FIRST PARISH CHURCH OF STOW & ACTON

Unitarian Universalist

Wednesday, December 24, 2025

Christmas Eve Family Service

The Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum
Minister

Yaakov Trek Reef
Intern Minister

Rayla D. Baldwin-Mattson
Director of Religious Education

Justin Marble
Nursery Care Coordinator

Chris Hossfeld
Music Director

Trevor Berens
Accompanist

Meg Rivers-Wright
Parish Administrator

Bradshaw Mattson
Tech Assistant

Mike Silkonis
Sexton

Brendon Chetwynd
President

Trisha Guditz
Vice President

Bill Froberg
Treasurer

Johanna Pyle
Clerk

Roza Anthony
Ruth Lull
Elizabeth Michaud
Trustees

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 and on Facebook.

December 24, 2025,
4:00 PM

Gathering

Prelude Carols "Silver Bells"

1. City sidewalks, busy sidewalks
Dressed in holiday style
In the air there's a feeling
of Christmas
Children laughing, people passing
rush
Meeting smile after smile
And on every street corner you'll hear

2. Strings of streetlights, even stoplights
Blink a bright red and green
As the shoppers rush home
with their treasures
Hear the snow crunch, see the kids

This is Santa's big scene
And above all this bustle you'll hear

Refrain: Silver bells, silver bells, it's Christmas time in the city
Ring-a-ling, hear them ring, soon it will be Christmas day

"Frosty the Snowman"

1. Frosty the Snowman,
was a jolly happy soul,
With a corn cob pipe
and a button nose,
and two eyes made of coal.
Frosty the Snowman,
is a fairytale, they say.
He was made of snow,
but the children know
how he came to life one day.
There must have been some magic in
that old silk hat they found,
For when they placed it on his head,
he began to dance around!
Oh, Frosty, the Snowman,
was alive as he could be;
and the children say
he could laugh and play,
just the same as you and me.

2. Frosty the Snowman,
knew the sun was hot that day,
so he said, "Let's run,
and we'll have some fun
now, before I melt away."
Down to the village,
with a broomstick in his hand,
Running here and there,
all around the square,
sayin', "Catch me if you can."
He led them down the streets of town,
right to the traffic cop;
and only paused a moment, when
he heard him holler, "Stop!"
For Frosty, the Snowman,
had to hurry on his way,
But he waved goodbye,
sayin' "Don't you cry,
I'll be back again someday."

Thumpety thump, thump, thumpety thump, thump, look at Frosty go.
Thumpety thump, thump, thumpety thump, thump, over the hills of snow.

"Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer"

You know Dasher and Dancer and Prancer and Vixen
Comet and Cupid and Donner and Blitzen
But do you recall the most famous reindeer of all?

Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer
Had a very shiny nose
And if you ever saw it
You would even say it glows
All of the other reindeer
Used to laugh and call him names
They never let poor Rudolph
Join in any reindeer games

Then one foggy Christmas Eve
Santa came to say
"Rudolph, with your nose so bright
Won't you guide my sleigh tonight?"
Then how the reindeer loved him
As they shouted out with glee
"Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer
You'll go down in history!

Welcome Yaakov Trek Reef, Intern Minister

Call to Worship "Another Star, Another Night" by Richard Gilbert — The Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum

Lighting of the Christmas Candle

Chalice Lighting

Responsive Reading "For So the Children Come" (adapted)
by Sophia Lyon Fahs Rayla D. Baldwin-Mattson
Director of Religious Education

For so the children come
And so they have been coming.

Always in the same way they come –
Born of the union of humankind.

No angels herald their beginnings
No prophets predict their future courses

No wise magi see a star to show
where to find the babe that will save humankind

Yet each night a child is born is a holy night.

Parents – sitting beside their children's cribs –
feel glory in the sight of a new life beginning.

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.

*** Carol** "Joy to the World"

Words: Isaac Watts, alt.
Music: Lowell Mason, after G.F. Handel's *Messiah*

Christmas Stories

The Timeless Tale Part 1: A Surprise Visit Rev. Landrum
The Gospels' Story
As told by Cynthia Landrum

A Modern Tale Part 1: A Surprise Package Lindsay LaPointe

Our story is based on:

Somebody Loves You, Mr. Hatch

By Ellen Spinelli

Adapted by Rayla D. Baldwin-Mattson

*** Carol** "Winter Wonderland"

Sleigh bells ring, are you listening,
In the lane, snow is glistening
A beautiful sight,
We're happy tonight.
Walking in a winter wonderland.

Gone away is the bluebird,
Here to stay is a new bird
He sings a love song,
As we go along,
Walking in a winter wonderland.

In the meadow
we can build a snowman,
And pretend
that he is Parson Brown
He'll say: Are you married?
We'll say: No man,
But you can do the job
While you're in town.

Later on, we'll conspire,
As we dream by the fire
To face unafraid,
The plans that we've made,
Walking in a winter wonderland.

