

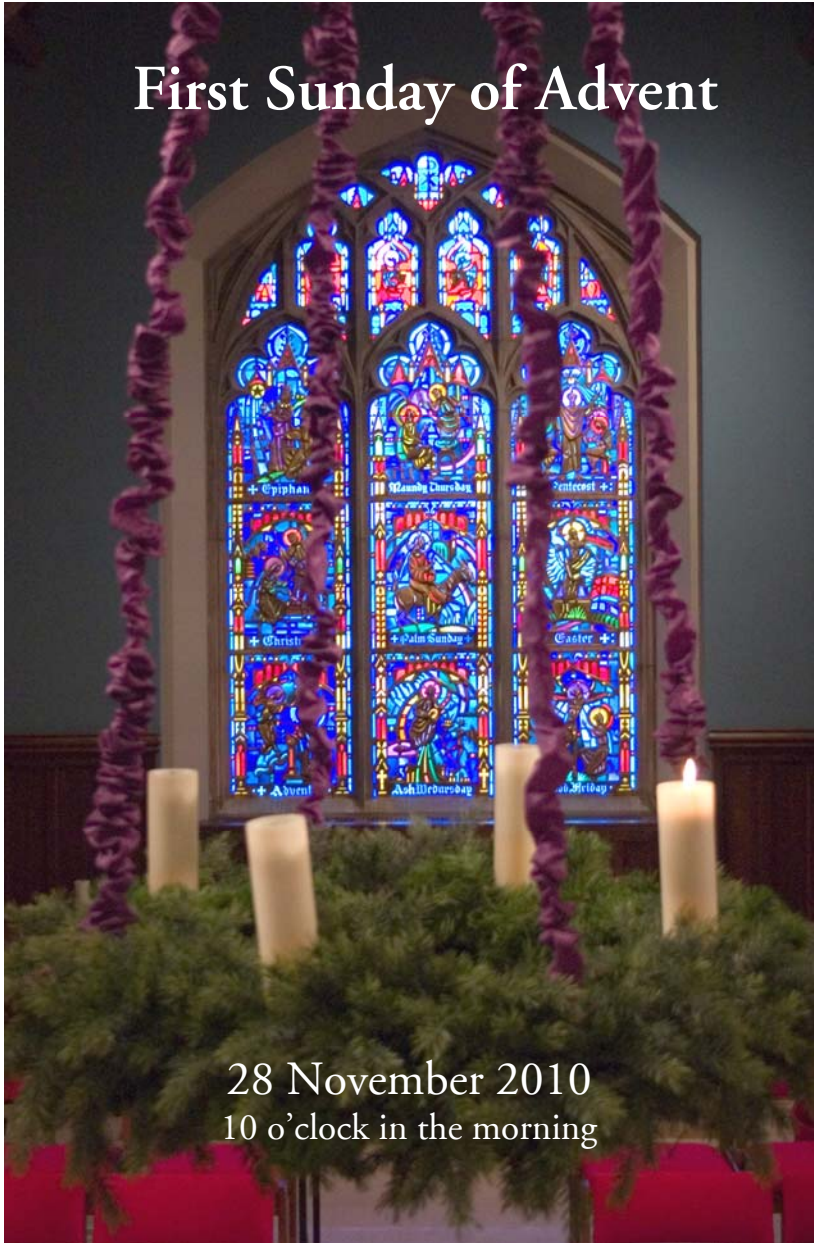
*Old Greenwich,
Connecticut*

THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH OF GREENWICH

*United Church
of Christ*

Founded in 1665

First Sunday of Advent



28 November 2010
10 o'clock in the morning

Welcome to this Service of Worship at The First Congregational Church as we begin the Advent season. In our reflection together, we are gathering in worship to “Celebrate the Gift.” As we move through this joyous time, may you know many gifts including hope, joy, love and peace. Waiting is often a precursor to receiving gifts and is our focus this morning. In the words of Christopher Blumhardt,

“The one who does not in all things expect God soon is not waiting.”

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

*All who are able please stand

‡Seating of latecomers

PRELUDE
Savior of the Nations, Come

*Dr. Craig Scott Symons, organ
J. S. Bach*

CALL TO COMMUNITY
Please sign and pass the red book.

