

*Old Greenwich,
Connecticut*

THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH OF GREENWICH

*United Church
of Christ*

Founded in 1665

The First Sunday after Christmas

27 December 2015

10 o'clock in the morning



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.



We warmly welcome you to The First Congregational Church of Greenwich on this Sunday after Christmas. May the fresh spirit of this beautiful season make our worship time together a blessing of God's grace.

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

Please silence all cell phones and other electronic devices.

**All who are able please stand.*

PRELUDE

Carol Rhapsody

Dr. Craig Scott Symons, organ

Richard Purvis

CALL TO COMMUNITY

Please sign and pass the red book.

Rev. Avery C. Manchester

PRAISING GOD

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: On the threshold of a new year, we sing a song of praise to God.

People: May our lives reflect God's love.

Leader: On the threshold of a new year, we sing a song of hope to God.

People: May our lives be refreshed by God's Spirit.

Leader: On the threshold of a new year, we sing a song of peace to God.

People: May our lives be made peaceful by God's grace.

Leader: On the threshold of a new year, we worship God together.

People: May our lives be a reflection of God's compassion.

*HYMN

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!”

OPENING PRAYER

Our loving God, we bask in the glow of the Christmas miracle with hopeful spirits and renewed commitment for creating a

peaceful world. We ask for your strength in seeing more clearly your plan for our lives. We pray that the inspiration of the child in the manger will be a true power that will help us look up from the distractions of our lives, that we might see the beauty of life and the gifts of this world. May our prayer be a prayer of thanksgiving, that as the carols fade and the gifts are put away, your love might continue to shine in our souls. We ask in Jesus' name, whose prayer we pray saying,

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.

HEARING GOD'S WORD

FIRST LESSON

Daniel Lepoutre

Acts 7:51-60

“**A**nd you continue, so bullheaded! Calluses on your hearts, flaps on your ears! Deliberately ignoring the Holy Spirit, you're just like your ancestors. Was there ever a prophet who didn't get the same treatment? Your ancestors killed anyone who dared talk about the coming of the Just One. And you've kept up the family tradition—traitors and murderers, all of you. You had God's Law handed to you by angels—gift-wrapped!—and you squandered it!”

At that point they went wild, a rioting mob of catcalls and whistles and invective. But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, hardly noticed—he only had eyes for God, whom he saw in all his glory with Jesus standing at his side. He said, “Oh! I see heaven wide open and the Son of Man standing at God's side!”

Yelling and hissing, the mob drowned him out. Now in full stampede, they dragged him out of town and pelted him with rocks.

The ringleaders took off their coats and asked a young man named Saul to watch them.

As the rocks rained down, Stephen prayed, “Master Jesus, take my life.” Then he knelt down, praying loud enough for everyone to hear, “Master, don’t blame them for this sin”—his last words. Then he died.

From *The Message*

ANTHEM

While By My Sheep

The Chancel Choir

Hugo Jungst

SECOND LESSON

Joe McBride

Colossians 3:12-17

So, chosen by God for this new life of love, dress in the wardrobe God picked out for you: compassion, kindness, humility, quiet strength, discipline. Be even-tempered, content with second place, quick to forgive an offense. Forgive as quickly and completely as the Master forgave you. And regardless of what else you put on, wear love. It’s your basic, all-purpose garment. Never be without it.

Let the peace of Christ keep you in tune with each other, in step with each other. None of this going off and doing your own thing. And cultivate thankfulness. Let the Word of Christ—the Message—have the run of the house. Give it plenty of room in your lives. Instruct and direct one another using good common sense. And sing, sing your hearts out to God! Let every detail in your lives—words, actions, whatever—be done in the name of the Master, Jesus, thanking God the Father every step of the way.

From *The Message*

* HYMN

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.*

Refrain
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.
Refrain

Then entered in those wise men three,
Full reverently upon their knee,
And offered there, in his presence,
Their gold and myrrh and frankincense.
Refrain

SERMON

Is Your Faith Contagious?

Rev. Avery C. Manchester

PASTORAL PRAYER

CAROL SING

Good King Wenceslas
Good King Wenceslas looked out
on the feast of Stephen,
when the snow lay round about,
deep and crisp and even.
Brightly shone the moon that night,
though the frost was cruel,
when a poor man came in sight,
gathering winter fuel.

