

FIRST PARISH CHURCH OF GROTON

December 18, 2016

Ringing of the Bell

Rebecca Pike

Thought 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 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

“Fuga” (from *Notturmo* C.D. Dittersdorf)
“Describe a Circle” (traditional arr. C. McMichael)

Welcome and Announcements

Gina Perini Benedict, Worship Leader

*Hymn People, Look East

#225

Lighting of the Chalice and Advent Wreath

Loretto and Tom Roney

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

“The Nightingale” (O. Respighi)

*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.

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

***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 "Simple Gifts" (traditional arr. By M.Z. Goldstein)

(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.)

***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.

* * * *

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

Flowers today are donated by Anne Bohan in celebration of
Alex Luening's 10th Birthday.

Greeters: Susan Epting, Owen Shuman and Suzanne Nelson
Ushers: Peter, Luke and Owen Benedict
Coffee Hour Host: Sam Mayer Svarczkopf

Warm Welcome and Special thanks to: Claire Rindenello, Michael Jacobs, Margery Goldstein, Maria Rindenello and Paul Funch for playing the flute, piccolo and alto 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 then transported to Austria where it was greeted and distributed to 1000 Boy Scouts from 20 countries. It arrived in the United States on November 27th 2016 and since then has been transported by members of Scouting units to homes, churches, hospitals and other organizations throughout North, Central and South America. Today as it burns in Groton, it also burns in thousands of cities and towns across Europe, Australia, Africa, the Middle and Far East carrying the message and hope for Peace on Earth.

Winter Solstice Celebration: Wednesday, Dec. 21, 7 PM, for all ages, downstairs in the vestry

Christmas Eve Services: Saturday, Dec. 24, 5:30 PM (Service for all Ages) and 7:30 PM, with caroling downstairs in the vestry at 6:45 PM

Christmas Day Service, Sunday, Dec. 25 at 10:00 AM

WELCOME ALL VISITORS. We are glad you are here. Join us for coffee and conversation after the service where you can meet our minister, Rev. Elea Kemler. 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 Welcoming Congregation. We joyfully welcome all!

FIRST PARISH CHURCH

Groton, Massachusetts



Fiber and Watercolor Art by Rachel Benson

Thousands of candles can be lighted from a single candle and the life of the candle will not be shortened. Happiness never decreases by being shared.
- Buddha

Try to be a rainbow in someone's cloud.
- Maya Angelou

"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

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.