Rev. Mark D. Montgomery

PRAISING GOD

CALL TO WORSHIP

*‡OPENING HYMN AND PROCESSION

Comfort, Comfort O My People

New Century (black) Hymnal 101

LIGHTING OF THE FIRST ADVENT CANDLE

Todd, Kelly, Madeleine and Tyler Phillips

Opening Sentences

Scripture: Isaiah 11: 1-3a

Prayer: (*In Unison*)

O God of all our waiting and expectation,
be present on our Advent journey that with
gentle hearts and generous affections we might
receive again your promised gift of newness in the birth of
the Christ Child to all generations. Amen.

Lighting of the first Advent Candle:

We light the first Advent Candle giving thanks for our rich
heritage of faith and remembering those who waited long ago for
the gift of a Savior and did not lose heart because they knew in
the deep-down places that God's promises are sure and true.

CONFESSING TO GOD

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (*In Unison*)

We confess, Surprising God, that our sense of anticipation has been
dulled. We have ceased to expect any wonders from your hand.
We do not see the marvels around us in the people and happenings
we view as commonplace.

We are not alert to your presence of your action on our behalf.
Wake us up, God, lest sleep be our death.

Pardon and redeems us, that we may escape the judgment we are
bringing on ourselves.

Send your light that it may shine through us into a needy world,
in the way of Jesus the Christ who taught us to pray,

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.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

‡**Congregational Response** (*Tune: Sussex Carol*)

*Then why should we on earth be sad,
since our Redeemer made us glad;
Then why should we on earth be sad,
since our Redeemer made us glad,
When from our sin Christ set us free,
all for to gain our liberty.*

As the song begins, the Church School children and teachers will leave for their classrooms. Children in second grade and older will leave independently. Children in kindergarten and first grade will meet their teachers at the back of the Meetinghouse (narthex) and will go to their classrooms as a group. It is not necessary for parents to accompany their children to the classroom because there are many Hall Helpers to guide anyone who needs help.

HEARING GOD'S WORD

FIRST LESSON

Stu McCalley

Isaiah 2: 1-5

The word that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. In days to come the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills; all the nations shall stream to it. Many peoples shall come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord!

SCRIPTURE ANTHEM

Come Quickly, Lord Jesus

*The Chancel Choir
Mark Schweizer*

SECOND LESSON

Matthew 24: 36-44

Stu McCalley

“**B**ut about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so too will be the coming of the Son of Man. Then two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken and one will be left. Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.

Romans 13: 11-14

Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

*‡HYMN

Thou Didst Leave Thy Throne

Pilgrim (red) Hymnal 326

SERMON

The Wonder of Waiting

Dr. David D. Young

(First in an Advent Sermon Series: “Celebrate the Gift”)

RESPONDING TO GOD

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

We believe in God, the Creator Spirit, who moved upon the face of the deep at the beginning of creation, who created all that is, and who spoke through the prophets of old.

We believe in Jesus Christ, into whom God's Spirit was poured in fullness and power, that the whole creation might be restored and unified; and who promised that the Spirit would come and fill the faithful with power to witness to the mighty love of God. We wait on that Spirit today with longing hearts, seeking to be empowered to witness to God's love in Christ, with fresh words and courageous actions of love and hope.

Glory be to God – Creator, Christ and Holy Spirit – now and always. Amen.

*Advent Gloria *(refrain from Angels We Have Heard on High)*
Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo.

CALL TO PASTORAL PRAYER

Rev. Avery C. Manchester

PASTORAL PRAYER AND QUIET MEDITATION

CALL TO OFFERING

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

A Choral Hymn for Advent

The Chancel Choir
Henry Ley

*Advent Response

(verse 3 of As With Gladness Men of Old)
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**

GOING FORTH TO SERVE GOD

***CLOSING HYMN AND PROCESSION**

O Come, O come, Emmanuel

Pilgrim (red) Hymnal 110

***CLOSING SENTENCES**

*Minister: A stable lamp is lighted
whose glow shall wake the sky;*

*Community: The stars shall bend their voices,
and every stone shall cry.*

*Minister: And every stone shall cry,
And straw like gold shall shine;*

*Community: A barn shall harbor heaven,
A stall become a shrine.*

Richard Wilbur, "A Christmas Hymn"

***BENEDICTION**

***CLOSING CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE**

Thou Didst Leave Thy Throne

Thou didst leave thy throne and thy kingly crown
When thou camest to earth for me,
But in Bethlehem's home there was found no room
For Thy Holy nativity.
O come to my heart, Lord Jesus;
There is room in my heart for Thee!

POSTLUDE

Fanfare

Kenneth Leighton

The flowers in the Meetinghouse this morning have been given in loving memory of William and Isabelle Webster by their children.

The 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.