“Sire, the night is darker now,
and the wind blows stronger;
fails my heart, I know not how;
I can go no longer.”
“Mark my footsteps, my good page,
tread thou in them boldly.

*Thou shalt find the winter's rage
freeze your blood less coldly."*

*In his master's steps he trod,
where the snow lay dinted;
heat was in the very sod
which the saint had printed.
Therefore, Christians all, be sure,
wealth or rank possessing,
ye who now will bless the poor,
shall yourselves find blessing.*

It Came Upon a 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.*

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!

Shepherds, why this jubilee?

Why your joyous strains prolong?

What the gladsome tidings be

Which inspire your heavenly song?

Refrain

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

Good Christian friends, rejoice

With heart and soul and voice;

Give ye heed to what we say:

Jesus Christ is born today;

Ox and ass before him bow,

And he is in the manger now.

Christ is born today! Christ is born today!

Good Christian friends, rejoice

With heart and soul and voice;

Now ye hear of endless bliss:

Jesus Christ was born for this!

He has opened heaven's door,

And we are blest forevermore.

Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!

Good Christian friends, rejoice

With heart and soul and voice;

Now ye need not fear the grave;

Jesus Christ was born to save!

Calls you one and calls you all

To gain his everlasting hall.

Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

Lo, How a Rose e're Blooming

Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming

from tender stem hath sprung,

of Jesse's lineage coming as men of old have sung.

*It came a floweret bright, amid the cold of winter,
when half-spent was the night.*

*Isaiah 'twas foretold it,
the Rose I have in mind:
with Mary we behold it, the virgin mother kind.
To show God's love aright she bore to men a Savior
when half-spent was the night.*

RESPONDING TO GOD

CALL TO OFFERING

OFFERTORY

The Savior of the World is Come

The Chancel Choir

Gustav Holst

***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**

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 men their songs employ;

While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains

Repeat the sounding joy,

*Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.*

*No more let sins and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found,
Far as the curse is found,
Far as, far as, the curse is found.*

*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**

***CHORAL RESPONSE**

POSTLUDE

Swiss Noel

L. C. D'Aquin

* * *

*Directly following the service, one of our pastors will remain in the
Chapel to be available to anyone who has a pastoral care concern.*

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

Calendar

NEXT WEEK

Caregivers Support Group in January

Our Caregivers Support Group will meet next *Sunday, January 3, 2016* from 11:15 am to 12:00 pm in the Binney Conference Room. This group, which meets the first Sunday of each month, is for those who currently are, or recently have been, a caregiver for a family member or friend. Dorothy Mueller, FCCOG Stephen Minister is the group facilitator and can be reached at 203-588-9896 or email: dorothymueller1@gmail.com.

NEWS AND NOTICES

Hats Off Book Discussion Group in January

Our book study group, *Hats Off*, begins again on *Thursday, January 7* in the Binney Conference Room (2nd floor of the Church Office building) from 10:00-11:30 am. The first book of 2016 is *American Nations: A History of the Eleven Rival Regional Cultures of North America* 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. See you there!

Happy New Year from The Rummage Room *191 Sound Beach Avenue*

Monday, December 28-31, 2015: The Rummage Room is closed.
Monday, January 4, 2016: The shop will **reopen** at 10:00 am and close at 5:00 pm. Winter clothing will be 50% off for the week.

Manager Leanne's Wish List: Winter hats, gloves, scarves and sleds. There is also the need for shopping bags!

Please consider volunteering as a temp in 2016. Call Manager Leanne at 203-637-1875 and find a time that fits your schedule. Two to four hours a week would be greatly appreciated. Many of the regular volunteers go south for the winter and The Rummage Room needs your help. Thanks for your consideration!

Thought for 2016: *"If you possess something but you can't give it away, then you don't possess it... it possesses you."* -Frank Sinatra (1915-1998).

Note: If we all went through our closets and donated those things to The Rummage Room we possess but never wear or use, it would accomplish two things: 1) Getting rid of some of our unneeded things, and 2) helping add to the more than 5 million dollars The Rummage Room has donated to women, children and family organizations in the past 50 years.

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 to Neighbor –

Food Collection Barrel in Entrance to the Church

Please don't forget those in need this holiday season.

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