

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT
Sunday, December 4, 2022



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 worship service. May it be a blessing to you.

CHILDREN IN WORSHIP



*God puts the wiggle in children
and calls it good... and so do we!*

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 welcome children as they are in worship, we've created the **PrayGround**, located in the front of the chapel (right side of the Meetinghouse) where children and others can engage in worship through movement and prayerful play.

The **PrayGround** offers space for movement and sensory materials for all ages to worship with and through. The presence of all God's children is a gift to the church, which offers hope for all.



SUPPORTING FIRST CHURCH

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



Faith First-Love Always

ORDER OF WORSHIP

CALL TO COMMUNITY

Reverend Cydney Van Dyke

*Please sign and pass the red Fellowship Pad found at the end of your row near the center aisle,
then pass it back to the center aisle, noting the names of those worshipping near you
so you may greet them at the end of worship.*

PRELUDE

Christmas Lullaby
Stephen Sondheim (1930-1921)
Linnea Conley, mezzo soprano
Dr. Craig Scott Symons, piano

†CALL TO WORSHIP

One: In the lonely places
The wilderness
All: Where we stand forlorn
Windswept and alone
One: Your voice calls out
All: Prepare a way for the Lord
One: In the dark places
The shadows
All: Where we hide our fears
Embrace our tears
One: Your voice calls out
All: Prepare a way for the Lord

CHORAL INTROIT

†HYMN

103 (The Pilgrim Hymnal)
Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus
Tune: Stuttgart

† Please rise in body or in spirit

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Sarah and Art Jenkins

One: With Esther we see plainly the injustice at work in our world, O God.

All: **And with Esther we know it is our call to stand up to injustice whatever the cost.**

One: We light this first candle as a beacon of hope for those who wait.

All: **We light this second candle as the fire of courage that we might bear witness to your justice.**

MUSIC DURING CANDLE LIGHTING

Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus

Arr. James Kimball

The Palmer Handbell Choir

PRAYER (in unison)

God of grace and mercy, with Esther we fear for the future of our people and all the earth. As we wait for your promised savior, give us hope that all will be made right in you and peace will prevail over all the earth. Amen.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

(During the response, the children will return to their seats.)

RESPONSE

Jesus Loves Me

**Jesus loves me! This I know, for the Bible tells me so.
Little ones to him belong. They are weak, but he is strong.
Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.**

FIRST LESSON

Matthew 3:1-12

Common English Bible

Bill DeHaven

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the desert of Judea announcing, "Change your hearts and lives! Here comes the kingdom of heaven!" He was the one of whom Isaiah the prophet spoke when he said:

The voice of one shouting in the wilderness,
"Prepare the way for the Lord;
make his paths straight."

John wore clothes made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist. He ate locusts and wild honey.

People from Jerusalem, throughout Judea, and all around the Jordan River came to him. As they confessed their sins, he baptized them in the Jordan River. Many Pharisees and Sadducees came to be baptized by John. He said to them, “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. I baptize with water those of you who have changed your hearts and lives. The one who is coming after me is stronger than I am. I’m not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with 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.”

ANTHEM

O Come, Redeemer Of The Earth
Brian Hanson
The Chancel Choir

SECOND LESSON

Esther 4: 1-17
New International Version

When Mordecai learned of all that had been done, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the city, wailing loudly and bitterly. But he went only as far as the king’s gate, because no one clothed in sackcloth was allowed to enter it. In every province to which the edict and order of the king came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping and wailing. Many lay in sackcloth and ashes.

When Esther’s eunuchs and female attendants came and told her about Mordecai, she was in great distress. She sent clothes for him to put on instead of his sackcloth, but he would not accept them. Then Esther summoned Hathak, one of the king’s eunuchs assigned to attend her, and ordered him to find out what was troubling Mordecai and why.

So Hathak went out to Mordecai in the open square of the city in front of the king’s gate. Mordecai told him everything that had happened to him, including the exact amount of money Haman had promised to pay into the royal treasury for the destruction of the Jews. He also gave him a copy of the text of the edict for their annihilation, which had been published in Susa, to show to Esther and explain it to her, and he told him to instruct her to go into the king’s presence to beg for mercy and plead with him for her people.

