

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2022
CHRISTMAS EVE
THREE 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 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.



ORDER OF WORSHIP

PRELUDE

Dr. Craig Scott Symons, organist

CHRISTMAS GREETING

Reverend Patrick Collins

CHRISTMAS PRAYER

One: We count it in mere hours now.
Soon the first pains of labor will be felt.

All: Soon the Light will shine in the darkness,
soon the baby will be born.

One: Soon God will once again break into our lives,

All: coming in a way that is expected yet unusual,
challenging our expectations
and calling us to see life differently.

One: God of birth, God of light,
in this time of song and prayer and silence,

All: reawaken in us the awe of Christmas.

One: As we hear again the story of a young woman and a surprising visitor,

All: remind us that we are called to respond to you in unexpected ways.

One: And when we leave this place,

All: may we be willing to sing praises
for a young woman who said yes
and the birth that we prepare to celebrate.

One: We pray all of this in the name of the holy child
Whose birth we will soon celebrate. Amen

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)

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning, Jesus, to thee be glory giv'n.
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing: (Refrain)

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

The Sahrbeck Family

One: With Habakkuk and Esther, we lit a beacon of hope for the waiting, and a fire of
courage for the called.

All: With Isaiah and Joseph, we lit a light to the nations and a declaration of trust in
your promised redemption.

One: Now the time has arrived, Holy God, the time long promised, long awaited, long
hoped for. The Word has been made flesh, and dwells among us, now and forever.

All: With all the angels in the heavenly chorus, we light the Christ Candle in
remembrance of the one true light that cannot be overcome, and with the angels
we proclaim, "He is born!"

ANTHEM

Sing Gloria
Parker Ramsay
The Celebration Singers
Vance Briceland, piano

LESSON

Isaiah 9:2-7
New International Version
Emmett Collins

The people walking in darkness
have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of deep darkness
a light has dawned.

You have enlarged the nation
and increased their joy;
they rejoice before you

as people rejoice at the harvest,
as warriors rejoice
when dividing the plunder.
For as in the day of Midian's defeat,
you have shattered
the yoke that burdens them,
the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor.
Every warrior's boot used in battle
and every garment rolled in blood
will be destined for burning,
will be fuel for the fire.
For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Of the greatness of his government and peace
there will be no end.
He will reign on David's throne
and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it
with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever.
The zeal of the Lord Almighty
will accomplish this.

CAROL

God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen

God rest you merry, gentlemen, let nothing you dismay,
remember Christ our Savior was born on Christmas day,
to save us all from Satan's pow'r when we were gone astray;

Refrain:

O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy, O tidings of comfort and joy.

From God our heav'nly Father, a blessed angel came;
and unto certain shepherds brought tidings of the same:
how that in Bethlehem was born the son of God by name, (Refrain)

Now to the Lord sing praises, all you within this place,
and with true love and charity each other now embrace;
This holy tide of Christmas all others shall replace. (Refrain)

LESSON

In The Midst Of It All – Love Has Come
Barbara Doerr-Peacock
Jason Wisecup

In the midst of it all...
a government tax, a burdened journey,
a burgeoned town,
no room
in the midst of it all.
In the midst of it all...
each single life, here and now,
walks the hard pavement of ordinary life,
wading through
the sinking mud or flash flood
of waking tasks,
worried racks of anxious unknowns.
But, somewhere in this night,
the desert night of long ago,
or this daily desert of a road—
a twinkling here, a shining there,
a flower blooms
in deepest winter.
Love has come
and calms the shiver.
A warming kiss
a soft embrace,
a lighted window
a stable place.
In the midst of it all...
a hard won labor,
grace is born in fleshly groans.
The baby cries his birthday song
as angels weep and sweep
the heaven-to-earthbound glory.
And, love has come,
to each and every one of us
whether our eyes are open
and we perceive,
or closed in lonely fear.
We will receive
this love come to us –
whether open-hearted

in abundant waves,
or in unsuspected
and surprising ways.

Love has come.
Love has come...
Arise and shine – with the sun!
Love has come
in newborn grace
to offer truth
and God a face.

