



SUNDAY, JANUARY 12, 2025
BAPTISM OF THE LORD
TEN O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING



THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF GREENWICH

declares itself to be Open and Affirming (ONA); 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.

Welcome to Worship!

We welcome you this day and are glad you are here! May worship be a blessing to you.

First Church Welcomes *You.*

With Worship. A casual tone, stirring music, moving prayers, & a faith-invoking message. **Prayer Book requests** (in Narthex) are uplifted during the Prayers of the People.

With Inclusion. Open & Affirming (ONA). We make a point of meeting all and name tags worn.

With Communion. The first Sunday of each month, all ages share in the sacred meal together. We use juice & gluten-free bread!

With Care. We pass the Peace of Christ to one another. We are a mask-friendly, come-as-you-are, leave-as-a-friend community.



First Church Welcomes *Children.*

The PrayGround. In the Chapel space, guiding kids in worship.

Cherub Choir, Celebration Singers, & Genesis Choir. Children of all ages are welcome to offer music in worship!

Children's Message. A moment for kids & the child in each of us.

Church School. Faith learnings for the day continue in the Undercroft classrooms after the Children's Message.

Children's Take Home Library. Located by the PrayGround. Check out what interests you & bring it back next week!



First Church Welcomes *All.*

Sensory Sanctuary & Rocking Chairs. Focusing resources located in the back of the Meetinghouse.

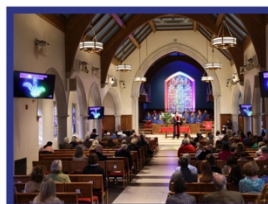
Visual Worship Aids & Live captioning. Found on the monitors.

Audio Hearing Aids. To use, ask Greeters or Ushers.

Spaces in Meetinghouse for Wheelchair Users

Exterior Ramp. In the back of the Meetinghouse, driveway side.

Liftavators. Located inside, from Narthex to Auditorium Level & Outside in the Memory Garden.



Enjoy a cup of coffee, food, & fellowship at *Community Hour* after the service!

ORDER OF WORSHIP

First Church is a mask-friendly community of faith. Anyone who prefers to wear a mask should feel comfortable doing so.

PRELUDE

Voluntary In D Major
William Boyce (1711-1779)
Dr. Craig Scott Symons, organ

CHIMING OF THE HOUR

CALL TO COMMUNITY

Reverend Patrick Collins

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 worshiping near you so you may greet them at the end of worship.

If you are the person on the center aisle, please remove the completed sheet and place it in the plate during the offering.

†CALL TO WORSHIP

One: A voice cries out: "Prepare for God's arrival!

All: **Make the road straight and smooth, a highway fit for our God.**

One: Fill in the valleys, level off the hills.

All: **Smooth out the ruts, and clear out the rocks.**

One: For our God is coming!

All: **Let us worship God together.**

†CHORAL INTROIT

†HYMN

Arise, Your Light Is Come!
744 Glory To God Hymnal (purple)

This hymn text was written by Ruth Duck, one of the most prolific hymn writers of our time.

Ruth was an ordained pastor in the United Church of Christ, a liturgical theologian and professor of worship and taught for 27 years at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in Evanston, Illinois. She passed away December 26, 2024.

†PRAYER FOR WHOLENESS (in unison)

Most wonderful God, foolish and flawed though we are, we too delight in your beloved Son. As in his name we gather in the house of many praises, may the heavens be opened for us, that we may catch a glimpse of that Light and Love, which transforms our common days with a beauty not of our making. Through Christ Jesus our Lord we pray. Amen.

Moment of silence for personal reflection

†ASSURANCE OF GRACE

†PASSING OF THE PEACE

God makes peace within us. Let us claim it. God makes peace between us. Let us share it.

One: May the peace of Christ be with all of you.

All: **And also with you.**

† Please rise in body or in spirit

†RESPONSE (remain standing)

Halle, Halle, Halle



ANTHEM

Day By Day

Stephen Schwartz

The Cherub Choir & Celebration Singers

Carol Woodman, director

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Khaleigh Laicher

(During the response, the children will depart for Church School or 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

Luke 3:1-14

New Revised Standard Version

Pat Larrabee

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
‘Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.
Every valley shall be filled,
and every mountain and hill shall be made low,
and the crooked shall be made straight,
and the rough ways made smooth,
and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’ ”

John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Therefore, bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor,’ for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.”

† Please rise in body or in spirit

And the crowds asked him, “What, then, should we do?” In reply he said to them, “Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none, and whoever has food must do likewise.” Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, “Teacher, what should we do?” He said to them, “Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.” Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what should we do?” He said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.”

ANTHEM

Every Valley
John Ness Beck (1930-1987)
The Chancel Choir

SECOND LESSON

Luke 3:15-22
New Revised Standard Version

As the people were filled with expectation and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, “I baptize you with water, but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

So, with many other exhortations he proclaimed the good news to the people. But Herod the ruler, who had been rebuked by him because of Herodias, his brother’s wife, and because of all the evil things that Herod had done, added to them all by shutting up John in prison.

