



**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 31, 2023, 10 AM
Worship**

Prelude The Easy Winners – Scott Joplin (1868—1917)

Welcome by Deacon

Call to Worship

One: Here is my servant, whom I uphold; my chosen, in whom my soul delights,

**All: who will not grow faint until justice is established justice in the earth;
and the coastlands wait for his teaching.**

One: Thus says God, the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out,

who gives breath to the people on earth and spirit to those who walk in it:

All: “I am the Lord; I have called you in righteousness;

One: I have given you as a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind,

to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon.

All: I am the Lord; see, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth, I tell you of them.”

adapted from Isaiah 42:1-9]

Opening Prayer

Emmanuel – God-with-us:

Like shepherds and sages of old,

we have followed signs toward the place of Your nearness,
and found ourselves here:

in this community, in this world, in this time.

We bear witness to the circumstances of Your birth,

as You came to bear witness to the circumstances of our living.

Help us to ponder, with Mary, the meanings of Your being with us –

and send us out by another way, a new way:

transformed in our ways of seeing one another in this world,
and of seeing You – by the Light of Your reconciling love.

We pray in the strength of the nearness of Jesus, alive with us now. Amen.

Hymn Angels From the Realms of Glory #117, Pilgrim Hymnal

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

Prayer of Dedication

Emmanuel, God-with-us –

You have heard our earnest prayer, “O come, O come” –
and even in the season of cold and dark,

You have sent the Light of the world as guide and companion.

We have heard his call to follow him

into the true work of Christmas: the healing of wounds,
the righting of wrongs, the restoring of relationships.

May the giving of these, our offerings,

help us to be with him, and open our hearts to be with You –
today, tomorrow, and in the seasons to come. Amen.

Scripture Reading Luke 2:22-40 Lynda Griffiths

²² When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³ (as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord”), ²⁴ and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”

²⁵ Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. ²⁶ It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s

Messiah. ²⁷ Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what was customary under the law, ²⁸ Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

²⁹ “Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,
according to your word,

³⁰ for my eyes have seen your salvation,

³¹ which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

³² a light for revelation to the gentiles
and for glory to your people Israel.”

³³ And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. ³⁴ Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel and to be a sign that will be opposed ³⁵ so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul, too."

³⁶ There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, ³⁷ then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. ³⁸ At that moment she came and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

³⁹ When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰ The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom, and the favor of God was upon him.

Sermon "To See around the Corner" Rev Rick Spalding

Congregational Carols - Repeating the sounding joy...

Blessing

Postlude Hymn of Faith – C.W. Gluck (1714-1787)

Our Deacon this morning is John Feuerbach.

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.

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!

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.

Happy 2024, welcome the New Year! Join us today!

First Parish invites you to ring in the New Year with some festive fun! Sunday, December 31, 4 - 6 PM, (at our Community Hall behind Santander Bank).

Come have fun, make friends, play Bingo, win silly prizes, sing Auld Lang Syne, and be home nice and early. All ages welcome. FREE!

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.

You can **contribute to the work of First Parish Church** or pay your pledge **[@PayPal.Me/FPChurchManchester](https://www.paypal.com/donate/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.firstparishchurch.org%2Fpaypal)**.

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](#)**.

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.

The Seaside Parish Knitters meets each 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month at the Chapel, from 1-3 pm. Jan. 4 & 18. 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.

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

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.

Your Stewardship Committee would like to remind you to fulfill your pledge commitment for 2023 to help us close out the year. We also invite you to pledge for 2024 so the Trustees can continue planning for First Parish's activities in 2024.

Questions? Contact Mary Ellen Cook or David Lumsden.

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