

*Old Greenwich,
Connecticut*

THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH OF GREENWICH

*United Church
of Christ*

Founded in 1665

Fourth Sunday of Advent

22 December 2013

10 o'clock in the morning



Artwork by Vonda Drees

<https://www.facebook.com/waytolead>

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 time of worship recognizing the 4th and final Sunday of Advent here at First Congregational Church of Greenwich. As we light the fourth candle, we remember the Love of God. As we begin our time of worship together, perhaps you could reflect on a time when love or a loving act has had an effect on you. Perhaps you were the one sharing love. Perhaps you were the receiver. Perhaps it is just something you witnessed. Today, our 6th 7th and 8th graders will tell the story of the *Gift of the Magi* ... a story of love. May the love of God transform you this day, and always. We are glad you are here!

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

Please silence all cell phones and other electronic devices.

*All who are able please stand.

‡Seating of latecomers.

PRELUDE

Noel

Dr. Craig Scott Symons, organ
Claude Balbastre (1724-1799)

CALL TO COMMUNITY

Please sign and pass the red book.

Rev. John W. Collins

PRAISING GOD

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: In the midst of darkness, God brings a new light.

People: Thanks be to the God of light.

Leader: In the midst of confusion and fear, God brings hope and peace.

People: Thanks be to the God of peace.

Leader: In the midst of strife and stress, God comforts and soothes us.

People: Let us praise God who truly loves us and brings us new life.

***‡HYMN**

Angels, From the Realms of Glory

Pilgrim (red) Hymnal 117

LIGHTING OF THE FOURTH ADVENT CANDLE

Reader: 1 John 4:7-12

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another.

Reader: Today, on this Fourth Sunday of Advent, we light the candle of love. In doing so, we proclaim that we are loved by God through Jesus Christ our Lord and we affirm that Christians ought to love one another with a love that is strong enough and wide enough to encompass the whole world. And, so, the candles of hope, peace, joy and love light up our lives and warm our hearts. But the greatest of these is love.

Candle Lighting

Members of our Youth Program

MUSIC DURING CANDLE LIGHTING *The Palmer Handbell Choir*
Ding, Dong Merrily on High Arr. Michael Bedford (b. 1949)

OPENING PRAYER

Lord of all life and all seasons, help us open our hearts to hear the words of promise and love that you send to us. Like Mary, may we find our part in bringing your love into the world. Like Joseph, may we trust in your abiding presence and power. May we be brave enough to proclaim Christ among us as we prepare ourselves, during this time of worship, to receive your gift of grace and peace. In the name of the one who taught us to pray:

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.

ANTHEM

The Chancel Choir

Fantasia on Christmas Carols

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

Tom Woodman, bass

HEARING GOD'S WORD

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Sue McCalley

Isaiah 7:10-16

Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, "Ask a sign of the Lord, your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven." But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test." Then Isaiah said: "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted."

From New Revised Standard Version

*‡HYMN

God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen

Pilgrim (red) Hymnal 122

SERMON

The Gift of the Magi

Rev. Mark D. Montgomery

RESPONDING TO GOD

PASTORAL PRAYER

Rev. Daniel B. England

CALL TO OFFERING

Rev. Avery C. Manchester

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

Mary Had a Baby

The Chancel Choir

Arr. William Dawson (1899-1990)

Linnea Conley, mezzo soprano

*DOXOLOGY

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;

Praise Christ, all creatures here below;

Praise Holy Spirit, Comforter;

One God, Triune, whom we adore.

Amen, Amen.

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

GOING FORTH TO SERVE GOD

*HYMN

Good Christian Men, Rejoice

Pilgrim (red) Hymnal 125

*BENEDICTION

*CHORAL RESPONSE

POSTLUDE

Noel

Felix Alexandre Guilmant (1837-1911)

Please join us for Coffee Hour following the worship service.

We have **child care for babies and toddlers** every Sunday in our Preschool classrooms. 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.

