

Third Sunday of Advent

17 December 2006

11 o'clock in the morning



**Welcome** to this Service of Worship at First Congregational Church as we celebrate love's "Reaching 'Round the Earth." May the words and music of this hour of worship stir within your heart and soul the deep sense of joy and anticipation of this Advent Season. In the words of C.S. Lewis in his children's classic, The Last Battle,

"Yes,' said Queen Lucy,  
'In our world too a stable  
once had something inside  
it that was bigger than  
our whole world."

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**

*Mark Swicegood*

Symphony II: Salve Regina *Charles-Marie Widor*

### **CALL TO COMMUNITY**

*Rev. Susan M. Craig*

*Please sign and pass the red book.*

## **PRAISING GOD**

### **CALL TO WORSHIP**

**\*OPENING HYMN AND PROCESSION**

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing  
*to the tune MENDELSSOHN*

*Pilgrim Hymnal 120*

**LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH**

*Barbara and Pete Kneen*

**Opening Sentences**

**Scripture: Luke 2: 8-14**

**Prayer:** O God who gave us the miracle of song, open our ears to hear that sound in the air and our mouths to rejoice and sing. Help us to bring our lives in tune with your will so well that true harmony can reign on earth. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

**Lighting of the Third Advent Candle:**

We light the Third Advent Candle recalling the song of the angels of old. May our voices unite with theirs as we continue to sing your praise this day.

*During the lighting of the third candle on the Advent Wreath, The Palmer Handbells will play an arrangement by Hal Hopson of the famous "Canon" by Johann Pachelbel.*

**CONFESSING TO GOD**

**CALL TO CONFESSION**

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION (in unison)**

We are a people  
Of the road, O God,  
busy with the business of movement  
to important destinations, vaguely conceived.

We are a people  
of personal privacy, O God,  
guarding our spaces from intrusion  
by this tangled world, vividly pressing.

We are a people  
of inner hesitance, O God,  
Fearful of going too deeply  
into the life of discipleship, demandingly present.

Forgive us, O Lord  
of the lowly Advent,  
for our rushing, our hiding, our foreboding,  
for we would be open to that moment of wonder once again  
where both the simple and the proud draw near to Bethlehem.  
Amen.

## **WORDS OF ASSURANCE**

### **‡ CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE**

Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.

## **HEARING GOD'S WORD**

### **FIRST LESSON**

*Beth Beam*

Isaiah 52: 7-10

**H**ow beautiful upon the mountains  
are the feet of the messenger who announces peace,  
who brings good news,  
who announces salvation,

who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns.'  
Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices,  
together they sing for joy;  
for in plain sight they see  
the return of the LORD to Zion.  
Break forth together into singing,  
you ruins of Jerusalem;  
for the LORD has comforted his people,  
he has redeemed Jerusalem.  
The LORD has bared his holy arm  
before the eyes of all the nations;  
and all the ends of the earth shall see  
the salvation of our God.

## SCRIPTURE ANTHEM

*Youth Choir*

The Voice of God *Michael McCabe*

The voice of God goes out to all the world:  
His glory speaks across the universe.  
The great King's herald cries from start to star:  
With power, with justice, he will walk his way.

The Lord has said: "Receive my messenger,  
My promise to the world, my pledge made flesh,  
A lamp to every nation, light from light."  
With power, with justice, he will walk his way.

The broken reed he will not trample down,  
Nor set his heel upon the dying flame.  
He binds the wounds, and health is in his hands:  
With power, with justice, he will walk his way.

Anointed with the Spirit and with power,  
He comes to crown with comfort all the weak,  
To show the face of justice to the poor:  
With power, with justice, he will walk his way.

His touch will bless the eyes that darkness held.  
The lame shall run, the halting tongues shall sing,  
And prisoners laugh in light and liberty:  
With power, with justice, he will walk his way. *Peter  
Icarus*

## SECOND LESSON

Luke 1: 46-55

**A**nd Mary said,  
'My soul magnifies the Lord,  
for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant.  
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;  
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.  
His mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.  
He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.  
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,  
and lifted up the lowly;  
he has filled the hungry with good things,  
He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,  
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.'

### ‡\*HYMN

What Child Is This, Who, Laid to Rest     *Pilgrim Hymnal 131*  
*to the tune ES IST EIN' ROS'*

### SERMON

"A Song of Salvation"

*Dr. David D. Young*

### \*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (in unison)

I believe in Jesus Christ and in the beauty of the gospel that  
began in Bethlehem. I believe in Him whose spirit glorified  
a little town of whose coming only shepherds saw the sign  
and  
form whom the crowded inn could find no room. I believe in  
Him who proclaimed the love of God to be invincible,  
whose cradle was a mother's arms, whose home in Nazareth  
had love  
for its only wealth, who looked at people and made them see  
what his love saw in them, who by his love brought sinners

back to purity and lifted human weakness up to meet the strength of God. I acknowledge in Christ a faith in life redeemed, that looks beyond the present; and I pray that this redemption may begin in us. Amen.

