

**FIRST PARISH CHURCH OF GROTON**

Thursday, December 24, 2014 – 7:30 PM Service

**A Thought as the Service Begins**

I cannot tell you how the light comes.  
What I know is that it is more ancient than imagining.  
That it travels across an astounding expanse  
to reach us.  
That it loves searching out what is hidden  
what is lost, what is forgotten, or in peril  
or in pain.

I cannot tell you how the light comes,  
but that it does. That it will.  
That it works its way into the deepest dark  
that enfolds you, though it may seem long ages in coming  
or arrive in a shape you did not foresee.

And so, may we this night  
turn ourselves toward it.  
May we lift our faces to let the light find us.  
May we bend our bodies to follow the arc it makes.  
May we open, and open more, and open still  
to the blessed light that comes. (Jan Richardson, 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** While By My Sheep  
(17<sup>th</sup> century, arr. Hugo Jungst) Adult Choir

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

**Welcome** Ed McNierney, Worship Leader

**Chalice Lighting** Allegra and Midori Harris

**\*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**

Karen G. Johnston, Intern Minister

**Anthem** Candlelight Carol (John Rutter) Adult Choir

**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.)*

**\*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

**Reading** To Find the Child by Steve Garnass-Holmes

**Prayer**

*Congregational Response:*  
*Wherever the world is in darkness, let us bring light.*

**\*Hymn In the Bleak Mid Winter**

In the bleak mid-winter  
Frosty wind made moan,  
Earth stood hard as iron,  
Water like a stone;  
Snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,  
In the bleak mid-winter Long ago.

Our God, Heav'n cannot hold Him  
Nor earth sustain;  
Heaven and earth shall flee away  
When He comes to reign:  
In the bleak mid-winter, a stable-place sufficed  
The Lord God Almighty, Jesus Christ.

Angels and archangels  
May have gathered there,  
Cherubim and seraphim  
Thronged the air,  
But His mother only, in her maiden bliss,  
Worshipped the Beloved With a kiss.

What can I give Him, poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd  
I would bring a lamb,  
If I were a wise man I would do my part,  
Yet what I can I give Him, Give my heart.

**Reflections** Lift Your Face Toward the Light Rev. Elea Kemler

**Anthem** Lo, How A Rose E'er Blooming (Michael Praetorius)  
Adult Choir

**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)

**Ringling of the Church Bells**

Rebecca Pike, First Parish Bell Ringer

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

*Large print hymnals, large print bulletins and 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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Tonight's flowers are given by Nancy LaFosse and Kira and Jared LaFosse-Baker in memory of Denis LaFosse, who loved Christmas.

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***Special Thanks to those who helped with the service:***

Music: Shawn McCann, Director of Music, First Parish, the Adult Choir, Kurt Staven on trumpet

Greeters and Ushers: June Johnson, Steve Lieman, Karen Goudy, Bernadette Dureault, Suzanne Nelson, Deb Boczenowski, Tom Roney

Fellowship Hosts: Deb Boczenowski, Susan Colt Willcox

Candlelight Bearers: Maddy Premru, Sara Woods

Fire Safety: Greg and Will Premru, Andy and Ian Peterson

**WELCOME ALL VISITORS.** We are so glad you are here. Join us for cider 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 Carol Sarasin*

*"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 children or adults need to take a break.