

Where there is great love, there are always miracles.

~ Willa Cather

No one is useless in this world who lightens the burdens of it for anyone else.

~ Charles Dickens

THE FIRST PARISH CHURCH IN WESTON, U.U.

Weston, Massachusetts

Gathered in 1698

ORDER OF SERVICE

December 22, 2024 A.D. at 10:30 am

Fourth Sunday in Advent

PRELUDE

CALL TO WORSHIP:

Minister: In the Spirit of Christmas Past,
let us gather to listen and learn the ancient stories,

People: **that our hearts may find wisdom.**

Minister: In the Spirit of Christmas Present,
let us gather to view and question the way things are,

People: **that our hearts may seek justice.**

Minister: In the Spirit of Christmas Future,
let us gather to dream and to plan the way things will be,

People: **that our hearts may be reclaimed by hope.**

*HYMN 138 – While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks

Minister: The Peace of God be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

EXCHANGE OF PEACE

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

CHURCH COVENANT

**In the love of truth and the spirit of Jesus Christ,
We join for the worship of God and service to humankind.**

CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER FOLLOWED BY THE LORD'S PRAYER

Source of Light and Life, you caused light to shine and dispel the darkness, and you constantly open us to the ways we can let our own light shine. We confess our unwillingness sometimes to see the light and to walk in your ways. We have not always opened our eyes to the needs of others and our feet have sometimes wandered from the paths of justice and peace. We ask that the same light that inspired your greatest servants be born anew within us, that your vision for this world comes to pass, and that our hearts be stirred by the story of the manger through acts of compassion and service. This we ask in the name of your servant Jesus, who taught us to pray, saying Our Father...

LIGHTING OF ADVENT WREATH AND CHALICE

Steve and Ginny Hibbard

Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love

ANNOUNCEMENTS

TIME FOR ALL AGES

Rev. Sarah Napoline

DISMISSAL TO CHURCH SCHOOL

**Go now in Peace, Go now in Peace,
May the love of God surround you,
Everywhere, everywhere, you may go.**

READING

*HYMN 151 – “O Little Town of Bethlehem” (vs. 1-3)

SERMON: “When Bethlehem Opens”

Rev. Jeff Barz-Snell

ANTHEM “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

arr. Robert Shaw & Alice Parker
(1916-1999 / 1925-2023)

PASTORAL PRAYER

CHORAL RESPONSE

OFFERTORY “Love Came Down at Christmas”

John Rutter (b. 1945)

OFFERTORY RESPONSE

**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.**

POEM FOR THE SOLSTICE: *The Shortest Day*

(Final line for everyone: “Welcome Yule”)

*HYMN- "Deck the Halls"

Deck the halls with boughs of holly, fa la la la la, la la la la.
'Tis the season to be jolly, fa la la la la, la la la la.
Don we now our gay apparel, fa la la la la, la la la la.
Troll the ancient Yuletide carol, fa la la la la, la la la la.
See the blazing Yule before us, fa la la la la, la la la la.
Strike the harp and join the chorus, fa la la la la, la la la la.
Follow me in merry measure, fa la la la la, la la la la.
While I tell of Yuletide treasure, fa la la la la, la la la la.
Fast a way the old year passes, fa la la la la, la la la la.
Hail the new, ye lads and lasses, fa la la la la, la la la la.
Sing we joyous all together, fa la la la la, la la la la.
Heedless of the wind and weather, fa la la la la, la la la la.

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Our greeter this morning is Holly Kulow.

Our guest organist is Ana Popa and we thank her for stepping in for Geoff Wieting and sharing her ministry of music with us.


First Parish Church has long welcomed people with different perspectives, backgrounds, and orientations. As a Welcoming Congregation, we happily invite all people into our 21st century community and church. If you are visiting, we hope you will check in at our welcome table and introduce yourself to the ministers.

Please join us in the Parlor by the fireplace for some festive Yuletide cheer, complete with cookies, coffee/hot chocolate, and milk punch.




Christmas Greetings from Your Church Staff!

*Rev. Jeff Barz-Snell, Rev. Sarah Napoline, Robert Jones
TJ Rufo-Curran, Geoff Wieting
Nate Bear, Ben Doyle,
Rose Hegele, Nathan Savant
Betsy Gibson, Alan Flynn, Paula Leger
Peter Constable*



**We are grateful to the
following First Parishioners whose donations
in honor of loved ones provided the
Christmas plants and wreaths:**



In loving memory of Deborah S. Knight from her husband Peter and their children Lydia and Carter & his wife Abigail

In loving memory of Dick Masland by Jean, John and Molly

In loving memory of Elizabeth, L. Frederick Jr. and L. Frederick Kilham, Edith S. & E. Paul Floyd from Dick & Kathy Floyd

In loving memory of Ruth & D. Bernard Pierson and Ellenora & John S. O'Brien, Sr. and John S. O'Brien, Jr. from the Pierson family

In memory of Susan Reeder, a special friend, from Ginnie and Steve Hibbard

In loving memory of Ted & Fi Saad from Karen and Janet

Tod & Georgia Foote and family celebrate the memory of Margaret & George Young, Esther & Gordon Foote and Kathy Rozzelle Long

In loving memory of Daniel L. Nozik and loved ones from Gail Nozik

With gratitude and in loving memory of Roger M. Thomas from his wife Dorothea, their children Donald and Helen, and their families

In remembrance of John O'Shea and Sue & Jerry Hughes with love from Nancy, Chris and Weston Hughes

Remembering with love the special times shared with Tare Newbury from his family

Given by Bill Sano in memory of Harry and Carolyn Hoehler. Rest in peace.

