

The First Congregational Church of Greenwich
Founded in 1665

Christmas Day
11 December 2016
10 o'clock in the morning



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.



Welcome to this special Service of Worship at The First Congregational Church on this most holy of mornings. 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!

Please silence all cell phones and other electronic devices.

*All who are able please stand.

WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP

All: The celebration of Christmas has just begun. Even though many of us have gone through the gift giving and receiving, have feasted with family and friends, there is yet another gift which has been given. You, O Loving God, have wrapped the gift of your Son Jesus Christ around our lives. The light of your love through him is shining brightly. It is not a harsh light, but a multitude of bright colors that remind us of the wondrous ways you love us. Open our hearts and spirits as we hear the words of your holy scriptures, and the beautiful music. Bring us to you with such joy that it will seem as though our feet aren't even touching ground. Amen.

CAROL SING

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;

Refrain:

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!” (Refrain)

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be all glory given;
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing; (Refrain)

Good Christian Friends Rejoice

Good Christian friends, rejoice
with heart and soul and voice;
give ye heed to what we say:
Jesus Christ was born today.
Ox and ass before him bow,
and he is in the manger now.
Christ is born today!
Christ is born today!

Good Christian friends, rejoice
with heart and soul and voice;
now ye hear of endless bliss:
Jesus Christ was born for this!
He has opened heaven's door,
and we are blest forevermore.
Christ was born for this!
Christ was born for this!

God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen

God rest you merry, gentlemen,

let nothing you dismay,
remember Christ our Saviour
was born on Christmas Day
to save us all from Satan's power
when we were gone astray.

Refrain:

O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy,
O tidings of comfort and joy.

From God our heavenly Father
a blessed angel came,
and unto certain shepherds
brought tidings of the same,
how that in Bethlehem was born
the son of God by name. (Refrain)

Now to the Lord sing praises,
all you within this place,
and with true love and gentleness
each other now embrace;
this holy tide of Christmas
all others doth deface. (Refrain)

GOSPEL READING

When the angels went away from them to heaven,
the shepherds said to one another,
“Let us go, then, to Bethlehem
to see this thing that has taken place,
which the Lord has made known to us.”
So they went in haste and found Mary and Joseph,
and the infant lying in the manger.
When they saw this,
they made known the message
that had been told them about this child.
All who heard it were amazed
by what had been told them by the shepherds.
And Mary kept all these things,
reflecting on them in her heart.
Then the shepherds returned,

glorifying and praising God
for all they had heard and seen,
just as it had been told to them.

ANTHEM

I Saw Three Ships

The Chancel Choir

Arr. James Kirkby

READING

A Song For A Christmas Tree Louisa May Alcott (1832-1888)

Cold and wintry is the sky,
 Bitter winds go whistling by,
 Orchard boughs are bare and dry,
Yet here stands a faithful tree.
 Household fairies kind and dear,
 With loving magic none need fear,
 Bade it rise and blossom here,
Little friends, for you and me.

 Come and gather as they fall,
 Shining gifts for great and small;
 Santa Claus remembers all
When he comes with goodies piled.
 Corn and candy, apples red,
 Sugar horses, gingerbread,
 Babies who are never fed,
Are handing here for every child.

 Shake the boughs and down they come,
 Better fruit than peach or plum,
 'T is our little harvest home;
For though frosts the flowers kill,
 Though birds depart and squirrels sleep,
 Though snows may gather cold and deep,
 Little folks their sunshine keep,
And mother-love makes summer still.

 Gathered in a smiling ring,
 Lightly dance and gayly sing,
 Still at heart remembering

The sweet story all should know,
Of the little Child whose birth
Has made this day throughout the earth
A festival for childish mirth,
Since the first Christmas long ago.

CAROL

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Hark! the herald angels sing
glory to the new-born 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.'

Refrain:

Hark, the herald angels sing
glory to the new-born 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. (Refrain)

A FABLE: BROTHER HEINRICH'S CHRISTMAS

John Rutter (b. 1945)
The Chancel Choir

Joseph McBride, narrator
Dorothy Darlington, oboe
Joyce Kelley, bassoon

CAROL

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?

Refrain:

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: (Refrain)

So bring him incense, gold and myrrh,
come, rich and poor, to own him,
the King of kings salvation brings,
let loving hearts enthrone him. (Refrain)

PRAYER

Loving God,
help us remember the birth of Jesus,
that we may share in the song of the angels,
the gladness of the shepherds,
and worship of the wise men.

Close the door of hate
and open the door of love all over the world.
Let kindness come with every gift
and good desires with every greeting.
Deliver us from evil by the blessing which Christ brings,
and teach us to be merry with clear hearts.

May the Christmas morning make us happy to be thy children,

and Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts,
forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

- attributed to Robert Louis Stevenson

CAROL

Joy to the World

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.

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!
Let men their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.

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

The story tells us
that it's those who wait in the world's shadows
who are the first to know of the Christ-child,
born into darkness
bringing great light.
So leave here today
to be carriers of the rumour of peace
and the truth of love
into a world longing for light.
Pray for the justice another is waiting for,

and speak of the hope another needs to breathe
And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ
the love of God
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with us all
Amen.
— written by Cheryl Lawrie

The Church Offices will be closed Monday, December 26, Friday, December 30, and Monday, January 2, for the holidays. The office will open again on Tuesday, January 3.

The clergy and staff of The First Congregational Church of Greenwich wish you a Very Merry Christmas and a Healthy, Happy New Year.



The First Congregational Church of Greenwich

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Ministers: The Members of The First Congregational Church of Greenwich

Senior Pastor: Rev. Richard S. DenUyl, Jr.

Associate Pastor: Rev. Patrick Collins

Associate Pastor for Pastoral Care: Rev. Avery C. Manchester

Director of Music: Dr. Craig Scott Symons

Director of Family Ministries: Rosemary Lamie

Director of Church Administration & Finance: Steve Summerton

Administrative Assistant - Operations: Donna White

Director of Membership: Ginny Breismeister

Parish Nurse: Susan Asselin, RN

Director of Preschool: Darla Kohler Steiner

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