FIRST PARISH CHURCH OF STOW & ACTON

Unitarian Universalist

Wednesday, December 24, 2025

Christmas Eve Candlelight 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.

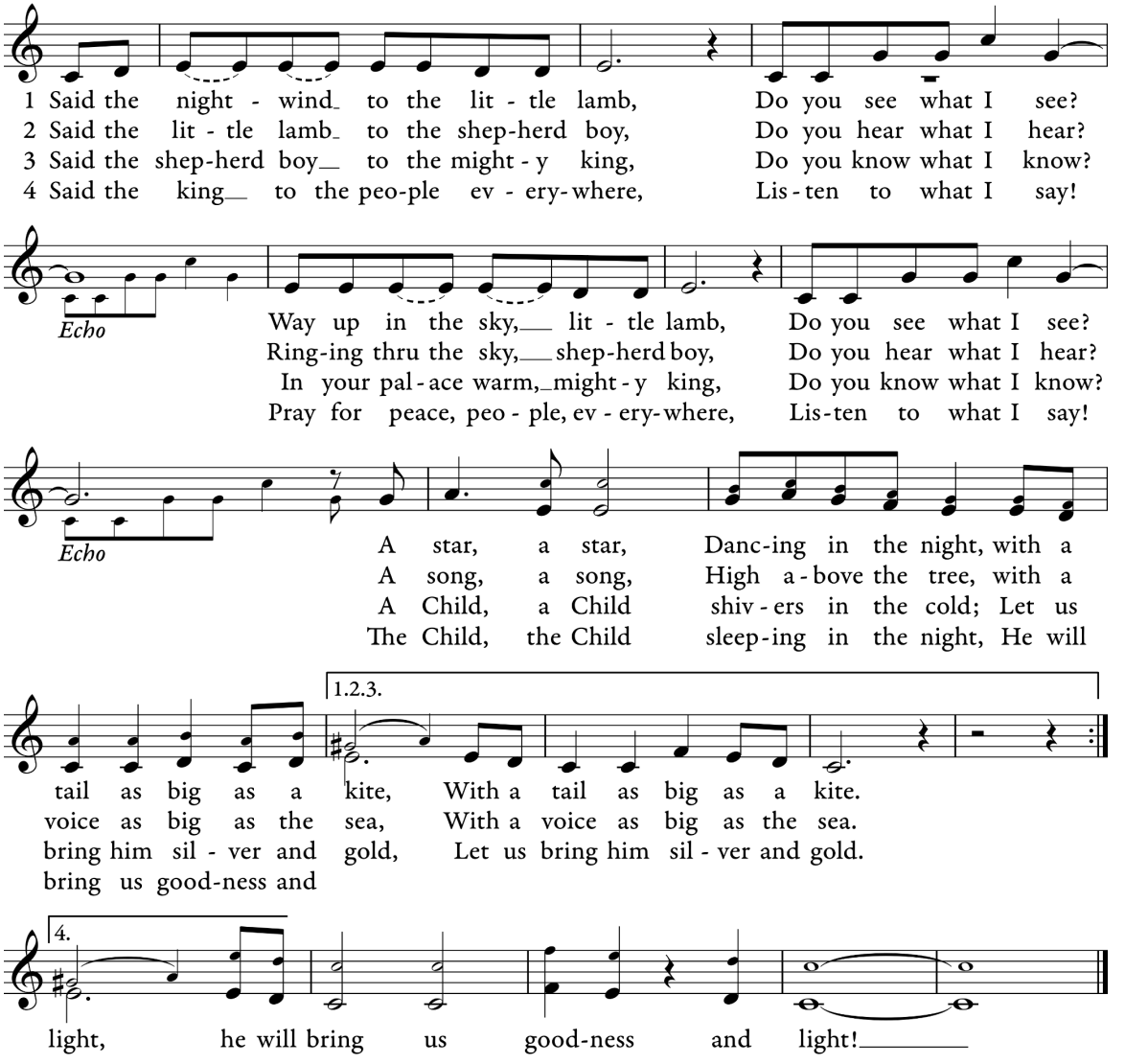
December 24, 2025, 9:00 PM

Gathering

Prelude "Es ist ein Ros entsprungen," Johannes Brahms Trevor Berens, organ

"Bright Morning Stars" Quinci Sprague and Michael Merrill, solos

*"Do You Hear What I Hear?"