We have **child care for babies and toddlers** every Sunday. Your children are always welcome for the entire service or for a respite time if needed. Please see an usher if you need directions.

The 10:00 am Service is broadcast live each week on WGCH 1490 AM Radio. In addition, the service is available through the church's website, www.fccog.org. A bulletin can be found there as well as a link to the live broadcast. Previous sermons may also be found there.

Giving Opportunities for the Season

Sharing Christmas Blessings – Giving Tree

If you haven't already, please be sure to pick up your gift tags for gifts to give to our friends at Pilgrim Towers and H.O.M.E. Co-op in Maine. Deadline for wrapping and delivering your gift(s) back to the church is Sunday, December 12.

Mitten Tree

Throughout Advent the Mitten Tree is available in the Auditorium to accept gifts of mittens, hats, gloves and socks that will be delivered to St Luke's Lifeworks to help warm the hands and hearts of those St. Luke's serves.

White Gifts

White Gifts are offerings of new clothing, toys, books or other useful items wrapped in white paper that are offered during our 10 am and 4 pm services on Christmas Eve. The white paper gives the illusion

of snow under the trees in the Meetinghouse. The gifts will be sent to Covenant to Care for Children, which provides advocacy, mentoring, and direct assistance to children and youth who are neglected, abused or at risk. Warm clothes, coats, educational toys, family board games, and gift cards (for Target or Walmart for teens) are particularly appreciated. Ribbon and bows are not necessary but **please attach a tag listing the contents including age, gender & size.** (Hint: If you find yourself without white paper, some patterned papers reverse to white, or use white tissue paper.)

Christmas Tree Sale

One of the ways that we increase the amount we are able to share through the Outreach Budget of FCCOG is through our Annual Christmas Tree Sale! The trees (and wreaths, garlands and kissing balls) arrived yesterday and we began selling as soon as the truck was unloaded. Here's where you come in....**BUY TREES AND OTHER ITEMS FROM US!!** Also, we need tons of volunteers to pull off this effort. If you are able to help out, please contact the Church Office.

Calendar

TODAY

Church School

There are no church school classes today, however there will be a Big Event where we will consider the meaning of Advent and the wonder of waiting! Next Sunday, we will resume our regular Church School schedule.

Annual Advent "Make Your Own" Craft Workshop

Today from 2 to 4 pm in the Daniels Center

The Annual Advent "Make Your Own" Craft Workshop is hosted by the Church School Task Force. Join us this afternoon. There will be several new crafts in addition to the long time favorites - photo ornament and pet gifts. A great time will be had by all!

Parish Nurse

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

Flu Vaccine Clinic 11:00-11:45 am in Room 203

The Wellness Committee will be offering season flu vaccines (this year's formula includes H1N1). Vaccines will be administered on a first-come, first-served basis to people 18 years of age or older who bring payment of \$30 cash or check (made out to FCCOG). We are unable to bill insurances, but will happily provide a receipt. Individuals under 18 should see their primary physician for the vaccine.

Youth Ministry

There are no Y! programs today.

Youth Choir

Youth Choir will rehearse today from 11:15 am – 12:15 pm in the Choir Room.

NEWS AND NOTICES

Messiah is coming!

Rehearsals for our annual performance of Messiah under the direction of Director of Music, Dr. Craig Scott Symons, start on Tuesday, December 7 and continue on Wednesday, December 8, Tuesday, December 14, and Wednesday, December 15 in the Meetinghouse from 8:00-10:00 pm. Singers should be prepared to attend all rehearsals and performances. Performances will be Saturday and Sunday, December 18 and 19 at 4 pm. Invite your family, friend, and neighbors to join us in this exciting choral opportunity!

Environmental Mission Team Catalog Project

The Environmental Mission Team would like to help you stop delivery of all of those unwanted catalogs which use so much paper and clog your mailbox. Just tear off the back page of those unwanted catalogs and leave them in the Church office in the envelope marked "Environmental Mission Team Catalog Project." A member of the team will either call the catalog publisher or fax them a request to stop delivery of the unwanted catalog. If you prefer, you may request the cancellation yourself. It usually takes a month or two for the publishers to remove a name from their mailing list, but it's a good move toward saving natural resources. Thanks for being a part of this endeavor!