Hathak went back and reported to Esther what Mordecai had said. Then she instructed him to say to Mordecai, “All the king’s officials and the people of the royal provinces know

that for any man or woman who approaches the king in the inner court without being summoned the king has but one law: that they be put to death unless the king extends the gold scepter to them and spares their lives. But thirty days have passed since I was called to go to the king.”

When Esther’s words were reported to Mordecai, he sent back this answer: “Do not think that because you are in the king’s house you alone of all the Jews will escape. For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father’s family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?”

Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: “Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my attendants will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish.”

So Mordecai went away and carried out all of Esther’s instructions.

MESSAGE

For Such A Time As This
Reverend Patrick Collins

†HYMN

110 (New Century Hymnal)
Now Bless The God Of Israel
Tune: Forest Green

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE LORD’S PRAYER (in unison)

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.

CALL TO OFFERING

Lynn Robertson

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

Behold, A Star From Jacob Shining
Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)
The Chancel Choir

†DOXOLOGY

Praise God, from whom all bless - ings flow; praise him, all crea - tures

here be - low; praise him a - bove, ye heaven - ly host; praise

Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost. A - men.

COMMUNION

Invitation

Words of Institution

Communion Prayer

Taking of Elements

Receiving the Bread and Cup

In the tradition of our church, let us partake of the bread (gluten-free) as it is served, remembering our individual uniqueness in the eyes of God and our diversity within the Body of Christ. Let us hold the cup (grape juice) until all have been served, remembering our oneness with God and our unity in the Body of Christ.

†HYMN

114 (Pilgrim Hymnal)
Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates
Tune: Truro

BENEDICTION

CHORAL RESPONSE

POSTLUDE

Come Now, Savior Of The Heathens
Wilhelm Friedemann Bach
(1710-1784)

† Please rise in body or in spirit

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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.

Join us for Community Hour in the Auditorium following worship this morning where you can greet each other and have a cup of coffee and some light snacks.