"Wintergrace"
Jean Ritchie

Jessica Tunick Berens, soprano solo, Caitlin Leigh McIntyre, violin, Ian McIntyre, viola, Michael Merrill, mandolin, and Trevor Berens, piano

This is the time so well we love,
The time of all the year;
When winter calls with chilling breath,
For fireside and good cheer.
A time for us with beast to stand
And feel the season turn;
To watch the stars for secret signs,
And Nature's lessons learn.

For the time when the corn is all
into the barn,
The old cow's breath's a frosty wine,
And the morn along the fallow field
Doth silver shine.

And when cold morning's radiant star
Shines over hill and plain;
We know anew that little Babe
Is born to us again.
And we with beast and bird in tree,
Alive in our own place;
We bow our hearts and thank the Earth
For winter rest and grace.

Introit "Gaudete"
From *Piae Cantiones*, 1582

FPC Choir, Chris Hossfeld, Music Director, Peter Fisk, drums, Emmeline Jones, Scott Feldhusen, Pat Sorn, Katy Weeks, soloists

Rejoice! Christ is born of Mary! Rejoice!

The time of grace has come;
Let us faithfully sing songs of joy.

God is human, nature marvels,
The world is renewed through Christ.

The gate of Ezekiel is open,
the light shone and found salvation.

We now sing brightly,
We greet and bless the Lord.

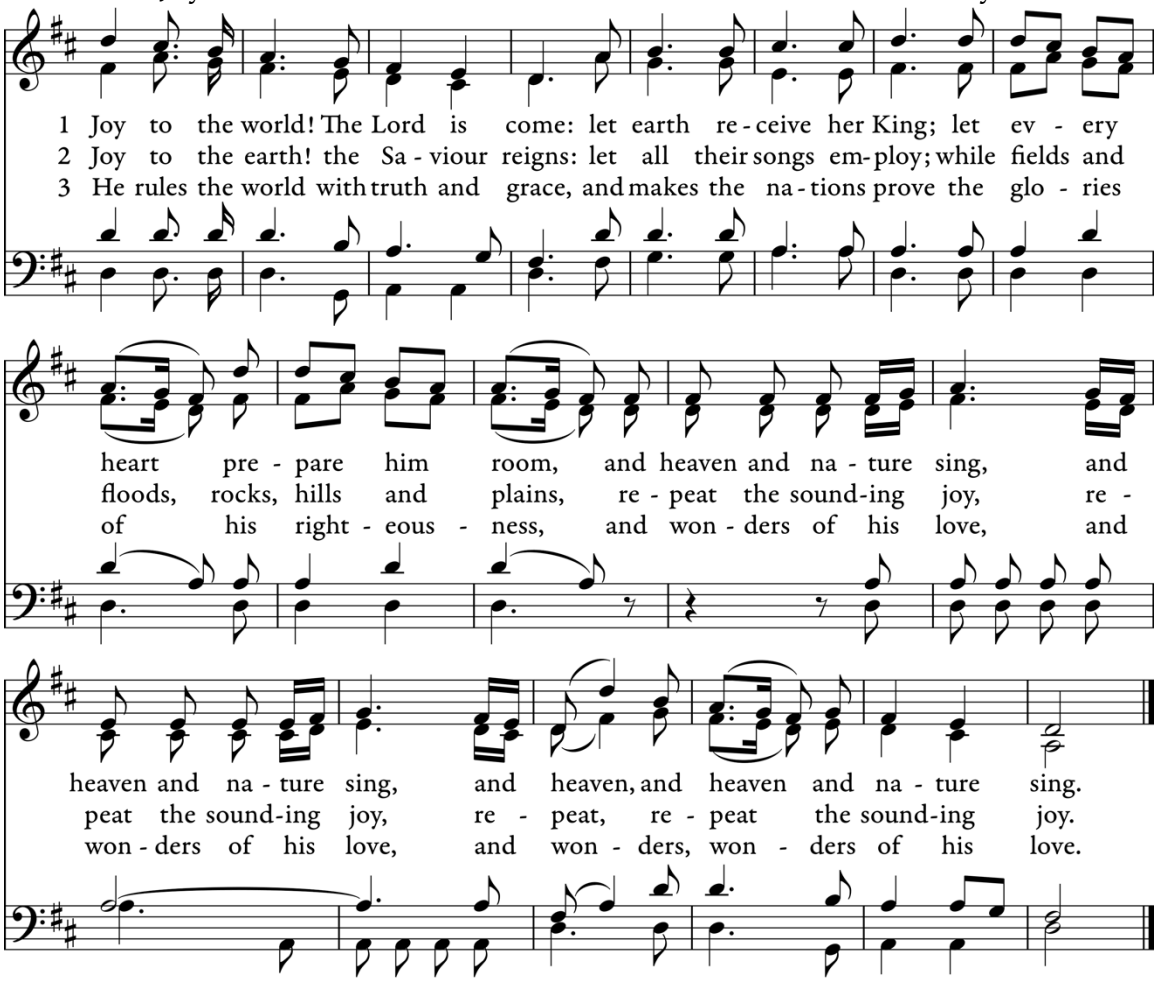
Welcome Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum

