

The First Congregational Church of Greenwich
Founded in 1665

26 August 2018

10 o'clock in the morning



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 service of worship at The First Congregational Church of Greenwich on this Sunday morning. Please join us after worship for our Community Hour in the Memory Garden.

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

(Please silence all cell phones and other electronic devices.)

PRELUDE

Dr. Craig Scott Symons, piano

CALL TO COMMUNITY

Rev. Carla Dietz

(Please sign and pass the red Fellowship Pad found at the end of your pew.)

PRAISING GOD

*** CALL TO WORSHIP**

One: God is our strength,

All: God is our hope,

One: God is our way of love.

All: We come now to this house of worship, this family of prayer,

One: To boldly declare the hope we find in our strong God of love.

All: Amen!

*** PASSING OF THE PEACE**

(Peace be with you.)

*** HYMN**

Be Thou My Vision

Pilgrim (red) Hymnal 391

INVOCATION

Rev. Carla Dietz

(Or Opening Prayer. We call on God for help & presence. We call on the living God who has made a covenant with us through Jesus the Christ)

Where God dwells, that place is our delight. Where God dwells, our souls long to be. We sing with all we are, heart and body; we sing for joy to the God of life.

The smallest sparrow finds in God a place to dwell, to lay her young.

All who find their home in God know joy, and ever sing God's praise!

All who find their strength in God, who walk God's way of love and hope, all will sprinkle seeds of life, will grow from strength to strength. We cry to the God of the saints who go before us, "Hear our prayer! O, hear our prayer!" God is life and light and joy, bestowing favor, honor, all good things; all who trust God's way of love will know joy forever more!

Amen.

--Inspired by Psalm 84

PRAYER OF REFLECTION

(When we admit that we have not always been our best. It's a chance to unburden our hearts)

One: Your way, O God, is not always easy,

All: forgive us when we falter.

One: We fall away from your way of peace, take up arms in attack, use violent words and acts, strike back, strike first, reject the best of human being. Your way, O God, is not always easy,

All: forgive us when we falter.

One: We let go the strength of the Spirit, your teaching, your wisdom, your word; our mighty tongues cut deep wounds in others, and ourselves. Your way, O God, is not always easy,

All: forgive us when we falter.

One: We remove the belt of truth, set down faith's shield, put off the helmet of salvation, and, vulnerable to fear, build fortresses of lies, and bind ourselves to hate. Your way, O God, is not always easy,

All: forgive us when we falter.

WORDS OF AFFIRMATION

(Assurance you are forgiven.)

HEARING GOD'S WORD

FIRST LESSON

Pat Larrabee

Psalm 84

How lovely is your dwelling place,
O Lord of hosts!
My soul longs, indeed it faints
for the courts of the Lord;
my heart and my flesh sing for joy
to the living God.
Even the sparrow finds a home,
and the swallow a nest for herself,
where she may lay her young,
at your altars, O Lord of hosts,
my King and my God.
Happy are those who live in your house,
ever singing your praise.
Happy are those whose strength is in you,
in whose heart are the highways to Zion.
As they go through the valley of Baca
they make it a place of springs;
the early rain also covers it with pools.
They go from strength to strength;
the God of gods will be seen in Zion.
O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer;
give ear, O God of Jacob!
Behold our shield, O God;
look on the face of your anointed.
For a day in your courts is better
than a thousand elsewhere.
I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God
than live in the tents of wickedness.
For the Lord God is a sun and shield;
he bestows favor and honor.
No good thing does the Lord withhold
from those who walk uprightly.

O Lord of hosts,
happy is everyone who trusts in you.

– New Revised Standard Version

SECOND LESSON

Ephesians 6: 10-20

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness. As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace. With all of these, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints. Pray also for me, so that when I speak, a message may be given to me to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it boldly, as I must speak.

– New Revised Standard Version

MESSAGE

Armor of Love

Rev. Carla Dietz

SOLO

Lord God of Abraham

Thomas Woodman, bass
Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

Draw near, all ye people, come to me!
Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel,
this day let it be known that Thou art God,
and that I am Thy servant!

Lord God of Abraham!
Oh shew to all this people
that I have done these things according to Thy word.

Oh hear me, Lord, and answer me!
Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel,
Oh hear me and answer me,
and shew this people that Thou art Lord God.
And let their hearts again be turned!

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Rev. Carla Dietz

(Praise for who God is, with thanksgiving for what God does and with requests for
God to heal, transform, renew us and help us work out the complications of our
lives.)

Sung Response:

**Don't be afraid, my love is stronger,
My love is stronger than your fear.
Don't be afraid, my love is stronger,
And I have promised, promised to be always near.**

**All: God's way of love needs strength to walk it; God's way of
love gives strength if we will receive it, for God's love is
stronger than our fear. (Sung Response)**

**We are afraid, God, for the places in the world that are at
war – so many – and we fear the terror that may wash
upon our shores. Our leaders are afraid, and they feel
our fear, but they do not always respond with love, and
those responses frighten us. (Sung Response)**

**We are afraid, God, for the influence of advertisers
telling us what more we need to have; of media telling us
which stories we need to know, but not telling us the
stories we know we need; our quickness to follow and
forget your way of wisdom frightens us. (Sung
Response)**

**We are afraid, God, for the little ones in our world,
children, hungry, lonely, persecuted, oppressed;
prisoners and victims; refugees and indigenous peoples;**

homeless and unemployed; it is so easy not to see that it frightens us. (Sung Response)

God's way of love needs strength to walk it; God will be our strength, if we allow it, for God's love is stronger than our fear. Amen.

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.

RESPONDING TO GOD

CALL TO OFFERING

(Humbly and in good measure, we offer our tithes and offerings in thanks to God.)

