



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2023
CHRISTMAS EVE
NINE 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

Please note that the service begins in darkness. For your safety, we ask that you remain seated.

PRELUDE

Trilogy Of Carols
Glenn Rudolph (b. 1951)
Carrienne Dillon, harp
Dr. Craig Scott Symons, organ

CHRISTMAS GREETING

Reverend Patrick Collins

HYMN

Creator Of The Stars Of Night (verse 1 only)
84 Glory To God Hymnal (purple)

Creator of the stars of night,
your people's everlasting light,
O Christ, redeemer of us all,
we pray you, hear us when we call.

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

The Golodinskii 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.**

One: In the beginning, too, was the Word. And the Word, too, has come down from heaven to earth.

All: **By the Word made flesh, Christ our Savior, we know that God is with us.**

One: Tonight 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.**

CHORAL CALL TO WORSHIP

In Dulci Jubilo
Arr. Robert Pearsall
Genesis/Alumni Choir
Daniel Young, director

CHRISTMAS GREETING

Reverend Cydney Van Dyke

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)

LESSON

Isaiah 9:2-7
Common English Bible
Emma Marten

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light.
On those living in a pitch-dark land, light has dawned.
You have made the nation great;
you have increased its joy.
They rejoiced before you as with joy at the harvest,
as those who divide plunder rejoice.
As on the day of Midian, you've shattered the yoke that burdened them,
the staff on their shoulders, and the rod of their oppressor.
Because every boot of the thundering warriors,
and every garment rolled in blood will be burned, fuel for the fire.
A child is born to us, a son is given to us,
and authority will be on his shoulders.
He will be named
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

There will be vast authority and endless peace

for David's throne and for his kingdom, establishing and sustaining it with justice and righteousness now and forever.

The zeal of the Lord of heavenly forces will do this.

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)

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)

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)

LESSON

Luke 2:1-20

Common English Bible

Khaleigh Laicher

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.”

When the angels returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, “Let’s go right now to Bethlehem and see what’s happened. Let’s confirm what the Lord has revealed to us.” They went quickly and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. When they saw this, they reported what they had been told about this child. Everyone who heard it was amazed at what the shepherds told them. Mary committed these things to memory and considered them carefully. The shepherds returned home, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. Everything happened just as they had been told.

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

Reverend Cydney Van Dyke

CAROL

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!

INVITATION TO CHRISTMAS OFFERING

Reverend Patrick Collins

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.

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

THE CHRISTMAS PRAYER

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.

THE SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION

Invitation

Prayer of Consecration

Words of Institution

Receiving the Bread and Cup

In the tradition of our church, let us partake of the bread (gluten-free) and the cup together, remembering our individual uniqueness in the eyes of God and our diversity and unity within the Body of Christ.

Those receiving communion are asked to come forward by the center aisle, receive and eat the bread, proceed to and drink an individual cup, then return to their seats by the side aisle.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING (in unison)

God of transformation, we offer you our gratitude, deep gratitude, for this moment, this meal, these people. We give ourselves to you. Take us out to live as changed people because we have shared this sacrament and cannot remain the same. Ask much of us, expect much from us, enable much by us, encourage many through us. For the baby whose birth we celebrate tonight, for peace to prevail on earth, and for your glory forever we give our thanks and praise. Amen.

ANTHEM

O Holy Night
Adolphe Adam
Genesis/Alumni Choir

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.
Lit candles stay upright. Please light your candle by tipping it over a lit one.*

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.

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 Cydney Van Dyke

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

BENEDICTION RESPONSE

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.

POSTLUDE

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



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!

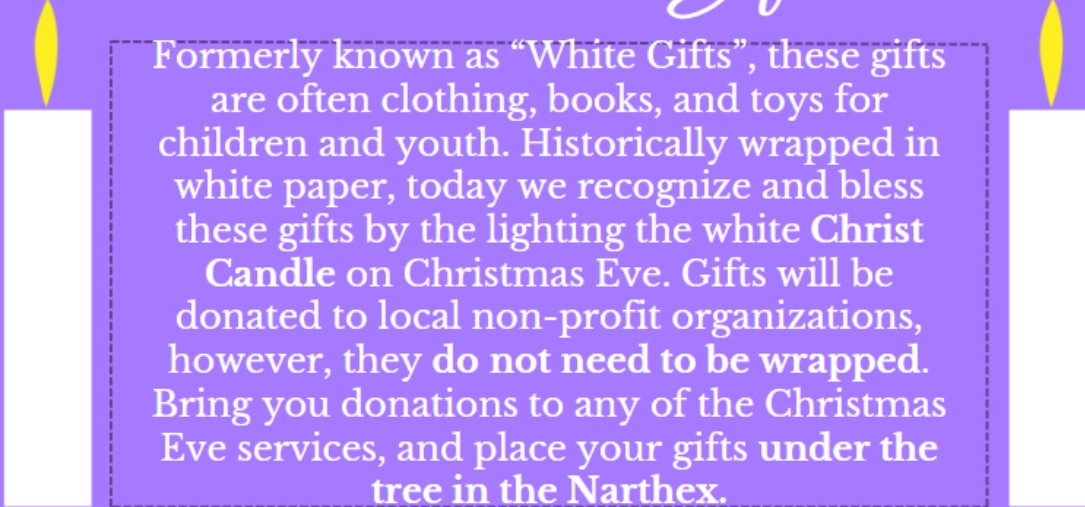
SATURDAYS: DEC 30 & JAN 6, 10AM-3PM
SUNDAYS: DEC 31 & JAN 7, 12-4PM

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
Richmond B. Hopkins	His 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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Decorations and brass donations:

Michael and Christina Russell
David and Ardith Williams

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
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
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Sue Wilder
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OF CHRIST
a just world for all