



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2025
FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT
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 are 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.

Please know our worshipping community gathers in-person and online via livestream
with multiple camera angles of the Meetinghouse and congregation.

Audio Hearing Aids are available for your use during the service. See an usher to request a device.

PRELUDE

Sonata #4

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Joseph Dermody, Paul Ghaffari, violins

Dr. Craig Scott Symons, organ

CHIMING OF THE HOUR

CALL TO COMMUNITY

Reverend Cydney Van Dyke

THE LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Yvonne Tran

Leader: In the beginning was the Word, the heartbeat of creation, the voice that speaks light into being.

People: **And that Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.**

Leader: The Word became flesh and moved into the neighborhood, full of grace and truth.

People: **We light this candle for love.**

Leader: Come, Lord Jesus, make your home in us.

People: **Let this flame shine with love that no darkness can extinguish.**

MUSIC DURING THE LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

O Little Town Of Bethlehem

Arr. Lloyd Larson (b. 1954)

The Palmer Handbell Choir

†HYMN

Angels From The Realms Of Glory

143 Glory To God Hymnal (purple)

†PRAYER FOR WHOLENESS (in unison)

You come to us in the flesh, O God. Living among us, knowing the fullness of our humanity and revealing to us the fullness of your glory. As we look for you this day, we trust you are looking for us too, and that we may meet you in light and life, in word and body, in community and solitude, in grace and truth. Make us ready to receive your Word once again. 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, Hallelujah



CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

RESPONSE

Jesus Loves Me

(During the response, the children will return to their seats.)

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

Morning Poem

Mary Oliver

Bonnie Kelley-Young

Every morning
the world
is created.
Under the orange

sticks of the sun
the heaped
ashes of the night
turn into leaves again

and fasten themselves to the high branches-
and the ponds appear
like black cloth
on which are painted islands

of summer lilies.
If it is your nature
to be happy
you will swim away along the soft trails

for hours, your imagination
alighting everywhere.
And if your spirit
carries within it

†Please rise in body or in spirit

the thorn
that is heavier than lead—
if it's all you can do
to keep on trudging—

there is still
somewhere deep within you
a beast shouting that the earth
is exactly what it wanted—

each pond with its blazing lilies
is a prayer heard and answered
lavishly,
every morning,

whether or not
you have ever dared to be happy,
whether or not
you have ever dared to pray.

SOLO

The Virgin's Slumber Song
Max Reger (1873-1916)
Carolyn Paulus, soprano

SECOND LESSON

John 1:1-18
New Revised Standard Version

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.

There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is the only Son, himself God, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

MESSAGE

Back To The Beginning Again
Reverend Patrick Collins

†HYMN

Love Has Come
110 Glory To God Hymnal (purple)

THE 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

Joe McBride

Using your smartphone messaging app, text FCCOG Donate to 73256
or scan this QR code to donate.



ANTHEM

Adore And Be Still
Charles Gounod (1841-1920)
The Chancel Choir
Hanna Golodinskii, soprano
Daniel Young, tenor
Linnea Conley, mezzo soprano
Joseph Dermody, violin

†DOXOLOGY

Praise God, From Whom All Blessings Flow

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below;
praise him above, ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

†PRAYER OF DEDICATION

†HYMN

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice
132 Glory To God Hymnal (purple)

†BENEDICTION

†CHORAL RESPONSE

†POSTLUDE

Postlude on "Sussex Carol"
Noel Rawsthorne (1929-2019)

†Please rise in body or in spirit

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.

COMMUNITY HOUR

HELP OUT AT COMMUNITY HOUR ON SUNDAY MORNINGS

Each Sunday morning, committees of First Church are responsible for working and providing treats during Community Hour following worship. But, even if you aren't on a committee, you can offer to help! Bring some treats, clean up, restocking coffee mugs or treats. There is something for everyone to do. Head to SignUp Genius or scan the QR code and participate in this important ministry when you are available.



CONTINUE HARVEST SUNDAY WITH DONATIONS THROUGHOUT DECEMBER

Thank you for the abundance of donations for Harvest Sunday! Through December 31, you can donate online to shop for fresh food donations from the comfort of your home. The fresh selections will be delivered to Neighbor to Neighbor as they need so nothing spoils.



GREENWICH HIGH SCHOOL - FOLSOM CARE CLOSET

Students in our community, who receive free/reduced price meals at school during the week, are going without food and basic essentials each weekend. GHS teachers are addressing this need through creation of the Folsom House Care Closet, open on Friday afternoons at dismissal, where they're working to provide provisions weekly for around 45 students. Please consider donating non-perishable food and hygiene items in the bin at the back of the Meetinghouse. **This will be an ongoing drive.** Suggested items include dried 1lb bags of white rice, dried 1lb bags of red or black beans, canned tuna, pasta, tomato sauce, granola bars, shampoo, and soap/body wash.



