

The First Congregational Church of Greenwich
Founded in 1665

Second Sunday of Advent
9 December 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 Auditorium.

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

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

PRELUDE

Wachet auf, ruft uns die stimme

Dr. Craig Scott Symons, organ

J. S. Bach (1685-1750)

CALL TO COMMUNITY

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

Reverend Carla Dietz

STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

PRAISING GOD

CHORAL INTROIT

CALL TO WORSHIP

(Prepares us for the purpose of service and sets the tone, orienting us toward a worship mindset)

One: This very morning you will hear the voice of God. But how will we listen?

All: We reach out to one another.

One: Let us shake the hand of one person next to us. (pause)

All: We want to hear the voice of God.

One: Be companions as together we listen.

All: In worship, let us listen for God.

One: Come let us worship!

*** HYMN**

Hope Is a Candle

(See Insert)

INVOCATION

Reverend Patrick Collins

(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)

LIGHTING OF THE SECOND ADVENT CANDLE

Rosemary Lamie & the Church School Task Force

Readers: As we enter the Second Sunday in the Season of Advent, we think about new life and promises kept. As we light the candles, think of the sound of promises kept. Listen as the flame ignites.

MUSIC DURING CANDLE LIGHTING

The Palmer Handbell Choir

'Twas in the Moon of Wintertime

Arr. Douglas Wagner (b. 1952)

Children: Consider the way our hearts are drawn to the light & let us pray...

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.

(All sing, as children exit)

**Jesus loves me! This I know, For the Bible tells me so;
Little ones to Him belong; They are weak, but He is strong.**

**(Refrain) Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.**

**Jesus loves me still today, Walking with me on my way,
Wanting as a friend to give Light and love to all who live.
(Refrain)**

(After the Lord's Prayer, children and teachers will all go to their classrooms in the Preschool, except the 6th graders who are in Rick's Room. Child Care is in the Red Door.)

PRAYER OF REFLECTION & AFFIRMATION

One: Our ears have been full of the sounds of doubt.

All: Our mouths have been full of the sounds of doubt.

One: In this season of preparation and anticipation we know that
"Love may overflow more and more with the knowledge and
full insight to help you to determine what is best,

**All: so that in the day of Christ we may be pure and
blameless."**

– Based on Philippians 1: 9-10

HEARING GOD'S WORD

FIRST LESSON—HEBREW BIBLE

Fred Laffan

Baruch 5:1-9

Take off the garment of your sorrow and affliction, O Jerusalem,
and put on forever the beauty of the glory from God.

Put on the robe of the righteousness that comes from God;
put on your head the diadem of the glory of the Everlasting;
for God will show your splendor everywhere under heaven.

For God will give you evermore the name,
"Righteous Peace, Godly Glory."

Arise, O Jerusalem, stand upon the height;
look toward the east,

and see your children gathered from west and east
at the word of the Holy One,
rejoicing that God has remembered them.

For they went out from you on foot,
led away by their enemies;

but God will bring them back to you,
carried in glory, as on a royal throne.

For God has ordered that every high mountain and the everlasting
hills be made low

and the valleys filled up, to make level ground,
so that Israel may walk safely in the glory of God.

The woods and every fragrant tree
have shaded Israel at God's command.

For God will lead Israel with joy,
in the light of his glory,
with the mercy and righteousness that come from him.
— New Revised Standard Bible

ANTHEM

A Spotless Rose

The Chancel Choir
Herbert Howells (1892-1983)
Daniel Young, tenor

A spotless Rose is blowing sprung from a tender root,
Of ancient seers' foreshowing, of Jesse promised fruit;
Its fairest bud unfolds to light amid the cold, cold winter
And in the dark midnight.

The Rose which I am singing, whereof Isaiah said,
Is from its sweet root springing in Mary, purest Maid;
For through our God's great love and might
The blessed babe she bare us in a cold, cold winter's night.

SECOND LESSON—GOSPEL

Luke 1: 68-79 & 3:1-6

“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,
for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them.
He has raised up a mighty savior for us
in the house of his servant David,
as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,
that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of
all who hate us.
Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors,
and has remembered his holy covenant,
the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham,
to grant us that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies,
might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness
before him all our days.
And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,
to give knowledge of salvation to his people
by the forgiveness of their sins.
By the tender mercy of our God,
the dawn from on high will break upon us,

to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight.

Every valley shall be filled,
and every mountain and hill shall be made low,

and the crooked shall be made straight,

and the rough ways made smooth;

and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”

– New Revised Standard Bible

MESSAGE

Promises and Praise

Reverend Carla Dietz

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

(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.)

*** HYMN**

Now Bless the God of Israel

New Century (black) hymnal 110

RESPONDING TO GOD

CALL TO OFFERING

Andrea Woodman

OFFERTORY SOLO

Ave Maria

Hanna Golodinskii, soprano

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

*** DOXOLOGY**

Pilgrim (red) Hymnal 515

(Offering praise and thanksgiving for meeting our needs and for using us to bring
God's mission to the world.)

