

*The First Congregational Church of Greenwich*  
*Founded in 1665*

**Fourth Sunday of Advent**  
**23 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 in the **Lounge** after worship for our Community Hour.

Please silence all cell phones and other electronic devices.  
\*All who are able please stand.

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### **PREPARING FOR WORSHIP**

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

**PRELUDE**  
Carol Rhapsody

Dr. Craig Scott Symons, organ  
Richard Purvis (1913-1994)

**CALL TO COMMUNITY**

Reverend Carla Dietz

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

### **PRAISING GOD**

**CHORAL INTROIT**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

Reverend Carla Dietz

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

One: God chose an unexpected village as the birthplace for the Messiah.

**All: Our God is full of surprises!**

One: God called an older woman and a young girl to be prophets.

**All: Our God is full of surprises!**

One: God calls ordinary people – you and me – to work for justice and healing in our land.

**All: Our God is full of surprises!**

One: Come, let us worship our surprising God.

**\* HYMN**

Angels We Have Heard on High

Pilgrim (red) Hymnal 116

**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)

One: Restore us, O God.

**All: Let your face shine on us!**

One: When we are far away,

**All: restore us to your presence.**

One: When we eat the bread of tears,

**All: restore us so that we are filled with good things.**

One: When we are filled with pride and power,

**All: restore us to humble simplicity.**

One: Restore us, O God.

**All: Let your face shine so that we may be saved! Amen.**

**LIGHTING OF THE FOURTH ADVENT CANDLE**

Ginny Breismeister & Wendy Spezzano

**MUSIC DURING**

**CANDLE LIGHTING**

The Palmer Handbell Choir

O Come, All Ye Faithful

Arr. Douglas Wagner (b. 1952)

**All: As we light the Advent candles, we remember that God satisfies our wonder. What do you wonder God's goodness is like? Teach us to sing your praise, O God. Teach us to sing with notes formed by hopes and acts of justice. Teach us to sing with harmonies shaped by mercy's wide embrace.**

**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—including the 3's and 4's—go to the Daniels Center for a special Christmas experience)

**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)**

### **PRAYER OF REFLECTION**

Reverend Carla Dietz

**O God of peace, you surprise us with your unexpected blessings. In the midst of tears, you offer joy. In the midst of judgment, you offer mercy. Forgive us for our begrudging hearts, for all of the times when we chose to stay the same rather than accept your invitation to be transformed into new life.**

### **MOMENT OF SILENCE**

### **WORDS OF AFFIRMATION**

**One:** Hear the good news. God's mercy is from generation to generation. No matter what choices we have made, still our God is abounding in steadfast love. In the name of Jesus the Christ, we are forgiven.

**All:** In the name of Jesus, we are forgiven!

### **HEARING GOD'S WORD**

### **FIRST LESSON—HEBREW BIBLE**

Helen Ingraham

**Micah 5:2–5a**

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,  
who are one of the little clans of Judah,  
from you shall come forth for me  
one who is to rule in Israel,  
whose origin is from of old,  
from ancient days.

Therefore he shall give them up until the time  
when she who is in labor has brought forth;  
then the rest of his kindred shall return  
to the people of Israel.

And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord,  
in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.

And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great  
to the ends of the earth;

and he shall be the one of peace.

If the Assyrians come into our land  
and tread upon our soil,

we will raise against them seven shepherds  
and eight installed as rulers.

– New Standard Revised Bible

## **ANTHEM**

The Chancel Choir

Bogorditse Devo

(sung in Church Slavonic)

S. Rachmaninoff (1873-1943)

Rejoice, virgin mother of God,  
Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you.  
Blessed are you among women,  
and blessed is the fruit of your womb,  
for you have borne the Savior of our souls.

## **SECOND LESSON—GOSPEL**

**Luke 1:39–55**

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord." And Mary said,

"My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;  
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.

His mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,  
and lifted up the lowly;

he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and sent the rich away empty.

He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,

according to the promise he made to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

– New Revised Standard Bible

## MESSAGE

Welcoming the Gift

Reverend Carla Dietz

## 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.)

One: God, your blessings are both ancient and new. Hear us this  
day as we pray for all of your children: For those who are  
joyful this day—God, in your mercy,

**All: hear our prayer.**

One: For the blessings which surround us—God, in your mercy,

**All: hear our prayer.**

One: For those who show mercy—God in your mercy,

**All: hear our prayer.**

One: For those who are humble—God in your mercy,

**All: hear our prayer.**

## \* HYMN

Comfort, Comfort Ye My People

Pilgrim (red) hymnal 104

## RESPONDING TO GOD

### CALL TO OFFERING

Barbara Norrgard

### OFFERTORY SOLO

Sweet Little Jesus Boy

Carol Woodman, soprano

R. MacGimsey

### \* 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

God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen

Pilgrim (red) Hymnal 122

### \* BENEDICTION

### \* CHORAL RESPONSE

### POSTLUDE

Tollite Hostias

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921)

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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.

