



# FIRST PARISH CHURCH OF STOW & ACTON

*Unitarian Universalist*



Tuesday, December 24, 2024  
*Christmas Eve Candlelight Service*

**The Rev. Dr. Cynthia L.  
Landrum**  
Minister

**Meg Rivers-Wright**  
Administration, Publicity,  
Membership

**Rayla D. Baldwin-Mattson**  
Director of Religious  
Education

**Chris Hossfeld**  
Music Director

**Trevor Berens**  
Accompanist

**Justin Marble**  
Nursery Care Coordinator

**Felix Freeman**  
Tech Assistant

**Mike Silkonis**  
Sexton

**Brendon Chetwynd**  
President

**Trisha Guditz**  
Vice President

**Bill Froberg**  
Treasurer

**Johanna Pyle**  
Clerk

*First Parish is a Unitarian Universalist Association Welcoming Congregation.  
We warmly welcome gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people into our 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.  
In the Sanctuary, several back rows with accessible seating are “mask-required.”

FPC is on the web at [fpc-stow-acton.org](http://fpc-stow-acton.org) and on Facebook.

December 24, 2024

9:00 PM

Gathering

**Prelude**

“Lo How a Rose E'er Blooming”  
Johannes Brahms

Trevor Berens,  
organ

“Have Yourself a Merry  
Little Christmas”  
Hugh Martin & Ralph Blane

Emmeline Jones  
Caitlin McIntyre  
Katy Weeks  
Ian McIntyre  
David Kay,  
solos

Have yourself a merry little Christmas  
Let your heart be light  
Next year all our troubles  
will be out of sight

Have yourself a merry little Christmas  
Make the yuletide gay  
Next year all our troubles  
will be miles away

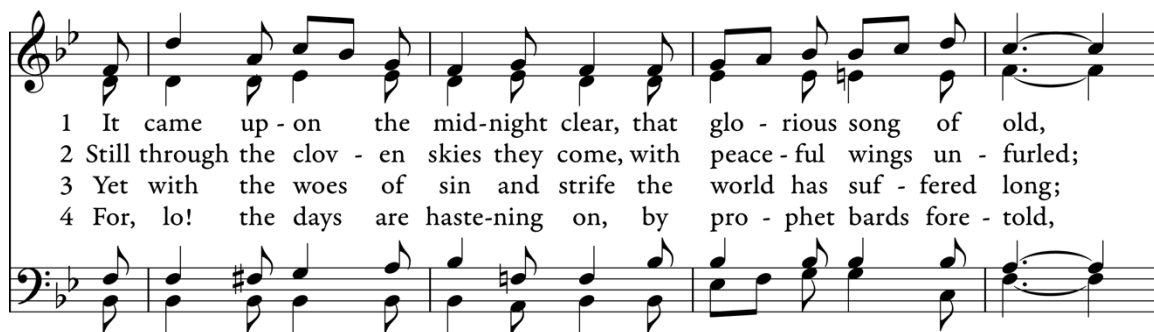
Once again as in olden days  
Happy golden days of yore  
Faithful friends who were dear to us  
Will be near to us once more

Someday soon we all will be together  
If the fates allow  
Until then, we'll have to  
muddle through somehow  
So have yourself a merry little  
Christmas now

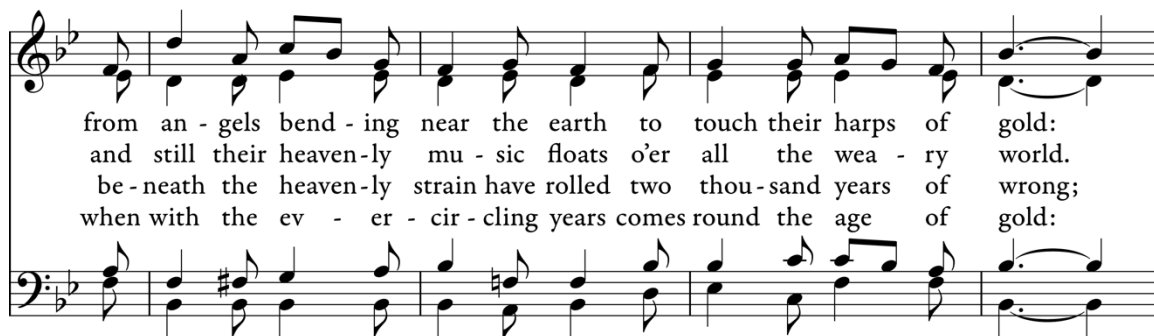
“Christmas Time is Here”  
Vince Guaraldi