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

The Summer Choir

Though You Have Not Seen Him

Craig Scott Symons

Though you have not seen him, you love him.
Though you do not see him, but believe in him.
Though you have not seen him,
you rejoice greatly with joy inexpressible.
And full of glory, obtaining as the outcome
of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

* DOXOLOGY

Praise God from whom all_ bless - ings flow; Praise God all crea-tures here be - low.

9
Praise God a - bove ye_ hea - ven'ly host; Cre - a - tor, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost. A - men.

*** DEDICATION OF THE OFFERING**

May these gifts we offer sing your praise, and welcome home those who yearn to dwell in peace, in hope, and in love. Amen.

GOING FORTH TO SERVE GOD

*** HYMN**

Siyahamba (We Are Marching in the
Light of God)

New Century (black) Hymnal 526

*** BENEDICTION**

*** CHORAL RESPONSE**

POSTLUDE

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

A Note about Welcoming Children

To our parents: relax! God put the wiggle in children, do not feel you have to suppress it during worship. The presence of children is a gift to the church, which offers hope for all. Jesus said, "Let the children come to me." At First Church we believe that the way we welcome children in worship directly affects the way they respond to God, the church, and to one another. To the members of our congregation, please know that a smile of encouragement is always welcome to parents with small, active children.

For those who are interested, we do have child care available for babies and toddlers every Sunday, for the entirety of the church service, in the preschool classrooms. For toddlers and preschoolers who stay in church, there is a PrayGround in front of the chapel with a rug and a few quiet play things. The first pew of the chapel is reserved for parents to supervise their children if you do not need to be on the rug with them. There are also additional children's books on the bookshelves near the back of the chapel.

Radio Ministry

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.

NEWS AND NOTICES

TODAY

Child Care

Child Care will be provided in the Blue Door classroom in the preschool. Looking ahead to Church School, sign up online now at fccog.org. Church School begins on Homecoming Sunday.

Parish Nurse

Sue Asselin, RN, is available for blood pressure screenings and health consultations following today's worship service. If our Community Hour is held outside, Sue will be in the Memory Garden. If held inside due to weather, Sue will be available in her office, to the right of the Auditorium stage.

UPCOMING

Beach Services Schedule

Our final beach service by the Innis Arden Cottage will be September 2 at 8 am.

Bible Study Class with Rev. Carla Dietz

Come join in on a rousing weekly conversation on the Bible readings of the week. This is a 'no holds barred' kind of group where everyone's voice matters. Classes take place on Thursdays at 11 am in the Pastor's Office. After Labor Day, this class will move to 11:30 am.

Summer Sings

Our 8th season of Summer Sings concludes on Thursday, August 30 when First Church's Director of Music, Craig Symons will lead the

singers in Leonard Bernstein's Chichester Psalms, honoring what would have been the composer's 100th birthday on August 25. Non-singers are welcome, free of charge, to enjoy this evening of community singing. Music will be provided. Hospitality, refreshments, and fun are all included! No sign-up necessary, just come ready to sing. Donation is \$10 per singer.

Save the Date for Homecoming Sunday: September 9, 2018

Please join us for our traditional welcome back picnic and festivities. We'll have our ever popular bouncy houses and more! Mark your calendars. Signups will begin in August on line and at coffee hour. We look forward to seeing you all!

**News from the Rummage Room
191 Sound Beach Avenue, Old Greenwich**

It was the week before Reopening, and we all moved with haste
To make sure the 'new' merchandise was all in its right place.
The clothing was hung on the hangers with great care,
In the hopes that crowds of customers soon would be there!
The shelves they are a bulging with many great buys—
Like clothing for the ladies and suits for the guys!
This may be the best Reopening in many a year,
Raising funds for the many in need, far and near.

Tuesday, September 4: The Rummage Room will celebrate its 54th Grand Reopening at 10 am with all 'new' merchandise. Please mark your calendars as the day will be the biggest event of the year at "The Best Little Shop in Town."

Wednesday, September 5: Donations will be accepted 9:30 am to 4:30 pm. Please do not leave donations before this date—thank you. Every time someone shops or donates at the Rummage Room, they are providing comfort to those less fortunate. It has been a 54-year tradition, thanks to shoppers, donors, volunteers and the dedicated staff at the Rummage Room.

Caregivers Support Group

Please join us for the Caregivers Support Group for those who currently are, recently have been, or no longer are, a caregiver for a family member or friend. The group offers a confidential place where participants can share experiences, learn new information, and receive emotional support and comfort from others in similar

situations. The group meets on the second Sunday of the month from 11:15 am - 12:15 pm in the Binney Conference Room. Dorothy Mueller, FCCOG Stephen Minister, is the group facilitator. For more information, please call Dorothy at (203) 588-9896, or email: dorothymueller1@gmail.com.

**Next Week at First Church
Sunday, September 2**

Rev. Patrick Collins, preaching

Music by the Summer Choir
Bread of the World—Carleton Young

Music by Linnea Conley, mezzo soprano,
and Daniel Young, tenor
I Waited for the Lord—Felix Mendelssohn



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. Carla Dietz
Associate Pastor: Rev. Patrick Collins
Associate Pastor for Pastoral Care: Rev. Avery C. Manchester
Minister of Music: Dr. Craig Scott Symons
Director of Family Ministries: Rosemary Lamie
Director of Church Administration & Finance: Steve Summerton
Administrative Assistant - Operations: Donna White
Director of Membership: Ginny Breismeister
Parish Nurse: Susan Asselin, RN
Director of Preschool: Darla Kohler Steiner
Publications Coordinator: Vance Briceland
Pastors Emeriti: Rev. Dr. Thomas L. Stiers & Rev. Sally Colegrove

Cover Art: Pierre Paul Rubens, Jeanne d'Arc