

HOW DOES A WEARY WORLD REJOICE?



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.

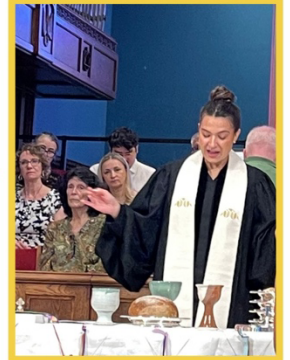
First Church Welcomes *You.*

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

*Two Christmas Carols:
All My Heart This Night Rejoices
While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks
Gordon Young (1950-1997)
Dr. Craig Scott Symons, organ*

CHIMING OF THE HOUR

CALL TO COMMUNITY

Reverend Patrick Collins

*Please take the Fellowship Pad found at the end of your row near the center aisle, sign it, and then pass it back to the center aisle, noting the names of those worshipping 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.*

THE LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

The Atesmen family

One: How does a weary world practice joy?

All: By dancing and throwing birthday parties.

One: By hanging Christmas lights and holding sleepy babies. By singing loudly and looking for good news.

All: By telling the story of Jesus and showing up for our community.

One: There are a million ways to practice joy. So today we light the candle of joy as a reminder and a charge.

All: With God's help, may we bring joy into a weary world. Amen.

MUSIC DURING THE LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

*Chimings Of Great Joy
Dan Edwards
The Palmer Handbell Choir*

†CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Our God can part the sea.

All: God can bring water from a rock, and provide bread in the desert.

One: Our God can walk on water.

All: He can heal the sick, and turn water into wine.

One: Our God sets the stars in the sky.

All: God hears our voice when we cry, and is closer than our own breath.

One: There is nothing our God cannot do.

All: Let us stand in awe. Let us worship God with wonder.

†HYMN

*Angels From The Realms Of Glory
117 Pilgrim Hymnal (red)*

† Please rise in body or in spirit

†PRAYER FOR WHOLENESS (in unison)

Holy God,

Somewhere in our childhood we face pressure to outgrow awe. We turn into adults who obsess over data and facts. We praise those who have answers and assume that wonder is an answerless game. Forgive us for closing that door to you. Remind us that the kingdom of God belongs to children. Teach us the ways of awe and wonder, so that like Zechariah, when we find ourselves speechless, our first words will be words of praise. With hearts open wide, 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.

†RESPONSE (remain standing)

Lead Me, Guide Me

Refrain

Lead me, guide me, a - long the way, for if you

(A) (D) (A7) (D)
B \flat E \flat B \flat 7 E \flat

lead me, I can - not stray. Lord, let me walk each

(A7) (B7) (Em) (D) (A7) (D)
B \flat 7 C7 Fm E \flat B \flat 7 E \flat

day with thee. Lead me, O Lord, lead me. Fine

ANTHEM

Star Carol
Richard Shepherd (1949-1921)
The Celebration Singers
Vance Briceland, piano

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

(During the response, the children will depart for Church School or return to their seats.)

RESPONSE

Refrain

and God will de-light when we are cre - a - tors of jus - tice and

joy, com - pas - sion and peace: yes,

God will de-light when we are cre - a - tors of jus - tice,

jus-tice and joy!

FIRST LESSON

Psalm 126
New International Version
Joe McBride

When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion,
we were like those who dreamed.
Our mouths were filled with laughter,
our tongues with songs of joy.
Then it was said among the nations,
“The Lord has done great things for them.”
The Lord has done great things for us,
and we are filled with joy.

Restore our fortunes, Lord,
like streams in the Negev.
Those who sow with tears
will reap with songs of joy.
Those who go out weeping,
carrying seed to sow,
will return with songs of joy,
carrying sheaves with them.

ANTHEM

The Spirit Of The Lord
Allen Orton Gibbs (1910-1996)
The Chancel Choir

SECOND LESSON

Luke 1:57-66
New International Version

When it was time for Elizabeth to have her baby, she gave birth to a son. Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy, and they rejoiced with her.

On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him after his father Zechariah, but his mother spoke up and said, “No! He is to be called John.”

They said to her, “There is no one among your relatives who has that name.”

Then they made signs to his father, to find out what he would like to name the child. He asked for a writing tablet, and to everyone’s astonishment he wrote, “His name is John.” Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue set free, and he began to speak, praising God. All the neighbors were filled with awe, and throughout the hill country of Judea people were talking about all these things. Everyone who heard this wondered about it, asking, “What then is this child going to be?” For the Lord’s hand was with him.

MESSAGE

From Weariness To Joy
Reverend Cydney Van Dyke

†HYMN

In The Bleak Midwinter
128 Pilgrim Hymnal (red)

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.

