

# This Season of Gifts

## The Second Sunday of Advent

9 December 2007

10 o'clock in the morning



Welcome to this service of worship at First Congregational Church as we share together in **This Season of Gifts**. May the joy and love that you find here strengthen you in the Way that is Christ. In the words of Clement Wood, our movement is toward:

*“That golden whisper of a miracle folk dare to know and do not dare forget.”*

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**

*John Stansell, organ*

Three Settings of “Nun Komm, der Heiden Heiland”

*Johann Sebastian Bach*

“Come, Savior of the Nations” – These three masterful settings have always signified to me the Advent themes of ardent longing, busy preparation and confident faith. Listen for that, or simply hear your own message. JS

#### **CALL TO COMMUNITY**

*Rev. Daniel B. England*

*Please sign and pass the red book.*

### **PRAISING GOD**

#### **CALL TO WORSHIP**

#### **\*‡OPENING HYMN AND PROCESSION**

Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates

*Pilgrim Hymnal 114*

#### **LIGHTING OF THE SECOND ADVENT CANDLE**

*Dale and Sherry Myer*

#### **Opening Sentences**

**Scripture:** Zechariah 8: 20-23

**Prayer:** *(spoken by family)*

Lord of this Advent time and our companion on every journey, draw us in this special season of transformation and turning to that simple stable where once again we might experience the joy and peace of the Christ Child's presence in our lives. Amen.

**Lighting of the second Advent Candle:** *(spoken by family)*

We light the second Advent candle of Transformation, remembering all those who have gone before us in the Way of Christ, and dared to discover what is precious and lasting in the life we share both in time and eternity.

*During the lighting of the Advent Wreath, The Palmer Handbells will play "The Coventry Carol" arranged by Noel A. Piercy.*

## **CONFESSING TO GOD**

### **CALL TO CONFESSION**

#### **PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

O God, whose being has been most fully expressed  
in the creative act of giving,  
we confess that we are more comfortable  
with a style of holding on to things.  
We are too ready to avoid the risks of love  
by responding to a needy world with the  
carefully measured and the "reasonable".  
Forgive us at this Advent time  
for allowing our lives to drift into  
comfortable calculations,  
when we have been summoned by a Star  
for a journey to Bethlehem - -  
that we might receive your renewing  
and transforming gift of the Christ child,  
returning our sensitivities  
in response to what has met us there.  
In the light of that Star, we pray. Amen.

### **WORDS OF ASSURANCE**

## ‡Congregational Response

*Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.*

## SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Addison Grace Shaw, *son of Justin C. and Jennifer M. Shaw*  
Elizabeth Anne Unger, *daughter of John A. and Suni E. Unger*

## BAPTISMAL RESPONSE

*(verse 1 of Child of Blessing, Child of Promise)*

*Child of blessing, child of promise,  
baptized with the Spirit's sign;  
With this water God has sealed you  
unto love and grace divine.*

## HEARING GOD'S WORD

### FIRST LESSON

*Sarah Gordon*

Exodus 18: 13-23

The next day Moses sat as judge for the people, while the people stood around him from morning until evening. When Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, "What is this that you are doing for the people? Why do you sit alone, while all the people stand around you from morning until evening?" Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to inquire of God. When they have a dispute, they come to me and I decide between one person and another, and I make known to them the statutes and instructions of God." Moses' father-in-law said to him, "What you are doing is not good. You will surely wear yourself out, both you and these people with you. For the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone. Now listen to me. I will give you counsel, and God be with you! You should represent the people before God, and you should bring their cases before God; teach them the statutes and instructions and make known to them the way they are to go and the things they are to do. You should also look for able men among all the people, men who fear God, are trustworthy, and hate dishonest gain; set such men over them as officers over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. Let them sit as judges for the people at all times; let them bring every important case to

you, but decide every minor case themselves. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you. If you do this, and God so commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all these people will go to their home in peace.”

## ANTHEM

*The Chancel Choir*

### A Choral Hymn for Advent

*Henry G. Ley*

The Lord will come and not be slow, His footsteps cannot err;  
Before Him righteousness shall go, His royal harbinger.

Truth from the earth, like to a flower, shall bud and blossom then;  
and justice from her heavenly bower, look down on mortal men.

Rise, God, judge Thou the earth in might, this wicked earth redress;  
for Thou art He who shalt by right, the nations all possess.

The nations all whom Thou hast made, shall come and all shall frame  
To bow them low before Thee Lord, and glorify Thy Name.

For great Thou art, and wonders great by Thy strong hand are done;  
Thou in Thy everlasting seat remainest God alone. Amen. Amen.

## SECOND LESSON

Luke 17: 11-21

On the way to Jerusalem Jesus was going through the region between Samaria and Galilee. As he entered a village, ten lepers approached him. Keeping their distance, they called out, saying, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!” When he saw them, he said to them, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went, they were made clean. Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice. He prostrated himself at Jesus’ feet and thanked him. And he was a Samaritan. Then Jesus asked, “Were not ten made clean? But the other nine, where are they? Was none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?” Then he said to him, “Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well.”

