

# FIRST PARISH CHURCH OF GROTON

December 7, 2008

## A Thought as the Service Begins:

This holy season  
of winter-darkness  
hearth-time

At the threshold of your being  
welcome the stranger you have feared  
your own desires  
your memories, your losses

And in the quiet of candle-light  
blessed be your life

hold hope again  
like a newborn child  
in your arms.

*(We ask that you turn off the ringers on your cell phones, beepers and electronic devices. Please join us in a time of quiet during the prelude.)*

**Ringing of the Bell** Rebecca Pike, Bell-Ringer

**Prelude** Nun Komm, Der Heiden Heiland (Johann Pachelbel)

**Call to Worship** Call to Worship (Betty Wylder)

**Welcome and Announcements** Annie Rayhill

**\*Hymn** O Come, O Come, Emmanuel #225

**The Lighting of the Chalice and Advent Wreath** Terri Ragot

**Response Hymn** *(please remain seated)*

Spirit of Life, come unto me.  
Sing in my heart all the stirrings of compassion.  
Blow in the wind, rise in the sea;  
Move in the hand, giving life the shape of justice.  
Roots hold me close; wings set me free;  
Spirit of life, come to me, come to me.

## A Time for All Generations

### Singing the Children and Teachers to Church School

Go now in peace. Go now in peace.  
May the love of God surround you  
Everywhere, everywhere you may go. (repeat)

### Candles of Celebration and Concern

You are invited to come forward, light a candle and briefly  
share a joy or sorrow that has touched your life.

**Anthem** Let Nothing Ever Grieve Thee (Johannes Brahms)  
Adult Choir

**Reading** The World Still Knows by Anne Weems

### Spoken Prayer, followed by Silent Meditation

**Offertory** Gelobet Seist Du (Samuel Scheidt)  
*Today's offering is an outreach collection for the benefit of  
Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry in Devens, MA*

**\*Offertory Response** *(Words: Melinda Green; Music: Shawn McCann)*  
We thank each other for these gifts  
which makes our giving blessed;  
We bless the works our gifts sustain  
and pray they ripple outward.  
With grace and generosity  
we show our faith enacted.

**Sermon** At the Threshold Rev. Elea Kemler

**\*Hymn** Dark of Winter #55

### \*Sung Benediction

As we leave this friendly place,  
Love give light to every face.  
May the kindness which we learn,  
Light our hearts til we return.

**Benediction Response** Amen (Brahms) Adult Choir

*(Service continues on back cover)*

**Postlude**      Once He Came In Blessing      (Heinrich Buttstedt)

*(Please remain seated during the Postlude. You are also invited to come to the front of the church and light a candle silently during this time. Please place your candle toward the back of the candle table. We ask the congregation to remain seated in quiet until the last candle is lit.)*

**\*Please stand as you are able.**

*Large Print Hymnals and Assisted Listening Devices are available at the sanctuary doors. If you don't wish to keep your order of service, please place it one of the recycle baskets at the sanctuary exits.*

\* \* \* \*

*Join us downstairs for good food and conversation immediately following the service! All are welcome to join the Small Group Conversation, a quieter alternative to Fellowship Hour, in the first floor library at 11:30 AM.*

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The herbs on the chancel — sage, rosemary and thyme — are for all in need of their attributes of wisdom, love and loyalty.

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Greeters: Rich Suval, Nancy LaFosse

Ushers: Jenny Deenik, Jim Oehler, Bob Kowalski, Bob Nowak, Donna Nowak.

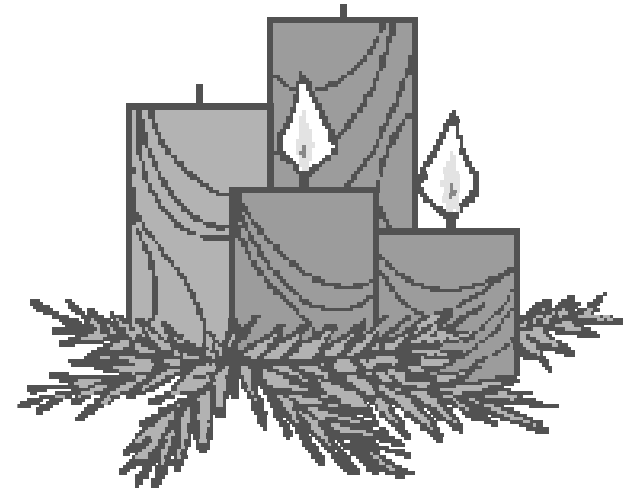
Fellowship Hour Hosts: Leadership Development: Betty Keddy, Alice Van Ormer, Eric Fisher

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**WELCOME TO VISITORS:** Visitors are encouraged to sign the Visitor's Book downstairs. Please stop by the Newcomer's Table on the stage in the Vestry. It has information on the First Parish Church and Unitarian Universalism. Join us for our fellowship hour in the Vestry following the service. Nametags help us to identify one another. You can order one at the Visitors' Table. Our minister, staff and identified leaders are available to meet with you to answer questions about our community.

**THE FIRST PARISH CHURCH OF GROTON** was gathered as the town church in 1664. The congregation worships in its fourth Meeting House which was completed in 1755. A town clock and Revere-cast bell rings out our call to service every Sunday. The congregation is a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association, a liberal faith that affirms the inherent worth and dignity of every person; justice, equity, and compassion in human relations; acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth; a free and responsible search for truth and meaning; the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large; the goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all; and respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

Membership is open to all age 13 and older. If you are interested in membership, please speak to the minister or any member of the Membership Committee.



## **FIRST PARISH CHURCH**

*Groton, Massachusetts*

### **A Warm Welcome to All!**

There is childcare for infants and toddlers through age 4 years beginning at 9:50 AM on the second floor of the East Wing and you are welcome to take children there at any time during the service. There are quiet toys in the soft, red pouches in each pew. The service is also broadcast downstairs in the large room beneath us if children become restless.

*"We are a supportive and welcoming liberal religious community. We live and share our beliefs by: exploring and nurturing our spirits; being inspired by the examples and teachings of diverse religious and moral leaders; fostering faith, justice and stewardship among ourselves and within the larger community; valuing our children and youth; celebrating our individual diversity and common unity."*