



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2025  
THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT  
GAUDETE (REJOICE) SUNDAY  
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

*Bouree On "On Christmas Night" And "The Moon Shines Bright"  
Alec Rowley (1892-1958)  
Dr. Craig Scott Symons, organ*

### CHIMING OF THE HOUR

### CALL TO COMMUNITY

Reverend Patrick Collins

### THE LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

The Gartner Family

One: "Come, all you who are thirsty," says the Lord, "and you who have no money, come, buy, and eat."  
All: **God invites us into a feast of grace, freely given.**  
One: God's word will not return empty; it goes out in power and comes back in joy.  
All: **We light this candle for joy.**  
One: Come, Lord Jesus, draw us into your song of delight.  
All: **Let this flame send us out in joy, with the trees and hills clapping along.**

### MUSIC DURING THE LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

*Still, Still, Still  
Arr. Lloyd Larson (b. 1954)  
The Palmer Handbell Choir*

### †HYMN

*On Christmas Night All Christians Sing  
112 Glory To God Hymnal (purple)*

### †PRAYER FOR WHOLENESS (in unison)

Lord, I come to you, thirsty and depleted, seeking the waters of your presence that truly quench. I know I've spent my energy on things that don't satisfy, and don't return me to you. Fill me with your life and joy. Help me to turn from my own ways and thoughts, which are not yours. Make your thoughts and ways known to me. Help me to trust you are working, even when I wait. I commit to seeking you now, to listen to your voice, and to live in your abundant grace and love.

*\*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

Hal-le, hal-le, hal - le - lu - jah! Hal-le, hal-le, hal - le - lu - jah!

Hal-le, hal-le, hal - le - lu - jah! Hal-le - lu-jah! Hal-le - lu - jah!

The image shows two staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. The first staff contains the lyrics 'Hal-le, hal-le, hal - le - lu - jah! Hal-le, hal-le, hal - le - lu - jah!' with notes and rests corresponding to the words. The second staff continues with 'Hal-le, hal-le, hal - le - lu - jah! Hal-le - lu-jah! Hal-le - lu - jah!' and ends with a double bar line.

## 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

The Guest House

Rumi

Betsy Kreuter

This being human is a guest house.  
Every morning a new arrival.

A joy, a depression, a meanness,  
some momentary awareness comes  
As an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all!  
Even if they're a crowd of sorrows,  
who violently sweep your house  
empty of its furniture,  
still treat each guest honorably.  
He may be clearing you out  
for some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame, the malice,  
meet them at the door laughing, and invite them in.

Be grateful for whoever comes,  
because each has been sent as a guide from beyond.

## SOLO

Sweet Little Jesus Boy

Robert MacGimsey (1898-1979)

Carol Woodman, soprano

†Please rise in body or in spirit

## SECOND LESSON

*Isaiah 55:1-13*  
New Revised Standard Version

Hear, everyone who thirsts;  
    come to the waters;  
and you who have no money,  
    come, buy and eat!  
Come, buy wine and milk  
    without money and without price.  
Why do you spend your money  
    for that which is not bread  
    and your earnings for that which does not satisfy?  
Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good,  
    and delight yourselves in rich food.  
Incline your ear, and come to me;  
    listen, so that you may live.  
I will make with you an everlasting covenant,  
    my steadfast, sure love for David.  
See, I made him a witness to the peoples,  
    a leader and commander for the peoples.  
Now you shall call nations that you do not know,  
    and nations that do not know you shall run to you,  
because of the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel,  
    for he has glorified you.

Seek the Lord while he may be found;  
    call upon him while he is near;  
let the wicked forsake their way  
    and the unrighteous their thoughts;  
let them return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on them,  
    and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.  
For my thoughts are not your thoughts,  
    nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord.  
For as the heavens are higher than the earth,  
    so are my ways higher than your ways  
    and my thoughts than your thoughts.