Senior Transportation – Call-A-Ride

If you are over sixty and need a ride to doctors' appointments, the pharmacy, grocery stores, physical therapists, the library, the Senior Center or even to visit with friends, Call-A-Ride is ready to give you a free ride within Greenwich between the hours of 9:00am and 3:30pm. Our volunteer drivers are most happy to accommodate you. Just call our office to make an appointment. The First Congregational Church is one of the founding sponsors of this program and continues to participate through its Outreach program. Call-A-Ride: 203-661-6633

Tai Chi Classes with Luis Duarte

All are welcome! Improve your balance, health and well-being. Come and experience the many wonderful benefits of Tai Chi and Qi Gong. Classes are held on Wednesdays at 8 am and Thursdays at 9 am. Only \$7/class if paid by the month and \$8/class for "drop ins." Join us! You'll love it!

Book Discussion Group

Hats Off!, the popular women's book discussion group, will be reading *The Autobiography of Eleanor Roosevelt* starting after Christmas. The group meets every Thursday from 9:45 to 11:30 am in the church lounge. All are welcome. For details, call Marcia Livingston at 203-625-0772.

Rummage Room News

The Christmas Shop opened November 22 to the delight of our shoppers. You will want to visit again and again as we receive new decorations and gifts daily thanks to our many donors. If you are looking for something in particular, you can register your request on "Santa's Wish List" by stopping by or calling The Rummage Room at 203-637-1875 and asking for Maria. The Shop is open Monday through Friday from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm and on Saturday from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm. Donations are accepted Monday through Saturday beginning at 9:30 am. Please note that your donations are needed now for holiday shopping. The last day to bring donations is December 4.

First Light: We invite you to help celebrate “First Light” on December 4 from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm when all of the shops in Old Greenwich, including the Rummage Room, will be open for your holiday shopping convenience. Cookies and cider will be served in the Rummage Room's Christmas Shop so bring the family and browse for holiday treasures.

Wish List for December: Christmas decorations; new items for Christmas giving; children's and adult clothing in clean, useable condition; bric-a-brac; JEWELRY; shoes; handbags; small furniture, a wooden cane, and a German Ceramic Christmas tree.

Rummage Room Mission: The Rummage Room proceeds go to Women's and Children's Organizations who need your help during this holiday season. As you are getting ready for the holidays, think of the needs of those families who are struggling and make The Rummage Room your destination for shopping and donating. Arnold Glasgow tells us “to make our lives a mission, not an intermission.” We thank all of you who shop, donate and volunteer, for without you The Rummage Room has no purpose. Enjoy the holiday season!



Christmas Memorial/Honor Flowers and Decorations

The Chancel Committee invites 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 Congregational Church Flower Fund) on or before Sunday, December 12. Thank you.

In Memory/Honor of

By

Enclosed is my check in the amount of \$_____

Please print names legibly to minimize spelling errors.



Celebrate Advent and Christmas at FCCOG

The Services of Advent

Sunday Worship at 10:00 am
November 28,
December 5, 12 and 19

Christmas Eve Services

10:00 am – Lessons and Carols
4:00 pm - Family Service:
Once in Royal David's City
5:00 pm – Carol Sing
at the Stable
8:00 pm - Carols and
Communion
11:00 pm - Candlelight Service

Part I of Handel's Messiah and Hallelujah Chorus

Our annual candlelight
performances of this masterpiece
will be held in the Meetinghouse
December 18 and 19 at 4:00 pm.

This year we will have two
FCCOG family members as
soloists: Carolyn Paulus and her
brother-in-law, Tom Woodman.

Two new faces will grace the
stage this year: mezzo soprano
Erika Hennings and tenor Neal
Harrelson-Keyes.

Christmas Dinner and Carol Sing

Get your tickets early for this favorite Christmas event!
Join us for a night of food, fellowship and a rousing
Christmas Carol sing-along.
Sunday, December 12 at 6:00



The First Congregational Church of Greenwich

108 Sound Beach Avenue, Old Greenwich, Connecticut, 06870

203-637-1791

www.fccog.org

Ministers: The Members of The First Congregational Church of Greenwich

Senior Pastor: Rev. Dr. David D. Young

Associate Pastor for Youth Ministry: Rev. Mark D. Montgomery

Associate Pastor for Christian Education: Rev. Susan Murtha

Minister of Communication and Adult Education: Rev. Daniel B. England

Minister of Pastoral Care: Rev. Avery C. Manchester

Director of Music: Dr. Craig Scott Symons

Director of Church School: Rosemary Lamie

Director of Membership: Ginny Breismeister

Director of Publications: Barbara Wilkov

Parish Nurse: Susan Asselin, RN

Pastors Emeriti: Rev. Dr. Thomas L. Stiers and Rev. Sally Colegrove

Director of Music Emeritus: Dr. John Stansell