

*Old Greenwich,
Connecticut*

**THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH OF GREENWICH**

*United Church
of Christ*

Celebrating 350 Years - 1665-2015

Third Sunday of Advent

13 December 2015

10 o'clock in the morning



Cover Art Credit: *Festival of Lights* by John August Swanson

Message from Rev. Meghan Young: During advent our bulletin covers will feature scenes from John August Swanson's *Festival of Lights*. Each week the light builds as we prepare the way during Advent for the birth of Christ.

Artist, John August Swanson, makes his home in Los Angeles, California, where he was born in 1938. His art reflects the strong heritage of storytelling he inherited from his Mexican mother and Swedish father. He addresses himself to human values, cultural roots, and his quest for self-discovery through visual images. These frequently include Bible stories, social celebrations, and everyday existence. All his parables optimistically embrace life and one's spiritual transformation. Swanson draws from the gift of imagination, which he believes comes from God, as well as his life experience as the son of immigrants.



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 Third Sunday of Advent at The First
Congregational Church of Greenwich. Let us share Peace and
Joy as we worship together this morning.

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

Please silence all cell phones and other electronic devices.

*All who are able please stand.

PRELUDE

Air and Variations

Dr. Craig Scott Symons, harpsichord
Franz Anton Murschhauser (1663-1738)

CALL TO COMMUNITY

Please sign and pass the red book.

Rev. Meghan D. Young

FIRST CHURCH FLASHBACK

Pat Larrabee

STEWARDSHIP – *What's My Why?*

Lawrence Hathaway

PRAISING GOD

CALL TO WORSHIP

Joshua Arnold, Confirmand

Leader: Sing for joy, children of God!

Shout aloud, for God is our salvation!

People: We will believe the good news that God is in our midst.

Leader: Sing of faith, children of God!

Shout aloud, for God is our hope!

People: We will live the good news that God removes all our fears.

Leader: Sing of grace, children of God!

Shout aloud, for God is our compassion!

People: We will share God's love and hope.

CHORAL INTROIT

***HYMN**

God's Eye Is on the Sparrow

New Century (black) Hymnal 475

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord

Leader 1: In this season of Advent, we are here to watch and wait and pray for the coming of light into the world. We long for the day when the things of darkness – selfishness and greed, suffering and oppression – shall be no more. Today we light the third candle of Advent – a symbol of the joy to come.

All: A candle burns, a symbol of our joy. God of hope, peace and joy, come to us again this Advent. May the joy of this season be born again within us, burning as a light in our lives.

Leader 2: Lord, by your presence, light up the past, that we might learn from it with thankfulness. Light up the present, that we might live in it with love. Light up the future, that we might prepare for it in hope.

All: As we watch and wait and pray this Advent season, may we always be ready to encounter the Lord who is already and always with us. Amen.

The candle of joy is lit.

MUSIC DURING CANDLE LIGHTING *The Palmer Handbell Choir*
We Three Kings Arr. Dan Edwards

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

This Little Light of Mine

*This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine;
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine;
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.*

*Everywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine;
Everywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine;
Everywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine;
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.*

(During the Congregational Response, 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. Note: The '678' class will meet in in the Binney Conference Room – behind the stage.)

HEARING GOD'S WORD

FIRST LESSON

Pat Larrabee

Isaiah 12:1-6

A prophetic song, bursting with joy and promises of God's presence. It's a joyful interlude, with messianic implications, wedged between scriptures about a peaceable kingdom and a return to Judah and Jerusalem, and prophecies of God's upcoming judgment. Here we are invited to the springs of salvation.

SOLO

Drew Seigla, tenor

I Wonder as I Wander

John Jacob Niles (1892-1980)

*I wonder as I wander out under the sky
How Jesus the Saviour did come for to die
For poor on 'ry people like you and like I;
I wonder as I wander out under the sky*

*When Mary birthed Jesus 'twas in a cow's stall
With wise men and farmers and shepherds and all
But high from God's heaven, a star's light did fall
And the promise of ages it then did recall.*

*If Jesus had wanted for any wee thing
A star in the sky or a bird on the wing
Or all of God's Angels in heaven to sing
He surely could have it, 'cause he was the King*

*I wonder as I wander out under the sky
How Jesus the Saviour did come for to die
For poor on'ry people like you and like I;
I wonder as I wander out under the sky.*

SECOND LESSON

Carolyn Paulus

Luke 3:7-20

God chooses John the Baptist, an unlikely candidate in the most unlikely place. John goes into the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a “baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.” It is a baptism that radically changes the heart and whole way of thinking. John prepares the way for Christ, offering a message of hope to exiles and those longing for salvation. He wakes us up with unapologetic anger and an invitation that demands much of us.

