



**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  
August 13, 2023, 9 AM  
The Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost**

**Prelude** Meditation (from 'Romances sans Paroles') – Cecile Chaminade (1857-1944)

**Welcome by Deacon**

**Call to Worship**

This is the appointed time for remembrance and celebration.

We gather in the festival of worship to honor God.

We stretch out our hands to the living God.

**Our souls thirst for God like a parched land.**

**Nothing can separate us from the love of God. God is with us.**

**We lift up our souls that you may teach us.**

**Hymn** There Is a Balm in Gilead NCH #553

**Children's Moment** (for young and young at heart) by Jeanne Westcott

**Prayer Intentions**

**Time of Spoken Prayer**

**The 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.

**Solo** Sometimes a Light Surprises – Craig Courtney (1961-)

Erin Merceruio Nelson, solo

Sometimes a light surprises a Christian while she sings; it is the Lord who rises with healing in His wings: When comforts are declining, He grants the soul again a season of clear shining, to cheer it after rain. In holy contemplation we sweetly then pursue the theme of God's salvation, and find it ever new; set free from present tomorrow, we cheerfully can say, let the unknown tomorrow bring with it what it may. It can bring with it nothing but He will bear us through; who gives the lilies clothing will clothe His people too; beneath the

spreading heavens no creature is but fed; and He who feeds the ravens will give His children bread. Though vine nor fig tree neither their wanted fruit should bear, though all the fields should wither, nor flocks nor herds be there; yet, God the same abiding, His praise shall tune my voice; for, while in Him confiding, I cannot but rejoice, I cannot but rejoice.

### **Invitation to the Offering**

**Meditation** La Fille aux Cheveux de Lin – Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

Dr. Bonnie Anderson, piano

### **Prayer of Dedication**

Loving God, we have so many reasons to say “thank You” to You. Your generosity, grace, and mercy are astounding, and we pray that the gifts we offer in worship and throughout the week might be used in Your name. Help us to be generous with our money, but also with our talents and time. Strengthen us to recognize Your blessings, to be grateful, and to respond accordingly. Amen.

**Scripture Reading** Eleanor Harris

### **Genesis 37:1-4, 12-28**

<sup>1</sup>Jacob settled in the land where his father had lived as an alien, the land of Canaan. <sup>2</sup>This is the story of the family of Jacob.

Joseph, being seventeen years old, was shepherding the flock with his brothers; he was a helper to the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father’s wives; and Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father. <sup>3</sup>Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his children, because he was the son of his old age; and he had made him a long robe with sleeves. <sup>4</sup>But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him.

<sup>12</sup>Now his brothers went to pasture their father’s flock near Shechem. <sup>13</sup>And Israel said to Joseph, ‘Are not your brothers pasturing the flock at Shechem? Come, I will send you to them.’ He answered, ‘Here I am.’ <sup>14</sup>So he said to him, ‘Go now, see if it is well with your brothers and with the flock; and bring word back to me.’ So he sent him from the valley of Hebron.

He came to Shechem, <sup>15</sup>and a man found him wandering in the fields; the man asked him, ‘What are you seeking?’ <sup>16</sup>‘I am seeking my brothers,’ he said; ‘tell me, please, where they are pasturing the flock.’ <sup>17</sup>The man said, ‘They have gone away, for I heard them say, “Let us go to Dothan.”’ So Joseph went after his brothers, and found them at Dothan. <sup>18</sup>They saw him from a distance, and

before he came near to them, they conspired to kill him. <sup>19</sup> They said to one another, 'Here comes this dreamer. <sup>20</sup> Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits; then we shall say that a wild animal has devoured him, and we shall see what will become of his dreams.' <sup>21</sup> But when Reuben heard it, he delivered him out of their hands, saying, 'Let us not take his life.' <sup>22</sup> Reuben said to them, 'Shed no blood; throw him into this pit here in the wilderness, but lay no hand on him'—that he might rescue him out of their hand and restore him to his father. <sup>23</sup> So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the long robe with sleeves that he wore; <sup>24</sup> and they took him and threw him into a pit. The pit was empty; there was no water in it.

<sup>25</sup> Then they sat down to eat; and looking up they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, with their camels carrying gum, balm, and resin, on their way to carry it down to Egypt. <sup>26</sup> Then Judah said to his brothers, 'What profit is there if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? <sup>27</sup> Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and not lay our hands on him, for he is our brother, our own flesh.' And his brothers agreed. <sup>28</sup> When some Midianite traders passed by, they drew Joseph up, lifting him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.

### **Romans 10:5-15**

<sup>5</sup> Moses writes concerning the righteousness that comes from the law, that 'the person who does these things will live by them.' <sup>6</sup> But the righteousness that comes from faith says, 'Do not say in your heart, "Who will ascend into heaven?"' (that is, to bring Christ down) <sup>7</sup> 'or "Who will descend into the abyss?"' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). <sup>8</sup> But what does it say? 'The word is near you,

on your lips and in your heart'

(that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); <sup>9</sup> because<sup>[a]</sup> if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. <sup>10</sup> For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. <sup>11</sup> The scripture says, 'No one who believes in him will be put to shame.' <sup>12</sup> For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. <sup>13</sup> For, 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

<sup>14</sup> But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? <sup>15</sup> And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!'

