

# FIRST PARISH CHURCH OF GROTON

December 20, 2015

## Ringing of the Bell

Rebecca Pike

## Thoughts as the Service Begins:

This is the irrational season  
when love blooms bright and wild.  
Had Mary been filled with reason,  
there'd been no room for the child. (Madeleine L'Engle)

We, Angels and Mortals,  
Believers and Nonbelievers,  
Look heavenward and speak the word aloud.  
Peace.  
We look to our world and speak the word aloud: Peace.  
We look at each other, then into ourselves,  
And we say without shyness or apology or hesitation:  
Peace, My Brother.  
Peace, My Sister.  
Peace, My Soul. (Maya Angelou)

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

**Prelude** Shepherds' Dance from "Amahl and the Night Visitors"  
(Gian Carlo Menotti)

## Welcome and Announcements

Gina Perini-Benedict, Worship Leader

**\*Hymn** Go Tell It on the Mountain #239

## Lighting of the Chalice and Advent Wreath

The Hooks-Wayman family

**Response Hymn** *(please remain seated)* #123

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.

## Offertory

"Tomorrow Shall Be My Dancing Day"  
(traditional English carol)

**\*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      Once in Royal David's City** #228

**\*Sung Benediction** #414

As we leave this friendly place,  
love give light to every face.  
May the kindness which we've learned,  
light our hearts 'til we return.

**Postlude**      Nutcracker Suite (Tschaikowky; arr. Walter Finlayson)

*(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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Flowers today are donated by Anne Bohan in celebration of Alex Luening's 9<sup>th</sup> Birthday.

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Greeters: Sarah Iaccabucci, Frank Sapp and Suzanne Nelson  
Ushers: Maddy Premru, Kathryn Ellis Moore, and the McClure/Stram family: Donna, Chris, Sarah and Jack  
Coffee Hour Host: Austin Edwards

Special thanks to Claire Rindenello, Michael Jacobs, Margery Goldstein and Paul Funch for playing the flute on all music selections this morning.

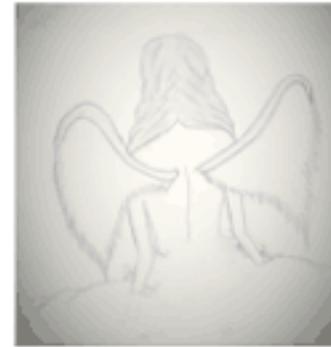
*The candle hanging from the pulpit at the front of the church carries a flame that originated at the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem on November 14, 2014 and has been transported by members of the International Boy Scouting Organization throughout the world. Today it burns in thousands of cities and towns across North and South America, Europe, Australia, Africa and the Middle and Far East carrying the message and hope for Peace on Earth. Thanks to Sam Kimpton for bringing it to us today!*

**WELCOME ALL VISITORS.** We are glad you are here. Join us for coffee and conversation after the service where you can meet our ministers, Elea and Karen. Everyone here is happy to speak with you and answer any questions you may have. Please sign one of the Guest Books on the tables near the front and back entrances so we can know who you are. Be sure to indicate if you want to get emails or newsletters about events in and related to First Parish.

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

## FIRST PARISH CHURCH

Groton, Massachusetts



*Artwork by Olivia Logan*

### **DECEMBER - PACKING LIGHT**

What keeps you from the great adventure life is calling you to? What are the logical or practical explanations that get in your way? What needs to be released to travel more lightly? (Christine Valters Paintner)

This the difference between being a tourist and a pilgrim. A tourist has new experiences, but remains the same person. A pilgrim experiences new places and is transformed by them. We can only be freed by what lies ahead if we leave behind our baggage. (Christine Valters Paintner)

*"We are a community seeking to deepen spiritually, to take care of one another, and to be a blessing to the world."*

*For more information Please visit our website: [www.uugroton.org](http://www.uugroton.org)*

### **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, multicolored fabric pouches in each pew. The service is also broadcast downstairs in the large room beneath us if children become restless.