

Love

*Love was born at Christmas;
star and angels gave the sign.*



FIRST PARISH CHURCH OF STOW & ACTON

Unitarian Universalist

The Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum
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*First Parish is a Unitarian Universalist Association Welcoming Congregation.
We warmly welcome gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people into our.*

To help everyone be a part of worship in the fullest way possible *community*,
large print orders of service and hymnals are available from an usher.
Assisted Listening Devices are available when worship is in the Sanctuary.

FPC currently has a masks-optional policy throughout the church.
Several rows in the back of the Sanctuary are designated "mask-required."
They are a greater distance from unmasked speakers and include accessible seating.

FPC is on the web at fpc-stow-acton.org and on Facebook.

Land Acknowledgement: We would like to acknowledge that this service is being held by a community that gathers on the stolen traditional lands of the Massachusetts, Nipmuc, Pawtucket, and Wampanoag People. We pay respect to those Indigenous Peoples who lost their lives in the colonization of this land and recognize that these Indigenous tribes are still today facing violations of sovereignty, territory, and water. We also give thanks for the Earth we walk upon, the waters, the lifegiving plants, and all the Earth's creatures, as well as the winds, sun, moon, and stars. We recognize this is just a first step in moving toward right relationship with Native peoples and healing of the Earth.

December 24, 2023: 9:00 PM

Gathering

Prelude

“March” from *The Nutcracker*
Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Trevor Berens &
Chris Hossfeld, piano

“Myn Lykyn”

Jessica Tunick Berens, soloist
R.R. Terry

1. I saw a fair mayden
syttin and sing:
She lulled a lyttel childe,
a swete lording. *Refrain.*
2. That same Lord is he
that made alle thing;
Of alle lordis he is Lord,
of alle kynges Kyng. *Refrain.*
3. There was mickle melody
at that Chylde's birth:
All that were in heavenly blisse
they made mickle mirth. *Refrain.*
4. Aungels bright sang
their song to that chylde:
Blyssid be thou and so be she
so meek and so milde. *Refrain.*

Refrain: Lullay myn lyking, my dere sonne, my sweetling.
Lullay my dere herte, myn own dere derling.

Gigue, Partita in E Major
J.S. Bach

Theo Ramsey,
violin

“Bring a Torch, Jeanette, Isabella”
Trad. French Carol, Arr. Jimmy Bass

Jessica Tunick Berens, Sharon Webb,
& Katy Weeks, soloists

1. Bring a torch, Jeanette, Isabelle!
Bring a torch, to the stable run
Christ is born, tell the folk of the village
Jesus is born and Mary's calling.
Ah! Ah! beautiful is the Mother!
Ah! Ah! beautiful is her child
2. It is wrong when the child is sleeping,
It is wrong to talk so loud.
Silence, now as you gather around,
Lest your noise should waken Jesus.
Hush! Hush! see how he slumbers;
Hush! Hush! see how fast he sleeps!

3. Softly now unto the stable,
Softly for a moment come!
Look and see how charming is Jesus,
Look at him there, His cheeks are rosy!
Hush! Hush! see how the Child is sleeping;
Hush! Hush! see how he smiles in dreams!

“Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy” from *The Nutcracker*

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Trevor Berens &
Chris Hossfeld, piano

Introit

“In the Bleak Midwinter”
Harold Drake

Jessica Tunick Berens &
Bob Glorioso, soloists,
FPC Choir

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In the bleak midwinter
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 midwinter
long ago. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Our God, heaven cannot hold him,
nor earth sustain;
heaven and earth shall flee away
when he comes to reign:
in the bleak midwinter
a stable place sufficed
the Lord God Almighty,
Jesus Christ. |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Enough for him whom cherubim
worship night and day,
a breastful of milk
and a mangerful of hay:
enough for him
whom angels fall down before,
the ox and ass and camel
which adore. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. 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. |

Land Acknowledgement & Welcome

The Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum

* Carol

“O Come, All Ye Faithful”

1 O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant, O come ye, O
2 — Lo, hum - ble shep - herds, hast - ing to his cra - dle, — leav - ing their
3 — Sing, choirs of an - gels, sing in ex - ul - ta - tion, — sing, all ye

come ye, to Beth - le - hem. Come and be - hold him,
flocks in the fields, draw near. We, too, with glad - ness,
ci - ti - zens of heaven a - bove; glo - ry to God, all

Refrain

born the King of an - gels;
thith - er bend our foot - steps; O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let us a -
glo - ry in the high - est;

dore him, O come, let us a - dore him, Christ the Lord.

