

# FIRST PARISH CHURCH OF GROTON

December 18, 2011

## Ringing of the Bell

Rebecca Pike, Bell-Ringer

## A Thought as the Service Begins

And it came to pass in those days (as it is always coming to pass, on any ordinary day, in any ordinary place) that the days were accomplished that a child should be born... And this child's name would be called a thousand beautiful names, every word there is for gladness, every word there is for love, every word there is for peace.

For why are we born but to remind each other what hope looks like,  
what hope feels like when you hold it in your hands and cradle it,  
whispering the quietest and bravest lullabies?

For why are we born, but to awaken to a winter morning,  
to look again upon the winter landscape, to stand upon this humble, holy ground and know that we are blessed?  
(Libbie Stoddard, adapted)

*(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** Traditions of Christmas (Chip Davis)

## Welcome and Announcements

Gina Perini Benedict, Worship Leader

**\*Hymn** People, Look East #226

## Lighting of the Chalice & Advent Wreath

Holly, Jack, Isadora and Ariana Durkin

**Lighting of the Menorah** Barbara Rich

Baruch atah adonai eloheynu melech ha-olam,  
Asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav vitzivanu l'hadilik ner shel Hanukkah

Blessed is Life, the Source of All Creation,  
Who makes us holy and urges us to kindle the Hanukkah lights.

Baruch atah adonai eloheynu melech ha-olam,  
She-asah nissim l'avoteynu ba-yamin ha-heym bazman ha-zey

Blessed is Hope, Source of All Creation,  
Who performed wondrous deeds for our ancestors long ago in these winter days.

Baruch atah adonai eloheynu melech ha-olam,  
Sheh-hechianu v'ki'manu v'higianu lazman ha-zey

Blessed is the Love, Source of All Creation  
For giving us life, for sustaining us and for enabling us to reach this season, that we are here to celebrate Life, Hope and Love.

**Response Hymn** *(please remain seated)*  
Spirit of Life #123

**Offertory** Still, Still, Still (traditional, arr. Chip Davis)

**\*Offertory Response** *(Words: Melinda Green; Music: Shawn McCann)*

We thank each other for these gifts  
Which makes our giving bless-ed.  
We bless the works our gifts sustain  
And pray they ripple outward.  
With grace and generosity  
We show our faith enacted.

**Hymn** Do You Hear What I Hear

Said the night wind to the little lamb,  
do you see what I see  
Way up in the sky, little lamb,  
do you see what I see  
A star, a star, dancing in the night  
With a tail as big as a kite, with a tail as big as a kite

Said the little lamb to the shepherd boy,  
do you hear what I hear  
Ringing through the sky, shepherd boy,  
do you hear what I hear  
A song, a song, high above the trees  
With a voice as big as the sea, with a voice as big as the sea.

Said the shepherd boy to the mighty king,  
do you know what I know  
In your palace warm, mighty king,  
do you know what I know  
A child, a child shivers in the cold  
Let us bring him silver and gold, let us bring him silver and gold.

Said the king to the people everywhere,  
listen to what I say  
Pray for peace, people everywhere!  
listen to what I say  
The child, the child, sleeping in the night  
He will bring us goodness and light, he will bring us goodness and light.

### **The Story of the Nativity, according to the Gospels of Matthew and Luke (also known as the Paper Bag Pageant!)**

#### **\*Hymn      Away in a Manger**

Away in a manger,  
no crib for his bed,  
The little Lord Jesus  
laid down his sweet head;  
The stars in the heavens  
looked down where he lay,  
The little Lord Jesus  
asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing,  
the poor baby wakes,  
But little Lord Jesus,  
no crying he makes.

I love Thee, Lord Jesus;  
look down from the sky  
And stay by my cradle  
till morning is nigh.

#### **\*Hymn      The First Nowell**

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.

And by the light of that same star,  
three magi came from country far;  
to seek a king was their intent,  
and to follow the star wherever it went.  
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, born is the king of Israel.

#### **\*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  
Him whose birth the angels sing:  
Come, adore on bended knee,  
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.  
Gloria in excelsis Deo. Gloria in excelsis Deo.

**\*Hymn We Three Kings**

We three kings of Orient are; bearing gifts we traverse afar,  
Field and fountain, moor and mountain, following yonder star.

O star of wonder, star of light, star, with royal beauty bright,  
Westward leading, still proceeding,  
guide us through this perfect night.

Born a babe on Bethlehem’s plain, gold I bring to crown him  
again, love forever, ceasing never, in our hearts to reign.  
*Refrain.*

**\*Hymn In the Bleak Midwinter #241**

**\*Sung Benediction**

As We Leave This Friendly Place #414

**Postlude Hark the Herald Angels Sing**  
(traditional, arr. Chip Davis)

*(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, Sunday Bulletins and Assisted Listening Devices are available at the sanctuary doors. If you don’t wish to keep your Sunday Bulletin, please place it one of the recycle baskets at the sanctuary exits.*

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*Join us downstairs for good food and conversation immediately following the service!*

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The flowers in church this morning are given by the  
O’Rourke family in loving memory of Gurudarshan Khalsa,  
Joan Geymer Carr, Ed and Leontine O’Rourke.

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**Greeters:** Diane Hewitt, Mary Jennings, Bernadette Dureault,  
Edythe Salzman  
**Ushers:** Andrea Mason, Pamela Worden  
**Exit Greeter:** Judy Nauman

Special thanks to Paul Funch for joining Shawn on flute this morning and to the members of the Intergenerational Worship Working Group: Gina Benedict, Brenna Mayer, Amy Sturm, Colleen Tessier.

**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 is a Unitarian Universalist Association Welcoming Congregation. We warmly welcome members of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community.”*

**Our Web Page:** [www.uugroton.org](http://www.uugroton.org) **Email:** [office@uugroton.org](mailto:office@uugroton.org)

**Office Hours** are Tuesday–Friday, 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. The office telephone number is 978-448-6307.