*HYMN

With Joy Draw Water

New Century (black) Hymnal 109

SERMON

Rev. Meghan D. Young

PASTORAL PRAYER

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.

RESPONDING TO GOD

CALL TO OFFERING

Bobbie Hopkins

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

Advent Anthem

The Chancel Choir

Douglas Brooks-Davies (b. 1942)

*This Advent moon shines cold and clear,
These Advent nights are very long;
Our lamps have burned year after year
And still their flame is strong.
'Watchman, what of the night?' we cry,
Heart-sick with hope deferred:
'No speaking signs are in the sky,'
Is still the watchman's word.*

*One to another hear them speak
The patient virgins wise:
'Surely He is not far to seek'—
'All night we watch and rise.'
'The days are evil looking back,
The coming days are dim;
Yet count we not His promise slack,
But watch and wait for Him.'*

*Weeping we hold Him fast to-night;
We will not let Him go
Till daybreak smite our wearied sight
And summer smite the snow:
Then figs shall bud, and dove with dove
Shall coo the livelong day;
Then He shall say, 'Arise, My love,
My fair one, come away.'*

***DOXOLOGY**

Pilgrim (red) Hymnal 515

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise him, all creatures
here below; Praise him above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son
and Holy Ghost. Amen.*

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

GOING FORTH TO SERVE GOD

*** HYMN**

Jesus, Jesus, Oh, What a Wonderful Child

New Century (black) Hymnal 136

*BENEDICTION

*CHORAL RESPONSE

POSTLUDE

Bouree on *On Christmas Night*

Alec Rowley (1892-1958)

* * *

*Please join us for Fellowship Hour in the Auditorium
following the worship service.*

The Chancel Committee would like to thank Pam Grunow and Loretta Stagen for their help in decorating the Church for Christmas. They would also like to thank Gary Zinsmeyer from Gary'Z of Stamford (gary@garyzofstamford.com) for providing exceptional flowers each Sunday for our worship service.

We have **child care for babies and toddlers** every Sunday in the Preschool classrooms. Your children are always welcome in child care for the entire worship service or for a respite time if needed. We also now have two rows in the back of the chapel reserved for parents with infants or little ones who are not ready for the Nursery where the parents can be comfortable *and* still be part of worship. Please see an usher if you need help finding either of these locations.

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 Opportunity this Christmas Eve

A Christmas Tradition: "White Gifts"

A long-standing tradition at First Church has been on Christmas Eve the congregation brings gifts for children wrapped in white paper, which, as we place them under the trees during the offering, gives the

illusion of snow. Gifts of clothing, toys, books or other useful items are then given to Covenant to Care for Children. Ribbon and bows are not necessary. (Hint: if you find yourself without white paper at the last minute, some patterned papers reverse to white or you can use white tissue paper).

Calendar

TODAY

Church School

Today our children are continuing their Advent workshops with a look at Jesus as the Light of the World. Also, at 11:15 our 4th and 5th grade families will head over to Pilgrim Towers with the Giving Tree gifts for the annual Christmas luncheon and party! Remember to tell Rosemary if your children would like to be in one of the **Christmas Eve Nativity Pageants** at the 10:00 am, 3:00 pm or 6:00 pm services. Please email her at RosemaryL@fccog.org.

Cherub, Children's & Youth Choir Rehearsal

Cherub Choir (grades K-2) will be rehearsing today in Room 104 (Lower Level) from 11:15-11:45 am - Donald Haviland, director.

Children's Choir (grades 3-6) will be rehearsing in the **Green Door in the Preschool** from 11:15 am-12:00 pm - Craig Symons, director.

Youth Choir (grades 7-12) will be rehearsing in the Meetinghouse from 11:15 am to 12:15 pm – Carolyn Paulus, director.

Parish Nurse

Sue Asselin, R.N. is available for blood pressure screenings and health consultations following today's Worship Service. Look for her in the Lounge during Fellowship Hour.