Words: John Francis Wade, tr. Frederick Oakley
Music: *Adeste Fideles*, John Francis Wade

Call to Worship

Another Star, Another Night

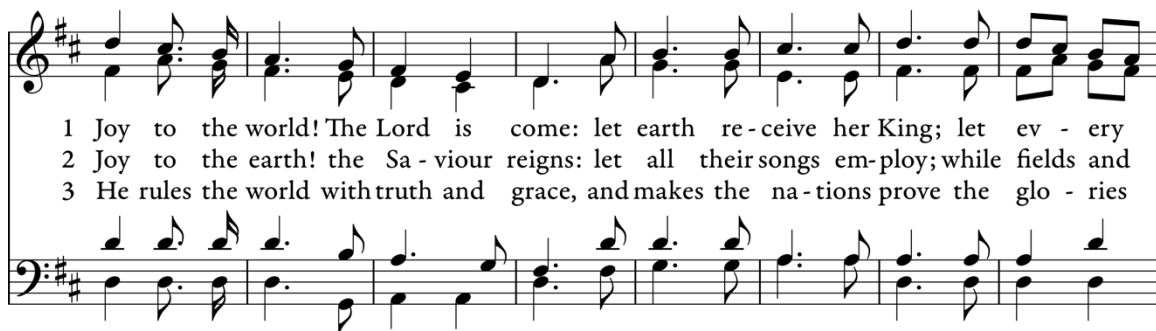
by Richard S. Gilbert

Lighting of the Advent Candles and Christmas Candle

Chalice Lighting

* Carol

“Joy to the World”



1 Joy to the world! The Lord is come: let earth re-ceive her King; let ev - ery
2 Joy to the earth! the Sa - viour reigns: let all their songs em-ploy; while fields and
3 He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the na-tions prove the glo - ries



heart pre - pare him room, and heaven and na - ture sing, and
floods, rocks, hills and plains, re - peat the sound-ing joy, re -
of his right - eous - ness, and won - ders of his love, and



heaven and na - ture sing, and heaven, and heaven and na - ture sing.
peat the sound-ing joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound-ing joy.
won - ders of his love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

Words: Isaac Watts, alt.

Music: Lowell Mason, after G.F. Handel's *Messiah*

The Timeless Story

Reading

“The Annunciation”
Luke 1: 26-38

Spencer Morfit

Reading

“Christmas 1974”
by May Sarton

Lisa Fagerstrom

* Carol #1061

“For So the Children Come”

Each night a child is born is a ho - ly night: A time for

The first system of musical notation consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 4/4 time signature. The bottom staff is in bass clef with the same key signature and time signature. The music is written in a simple, homophonic style with lyrics underneath.

sing - ing, A time for won - der - ing, A time for wor - ship - ping,

The second system of musical notation continues the melody and accompaniment from the first system. It maintains the same key signature and time signature.

Each night a child is born is a ho - ly night.

The third system of musical notation concludes the piece. It features a final cadence in both staves.

(ho - ly night.)

Words: Sophia Lyon Fahs

Music: Jason Shelton, © 1998 Jason Shelton

Reading

“The Birth of Jesus”
Luke 2:1-7

Dave Kay

Reading

“The Risk of Birth (1973)”
by Madeleine L’Engle

Susan Avery

Offertory

“Gesu Bambino”
Pietro A. Yon, arr. C. Hossfeld
Lyrics F.H. Martens

Jessica Tunick Berens, solo
Theo Ramsey, violin
FPC Choir

When blossoms flowered mid the snows
Upon a winter night,
Was born the Child, the Christmas Rose,
The King of Love and Light.
The angels sang, the shepherds sang,
The grateful earth rejoiced;
And at His blessed birth the stars
Their exultation voiced.

Venite adoremus, O come let us adore Him,
Dominum. Christ the Lord.

Again the heart with rapture glows
To greet the holy night,
That gave the world its Christmas Rose,
Its King of Love and Light.
Let every voice acclaim His name,
The grateful chorus swell.
From paradise to earth He came
That we with Him might dwell.

Venite adoremus, O come let us adore Him,
Dominum. Christ the Lord.