COMMUNITY
~~~~~
HOUR



THIS SUNDAY - SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

We all celebrate worship in the Meetinghouse, including communion. First Church serves communion to all who wish to receive, and parents can decide when their children will participate.

TODAY December 4

Annual Advent Craft Fair. Daniels Center

A light lunch will be served at 11:30 and ten crafts will be available to create for gifts or to display on your Christmas tree.

NEXT SUNDAY ~ December 11 11:30 a.m.

Pilgrim Towers trip to deliver Christmas Gifts and make a craft with the residents. All FCCOG members and families welcome.

Dec 18 Regular Church School

It's time to sign up to be in the traditional "Once in Royal David's City" Christmas pageant at 3 p.m. on Christmas Eve. Email CydneyV@fccog.org or Donna.hascher@gmail.com and let us know if you want to be part of the cast. Children can be an angel, shepherd, king, an animal in the stable, or the little drummer boy.

ANNUAL GIVING UPDATE



We are at 137 pledges to date - \$438,289 in pledged amounts.

If you haven't made your pledge, please consider supporting the wonderful programs at First Church and go to www.iamfirstchurch.com

THE RUMMAGE ROOM

Needs for this week are –

- Children's Shoes
- Ladies Handbags
- Cloth Napkins
- Tablecloths



Shopping hours are Monday through Thursday from 11 a.m. until 3 p.m., with the same hours for donation drop off.



WHAT IS ADVENT? LIKE, REALLY?

Advent Faith Formation Series

Tuesday, December 6

(note day change)

Wednesday, December 14

Wednesday, December 21

6:00 - 7:00 p.m.

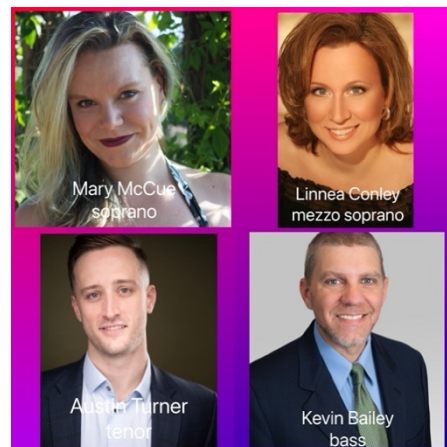
First Church Lounge

Each week we will watch a brief video on advent featuring some of the preeminent voices in progressive Christianity like Father Richard Rohr, Nadia Bolz-Weber, Brene Brown, and Parker Palmer. Come as you are and join us as we discuss what advent really means for our lives today.

56TH ANNUAL MESSIAH

We're less than a week away from the **Messiah** performance on **Saturday, December 10 at 4 p.m.** The performance is free with a suggested \$20 per person donation.

Since 1966 First Congregational Church has presented Part I of Handel's **Messiah**, the Christmas portion, concluding with the Hallelujah chorus. The First Church Festival Chorus, 75 singers strong, is accompanied by the First Church Chamber Orchestra, with professional soloists for the performance.



JOIN THE FIRST CHURCH FESTIVAL CHORUS!

- **Choir rehearsal**
Monday, December 5 7:30 – 9:00 pm
- **Dress rehearsal with orchestra**
Wednesday, December 7 from 7:30 – 9:00 pm.

There is a refundable score deposit of \$20. There are no auditions; everyone is welcome. The singers always have a great time - just ask one! Contact Dr. Craig Scott Symons, craigs@fccog.org, for more information.

Sunday, December 11 5 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. Annual Christmas Party

Celebrate the holidays with your
First Church family!

Join us for fun,
generous hors d' oeuvres, and a full bar

To let us know that you're attending, email
RSVPFirstChurch@fccog.org by December 9.



Annual Christmas Party

Celebrate with your First Church Family

Sunday, December 11
5:00 – 7:30 p.m.

First Church Meetinghouse

Generous Hors D'oeuvres
Wine, Beer, Full Bar



DO YOU STILL NEED A CHRISTMAS TREE?

We have Frasers and Balsams in various sizes, if they haven't sold out on Saturday.

THANK YOU TO LAST WEEKEND'S DREAM TEAM OF VOLUNTEERS

Thanks to all your hard work, we had a record-breaking weekend of tree and wreath sales! Not only did we sell a lot of trees, we also provided a festive

community atmosphere where friends could visit and those new to us could get a taste of First Church's hospitality and welcoming nature. We could not have done it without you!

UPCOMING EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF FIRST CHURCH

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES - SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24

- **10 a.m. Children's Service** especially designed for younger children and their families and music by The Cherub Choir.
- **3 p.m. Family Service** with "Once in Royal David's City" pageant and music by The Celebration Singers.
- **5 p.m. Community Candlelight Carol Sing** on the front lawn of the church.
- **6 p.m. Festival Carol Service** with candlelight and music by a brass quintet and The Chancel Choir.
- **9 p.m. Candlelight Service with Communion** and music by The Genesis/Alumni Choir and harp.

CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE - SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25, 10 A.M.

Breakfast Church in the Auditorium

----- ✂ cut here ✂ -----

Christmas Meetinghouse Flowers

The Deacons invite contributions for decorations for the Meetinghouse this Christmas. Any amount is welcome. Please deliver the completed form with your check to the church office on or before Monday, December 19, 2022. Thank you!

Please check one of these choices: ☐ In Memory of ☐ In Honor of

Name: _____

By: _____

Enclosed is my check for \$_____ made out to First Congregational Church of Greenwich ("Flowers" in the memo)

Please print legibly to minimize spelling errors.

THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF GREENWICH

108 Sound Beach Avenue Old Greenwich CT 06870
203-637-1791 • www.fccog.org

Ministers - All Members Of The First Congregational Church Of Greenwich

Senior Pastor
Associate Pastor
Minister of Music
Parish Nurse
Church Office Coordinator
Financial Administrator
Livestream Director
Audio Technician
Database Administrative Assistant
Interim Facility Manager
Sextons
Director of Preschool
Assistant Director of Preschool
Pastors Emeriti

Reverend Patrick Collins
Reverend Cydney Van Dyke
Dr. Craig Scott Symons
Susan Asselin, RN
Wendy Spezzano
Greg Girolamo
Daniel Lepoutre
Bob Small
Sue Wilder
Julio Yika
Curtis Gay, Qasim Hussaini
Jennifer DiCarlo
Kayla Vozzella
Reverend Dr. Thomas L. Stiers - Reverend Sally Colegrove



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST
a just world for all