In loving memory of their parents Helen & J Torrey and Polly & Frederick Kulow from Rob and Holly Kulow

From Marcia Matthyse in loving memory of her dear husband Steven Matthyse and parents Tod & Polly Jenney

In loving memory of Oliver H. Brewster, Alice Brewster, Bruce Brewster, James W. Nelson, Jr. & Alice E. Nelson from Glenn & Sue N. Brewster

Remembering loved ones in the Allee, Kueffer, Charlsen, and Flory families at Christmas and always, from Kurt, Cindy, Ellie and Emma Flory

Given in memory and with love to Marjorie Hench Toppan and Wellington Clough Toppan from Debbie Toppan

From Carol McKeen, John Dunton and Lynne Czysz to their beloved McKeen, Dunton and Czysz family members

In loving memory of Kenneth Fish and Rachid Hankour from the Fish family

In memory of Jon C Krebs, husband/father/grandfather, from his family with love

In honor of her family – Clara, Sean, Stephanie and James – with love from Evelyn Krebs

In loving memory of their parents, Jane & Bret Carlson and Carol & David Fisher, and of Sherry Huber and David Fisher, Jr., from Jane & Chris Carlson

Remembering Mimi & Pop, Conrad, the Colonel and family friends Marjorie Jordan and Peggy Matthews from Lynn & Ed Taff

ANNOUNCEMENTS

KNITTERS & STITCHERS will not meet tomorrow, Dec. 23, but will gather at noon in the Parlor on Monday, Dec. 30.

FAMILY CHOIR RETURNS – With some of the best seats in the house, the Family Choir will return to the “Loft” for the 4:00 pm Christmas Eve service. There will be a brief rehearsal before the service at 3:30 pm in the Parlor. Please reach out to TJ Rufo-Curran if questions (tjrufu@firstparishweston.org).

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICES OF LESSONS AND CAROLS, Dec. 24 at 4:00 pm and 6:00 pm. Please register for your preferred service:

- 4:00 pm service: <https://fpcw-christmas2024-4pm.eventbrite.com/>
- 6:00 pm service: <https://fpcw-christmas2024-6pm.eventbrite.com/>

YULETIDE SUNDAY SERVICE, DEC. 29, AT 10:30 AM

EPIPHANY & COMMUNION SERVICE, SUNDAY, JAN. 5, 2025

ACCOUNTING REQUEST – If you have church expenses to be reimbursed to you, please submit them to Betsy Gibson by Dec. 27 so they can be recorded in 2024.

2024 & 2025 STEWARDSHIP – As we near the end of the 2024 Budget Year, we still have some open commitments. And, if you did not make a 2024 commitment or would like to make an additional stewardship gift, your support is always appreciated. All gifts to First Parish received in hand or postmarked by December 31 are deductible in the 2024 tax year, regardless of when they are deposited in the church account. 2024 tax statements will be mailed at the end of January.

The 2025 fiscal year begins January 1, 2025. We thank all who have already made a commitment to support First Parish financially in 2025 and hope to hear from all who received the Campaign letter. Office hours will be somewhat limited during the Christmas week. If you have questions about donations, please contact Betsy Gibson.

STAFF AND COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORTS - It soon will be time to submit annual reports to be published in First Parish's *News & Views* in advance of the 2025 Budget Hearing on Sunday, Jan. 26, and the Annual Congregational Meeting on Sunday, Feb. 2. Deadline for submission is Friday, Jan. 17 (in advance of MLK, Jr. Day).

MEET & GREET RECEPTION, SUNDAY, JAN. 5 – Are you new to First Parish? Would you like to know more about the church and how it is governed and functions day to day? If so, we invite you to join Jeff and some of our lay leaders in the Parlor after church for refreshments and conversation, including what membership entails. We will be welcoming new members on both Sunday, Jan. 26 - Budget Hearing Sunday - and Feb. 2, Annual Meeting Sunday.

MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR THE REV. DR. HARRY HOEHLER, 12th minister of this church, Saturday, Jan. 11, at 11:00 am in the Sanctuary with a lunch reception to follow in the Parish Hall.

MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR SALLY GILMAN, SATURDAY, JAN. 18, AT 11:00 AM in the Sanctuary, followed by a reception in the Parish Hall.