Now, when all the people were baptized and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”

MESSAGE

Prepare The Way
Reverend Patrick Collins

†HYMN

Praise, My Soul, The God Of Heaven
619 Glory To God Hymnal (purple)

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.

† Please rise in body or in spirit

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.



ORGAN OFFERTORY

Fugue In D Minor
Clara Schumann (1819-1896)

†DOXOLOGY

Praise God, From Whom All Blessings Flow

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.

†PRAYER OF DEDICATION

†HYMN

How Firm A Foundation
463 Glory To God Hymnal (purple)

†BENEDICTION

†CHORAL RESPONSE

†POSTLUDE

Prelude In D Minor
Clara Schumann

† Please rise in body or in spirit

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COMMUNITY HOUR

Join us for Community Hour in the Auditorium where you can greet one another, have a cup of coffee, and a light snack.

Hosts for January are members of the Caring Ministries Committee.

CHURCH SCHOOL

Jan 12 - 26 - Regular Church School



BLOOD PRESSURE SCREENINGS



Sue Asselin, Parish Nurse, is available for blood pressure screenings and health consultations following today's worship service. She will be in her office, just to the right of the Auditorium stage. During the week she is available by appointment by calling 203-637-1791 ext. 821.



WIRED WORD BIBLE STUDY CONTINUES!

Join Pastor Patrick for lunch on Thursdays at noon in the lounge. Using the Wired Word curriculum, each week we'll discuss a topic or headline from the week's news and ask

ourselves how our faith applies through guided questions and discussion. Learn more at thewiredword.com. BYO lunch optional.

THE RUMMAGE ROOM

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



CHOIR REHEARSALS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TODAY



As we begin a new year, this is the great time to join a choir! Even if you can only be part of the group for a few months, this is your chance to explore what it means to share your voice with a wonderful group of friends. Check us out today!!

Cherub: K-2nd grade - Carol Woodman, director - Silver Door (Preschool level) 11:15-11:45

Celebration Singers: 3-6th grade - Craig Symons, director - 3rd floor Music Room 11:15-12:00

Genesis Choir: 7-12th grade - Danny Young, director - 3rd floor Choir Room 11:15-12:15



SAVE THE DATE -

QUARTERLY MEETING SUNDAY, FEB 2

Plan to attend the quarterly meeting following the worship service and hear important updates in the life of First Church from your Church Council.



THE 2025 ANNUAL GIVING CAMPAIGN

As of January 8, we have received 165 pledges (75% of potential giving units) for over \$582,508 (almost 90%) toward our goal of \$650,000 for 2025. Click on the QR code on the right for instructions on how to pledge online.



You can schedule your giving for 2025 in weekly, monthly, or other ways, because First Church has the capability of auto-payments from your bank account or credit card! Please use the QR code on the right to access the church's ACS system and enter the necessary information. If you set up, changed, or plan to continue your automatic monthly online through MyFirstChurch.com for 2025, please know that **you still need to submit a pledge form.**



Pledges can be submitted through the digital pledge form at www.fccog.org or by returning a paper pledge card to the office. If you have any questions, please contact Greg Girolamo at the church office or Philip Wentworth at 203-992-9500.

THE 2025 "SOUPER BOWL" SUNDAY SOUP & CHILI SALE

Calling all cooks! It's time to show off your soup-making skills once again by volunteering to make and donate a quart (or quarts) of soup or chili to benefit the First Church Women's Fellowship!



The sale will take place in the auditorium on Sunday, February 9, 2025 following worship. Quarts of homemade soup and chili will be sold for \$10 each.

Please sign up to donate after church in the auditorium beginning Sunday, January 12th, and continuing for the next several Sundays. Restaurant-style food containers will be available when you sign up. You may also sign up in the church office. This annual event has proven to be easy, inexpensive and popular for both those who love to cook and those who love to eat! This is the only Women's Fellowship fundraiser for the year. Please contact Sue Wilder for more information swilder102@gmail.com

PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY



Can you knit a basic stitch? If so, please consider knitting a prayer shawl for our ministry. It will bless you and the recipient. The few stolen moments of knitting a few rows while saying a prayer to the future recipient is peaceful and uplifting, I promise.

Join us in creating these prayer shawls, knitting into them our prayers, love and support. These shawls are then distributed to those experiencing a crisis or loss – and truly are beloved. No expertise needed as we use very forgiving yarn, larger needles and one basic stitch.

We meet again on Wednesday January 22 at 7pm in Rick's Room of First Church. We can supply the needles and yarn. Contact Angela Stevens for more information. angelamessinastevens@gmail.com
Hope to see you soon!

