

# Reaching 'Round the Earth



## First Sunday of Advent

December 3, 2006  
10 o'clock a.m.

Welcome to this Service of Worship at First Congregational Church as we begin our Advent journey with the accompanying theme: "Reaching 'Round the Earth." Today begins our seasonal preparation for the coming of the Christ Child. May that "cherubic wanderer" Angelus Silesius offer these prompting words as Advent unfolds before us,

"If Christ were born within  
my heart, he would no  
longer have to roam  
the earth an outcast alien by birth."

First Congregational Church of Greenwich declares itself to be open and affirming; open to all for participation, membership, leadership and employment, and affirming of all who wish to join us as children of God. We continue to give thanks for God's guidance in our journey of faith.

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### PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

\*All who are able please stand  
‡Seating of latecomers

PRELUDE

*Rêverie Louis Vierne*

*John Stansell, organ*

CALL TO COMMUNITY

*Rev. Susan M. Craig*

### PRAISING GOD

CALL TO WORSHIP

‡\*OPENING HYMN AND PROCESSION

*Pilgrim Hymnal 107 to the tune PICARDY*

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

## LIGHTING OF THE FIRST ADVENT CANDLE

*Michael, Christina, Peter, and John Russell*

### Opening Sentences

Scripture: John 4: 23-25

### Prayer:

O God, as we sense anew the wondrous vision that Christ is coming, help us to see and hear with joy and respond with simple acts of Faith. Amen

Lighting of the first Advent Candle: We light the first Advent candle, catching a vision and anticipating something so great it's hard to believe it has already come and is coming still."

*During the lighting of the Advent Wreath, The Palmer Handbells will play "A Welsh Folk Song" arranged by Margaret Tucker.*

## CONFESSING TO GOD

### CALL TO CONFESSION

#### PRAYER OF CONFESSION (in unison)

God of the new moment, we confess our lingering attachment to old and outworn modes of living.

Christ of our life's aspiring, we confess our continuing pattern of keeping you altar-distant from our life.

Spirit of promised inspiration, we confess our persistent fear of becoming too involved in Kingdom concerns.

Forgive us this day in a time of Advent adventure for fleeing your presence, distancing Christ's model, fearing inner renewal, for we would be drawn once again to that special stable of angels singing and unimaginable light. Amen

### WORDS OF ASSURANCE

## ‡ CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.

### HEARING GOD'S WORD

#### FIRST LESSON

*Maryan Ainsworth*

Jeremiah 33: 14-16

**T**he days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfil the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: 'The LORD is our righteousness.'

Acts 2: 14-21

**B**ut Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them: 'Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

“In the last days it will be, God declares,  
that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,  
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,  
and your young men shall see visions,  
and your old men shall dream dreams.

Even upon my slaves, both men and women,  
in those days I will pour out my Spirit;  
and they shall prophesy.

And I will show portents in the heaven above  
and signs on the earth below,  
blood, and fire, and smoky mist.

The sun shall be turned to darkness

and the moon to blood,  
before the coming of  
the Lord's great and glorious day.  
Then everyone who calls on the name  
of the Lord shall be saved."

SCRIPTURE ANTHEM

O Come, O Come Immanuel

*The Children's Choir,  
Nancy McLaran, piano  
Natalie Sleeth*

SECOND LESSON

Matthew 1: 18-24

**N**ow the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way.

When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.' All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

'Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,  
and they shall name him Emmanuel',  
which means, 'God is with us.' When Joseph awoke  
from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord  
commanded him; he took her as his wife....

†\*HYMN

*New Century Hymnal 112 to the tune of WACHET AUF  
Keep Awake, Be Always Ready*

SERMON

“Dream On”

*Dr. David D. Young*

\*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (in unison)

In the Beginning was the word. The Word was with God and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning  
In him was life, and the life was the light of all, a light that darkness could not overpower. The word was made flesh, he lived among us and we saw his glory. The glory that is his as the only son of the father, full of grace and truth. Indeed, from his fullness, we have, all of us, received – yes, grace in return for grace, since, though the law was given through Moses, grace and truth have come through Jesus Christ. Amen.

\*Advent Gloria *refrain from “Angels we Have Heard on High”*

Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo.

RESPONDING TO GOD

CALL TO OFFERING

*Rev. Ronald E. Halvorsen*

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

Advent Carol

*The Chancel Choir*

*Peter Niedmann (1996)*

The people of the world confessed;  
No Law makes way to happiness.  
No strife in ages gone before  
brought lasting peace, and souls restored.  
How long before the world can know  
The end of Satan’s deadly woe?  
How long till blindness, deafening fear  
will cease, and touch of Love draw near?  
The leaves of prophecy unfold;  
Isaiah’s dream of Love is told.  
A vision full of power and might,

A Lord of light beyond all light!  
How long before we see Love's face,  
and hearts are touched by saving grace?  
How long till Zion's songs are heard,  
and mankind knows God's healing Word?  
Isaiah saw his glimpse of God  
in majesty above, and awed;  
While angels soared and sang for him  
the Sanctus of the seraphim.  
"How long," he asked, "till all can see with opened eyes, and  
hear of Thee?  
How long before Thy truth above  
will touch all hearts with fire of Love?"  
The temple, shaken, filled with smoke.  
Then, touched with fire, the prophet spoke  
in open answer to God's call,  
to bring this message to us all:  
When Jesus comes, we'll see God's face.  
His tiny hands will touch our race.  
In infant laughter heaven sings  
the power of Love above all things!

