

The First Congregational Church of Greenwich
Founded in 1665

Third Sunday of Advent
16 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

In dulci júbilo

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 Patrick Collins

PRAISING GOD

CHORAL INTROIT

CALL TO WORSHIP

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

Reverend Patrick Collins

Leader: We come to share together. To celebrate the God who is present amongst us.

People: The Lord our God is our strength and song, and is even now our salvation.

Leader: We come to share together. To celebrate with all the world, that the Lord is God.

People: With joy we gather around God's fountain of grace to be refreshed and renewed.

Leader: We come to share together. To celebrate with songs of praise and joy for the Lord our God's eternal presence is forever amongst and with us, and all peoples.

People: We sing with joy: Thank the Lord, our Mighty God! Praise God's holy name! Amen.

*** HYMN**

Angels from the Realms of Glory New Century (black) Hymnal 126

INVOCATION

Reverend Avery C. Manchester

(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)

**Holy God, we long for your peace, and trust in your promise.
We hear your call to turn toward you, to change our lives and
welcome you in. Meet us here and fill our minds with your
wisdom and our hearts with your peace, that our worship
together may open us to the challenge of your dream of
wholeness for all. In the Name of the One who is coming, we
pray. Amen!**

LIGHTING OF THE THIRD ADVENT CANDLE

Daniel Young, Bonnie Kelley-Young, Rory Young

MUSIC DURING

CANDLE LIGHTING

The Palmer Handbell Choir

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

Arr. Douglas Wagner (b. 1952)

**All: May this light serve as an invitation to draw near to God,
for in the light of this candle we can feel God's warmth,
we can see more clearly, and together, we can find joy
in our hearts and our world.**

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Charlotte Betts St. Amor, daughter of
Katherine and Edgar St. Amor

BAPTISM PRAYER (in unison)

**Gracious God, giver of life, you have called us by name, and
pledge to each of us your faithful love. We pray today for your
blessing on Charlotte, that you will watch over her and guide
her as she grows in faith. Remind us of the promises of our own
baptism, and renew our trust in you. Make us strong to obey
your will and to serve you with joy, through the power of your
Holy Spirit. All of this we pray as Jesus taught us 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.

BAPTISMAL RESPONSE

Child of Blessing,

Child of Promise

New Century (black) Hymnal 325

**Child of blessing, child of promise,
baptized with the Spirit's sign;
With this water God has sealed you
unto love and grace divine.**

**Child of God, your loving Parent,
learn to know whose child you are.
Grow to laugh and sing and worship,
trust and love God more than all.**

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

HEARING GOD'S WORD

FIRST LESSON—HEBREW BIBLE Andrea Woodman Osker

Isaiah 12: 2-6

God is indeed my salvation;

I will trust and won't be afraid.

Yah, the Lord, is my strength and my shield;

he has become my salvation."

You will draw water with joy from the springs of salvation.

And you will say on that day:

"Thank the Lord; call on God's name;

proclaim God's deeds among the peoples;

declare that God's name is exalted.

Sing to the Lord, who has done glorious things;

proclaim this throughout all the earth.”
Shout and sing for joy, city of Zion,
because the holy one of Israel is great among you.

– Common English Bible

ANTHEM

The Friendly Beasts

The Children’s Choir
15th Century French Melody
Dr. Craig Scott Symons, director
Vance Briceland, piano

SECOND LESSON—GOSPEL

Luke 3: 7-18

Then John said to the crowds who came to be baptized by him, “You children of snakes! Who warned you to escape from the angry judgment that is coming soon? Produce fruit that shows you have changed your hearts and lives. And don’t even think about saying to yourselves, Abraham is our father. I tell you that God is able to raise up Abraham’s children from these stones. The ax is already at the root of the trees. Therefore, every tree that doesn’t produce good fruit will be chopped down and tossed into the fire.”

The crowds asked him, “What then should we do?”

He answered, “Whoever has two shirts must share with the one who has none, and whoever has food must do the same.”

