



**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  
November 12, 2023, 10 AM  
Worship**

**Prelude** Poem – Zdenko Fibich (1850-1900)

Blessed Are the Pure in Heart (sung by the choir) – Henry W. Davies (1869-1941)

“Today as we prepare to worship, we express our gratitude to all of those in our congregation who have served in our nation's military. Your service enables us to enjoy many freedoms, especially the freedom to gather to worship this morning.”

**Welcome by Deacon**

**Call to Worship**

Leader: God of love, we long for you. We search for you. We wait for you.

**People: Light the lamps of our hope, so we may wait and watch with patience.**

Leader: The world is often dark, and it feels late.

**People: Light the lamps of our faith, so we may shine with your light.**

Leader: There are still those who wait in darkness.

**All: Light the lamps of our love, so we may share your light with others.**

**God, we open the vessels of our hearts to you; we hold the wick of our hearts to the flame of your love.**

**Fill us with your light. Amen.**

**Hymn** Be Now My Vision NCH #451

**Solo** O, Divine Redeemer! – Charles Gounod (1818-1893)

Erin Merceruio Nelson, solo

Ah! Turn me not away, receive me, though unworthy, Hear Thou m cry,  
behold, Lord, my distress! Answer me from Thy throne. Haste Thee, Lord, to  
mine aid, Thy pity show in my deep anguish! Let not the sword of vengeance  
smite me, though righteous thy anger, o Lord! Shield me in danger, o regard  
me! On Thee, o Lord, alone will I call.

O divine Redeemer! I pray Thee, grant me pardon, and remember not,  
remember not my sins! Forgive me, o divine Redeemer! I pray Thee, grant me  
pardon and remember not, remember not, o Lord, my sins! Night gathers  
‘round my soul; fearful, I cry to Thee; come to mine aid, o Lord! Haste thee,

Lord, haste to help me! Hear my cry, hear my cry! Save me, Lord, in Thy mercy; hear my cry, hear my cry! Come and save me, o Lord! O divine Redeemer! I pray Thee, grant me pardon, and remember not, remember not my sins! Save, in the day of retribution, from death shield Thou me, o my God! O, divine Redeemer, have mercy! Help me, my Savior!

### **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.

### **Stewardship Annual Fund Drive 2024 Mary Ellen Cook**

1 Thessalonians 5:11 “therefore encourage one another and build up each other as indeed you are doing.”

Reflection question- what are your dreams for the future we are building together at First Parish?

### **Invitation to the Offering**

**Meditation** Largo e Sostenuto (from ‘Sonata in D’) – F. J. Haydn (1732-1809)  
Dr. Herman Weiss, piano

### **Prayer of Dedication unison**

**Discerning God, receive our offerings and gifts for your kingdom. Let them be a blessing to those in need of encouragement, material goods, and evidence of your presence among us. Magnify them beyond our imagining and grant us insight into the possibilities before us for ministry and witness. We are grateful to give. Amen.**

### **Scripture Reading Matthew 25:1-13**

“Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten young women took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. <sup>2</sup> Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. <sup>3</sup> When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, <sup>4</sup> but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. <sup>5</sup> As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. <sup>6</sup> But at midnight there was a

shout, 'Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' <sup>7</sup> Then all those young women got up and trimmed their lamps. <sup>8</sup> The foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' <sup>9</sup> But the wise replied, 'No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.' <sup>10</sup> And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet, and the door was shut. <sup>11</sup> Later the other young women came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' <sup>12</sup> But he replied, 'Truly I tell you, I do not know you.' <sup>13</sup> Keep awake, therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

### **Sermon Rev. Ellie Richardson**

**Anthem** Canticle of Fellowship – Craig Courtney (1948), text from Col. 3:12-14, and John Fawcett

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Forgive each other as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love. Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love; the fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above. Before the throne we pour our prayers; our hopes are one, our comforts and our cares. Blest be the tie that binds our hearts, that binds our hearts in love. We share our mutual woes, our mutual burdens bear; and often for each other flows the sympathizing tear. When we asunder part, it gives us inward pain; we shall still be joined in, joined in heart, and hope to meet again. Blest be the ties that binds our hearts, that binds our hearts in love. From sorrow, toil, and pain and sin we shall be free; and perfect love and joy shall reign throughout eternity. Blest be the tie that binds our hearts, that binds our hearts in love.

