

Christmas Eve 2015

Candlelight Service with Communion

9:00 pm



*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.



Candlelight Service with Communion

Christmas Eve

24 December 2015

9 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

Noel and Variations

Dr. Craig Scott Symons, organ

Henry Kihlken

INTROIT

Shepherd's Gloria

The Youth/Alumni Choir

Mark Patterson

Carolyn Paulus, director

Vance Briceland, piano

WELCOME

Rev. Meghan D. Young

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH AND THE CHRIST CANDLE

The Freeman Family

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord

Leader 1: Through this season of Advent, we have been watching, waiting, and praying for the coming of light into the world. We have longed for the day when the things of darkness – selfishness and greed, suffering and oppression – shall be no more. Our journey has been lit with hope, peace, joy, and love, as we recognized our God who travels with us every step of the way.

All: A light has dawned, and it fills the earth. We go to Bethlehem to see the embodiment of God's grace. Today we light the Christ candle, as we celebrate the God coming to us in human form, bringing light to all the world. The light of the world beckons to us.

Leader 2: May the light of Christ 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: Rejoice and be glad for the possibilities of this good news! Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among all whom God favors! May God's light overwhelm the world and be born anew within us once more. Amen.

The Christ candle is lit.

SHARING THE CHRISTMAS PEACE

Rev. Meghan D. Young

GATHERING PRAYER

Rev. Richard S. DenUyl, Jr.

Leader: Through lush farmland and bleak alleys

People: sweeps good news of great joy!

Leader: Through empty wants and desperate needs

People: blazes a start to light our way.

Leader: Through pounding turmoil and dazing fear

People: sounds an angel chorus:

Glory to God in the highest;

Peace to God's people on earth!

Leader: Receive the news! Follow the star! Heed the angels!

*People: Through song and silence, word and wonder,
let us make our way to Bethlehem.*

*Leader: Let us worship the Holy One
who beckons in an infant's cry.*

***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;

Refrain

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, in the highest; *Refrain*

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning, Jesus, to thee
be glory giv'n. Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing:

Refrain

THE FIRST READING: Luke 2:1-20

Alex Mair, Stephanie Woodman, Ellie Garnett

***CAROL**

Angels We Have Heard on High

Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,
and the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains.

Refrain:

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.

Refrain

*CAROL

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?

Refrain:

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.

Refrain

A CHRISTMAS MEDITATION

Rev. Meghan D. Young

PRAYER

Daniel Lepoutre, Lucinda Allen, Olivia Hartwell

INVITATION TO CHRISTMAS OFFERING

Rev. Richard S. DenUyl, Jr.

ANTHEM

The Sky Can Still Remember

The Youth/Alumni Choir
Basque Carol, Arr. Paul Stephan
Tomina Parvanova, harp

SUNG PRAYER OF DEDICATION

In the Bleak Midwinter

In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,

In the bleak midwinter, long ago.
Our God, heaven cannot hold him, nor earth sustain;
Heaven and earth shall flee away, when he comes to reign;
In the bleak midwinter, a stable place sufficed
The Lord God almighty, Jesus Christ.

Angels and archangels may have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim thronged the air;
But his mother only, in her maiden bliss,
Worshipped the beloved with a kiss.

What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a wise man, I would do my part;
Yet what I can I give him - give my heart.

SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

SERVING OF THE BREAD AND CUP *(Those receiving communion are asked to come forward by the center aisle, receive the bread, proceed to the cup for intinction, then return to their seats by the side aisles.)*

Communion Servers: Gillian Woodman, Jennie Olmsted, Emma Olmsted, Charlotte Lorthioir

UNISON PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Glory to you, O God, our Emmanuel, who has fed and nurtured us by word and sacrament. We give you thanks, O God, that you have come to us through Jesus Christ, both in the midst of time and history in the city of Bethlehem, and in the timeless presence of Christ's Spirit as we receive the gifts of bread and cup. Send us out into the world rejoicing, ready to share your love with the people we meet; through the grace of Jesus Christ. Amen.

SHARING THE CHRIST LIGHT

(Please note that the sanctuary will darken at the beginning of the sharing of the Christ light. For your safety, we ask that you remain seated.)

Introduction

Anthem
O Holy Night

The Youth/Alumni Choir
Adolphe Adam

Passing of the Light

Candlelight will be shared with those at the end of the pews, who are invited to pass it along. Please light your candle by tipping it over a lit one.

Reflecting on the Light

Silent 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.

Silent night, holy night! Wondrous star, lend thy light;
with the angels let us sing Alleluia to our King:
Christ the Savior is born; Christ the Savior is born.

(Please extinguish your candle at the end of "Silent Night")

BENEDICTION

***BENEDICTION RESPONSE**

Joy to the World

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.

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ,
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

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.

POSTLUDE

The Church Offices will be closed Friday, December 25 & Monday, December 28 for Christmas and Friday, January 1, 2016 for the New Year Holiday. The office will be open Monday, January 4, 2016.

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



The First Congregational Church of Greenwich

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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