Christmas Memory/Honor Flowers and Decorations

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

Our parents, Barbara and Maurice Lorthioir and Hermione Schoen by Fred Lorthioir and Christina Schoen

My family by Bobby Littlefield

Catherine Weigner by Stephen Weigner

Catherine Weigner by Arthur Weigner

Melita and John Magness, and Dana Andersen by their family

Eric and Susan Robertson, my father and sister, by Lynn Robertson

Joan and Jim Kreuter by their children and grandchildren

Charlie and Bill Robertson by Eric and Betsy Kreuter

Lloyd L. and Ruth Shawber, and Lloyd Oberlin Shawber by Anne Shawber Stolley

Richmond B. Hopkins by his wife, Bobbie, their children and grandchildren

Michel A. Scrivan by his loving family

Our parents, Dot and Bill Johnson and Eleanore and Bob Bailey, and our friends, William A. Mitchell, Gillian Jones and Helen Allen by Cindy and Bob Bailey

Jane Crosley by Erlinda and Larry Haviland

John Provoost by Jack, Judy, Michael, Jennifer and David Provoost

Our parents, Feliciano and Purisima Teria, and Richard and Louise Haviland by Erlinda and Larry Haviland

Earl S. Moore Jr. by his family

Shirley Cook by the Kuppenheimer family

Marian and Fred Hout by Susie Hout Baker, Sara, Charlie and Liz

Our parents, Elmer and Lile Rasmuson, and Jack and Marian Gibbons by Lile and John Gibbons

Charles J. Veith, IV by his sister, Linda Veith Glover

William J. Provoost by his wife, Suzanne, daughter Patti and son Jack

My parents, Dorothy and John Green, in-laws, Willa and Bill Provoost Sr. and grandson, John Provoost, by Suzanne Provoost

Robert L. Liddel by the Liddel family

Anne, Bill and Sue Denne by their family, Joan and John Denne

Our parents, Efraim and Victoria Olson, and Ryan and Margaret Rosendale, and aunt, Erna Nelson by Ken and Erna Olson

Our parents, Alma and Steve Karch, and Betty and Fred Breismeister, and Don's brother, Fred, by Ginny and Don Breismeister

Catherine G. Weigner by her husband, Arthur, and sons, Stephen and Ronald Weigner

Franklin, Douglas and Stephen by Nancy Hume

All those family members who brought such love and laughter into our lives by the Kneen and Hoffman families

Our parents, grandparents and Aunt Mary by Dianne and Harry Culpen

Richard Vogt, anonymously

Family and friends by Diane and Paul Kretschmann

Lois and Cecil MacDonald by Roxanne MacDonald and family

My friend, Susan Jordan, by Betty Bonsal

Tim Manchester by his family

John L. Putnam by Wendy Putnam and Jennifer Maloney

Alvin Wachsman by Anne Wachsman

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

Carolyn Paulus and the Youth Choir by Pam Speer

Andrew Bohannon, grandson, by Dale and Sherry Myer

Finn, June, Gunther and Alta Breismeister by Ginny and Don Breismeister

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

Mary Lennon

Jane Finch

Calendar

TODAY

Church School

Today our Church School children will be in worship for the entire service – except our 3's and 4's whose teachers are happy to have them in class!

We hope some of you will participate in the **Live Nativity** outside at the crèche **this afternoon** anytime between noon and 4:00 pm for a 30 minute time slot. The program is flexible, so “do not fear!” We have costumes. See Rosemary or Betsy Kreuter after church if you want to give it a try or have questions before you decide. We look forward to seeing many of you on Christmas Eve. Church School resumes on January 5, 2014.

Pre-Daniel Bible Study

Astonishingly, we all had a great time last week learning about the time between the Old and New Testaments, where brave and faithful people suffered much but also triumphed much. All of this is in the book of 1 Maccabees (yes, there are two of them). This week we will cover the restoration of the Temple, which yielded Hanukkah, that mysterious burning of the lamps for eight days with but one day's oil. But where did this story come from? All of this will aid in understanding Daniel beginning on January 5, which you really don't want to miss. But those who come today will have a head start. 11:20 am in the Lounge.