### **Honoring Our Veterans**

At 11:00am on November 11, 1918 World War I ended with the signing of the Armistice by the Allies and Germany. In the first Armistice Day proclamation in 1919, President Woodrow Wilson called for the nation to remember those who had died in their country's service and to make the day an opportunity for America to "show her sympathy with peace and justice in the councils of the nation." Each year on the 11<sup>th</sup> day of the 11<sup>th</sup> month we honor the men and women who have served, and continue to serve, in the military.

## **In Gratitude to Our Veterans**

On this day, we remember those who have served in our armed forces as well as though currently serving.

All veterans, active military personnel, and widows of deceased veterans, are invited to stand to receive our gratitude, sharing their branch of service and dates of service.

### *Pause for silent reflection*

**Veterans' Day Prayer** You are welcome to pray in unison or remain in silence allowing the words to fill your soul.

Loving God, we come to you today filled with gratitude and humbled by our freedom, for we know that freedom is not free. In order to grant our country's freedom, millions of men and women have submitted their lives to serve on our behalf. We are deeply indebted to them and we pray they feel our gratitude for all they have done for us.

Help us remember the sacrifice of every man and woman in our armed forces. Their service meant a commitment to our country and to us. Let us celebrate their willingness to lay their lives down for their friends, the greatest act of love.

Help us to remember that their service meant sacrifice—time spent away from loved ones, eyes that cannot unsee war, and memories that do not seem to fade. Loving God, we may not know the hardships they have endured, but you do. You see all. You know all. And you are with all. We pray that these men and women would cast their burdens on you and find everlasting peace in your presence. Let our hearts be stirred by the selflessness of our veterans. Let their sacrifice motivate us to serve one another as they have served us.

Gracious God, help us remember the sacrifice of their families. The parents and partners who exchanged last hugs before deployments, never knowing if they would see their loved one again. The parents raising the children of our military personnel, willingly taking on the role of both mother and father. The partners and kids who wait patiently by the door day after day, just waiting for their hero to come back home. Freedom is not free and the weight of our veterans' service also fell on their families.

Help us remember those who serve today and their active role in defending our nation. Heavenly Father, we ask for your protection over them. We pray that they know your presence is with them always.

We pray that you would open our eyes to see the needs of veterans in our communities. Open our mouths to uplift our veterans with honor and kindness. Open our hands in generosity to serve and care for them. Let us not be too busy or too distracted to honor their sacrifices.

Help us to keep our eyes fixed on the day when the world will know no more war, when your peace will sweep over our lands and finally heal our brokenness. Oh God, we long for that day. Yet, for now, we offer our gratitude and prayers in the name of our savior Jesus. Amen

*adapted from a prayer by Katie Davidson*

**Hymn For the Healing of the Nations NCH #576**

## **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 Deacons this morning are Nancy Peterson and Paul Gudonis.

**This morning we welcome** Rev. Ellie Richardson. Rev. Ellie Richardson (She/Her/Hers) is an ordained minister of the United Church of Christ having graduated from Andover Newton Theological School. She has served as Minister of Spiritual Development in the historic Andover Association of the Massachusetts Conference (MACUCC); moderator and chair of the Committee on Formation for the historic Andover Association; Associate Conference Minister for Lay & Clergy Leadership Development in the historic MACUCC and the Southern New England Conferences; she is a co-founder of Potentials Coaching & Consulting and is a PCC level trained coach; Ellie also serves churches as an Intentional Transitional Interim Minister.

In addition to church ministry Rev. Ellie serves as co-chair of the COMPASS steering committee, for national setting of the United Church of Christ. COMPASS provides training and support for Community of Practice programs throughout the denomination.

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

**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.

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.