FIRST CHURCH SOCIAL MEDIA

How many of you have accounts on Facebook, Instagram, or YouTube? First Church has a presence on all of these platforms and we need YOU to connect with us there and help spread the news of the great work our members do at the church and in the community.



Our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/FCCOGCT) has 885 "likes" - which means 885 people will see the posts that happen on Facebook. Our Instagram account (www.instagram.com/fccog/) has 365 "followers" and our YouTube account (www.youtube.com/@firstchurchgreenwich) has 589 "subscribers". That translates to nearly 2000 (!!!) people who have connected with First Church on social media.

"What more can I do?" Well, we're glad you asked!! Every time a post happens from First Church on social media, click on it and like/love it. THEN share it to your account (if that post resonates with you or is important) so others see that. THEN encourage your friends and family to like/follow/subscribe our social media. When you view our YouTube page and watch weekly worship or Messiah, click "like" (or thumbs up). That kicks the algorithms into gear and our account can get increased awareness online.

Finally, here's your New Year Challenge! Let's get those numbers up to the next major level. For Facebook - let's get to 1000; for Instagram, let's get to 400; and for YouTube, let's get to 600. That equals about 160 new friends that will receive the good news of our amazing church in Old Greenwich!

MEETINGHOUSE FLOWERS

Flowers in the Meetinghouse on Sunday mornings are something we all enjoy. These flowers not only beautify our worship space, but are given to honor very special people or occasions in our lives. In addition to remembering a loved one, you can give flowers in celebration of:

- Marriages
- Anniversaries
- Baptisms
- Birthdays
- To say "congratulations" or "thank you."

Donors can be an individual or a group.



This year, why not consider a Sunday when you would like to thank God and honor a special person or memorable moment in your life with a gift of flowers? Mail or drop off your check for \$100 to the Church Office (payable to First Congregational Church) with detailed information on who or what you would like recognized, and we'll take care of the rest!

Following worship, your flowers can be taken home or will be reorganized into smaller arrangements and distributed to homebound or ill members who would enjoy a token of beauty in their homes. Deadline for donations is at least 2 weeks in advance of the Sunday to guarantee floral arrangements. Contact Craig Symons for further information.



NEW YEAR INVOLVEMENT

As 2025 spreads out before you, why not take the opportunity to serve First Church as an usher, a scripture reader, or call to offering reader? Use our SignUpGenius page to sign yourself up through June 2025. Simply head to our website - www.fccog.org, scroll to the bottom left side under "Quick Links" and select the way in which you'd like to serve!

CALL-A-RIDE GREENWICH



Free Transportation For Seniors And More

At CALL-A-RIDE we provide free transportation weekdays for seniors age 60 or over within the Town of Greenwich. Our volunteer drivers also serve to create an atmosphere of understanding and camaraderie aiding seniors toward a full enjoyment of life.

We currently have a roster of volunteer drivers who cover 24 shifts Monday through Friday each week. Morning shifts run from 8:30 a.m.-12:15 p.m. and afternoon shifts run from 12:15 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Some drivers have regularly committed weekly shifts and others are available on a substitute basis. Drivers must be 25 years of age or older, possess a valid driver's license and be approved by C-A-R's automobile insurer. Many current drivers have volunteered with C-A-R for many years and derive a high degree of satisfaction from their service to others through C-A-R.

We are always looking for volunteer drivers - hopefully you will be so inclined and, in that event, kindly make initial contact with our office.

CONTACT US

CALL-A-RIDE OF GREENWICH, INC. 37 Lafayette Place Greenwich, CT 06830

Phone: (203) 661-6633

Dispatchers: Ron March, Hilary Gunn

E-mail: call-a-ride@optimum.net

<https://callaridegreenwich.org/our-service/>

GET INVOLVED WITH OUR MUSIC MINISTRY THIS YEAR!

Choir Opportunities For Young People!

The Cherub Choir is for children in kindergarten through second grade.
Carol Woodman, director
Meets on Sundays
11:15-11:45



The Celebration Singers is for youth in grades 3 to 6.
Craig Symons, director
Meets on Sundays 11:15-12:00

The Genesis Choir is for youth in grades 7 through 12 and early college ages.
Danny Young, director
Meets on Sundays 11:15-12:15



OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADULTS

The Chancel Choir meets in the choir room on the 3rd level on Thursdays from 7:30-9:00 p.m. for ages 18 and up. The sing each Sunday morning for the 10:00 a.m. worship service.



The Palmer Handbell and Silverthorn Handchime Choirs, for ages 18 and up, generally meets on Thursdays in the Meetinghouse from 6:30-7:20 p.m. or as scheduled. | Music is chosen for a larger group or for a quartet of ringers.



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
Junior Sexton
Junior Sexton
First Church Preschool Director
First Church 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
Sue Wilder
Julio Yika
Curtis Gay
Joseph Cicchelli
Jose Jolon
Beth Genovese
Melanie Garnett
Reverend Sally Colegrove



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST
a just world for all