

# FIRST PARISH CHURCH OF GROTON

Wednesday, December 24, 2008 – 8 PM Service

## A Thought before the Service Begins:

All beings  
are words of God,  
God's music, God's art.

Sacred books we are...  
Every act reveals God and expands God's being.  
I know that may be hard  
to comprehend.

All creatures are doing their best  
to help God in God's birth  
of Godself.

Enough talk for the night.  
God is laboring in me;  
I need to be silent  
for a while,  
worlds are forming  
in my heart.. (Meister Eckhart)

(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.)

**Prelude** In Dulce Jubilo (J.S. Bach)

**Call to Worship** Gaudete (traditional)  
Quartet: John Jackson, Ellen Todd, Melinda Stewart, Jim Oehler  
Recorders: Richard Hussong, Sue Gleason

**Welcome** Deborah Johnson, Worship Leader

**Chalice Lighting** Kira LaFosse-Baker

## \*Hymn O Come All Ye Faithful

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.

Lo, humble shepherds, Hasting to his cradle,  
Leaving their flocks in the fields, draw near.  
We, too, with gladness, thither bend our footsteps,  
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 heaven above:  
Glory to God in the highest,  
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

**Reading** from the Gospels of Matthew and Luke  
read by Georgess McHargue

## \*Hymn Angels We Have Heard on High

Angels we have heard on high sweetly singing o'er the  
plains  
and the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains.  
Gloria in excelsis Deo. Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Shepherds, why this jubilee?  
Why these songs of happy cheer?  
What great brightness did you see?  
What glad tidings did you hear?  
Gloria in excelsis Deo. Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Come to Bethlehem and see  
Christ whose birth the angels sing:  
Come, adore on bended knee,  
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.  
Gloria in excelsis Deo. Gloria in excelsis Deo.

**Anthems** "As With Rosy Steps" from Theadora (Handel)  
Christine Duncan, soloist  
Let Their Celestial Concerts All Unite (Handel)  
Adult Choir

**Reading** from "Letters to a Young Poet" by Rainer Maria Rilke; read in German and English by Paul Harter

**\*Hymn What Child is This**

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

So bring Him incense, gold and myrrh;  
Come peasant, king to own Him.  
The King of Kings salvation brings;  
Let loving hearts enthrone Him.  
Raise, raise a song on high,  
The mother sings her lullaby.  
Joy, joy for Christ is born,  
The Babe, the Son of Mary.

**Prayer** Rev. Clio Fisher

**Offertory** How Brightly Shines the Morning Star  
(J.C. Bach)  
*(Tonight's offering is for charitable and outreach giving.)*

**Reflections** Fear Not the Strangeness Rev. Elea Kemler

**Candle Lighting Ceremony Silent Night**

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, Son of God, love's pure light  
Radiant beams from thy holy face,  
With the dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord at thy birth.

**Benediction**

**Postlude** O Holy Night (Adolphe Adam)

**Ringling of the Church Bells** Rebecca Pike,  
First Parish Bell Ringer

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

*Assisted Listening Devices are available from the ushers.*

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*Join us downstairs for cookies and cider immediately following the service. All are very welcome!*

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Greeters: June Johnson and Steve Lieman  
Ushers: Kate McNierney, Fran McNierney, Meghan McNierney, Suzanne Nelson  
Light Bearers: Youth of First Parish Church  
Fellowship Hosts: The Hutchins-Sandy Family  
Special thanks this evening to soprano soloist Christine Duncan; and to First Parish friends Jeff Close and Allen King, for fire safety.

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