Michael Merrill  
& Quincy Sprague

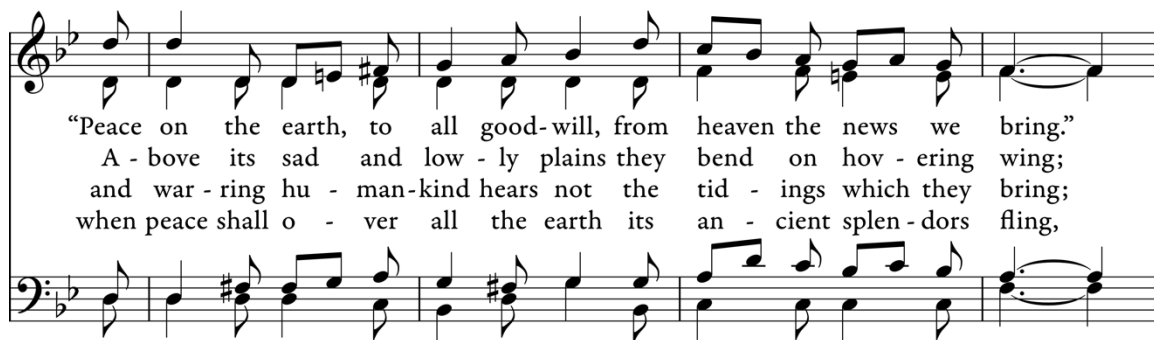
## "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear"



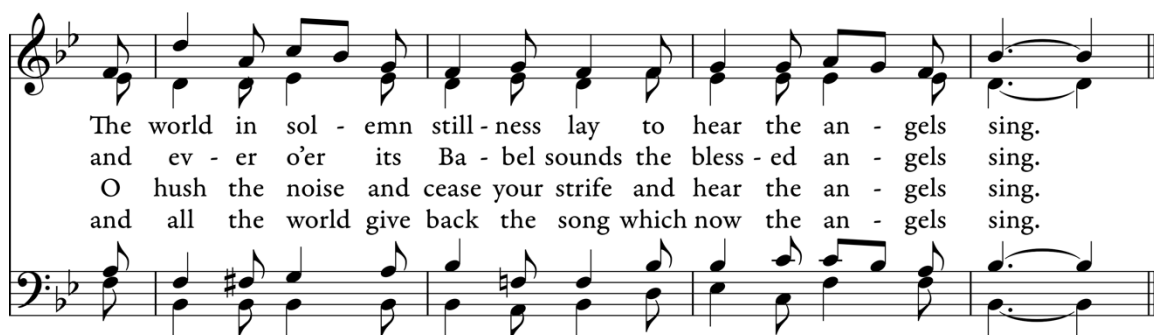
1 It came up - on the mid - night clear, that glo - rious song of old,  
2 Still through the clov - en skies they come, with peace - ful wings un - furled;  
3 Yet with the woes of sin and strife the world has suf - fered long;  
4 For, lo! the days are haste - ning on, by pro - phet bards fore - told,



from an - gels bend - ing near the earth to touch their harps of gold:  
and still their heav - en - ly mu - sic floats o'er all the wea - ry world.  
be - neath the heav - en - 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.

**Introit**

*“Carol of the Bells”*  
Mykola Leontovich  
arr. Peter Wilhousky

FPC Choir,  
Chris Hossfeld,  
Music Director

Hark how the bells  
Sweet silver bells  
All seem to say  
Throw cares away

Oh, how they pound  
Raising the sound  
O'er hill and dale  
Telling their tale

Christmas is here  
Bringing good cheer  
To young and old  
Meek and the bold

Gaily they ring  
While people sing  
Songs of good cheer  
Christmas is here  
Merry Christmas

Ding, dong, ding, dong  
That is their song  
With joyful ring  
All caroling

On, on they send  
On without end  
Their joyful tone  
To every home  
Ding, dong! Bohm!

One seems to hear  
Words of good cheer  
From everywhere  
Filling the air

**Land Acknowledgement & Welcome**

The Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum

**Call to Worship**

*“Another Star, Another Night”*  
by Richard S. Gilbert

**Chalice Lighting****Lighting of the Christmas Candle**

\* 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.

\* Please rise in body or in spirit

## The Themes of Christmas: Hope, Love, Joy and Peace

Reading

“The Birth of Jesus”  
Luke 2: 1-20

Rev. Dr. Cynthia Landrum

Reading

“Open to Joy”  
Elea Kemler

Trish Woods

\* 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*

**Reading** "Season of Promise" Rev. Dr. Cynthia Landrum  
by Howard Thurman

**Anthem** "Love is Christmas" Jessica Tunick Berens, solo  
Sara Bareilles Trevor Berens, piano

I don't care if the house is packed  
Or the strings of light are broken  
I don't care if the gifts are wrapped  
Or there's nothing here to open  
Love is not a toy, and no paper  
will conceal it  
Love is simply joy that I'm home  
I don't care if the carpet's stained,  
we've got food upon our table  
I don't care if it's gonna rain,  
our little room is warm and stable  
Love is who we are,  
And no season can contain it  
Love would never fall for that, we sing,  
Let love lead us, love is Christmas  
Why so scared that you'll mess it up?  
When perfection keeps you haunted  
All we need is your best, my love,  
that's all anyone ever wanted  
Love is how we do, let no  
judgment overrule it  
Love, I look to you, and I sing  
Let love lead us, love is Christmas

