

*Old Greenwich,
Connecticut*

**THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH OF GREENWICH**

*United Church
of Christ*

Founded in 1665

The Third Sunday of Advent

11 December 2011

10 o'clock in the morning



Advent Wreath Art Credit: Ted Mallory 2009

We welcome you to our church and this service of worship during Advent. We hope you will feel at home here very quickly and if there is anything we can help you with you will let us know. There is a Coffee Hour after the service and we would love to be able to greet you personally there. Any of the ushers can help you with questions about children. When you have a moment, please visit our website at www.fccog.org for all of the activities that are taking place during the Christmas season. We're glad you're here.

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

Please silence all cell phones and other electronic devices.

*All who are able please stand

‡Seating of latecomers

PRELUDE

Aubade to the Christ Child

Prelude on *Resonet in Laudibus*

Dr. Craig Scott Symons, organist

Stanley Vann

Colin Mawby

CALL TO COMMUNITY

Please sign and pass the red book.

Dr. David D. Young

MOMENT OF OPPORTUNITY

Linnea Stenberg

PRAISING GOD

CALL TO WORSHIP

***‡OPENING HYMN AND PROCESSION**

Mary, Woman of the Promise New Century (black) Hymnal 123

LIGHTING OF THE THIRD ADVENT CANDLE

Members of the Senior Pilgrim Fellowship

Opening Sentences

Scripture

Prayer

Lighting of the Second Advent Candle

MUSIC DURING LIGHTING OF CANDLE
Coventry Carol

The Palmer Handbells
Arr. Hal Hopson

CONFESSING TO GOD

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Leader: My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

People: We have been lifted up and blessed. May we find forgiveness for the times we do not offer blessings to others.

Leader: 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.

People: May we know pardon for the times we have not offered reverence to God, for the times we have missed that we are in the midst of holiness.

Leader: 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, and sent the rich away empty.

People: May we give from a place of gratitude, rather than from a place of obligation. May we live humbly and hopefully.

Leader: 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 forever.

People: May the covenant we share with God and with one another bind us together, relieving our need to be right, to be the best, and, instead, call us into the community God would have us be.

*All: As a community, as a blessed people, as imperfect creations,
as many voices raised together in community,
let us pray together...*

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*)

New Century (black) Hymnal 143

*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.*

HEARING GOD'S WORD

FIRST LESSON

Al Primo

Isaiah 61:1-4

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion—to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory.

They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.

SCRIPTURE ANTHEM

The Children's Choir
Vance Briceland, accompanist
There's a Baby Being Born in Bethlehem John Horman

SECOND LESSON

Isaiah 61:8-11

For I the Lord love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed.

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

*‡ HYMN

My Soul Gives Glory to My God

New Century (black) Hymnal 119

(During the hymn, 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.)

SERMON: "Garlands of Grace"

Rev. Mark D. Montgomery

RESPONDING TO GOD

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

We belong to God,
creator of all that is and all that is to come,
abundant provider of the gifts in this life
and the gifts in our own hearts.
It is God alone who gives life,
who is generous beyond measure with grace and blessing.

We follow Christ, whom God sent to teach and heal,
to show us a new way of living,
with love and trust and courage, with joy and generosity.
In this faith Jesus gave of himself, even his very life.
He was crucified and buried;
yet God raised him from death,
and he lives among us, and grants his spirit to us.

We live by that Holy Spirit,
and entrust ourselves to its guidance and empowerment.
As members of the church, the Body of Christ,
we devote ourselves to lives of love,
rejoicing in the power of forgiveness,
the reality of resurrection,
and the mystery of eternal life. Amen.

*Advent Response New Century (black) Hymnal 122 (*verse 3*)

*Born all people to deliver,
born a child, you came to reign!
Born to rule on earth forever,
come, be known to us again.*

CALL TO PASTORAL PRAYER

Rev. Daniel B. England

PASTORAL PRAYER AND QUIET MEDITATION

CALL TO OFFERING

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

Bogoroditse Devo
(Sung in Church Slavonic)

The Chancel Choir
Sergei Rachmaninov

*Bogoroditse Devo, raduysia,
Blagodatnaya Mariye,
Ghospod s'Toboyu.
Blagoslovenna Ti v'zhenah, i blagosloven
Plod chreva Tvoyego,
yako Spasa rodila, yesi dush nashih.*

*Rejoice, O Virgin Mother Of God,
Mary full of grace, the Lord is with You.
Blessed are You among women,
and blessed is the Fruit of Your womb,
for You have borne the Savior of our souls.*

***Offertory Response** New Century (black) Hymnal 159 (*verse 3*)

*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**

Now Bless the God of Israel New Century (black) Hymnal 110

***CLOSING SENTENCES**

Leader: We go from this place to live...

