

FIRST PARISH CHURCH OF GROTON

Thursday, December 24, 2015 – 5:30 PM Service

A Thought as the Service Begins

Now is the moment of magic,
When an eastern star beckons shepherds and kings toward
an unknown goal,
And here is a blessing:
They find nothing in the end but an ordinary baby,
Born at midnight, born in poverty, and the baby's cry, like
bells ringing,
Makes people wonder as they wander through their lives,
What human love might really look like, sound like,
Feel like.

Now is the moment of magic,
And here is a blessing:
We already possess all the gifts we need;
Hearts to be filled with compassion
Voices to speak words of gratitude and kindness
Hands to build true peace on earth
And to hold each other tight in love.
(Victoria Safford, adapted)

*(We ask that you turn off the ringer on your cell phones
as well as the flash on your cameras.
Please join us in a time of quiet during the prelude.)*

Call to Worship Gloria (Jacques Berthier)
Children's Choir and Youth Choir

Prelude Christmas is Coming (Vince Guaraldi)

Welcome Brenna Mayer, Worship Leader

*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.

Chalice Lighting The Foster Family: Molly, Mike,
Dmitri and Sadie

Anthem The Little Drummer Boy (Simeone, Davis, Onorati)
Children's Choir

***Hymn Angels We Have Heard on High**
*(Children with or without halos and crowns are invited to parade
around the sanctuary during the hymn!)*

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.

Telling the Christmas Story (with the help of the children)
Rev. Elea Kemler, Karen G. Johnston and Brenna Mayer

Anthem For So the Children Come Youth Choir
(Sophia Lyons Fahs, words; Jason Shelton, music)

Offertory Of the Father's Love Begotten (arr. David Lasky)
(Tonight's offering is for the Caring Committee, which supports needs within the congregation and helps strangers and friends who come to our doors in need. Thank you for your generosity. If you are in need of a gas or grocery card tonight, please speak to one of the ministers after the service.)

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.

***Hymn Joy to the World!**
Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare him room,
And Heaven and nature sing,
And Heaven and nature sing,
And Heaven, and Heaven, and nature sing.

Joy to the world, the Savior reigns!
Let all their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.

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

Benediction Rev. Elea Kemler and Karen G. Johnston

Postlude O Holy Night (Adolphe Adam)

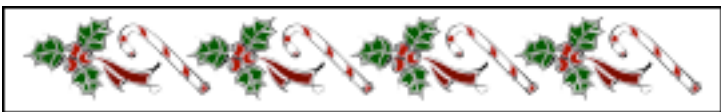
Ringing of the Church Bells
Rebecca Pike, First Parish Bell Ringer

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

Join us downstairs for cookies and cider immediately following the service. Caroling will take place from 6:45 – 7:15 pm in the large room beneath us. All are very welcome!

Tonight's flowers are given by Nancy LaFosse and Kira and Jared LaFosse-Baker in memory of Denis LaFosse, who loved Christmas.

Special thanks to all who helped with this evening's service:
Music: Shawn McCann, Director of Music, First Parish Church and the Children's Choir and Youth Choir
Ushers and Greeters: Tom Roney, Suzanne Nelson, June Johnson, Steve Lieman, Loretto Roney
Candlelight Bearers: Dmitri Foster, Lara Hill, Kira Hill, Sam Mayer-Svarczkopf
Fellowship Hosts: Deb Boczenowski, Susan Colt-Willcox
Fire Safety: Karen Goudey, Bob Hanninen, Sarah Iacobucci



FIRST PARISH CHURCH

Groton, Massachusetts

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.

WELCOME ALL VISITORS. We are so 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."



Art by: Hatzy Hornblower

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

A Warm Welcome to All!

Tonight's service is for all ages. 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 adults or children need to take a break.