

The First Congregational Church of Greenwich
Founded in 1665

Christmas Eve Family Service
24 December 2018
3 o'clock in the afternoon



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 welcome you to this special Christmas Eve service at First Congregational Church. We hope that the mystery and comfort of the incarnation will be born in you this night as we tell the story of how God came to be with us in Christ Jesus. May God bless you and your family as we worship together.

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

WELCOME

Reverend Carla Dietz

PRELUDE

The Song of Twilight

Sara Rahimtula, piano
Yoshinao Nakada

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Reverend Carla Dietz

One: The people who walked in deep shadows have seen a great light.

All: Those who lived in deep shadows, on them light has shined.

One: Let us sing a new song.

All: Let the seas thunder! Let the trees shout for joy.

One: Breathe deep of the starlight, the animals, the child.

All: Let us ponder all these things in our heart.

One: Glory to God, and peace on earth!

All: For Jesus Christ is born!

CHRISTMAS GREETING

Reverend Avery C. Manchester

*CAROL

O Come, All Ye Faithful

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,

O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;

Come and behold him, born the King of angels;

Refrain:

O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,

O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest! (Refrain)

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE The DeHaven Family

Reader 1: Rejoice, people of God! The light has come into the world. O God, now we light the candle of your nativity!

Reader 2: With the company of heaven and with sounds of great joy, you come to us. This is the time of light and resplendent joy. We have known times when God has come and brought life and light to our world.

All: God has been born among us.

Reader 1: The prophet Isaiah proclaimed a time when those who walked in the shadows would see a great light. This great light lives among us. By it we behold God's glory—full of grace and truth. At Christ's nativity, we now rejoice.

All: God, our Life and Light, thank you for coming this day to us. Thanks for touching all heaven and earth with your splendor. In every corner of the world, shine this day with your peace. In every corner of our hearts, shine this day with your grace. Amen.

FIRST LESSON

Rosemary Lamie

Isaiah 9: 2-7

The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—
on them light has shined.
You have multiplied the nation,
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as people exult when dividing plunder.
For the yoke of their burden,
and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.
For all the boots of the tramping warriors
and all the garments rolled in blood
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.
For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders;

and he is named
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
His authority shall grow continually,
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.
He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onward and forevermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

--New Revised Standard Bible

ANTHEM

Advent Candlelight Carol

The Children's Choir
Arr. Page & Shafferman
Dr. Craig Scott Symons, director
Vance Briceland, piano

SECOND LESSON

Psalm 96

Bob Mendelsohn

O sing to the Lord a new song;
sing to the Lord, all the earth.
Sing to the Lord, bless his name;
tell of his salvation from day to day.
Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous works among all the peoples.
For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised;
he is to be revered above all gods.
For all the gods of the peoples are idols,
but the Lord made the heavens.
Honor and majesty are before him;
strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.
Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples,
ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.
Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name;
bring an offering, and come into his courts.
Worship the Lord in holy splendor;
tremble before him, all the earth.
Say among the nations, "The Lord is king!
The world is firmly established; it shall never be moved.
He will judge the peoples with equity."
Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice;
let the sea roar, and all that fills it;
let the field exult, and everything in it.

Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy
before the Lord; for he is coming,
for he is coming to judge the earth.
He will judge the world with righteousness,
and the peoples with his truth.

--New Revised Standard Bible

SOLO

Sweet Little Jesus Boy

Helena Brown, soprano
R. MacGimsey

THIRD LESSON

Kevin Scheller

Titus 2: 11-14

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

--New Revised Standard Bible

ANTHEM

Dormi, dormi (sung in Italian)

The Children's Choir
Arr. Goetze

FOURTH LESSON

Ainsley Sahrbeck and Francesca Lotufo

Luke 2: 1-20

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will

find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. --New Revised Standard Bible

***CAROL**

O Little Town of Bethlehem

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin, and enter in: be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell:
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel.

NATIVITY PAGEANT: Once in Royal David's City

CALL TO OFFERING

Reverend Carla Dietz

OFFERING OUR GIFTS TO THE CHRIST CHILD

(During our offering, please come forward to visit the holy family and all those who came to visit them at the manger. You are also invited to bring up your offering, greet the Pastors and receive a special treat from the staff of First Church. If you brought a “white gift” to the service today, they will be collected at the back of the church as you depart. All collected gifts will be donated to Covenant to Care for Children)

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!”

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!”

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)

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.

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.

What Child is This?

What child is this, who laid to rest,
On Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,
While shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the King,
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
Haste, haste to bring him laud,
The babe, the son of Mary.

Why lies he in such mean estate
Where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear: For sinners here
The silent Word is pleading.
This, this is Christ the King,
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
Haste, haste to bring him laud,
The babe, the son of Mary.

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh,
Come peasant, king, to own him;
The king of kings salvation brings,
Let loving hearts enthrone him.
This, this is Christ the King,
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
Haste, haste to bring him laud,

The babe, the son of Mary.

Angels We Have Heard on High

Angels we have heard on high
Sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply
Echo back their joyous strains.
Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Come to Bethlehem and see
Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come adore on bended knee,
Christ, the Lord, the newborn King.
Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo.

MEDITATIONS ON CHRISTMAS

Reverend Carla Dietz and
Reverend Avery C. Manchester

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.

SOLO
O Holy Night

Helena Brown, soprano
Adolphe Adam

***BENEDICTION**

Reverend Carla Dietz

***CAROL**

Silent Night, Holy Night

Silent night, holy night,
All is calm, all is bright
Round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night,
Shepherds quake at the sight,
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heavenly hosts sing alleluia;

Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!

Silent night, holy night,
Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from thy holy face,
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

POSTLUDE

In Dulci Jubilo

J. S. Bach

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,
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www.fcog.org

Additional services this evening:

6:00 pm: Festival Carol Service with the Chancel Choir and Brass Ensemble
with Once in Royal David's City Nativity pageant.

9:00 pm: Candlelight Service with Communion and the Youth/Alumni
Choir.

The First Church offices will be closed Tuesday and Wednesday, December
25 and 26, and Tuesday, January 1, for the Christmas
and New Year's holidays.

The clergy and staff of the First Congregational Church of Greenwich wish
you a very merry Christmas and a healthy, happy New Year.