

**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 with Communion
Family Sunday
Second Sunday of Advent
Sunday, December 4, 2022
10:00 AM**

Prelude The Day is Surely Drawing Near – Michael Praetorius
(1571-1621)

Welcome by Deacon Nancy Peterson

Call to Worship

Leader: In the desert of life, prepare a pathway for God.

People: In the wilderness, make a highway for our God.

Leader: Every valley shall be raised up,

People: Every mountain and hill made low.

All: And the glory of God shall be revealed among us.

Hymn *There's a Voice in the Wilderness* #120

Opening Prayer (Unison)

Eternal God,

through long generations you prepared a way

for the coming of your Son,

and by your Spirit

you will bring light to illumine our paths.

Renew us in faith and hope

that we may welcome Christ to rule our thoughts

and claim our love,

as Lord of Lords and King of Kings

to whom be glory always. Amen.

Lighting the Advent Candle: Peace The Argento Family

Hymn *Silent Night* (one verse)

Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright

Round yon virgin, mother and child,

Holy infant so tender and mild.

Sleep in heavenly peace. Sleep in heavenly peace.

Children's Moment (for young and young at heart) Jeanne Westcott
(Children will stay in worship with their families this Sunday - activities available)

Anthem African Noel – arr. Andre J. Thomas (1952)
Russell Lane, percussion

Sing Noel, sing we all Noel

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

Music Meditation For Behold, Darkness Shall Cover the Earth; The People That Walked in Darkness - G. F. Handel
Paul Knox, solo

For behold darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall rise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee, and the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light, and they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

Prayer of Dedication

Scripture Bethany Wood

(New Revised Standard Version Translation)

Isaiah 1:1-10

¹The vision of Isaiah son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

²Hear, O heavens, and listen, O earth;
for the LORD has spoken:

I reared children and brought them up,

but they have rebelled against me.

³ The ox knows its owner,
and the donkey its master's crib;
but Israel does not know,
my people do not understand.

⁴ Ah, sinful nation,
people laden with iniquity,
offspring who do evil,
children who deal corruptly,
who have forsaken the LORD,
who have despised the Holy One of Israel,
who are utterly estranged!

⁵ Why do you seek further beatings?
Why do you continue to rebel?
The whole head is sick,
and the whole heart faint.

⁶ From the sole of the foot even to the head,
there is no soundness in it,
but bruises and sores
and bleeding wounds;
they have not been drained, or bound up,
or softened with oil.

⁷ Your country lies desolate,
your cities are burned with fire;
in your very presence
aliens devour your land;
it is desolate, as overthrown by foreigners.

⁸ And daughter Zion is left
like a booth in a vineyard,
like a shelter in a cucumber field,
like a besieged city.

⁹ If the LORD of hosts
had not left us a few survivors,
we would have been like Sodom,
and become like Gomorrah.

¹⁰ Hear the word of the LORD,
you rulers of Sodom!
Listen to the teaching of our God,
you people of Gomorrah!

Matthew 3:1-12

¹ In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, ² 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.'

³ This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said,
'The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

"Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight."

⁴ Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵ Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, ⁶ and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

⁷ But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸ Bear fruit worthy of repentance. ⁹ Do not presume to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our ancestor"; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ¹⁰ Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

¹¹ 'I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹² His winnowing-fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing-floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.'

***Sermon Pointing Toward Christ* Rev. Dr. Llewellyn P. Smith**

Anthem People Look East – Besancon carol, words by Eleanor Farjeon, arr. Malcolm Archer

People, look East. The time is near for the crowning of the year. Make your house fair as you are able, trim the hearth, and set the table. People, look East, and sing today: Love the Guest is on the way. Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more seed is planted there: give up your strength the seed to nourish, that in course the flower may flourish. People, look East, and sing today: Love the Rose is on the way. Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim one more light the bowl shall brim, shining beyond the frosty weather, bright as sun and moon together. People, look East, and sing today: Love the Lord is on the way. Angels, announce to man and beast him who cometh from the East. Set every peak and valley humming with the word, the Lord is coming. People, look East, and sing today: Love the Lord is on the way.

Sacrament of Holy Communion Invitation

Prayer for the Holy Spirit

Sharing the Bread and Cup

Thanksgiving prayer (Unison)

**We thank you, O God, for inviting us to this table
where we have known the presence of Christ
and the blessing of the Holy Spirit.**

Strengthen our faith,

Increase our love for one another,

**And let us show forth your praise in our lives
through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.**

Hymn Comfort, Comfort ye, My People #101

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. -Congratulations on the newest Lelly!

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.

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.

First Parish Staff

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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>

Learn more about First Parish online:

Facebook www.facebook.com/FirstParishChurchManchesterMa/

Instagram www.instagram.com/fpcmanchesterbythesea/

Website www.firstparishchurch.org/

YouTube Worship Services

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.

Saturday, December 10, 12 PM - 4 PM Winter Queen's Emporium

A holiday shopping opportunity for children ages 5 – 10. Children bring a list and \$1 per family members, to shop in our stocked emporium.

They will meet the Winter Queen, enjoy a treat, and wrap/tag their gifts to surprise their family! Pre-registration required sign children up [here](#)

Our New 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/>

First Parish will hold its first annual **Messiah Sing** in its 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.

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***. *It is 1985 in a small Irish town. During the weeks leading up to Christmas, Bill Furlong, a coal merchant and family man faces into his busiest season. Early one morning, while delivering an order to the local convent, Bill makes a discovery which forces him to confront both his past and the complicit silences of a town controlled by the church. Already an international bestseller, Small Things Like These is a deeply affecting story of hope, quiet heroism, and empathy from one of our most critically lauded and iconic writers.* goodreads

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.

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

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

The Seaside Parish Knitters meet each 1st and 3rd Thursday (Dec 1) 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 12th 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!

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

First Parish Church Annual Fund Drive 2023	
Name: _____	Phone: _____
Address: _____	
Email: _____	
Total Pledge for 2023 _____	
<i>Thank you for your pledge</i>	
<i>Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much.</i> Helen Keller	
	
Please use the enclosed pre-stamped envelope to return your pledge or bring to Church on Pledge Sunday, November 20	

Upcoming Guest Worship Leaders

Today, December 4, Rev. Dr. Llewellyn Smith

December 11, 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 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>