



**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
Christmas Eve Celebration
December 24, 2024
7:30 PM**

Prelude – Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming – arr. Christina Harmon (trumpets and organ)

Call to Worship and Advent Wreath Lighting The Argento Family

Reader 1: Tonight we relight four candles representing the four weeks of Advent as we anticipate the birth of Jesus Christ, Emmanuel, God with Us.

Reader 2: These candles symbolize the gifts of Jesus Christ to us: hope, peace, joy, and love.

Reader 1: Tonight we light the Christ Candle: In Christ, the grace of God appears bringing Good News for all people.

Reader 2: May the light from these candles illuminate the darkest corners of our world. May they shine every day of the year.

**Many: O God of the Baby of Bethlehem,
We come into your presence with praise and thanksgiving.
We come to experience this news of great joy for all people.
Let the words of sacred scripture seep into our hearts,
to be treasured and pondered anew.
We are here; we are ready!
Let the light of your love break forth! Amen.**

Greeting

Hymn O Come, All Ye Faithful #132 PH

Prayer for Illumination (unison)

God of our time, God of all time –

To this world that worships power, You send a child in weakness.

To these times when violence seems normal, You whisper peace.

To lives heavy with fear, You have dispatched messengers:

angels who sing to our imaginations of a different world;

shepherds who find their way into a flock as wide as the world;

sages who learn to find their way home by a new road.

Tonight, in the retelling of the ancient story and the singing of songs we know so well, be with us afresh.

And may the birth of this one holy child

teach us how to be with you, and with one another,
in a world transformed by the power of Your love
in which we all see one another as Your children, one whole
human family.

We ask it in the name of the One whose story we tell again tonight. Amen.

First Reading from Scripture Luke 1: 26-35, 38 Christina Calandra

Anthem Angels' Carol – words and music by John Rutter

Verse: Have you heard the sound of the angel voices ringing out so sweetly,
ringing out so clear? Have you heard the star shining out so brightly as a
sign from God that Christ the Lord is here? Have you heard the news that
they bring from heaven to the humble shepherds who have waited long?

Chorus: Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo! Hear the angels sing
their joyful song.

Verse: He is come in peace in the winter's stillness, like a gentle snowfall in
the gentle night; He is come joy like the sun at morning, filling all the world
with radiance and with light. He is come in love as the child of Mary; in a
simple stable we have seen His birth:

Chorus: Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo! Hear the angels
singing 'Peace on earth'.

Verse: He will bring new light in a world of darkness, like a bright star shining
in the skies above; He will bring new hope to the waiting nations when He
comes in purity and love. Let the earth rejoice at the Saviour's coming; let
the heavens answer with the joyful morn:

Chorus: Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo! Hear the angels
singing 'Christ is born'.

Second Reading from Scripture Luke 2: 1-7 Paul Lengieza

Hymn What Child Is This, Who, Laid to Rest #140 PH

A Prayer for the World

Meditation Gesu Bambino – Pietro Yon (1886-1943) (sung in Italian)

Rebecca Shrimpton, solo

English translation: In the humble hut, in cold and poverty the holy infant is
born, who the world will adore. Hosanna, hosanna, sing with a joyous heart,
your shepherds and angels, O King of light and love. Come let us adore the
Lord. O beautiful boy do not cry, Redeemer! Your mother cradles you, kisses
you, oh Savior. Hosanna, hosanna, sing with a joyous heart, your shepherds
and angels, oh King of light and love. Oh come let us adore the Lord!

Third Reading from Scripture Luke 2: 8-20 Nancy Peterson

A Christmas Word Rev. Katherine Schofield

The Christmas Offering Invitation

Offertory Anthem Listen to the Silence of the Night, from 'Once Upon a Night' – Pepper Choplin (1957)

See the mother now with her tiny child, softly singing while the moon starts to rise. When her lullabies calm the baby's cries, come and listen to the silence of night. Now she holds her child with a warm embrace, gazing at his face by the soft candlelight and her heart is full of this miracle as she listens to the silence of the night. Come hear the silence of the night. All the world for a moment seems peaceful and bright as we listen to the silence of the night. Silent Night....(the congregation is invited to sing "Silent Night"). Trust God's promises; they are coming true. Come and listen to the silence of the night.

Prayer of Dedication

Hymn Hark! The Herald Angels Sing #120 PH

Fourth Reading from Scripture John 1: selected verses

Lighting of the Christ Candle

One: The four advent candles burn bright, reminders of God's gifts of hope, peace, joy, and love. Tonight we light the Christ Candle: In Christ, the grace of God appears, bringing Good News for all people. May the light from these candles illuminate the darkest corners of our world. May they shine every day of the year.

Many: O God of the Baby of Bethlehem,

We come into your presence with praise and thanksgiving.

We come to experience this news of great joy for all people.

Let the story seep into our hearts,

to be treasured and pondered anew.

We are here; we are ready!

Let the light of your love break forth! Amen.

Hymn Silent Night, Holy Night #138 PH

Blessing

Our Deacons tonight are Paul Gudonis and Nancy Peterson.

We thank our trumpeters Kevin Tracy and Emily Dunbar.

The nativity scene on the altar is in celebration of Christmas Eve.

