

Family Service with Pageant “Once in Royal David’s City”

Christmas Eve

24 December 2010

4 o’clock in the afternoon

Welcome to this special Service of Worship at The First Congregational Church on this most holy of days. May the mystery and magnitude of these moments shared together renew your heart with the light and love which came into the world in the Christ Child. A blessed and Merry Christmas to you and our entire church family!

*All who are able please stand

PRELUDE

Nowell to a Ground

Cradle Song

Aubade for the Christ Child

Prelude on “Resonet in Laudibus”

Dr. Craig Scott Symons, organ

Colin Hand

Richard Shephard

Stanley Vann

Colin Mawby

CALL TO COMMUNITY

Dr. David D. Young

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Leader: Tonight old dreams die and new dreams come to life.

The Promise is fulfilled!

People: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace.

Leader: Hope gives way to joy and prayer to proclamation.

People: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace.

Leader: Our candles illuminate our story. Dawn invades midnight.

The Light of the World has come.

People: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace.

Leader: And this light is a light for all: igniting a flame within the soul, warming us from within, radiating love, lighting our lives with the presence of God come alive in human flesh within us and among us now and always.

People: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, and good will to all.

ANTHEM
On Christmas Night

The Children's Choir
Arr. Jody Lindh

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CHILD CANDLE

Inge, Jahn, Peter, George, and Olivia Thalheim

Opening Sentences

Scripture: Matthew 2:10-11

Prayer:

O God, touch us with a special sense of your presence and joy on this holy night, even such as was felt by those in the inn so long ago. And in so doing, open our hearts to receive the Christ Child. Amen.

Lighting of the Christ Child Candle:

We light this candle in remembrance of the Christ Child and the first Christmas. Ever since that night His presence has been felt, for truly Christ is our light in the world!

*OPENING CAROL

O Come, All Ye Faithful

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold him, born the King of angels;
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest;

O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

“THE HOPES AND FEARS OF ALL THE YEARS”

An original play by Rev. Dan England

Narrator: Rosemary Lamie

Grandfather: Avery Manchester

Father: Dan England

Mother: Susan Murtha

Teen: Natasha Sibirzeff

Child: Julia Quinn

Neighbor: David Young

CAROL

O Little Town of Bethlehem

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

THE CHRISTMAS STORY – PART 1

Rev. Susan J. Murtha

Luke 2:1-7

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

ANTHEM

Never a Child as He

The Children's Choir
Arr. David Brunner

Luke 2:8-16

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!” When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

NATIVITY PAGEANT

Once in Royal David’s City

Henry John Gauntlett

The congregation is invited to join the choir in singing verse six of

Once in Royal David’s City:

Not in that poor lowly stable,
 With the oxen standing by,
 We shall see him; but in heaven,
 Set at God’s right hand on high;
 Where like stars his children crowned
 All in white shall wait around.

CALL TO OFFERING

OFFERING OUR GIFTS TO THE CHRIST CHILD

We are a church of faith in action. This afternoon, all offerings not otherwise earmarked, will be given to those in great need. Half will be given to the ongoing work of rebuilding Haiti, reuniting its families, and restoring its devastation. Half will be given as direct care to the homeless and hungry of Stamford. In addition, if you have brought

*White Gifts, they will be given to Covenant to Care for children at risk.
Your Mitten Tree items will go to St. Luke's LifeWorks for homeless
children and families.*

CHRISTMAS CAROLS

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With the angelic host proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"

Christ, by highest heaven adored;
Christ, the everlasting Lord!
Late in time behold him come,
Offspring of the Virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
Hail the incarnate Deity,
Pleased as man with men to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel.
Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"

Hail the heaven-born Prince of peace!
Hail the Sun of righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
Risen with healing in his wings,
Mild he lays his glory by,
Born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth.
Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"

Away in a Manger

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the sky looked down where he lay,
The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.
The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky,
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

What Child is This?

What child is this, who laid to rest,
On Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,
While shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the King,
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
Haste, haste to bring him laud,
The babe, the son of Mary.

Why lies he in such mean estate
Where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear: For sinners here
The silent Word is pleading.
This, this is Christ the King,
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
Haste, haste to bring him laud,
The babe, the son of Mary.

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh,
Come peasant, king, to own him;
The king of kings salvation brings,
Let loving hearts enthrone him.
This, this is Christ the King,
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
Haste, haste to bring him laud,
The babe, the son of Mary.

Angels We Have Heard on High

Angels we have heard on high
Sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply
Echo back their joyous strains.
Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
Say what may the tidings be,
Which inspire your heavenly song.
Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Come to Bethlehem and see Him
whose birth the angels sing;
Come adore on bended knee,
Christ, the Lord, the newborn King.
Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Silent Night, Holy Night

Silent night, holy night,
All is calm, all is bright
Round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night,
Shepherds quake at the sight,
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heavenly hosts sing alleluia;
Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!

Silent night, holy night,
Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from thy holy face,
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

A PRAYER FOR CHRISTMAS

Rev. Avery C. Manchester

LORD'S PRAYER (*using debts*)

*CAROL

Joy to the World! The Lord Is Come

Joy to the world! The Lord is come:
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare him room,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness,
And wonders of his love,
And wonders of his love,
And wonders, wonders of his love.

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

In dulci jubilo

Johann Sebastian Bach

Please join us for our Community Carol Sing around the tree at 5:00 pm, following which we will visit the Crèche and sip hot cocoa. Additional services this evening are: Communion and Carols at 8:00 pm and our Candlelight Service at 11:00 pm with special music beginning at 10:30 pm.

The Church Offices will be closed Monday, December 27 and Friday, December 31 for the Christmas and New Year Holidays.

Merry Christmas and a healthy and happy New Year to all from the staff of The First Congregational Church of Greenwich.

The First Congregational Church of Greenwich

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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 J. 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