Call to Worship **"**Another Star, Another Night" by Richard S. Gilbert — Yaakov Trek Reef, Intern Minister

Chalice Lighting Yaakov Trek Reef

Lighting of the Advent Wreath and Christmas Candle Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum

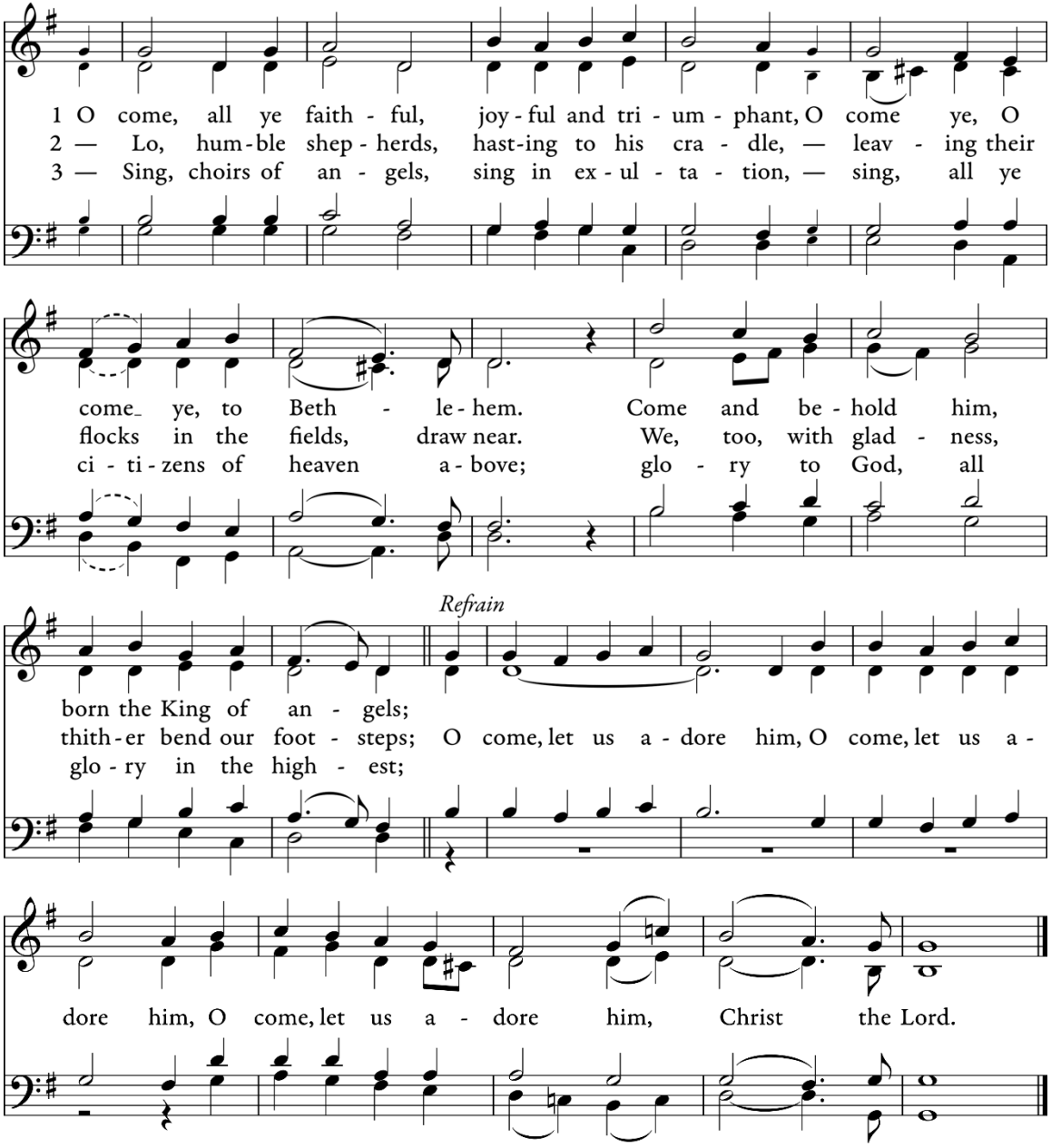
Reading "For So the Children Come" Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum
by Sophia Lyon Fahs, adapted