Come to *Messiah* today at 4 pm!

The 49th annual *Messiah* performance will take place TODAY at 4 pm in the Meetinghouse. Tickets \$25 (school-aged children/youth free) and can be purchased at the door. Following the performance, join us for a special Gala Reception with wine



This year's soloists, Mary Ellen Callahan, Abby Powell, Brian Giebler, Thomas Woodman

and holiday nibbles for performers and audience (included in the price of your ticket)! Don't miss this musical holiday treat!

THIS WEEK

Advent Faith Formation Series

Join us for the last session of our Advent Faith Formation Series, *A Thrill of Hope: The Christmas Story in Word and Art*, *tomorrow, December 14*, 7-8 pm.

Youth Progressive Dinner - This Friday, Dec. 18, 6-10 pm

It's that time of year again! Join us for a night across several generations of the youth program! Bring a dish to share and a \$10 gift for the exchange at the end of the night. All JPF, SPF, and alumni of all faiths welcome. We'll start in the First Church parking lot before dividing off into carpools and eating all over town! If you're interested, contact Donald at donald.haviland@gmail.com.

NEWS AND NOTICES

Found Ring

Last weekend a men's 14K white gold wedding ring was found in the Meetinghouse. If you or someone you know has lost a ring and you would like to check to see if this is it, please email barbaraw@fccog.org or call the Church Office.

350th Anniversary Christmas Ornaments on Sale!

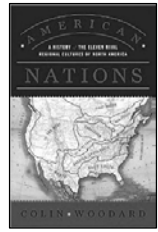
Don't miss the opportunity to get this keepsake ornament to mark our 350th Anniversary! It makes a perfect Christmas gift. This uniquely designed brass ornament is a reproduction of the beautiful stained glass Christmas panel from the Chancel window in the Meetinghouse. Pick up your commemorative ornaments at Fellowship Hour on Sundays or in the Church Office during the week. \$15 for one/\$10 for each additional. Merry Christmas!



Hats Off Book Discussion Group in January

Our book study group, *Hats Off*, has chosen its first read of 2016 – *American Nations: A History of the Eleven Rival Regional Cultures*

of North American by Colin Woodard. This award-winning journalist and historian takes readers on a journey through the history of our fractured continent, offering a revolutionary and revelatory take on American identity, and how the conflicts between them have shaped our past and continue to mold our future. Please contact Jean Bruder at 203-661-1685 to order your paperback. There are only 3 copies in our Greenwich Library. We will begin our 2016 study group on *Thursday, January 7* in the Binney Conference Room (2nd floor of the Church Office building) from 10:00-11:30 am.



Merry Christmas from The Rummage Room

191 Sound Beach Avenue

Monday, December 14: BELIEVE – it's only 12 days until Christmas! Have you finished your Christmas shopping? The 'Best Little Shoppe in Town' still has amazing items for gifts at half the cost! And Christmas decorations too. Manager Leanne has everything Christmas 50% off for the entire week. Clothing (includes a large selection of men's suits), linens, tree ornaments, jewelry (yes, the jewelry is 50% off!) and other great merchandise. Go to www.fccog.org/about-us/the-rummage-room and check it out.

Friday, December 18: Please come in and join Manager Leanne and the volunteers for cookies any time between 10:00 am-5:00 pm so we have a moment to express thanks to you, our customers. The Rummage Room could not exist without you, as all the proceeds go to help those in need.

Saturday, December 19: The Rummage Room opens at 10:00 am and will close at 1:00 pm for the Christmas and New Year Holidays.

January 4, 2016: We will reopen for shopping and donations 10:00 am to 5:00 pm. If you need winter clothing ... we have it!

Remember, we do not take skis or ski boots. Donations resume again 9:30 am-4:30 pm Monday-Thursday and 9:30 am-12:30 pm Friday & Saturday. Please do not leave donations while the shop is closed.

A Certificate of Appreciation from The Garden Club of Old Greenwich was presented to The Rummage Room, calling it The 'Best Reflection of Christmas Past' Award. The windows were designed and decorated by Mgr Leanne Meyer and Assistant Mgr Nancy Hamilton totally from customer donated decorations.

