

candlelight service 2012
11:00 pm



the first congregational church
of Greenwich

Candlelight Lessons and Carols

Christmas Eve

24 December 2012

11 o'clock in the evening

WELCOME 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

Tafelmusik

G. P. Telemann (1681-1767)

Dorothy Darlington, oboe

Mary Fike, flute

Dr. Craig Scott Symons, harpsichord

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

Craig Scott Symons and Vance Briceland

Reader: "While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger." (*Luke 2:6-7*)

Reader: Tonight, angels far and near sing tender lullabies; well-worn fabric full of years holds in the warmth of parental love; animals and shepherds crowd in tight, glowing with adoration, while a muffled cry squeezes out to greet the world.

People: Tonight we give thanks for every child among us. Each new birth -- regardless of circumstances -- reminds us of the preciousness of life, the potential of tomorrow, the promise of God.

Reader: On this Christmas Eve, we light the Christ candle for the child-King, the infant-Redeemer, the lowly-Lord. And now we know . . . He is born and nothing will ever be the same!

Lighting of the Christ Candle

*CAROL

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

Pilgrim (red) Hymnal 131

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

Olga Hartwell

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

ANTHEM

Let Our Gladness Have No End

The Chancel Choir

Mark Sedio

Dorothy Darlington, oboe

Jayson Engquist, organ

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

Jean Watkins

*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

Stu McCalley

Saint Luke tells of the birth of Jesus.

ANTHEM

Carol of the Birds

The Chancel Choir

Shaw/Parker

Hanna Golodinskii, soprano

THE FOURTH LESSON: Luke 2:8-16

Rev. Mark D. Montgomery

The shepherds go to the manger.

***CAROL**

Joy to the World! The Lord is Come

Pilgrim (red) Hymnal 130

THE FIFTH LESSON: Matthew 2:1-11

Rev. John W. Collins

The wise men worship the child.

ANTHEM

Shepherd's Pipe Carol

The Chancel Choir

John Rutter (b. 1945)

Mary Fike, piccolo

THE SIXTH LESSON: John 1:1-5;9-14

Rev. Avery C. Manchester

Saint John interprets the mystery of the Incarnation.

MEDITATION: *Do You See the Light?*

THE CHRISTMAS OFFERING

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

Little Lamb

Chancel Choir Quartet

John Tavener (b. 1944)

CHRISTMAS PRAYER

ANTHEM

Mary's Lullaby

The Chancel Choir

John Rutter

Dorothy Darlington, oboe

Mary Fike, flute

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

Bring a Torch, Jeanette Isabella

Keith Chapman (1945-1989)

We thank Dorothy Darlington, Mary Fike, Jayson Engquist and Hanna Golodinskii for sharing their musical talents during this evening's service.

The Church Offices will be closed Monday, December 31, 2012 and Tuesday, January 1, 2013 for the New Year Holiday.

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

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The First Congregational Church of Greenwich

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Ministers: The Members of The First Congregational Church of Greenwich

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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