You can **contribute to the work of First Parish Church** or pay your pledge **[@PayPal.Me/FPChurchManchester](https://www.paypal.com/donate/?url=https://www.firstparishchurchmanchester.org/)**.

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

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



**Fall hands on Community Service**, all items can be dropped at the Chapel or Church –

**Operation Troop Support** Socks, any size any color. Small board and card games.

**Thanksgiving Food Drive for The Open Door** Cereal, coffee & tea, granola bars, oatmeal, pancake & waffle mix, maple syrup, 100% fruit juice.

**The Grace Center** Gift Cards from local grocery markets.

**Gift bags for the Council on Aging and Freshman care packages** See the sticky notes with items needed in the Church.

**Toys for Tots** Ballet de Mar is collecting new toys for Christmas.

**Coming in December, mark your calendar!**

**Sunday, Dec. 3, Community Carol Sing**, just before the Friendship Tree concert. 2:30-3:15 PM inside First Parish Church, 10 Central St. Join us around the piano to sing some traditional carols and get in the mood for the tree lighting. Happening no matter the weather.

**Sunday, Dec. 10, 2nd Annual Messiah Sing**, 7:30 PM followed by a reception at the Chapel Hall.

**Poinsettias**, the Deacons will once again offer the opportunity to purchase a poinsettia to decorate the church for Christmas. Order forms coming later this month.

**Our Stewardship Annual Fund Drive** has begun. We will be taking a month to reflect on our theme, Thessalonians 5:11, “therefore encourage one another and build up each other as indeed, you are doing”. A reflection question for the fund drive is - What are your dreams for the future we are building together at First Parish? In the next few weeks, we will have speakers from the First Parish community give their reflections during worship. In November our **Annual Fund Drive Sunday will be November 19**. Please bring your pledge cards! If you have any questions, please call Mary Ellen Cook 978-500-0018. We look forward to receiving your pledge for 2024, your Stewardship Committee.



**The Seaside Parish Knitters** meets each 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month at the Chapel, from 1-3 pm. Oct. 5 & 19. We welcome all to stop by anytime during that time and join in. 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.

**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).

**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/>

Use the links below to **learn more about First Parish Church** online

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

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

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

YouTube Worship Services

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLUvfURhmsH8lfE13FLaRtWcw-pOTC9T2h>

### **First Parish Staff**

Dr. Herman Weiss, Director of Music, [hweiss05@comcast.net](mailto:hweiss05@comcast.net)

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Nancy Klebart, Office Manager, [office.fpchurch@gmail.com](mailto:office.fpchurch@gmail.com), 978-526-7661 x1

**Visiting Nurses Health Clinic**, free. Held on the 1st & 3rd Thursdays of the month, 10 - 11:45 AM at First Parish Chapel Hall. 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 and open to all.

**Manchester Seniors - Drop in for Coffee** and Conversation Every Monday 10 AM-12:30 PM (except holidays) at the First Parish Community Hall located behind Santander Bank. Hospitality provided by The Friends of The Manchester Council on Aging. Come sit down and talk!

**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>

**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>

or contact Richard Smith at [richard.w.smith@gmail.com](mailto:richard.w.smith@gmail.com).

**The Stephen Ministry.** There are many ways to participate depending upon your gifts and availability, so if you think you might be interested, email [scarh10428@aol.com](mailto:scarh10428@aol.com) to receive and email Zoom invitation. If you would like to discuss the program in greater detail, call Linda Crosby at 978-314-1526 or Steve Carhart at 978-407-8454.

**Book Group** Please note the change in the book for November\* 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! Book Group meets on the last Monday of the month and hosting is shared among members.

**Monday, November 27**, at Nancy Peterson's home, the November book is *Catcher in the Rye* by JD Salinger. It's Christmas time and Holden Caulfield has just been expelled from yet another school...Fleeing the crooks at Pencey Prep, he pinballs around New York City seeking solace in fleeting encounters— shooting the bull with strangers in dive hotels, wandering alone round Central Park, getting beaten up by pimps and cut down by erstwhile girlfriends. The city is beautiful and terrible, in all its neon loneliness and seedy glamour, its mingled sense of possibility and emptiness.

