



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2023
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

Dorothy Darlington, oboe
Dr. Craig Scott Symons, organist

CHRISTMAS GREETING

Reverend Cydney Van Dyke

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Like the shepherds, we come to the stable, uncertain of what we have heard and seen,

All: **longing to hear a word of peace and joy.**

One: Like the wise ones, we have journeys to make, gifts to offer, and hope in our hearts,

All: **that this world can change for the better.**

One: Here, in the stillness of a winter's night, we gather to share the light of Christ, a light that shines in the nightfall.

All: **We gather in the wonder of this night to share our joy and thanks for new life.**

†CAROL

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!"

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

The Elliott-Bocassi Family

One: In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, and set lights in the sky — sun and moon and stars.

All: **By these stars, our ancestors charted their journeys. By these stars, they knew God was with them.**

† **Please rise in body or in spirit**

One: Today we light five candles to bring the fire of the stars down from heaven to earth, to nestle among the greens.

All: We name the four candles Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love, and at the center of them all we light the Christ Candle.

One: We too are on a journey, and we do not always know the way. But we chart our path by the star of joy.

All: Even when faith burns low and its promises seem too good to be true, we set our face steadily towards the light.

One: Let us pray:

All: Lord Jesus, as we search for signs of Christ's presence this week, help us to become the signs of Christ's presence that others are searching for. As these candles are but a glimpse of the light of the heavens, help us to be a glimpse of heaven on earth. Help us to shine like stars in the world. Amen.

ANTHEM

Jesus, Our Brother, Kind And Good
French Carol – 13th Century
The Celebration Singers
Vance Briceland, piano

LESSON

Isaiah 9:2-7
New International Version
Christopher D.

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.

SOLO

Sweet Little Jesus Boy
Robert MacGimsey
Helena Brown, soprano

LESSON

First Coming
Madeleine L'Engle
Kellan O.

God did not wait till the world was ready, till...the nations were at peace.
God came when the heavens were unsteady, and prisoners cried out for release.

God did not wait for the perfect time. God came when the need was deep and great.
God dined with sinners in all their grime, turned water into wine. God did not wait

Till hearts were pure. In joy God came to a tarnished world of sin and doubt.
To a world like ours of anguished shame God came, and god's light would not go out.

God came to a world which did not mesh, to heal its tangles, shield its scorn.
In the mystery of Word made Flesh the Maker of the stars was born.

We cannot wait til the world is sane to raise our songs with joyful voice,
for to share our grief, to touch our pain, God came with Love: Rejoice! Rejoice!

ANTHEM

Camel, Kneel Softly
Susan Hunt Paterson
Celebration Singers

GOSPEL LESSON

Luke 2:1-14
New International Version
Tommy S.

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."

†CAROL

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.

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

† Please rise in body or in spirit

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 back main entrance of the church.

The gifts will be donated to local non-profits for children and youth.

†CAROLS

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)

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.

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!

† Please rise in body or in spirit

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.

SOLO

O Holy Night
Adolphe Adam (1803-1856)
Helena Brown, soprano

†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

POSTLUDE

† Please rise in body or in spirit

OUR REMAINING CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

6 p.m. Festival Carol Service with Candlelight
Music with brass quintet and
The Chancel Choir

9 p.m. Candlelight Service with Communion
Music with The Genesis/Alumni Choir and harp

The Church Offices will be closed
Monday, December 25, Tuesday, December 26, 2023
& Monday, January 1, 2024 for the holidays.

Thank you
FOR YOUR SUPPORT

YEAR-END PLEDGE REMINDER

We are grateful for your presence at this Christmas Eve service. As the year-end quickly approaches, please consider your 2023 pledge fulfillment during this busy season. The church offices are closed for the staff holiday on Tuesday, Dec 26, but will be open December 27-29 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.

Happy Advent & Merry Christmas



WISHING MANY BLESSINGS TO YOU AND YOURS,
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF GREENWICH STAFF

FCCOG CHRISTMAS TREE
Collection



ONLY \$35

BOOK NOW

SIGN UP LINK IN EBLAST

STAY AT HOME!
JUST LEAVE THE TREE OUTSIDE- WE RECYCLE FOR YOU!

