



**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 3, 2023, 10 AM  
First Sunday of Advent  
Worship with Communion**

**Prelude** The Advent of Our King – Healy Willan (1880-1968)

**Welcome by Deacon**

**Call to Worship**

One: The promise of the Holy One is new again:

**All: “A branch will sprout from ancient roots, and flower with the Spirit of God:**

One: the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,

**All: the Spirit of counsel and reverence, the Spirit of delight in holiness.**

One: The One who comes to us will not judge by mere sight or sound;

**All: he will wield righteousness and justice for those long pushed aside.**

One: The time will come when the wolf shall dwell beside the lamb,

**All: the calf and the lion and the yearling together, and a child shall lead them.**

One: They will not harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, says the Holy One –

**All: for the earth will be as full of the knowledge and love of God as the waters cover the sea.”**

One: People of God, the promise of the prophet lives with us!

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

[adapted from Isaiah 11:1-9]

**Opening Prayer**

**Emmanuel – God-with-us:**

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

**We struggle to hear the voice of the prophets  
who bid us to trust your promises of healing and justice,  
and to lean into them.**

**Whisper to us this morning  
a new word to stir hope into action,  
and a new song to bind hearts together for love.**

**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.**

## **Lighting of the Advent Candle**

**Lynda Griffiths and grandson, Will, and his wife, Christina, and great granddaughter, Madeline Doucette**

**Hymn** O Come, O Come, Emmanuel NCH #116

**Anthem** People Look East – Besancon carol, words by Eleanor Farjeon, arr. Malcolm Archer.

People, look East. The time is near for the crowning of the year. Make your house fair as you are able, trim the hearth, and set the table. People, look East, and sing today: Love the Guest is on the way. Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more seed is planted there: give up your strength the seed to nourish, that in course the flower may flourish. People, look East, and sing today: Love the Rose is on the way. Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim one more light the bowl shall brim, shining beyond the frosty weather, bright as sun and moon together. People, look East, and sing today: Love the Lord is on the way. Angels, announce to man and beast him who cometh from the East. Set every peak and valley humming with the word, the Lord is coming. People, look East, and sing today: Love the Lord is on the way.

## **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** Recitative and Aria (from 'The Messiah', part 1) – G. F. Handel (1685-1759)

Rebecca Shrimpton, solo

Thus saith the Lord, the Lord of Hosts: Yet once a little while, and I will shake the heav'ns and the earth, the sea and the dry land; and I will shake all nations; I'll shake the heav'ns, the earth, the sea, the dry land, all nations, I'll shake, and the desire of all nations shall come. The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His temple, ev'n the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in; behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts. But who may abide the day of His coming?

And who shall stand when He appeareth? For He is like a refiner's fire.  
Who shall stand when He appeareth? For He is like a refiner's fire.

### **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 of our treasure help us to be with  
him,**

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

### **Scripture Reading Isaiah 64:1-9 Paul Lengeiza**

<sup>1</sup> O that you would tear open the heavens and come down,  
so that the mountains would quake at your presence—

<sup>2</sup> as when fire kindles brushwood  
and the fire causes water to boil—

to make your name known to your adversaries,  
so that the nations might tremble at your presence!

<sup>3</sup> When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect,  
you came down; the mountains quaked at your presence.

<sup>4</sup> From ages past no one has heard,  
no ear has perceived,  
no eye has seen any God besides you,  
who works for those who wait for him.

<sup>5</sup> You meet those who gladly do right,  
those who remember you in your ways.

But you were angry, and we sinned;  
because you hid yourself we transgressed.

<sup>6</sup> We have all become like one who is unclean,  
and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth.

We all fade like a leaf,  
and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

<sup>7</sup> There is no one who calls on your name  
or attempts to take hold of you,  
for you have hidden your face from us  
and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity.

<sup>8</sup> Yet, O LORD, you are our Father;  
we are the clay, and you are our potter;  
we are all the work of your hand.

<sup>9</sup> Do not be exceedingly angry, O LORD,

and do not remember iniquity forever.  
Now consider, we are all your people.

## **Sermon “With Us” Rev Rick Spalding**

**Anthem** Canticle of the Turning (Magnificat) – Hal H. Hopson (1933), text:  
Rory Cooney

Sydney Scherer, flute

Verse: My soul cries out with a joyful shout that the God of my heart is great, and my spirit sings of the won’drous things that you bring to the ones who wait. You fixed your sight on your servant’s plight, and my weakness you did not spurn, so from east to west shall my name be blest – could the world be about to turn?

Refrain: My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your justice burn. Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the world is about to turn.