*** Carol** "Joy to the World" Caitlin & Ian McIntyre, violins

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

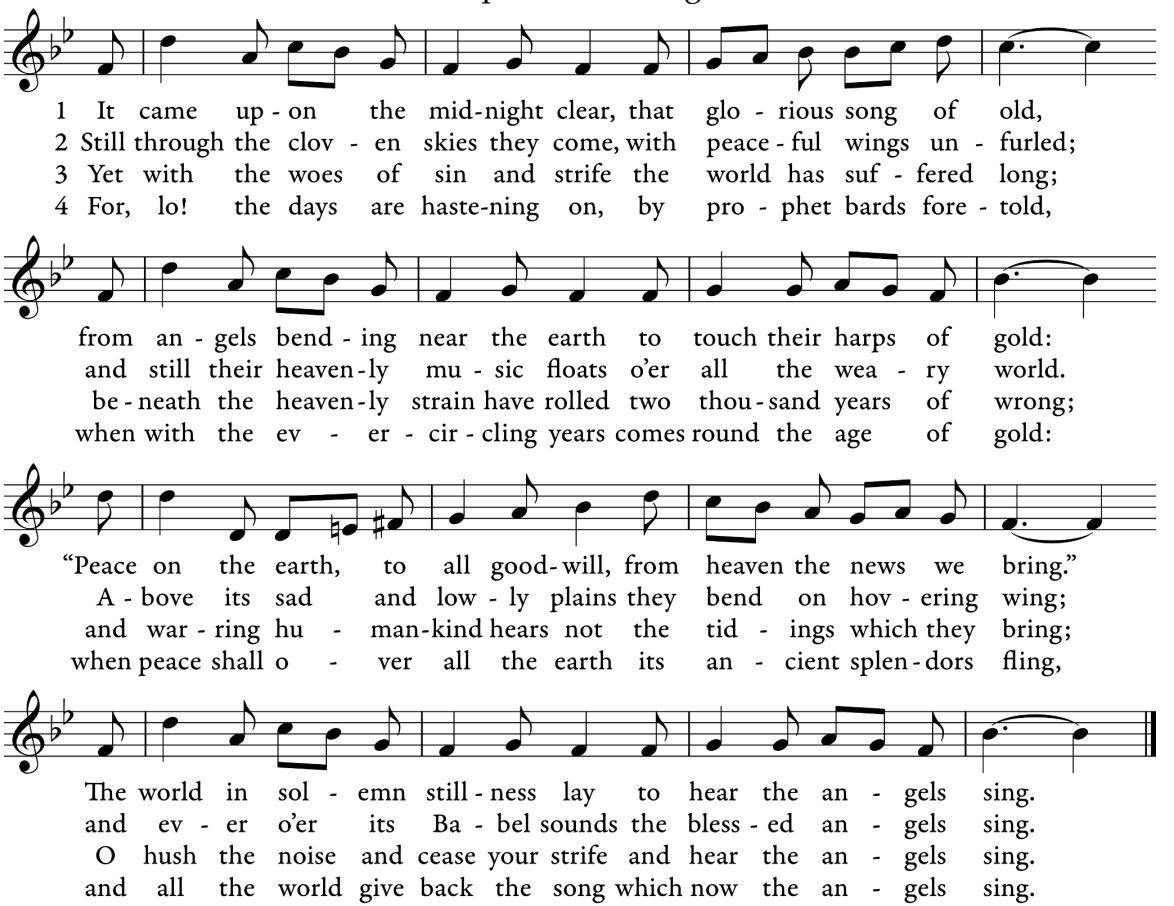
The Timeless Tale

Reading "The Birth of Jesus" Ruth Lull
Luke 2: 1–7

Reading "A Christmas Poem" Susan Avery
by Kaitlin Hardy Shelter

*** Carol** "O Come, All Ye Faithful" Caitlin & Ian McIntyre, violins

Reading "Angels and Shepherds" Margot Law
Luke 2: 8-20

Reading "Christmas Is Subversive" John Kendrick
by Kendyl L.R. Gibbons

*** Carol** "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear"

*** Reading** "The Magi" Edmund Schweppe
Matthew 2:1-12

Reading "Holy Innocents (Refugee)" David Kay
by Malcolm Guite

Offertory "Song of the Magi" Jessica Tunick Berens, soprano
Anais Mitchell Trevor Berens, piano

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.

When we came
We came through the cold
We came bearing gifts of gold
And frankincense and myrrh
And there were trumpets playing
There were angels looking down
On a west bank town
And he so loved the world

Wore we then our warmest capes
Wore we then our walking shoes
Open wide the city gates
And let us through

A child is born
Born in Bethlehem
Born in a cattle pen
A child is born on the killing floor
And still he no crying makes
Still as the air is he
Lying so prayerfully there
