



**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
December 10, 2023, 10 AM
Second Sunday of Advent
Worship**

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

Welcome by Deacon

Call to Worship

One: Sing aloud, O children of the promise!

All: Rejoice and exult with all your heart!

One: For the Lord has taken away the judgments against you;

All: God has turned away your enemies.

One: You shall fear disaster no more. The Lord, your God, is in your midst;

All: The Holy One will rejoice over you with gladness.

One: God will renew you in love and exult over you with singing.

All: I will remove disaster from you,
and spare you from the scorn of your oppressors.

One: I will save the lame and the outcast; I will change their shame into praise.

All: I will gather you and bring you home,
and restore your fortunes before your very eyes, says the Lord.

One: O beloved people of God, the promise of the prophet lives with us!

All: Come, let us walk in the Light of the Lord!

[adapted from Zephaniah 3:14-20]

Opening Prayer

Emmanuel – God-with-us:

we gather in this beloved place, this time set apart,
to ponder the meanings of your coming near.

In the midst of the crowded lives we have built for ourselves,
help us to prepare a home for you to be born afresh.

Guide us this morning
toward a place that is safe for the nurture of your truth,
and full of your light.

May the prayers we pray and the songs we sing change us,
so that we may help You change hearts, and change the world.

We pray in the strength of the nearness of Jesus.

Amen.

Lighting of the Advent Candle Henry and Penny Lapham and daughter, Becca Calandra

Hymn My Soul Gives Glory to My God NCH #119

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

Marsha Johnson, 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

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.

Invitation to the Offering

Meditation Rejoice Greatly (from 'The Messiah') – G.F. Handel

Marsha Johnson, solo

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion rejoice greatly; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, the King cometh unto thee – He is the righteous Saviour, and He shall speak peace unto the heathen. He is the righteous Saviour, and He shall speak peace unto the heathen. Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion rejoice greatly; and shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, the King cometh unto thee.

Prayer of Dedication

Emmanuel, God-with-us –

You have heard our earnest prayer, "O come, O come," and sent Jesus to be with us.

We have heard his call to follow him into the true work of Advent: the healing of wounds, the righting of wrongs, the restoring of relationships.

May the giving of these offerings help us to be with him,

and open our hearts to be with You – today, tomorrow, and in time to come. Amen.

Scripture Reading Matthew 1:18-25 Jeff Bodmer-Turner

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” ²² All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: ²³ “Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means, “God is with us.” ²⁴ When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife ²⁵ but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.

Sermon “With Us” Rev Rick Spalding

Recitative and Air Then Shall the Eyes/He Shall Feed His Flock/Come Unto Him (from ‘The Messiah’) – G. F. Handel

Rebecca Shrimpton and Marsha Johnson, 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.

Hymn Gentle Joseph, Joseph Dear NCH #105

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.

Our Deacons this morning are John Feuerbach and Janet Groth.

Our Preacher today is Rick Spalding. Rick retired in 2018 after nearly 20 years of service as Chaplain at Williams College in western Massachusetts – where his work included encouraging spiritual life and inter-faith collaboration among students representing most of the world's great religious traditions. He had previously served congregations in Boston, New York City, and Albany, and taught at Harvard Divinity School, Andover-Newton Theological School, and Trinity School in NYC.

Since retiring, Rick has served as Interim Senior Pastor at the First Presbyterian Church of Ann Arbor, Michigan and at Old South Church in Boston. He and his partner Peter Bubriski now live in Ipswich and feel very much at home on the North Shore - perhaps partly because Rick's grandfather grew up on Bridge Street here in Manchester.

Soprano Marsha Johnson has performed extensively in both opera and in recital. Among her programs (as part of the DreamSong Duo) she has created a Mozart Lecture Recital and Songs from the American Songbook. Marsha has performed with Great Woods Opera, Janus Ensemble, Bach Aria Festival, and Aspen Music Festival, among others. She holds a MM in vocal performance (New England Conservatory) and is a board certified music therapist and mental health counselor with a Master's Degree in Music and Expressive Therapy. (Lesley University). She is the director of Middlesex Counseling Services and is music director for the First Baptist Church in Woburn, MA. Currently Marsha studies voice with Donna Roll.