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### **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](http://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**

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### **TODAY**

#### **Church School**

There will be a "Big Event" in the Daniels Center with games, books, crafts and just a lot of Christmas fun. We will also get a report on our Heifer challenge. There is no Church School on Sunday, December 30 but there will be child care. Regular Church School resumes on January 6.

#### **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

## UPCOMING

### **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.

### **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.

### **CHRISTMAS FLOWERS AND DECORATIONS**

The decorations in the Meetinghouse this morning are given in joyful and loving memory of:

- George W. Fisk and Robert W. Fisk, by Dorothy L. Fisk
- Family and friends, by Diane and Paul Kretschmann
- Richard L. Geismar, by his family
- Efraim & Victoria Olson, Ryan and Margaret Rosendale, parents, and Erna Nelson, aunt, by Ken and Erna Olson
- Our parents, Robert & Anna MacLea, Elmer & Nadean Hirth, by Bob & Carolyn MacLea
- Our parents, by Lile and John Gibbons
- Paul Hudson and George Finch, from the Hudson and Finch families
- Rick Woodman and Harry Woodman, two of the most wonderful men in our lives, by Carolyn Paulus and the entire Woodman family
- Judy Carey & Jim Callaway, by Bob Carey & Libby Callaway
- Dave & Pat Patterson, Jean & Kay Paulus, and Bruce Jensen, by the Woodpeople
- Richard Vogt, Seth McCoy, Ara Berberian, and the First Church Choir of Angels, by all the Woodmans
- Kip & Helen Couch, by Jan Meyer and his family
- Richmond B. Hopkins, by his family
- Joan Denne, by her family
- Anne, Bill, & Sue Denne, by their family
- Melita & John Magness & Dana Andersen, by their family
- Roger A. Lepoutre, by Catherine, Richard, & Deborah, Rev. Christophe & Cynthia, Clement & Jennifer Lepoutre, Maryse & Tom Lepoutre-Postlewaite, and families
- John L. Putnam, by Jennifer Maloney & Wendy Putnam
- Michel A. Scrivan, by his loving and devoted family
- Kimberly Dawn Pacent, our cherished daughter and beloved sister, by Paul, Karen, & Nicole Pacent
- Phyllis Kimball, wonderful mother and nana, by Karen & Nicole Pacent

- James H. Sotzing, by Elen, Andrew, Ian, & Kristen Sotzing
- My parents, Ruth & Lloyd Shawber, and brother, Lloyd Oberlin Shawber, by Anne Shawber Stolley
- Our parents, Lillian & Albert Gordon, and Elizabeth & Daniel O'Grady, by Judy and Al Gordon
- Margaret & Carleton Gisborne, and Louise & Harrison Reed, our parents, by Ruth & Gifford Reed & family
- Our parents, Purisima & Feliciano Teria, and Louise & Richard Haviland, by Erlinda & Larry Haviland
- Marian & Fred Hout, by Susie Hout Baker & Sara, Charlie, Liz
- Charles J. Veith IV, by his sister, Linda Veith Glover
- Joan & Jim Kreuter by their children and grandchildren,
- Charlie & Bill Robertson by Eric & Betsy Kreuter
- John & Betty Briggs by the Kreuter family
- Gustav Sippel, by the Sippel family
- Bertrand Moss & Lee Davenport, by Doris Moss Davenport
- Paul G. Hudson & George Finch, by the Hudson & Finch families
- Eric & Susan Robertson, my father & sister, by Lynn Robertson
- Arthur C. & Catherine G. Weigner, by sons Stephen A. & Ronald C. Weigner
- William Webster, by Mary Mooney Webster
- Lt. Col. C. George Fryback & Nicholas Fryback, by the Fryback family
- Our parents, Alma & Steve Karch, Betty & Fred Breismeister, and Don's brother Fred, by Ginny & Don Breismeister
- My parents & brother, by Mary R. Benoit
- Joe Browne & Carole & Jerry Kutzen, by the Kutzen family
- Richard Charles Robarts, by his family & friends

The decorations in the Meetinghouse this morning are given in honor of:

- Wishes from the Bell/Scannell family to everyone for a blessed holiday season
- Our grandchildren, Finn, June, Gunther, Alta, & Foster Breismeister, by Ginny & Don Breismeister

A donation to the decorations in the Meetinghouse this morning is given by:

- Eleanor Olsen



## **The First Congregational Church of Greenwich**

108 Sound Beach Avenue,  
Old Greenwich, Connecticut, 06870  
203-637-1791  
*[www.fcog.org](http://www.fcog.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