



**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, 2025
7:30 PM**

Prelude O Holy Night – Adolphe Adam (1803-1856)

Rebecca Shrimpton, solo

O holy night! The stars are brightly shining, it is the night of the dear Saviour's birth; long lay the world in sin and error pining, 'till He appeared and the soul felt its worth. A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices, for yonder breaks a new and glorious morn. Fall on your knees! Oh, hear the angel voices! O night divine! O night when Christ was born. Led by the light of faith serenely beaming, with glowing hearts by his cradle we stand; so, led by light of a star sweetly gleaming, here came the wise men from the Orient land. The King of Kings lay thus in lowly manger, in all our trials born to be our friend; He knows our need, our weakness is no stranger; Behold your King! Before him lowly bend! Truly he taught us to love one another; His law is love and his Gospel is peace. Chains shall he break, for the slave is our brother. And in his Name all oppression shall cease. Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we, Let all within us praise his holy Name. Christ is the Lord, then ever, ever praise we, His power and glory ever more proclaim.

Call to Worship and Advent Wreath Lighting The Smith 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

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem.
Come and behold him, born the King of angels.
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation.
Sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above!
Glory to God, glory in the highest.
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

Child, for us sinners poor and in the manger,
We would embrace thee, with love and awe;
Who would not love thee, loving us so dearly?
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning,
Jesus, to thee be all glory given;
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing;
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

Prayer for Illumination

First Reading from Scripture Luke 1: 26-35, 38 Annabel Smith

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

Second Reading from Scripture Luke 2: 1-7 Atticus Smith

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

What Child is this, who, laid to rest,
on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,

While shepherds watch are keeping?

Chorus:

This, this is Christ, the King, Whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
Haste, haste to bring Him laud, The Babe, the Son of Mary!

Why lies He in such mean estate,
Where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear: for sinners here
The silent Word is pleading. [Chorus]

So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh,
Come, peasant, king to own Him.
The King of kings salvation brings;
Let loving hearts enthrone Him. [Chorus]

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 Hilary Robinson

Hymn The First Nowell - #141, Pilgrim Hymnal

The first Nowell the angel did say
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay,
in fields where they lay keeping their sheep,
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, born is the King of Israel.

They looked up and saw a star
shining in the east beyond them far;
and to the earth it gave great light,
and so it continued both day and night.
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, born is the King of Israel.

A Christmas Word Rev. Katherine Schofield

Offering In thanksgiving to God, our collection this evening supports the ministries of First Parish Church, and the UCC Christmas Fund, which offers financial assistance to retired clergy and church workers in need.

Offertory Anthem Angels' Carol – words and music by John Rutter (1945)
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'.

Prayer of Dedication

Hymn - Joy to the World - #130, Pilgrim Hymnal

Joy to the world; the Lord is come;
Let Earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare him room,
And heaven and nature sing. (x3)

Joy to the Earth, the Savior reigns;
Let men their songs employ,
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains,
Repeat the sounding joy. (x3)

He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness,
And wonders of his love. (x3)

Fourth Reading from Scripture John 1: selected verses Chip Price

Passing the Light

Hymn Silent Night, Holy Night #134 NCH

Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright
Round yon virgin, mother and child.
Holy infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night, shepherds quake at the sight,
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia;
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born.

Silent night, holy night, Child of God, love's pure light.
Radiant beams from Thy holy face
Bring the dawn of redeeming grace;
Jesus, Lord at Thy birth, Jesus, Lord at Thy birth.

Blessing

Our Deacons tonight are Paul Gudonis and Liz Loomis.

We thank our trumpeters Kevin Tracy and Emily Dunbar.

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

The Church Office is closed for the holidays. It will reopen Monday, January 5, 9 AM.

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.

Looking for a space for your upcoming event? Our community hall is a lovely spot. There is a sound system and projector available. Members pay a discounted rate. Check availability by call 978-526-7661 x1 or email office.fpchurch@gmail.com.

You can contribute to the good work of First Parish Church or pay your pledge @PayPal.Me/FPChurchManchester or Venmo to @FirstParish-Church (978-907-3781).

Prayer Wall - Give it a try! Request prayers and pray for others through the Prayer Wall on our website. <https://www.firstparishchurch.org/prayer-wall/>
Feel more connected to the Joys and Concerns of our congregation, and hear what's on each other's hearts. You will be touched to receive notifications every time someone prays for you.
We also have traveling prayers walls throughout the year. Look for us at the 4th of July Parade, Festival by the Sea, Burgers & Bingo and other community events!



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. Donations to the Deacon Fund \$335

IN LOVING MEMORY OF

Larry L. Larsen

Jolene and Kate Larsen

Grace and George Neilson, Annemie Robert and George Eschauzier

Jan and Peter Eschauzier

Stephen, Ernest and Jean Groth

Marlene Dolan, Janet Groth

Bill Houghton, and Gene and Elaine Shrimpton

The Shrimpton – Houghton Family

Pauline and Ted Bzdula

Paula Bzdula

*Antone DeMoura Jr, Florence Lincoln DeMoura, Lincoln A. DeMoura, and
Lincoln H. DeMoura*

David DeMoura

Our parents, Barbara, Willard, Ellyn and Wendell

Barbara and Richard Smith

June Nickless and Doug Emery

Martha Emery

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

Paul Driscoll and Nancy Peterson

Robert W. Graul, Jr. and Edith Graul

Robert Graul

Our parents Caleb, Rosemary, Ethel and Robert

Rosemary Loring & David Byrne

Our Grandparents and Abuelos

Brian and Rosy Parker

Vincent and Alrie Terrill

Susan Martinieau

IN CELEBRATION OF

Christmas

Mary Ellen & Jerry Cook

The marriage of Mara Franklin and Ryan Mazalatis

Cynthia and Barry Franklin

IN HONOR OF

George Nickless and Nancy Klebart

Jolene Larsen

Our Loved Ones

The Lumsden Family

Our wonderful children, Mara, Lake, Naomi and Charlotte

Cynthia and Barry Franklin

Stephen's Ministry 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).

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.

Family Worship (second Sunday of the month) children of all ages stay in worship for these special intergenerational services.

Church School (all other Sundays) children depart from worship around 10:15a for their own time of learning, crafting, sharing and playing.

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.

The Seaside Parish Knitters meet each 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month, **Jan. 8 & 22, 1-3 PM**. We welcome all to stop by. 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.

Considering Book Group?

Try us out in the new year! Upcoming books - February Bible TBA, March, *The Glassmaker* by Tracy Chevalier, April, *The Chaperone* by Laura Moriarty May, *Finding Margaret Fuller* by Allison Pataki, June, *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption* by Bryan Stevenson. 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. Meets on the last Monday of the month, and hosting is shared among members.