



THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT
Sunday, December 13, 2020
10:00 a.m.

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 this day and are glad you made the choice to join us for this live stream worship service. May it be a blessing to you.

SUNDAY MORNING LIVE STREAM WORSHIP

10:00 a.m.

YouTube - [YouTube](#)

Facebook - [First Church](#)

Radio at [WGCH](#) 1490 AM or 105.5 FM

Download the bulletin [HERE](#)

RUMMAGE ROOM

Store Hours

Monday - Thursday
11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Donation Hours

Wednesday & Thursday
11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

ORDER OF WORSHIP

VIDEO WELCOME

CALL TO COMMUNITY

Rev. Patrick Collins

Using your smartphone messaging app, text **FCCOG Donate** to 73256
or click [HERE](#) to access the online giving webpage

PRELUDE

Sleepers, Awake!
J. S. Bach (1685-1750)
Dr. Craig Scott Symons, organist

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

The Sterling Family

We want everything to look nice: the decorations of the season, our homes with their lights and tinsel, wreaths and ribbons. We want to lighten the darkness around us, bring beauty to the ugliness that wears us down. We decorate, because it is tradition. Because it lifts our hearts. Because it makes us feel like children again. We deck our halls because company is coming.

The prophet Isaiah smiled when he said, “God will give a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, a mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.” No matter how far we feel from the spirit of the season, God promises to decorate us with love and with joy.

We light these candles as a sign of our joy in the beautiful things of this season – not just the things that glitter and flash, but the deeper things, the beauty of the heart and the soul, the beauty of love shared in service and hospitality. We light this candle of joy because company is coming.

O Come, O Come Emmanuel.

HYMN

Love Has Come

**Love has come, a light in the darkness!
Love explodes in the Bethlehem skies.
See, all heaven has come to proclaim it.
Hear how their song of joy arises:
Love! Love! Born unto you, a Savior!
Love! Love! Glory to God on high!**

**Love is born! Come share in the wonder.
Love is God now asleep in the hay.
See the glow in the eyes of His mother.
What is the name her heart is saying?
Love! Love! Love is the name she whispers.
Love! Love! Jesus, Immanuel.**

**Love has come, He never will leave us!
Love is life everlasting and free.
Love is Jesus within and among us.
Love is the peace our hearts are seeking.
Love! Love! Love is the gift of Christmas.
Love! Love! Praise to You, God on high!**

GATHERING PRAYER (Unison)

Rev. Cydney Van Dyke

Holy God, we gather today to feel your presence. We received your invitation to come in and know you better. We heard the call you placed on our hearts to take care of the poor, to lift the lowly, to love all as we love ourselves. Prepare every part of us to do just that- this Christmas time, and at all times.

Today, may our spirits be filled with hope, may our minds rest in your peace, and may our bodies enliven with your joy. May we come in, and know you better. In the name of the one who is coming, Amen.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Carol Woodman
Lynn Hawxhurst
Andrea Woodman

FIRST LESSON

A Christmas Carol Stave 3 (abridged)

Charles Dickens

Joe McBride

Scrooge woke up in the middle of a snore, just before the clock struck one again. He felt like he had woken right in the nick of time, for the special purpose of holding a conference with the second messenger. A ghostly light led him to the next room, and with his hand upon the lock, he heard a strange voice call him by name and bid him enter. He obeyed.

It was his own room – there was no doubt about that – but it had undergone a surprising transformation; it was decorated with sprigs of holly, mistletoe and ivy, and a roasting fire that blazed brightly up the chimney. Heaped up on the floor, to form a kind of throne, were turkeys, geese, game, poultry, brawn, great joints of meat, long wreaths of sausages, mince-pies, plum-puddings, red-hot chestnuts, cherry-cheeked apples, juicy oranges and luscious pears. In easy state upon this couch, there sat a jolly Giant, glorious to see; it was clothed in one simple green robe, boarded with white fur. On its head it wore a holly wreath, set here and there with shining icicles. Its dark brown curls were long and free: free as its kind voice, its sparkling eye, its open hand, its joyful air.

