

*Christmas Eve Family Service*  
*December 24, 2013*  
*4:00 pm*



*Artwork by Vonda Drees*

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*The First Congregational Church of Greenwich*

*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.*



# *Family Service with Pageant “Once in Royal David’s City”*

*Christmas Eve*  
24 December 2013  
4 o’clock in the afternoon

**W**elcome to this special Service of Worship at The First Congregational Church on this most holy of days. 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!

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\*All who are able please stand

## PRELUDE

*Noel and Variations*

*Dr. Craig Scott Symons, organ*  
*Henry Kihlken (b. 1939)*

## WELCOME

*Rev. John W. Collins*

## \*CALL TO WORSHIP

*Leader: Tonight old dreams die and new dreams come to life.  
The Promise is fulfilled!*

*People: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace.*

*Leader: Hope gives way to joy and prayer to proclamation.*

*People: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace.*

*Leader: Our candles illuminate our story. Dawn invades midnight.  
The Light of the World has come.*

*People: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace.*

*Leader: And this light is a light for all: igniting a flame within the soul,  
warming us from within, radiating love, lighting our lives with  
the presence of God come alive in human flesh within us and  
among us now and always.*

*People: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, and  
good will to all.*

**\*OPENING CAROL**

*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;  
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;  
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

**LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CHILD CANDLE**

*The Lorthioir Family*

**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**

**ANTHEM**

*See the Little Baby*

*The Children's Choir*

Donald Swift

CAROL

*O Little Town of Bethlehem*

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light;  
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

THE CHRISTMAS STORY – PART 1

Luke 2:1-7

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. 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, because there was no place for them in the inn.

ANTHEM

*Star Carol*

*The Children's Choir*  
Richard Shephard

THE CHRISTMAS STORY – PART 2

Luke 2:8-16

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped

in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!” When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

## CAROL

### *The First Nowell*

The first Nowell, the angel did say,  
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;  
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep,  
On a cold winter’s night that was so deep.  
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,  
Born is the King of Israel.

And by the light of that same star  
Three wise men came from country far;  
To seek for a king was their intent,  
And to follow the star wherever it went.  
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,  
Born is the King of Israel.

Then entered in those wise men three,  
Full reverently upon their knee,  
And offered there, in his presence,  
Their gold and myrrh and frankincense.  
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,  
Born is the King of Israel.

## NATIVITY PAGEANT

### *Once in Royal David’s City*

Henry John Gauntlett

*The congregation is invited to join the choir in singing verse six of  
Once in Royal David’s City:*

Not in that poor lowly stable,  
With the oxen standing by,

We shall see him; but in heaven,  
Set at God's right hand on high;  
Where like stars his children crowned  
All in white shall wait around.

## CALL TO OFFERING

### OFFERING OUR GIFTS TO THE CHRIST CHILD

*If you have brought White Gifts today, they will be given to the children at Covenant to Care.*

## CHRISTMAS CAROLS

### *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*

Hark! The herald angels sing,  
"Glory to the newborn 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!"  
Hark! The herald angels sing,  
"Glory to the newborn King!"

Christ, by highest heaven adored;  
Christ, the everlasting Lord!  
Late in time behold him come,  
Offspring of the Virgin's womb.  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;  
Hail the incarnate Deity,  
Pleased as man with men to dwell,  
Jesus, our Emmanuel.  
Hark! The herald angels sing,  
"Glory to the newborn 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.  
Hark! The herald angels sing,  
“Glory to the newborn King!”

*Away in a Manger*

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,  
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.  
The stars in the sky looked down where he lay,  
The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,  
But little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.  
I love thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky,  
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

*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?  
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.  
This, this is Christ the King,  
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing:  
Haste, haste to bring him laud,  
The babe, the son of Mary.

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh,  
Come peasant, king, to own him;

The king of kings salvation brings,  
Let loving hearts enthrone him.  
This, this is Christ the King,  
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing:  
Haste, haste to bring him laud,  
The babe, the son of Mary.

*Angels We Have Heard on High*

Angels we have heard on high  
Sweetly singing o'er the plains,  
And the mountains in reply  
Echo back their joyous strains.  
Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Shepherds, why this jubilee?  
Why your joyous strains prolong?  
Say what may the tidings be,  
Which inspire your heavenly song.  
Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Come to Bethlehem and see Him  
whose birth the angels sing;  
Come adore on bended knee,  
Christ, the Lord, the newborn King.  
Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo.

*Silent Night, Holy Night*

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.

A PRAYER FOR CHRISTMAS

*Rev. John W. Collins*

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.

\*CAROL

*Joy to the World! The Lord Is Come*

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.  
  
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

POSTLUDE

*In Dulci Jubilo*

J. S. Bach

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Please join us for our Community Carol Sing around the tree at **5:00 pm**, following which you may visit the Crèche.

Additional services this evening are: Communion and Carols at **8:00 pm** and our Candlelight Service at **11:00 pm**.

The Church Offices will be closed Wednesday, December 25 and Thursday, December 26 for Christmas and Tuesday, December 31, 2013 and Wednesday, January 1, 2014 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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[www.fccog.org](http://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