

The First Congregational Church of Greenwich

Founded in 1665

Third Sunday of Advent

17 December 2017

10 o'clock in the morning

Of the Empire

We will be known as a culture that feared death and adored power, that tried to vanquish insecurity for the few and cared little for the penury of the many. We will be known as a culture that taught and rewarded the amassing of things, that spoke little if at all about the quality of life for people (other people), for dogs, for rivers. All the world, in our eyes, they will say, was a commodity. And they will say that this structure was held together politically, which it was, and they will say also that our politics was no more than an apparatus to accommodate the feelings of the heart, and that the heart, in those days, was small, and hard, and full of meanness.

--from 'Devotions—The Selected Poems of Mary Oliver'

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 service of worship at The First Congregational Church of Greenwich on this Sunday morning. Please join us after worship for our Community Hour in the auditorium.

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

Please silence all cell phones and other electronic devices.

*All who are able please stand.

PRELUDE

Air

Dr. Craig Scott Symons, organ

J. S. Bach (1685-1750)

Mary Fike, flute

CALL TO COMMUNITY

(Please sign and pass the red Fellowship Pad found at the end of your pew.)

Rev. Patrick Collins

CHERUB CALL TO WORSHIP

Away in a Manger

The Cherub Choir

J. Murray

Carol Woodman, director

Debbie Berner, piano

PRAISING GOD

*** CALL TO WORSHIP**

Rev. Patrick Collins

Leader: The Word was first, the Word present to God, God present to the Word.

People: The Word was God, in readiness for God from day one.

Leader: Everything was created through him.

People: Nothing—not one thing!—came into being without him.

Leader: What came into existence was Life, and the Life was Light to live by.

All: **The Life-Light blazed out of the darkness; the darkness couldn't put it out.**

*** PASSING OF THE PEACE**

*** HYMN**

Angels from the Realms of Glory New Century (black) hymnal 126

UNISON PRAYER

Rev. Avery C. Manchester

God of liberating disruptions, grant us wisdom to identify the certitudes by which we live, and the courage to notice your governance even beyond our treasured certitudes. God of summoning words, in your presence we are yet again aware of your calling that we be different in the world. Grant us enough resolve to resist being narcotized by our society of indifference. In his name. Amen. --Walter Bruggemann

LIGHTING OF THE THIRD ADVENT CANDLE

Ben, Brielle, & Kendall Quick

All: **Today we give thanks for the Marys among us, who step out of the roles society has planned; unintended pioneers determined to do as God asks; fearless and fearfully stepping out in faith, and beckoning us to do the same.**

MUSIC DURING

CANDLE LIGHTING

The Palmer Handbell Choir

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

Arr. Douglas Wagner (b. 1952)

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.

(Children now go to Church School. Kindergarten and 1st graders to the Preschool Red Door; 2nd to the Gold Door (downstairs), 4th and 5th

graders to the Daniels Center. 3rd graders to the Rainbow Door (Room 104 at the end of the stairs on the way to the preschool). 6th graders go to Patrick's Office on the 3rd floor and 7th and 8th graders go to the Binney Conference Room - Note change in location.)

HEARING GOD'S WORD

FIRST LESSON

Lynn Woodman Hawxhurst

Luke 1: 39-45

Mary didn't waste a minute. She got up and traveled to a town in Judah in the hill country, straight to Zachariah's house, and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby in her womb leaped. She was filled with the Holy Spirit, and sang out exuberantly,

'You're so blessed among women, and the babe in your womb, also blessed! And why am I so blessed that the mother of my Lord visits me? The moment the sound of your greeting entered my ears, the babe in my womb skipped like a lamb for sheer joy. Blessed woman, who believed what God said, believed every word would come true!'

—The Message

DUET

Carolyn Paulus, Carol Woodman, sopranos
Max Reger

Maria Weigenlied

Translation:

Amid the roses Mary sits
And rocks her Jesus-child,
While amid the treetops
Sighs the breeze so warm and mild.
And soft and sweetly sings
A bird upon a bough:
Ah, baby, dear one,
Slumber now!
Happy is Thy laughter,
Holy is Thy silent rest,
Lay Thy head in slumber
Fondly on Thy Mother's breast.
Ah, baby, dear one,
Slumber now!