“Come in! Come in, and know me better, man! I am the Ghost of Christmas Present.”

“Spirit,” said Scrooge submissively, “conduct me where you will. I went forth last night through force, and I learnt a lesson which is working now. So tonight, if you have anything to teach me, let me profit by it.”

The room vanished instantly, and they stood in the city streets on Christmas morning, where people were shoveling the snow from in front of their houses. Despite the gloomy sky and their obvious poverty, the people were jovial and full of glee; they were calling out to one another, and now and then exchanging a flying snowball.

The ghost took Scrooge to Bob Cratchit’s house – a very poor little dwelling. On the threshold of the door, the spirit blessed the house with a little of his magic. In the kitchen you could see Mrs. Cratchit preparing Christmas dinner, with potatoes bubbling merrily on the stove. Her children were cheerfully running around. Mrs. Cratchit was watching the clock. Then the door opened, and Bob Cratchit came in with Tiny Tim upon his shoulders. Tiny Tim was Bob Cratchit’s youngest son. He bore a little crutch and had an iron frame around his limbs. As the children ran off to play and to sneak a look at the boiling Christmas pudding, Mrs. Cratchit came close to her husband.

“And how did little Tim behave?”

“As good as gold,” said Bob, “and better. Somehow, he gets thoughtful, sitting by himself so much, and thinks the strangest things you ever heard. He told me, coming home, that he hoped the people saw him in the church, because he was a cripple, and it might be pleasant to them to remember upon Christmas Day, who made lame beggars walk, and blind men see.”

ANTHEM

Magnificat
Charles Wood (1866-1926)
The Chancel Choir Quartet

SECOND LESSON

Luke 1: 39-56
(The Message)
Barbara Norrgard

Mary didn't waste a minute. She got up and traveled to a town in Judah in the hill country, straight to Zachariah's house, and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby in her womb leaped. She was filled with the Holy Spirit, and sang out exuberantly,
You're so blessed among women,
and the babe in your womb, also blessed!
And why am I so blessed that
the mother of my Lord visits me?
The moment the sound of your
greeting entered my ears,
The babe in my womb
skipped like a lamb for sheer joy.
Blessed woman, who believed what God said,
believed every word would come true!

And Mary said,
I'm bursting with God-news;
I'm dancing the song of my Savior God.
God took one good look at me, and look what happened—
I'm the most fortunate woman on earth!
What God has done for me will never be forgotten,
the God whose very name is holy, set apart from all others.

His mercy flows in wave after wave
on those who are in awe before him.
He bared his arm and showed his strength,
scattered the bluffing braggarts.
He knocked tyrants off their high horses,
pulled victims out of the mud.
The starving poor sat down to a banquet;
the callous rich were left out in the cold.
He embraced his chosen child, Israel;
he remembered and piled on the mercies, piled them high.
It's exactly what he promised,
beginning with Abraham and right up to now.

Mary stayed with Elizabeth for three months and then went back to her own home.

MESSAGE

At Christmas Time
Rev. Cydney Van Dyke

MULTIMEDIA REFLECTION

Someday At Christmas
Stevie Wonder
A Cappella

Scott David Shattuck and Ryceejo Nordström Shattuck featuring Jonathan Moser

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Rev. Patrick Collins

THE 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.

HYMN

Lo, How A Rose E'er Blooming

**Lo, how a rose e'er blooming from tender stem hath sprung,
of Jesse's lineage coming, by faithful prophets sung.
It came, a floweret bright, amid the cold of winter, when half spent was the night.**

**Isaiah 'twas foretold it, the rose I have in mind;
with Mary we behold it, the virgin mother kind.
To show God's love aright she bore for us a Savior, when half spent was the night.**

**This flower, whose fragrance tender with sweetness fills the air,
dispels with glorious splendor the darkness everywhere.
Enfleshed, yet very God, from sin and death he saves us and lightens every load.**

BENEDICTION

Rev. Cydney Van Dyke

CHORAL RESPONSE

Comfort, Comfort Now My People

POSTLUDE

Lord Christ, Only Son of God
J. S. Bach

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