

Order of Service
First Parish in Concord
December 17, 2023

*What if, instead of doing something, we were to be something special?
Be a womb. Be a dwelling for God. Be surprised.*
—Loretta Ross-Gotta

Gathering Hymn #235 “Deck the Halls with Boughs of Holly”

Welcome & Opening Words – Rev. Amy Freedman

Chalice & Advent Wreath Lighting – Rev. Seth Carrier-Ladd

I will light candles this season.
Candles of joy, despite all sadness,
Candles of hope where despair keeps watch.
Candles of courage for fears ever present,
Candles of peace for tempest-tossed days,
Candles of grace to ease heavy burdens,
Candles of love to inspire all my living,
Candles that will burn all the year long.

—Howard Thurman (adapted)

Anthem “African Noel and Amen” (Traditional) – Pop-up Choir

Invitation to Offering – Emran Hakimi

Organ Offertory “Improvisation on *Veni Emmanuel*” by Emma Lou Diemer – Eric Huenneke, organist

To give to the Offering via text message, send a text to 855-691-2592.

Angel Annunciation

Centering Music “Chorale Prelude on *Veni Emmanuel*” by Kenneth Walton

Centering in Meditation and Prayer

Silence

Hymn #352 “Find a Stillness”

Find a stillness, hold a stillness,
let the stillness carry me.
Find the silence, hold the silence,
let the silence carry me.
In the spirit, by the spirit, with the spirit giving power,
I will find true harmony.

Introducing our Christmas Pageant – Rev. Amy Freedman and Dawn Van Patten

Solstice Chant

I find my way through the cloak of darkness,
Silently I go within.
I find my way through the cloak of darkness,
Trusting dawn will come again.
Darkness come to me
Into mystery.
Darkness come to me
Darkness, blessed be!

Enter Caesar Augustus, Emperor of Rome

Journey to Bethlehem: Joseph and Mary on a Donkey

Anthem “Let your little light shine” (Traditional) arr. by Steve Finner – First Parish Choir

Arriving at the Stable with Animals

Hymn #239 “Go Tell It on the Mountain” (verses 1 & 2)

Angels Visit the Shepherds Tending their Sheep

Hymn #231 “Angels We Have Heard on High” (verses 1 & 2)

Three Wise Men Visit King Herod and Follow a Star

Hymn #259 “We Three Kings of Orient Are” (verse 1)

Reflection on the Nativity Story – Rev. Amy Freedman

Closing Hymn “Joy to the World”

Joy to the world!
The Lord is come.
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare him room,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven, and heaven
and nature sing.

Joy to the earth!
The Savior reigns.
Let all their songs employ.
While fields and floods,
Rocks, hills and plains,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

Closing Words & Benediction – Rev. Seth Carrier-Ladd

Go out into the world in peace
Have courage
Hold on to what is good
Return to no person evil for evil
Strengthen the faint-hearted
Support the weak
Help the suffering
Honor all beings

Postlude “Chorale Prelude” by Johann Sebastian Bach

Nun komm der Hediem Heiland, BWV 661

We invite you to stay seated as our service concludes with the postlude.

Benediction



*Please scan the QR code on the left with your camera to share your feedback on the Benediction for next Sunday's service.
Please scan the QR code on the right to offer feedback about the new technology in the sanctuary.*

Sanctuary Tech



Many people contribute to making our Sunday worship services a smooth and meaningful experience, both in person and on Zoom. Thank you to the many volunteers who give generously of their time, including our ushers and Zoom chat hosts. Thanks also to our staff worship team:

*Rev. Seth Carrier-Ladd
Interim Senior Minister*

*Beth Norton
Director of Music Ministry*

*Arkadiy Bar
AV Technician*

*Rev. Liz Weber
Minister for Congregational Care*

*Eric Huenneke
Organist*

*David Wisniewski
AV Technician*

*Rev. Amy Freedman
Minister of Religious Education*

*Anderson Manuel
Gospel Choir Director*

*Catherine Hill
Web & Office Administrator*

*Rev. Paul Langston-Daley
Minister of Social Action*

*Dawn Van Patten
Asst. Dir. of Religious Education*

*Bruce Davidson
Facilities Manager*