-- *Sandra Niles*

\*OFFERTORY RESPONSE

As they offered gifts most rare,  
at the manger rude and bare,  
so may we with holy joy,  
pure and free from sin's alloy,  
all our costliest treasures bring,  
Christ, to thee, our heavenly King.

\*Prayer of Dedication

SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER (seated)

Prayer of Consecration

## Serving of the Bread and Cup

*In the tradition of our church, let us partake of the bread as it is served, remembering our individual uniqueness in the eyes of God and our diversity within the Body of Christ. Let us hold the cup until all have been served, remembering our oneness with God and our unity in the Body of Christ.*

During communion the Chancel Choir will sing the German Advent chorale “Savior of the Nations, Come.”

## Prayer of Thanksgiving (in unison)

We thank you, Lord, for inviting us to this table where we have known the presence of Christ and have received Christ’s gifts. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and let us show forth your praise in our lives. We celebrate our unity with the world community of faith as we have been renewed at Christ’s table and we join now in the universal prayer he taught us, saying. . .

## LORD’S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

## GOING FORTH TO SERVE GOD

### \*CLOSING HYMN AND PROCESSION

*Pilgrim Hymnal 103 to the tune STUTTGART*

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

**\*CLOSING SENTENCES**

*Leader: On the sad and the lonely the wretched and poor.,*

People: The voice of the Christ-child shall fall;

*Leader: And to every blind wanderer*

*Open the door*

*Of hope that he cared not  
to dream of before.*

People: With a sunshine and welcome for all.

-- Phillips Brooks "Christmas Carol"

**\*BENEDICTION**

**\*BENEDICTION RESPONSE**

**POSTLUDE**

Postlude

*Cheryll Hadley, organ*

Gloria in Excelsis Deo

*Todd Kendall*

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The flowers in the Meetinghouse today are given in loving memory of William and Isabelle Webster by their children.

*Deacons Serving Communion:* Sybren Hoekstra, Darlene Moore, Enid Norris, Carolyn Paulus, Jean Watkins, Peter Schay, Paul Kretchmann, Andy Taylor.

*Ushers:* Ted Hoster, Johann Thalheim, Darren Beurer, Al Reams, Giff Reed, Al Primo, Kit Mill, Diane Kretschmann, Joyce Nye

*Greeters and Coffee Hour Hosts:* Parish Life Committee

The WGCH radio broadcast of today's service is underwritten by the Radio Broadcast Fund. If you would like to contribute to this fund, or to sponsor the broadcast on a specific Sunday, please contact Kirk Young.

*Flower Delivery:* Peggy Whitlock

## *Calendar*

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### TODAY

Is the first Sunday of the month and the Food Barrel is out for food donations to Neighbor-to-Neighbor.

Christmas Gifts for H.O.M.E. – All gifts need to be at church TODAY.

Advent Craft Fair 2-4 PM in the Auditorium. Bring the whole family.

FOR ALL CURRENT USHERS AND THOSE INTERESTED IN USHERING, there will be a meeting today at 11:20 AM in the Meetinghouse to discuss changes in the worship service and how they effect the ushers,. We will answer questions and discuss 2007 monthly assignments with all those interested. For more information, contact Paul Pacent at 637-5800.

Church School Worship in the Daniels Center before class for Kindergarten - 5th Grades. Pastors' class will not be in the Meetinghouse today. Sixth Grade will begin in the Meetinghouse. beginning at 10 AM. Child Care for infants and toddlers is available in the Undercroft

### **Flu Vaccine Clinic**

Flu shots will be available to people at least 18 years of age, for a fee of \$25, today from 11:15 AM to 12:00 PM (or until supplies last) in room 203. Please bring payment of cash or check (made out to FCCOG). Pregnant women, and young people under the age of 18 should see their private physicians. The Wellness Committee thanks you for your cooperation.

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### THIS WEEK

Children's Choir Wed Dec 6 5 - 6 PM in the Choir Room

Faith and the Workplace Dec 7 7-8 AM Church Lounge

## NEXT SUNDAY

Advent Service for Younger Children (three years old through second graders) and their parents in the Auditorium at 10:00 AM.

Don't miss "Sing for Your Supper" at 5 PM. Tickets are on sale today in Coffee Hour or call the Church Office during the week to RSVP.

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## NEXT WEEK

Thursday, December 14 Hats Off Luncheon 11:30 AM at Penny Lehman's.

December 15, Friday, Senior Pilgrim Fellowship Progressive Dinner. Call Anna Paskausky if you would like to take part. Begin in the Youth Room at 5:30.

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## NEWS AND NOTICES

### Christmas Tree Sale

The First Church Christmas Tree sale begins after church today. If you are interested in helping, please join us. See Betsy or Eric Kreuter for more information. All proceeds go to local charities.

MESSIAH 2006 December 16 & 17, 4 PM. No tickets needed. 100-voice chorus & professional orchestra; soloists Victoria Baker, Holly Sorensen, Terry Beaurline & Edward Pleasant. Come – or come and sing with us! Rehearsals: December 5, 6, 12 & 13 at 8 PM.

General Synod is coming to Hartford. Visitor registration is available at <http://www.ucc.org/synod/> effective December 1. We encourage you to register early as thousands will want to attend. Since this is the first time the Synod has ever convened in CT, this is a rare opportunity to experience the whole life of our denomination, especially in this 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year. And don't forget to volunteer by visiting <http://www.ctucc.org/synod2007/>!

Rummage Room Wish List Can you donate a men's bike, a treadmill, a wheelchair, a highchair, and a DVD player.

## Medicare Part D

Individual counseling sessions, including computer assistance, are available here at church. Call Sue Asselin, Parish Nurse, at extension 21 to make an appointment.