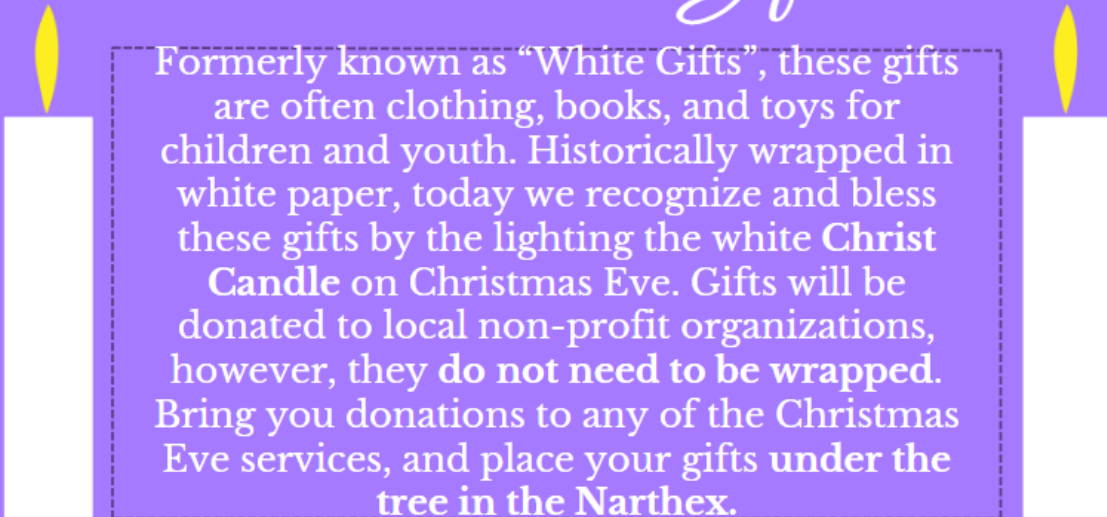
SATURDAYS: DEC 30 & JAN 6, 10AM-3PM
SUNDAYS: DEC 31 & JAN 7, 12-4PM

A REGIONAL YOUTH MINISTRY FUNDRAISER!

Use this link to sign up: <https://shorturl.at/ftL47>

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF GREENWICH

Annual Christmas Gift Drive



Formerly known as "White Gifts", these gifts are often clothing, books, and toys for children and youth. Historically wrapped in white paper, today we recognize and bless these gifts by the lighting the white Christ Candle on Christmas Eve. Gifts will be donated to local non-profit organizations, however, they **do not need to be wrapped**. Bring your donations to any of the Christmas Eve services, and place your gifts **under the tree in the Narthex**.

CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS & BRASS

The decorations and brass are given in joyful and loving memory of:

Diane, Erling, and Dana Andersen	Their Family
Lydia Tyner Anderson, James Anderson III,	Cyndy & Ty Anderson
John and Betty Briggs	Eric & Pam Kreuter – Chase & Nina Kreuter
Anne, Bill and Sue Denne	Their Family
Joan Denne	Her Family
Marian and Fred Hout	Susie Hout Baker – Sara, Charlie, Lizzy
Joan and Jim Kreuter	Betsy Kreuter, and Eric Kreuter & Family
Melita and John Magness	Their Family
Scott P. Marks, Jr.	Diane & Paul Kretschmann
Kimberly Pacent, our beautiful daughter and loving sister	Paul & Karen Pacent & Nicole Pacent-Lindquist
John L. Putnam	Wendy Putnam & Jen Maloney
Barbara Tufts, and Donald Winston Tufts	Cyndy & Ty Anderson
Charles J. Veith IV	His Sister, Linda Veith Glover
Arthur C. and Catherine G. Weigner	Sons Stephen & Ronald
Rick Woodman, Harry Woodman, Robert Osker	Edmund Hawxhurst & Lynn Woodman Hawxhurst

The decorations and brass are given in honor of:

Emily and Julie Hasler	Ken and Erna Olsen
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Decoration and brass donations:

Michael and Christina Russell
David and Ardith Williams

THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF GREENWICH

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Ministers - All Members Of The First Congregational Church Of Greenwich

Senior Pastor
Associate Pastor
Minister of Music
Director of FCCOG Church School/Regional Youth Ministry
Parish Nurse
Church Office Coordinator
Financial Administrator
Administrative and Communications Colleague
Livestream Director
Audio Technician
Database Administrative Assistant
Facility Manager
Sexton
Director of First Church Preschool
Assistant Director of First Church Preschool
Preschool Administrative Assistant
Pastor Emerita

Reverend Patrick Collins
Reverend Cydney Van Dyke
Dr. Craig Scott Symons
Khaleigh Laicher
Susan Asselin, RN
Wendy Spezzano
Greg Girolamo
Carolyn Samuel
Daniel Lepoutre
Bob Small
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