

*Music gives a soul to the universe,
wings to the mind, flight to the imagination
and life to everything.*
– Plato

THE FIRST PARISH CHURCH IN WESTON
Weston, Massachusetts
www.firstparishweston.org
Gathered in 1698
ORDER OF SERVICE
Third Sunday in Advent – All-Music Sunday
December 12, 2021

PRELUDE

Overture to *Messiah*

George Frideric Handel
(1685-1759)

CALL TO WORSHIP (Sophia Lyon Fahs)

Minister: For so the children come
and so they have been coming.
Always in the same way they come
born of the seed of man and woman.

People: **No angels herald their beginnings.
No prophets predict their future courses.
No wisemen see a star to show where to find
the babe that will save mankind.**

Minister: Yet each night a child is born is a holy night,
fathers and mothers—sitting beside their children’s cribs
feel glory in the sight of a new life beginning.

People: **They ask, “Where and how will this new life end?
Or will it ever end?”
Each night a child is born is a holy night—
A time for singing,
A time for wondering,
A time for worshipping.**

*HYMN 134 – “Joy to the World” (*verses 1-3*)

Minister: The Peace of God be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

*THE PEACE

CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER and THE LORD'S PRAYER (*please be seated*) (*unison*)

Amazing God, Creator and Confronter, open our hearts to hear your voice in unexpected times and places. Appear to us in forms we cannot deny. Challenge us in ways we cannot avoid. Lead us in paths from which we cannot turn back. Guide us so that our self-discipline may be better informed and more consistent. Test us that we may test ourselves by the model of Jesus, who taught us to pray, saying together, OUR FATHER . . .

LIGHTING THE CHALICE

& THIRD ADVENT CANDLE

Nancy Piedra & Michael Pastrone

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PIANO RESPONSE

LESSON: Isaiah 35: 1-10 *The Return of the Redeemed to Zion*

OFFERTORY

*OFFERTORY RESPONSE

**From all that dwell below the skies,
Let songs of hope and faith arise;
Let peace, goodwill on earth be sung
Through every land by every tongue.**

**Praise God, the Love we all may share;
Praise God, the beauty everywhere;
Praise God, the Hope of Good to Be;
Praise God, the Truth that makes us free.**

MESSIAH (Part the First)

RECITATIVE:

"Comfort ye my people"
TJ Rufo

AIR:

"Every valley shall be exalted"
TJ Rufo

CHORUS:

"And the Glory of the Lord"

CHORUS:

"And He shall purify"

RECITATIVE:

"Behold a virgin shall conceive"
Ben Doyle

AIR AND CHORUS:

O Thou that tellest good tidings to Zion"
Sharon Brown

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WELCOME VISITORS: Whoever you are, wherever you find yourself on your journey of faith, you are welcome here at First Parish. If you are a first-time visitor and would like to receive the First Parish newsletter, please fill out the "Welcome" form in your pew rack and place it in the collection plate. We hope you will introduce yourself to the Ministers and join us for refreshment and fellowship in the Parish Hall following the service.

PAGEANT REHEARSAL TODAY AFTER WORSHIP – If you'd like to participate in next week's Christmas Pageant during worship, come to the Sanctuary at 11:45 am today.

CHRISTMAS FLOWERS – Would you like to donate plants (poinsettias, amaryllis, cyclamen) in memory/celebration of loved ones? Dedications will be in the orders of service for Dec. 19 & 24. The plants will decorate the Sanctuary on those two days and the Parlor on Christmas! To order a plant, please contact Lynn Taff (LRT.1@comcast.net/781-237-2535) and send your dedication with a check (*First Parish Church in Weston*) to Lynn at 370 Glen Rd., Weston by Thursday, Dec. 16.

SKYLARK VOCAL ENSEMBLE PRESENTS . . . Their first-ever storytelling concert based on Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* in the First Parish sanctuary on Saturday, Dec. 18, at 7:00 pm. Artistic Director Matthew Guard will give a pre-concert talk beginning at 6:15 pm. For info/tickets, go to: <https://www.skylarkensemble.org>

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT – Dec. 19, Christmas Pageant Worship at 10:30 am; **pageant participants should gather in the Sanctuary at 9:15 am for costumes and quick run-through.**

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES – Friday, Dec. 24, at 4:00 and 6:00 pm (and perhaps 8:00 pm if enough interest). Join us in-person for our traditional candlelit services of lessons and carols that will include a Christmas message and end with the singing of "Silent Night" and "Joy to the World." Capacity limited to 160 per service; reservations required, along with vaccination, masks, and contact tracing information as we work to keep everyone healthy. Wearing of layers urged as there will be fresh air brought into the Sanctuary, along with use of our air filtration systems, to provide exchange of air.

Reserve for 4:00 pm service: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/christmas-eve-lessons-carols-400-pm-registration-224279003537>

Reserve for 6:00 pm service: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/christmas-eve-lessons-carols-400-pm-registration-224279003537>

OR call the Church Office – 781.893.7798