

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2022
CHRISTMAS EVE
SIX O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING



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

Christmas Fantasy
Arr. Joel Raney (b. 1956)
Brass, Timpani, Organ
Dr. Craig Scott Symons, director

CHRISTMAS GREETING

Reverend Cydney Van Dyke

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
Arr. David Willcocks (1919-2015)

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

Jason Wisecup & Giusi DiFrenna

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

Fum, Fum, Fum
Arr. Alice Parker/Robert Shaw
The Chancel Choir

LESSON

Isaiah 9:2-7
New International Version
Charlie Stuckey

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
Arr. Willcocks

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)

"Fear not, then," said the angel, "let nothing you affright;
this day is born a Savior of a pure virgin bright,
to free all those who trust in him from Satan's pow'r and might." (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

Mid-Winter
Bob Chilcott (b. 1955)
The Chancel Choir

GOSPEL LESSON

Luke 2:1-14
Common English Bible

In those days Caesar Augustus declared that everyone throughout the empire should be enrolled in the tax lists. This first enrollment occurred when Quirinius governed Syria. Everyone went to their own cities to be enrolled. Since Joseph belonged to David's house and family line, he went up from the city of Nazareth in Galilee to David's city, called Bethlehem, in Judea. He went to be enrolled together with Mary, who was promised to him in marriage and who was pregnant. While they were there, the time came for Mary to have her baby. She gave birth to her firstborn child, a son, wrapped him snugly, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the guestroom.

Nearby shepherds were living in the fields, guarding their sheep at night. The Lord's angel stood before them, the Lord's glory shone around them, and they were terrified.

The angel said, “Don’t be afraid! Look! I bring good news to you—wonderful, joyous news for all people. Your savior is born today in David’s city. He is Christ the Lord. This is a sign for you: you will find a newborn baby wrapped snugly and lying in a manger.” Suddenly a great assembly of the heavenly forces was with the angel praising God. They said, “Glory to God in heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors.”

CAROL

The First Nowell
Arr. Willcocks

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)

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)

This star drew nigh to the northwest; o’er Bethlehem it took its rest,
and there it did both stop and stay, right over the place where Jesus lay. (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)

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

CAROL

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing
Arr. Willcocks

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!"

CALL TO OFFERING

Reverend Cydney Van Dyke

OFFERING OUR GIFTS

(During our offering time, the ushers will receive your offerings while you remain seated. If you brought a "white gift" to the service today and have not placed it under the Christmas tree at the back of the church, please do so as you depart. All collected gifts will be donated to Covenant to Care for Children.)

ANTHEM

The Shepherd's Pipe Carol
John Rutter (b. 1945)

THE CHRISTMAS PRAYER

Reverend Cydney Van Dyke

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.

SHARING THE CHRIST LIGHT

*Please note that the sanctuary will darken at the beginning of the sharing of the Christ light.
For your safety, we ask that you remain seated.*

PASSING OF THE LIGHT

*Candlelight will be shared with those at the end of the rows,
who are invited to pass it along. Please light your candle by tipping it over a lit one.*

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.

Silent night, holy night! Wondrous star, lend thy light;
with the angels let us sing Alleluia to our King:
Christ the Savior is born; Christ the Savior is born.

BENEDICTION

Reverend Patrick Collins

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

POSTLUDE

Canzon Septimi Toni # 2
Giovanni Gabrieli (1557-1612)

Special thanks to our instrumentalists this evening:

Trumpets: Mike Carolan, Joe Spitzer

French Horn: Debbie Schmidt

Trombone: Steve Shulman

Tuba: Joe Stanko

Percussion: Eric Phinney

Organ: Marnus Greyling

OUR FINAL CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

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.

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

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The First Congregational Church Of Greenwich**

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a just world for all