_\_\_\_\_ Please give my plant(s)  
                                 \_\_\_\_\_ A donation to the Diaconate Fund

# of Poinsettia(s) desired: \_\_\_\_\_      Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*Please return order form and payment to the church office,  
drop in the offering plate or order online [here](#)  
by Friday, December 16*

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30E0C4CABA822A1F49-poinsettias2>