Once Jesus was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming, and he answered, “The kingdom of God is not coming with things that can be observed; nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or ‘There it is!’ For, in fact, the kingdom of God is among you.”

\*‡HYMN

In the Bleak Midwinter

*Pilgrim Hymnal 128*

*As the hymn begins, the Sixth Grade and Pastor's Class leave for their classes.*

SERMON

***Your Time of Turning***  
(Transformation)

*Dr. David D. Young*

**RESPONDING TO GOD**

\*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

We affirm our faith in the little graces of life;  
the urgency of growth, the strength of laughter,  
the vitality of friendship.

We affirm our confidence in the dignity of all persons;  
their fortitude in despair, their strength in weakness,  
their love in hatred.

We affirm our joy in the experience of living;  
the fragrance of nostalgia, the scattered moments of delight,  
the exhilaration of danger.

We affirm our need for each other;  
the offerings of faith, the gifts of variety,  
the quality of difference.

We affirm our hunger for God;  
the desire for fulfillment, the ache for understanding,  
the sense of peace.

Christmas is our season of affirmation.

*(adapted from Howard Thurman)*

\*Advent Gloria

*(refrain from Angels We Have Heard on High)*

*Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo.*

CALL TO PASTORAL 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



## \*BENEDICTION

## \*BENEDICTION RESPONSE

### POSTLUDE

Fugue in B Major, Op. 7

*Marcel Dupré*

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The flowers in the Meetinghouse today have been given with grateful memories of their parents by Barbara and John Norrgard.

The 10 am Service is broadcast live each week on WGCH 1490 AM Radio. In addition, the service is available through the church's Web site, [www.fccog.org](http://www.fccog.org), where a bulletin can be found as well as a link to the live broadcast.

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### *Calendar*

#### TODAY

**Church School** - The lesson this week is taken from Isaiah 11:1-10 and our children will “dare to hope: to imagine that we are part of God's vision for a world filled with God's love” and peace. The classes are preparing for their own worship service either on December 16 or 23. Next Sunday is the special Advent service in the Auditorium for our 3 year olds through 2nd grade and their parents.

**The Pastor's Class** will be performing a new play, The Fourth Wiseman, on Sunday, December 23 in the morning service. In order to prepare, the class will be meeting at the regular times for rehearsal. For coordination of props, music, etc. players are asked to stay for an extra period of time, from 11:00 to 11:30 am on December 9 and 16. In addition, there will be a dress rehearsal on December 22 at 10:00 am. There is a way for everyone in the Pastor's Class to have a hand in this brief but delightful production. Class members are also reviewing scriptural passages that form the basis of the play's characters. The young people are excited about this effort and we invite as many as can attend to be here on December 23 to support them. For more information, contact Dan England.

Sue Asselin, RN is available today in room 203, after the Worship Service. Stop in to have your **blood pressure** checked or discuss any health concerns.

**JPF / Junior Pilgrim Fellowship (6-8 grade)** - NO JPF! Go to the all church Christmas Carol Party. Eat, sing and be merry!

**SPF / Senior Pilgrim Fellowship (9-12 grade)** - The all church Christmas Carol Party. Eat, sing and be merry!

Today is the **Church's Annual Christmas Carol Party**. Come help us celebrate in the Auditorium from 5:00-7:30 pm. This year's menu includes roast turkey and ham, along with a feast of side dishes brought by attendees. We will also have an assortment of seasonal beverages prepared with old family recipes – including cider, eggnog and punches. For entertainment, we'll be singing carols and enjoying songs from the Choir and other Church Groups. Tickets are only \$7 for adults, \$5 for seniors and \$3 for children.

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## THIS WEEK

Our 41<sup>st</sup> Annual *Messiah* performances (Part I & Hallelujah) are next weekend. Don't miss it! Greenwich Music Festival co-founder Ted Huffman has assembled a brilliant quartet of soloists: Lisa Hopkins, soprano, Amanda Crider, mezzo, Steven Paul Spears, tenor, and himself singing bass. No tickets are required for the performances that take place at 4 pm on Saturday and Sunday, December 15 & 16. We finish just before 5:30. The aisle candles are lit and the chancel window changes from multi-color to gold as the sun sets. Music and setting are magical. We only suggest a \$20.00 contribution to cover our expenses. See you there!

**JPF** - Wednesday, December 12: At 6:30 pm come and help out at the ARC Holiday Dinner Dance at the Knights of Columbus in Greenwich. (SIGN UP AHEAD OF TIME.)