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

Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo.

## **CALL TO PRAYER**

*Rev. Ronald E. Halvorsen*

## **PASTORAL PRAYER AND QUIET MEDITATION**

### **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.

## **RESPONDING TO GOD**

### **CALL TO OFFERING**

**OFFERTORY ANTHEM** *Chancel Choir, Carolyn Paulus, soprano*

Magnificat in G *Charles Villiers Stanford*

### **\*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**

*Anna L. Paskauskys*

**GOING FORTH TO SERVE GOD**

**\*CLOSING HYMN AND PROCESSION**

The First Nowell

*Pilgrim Hymnal 141*

*To the tune THE FIRST NOWELL*

**\*CLOSING SENTENCES**

*Leader: The earth has grown old  
with its burden of care.*

*People: But at Christmas  
it always is young.*

*Leader: The heart of the jewel  
burns lustrous and fair,  
And its soul full of music  
bursts forth on the air.*

*All: When the song  
Of the angels is sung.*

*Phillips Brooks – “Christmas Carol”*

**\*BENEDICTION**

**\*BENEDICTION RESPONSE**

**POSTLUDE**

*Mark Swicegood*

Magnificat *Marcel Dupré*

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***Ushers:*** Peter Schay, Judy Chapman, Shirley Flierl, Bob & Pat Mendelsohn, Gary & Judy Miller, Marilyn Olsson

***Greeters and Coffee Hour Hosts:*** Thalia Anderen, Chris Thompson, Larry Haviland, Erlinda Haviland

The live Christmas trees in the Meetinghouse are given by Peter Grunow in loving memory of his parents, Betty and John Grunow.

## *Calendar*

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### **TODAY**

**MESSIAH THIS AFTERNOON AT 4:00** – Don't miss this 40<sup>th</sup> annual performance. It's magic! Soloists Victoria Baker, Holly Sorensen, Terry Beaurline and Edward Pleasant join the large community chorus and professional orchestra under the direction

of John Stansell. No tickets are required. Arrive early for best seating. A \$ 20.00 per person contribution is requested. Shuttle bus service from the Civic Center parking lot on Harding Road.

**Sue Asselin, RN, is available in Room 103.** Stop in to have your blood pressure checked or discuss any health concerns

**Junior Pilgrim Fellowship (JPF - Middle School);** 5 - 6 PM  
Room 103 – Christmas Party!

**Senior Pilgrim Fellowship (SPF - High School)** 6:30 - 8 PM  
Room 103 Last SPF! until the New Year.

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### **THIS WEEK**

**Hats Off** is on vacation until January 11.

**Chancel Choir** rehearsal Thurs., Dec 21, 8:00 - 9:00 PM

### **Rehearsals for Christmas Eve Services**

Friday, Dec. 22, 3:30 PM for 10 AM Service

Saturday, Dec 23, 9:30 AM for 4:00 PM Service

Saturday, Dec. 23, 11:00 AM for Youth Choir

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## **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31**

**Regular Worship with Communion.** Childcare will be available. David Young is preaching, “Bethlehem and Back.”

## **SUNDAY, JANUARY 7**

**Regular Worship with Communion.** Childcare will be available. Susan Craig preaching, “What About Life?” church School will resume. Childcare available.

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## **NEWS AND NOTICES**

**CHURCH SCHOOL – CHRISTIAN OUTREACH CHRISTMAS DELIVERY!! MANY THANKS ARE DUE TO** Barbara Van Buren and Barry Richmond for playing Santa Claus and delivering our Christmas gifts to the H.O.M.E. Community in Orland, Maine last weekend. They saw a winter wonderland of snow – and were warmly welcomed as they made their delivery on our behalf. Talk to them at Coffee Hour or when you see them to hear more!

### **WHITE GIFTS**

Regardless of all other reports, White Gifts will be received during the 4PM Christmas Eve service at our time of offering. These gifts of toys or clothing wrapped in white should be labeled with the gender and age for which they are intended. Should you be unable to be with us for the 4PM service, gifts can be delivered to the Church Office at your convenience. White Gifts are delivered locally to those in need across the winter months. Toys are delivered to children in need.

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# Christmas Memorial Trees and Decorations

The Chancel Committee invites memorial contributions for decorations for our church this Christmas. Any amount is welcome. Please deliver the completed form with your check to the church office (payable to the First Church Flower Fund) on or before Monday, December 15. Thank you.

In Memory of

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By

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Enclosed is my check in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please print names legibly to minimize spelling errors.





*Christmas Eve Services 2006  
at First Church*

10 am Sunday Morning Worship

4 pm Family Service

5 pm Caroling in Binney Park

8 pm Communion and Carols

11 pm Candlelight Service

*A festival candlelight service of lessons and carols.*

*Pre-service music begins at 10:30*