People: To live as Christ has taught us:

*Leader: Helping those in need, living as faithful people,
seeking justice, fostering peace,
offering hope, giving of ourselves.*

*People: We go clothed in garlands of grace
to live as Christ has taught us, knowing that we go
in the grace of God.*

*BENEDICTION

*BENEDICTION RESPONSE

POSTLUDE

On Christmas Night

Noel Rawsthorne



Music Notes:

Our offertory anthem is taken from the magnificent work *All Night Vigil* by Russian composer Sergei Rachmaninov (1873-1943).

Written and premiered in 1915, this 60-minute work contains some of the most beautiful music from the Russian repertoire. The fourth movement is written in honor of the Virgin Mary, and uses the text from *Ave Maria*, commonly recited as part of the rosary.

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

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

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

Our annual Christmas Tree Sale is one of the ways that we increase the amount we are able to share through the Outreach Budget of FCCOG. Be sure to stop by this weekend or next (if there are still trees left by then!) to **BUY TREES AND OTHER ITEMS FROM US!!** Also, there are still shifts available if you're available to volunteer to help at the sale. Just contact the Church Office or email Clem Lepoutre (clem@lepoutre.us) or Mark Montgomery (mmontgomery@fccog.org).

Calendar

TODAY

Church School

Today most of our children will hear about the angel who told Mary that she was going to be the mother of the baby, Jesus. The 3rd Graders will learn about the Old Testament prophecies of the coming of The Messiah. The 6th Graders will learn about *The Magnificat* which is the scripture reading today. Next Sunday is the day of our 5th graders' Christmas trip to Pilgrim Towers. We will bring our congregation's gifts to them, will have lunch and a sing-along, too! Next Sunday is also the last Church School session until January 8.

Youth and Cherub Choir Rehearsals

Youth Choir will rehearse today from 11:15 am to 12:15 pm in the Choir Room. Cherub Choir will rehearse from 11:15 to 11:45 am in Room 104.

linc

Join us today at 5:00 pm in the Auditorium for our linc worship service. Come in your jeans and t-shirt and experience something completely new. During the service, we will take a look at another Angelic encounter, this time from the Book of Judges, chapter 13. Don't recall which story is in this chapter? Open up to Judges and take a look! Mark Montgomery will be the service leader.

Christmas Carol Sing and Dinner

The annual Christmas Carol Sing and Dinner is *today* at 6:00 pm. The Parish Life Committee will provide everything for an elegant dinner EXCEPT for the side dishes you are asked to bring to share with 8-10 people. Even if you have not signed up, you are still welcome to come. Also, since this event will follow the linc service, you may want to come to that first and "warm-up" for the dinner and carol sing!

Y! - Youth Ministry

There are no Youth Ministry Programs this evening.

THIS WEEK

Nights Off Christmas Celebration

Join us for the Nights Off Christmas get-together tomorrow *Monday, December 12* at 6:30 pm at the home of Kathy Riley. Nights Off is a program of the Women's Fellowship to which all women of the church are invited. The evening will be a time for friendship, holiday cheer and celebration; an evening to relax with friends. Bring a favorite hors d'oeuvre and beverage of your choice. Feel free to also bring along a friend to join us and a recycled/regifted gift for a "Chinese Auction." For more information and/or directions, please contact Shirley Flierl at 203-629-4939 or fbtworld@aol.com.

45th Annual *Messiah* Performances

Our annual candlelight performances of this masterpiece will be held in the Meetinghouse *December 17 and 18 at 4:00 pm*. This year the soloists will be: Bonnie Pepper, soprano; Christopher Pfund, tenor; Wanda Brister, mezzo soprano; and Mark Kaczmarczyk, bass. Admission is free to both performances but we encourage a \$20/person donation to help underwrite the costs associated with this lovely afternoon of a timeless masterpiece. This is a great chance to bring your neighbors and colleagues to show off your church family and the wonderful programs we share with the community.