Holden passes through it like a ghost, thinking always of his kid sister Phoebe, the only person who really understands him, and his determination to escape

the phonies and find a life of true meaning. *The Catcher in the Rye* is an all-time classic in coming-of-age literature- an elegy to teenage alienation, capturing the deeply human need for connection and the bewildering sense of loss as we leave childhood behind. J.D. Salinger's (1919–2010) classic novel of teenage angst and rebellion was first published in 1951. The novel was included on Time's 2005 list of the 100 best English-language novels written since 1923. It was named by Modern Library and its readers as one of the 100 best English-language novels of the 20th century. It has been frequently challenged in the court for its liberal use of profanity and portrayal of sexuality and in the 1950's and 60's it was the novel that every teenage boy wants to read. goodreads

**December 11**, a potluck dinner, and book swap at Joanne Hadaegh's home.

**January 29** at Mary Ellen's home, 23 Harold St. The book is *Hello Beautiful* by Ann Napolitano. An emotionally layered and engrossing story of a family that asks: Can love make a broken person whole? William Waters grew up in a house silenced by tragedy, where his parents could hardly bear to look at him, much less love him. So it's a relief when his skill on the basketball court earns him a scholarship to college, far away from his childhood home. He soon meets Julia Padavano, a spirited and ambitious young woman who surprises William with her appreciation of his quiet steadiness. With Julia comes her family; she is inseparable from her three younger sisters: Sylvie, the dreamer, is happiest with her nose in a book and imagines a future different from the expected path of wife and mother; Cecelia, the family's artist; and Emeline, who patiently takes care of all of them. Happily, the Padavanos fold Julia's new boyfriend into their loving, chaotic household. But then darkness from William's past surfaces, jeopardizing not only Julia's carefully orchestrated plans for their future, but the sisters' unshakeable loyalty to one another. The result is a catastrophic family rift that changes their lives for generations. Will the loyalty that once rooted them be strong enough to draw them back together when it matters most? Vibrating with tenderness, *Hello Beautiful* is a gorgeous, profoundly moving portrait of what's possible when we choose to love someone not in spite of who they are, but because of it. goodreads

**February 26** at Meredith Tufts' home. The book is *Beyond That, the Sea* by Laura Spence-Ash.

**March 25** at Carol Spence's home. The book is *Genesis in the Bible*.

## **The 2nd Community "Messiah Sing" will be presented in the Church**

**Sunday evening, Dec.10, 7:30 PM.** This event is again being made possible by a bequest from Laura Ells, who was for many years a member of the First Parish Choir. It's open to the community, singers and listeners alike. We plan a 14-piece orchestra and professional soloists and a chorus consisting of anyone who is eager to sing this beautiful music.

As Music Director Dr. Herman Weiss describes it, "The whole idea is that people who may or may not know each other will spontaneously get together with professionals to create something beautiful." We will sing the choruses for Part I of the Messiah plus the beloved Hallelujah Chorus, and the arias and recitatives will be sung by professional soloists. If you have your own Messiah score, please bring it, but we will hand out printed scores to anyone who needs one.

Last year following our first Messiah Sing, Christiane Alsop wrote a heartfelt message to the choir that encouraged us to do it again and captured exactly the response we had hoped to elicit. "The Messiah-Sing-Along will forever be engraved in my memory as such a moving, and yes, glorious moment. I loved every minute of it: Herman's inviting, anxiety-melting ways of introducing the event and conducting it, the soloists, the orchestra and then us, the expert choir singers and the commoners (like me), all together joining in the creation of it all - awe-inspiring in the true sense of the word.... Cannot think of a better way to open our church's doors for all those who usually shy away from entering."

So, if you missed it last year, don't let that happen again! Following the singing, there will be a reception in the Chapel Hall. Invite your friends!

And please help us raise the funds to do this again next year. A donation of \$20 per person at the door will get us halfway to that goal.