Choir Rehearsals

Choir rehearsals today are: Cherub Choir from 11:15 am to 12 Noon in Room 104, Children's Choir from 11:15 am to 12 Noon in Room 303 (Craig's office) and Youth Choir from 11:15 am to 12:15 pm in the Choir Room.

JPF & SPF Youth Groups

Our JPF and SPF Youth Groups will meet at 6:00 pm today.

THIS WEEK

Kettle Quilters

The Kettle Quilters will not be meeting this week or next, due to the Christmas and New Year's holidays. We will resume our regular schedule of Mondays 9:00 am-12:00 noon and Tuesdays 7:30 pm-9:00 pm in Room 203 starting *January 6 and 7, 2014*.

NEWS AND NOTICES

Missing Basket from Last Sunday's Coffee Hour

A 9 x 12 oval handmade "Nantucket" basket was lost at last Sunday's Coffee Hour. If found, please contact Betsy Kreuter at 203-698-3016 or call the Church Office.

Reminder: Lost Coat

A black pea-coat and gloves were taken by mistake on Wonderful Wednesday, November 13, from the rack outside the kitchen on the main level. A black Calvin Klein jacket was left in its place. Please take another look and check your closet to see if you have this missing coat. If you do, please contact the Church Office and the exchange can be made.

Merry Christmas from The Rummage Room

191 Sound Beach Avenue, Old Greenwich

Monday, December 23 until January 2, 2014: *THE RUMMAGE ROOM IS CLOSED FOR THE HOLIDAYS.*

Wednesday, December 25: May you and your families enjoy your Christmas celebrations.

Thursday, January 2, 2014: The Rummage Room reopens at 10:00 am with a 50% off winter-clothing sale for the remainder of the week. All Christmas items will be 75% off. Hours are 10:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday through Friday, and Saturday from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm.

PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE DONATIONS WHILE THE RUMMAGE ROOM IS CLOSED. Donations will be accepted again **Thursday, January 2** between 9:30 am and 4:30 pm, and on Saturday from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm. Donations left outside while The Rummage Room is closed will be 'sacrificed to the elements'!!

Holiday Windows: The Rummage Room has won **two** awards this December. "The Best Original Storefront Holiday Window Decorating Award in Old Greenwich" from The Greenwich Chamber of Commerce; and "The Best Village Scene Display Award in Old Greenwich" from The Garden Club of Old Greenwich.

Congratulations to the designers, Maria Drieghe and Nancy Hamilton for continually creating award winning windows using donations received from our donors.

Joy to the World! The Lord is come. Let earth receive her King!

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 \$10 per class, \$8 for seniors. Join us! You'll love it! **All are welcome.**

Special Giving Opportunity for the Season

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.)



Join Us for Christmas Eve at FCCOG

10:00 am - Lessons and Carols - for our youngest families;
The Cherub Choir sings; White Gift Offerings; Live Nativity

4:00 pm – Family Service – *Once in Royal David's City*
Live Nativity; The Children Choir sings; White Gift Offerings

5:00 pm – Community Carol Sing –
around the Christmas tree on the front lawn of the church

8:00 pm – Communion and Carols –
The Youth Choir sings

11:00 pm – Candlelight Lessons and Carols –
The Chancel Choir sings



Next Week at First Congregational Church

10:00 am Worship Service – Meetinghouse
December 29

Music by:

The Chancel Choir

The New Year Carol by Raymond Weidner

In the Bleak Midwinter by Harold Darke

Lynette Pfund, soprano

Chris Pfund, tenor

Rev. John Collins, preaching

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

Interim Senior Pastor: Rev. John W. Collins

Associate Pastor for Youth Ministry: Rev. Mark D. Montgomery

Associate Pastor for Communication/Adult Education: Rev. Daniel B. England

Associate Pastor for 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 Communications: 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