ANTHEM

O Come, Little Children
Carol McClure
Celebration Singers

GOSPEL LESSON

Luke 2:1-14
New International Version

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register.

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

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.

They looked up and saw a star shining in the east beyond them far;
and to the earth it gave great light, and so it continued both day and night. (Refrain)

Then let us all with one accord sing praises to our heavenly Lord,
that hath made heaven and earth of nought, and with his blood our life hath bought. (Refrain)

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

Reverend Patrick Collins

NATIVITY PAGEANT

Once In Royal David's City

CALL TO OFFERING

Reverend Patrick Collins

OFFERING OUR GIFTS

*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 your offering and greet the Pastors. If you brought a "white gift" to the service today, they are being collected under the tree at the rear main entrance of the church. All collected gifts will be donated to **Covenant to Care for Children** to use throughout the year.*

CAROLS

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!"

Christ, by highest heaven adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come, offspring of the Virgin's womb:
veiled in flesh the Godhead see; hail th'incarnate Deity,
pleased with us in flesh to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel.
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!"

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.

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!

THE CHRISTMAS PRAYER

Reverend Patrick Collins

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.

CAROL

Silent 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.

BENEDICTION

Reverend Patrick Collins

*Please extinguish your candle after the benediction
and return it to the baskets in the back of the Meetinghouse.*

POSTLUDE

OUR REMAINING CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

6 p.m. Festival Carol Service with Candlelight

Music by a brass quintet and

The Chancel Choir

9 p.m. Candlelight Service with Communion

Music by The Genesis/Alumni Choir and harp

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

Breakfast Church in the Auditorium

We will share food, stories and music together in this informal worship setting. The deacons will provide some hot food items and we encourage all who attend to bring a food item to share.

The Church Offices will be closed

*Monday, December 26 & Tuesday, December 27, 2022 & Monday, January 2, 2023
for the holidays.*

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

YEAR-END PLEDGE REMINDER

We are grateful for your presence at this Christmas Eve service. As the year-end quickly approaches, please consider your 2022 pledge fulfillment during this busy season. The church offices are closed for the staff holiday on Monday, Dec 26 and Tuesday, Dec 27, but will be open Dec 28-30 from 9-4 pm if you wish to drop off your pledge. Or you can complete it online by clicking on the "My First Church" secure link on the upper right corner of the church website. Thank

you for supporting the important work at First Congregational Church of Greenwich.



Thank you
FOR YOUR SUPPORT

CHRISTMAS FLOWERS AND DECORATIONS

**The decorations and flowers in the Meetinghouse are given
in joyful and loving memory of:**

Diane, Erling, and Dana Andersen
John and Betty Briggs
Joe & Kay Broune – Carol & Jerry Kutzen
Richmond B. Hopkins

Ginny Keller
Joan and Jim Kreuter
Our beloved mother Virginia Liddel
Melita and John Magness
John L. Putnam
Charlie and Bill Robertson
Our Parents Purisima and Feliciano Teria
Charles J. Veith IV
Arthur C. and Catherine G. Weigner
Rick Woodman, Harry Woodman, Bob Osker

Their Family
The Eric Kreuter Family
Tom, Terri, & Peter Kutzen
R. B. Hopkins Family
J. A. Hopkins Family
J. L. Wilson Family
Ed, Sara, Chris, Caroline, & Eliza Keller
The Eric Kreuter Family & Betsy Kreuter
Joan McCaw
Their Family
Wendy Putnam & Jen Maloney
Eric Kreuter & Betsy Kreuter
Louise & Richard Haviland
His Sister, Linda Glover
Sons Stephen & Ronald
Carolyn Paulus, Stephanie & Gillian Woodman

The decorations and flowers in the Meetinghouse are given in honor of:

Our Granddaughters Emily and Julie Hasler
Barbara H. Hopkins

Ken and Erna Olsen
R. B. Hopkins Family
J. A. Hopkins Family
J. L. Wilson Family

Doctors, Nurses, Therapists, and Aides
that assisted in my brother Eric Kreuter's recovery

Betsy Kreuter

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