Thought for December: *It is Christmas every time we allow God's love*

to flow through us ... every time we smile at another and offer them our hand. Let it begin with us so that we may work toward making our crazy world sane again.

Tai Chi Classes

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 \$10 per class. Drop-ins are welcome.

Neighbor –

Food Collection Barrel in Entrance to the Church

Please don't forget those in need this holiday season. **Items especially needed are dry beans (kidney, garbanzo, etc.)** Also, cereal, canned fruit, pasta, peanut butter, jelly, sheets & towels. Tuna is **not** needed.

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Christmas Memorial/Honor Flowers and Decorations

The Chancel Committee invites contributions for decorations for the Meetinghouse this Christmas. Any amount is welcome. Please return the form below with your check (payable to the First Congregational Church Flower Fund) **TODAY** in either Fellowship Hour or in the Church Office. Thank you.

In Memory/Honor of: _____

By: _____

Enclosed is my check in the amount of \$ _____

Please print names legibly to minimize spelling errors.

✂-----



“First Church was a primary reason why we chose Greenwich, CT as our home. We appreciate the community it provides, the music it generates and the outreach to those in need.”

- Diane and Paul Kretschmann

“There are too many ‘whys!’”

- Elizabeth Bonsal

“We love our church. It is an important part of our family and our lives.”

- The Ghaffari Family

“I joined the Church with my husband 63 years ago and over the years it has been a mainstay in our lives. In times of joy and sorrow, the church was, and remains, an anchor in my life.”

- Barbara Van Buren

“First Church is my spiritual home and a place of comfort and joy. I have met friends here who hold a special place in my life.”

- Libby Fatum

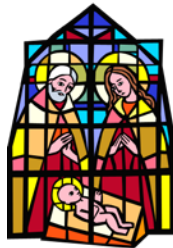
“Because I love this church! I love my church family. I love the outreach we perform. I love the support I get and the support I give. I love the music and the worship that grounds me weekly.”

- Betsy Kreuter

We are gratified to report that so far 214 members have sent in very generous pledges totaling \$758,910. We are still a long way toward our goal of substantially growing stewardship this year and fully funding our vital church programs. If you haven't done so already, please join us by sending in your pledge card today!

December

- 13: 49th Annual *Messiah* Performance, 4 pm followed by special gala reception.
- 14: Advent Faith Formation Series, *A Thrill of Hope: The Christmas Story in Word and Art*, 7-8 pm
- 18: Sheep arrive for Live Nativity in Crèche
- 24: Christmas Eve Celebrations
- 10 am: Lessons and Carols for our youngest families; Nativity Pageant; Cherub Choir sings; White Gift Offerings*
 - 3 pm: Family Service; *Once in Royal David's City* Nativity Pageant; Children's Choir sings; White Gift Offerings*
 - 4 pm: Community Carol Sing in *Binney Park*
 - 6 pm: Festival Carol Service with Brass & Timpani; *Once in Royal David's City* Nativity Pageant; Chancel Choir sings; White Gift Offerings*
 - 9 pm: Candlelight Service with Communion; Youth/Alumni Choir sings



**White Gifts are clothing, toys, books or other useful items wrapped in white paper to be offered during our 10 am, 3 pm and 6 pm services on Christmas Eve. The white paper gives the illusion of snow under the trees in the Meetinghouse. Ribbon and bows are not necessary.*

Next Week at First Congregational Church

December 13, 2015

4th Sunday of Advent

10:00 am Worship Service in the Meetinghouse

Music by:

The Chancel Choir

Christo Paremus by Eric Haas

Linnea Conley, mezzo soprano; Mary Fike, flute

Gabriel's Message by Craig Scott Symons

The Palmer Handbell Choir

Joy to the World Arr. Anna Laura Page

Rev. Richard DenUyl, preaching

Where to find us:

www.fccog.org

Facebook

Twitter

YouTube

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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.

Transitional Associate Pastor: Rev. Meghan D. Young

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

Director of Music: Dr. Craig Scott Symons

Director of Family Ministries: Rosemary Lamie

Youth Coordinator: Donald Haviland

Director of Church Administration & Finance: Steve Summerton

Office Manager/Sr. Administrative Assistant: Donna White

Director of Membership: Ginny Breismeister

Director of Communications: Barbara Wilkov

Parish Nurse: Susan Asselin, RN

Director of Preschool: Darla Kohler Steiner