Even tax collectors came to be baptized. They said to him, “Teacher, what should we do?”

He replied, “Collect no more than you are authorized to collect.”

Soldiers asked, “What about us? What should we do?”

He answered, “Don’t cheat or harass anyone, and be satisfied with your pay.”

The people were filled with expectation, and everyone wondered whether John might be the Christ. John replied to them all, “I baptize you with water, but the one who is more powerful than me is coming. I’m not worthy to loosen the strap of his sandals. He will

baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. The shovel he uses to sift the wheat from the husks is in his hands. He will clean out his threshing area and bring the wheat into his barn. But he will burn the husks with a fire that can't be put out." With many other words John appealed to them, proclaiming good news to the people.

– New Revised Standard Bible

MESSAGE

Good News of Great Joy

Reverend Patrick Collins

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Reverend Avery C. Manchester

(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**

With Joy Draw Water

New Century (black) hymnal 109

RESPONDING TO GOD

CALL TO OFFERING

Andrea Woodman

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

The Chancel Choir

Gaudete

Arr. David Haas (b. 1957)

*** 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**

Joy to the World

Pilgrim (red) Hymnal 130

*** BENEDICTION**

* CHORAL RESPONSE

POSTLUDE

Nowell to a Ground

Colin Hand (b. 1929)

* 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 are given in celebration of the baptism of Charlotte Betts St. Amor, by her parents, Katherine and Edgar St. Amor.

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 conclude their lessons on Advent and the scriptures of Jesus' birth story. Next Sunday, we will have a One Room Schoolhouse gathering in the Daniels Center.

Also today is the annual Christmas Party with our friends at Pilgrim Towers. Immediately after the service, we will meet in the hallway outside the church office to pack up our cars with our congregation's Giving Tree gifts and head over to the party nearby in Stamford. We conclude between 12:30 and 1:00 pm.

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.

First Church Cookie Walk

The third annual First Church Cookie Walk is today! Following the service, we will all have the opportunity to participate in a festive sale of delectable Christmas cookies and treats provided by all you wonderful bakers. 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.

UPCOMING

Christmas Memorial Flowers and Decorations

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

Donations for Pacific House

First Church and the First Church Pre-School are coordinating a donation drive for Pacific House in Stamford. The cold weather has increased the number of occupants at the emergency men's shelter, and, because of the increase, they are in desperate need of clean, new, or gently used towels all sizes. Donations may be dropped off in the Church Office or outside of the Pre-School from December 16 thru January 31.

Volunteers Still Needed for 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 especially for the 3 pm service. If you and family will be here for the 10 am, 3 pm or 6 pm services, please encourage your children to give the pageant a try. At the 10 am service, any children who arrive by 9:20 am can be in the pageant. 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! Contact Rosemary at (RosemaryL@fccog.org). She will be so happy to hear from you!

News from the Rummage Room

191 Sound Beach Avenue, Old Greenwich

Merry Christmas from the Rummage Room! The Rummage Room is closed for the holidays. We will reopen Wednesday, January 2, 2019, at 10 am. Please do not leave donations while the Rummage Room is closed.

The decorations in the window will remain until the shop reopens on Wednesday, January 3, 2019. If you are out and about during the holidays, make it a point to drive by and see the wonderful windows

done by Leanne Meyer and Nancy Hamilton. They are beautiful as always!

Wednesday, January 2: The Rummage Room will reopen for business at 10 am with many great winter items for you and your family.

It has taken a village to make the Rummage Room what it's become over the past more than fifty years. There are so many women's and children's causes locally and around the world that have benefitted from the literally millions of dollars raised and allocated by the Rummage Room. It is impossible properly to thank all of those who have contributed to the good works of this amazing little shop.

In the spirit of the season, Mgr. Leanne, the Volunteers, the Assistant Managers, and the Rummage Room Board wish all our shoppers and donors a merry Christmas and a wonderful 2019.

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