Listening devices are available for those in need; they are at the back of the Sanctuary. Feel free to ask 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, 978-526-7661 x 1.

Interested in holding a wedding, memorial service or baptism at First Parish? Contact the office at 978-526-7661 ext. 1, office.fpchurch@gmail.com or Rev. Katherine at revkatherine.fpchurch@gmail.com for more information.

First Parish uses candid photos of Church activities in its publicity from time to time. Any photos of children used will not contain personally identifiable information. Members of the community not wanting their or their children's photos depicted should inform the Church Office.

Faith Formation Opportunities for All Ages Through study and prayer and service, we aspire to love God "with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength." From the youngest toddlers, to the wisest Elders, we each are called to grow in our faith and understanding. Sunday school meets weekly during the school year and begins in worship. Youth group meets twice a month. Contact Jeanne for details, jeanne.fpchurch@gmail.com. Weekly Bible Study – Meets on Tuesdays, 3:30-4:45p via Zoom. We study scripture together, utilizing resources from a variety of traditions, and seeking meaning for our daily lives.

First Parish Stephen Ministers are highly trained lay volunteers who stand ready to provide confidential, one on one presence and counsel for anyone facing a life challenge such as divorce, job loss, major illness, or bereavement, under the direction of our Minister. This service also provides referrals to local agencies which can provide tangible assistance for needs such as housing, energy, or medical care. This program is part of the national interdenominational Christian movement described here: stephenministries.org. If you or anyone you know might benefit from this service, please contact Rev. Katherine or Stephen Leaders Linda Crosby (978-314-1526) and Steve Carhart (978-407-8454).

The Seaside Parish Knitters meet each 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month at the Chapel, from 1-3 pm, January 2 and 16. 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.

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

Learn more about First Parish online:

Facebook www.facebook.com/FirstParishChurchManchesterMa/

Instagram www.instagram.com/fpcmanchesterbythesea/

Website www.firstparishchurch.org/

YouTube Worship Services

Book Group is open to everyone! 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, at 6:30 PM, and the hosting is shared among members.

January 27, 6:30 PM at Mary Lumsden's home, 18 Woodcrest Rd. Manchester. We will discuss the book *The Winter Soldier* by Daniel Mason. RSVP to Mary at 978-712-0047 or rasc84@hotmail.com.

Hands on Opportunities at First Parish

First Parish has continuing collections for –

- **The Open Door** Most needed items – canned chicken & tuna, peanut butter, healthy snacks, 100% juice boxes, cereal, hearty soups, canned fruits & veggies.
- **Operation Troop Support** Socks, and small board and card games.
- **The Grace Center** Gift Cards from local grocery markets for perishables like cream, butter, milk.

Drop items at the Chapel (inside and outside bins) and at the Church



***Thank you to all who donated poinsettias or
donated to the Deacon Fund for the
Christmas season. If you donated a plant,
you are invited to take it with you after this
celebration.***

IN LOVING MEMORY OF

Larry L. Larsen

Jolene and Kate Larsen

Dorothy Kelly

Andrea Kunst

Gert and Gene Turner

Sandra and Jeffrey Bodmer-Turner

Mr. and Mrs. Harold Bodmer

Jeffrey and Sandra Bodmer-Turner

Johanna "Hannie" Boele Eschauzier and Susan E. Madigan

Peter G. Eschauzier

Pauline and Ted Bzdula

Paula Bzdula

Ernie Dorn and David Loomis

Molly Tyson and Liz Loomis

Wayne Marshall

Jan Marshall

*Robert, Gloria & Marion Driscoll, Violet Tracey, Kathleen Colleran, Frederick
& Lee Peterson, and Henrietta Burnett*

Paul Driscoll and Nancy Peterson

Bob & Shirley Wilkinson and Bob & Muriel Parker

Sue and Jeff Parker

Wife and mother, June Nickless

George and Betsy Nickless

Muriel Parker

Brian and Rosy Parker

IN CELEBRATION OF

Grace and George Neilson

Jan Eschauzier and Jody Morse

My children

Nancy Klebart

IN HONOR OF

All our Loved Ones

Mary and David Lumsden

Donations to the Deacon Fund \$205

CHURCH SCHOOL

Families start Sunday in worship until 10:15a when children depart to Church School (Except 1st Sundays - when children stay in church for All-Ages Family Worship) Our kids engage in hands-on, age-appropriate learning opportunities that integrate storytelling, the arts and spiritual development in a safe and family-friendly environment.



At First Parish Church, we value kids of all ages and encourage families of all configurations to join in our Christian worship, activities and spiritual experiences. The staff and volunteers at First Parish Church are committed to respect, safety and the strengthening of relationships encompassed in God's Love and illuminating Christ's life and work. For more info contact jeanne.fpchurch@gmail.com.



YOUTH GROUP

Gathers monthly for service projects, arts and crafts, and social events.

BURGERS & BINGO

*Celebrate New Year's Eve with food,
fun, excitement, and fantastic prizes!*

FPC Community Hall

DECEMBER 31ST

→ 📅 **4 - 6 PM**

**All are welcome.
A free and fun
family event!**

WWW.FIRSTPARISHCHURCH.ORG