*You may donate by check made out to First Parish Church,
online at <https://fpc-stow-acton.org/donate>, or by text to 978-310-3309.*

Reading

“The Angels and the Shepherds”
Luke 2:8-20

Sharon Brownfield

Reading

“Peace on Earth”
by Ann Weems

Rick Lent

* Carol

“It Came Upon the Midnight Clear”

1 It came up - on the mid - night clear, that glo - rious song of old,
 2 Still through the clov - en skies they come, with peace - ful wings un - furled;
 3 Yet with the woes of sin and strife the world has suf - fered long;
 4 For, lo! the days are haste - ning on, by pro - phet bards fore - told,

from an - gels bend - ing near the earth to touch their harps of gold:
 and still their heaven - ly mu - sic floats o'er all the wea - ry world.
 be - neath the heaven - ly strain have rolled two thou - sand years of wrong;
 when with the ev - er - cir - cling years comes round the age of gold:

“Peace on the earth, to all good - will, from heaven the news we bring.”
 A - bove its sad and low - ly plains they bend on hov - ering wing;
 and war - ring hu - man - kind hears not the tid - ings which they bring;
 when peace shall o - ver all the earth its an - cient splen - dors fling,

The world in sol - emn still - ness lay to hear the an - gels sing.
 and ev - er o'er its Ba - bel sounds the bless - ed an - gels sing.
 O hush the noise and cease your strife and hear the an - gels sing.
 and all the world give back the song which now the an - gels sing.

Reflecting

Reading

“Amazing Peace”
by Maya Angelou

Reflection and Prayer

The Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum

Anthem

“O Holy Night” Jessica Tunick Berens, solo
Michael Paladini, guitar,
Theo Ramsey, violin
Quinci Sprague, bass, & FPC Choir

1. O holy night! the stars are brightly shining,
it is the night of the dear Savior's birth;
long lay the world in sin and error pining,
till he appeared and the soul felt its worth.
A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices,
for yonder breaks a new and glorious morn:

Refrain:

Fall on your knees, oh, hear the angel voices!
O night divine, O night when Christ was born!
O night, O holy night, O night divine!

2. Led by the light of faith serenely beaming,
with glowing hearts by his cradle we stand.
So led by light of a star sweetly gleaming,
here came the wise men from eastern lands.
The king of kings lay thus in lowly manger,
in all our trials born to be our friend!

Refrain

3. Truly he tells us to love one another,
his law is love, and his gospel is peace;
chains shall he break for the slave is our brother,
and in his name all oppression shall cease.
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we,
let all within us praise his holy name:

Refrain

Candle Lighting and Returning

Reading

I Will Light Candles This Christmas

by Howard Thurman

Passing of the Christmas Light

* Carol

“Silent Night”

Michael Paladini, guitar
Theo Ramsey, violin,
Michael Merrill, mandolin,
& Quinci Sprague, bass

1 Si - lent night, ho - ly night, all is calm, all is bright
2 Si - lent night, ho - ly night, shep - herds quake at the sight,
3 Si - lent night, ho - ly night, Son of God, love's pure light

round yon vir - gin mo - ther and child. Ho - ly in - fant, so ten - der and mild,
glo - ries stream from hea - ven a - far, hea - ven - ly hosts sing al - le - lu - ia;
ra - diant beams from thy ho - ly face, with the dawn of re - deem - ing grace,

sleep in hea - ven - ly peace, sleep in hea - ven - ly peace.
Christ, the Sa - vior, is born! Christ, the Sa - vior, is born!
Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth, Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth.

*** Benediction**

The Work of Christmas
by Howard Thurman

Postlude

“Trepak” from *The Nutcracker*
Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Trevor Berens &
Chris Hossfeld, piano



Thank you to

Jeff Brown, Rick Lent, Sharon Brownfield, Ushers;
Felix Freeman, Tech Assistant; Jessica Tunick Berens and the FPC Choir;
our musicians, Michael Paladini, Quinci Sprague, Michael, Merrill, Trevor
Berens, and Theo Ramsey, & participants; and to our staff and leadership

Our poinsettias today are given by

- ☼ Keshava Srivastava, for his beloved wife, Nollie
- ☼☼☼☼ Skip Warren for family and friends
- ☼☼ Jeff & Linda Brown for their parents, Persis & Gordon Brown
and Virginia & Robert Smith
- ☼ The Stadolnik Family for Shadow
- ☼ Rouly Constantzos for Andy Constantzos
- ☼☼☼ Sharon Brownfield & Rick Lent for Rick & Lillian Lent,
Rollin & Mary Lee Smith, and Gary R. Smith
- ☼ Sandra Mika for her sister, Jane Mika
- ☼ Marcia & Richard Allison for departed family
- ☼ Sharon Webb & Lisa Fagerstrom for Jim & Emily Webb & their parents;
Tony Webb; and John & Lori Fagerstrom & their parents
- ☼☼ Mary Evans for Helen & Dan Yuill, and Donna & Virgil Evans

☼ indicates number of plants



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Services Sunday at 10 am, in person and online

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