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all
creatures here below; Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

*** DEDICATION OF THE OFFERING**

GOING FORTH TO SERVE GOD

*** HYMN**

My Soul Gives Glory to My God New Century (black) Hymnal 119

*** BENEDICTION**

*** CHORAL RESPONSE**

POSTLUDE

Today, God's Only Son Has Come to Us

J. S. Bach

* All who are able, please stand
* * *

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

The flowers in the Meetinghouse this morning have been given with
grateful memories of their parents, by Barbara and John Norrgard.

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 the back of the chapel with a rug and a few quiet play things. Chairs and rocking chairs are 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 is there as well as a link to the live broadcast. Previous sermon recordings are also available.

NEWS AND NOTICES

TODAY

Church School

Today our children will continue to learn about Advent and the scriptures of Jesus' birth story. Next Sunday, December 16, is the annual Christmas Party with our friends at Pilgrim Towers. We will be taking our congregation's Giving Tree gifts. Let Rosemary know if you would like to join in. Also, we are still looking for participants in the Nativity Pageants especially the 3pm service.

Choir Rehearsals

The following choirs will meet today:

- Cherub Choir: Rainbow Room (Lower Level) 11:15-11:45
- Children's Choir: Music Room (3rd floor) 11:15-12:00
- Youth Choir: Choir Room (3rd floor) 11:15-12:15

Parish Nurse

Sue Asselin, RN, is available for blood pressure screenings and health consultations following today's worship service, in her office to the right of the Auditorium stage. During the week, she is available by appointment, which can be made by calling extension 821.

UPCOMING

First Church Christmas Party: Sign Up Now!

Come celebrate the holidays with your First Church family! Please join us for fun and generous hors d'oeuvres on Saturday, December 15 from 5 to 7:30 pm in the church auditorium. There will be a full bar. Please RSVP by Monday, December 10. For reservations contact Ginny Breismeister at ginnyb@fccog.org, register on line at fccog.org or call the church office 203 637-1791. Babysitter recommendations available. Join us for this festive complementary Christmas celebration!

First Church Cookie Walk

The third annual First Church Cookie Walk is fast approaching! On Sunday, December 16 we will all have the opportunity to participate in a festive sale of delectable Christmas cookies and treats provided by all you wonderful bakers. Bakers will receive “priority” stickers to fill your box first and then non bakers may go through the line. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Boxes will be \$5 each. Proceeds will go to the Pastor’s discretionary fund for emergency relief. Fire up your ovens, get out the flour and sugar and bake for a fun time and help those in need! Please sign up in coffee hour indicating that you will bring cookies.

Christmas Memorial Flowers and Decorations

The Chancel Committee invites contributions for holiday decorations for the Meetinghouse this Christmas. Any amount is welcome. Please see the form enclosed in this bulletin, or pick one up from the church office, and submit your contribution by Tuesday, December 18.

Now Casting for the Christmas Eve Nativity Pageants

Do you know that on Christmas Eve we have three nativity pageants? We need Marys and Josephs, shepherds and angels, kings, little drummer boys, and even some farm animals.

At the 10 am service, any children who arrive by 9:20 am can be in the pageant. For both the 3 pm and 6 pm services, we also need an angel who is willing to climb the ladder and spread your wings. For the 3 and 6 pm services, you will need to choose costumes and rehearse on Saturday, December 22, from 10 am to Noon. There are no speaking parts! How easy can this be! All you need to do is act the

part of the character you are portraying and smile. So as soon as your family knows which service you will be attending and if you want to be part of the fun, just let Rosemary know.

(RosemaryL@fccog.org). She will be so happy to hear from you.

First Church Giving Trees

Thank you for your generosity with your gifts for those at H.O.M.E. (Homeworkers Organized for More Employment) and at Pilgrim Towers. The gifts are so appreciated. Special thanks to Ruth and Giff Reed for being Santa, yet again, delivering the H.O.M.E. gifts to Maine and to Rosemary who is organizing the Christmas party at Pilgrim Towers.

News from the Rummage Room

191 Sound Beach Avenue, Old Greenwich

Saturday: December 15: The Rummage Room closes for the holidays at 1 pm and will reopen Wednesday, January 2, 2019, at 10 am.

Please do not leave donations while the Rummage Room is closed. There will be no one to process donations. We will accept donations again starting Wednesday, January 2, at 10 am.

Thought for the Holidays: Live simply, love generously, care deeply, speak kindly, and leave the rest to God.

The management and volunteers of the Rummage Room wish you and your families a very happy holidays.

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 Youth 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.



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

Director of Membership: Ginny Breismeister

Parish Nurse: Susan Asselin, RN

Director of Preschool: Darla Kohler Steiner

Administrative Assistant: Wendy Spezzano

Publications Coordinator: Vance Briceland

Database Administrative Assistant: Sue Wilder

Pastors Emeriti: Rev. Dr. Thomas L. Stiers & Rev. Sally Colegrove