For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven  
    and do not return there until they have watered the earth,  
making it bring forth and sprout,  
    giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,  
so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;  
    it shall not return to me empty,  
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose  
    and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

For you shall go out in joy  
and be led back in peace;  
the mountains and the hills before you  
shall burst into song,  
and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.  
Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress;  
instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle,  
and it shall be to the Lord for a memorial,  
for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

## MESSAGE

*The Currency of Joy*  
Reverend Cydney Van Dyke

## †HYMN

*Lo, How A Rose E'er Blooming*  
129 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

Jennifer Gartner

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



## ANTHEM

*Seek Ye The Lord*  
John Varley Roberts (1841-1920)  
The Chancel Choir  
Daniel Young, tenor

## †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

*Angels We Have Heard On High*  
113 Glory To God Hymnal (purple)

†Please rise in body or in spirit

## †BENEDICTION

## †CHORAL RESPONSE

## †POSTLUDE

Postlude On "Antioch"  
Gordon Young (1919-1998)

†Please rise in body or in spirit

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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*  
**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](mailto:pspeer22@gmail.com) or Kristin Toretta [ktoretta@gmail.com](mailto:ktoretta@gmail.com). Thank you!

**THANK YOU TO ALL THE VOLUNTEERS THAT WORKED ON THE  
59<sup>TH</sup> 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 eight local charities that the sale benefits. Merry Christmas!



**ANNUAL GIVING UPDATE**

We're well on our way for this year with 115 pledging units and over 70% of our goal! Thanks to all who have pledged. This figure is as of Dec 10.

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.



**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 19, 2025. Thank you!

Please check one of these choices:

- Flowers
  Brass
  In Memory of
  In Honor of

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

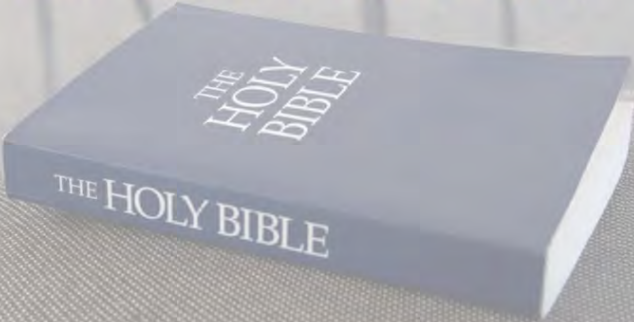
By: \_\_\_\_\_

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 LECTIONARY 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).



# Good to Give: A Pilgrim Towers Party



Share the meaning of the season with:

HOLIDAY MUSIC	GIVING OF GIFTS	CRAFTS FOR ALL
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**FOR KIDS & FAMILIES: HELP US MAKE THE HOLIDAYS HOLY!**

25 Washington Ct, Stamford, CT  
**DEC 14 @ 12:00 AM-2:00 PM**



**PILGRIM TOWERS**

**NEW FRIENDS**

**GIVING TREE GIFTS**

# YOU ARE INVITED TO

*First Church*

## Christmas Party

**SUNDAY  
DEC 14  
5:00-7:30 PM**

In the Meetinghouse  
Hors d'oeuvres & beverages -  
and a carol sing-a-long!

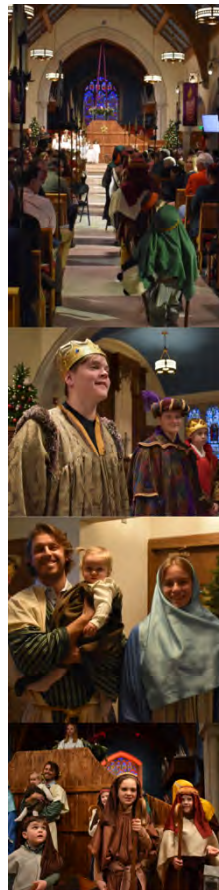


# JESUS GIFT DRIVE

**DECEMBER 21-24**

Join us in collecting gifts for the children and youth of Kids in Crisis. Gifts for all ages will be used year-round!

Unwrapped gifts will be collected during the 10 am worship service December 21 and at the 10 am, 3, 6 and 9 pm Christmas Eve worship services



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](mailto:Khaleighl@fccog.org) to register, anyone is welcome we have plenty of costumes!

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

first church

# Cozy Carol Sing

**A SPECIAL WORSHIP SERVICE  
SINGING CAROLS IN PAJAMAS  
OR CHRISTMAS SWEATERS!**

*December 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025*



# 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