**Reading** "Perfect Love" Spencer Morfit  
Dan Schatz

**Offertory** "It's You I Like" & "Love Came Down at Christmas" FPC Choir  
Fred Rogers & Christina Rosetti Chris Hossfeld, Music Director

*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.*

It's you I like, it's not the things you wear,  
It's not the way you do your hair,  
But it's you I like, the way you are right now,  
The way down deep inside you,  
Not the things that hide you,  
Not your toys – they're just beside you.  
But it's you I like, every part of you.  
Your skin, your eyes, your feelings,  
Whether old or new. I hope that you'll remember  
Even when you're feeling blue,  
That it's you I like, it's you yourself, it's you.  
It's you I like.  
Love came down at Christmas,  
Love all lovely, Love divine;  
Love was born at Christmas;  
star and angels gave the sign.  
Love shall be our token;  
love be yours and love be mine;  
love to God and others,  
love for plea and gift and sign.

**Reading** "When the World Was Dark"  
the Iona Community



\* Carol

“Do You Hear What I Hear?”



1 Said the night - wind to the lit - tle lamb, Do you see what I see?  
 2 Said the lit - tle lamb to the shep-herd boy, Do you hear what I hear?  
 3 Said the shep-herd boy to the might - y king, Do you know what I know?  
 4 Said the king to the peo-ple ev - ery-where, Lis - ten to what I say!



Do you see what I see? Way up in the sky, lit - tle  
 Do you hear what I hear? Ring - ing thru the sky, shep - herd  
 Do you know what I know? In your pal - ace warm, might - y  
 Lis - ten to what I say! Pray for peace, peo - ple, ev - ery -



lamb, Do you see what I see? Do you see what I see? A  
 boy, Do you hear what I hear? Do you hear what I hear? A  
 king, Do you know what I know? Do you know what I know? A  
 where, Lis - ten to what I say! Lis - ten to what I say! The



star, a star, Danc - ing in the night, with a tail as big as a  
 song, a song, High a - bove the tree, with a voice as big as the  
 Child, a Child shiv - ers in the cold; Let us bring him sil - ver and  
 Child, the Child sleep - ing in the night, He will bring us good - ness and



kite, With a tail as big as a kite.  
 sea, With a voice as big as the sea.  
 gold, Let us bring him sil - ver and gold.



light, he will bring us good-ness and light!

**Reading**

“Amazing Peace” (abridged)  
by Maya Angelou

Susan Avery

**Reflections**

The Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum

**Anthem**

“O Holy Night”      Jessica Tunick Berens, solo  
Music: Adolphe Adam      Quinci Sprague, bass,  
Lyrics: Placide Cappeau,      Trevor Berens, piano,  
transl. John Sullivan Dwight      & 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 (2x) :*

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.*

*All are invited to sing verse three with the choir:*

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 (1<sup>st</sup> time solo, 2<sup>nd</sup> time all sing):*

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!

## Candle Lighting and Returning

Reading "I Will Light Candles This Christmas"

by Howard Thurman

### Passing of the Christmas Light

\* Carol

"Silent Night"

Caitlin & Ian McIntyre, violin

Michael Merrill, mandolin, Quinci Sprague, bass, & Trevor Berens, organ

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, heav - en - 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

Tocata in G-major, BWV 916  
Johann Sebastian Bach

Trevor Berens, organ



## Thank you to

Sharon Brownfield, Rick Lent, Jeff Brown, Ushers;  
Felix Freeman, Tech Assistant; Jessica Tunick Berens and the FPC Choir;  
our musicians, Caitlin McIntyre, Ian McIntyre, Michael Merrill, Quinci Sprague;  
participants; and to our staff and leadership

### Our poinsettias today are given by:

- ☼☼☼ **Kate Cremens Basbas**, in memory of Jack & Agnes Cremens,  
Mary Rogers Sullivan, and Audrey & Monte Basbas
- ☼ **Martha Morrison**, dedicated to Carol B.
- ☼ **Ingrid Holcomb**, Til Mor - God Jul - Din kärleksfulla dotter (Inga)  
To Mother - Merry Christmas - Your loving daughter (Inga)
- ☼☼ **Ruth & Jeff Lull**, in memory of Jay
- ☼☼☼☼ **Sharon Brownfield & Rick Lent**, in memory of Richard & Lillian Lent,  
Col. Rollin & Mary Lee Smith, Gary Rollin Smith,  
and for the sanctuary of this Community
- ☼ **Rebecca Stadolnik**, dedicated to family and friends
- ☼ **Pat Sorn**, with hope for Peace this year
- ☼☼☼☼ **Skip Warren**
- ☼ **Marcia & Richard Allison**

☼ *number of plants*



## To our visitors, thank you for coming!

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