SECOND LESSON

Luke 1: 46-56

And Mary said, “I’m bursting with God-news; I’m dancing the song of my Savior God. God took one good look at me, and look what happened— I’m the most fortunate woman on earth! What God has done for me will never be forgotten, the God whose very name is holy, set apart from all others. His mercy flows in wave after wave on those who are in awe before him. He bared his arm and showed his strength, scattered the bluffing braggarts. He knocked tyrants off their high horses, pulled victims out of the mud. The starving poor sat down to a banquet; the callous rich were left out in the cold. He embraced his chosen child, Israel; he remembered and piled on the mercies, piled them high. It’s exactly what he promised, beginning with Abraham and right up to now.”

Mary stayed with Elizabeth for three months and then went back to her own home.

—The Message

SERMON

Feel the Embrace

Rev. Avery C. Manchester

* HYMN

God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen

Pilgrim (red) hymnal 122

PASTORAL PRAYER

Rev. Richard S. DenUyl, Jr.

RESPONDING TO GOD

CALL TO OFFERING

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

Shepherd’s Pipe Carol

The Chancel Choir

John Rutter

Mary Fike, piccolo

* DOXOLOGY

Pilgrim (red) Hymnal 515

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below; Praise Him above, ye heav’nly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

*** PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

GOING FORTH TO SERVE GOD

*** HYMN**

Angels We Have Heard on High

Pilgrim (red) Hymnal 116

*** BENEDICTION**

*** CHORAL RESPONSE**

POSTLUDE

Swiss Noel

L. C. D'Aquin

* * *

The Chancel Committee wishes to thank Loretta Stagen and Pam Grunow and the many friends who made contributions to the Christmas flowers. They would also like to thank Gary Zinzmeier (gary@zofstamford.com) who beautifies our Meetinghouse with the flowers each Sunday morning

Directly following the service, one of our pastors will remain in the Chapel to be available to anyone who has a pastoral care concern.

A Note to Parents

Relax! God put the wiggle in children, do not feel you have to suppress it during worship. The presence of children is a gift to the church, which offers hope for all. Jesus said, "Let the children come to me." At First Church we believe that the way we welcome children in worship directly affects the way they respond to God, the church, and to one another. To the members of our congregation, please know that a smile of encouragement is always welcome to parents with small, active children.

For those who are interested, we do have child care available for babies and toddlers every Sunday, for the entirety of the church service, in the preschool classrooms.

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.

NEWS AND NOTICES

TODAY

Church School

Today all classes will conclude their series of Advent lessons and now look toward Christmas! Remember Advent boxes for Inspirica are due back to the church on Thursday, December 21 because we are delivering them the next day. We hope to see you all sometime on Christmas Eve but if not, have a blessed and beautiful Christmas and New Year!

Choir Rehearsals

The following choirs will meet today in their normal places/times:

- Cherub Choir: Rainbow Room (basement) 11:15-11:45
- Children's Choir: Music Room (3rd floor) 11:15-12:00
- Youth Choir: Choir Room (3rd floor) 11:15-12:15

First Church Cookie Walk

The second annual First Church Cookie Walk is today **in the lounge!** After the service, you will have the opportunity to purchase delectable Christmas cookies made by wonderful bakers from within the congregation. Bakers who have brought baked goods will receive "priority" stickers to fill their boxes first; then non bakers may go through the line. Boxes will be \$5 each. Proceeds will go to the Pastor's discretionary fund for emergency relief.

Parish Nurse

Sue Asselin, RN will be available for blood pressure screenings and health consultations during Community Hour, following today's worship service. During the week, she is available on Tuesdays and Wednesdays by appointment, which can be made by calling extension 21.

UPCOMING

News from the Rummage Room

191 Sound Beach Avenue, Old Greenwich

Sunday, December 17: The Rummage Room is closed for Christmas and will reopen Tuesday, January 2. Please do not leave donations again until January 2—there will be no one to accept them. The Christmas decorations in the Rummage Room windows will remain until the shop reopens in 2018. If you are near the Rummage Room while we are closed, be sure and view the wonderful decorations by Leanne Meyer and Nancy Hamilton.

Tuesday, January 2, 2018: The Rummage Room will reopen for business at 10:00 am with many great winter items for your family. All the volunteers, Manager Leanne Meyer, the Asst. Mgrs., and the Rummage Room Board, wish our shoppers and donors a Merry, Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Because of you it is amazing how many people are helped by this tiny little shop in Old Greenwich. It is said 'It Takes a Village' and the Rummage Room is proof of the truth in that statement.