Waiting for the war

Welcome home, my child
Your home is a checkpoint now
Your home is a border town
Welcome to the brawl
And life ain't fair, my child
Put your hands in the air, my child
Slowly now, single file, now
Up against the wall

Wear we now our warmest coats
Wear we now our walking shoes
Open wide the gates of hope
And let us through

When we came
We came through the cold
We came bearing gifts of gold
And frankincense and myrrh
And there were shepherds praying
There were lions laying down
With the lambs in a west bank town
And he so loved the world.

The Meaning of Christmas

Reflections Yaakov Trek Reef, Intern Minister

Anthem "Dona Nobis Pacem" FPC Choir,
from the *Mass in B Minor* Chris Hossfeld, Music Director
Johann Sebastian Bach Trevor Berens, organ

Dona nobis pacem. Grant us peace.

Reading "Amazing Peace" (abridged) by Maya Angelou — Meg Rivers-Wright

Reflections — Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum

Anthem "O Holy Night"
Music: Adolphe Adam
Lyrics: Placide Cappeau,
transl. John Sullivan Dwight

Jessica Tunick Berens
and Margot Law, solos,
Ian and Caitlin McIntyre, violins,
Trevor Berens, piano, 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. *(First verse in French)* *Refrain.*

All are invited to sing verse three with the choir:

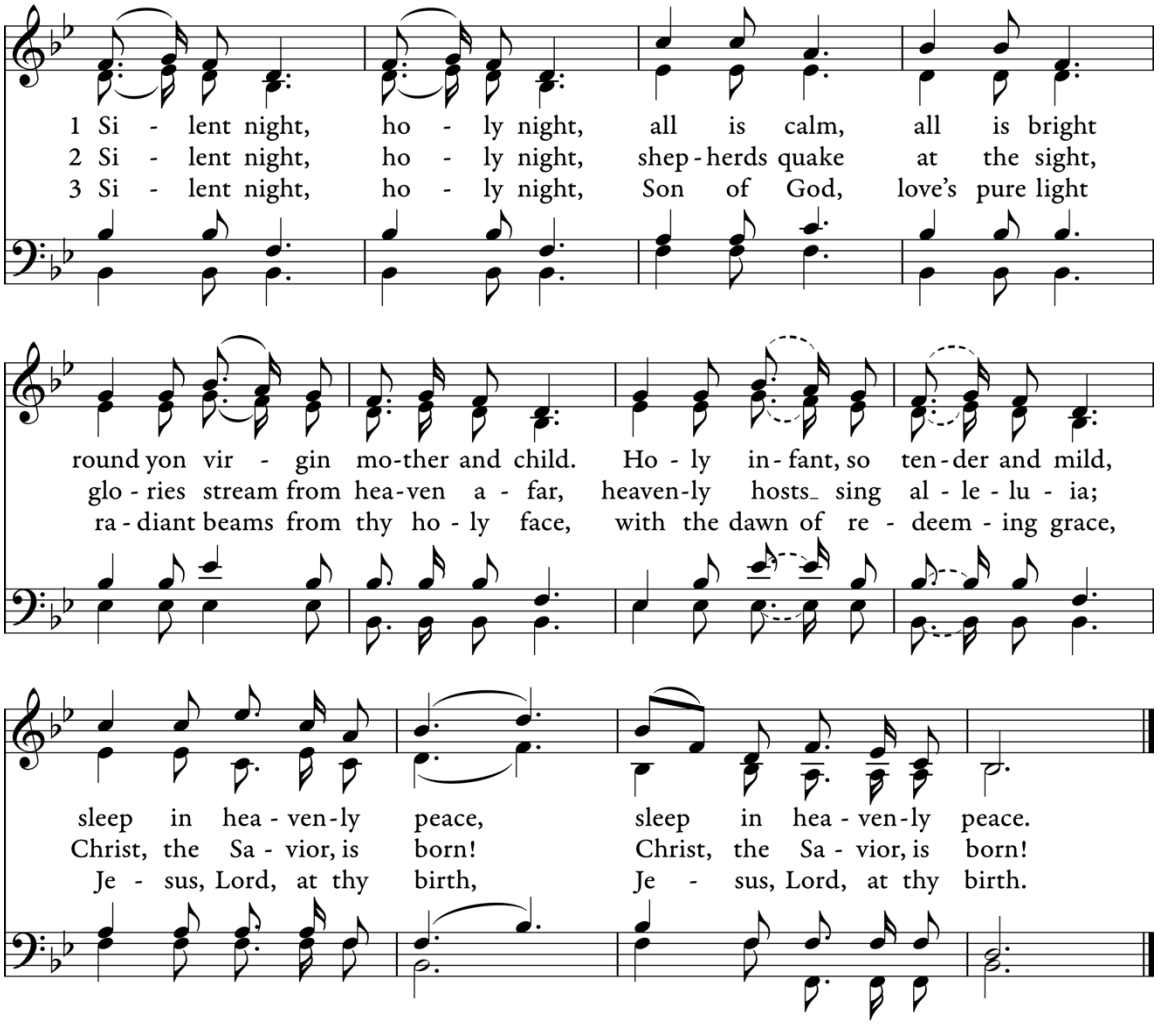
3. Truly he tells us to love one another,
his law is love, and his gospel is peace;
chains shall he break for the slave is our brother,
and in his name all oppression shall cease.
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we,
let all within us praise his holy name:

Refrain (1st time solo, 2nd 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 — Yaakov Trek Reef, Intern Minister

Passing of the Christmas Light

*** Carol** "Silent Night" Caitlin & Ian McIntyre, violins, Michael Merrill, mandolin, & Trevor Berens, organ

*** Benediction** "The Work of Christmas" by Howard Thurman Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum

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, Rick Lent, Ushers;
Jessica Tunick Berens and the FPC Choir;
our musicians; participants; and to our 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.