NEXT WEEK

Church Committee Task Forces

Kickoff meetings for each of the three Task Force groups formed by the Church Committee (Pastor Compensation and Housing, Governance, and Welcoming) are scheduled for next *Sunday, December 18*, following the 10:00 am service. Meeting places will be published in next week's bulletin. Please join us in starting this important project.

NEWS AND NOTICES

Tai Chi Fitness with Luis Duarte

Improve your balance, health and well being. Come and experience the many wonderful benefits of Tai Chi and Qi Gong exercises. Classes are held on **Wednesdays** at 8:00 am and **Thursdays** at 9:00

am. Only \$7 per class if paid by the month, and \$8 per class for “drop ins.” Join us! You’ll love it! **All are welcome!**

News from The Rummage Room

Calendar of Events:

Monday, Dec. 12 – Friday, Dec. 16: Everything in the shop will be on sale at 50% off. Get last minute gifts at bargain prices.

Friday, Dec. 16: Come join us for our annual Christmas party from 10:00 am-5:00 pm. The Rummage Room will close for the holidays at 5:00 pm on Friday and reopen Monday, January 2. Please do **not** leave donations either at the front door or in the back during the period The Rummage Room is closed as they will not survive the weather and will have to be disposed of at The Rummage Room’s expense.

Monday, Jan. 2: The Rummage Room opens at 10:00 am. The Christmas Shop will have been replaced with new merchandise to greet the New Year. Donations will be gratefully accepted from 9:30 am to 4:30 pm.

Reminder: If you have not seen the award-winning windows created by Manager, Maria Drieghe, and Assistant Manager, Nancy Hamilton, make a point of coming by during the holidays. They are spectacular and what is truly amazing is that everything in the windows is from donations! This year’s award, given by the Garden Club of Old Greenwich, was received by The Rummage Room for “The Best Reflections of Christmases Past.” *To Our Customers and Donors:* In the true spirit of Christmas, The Rummage Room staff and volunteers wish to thank you. We appreciate your many years of support for our Worldwide Mission of helping feed, clothe, educate, drill water wells, and, in general, provide the funds for women and children’s emotional and physical needs. It has been an amazing trip during the past 48 years that The Rummage Room has been in operation to see just what all of us have accomplished together. We salute everyone who has been a part of this greatness! And may we all continue to lend our support and to thank our Lord Jesus for His blessings on all of us. Merry Christmas to all.

Food Collection

Don’t forget to add a few items in the collection barrel at the back of the Meetinghouse for Neighbor to Neighbor.

Next Week at First Congregational Church

10:00 am Worship Service – Meetinghouse
The Fourth Sunday in Advent

Music by:

The Chancel Choir:

Sir Christmas by William Mathias

The Snow Lay on the Ground by Leo Sowerby

The Palmer Handbells:

God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen

It Came Upon a Midnight Clear

Dr. David D. Young, preaching

linc worship service

We will get to hear the voices of Angels –

We are going to forego our regular 5:00 pm linc service this day and gather at 4:00 pm in the Meetinghouse instead to share together in Handel's *Messiah*.



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) today Sunday, December 11. 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

Nov. 27, Dec. 4, 11 and 18

Christmas Carol Sing & Dinner

Sign up early for this favorite
Christmas event!

Join us for a night of food,
fellowship and a rousing
Christmas Carol sing-along.

Sunday, December 11, 6:00 pm

Part I of Handel's Messiah and Hallelujah Chorus

Our annual candlelight
performances of this masterpiece
will be held in the Meetinghouse
December 17 and 18 at 4:00 pm.

This year the soloists will be:

Bonnie Pepper, soprano;

Christopher Pfund, tenor;

Wanda Brister, mezzo soprano;

and Mark Kaczmarczyk, bass.

Christmas Eve Services

10:00 am - Children's Service

4:00 pm - Family Service:

Once in Royal David's City

5:00 pm - Community Carol
Sing

8:00 pm - Carols and
Communion

11:00 pm - Candlelight Service

Christmas Day Services

10:00 am - Worship *at First
Presbyterian* for
FCCOG and First
Baptist Churches

5:00 pm - "linc" Service

New Year's Day Services

10:00 am - Worship *at FCCOG*
with First Pres-
byterian and First
Baptist Churches

5:00 pm - "linc" Service



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

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