Caregivers Support Group

Please join us for the Caregivers Support Group for those who currently are, recently have been, or no longer are, a caregiver for a family member or friend. The group offers a confidential place where participants can share experiences, learn new information, and receive emotional support and comfort from others in similar situations. The group meets on the second Sunday of the month from 11:15 am - 12:15 pm in the Binney Conference Room. Dorothy Mueller, FCCOG Stephen Minister, is the group facilitator. For more information, please call Dorothy at (203) 588-9896, or email: dorothymueller1@gmail.com .

CHRISTMAS FLOWERS AND DECORATIONS

The decorations in the Meetinghouse this morning are given in joyful and loving memory of:

- Richard Vogt, by Anonymous
- Claire's Uncle Shelty, by the Wentworth family
- Our parents and Don's brother by Ginny & Don Breismeister
- Rick Woodman, Harry Woodman, Jean Paulus, & C.K. Paulus, by Carolyn Paulus and Stephanie & Gillian Woodman
- John L. Putnam, by Wendy Putnam & Jennifer Maloney
- Arthur C. & Catherine G. Weigner by their sons, Stephen A. & Ronald C. Weigner
- Our parents, Purisima & Feliciano Teria, and Louise & Richard Haviland, by Erlinda & Larry Haviland
- Mildred & Albert Isaacson, by Gerald Isaacson
- Edward J. William, by the William Family
- Marian & Fred Hout, by Susie Hout Baker & Sara, Charlie, & Liz
- Our son and brother, John C. Fountain, by Nancy, Katharine, & Sarah Fountain
- Earl S. Moore, Jr., by his family
- Richmond Benner Hopkins, by his family
- Our parents, Nadean & Elmer Hirth, and Anna & Robert MacLea, by Carolyn H. and Robert H. MacLea, Jr.
- Rafic & Adele Zaitoon, loving parents & grandparents
- Howard & Nina Flierl and Marge & Art Billings, by Shirley Billings Flierl and Peter J. Flierl
- William S. Webster, by Mary Webster
- Richard Thomas Hermance, by his wife & children
- Joan & Jim Kreuter, Charlie & Bill Robertson, by the Kreuter family and Betsy Kreuter
- John & Betty Briggs by the Kreuter family
- Our parents, Harrison & Louis Gifford, and Carleton & Margaret Gishorne, by Ruth & Gifford Reed and our family
- Michel A Scrivan, by his loving family, Mitzi, Kate & Andrew
- Joan Denne, by her family
- Anne, Bill, & Sue Denne, by their family
- Wilfrid & Marcia Hobbs, by Pamela Hobbs
- My father and sister, Eric and Susan Robertson, by Lynn Robertson
- Sherman & Beth Baldwin, by Anne Baldwin Castine
- Paul Hudson and George Finch, from the Hudson/Finch families
- Our parents, Efraim & Victoria Olson, Ryan & Margaret Rosendale, and our aunt, Erna Nelson, by Ken & Erna Olson

- Melita & John Magness and Dana Andersen, by their family
- Marian Cordner, by Gary & Judy Miller
- Our parents, Morris & Noemie Watkins and Robert & Lucile Tubbs, by Jeff & Jean Watkins
- Charles J. Veith IV, by his sister, Linda V. Glover
- Robert & Joyce Turvey and Angela Turvey Wyman, by Helen Ingraham, Kelsey, Taylor, Colin, & Trevor
- Roger A. Lepoutre, by Catherine Lepoutre & family
- Our parents, Sigrid & Hjalmar Johansen, and Agnes & Leonard A. Leonard, by Paul & Joan Johansen
- My parents, Karen Ogendahl Scrivanos & Marios Scrivanos, by Karen Scrivanos Oztemel
- Jerry & Carole Kutzen, and Joe Browne, by the Kutzen family
- Our parents, Bill Bovard and Esther & Harold Broderick, by Sue and Shawn Asselin

The decorations in the Meetinghouse this morning are given in honor of:

- Our parents, Dr. & Mrs. Smith, and Rev. & Mrs. Wentworth, by the Wentworth Family
- Our grandchildren, Finn, June, Gunther, & Alta by Ginny & Don Breismeister
- The Youth Choir and Youth Choir Alums, by Carolyn Paulus
- Tod, Sarah, & Isla Hedrick, by Lucy Hedrick
- My great-grandchildren, Kinley, Eloise, Harper, Calvin, & Mila, by Virginia Liddel
- Craig Symons, with thanks, for his ministry of music
- Virginia Liddel, cherished mother, grandma, and Gigi, by Joan McCaw, her loving daughter and Florida family

A donation to the decorations in the Meetinghouse this morning is given by:

- Eleanor Olsen
- The Quake family



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. 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

Publications Coordinator: Vance Briceland

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