**SPF** - Friday, December 14: Meet at 6:30 pm in the Youth Room for the SPF Annual Progressive Dinner.

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## NEXT SUNDAY

**JPF** - Meet at 9:30 am in the Youth Room to help hand out Holiday Treats to the congregation. After church we go to "Sing With Santa" at local nursing homes. At 5 pm meet again in the Youth Room for the Annual JPF Christmas Party.

**SPF** - Meet at 9:30 am in the Youth Room to help hand out Holiday Treats to the congregation. After church we go to "Sing With Santa" at local nursing homes.

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## NEWS AND NOTICES

### Calling all Greeters!

The Membership Committee is forming a group to welcome people to our worship services on Sunday mornings. The commitment would be about two to three Sundays per year. If you are interested in being a part of this group of greeters, please contact Ginny Breismeister at 637-1791, extension 26 or Bob Mendelsohn at 637-5773.

## Share your name

You may have noticed that we have been inviting you to make a name tag as you enter the Meetinghouse each Sunday. As a welcoming, vital, and caring church, we want to get to know each other better. Please wear your name tag when you are in church and at coffee hour so we can greet each other by name.

**Nights Off!** - will meet on Monday, December 17 at 6 pm for our traditional Christmas party with food, fun and conversation. All church women are invited to join this evening fellowship group. For further information, please contact Karen Young at 637-7877.

## Sunday Afternoons Live 2008

4 pm candlelight concerts in the Auditorium  
Tea, cocoa and cookies from 3:30 pm

January 6	Pianist <b>Andrew Armstrong</b>
January 13	Richard " <b>Cookie</b> " <b>Thomas</b> , singing from the Great American Song Book
January 20	No performance
January 27	<b>Percussia</b> , music for percussion and harp
February 3	<b>Broken Reed Saxophone Quartet</b> Vivaldi's "Four Seasons" jazzed up
February 10	Vocal ensemble <b>Musica Plenti</b> in a program of opera favorites
February 17	Violinist <b>Sarah Geller</b>
February 24	Baritone <b>Thomas Woodman</b>

A new adult **Bible Study** with Dan England will commence on Tuesday, January 8. It will run for only 5 weeks from 7:30-8:45 pm. Because of the limited time, we will concentrate on the New Testament. Topics will include:

- How did the Bible come about? What's happened to it in Western history? What about all the different translations?
- The gospels: how they were formed, when they were written and for whom.
- Acts and the history of the early church.
- Paul's letters: to whom and why?
- The rest of the New Testament - a basic guide.

This course, called Bible 101, could be called, Everything you wanted to know about the Bible but were afraid to ask. It is designed for people who don't even pretend to know a lot about the Bible, but need a bit of orientation so that it makes more sense. If you would like to join us simply send an e-mail to [dengland@fccog.org](mailto:dengland@fccog.org) or call Dan England at 203-637-1540, extension 25 so that we can plan ahead for the room set up. Include a question that you would like to be answered if you wish to.

**Flu Vaccines**

Vaccines are available by appointment to people 18 years of age or older. Contact Sue Asselin, Parish Nurse at extension 21. The cost is \$25, payable by cash or check (made out to FCCOG). We are unable to bill insurances. Individuals under 18 should see their primary physician for the vaccine. The Wellness Committee thanks you for your cooperation.

**Medicare Part D Individual Counseling Sessions**

Appointments are available to discuss Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage options. Sessions include navigating the Medicare website using an individual's specific medication information. Call Sue Asselin, Parish Nurse, at extension 21 to arrange an appointment.

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# Christmas Memorial Trees and Decorations

The Chancel Committee invites memorial contributions for decorations for the Meetinghouse 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 17. 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.

## Worship Schedule

### This Season of Gifts

- December 2, 10 am: *This Wistful Waiting*  
December 9, 10 am: *Your Time of Turning*  
December 16, 10 am: *A Moment in Time*  
December 23, 10 am: *Of Star and Moon Shine*  
December 24, 10 am: *Children's Service*  
4 pm: *Once in Royal David's City*  
5 pm: *Carol Sing in Binney Park*  
8 pm: *Communion Meditation*  
11 pm: *The Incognito Arrival*

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### *First Congregational Church of Greenwich*

108 Sound Beach Avenue, Old Greenwich, Connecticut, 06870  
203-637-1791  
[www.fccog.org](http://www.fccog.org)

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Ministers: The Members of The First Congregational Church of Greenwich  
Senior Pastor: David D. Young  
Interim Associate Pastor: Daniel B. England  
Minister of Pastoral Care: Ronald E. Halvorsen  
Director of Music/Senior Organist: John Stansell  
Associate Organist/Director: Terence J. Flanagan  
Directors of Youth Ministries: Steve and Debbie Crawford  
Director of Church School: Rosemary Lamie  
Director of Membership: Ginny Breismeister  
Parish Nurse: Susan Asselin  
Pastors Emeriti: Thomas L. Stiers and Sally Colegrove