Larger orders can be shipped directly to Folsom House Care Closet at Greenwich High School at 10 Hillside Rd, Greenwich, CT 06830. Financial donations can also be made to the GHS PTA - Folsom Care Closet Donations by clicking on the QR code with your smartphone. Questions or if you would like to help with drop-off, please reach out to Pam Speer pspeer22@gmail.com or Kristin Toretta ktoretta@gmail.com. Thank you!

First Church 2026 Annual Giving Stats



- Pledged To Date (536139)
- Annual Giving Goal (750000)

ANNUAL GIVING UPDATE

We're well on our way for this year with 119 pledging units and over 71% of our goal! Thanks to all who have pledged. This figure is as of Dec 17.

It's not too late to make your pledge to First Church for the 2026 calendar year. You can scan the QR code below which will take you to the website and make your pledge online, or you can use the pledge card in the rack in front of your seat and place it in the offering plate as you come forward to present your food donations during the offering.

We are grateful for your generosity during this giving season to continue the ministry that First Church has in the greater Greenwich community and throughout the world.



LAST CALL FOR DONATIONS – ABSOLUTE FINAL DAY IS NOON TOMORROW!



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 22, 2025. Thank you!

Please check one of these choices:

- Flowers Brass In Memory of In Honor of

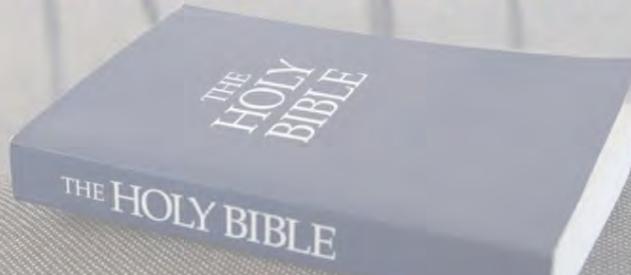
Name: _____

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.

ADULT FAITH FORMATION OPPORTUNITIES

First Look Bible Study



Just Drop-In: A First Look at Sunday's Scripture
9:00-9:45 a.m. in The Lounge

Each Sunday morning, join Pastor Cydney on Sunday mornings for a drop-in time of conversation around the day's scripture. Together we'll explore the passage, gain context, and notice fresh insights before entering worship.

No need to prepare—just bring yourself. Come for the whole time, or even 15 minutes, and trust that God will give you something good to carry into worship and beyond.



NARRATIVE LECTORY BIBLE STUDY

Each Thursday at 12 noon in the First Church Lounge, Pastor Patrick leads a group in a new adult education opportunity. We'll dive into the Narrative Lectionary daily readings, opening space for honest conversation, fresh insights, and shared discovery.

For the past 2-3 years, First Church has been using the Narrative Lectionary as our primary scripture focus in Sunday worship.

Whether you are brand new to Bible study or a seasoned reader, you'll find a welcoming circle to explore how God's story connects with our own.

Come as you are, bring your questions, curiosity, an open heart, and your lunch (optional).



First Congregational Church Greenwich

Annual Nativity Pageant

Ages 2+, one - time costume fitting & walk through, very flexible with no lines to memorize!

Email Khaleighl@fccog.org to register, anyone is welcome we have plenty of costumes!

2025: Rehearsal - Dec 21
Pageant - Dec 24, 3 pm





Christmas Eve At First Church

10 a.m. Children's Service
especially designed for younger children and families

3 p.m. Family Service
"Once in Royal David's City" pageant
Music by The Cherub Choir & The Celebration Singers and
Helena Brown, soprano from The Metropolitan Opera

6 p.m. Festival Candlelight Carol Service
Music by a brass quintet, timpani, organ
and The Chancel Choir

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



BUILDING CLOSED
Thursday, 12.25.2025
Friday, 12.26.2025
Saturday, 12.27.2025
Thursday, 01.01.2026
Friday, 01.02.2026
Saturday, 01.03.2026

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 Church School/ Regional Youth Ministry

Parish Nurse

Director of Operations

Director of Finance & Administration

Livestream Director

Audio Technician

Database Administrative Assistant

Facility Manager

Sexton

Sexton

First Church Preschool Director

First Church Preschool Assistant Director

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

Julio Yika

Joe Vartuli

Curtis Gay

Beth Genovese

Melanie Garnett

Reverend Sally Colegrove



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST
a just world for all

See more about the stories of our
Stained Glass Windows



See the Tour of our Main Cemetery -
People of Note