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.

Join us following worship for hospitality!

Our Advent theme from Rev. Rick Spalding - *Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you...* So affirms the beloved carol in whose shelter we gather ourselves together, each Advent - to wait and to wonder. The prophet Isaiah proclaims that God's name means "God with us". What are the implications of the with-ness of God - for each of us alone, for all of us together? How does the with-ness of God change our ways of being with each other? with ourselves? with the world? These are

some of the questions we'll be pondering as we worship together during this momentous Advent at First Parish - on the cusp of an exciting new chapter in the life of our church, and a season of urgent need in the world. In light of everything that's going on around us, let's be sure to be **with** one another, and **with** God, as we prepare ourselves again through the month of December to receive *tidings of great joy which shall be to all people!*

You can **contribute to the work of First Parish Church** or pay your pledge **[@PayPal.Me/FPChurchManchester](#)**.

Save the date! Join us in welcoming our new pastor, Rev. Katherine Schofield, as she begins her ministry at First Parish Church on January 1, 2024 and leads worship on Sunday, January 7, 2024.

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

December and Advent Activities

- **Poinsettias**, the Deacons will once again offer the opportunity to purchase a poinsettia to decorate the church for Christmas. Order [online here](#) or use the enclosed order form.
- **Join us for Christmas Eve**, Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you... In-person Worship celebrations at 10 Central St. and also on Facebook Live
5 PM Come one and all to our 5 PM Christmas Eve Intergenerational Service for people of all ages. Infused into the service will be a recreation of an older pageant script, slightly modernized, entitled Looking Back is Looking Forward. Music, joy, and the humanness of this ancient tale is sure to set your Christmas Eve with just the right tone to meet Christmas Day with arms and eyes wide!
7:30 PM Traditional Candlelight service open to all! Rev. Rick Spalding "A Feather in a Gale"

Thursday Bible Study with Elsa Marshall 4 PM Join in a lively discussion, Thursdays, 4 PM, on Zoom.

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, 978-526-7661 ext. 1.

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

Click to read the most recent edition of **The Church Bell Newsletter**.

The Seaside Parish Knitters meets each 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month at the Chapel, from 1-3 pm. Dec. 7 & 21. 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.

Our Online Prayer Wall Request prayers and pray for others
<https://www.firstparishchurch.org/prayer-wall/>

The Stephen Ministry Learn more call Linda Crosby at 978-314-1526 or Steve Carhart at 978-407-8454.

Use the links below to **learn more about First Parish Church** online
Facebook www.facebook.com/FirstParishChurchManchesterMa/
Instagram www.instagram.com/fpcmanchesterbythesea/
Website www.firstparishchurch.org/
YouTube Worship Services
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLUvfURhmsH8lfE13FLaRtWcw-pOTC9T2h>

First Parish Staff

Rev. Katherine Schofield, Pastor, revkatherine.fpchurch@gmail.com

Dr. Herman Weiss, Director of Music, hweiss05@comcast.net

Jeanne Westcott, Director of Youth and Children's Ministry

jeanne.fpchurch@gmail.com

Nancy Klebart, Office Manager, office.fpchurch@gmail.com, 978-526-7661

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! Sign up here or contact Richard Smith at richard.w.smith@gmail.com.

Book Group

Tomorrow night, December 11, 6:30 PM a potluck dinner, and book swap at Joanne Hadaegh's home, 29 Hickory Hill Rd. Manchester. Bring a dish to share and a wrapped used book to swap. RSVP for planning purposes to Joanne at noushi65@yahoo.com or 413-221-4518.

January 29 at Mary Ellen's home, 23 Harold St. The book is Hello Beautiful by Ann Napolitano.

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.

First Parish Church Annual Fund Drive 2024

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Total Pledge for 2024 _____

Thank you for your pledge

"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up as indeed you are doing."
1 Thessalonians 5:11



Please use the enclosed pre-stamped envelope to return your pledge or bring to Church on Pledge Sunday, November 19