Verse: Though I am small, my God, my all, you work great things in me, and your mercy will last from the depths of the past to the end of the age to be. Your very name puts the proud to shame, and to those who would for you yearn, you will show your might, put the strong to flight, for the world is about to turn.

Refrain:

Verse: From the halls of pow’r to the fortress tow’r, not a stone will be left on stone. Let the king beware for your justice tears ev’ry tyrant from his throne. The hungry poor shall weep no more, for the food they can never earn; there are tables spread, ev’ry mouth be fed, for the world is about to turn.

Refrain:

Verse: Though the nations rage from age to age, we remember who holds us fast: God’s mercy must deliver us from the conqueror’s crushing grasp. This saving word that our forebears heard is the promise which holds us bound, ‘til the spear and rod can be crushed by God, who is turning the world around.

Refrain:

## **The Sacrament of Communion**

### **Invitation to the Table**

### **The Great Prayer of Thanksgiving**

One: The Lord be with you.

**All: And also with you.**

One: Lift up your hearts!

**All: We lift them up to God!**

One: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**All: It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

One: We offer You praise, dear God...

...In this communion of Your love, Christ comes close to us, and we come close to Christ. Therefore with the whole realm of nature, earth and sea and sky around us, and all your family of creation, we cry with joy:

**All: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,  
Heaven and earth are filled with your glory!  
Hosanna in the highest!  
Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord!  
Hosanna in the highest!**

### **The Breaking, Pouring, Sharing of the Bread and Cup**

**Prayer of Thanksgiving** (in unison)

**All: Gracious God – In deep gratitude for this place, this meal, these people, we offer ourselves again to You. Stir in us a passion to ease the hunger and thirst we see around us. Ask much of us; enable much by us; encourage many through us. Send us forth in the strength of this food and this time to love You and to love Your people - to serve You and to serve Your people. Amen.**

**Hymn** Come Thou Long-Expected Jesus NCH #122

### **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 Liz Loomis.**

**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.

**Thank you, Nancy Klebart, for sharing your exceptional Christmas cactus at last week's and this morning's services.**

**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](https://www.paypal.com/donate/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.paypal.com%2Fme%2Ffpchurchmanchester).

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.

**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

- **Today, 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, the 2nd Community "Messiah Sing" will be presented in the Church.** 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 with a 14-piece orchestra and professional soloists. Described - "The whole idea is that people who may or may not know each other will spontaneously get together with professionals to create something beautiful." Bring your Messiah score, we will have scores available. If you missed it last year, don't let that happen again! A reception will follow in the Chapel Hall, a donation of \$20 per person at the door is welcome.
- **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.
- **Christmas Eve 5 PM** service needs 5 actors, three men and two women. The women will portray Mary at two different times in her journey and the two men will accompany her as the role of Joseph. One man will portray Jesus. Our renowned soloists will give us two beautiful selections in Part One of the script and the actors will be engaged in short conversation. Our two youngest church members will portray the expectant Mary and Joseph, with Jesus as Narrator for that part of the script, entitled, Looking Back is Looking Forward. Please see Jeanne or contact her at [jeanne.fpchurch@gmail.com](mailto:jeanne.fpchurch@gmail.com) if you would like to help present a version of the Greatest Story Ever Told!
- **Christmas Eve 7:30 PM** Traditional Candlelight open to all!

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).

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

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



**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.

**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/](http://www.facebook.com/FirstParishChurchManchesterMa/)

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

Jeanne Westcott, Director of Youth and Children’s Ministry

[jeanne.fpchurch@gmail.com](mailto:jeanne.fpchurch@gmail.com)

Nancy Klebart, Office Manager, [office.fpchurch@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:richard.w.smith@gmail.com).

**Book Group** 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.

**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.

**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



You are invited to purchase a traditional Poinsettia, (6 & 1/2" plant with 3-6 flowers, \$15) to decorate our sanctuary for the Christmas services. The Diaconate also offers the option of donating to The Diaconate Fund to assist people in our community who are in need.

Following the Christmas Eve services the plant may be taken home or left to be given to our members and friends who are

ill or unable to leave their home. A complete list of all honored will be included in the Christmas Eve bulletins.

I (we) wish to donate a plant(s) please circle one:

In Memory of

In Celebration of

In Honor of

Name of Honored

Name of Donor(s)

Please check:

\_\_\_\_\_ I will take plant(s) home

\_\_\_\_\_ Please give my plant(s)

\_\_\_\_\_ A donation to the Diaconate Fund

# of Poinsettia(s) desired: \_\_\_\_\_ Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please return order form and payment to the church office,  
drop in the offering plate or order online [here](#)  
**by Monday, December 18**