CALL TO OFFERING

Lynn Robertson

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

O Come, O Come Emmanuel
Wilbur Held (1914-2015)

†DOXOLOGY

Praise God, From Whom All Blessings Flow
515 Pilgrim Hymnal (red)

†PRAYER OF DEDICATION

† Please rise in body or in spirit

†HYMN

Good Christian Men, Rejoice
125 Pilgrim Hymnal (red)

†BENEDICTION

†CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

Light Dawns On A Weary World (refrain only)
79 Glory To God Hymnal (purple)

The trees shall clap their hands; the dry lands, gush with springs;
the hills and mountains shall break forth with singing!
We shall go out in joy, and be led forth in peace,
as all the world in wonder echoes shalom.

†POSTLUDE

On Christmas Night
Noel Rawsthorne (1929-2019)

† Please rise in body or in spirit

All music used with permission under ONE LICENSE #A-726454. All rights reserved.

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 December are members of the Church Council.



CHURCH SCHOOL

Church School: Dec 15, 22
Pageant Rehearsal: Dec 22 after worship
All Ages Worship - Cozy Carol Sing: Dec 29
All Ages Worship: Jan 5
Church School: Jan 12

RUMMAGE ROOM

Happy 60th anniversary to the rummage room!

Wow - over \$5,600,000 in dollars given to charities in 60 years! (In today's dollars it is way more than that!)

Many thanks to members and non-members of our church who devote many volunteer hours to the Rummage Room! Many thanks also to all who donate goods to make the shop a success. We couldn't survive without donations.



The Rummage Room closes on December 19th for the Christmas Holidays. Shop before we close.
Regular hours are Monday - Thursday 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.

TREE & WREATH SALE UPDATE



Thank you to all the volunteers that worked on the 58th Annual Christmas Tree and Wreath Sale!

Thank you to everyone for all your efforts in planning, creating, setting up, advertising, selling, decorating, loading, and promoting! This event would not have come together without all your efforts, talents, and generosity. You are the BEST volunteers!

We don't have all the revenue numbers yet, but it is clear that we will be able to make valuable grants to the nine local charities that the sale benefits.

Merry Christmas!



THE 2025 ANNUAL GIVING CAMPAIGN

As of Dec 11, we have received 126 pledges (57% of potential giving units) for over \$488,768 (75%) 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 Giralamo at the church office or Philip Wentworth at 203-992-9500.





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.



Good to Give:
A Pilgrim Towers Party
Share the meaning of the season with:
HOLIDAY MUSIC | GIVING OF GIFTS | CRAFTS FOR ALL
FOR KIDS & FAMILIES: HELP US MAKE THE HOLIDAYS HOLY!

 25 Washington Ct, Stamford, CT
DEC 15 @ 11:30 AM-1:30 PM 

PILGRIM TOWERS  **NEW FRIENDS**  **GIVING TREE GIFTS** 


Faith Formation
for the Whole Family:
HOLY COOKIES

Explore how we
can use food to
check-in with
those we love!

DEC 19TH
Dinner - 5:30
Event - 6 pm


**MAKE
COOKIE
MIX TO
SHARE!**



108 SOUND BEACH AVE | KHALEIGHL@FCCOG.ORG



JESUS GIFT DRIVE

DECEMBER 22-24

Join us in collecting gifts for the
Connecticut Alliance of Fostering Families.
Gifts for all ages will be used year-round.

Unwrapped gifts will be collected during the 10 am
worship service December 22 and at the 10 am, 3, 6
and 9 pm Christmas Eve worship services



Christmas Eve at First Church

10 a.m. Children's Service

especially designed for younger children and families
Music by The Cherub Choir.

3 p.m. Family Service

"Once in Royal David's City" pageant
Music by The Celebration Singers and
Helena Brown, soprano from The Metropolitan Opera

5 p.m. Community Candlelight Carol Sing

on the front lawn of the church.

6 p.m. Festival Candlelight Carol Service

Music by a brass quintet, timpani,
and The Chancel Choir.

9 p.m. Candlelight Service with Communion

Music by The Genesis/Alumni Choir, and harp.

Christmas Meetinghouse Decorations & Brass

The Deacons invite contributions for decorations and brass music for the Meetinghouse this Christmas.

Any amount is welcome. Please deliver the completed form with your check to the church office
on or before Monday, December 16, 2024. Thank you!

Please check one of these choices:

☐ Flowers

☐ Brass

☐ In Memory of

☐ In Honor of

Name: _____

By: _____

Enclosed is my check for \$ _____ made out to **First Congregational Church of Greenwich**
("Flowers" in the memo) Please print legibly to minimize spelling errors.

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

Livestream Director

Audio Technician

Database Administrative Assistant

PrayGround Supervisor

Facility Manager

Senior 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

Daniel Lepoutre

Bob Small

Sue Wilder

Amalia Samuel

Julio Yika

Curtis Gay

Joseph Cichelli

Jose Jolon

Beth Genovese

Melanie Garnett

Reverend Sally Colegrove

