

Christmas Eve 2011
Candlelight Service
11:00 pm



Candlelight Lessons and Carols

Christmas Eve

24 December 2011

11 o'clock in the evening

W elcome to this special Service of Worship at The First Congregational Church on this most holy of nights. 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

Pastorales de Noel

Andre Jolivet

Lynette Wardle, harp

Mary Fike, flute

Tod Hedrick, bass

CHRISTMAS PROMISE (*spoken by minister*)

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light:
those who dwelt in the land of deep darkness, on them has light
shined. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the
government will be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be
called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father,
Prince of Peace.

(Isaiah 9:2, 6)

***CAROL**

O Come, All Ye Faithful

Pilgrim (red) Hymnal 132

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CHILD CANDLE

Dana and Anne Low

Opening Sentences

Scripture: Matthew 2:10-11

Prayer:

O God, who touches our lives not in the rush of words and loud celebration, but in the gentleness of a mother's love and a baby's soft cry, be present to our lives this night that we might be very quiet, and hear again your promise of hope, peace, joy and love. Amen.

Lighting of the Christ Child Candle

*CAROL

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

Pilgrim (red) Hymnal 131

THE FIRST LESSON: Isaiah 11:1, 2, 6-9

Rev. Avery Manchester

The prophet points to the reign of peace when the Messiah has come.

ANTHEM

Wolcum Yole! from *Ceremony of Carols*

The Chancel Choir

Benjamin Britten

Lynette Wardle, harp

THE SECOND LESSON: Luke 1:26-35, 38

Sarah Gordon

*The angel Gabriel appears to Mary,
announcing she will bear a son, Jesus.*

*CAROL

O Little Town of Bethlehem

Pilgrim (red) Hymnal 134

THE THIRD LESSON: Luke 2:1-7

Donna Hascher

Saint Luke tells of the birth of Jesus.

ANTHEM

There is No Rose from Ceremony of Carols

The Chancel Choir
Benjamin Britten
Lynette Wardle, harp
Tod Hedrick, bass

THE FOURTH LESSON: Luke 2:8-16

The shepherds go to the manger.

Lile Gibbons

*CAROL

Joy to the World! The Lord is Come

Pilgrim (red) Hymnal 130

THE FIFTH LESSON: Matthew 2:1-11

The wise men worship the child.

Peter Schay

ANTHEM

We Three Kings

The Chancel Choir
Arr. Stephen Paulus
Lynette Wardle, harp
Mary Fike, flute

THE SIXTH LESSON: John 1:1-14

Saint John interprets the mystery of the Incarnation.

Dr. David D. Young

CHRISTMAS EVE MEDITATION

Touched by Transcendence

(Tonight we transition quietly to a time of offering.)

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

In the Bleak Midwinter

The Chancel Choir;
Harold Darke
Hanna Golodinskii, soprano
Christopher Pfund, tenor

CHRISTMAS PRAYER

CHRISTMAS POEM

From Spiralling Ecstatically This

e.e. cummings

PASSING OF THE LIGHT

As the Choir moves into the side aisles, they will share the light of their candles with those at end of the pews. The light will move out into the entire congregation. To receive the light, tip your unlit candle into the flame of your neighbor's candle. Please then turn to offer your light to the next person.

*CAROL: *It Came Upon the Midnight Clear*

It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth
To touch their harps of gold;
“Peace on the earth, good will to men,
From heaven’s all gracious King.”
The world in solemn stillness lay
To hear the angels sing.
Still through the cloven skies they come,
With peaceful wings unfurled,
And still their heavenly music floats
O’er all the weary world;
Above its sad and lowly plains
They bend on hovering wing;
And ever o’er its Babel sounds
The blessed angels sing.

And ye, beneath life’s crushing load
Whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way,
With painful steps and slow,
Look now, for glad and golden hours
Come swiftly on the wing;
O rest beside the weary road,
And hear the angels sing!

For lo, the days are hastening on,
By prophet bards foretold,
When with the ever circling years
Comes round the age of gold;
When peace shall over all the earth

Its ancient splendors fling,
And the whole world send back the song
Which now the angels sing. Amen.

CAROL: *Silent Night, Holy Night

(The congregation lifts their candles on the last verse.)

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.

***THE CHRISTMAS BLESSING**

(After the Christmas Blessing all candles are extinguished.)

POSTLUDE

Allegro from Concerto #1

Lynette Wardle, harp

G. F. Handel

We thank Lynette Wardle, Mary Fike, Tod Hedrick, Hanna Golodinskii and Christopher Pfund for sharing their musical talents during this evening's service.

The Church Offices will be closed Monday, December 26 and Monday, January 2 for the Christmas and New Year Holidays.

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

Christmas Day and New Year's Day Services
First Congregational Church

Christmas Day Services:

10:00 am Joint Worship Service at First Presbyterian Church,
One West Putnam Avenue, Greenwich

Combined choirs of First Congregational, First Presbyterian
and First Baptist Churches sing *Gloria* by Antonio Vivaldi
(with chamber orchestra). Dress is casual.

5:00 pm linc worship service at FCCOG
An Evening of Angel Stories

New Year's Day Services:

10:00 am Joint Service of Word and Sacrament at FCCOG
with First Presbyterian and First Baptist Churches. The 3 senior
pastors will do a joint meditation. Communion will be served.

Note: There will be **no** linc service on New Year's Day -
Since we have a wonderful opportunity to "linc" with our
larger community at our 10:00 am service, we will forego our
regular 5:00 pm linc service and, instead, encourage all to
attend the 10:00 am 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