The Timeless Tale Part 2: The Journey to Bethlehem Yaakov Trek Reef, Intern Minister

A Modern Tale Part 2: A Neighborhood Journey Kennedy Mattson

*** Carol** "Do You Hear What I Hear"

Lyrics: Noël Regney; Music: Gloria Shayne

The Timeless Tale Part 3: Visitors to the Manger Rev. Landrum

A Modern Tale Part 3: Visitors to Neighbor Hatch Kelsey Peterson

*** Carol** "The Little Drummer Boy"

Come, they told me,
pa rum pum pum pum
A newborn King to see,
pa rum pum pum pum
Our finest gifts we bring,
pa rum pum pum pum
To lay before the King,
pa rum pum pum pum
Rum pum pum pum,
rum pum pum pum.
So to honour Him,
pa rum pum pum pum
When we come.

Little baby,
pa rum pum pum pum
I am a poor boy too,
pa rum pum pum pum
I have no gift to bring,
pa rum pum pum pum
That's fit to give a King,
pa rum pum pum pum
Rum pum pum pum,
rum pum pum pum.
Shall I play for you,
pa rum pum pum pum
On my drum?

Mary nodded,
pa rum pum pum pum
The ox and lamb kept time,
pa rum pum pum pum
I played my drum for Him,
pa rum pum pum pum
I played my best for Him,
pa rum pum pum pum
Rum pum pum pum,
rum pum pum pum.
Then He smiled at me,
pa rum pum pum pum,
Me and my drum.

Candle Lighting

Reading "I Will Light Candles This Christmas" by Howard Thurman — Rev. Landrum

Passing of the Light

*** Carol** "Silent Night"

Words: Joseph Mohr
Music: *Stille Nacht,* Franz Xavier Grüber

*** Benediction** "The Work of Christmas" by Howard Thurman — Yaakov Trek Reef, Intern Minister

Postlude "Noel Etranger" Louis Claude Daquin — Trevor Berens, organ

Our 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 Massachusett, Nipmuc, Pawtucket, and Wampanoag People. We pay respect to all those Indigenous Peoples who nourished this land before us, and we strive to do likewise.

Thank you to:
Sharon Brownfield, Zoom Host;
Ushers; and to our participants, staff and leadership

Our cuetlaxóchitl (poinsettias) today are given by:

Sharon Brownfield, Wishing all Happy Holidays
The Evans Family, in loving memory of Helen & Daniel Yuill, and Donna & Virgil Evans
Skip Warren, in memory of family and church friends
Phil & Carolyn Lynes
Richard & Marcia Allison
An anonymous friend
Ruth & Jeff Lull

number of plants

To our visitors, thank you for coming! ♥

We hope you found what you're looking for and that you'll return. Here's how to keep connecting with our people and programs:

- Fill out a Visitor Card in your pew or online (QR code)
- Watch these pages for newcomer events:
  - **Newcomer Coffees** - Meet the minister and other newcomers
  - **UU Journey classes** - Learn about UU history, spirituality, mission, and traditions
- Check out our website, www.fpc-stow-acton.org
  There is so much happening at FPC! Our homepage and "Church Life" tab detail our events and programs.
- Subscribe to our e-newsletters & email groups (QR code)

Visitor Card

E-Newsletters

January Services at FPC

Jan. 4, 10:30 at UCMH - "Covenant" - Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum

Our congregation this Sunday will be joining the Unitarian Church of Marlborough and Hudson, 80 Main St. in Hudson, at their service time of 10:30am. Our service will be an exploration of covenant. Our two merging congregations have two different covenants, both are ones with a long history in Unitarian Universalism. What does covenant mean? Why do we recite them every Sunday?

Jan. 11, 10:00 - "The War on Empathy" - Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum

Rev. Cindy's been planning this service since before the death of Charlie Kirk, who said, "I can't stand the word empathy, actually. I think empathy is a made up New Age term that – it does a lot of damage." Since then, the war on empathy has gotten stronger. What is empathy, and what is our faith's relationship to this concept?

Jan. 18, 10:00 - Martin Luther King, Jr. Sunday - Intern Minister Yaakov Trek Reef

Jan. 25, 10:00 - "What's in a Name?" - Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum and Intern Minister Yaakov Trek Reef

William Shakespeare, in Romeo and Juliet, wrote, "What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet."As our congregation considers a name change, and in a culture that is persecuting people who choose name change, we'll look at the power of naming and being able to choose a name.

January Music and Arts Events at FPC

Resilience Practices for Social Justice Organizers Thu., Jan. 15, 6–7 pm

A 6-week interactive class exploring resilience tools for social justice organizers using embodiment practices from the Alexander Technique, Somatic Experiencing, Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction, tai chi, and generative somatics. Suggested donation: $80 to $120 for six sessions. Advance registration required.

Line Dancing Evening Sat., Jan. 24, 7 pm

Join us for a chill-busting Arts Committee-sponsored evening of line dancing led by the incomparable Paul Hughes! This will be a family-friendly event, open to all ability levels and friends from the community. Suggested donation: $5 per person.

New Revival Coffeehouse Presents: Kathleen Parks Sat., Jan. 31, 7:30 pm

Kathleen Parks is a fiddler, singer, and songwriter whose virtuosic fiddle blends and reimagines traditional and modern musical styles with boundless groove, and a playful improvisational spirit. Tickets are $20 in advance and $25 on the day of the concert.