**Sermon** “Seeds of Grace!” Rev. Dr. Dave VanArsdale

**Solo** Let the Bright Seraphim – G. F. Handel (1685-1759)

Erin Merceruio Nelson, solo

Let the bright Seraphim in burning row, their loud uplifted angel trumpets blow. Let the bright Seraphim in burning row, in burning, burning row, their loud uplifted angel trumpets blow. Let the Cherubic host, in tuneful choirs, touch their immortal harps with golden wires. Let the bright Seraphim in burning row, their loud uplifted angel trumpets blow. Let the bright Seraphim in burning row, in burning, burning row, their loud uplifted angel trumpets blow.

**Hymn** Savior, like a Shepherd Lead Us NCH #252

**Blessing**

**Closing Song** God Bless You and Keep You – Jay Althouse (1951)

God bless you and keep you wherever you may go; His love be a constant companion. God lead you and guide you and be at your side. God bless you and keep you forever.

**Our Deacon this morning is Barbara Smith.**

**Our Preacher today is Rev. Dr. David VanArsdale.** Dave retired in 2013 after 41 years in ministry, which started with Ordination in Edwards U.C.C. in Framingham and concluded as Pastor of Faith Presbyterian Church in Sun City, AZ. Ellen and Dave have become a part of the South Church (U.C.C.) in Andover since moving six years ago from Arizona to the Edgewood Retirement Community in North Andover. Dave is now serving as the Chair of the Council on Aging for North Andover.

**We welcome Erin Merceruio Nelson as our guest soloist.** 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.erinmercruionelson.com](http://www.erinmercruionelson.com).

**We welcome Bonnie Anderson, our Guest Music Director, this morning.**

Bonnie Anderson has a varied career as chamber pianist, orchestral pianist, soloist, and teacher of students ages 12-88. She enjoys collaborating with musicians from the Boston Symphony, New York Philharmonic, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and San Francisco Symphony. Highlights of her collaborations include performing Hindemith's *Trio for Saxophone, Viola and Piano* with Branford Marsalis and Christof Huebner on the Nantucket Island Musical Arts Society Series, recital with Joseph Foley on the River Oaks Chamber Orchestra "Unleashed Series" in Houston, and concerts with her Piano Duo partner Stella Owen around New England. As orchestral pianist, Bonnie is a member of Orchestra of Indian Hill and performs as guest pianist with Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra, Concord Orchestra, and Portland Symphony. An enthusiastic educator, Bonnie teaches at Phillips Andover Academy and was previously on the faculty at UMass Lowell. This year's projects include outdoor concerts on two keyboards with her Piano Duo, solo recitals of her solo arrangements of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* and Rachmaninoff's *Second Piano Concerto*, and concerts with her new Piano Trio. Bonnie's recordings include a solo piano disc featuring French composers and a collaborative disc (*Nightsongs*) with trumpeter Joseph Foley. Bonnie attended the Juilliard School, Michigan State University, French Piano Institute in Paris and received her DMA from Boston University. She lives in Manchester with her family and two golden retrievers.

## **Altar Flowers**

With gardens and yards now in bloom, please consider creating an arrangement for the FPCC altar...it does not need to be large or tall...and can be as simple as you wish...just from your yard would be a beautiful gift to share.  
Call Penny Lapham 978-526-7128.

Welcome to all who are new to our worship time. **To join our mailing list** please fill out a "Welcome Card" to place in the collection plate or contact [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>

**Thursday Bible Study with Elsa Marshall 4 PM** Join in a lively discussion, Thursdays, 4 PM, on Zoom. The link to join is sent each Thursday morning. Questions contact [office.fpchurch@gmail.com](mailto:office.fpchurch@gmail.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  
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Nancy Klebart, Office Manager, [office.fpchurch@gmail.com](mailto:office.fpchurch@gmail.com), 978-526-7661 x1

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

**Our Online Prayer Wall** Request prayers and pray for others through the Prayer Wall on our website. You will be touched to receive notifications every time someone prays for you. <https://www.firstparishchurch.org/prayer-wall/>

**Faith Formation is collecting school supplies**, to benefit the Beeman School of Gloucester, the sales are currently on! If you are out and about, please consider the following to add - Spiral bound notebooks (not college ruled), Pencils, Pens, Washable Markers in thin and thin variety, Composition notebooks, Crayons in 24 pack size, Small staplers and staples, Paper clips, Dry Erase markers, Sharpies (for teachers), Construction paper, Sketch pads, Index cards, Pink Pearl Erasers.

Any assorted Art Supplies: like paint brushes, washable paint, craft foam sheets, stickers, glitter glue. Let's support our educators and students by limiting their needs and preparing them for success!

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](https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30E0C4CABA822A1F49-sunday2)

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30E0C4CABA822A1F49-sunday2>  
or contact Richard Smith at richard.w.smith@gmail.com.

**Book Group** We are skipping our August 28th meeting and giving everyone the summer to read all those books that are in your pile. Please come back in September with some suggestions for books in the coming year. We will choose for the year! Happy reading! Our next book group will be on **September 25th** at 6:30 PM at Mary Lumsden's home at 18 Woodcrest Road, Manchester. Rough Sleepers by Tracy Kidder will be discussed. Book Group 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! Book Group meets on the last Monday of the month and hosting is shared among members.

**The Outreach and Service Collections Continue - Drop at the Church before Worship or at the Chapel**

**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 Needs June, July, August** -Powdered drink mixes- Gatorade, iced tea, lemonade, Dry fruits & nuts, Hard candy, Beef Jerky, Flip Flops, Shower wash, Razors and toiletries.