



WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2025
CHRISTMAS EVE
NINE O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING



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

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

PRELUDE

Carol Fantasia
David Blackwell
Dr. Craig Scott Symons, organ

CHRISTMAS GREETING

Reverend Patrick Collins

CALL TO WORSHIP

First Coming
Madeline L'Engle

One: He did not wait till the world was ready, till men and nations were at peace.

All: He came when the Heavens were unsteady, and prisoners cried out for release.

One: He did not wait for the perfect time. He came when the need was deep and great.

All: He dined with sinners in all their grime, turned water into wine.

One: He did not wait till hearts were pure. In joy he came to a tarnished world of sin and doubt.

All: To a world like ours, of anguished shame he came, and his Light would not go out.

One: He came to a world which did not mesh, to heal its tangles, shield its scorn.

All: In the mystery of the Word made Flesh the Maker of the stars was born.

One: We cannot wait till the world is sane to raise our songs with joyful voice,

All: For to share our grief, to touch our pain, He came with Love: Rejoice! Rejoice!

HYMN

Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus (verse 1 only)
83 Glory To God Hymnal (purple)

Come, thou long-expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in thee.

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

One: Good news of great joy for all people—

All: For unto us a Savior is born.

One: Tonight heaven draws close, and God's love takes on flesh.

All: We light the Christ Candle, for Christ is our light.

One: Come, Lord Jesus, dwell in us this holy night.

All: Let this flame shine through us as your everlasting light.

CHORAL CALL TO WORSHIP

The Holly And The Ivy
Rob Mathes (b.1970)
Genesis/Alumni Choir
Daniel Young, director
Soloists: Matthew Golodinski
Yasmine Bruce
Natalie Bruce
Laura Pap
Emma Marten

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)

CHRISTMAS POEM

I Cannot Tell You How The Light Comes

Jan Richardson

Juliet Primo

I cannot tell you
how the light comes.
What I know
is that it is more ancient
than imagining.
That it travels
across an astounding expanse
to reach us.
That it loves
searching out
what is hidden
what is lost
what is forgotten
or in peril
or in pain.
That it has a fondness
for the body
for finding its way
toward flesh
for tracing the edges
of form
for shining forth
through the eye,
the hand,
the heart.

I cannot tell you
how the light comes,
but that it does.
That it will.
That it works its way
into the deepest dark
that enfolds you,
though it may seem
long ages in coming
or arrive in a shape
you did not foresee.
And so
may we this day
turn ourselves toward it.
May we lift our faces
to let it find us.
May we bend our bodies
to follow the arc it makes.
May we open
and open more
and open still
to the blessed light
that comes.

†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 2:1-7
New Revised Standard Version

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no place in the guest room.

Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

Do Let The Light In
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 "Jesus 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.

†Please rise in body or in spirit

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)

Holy God, Incarnate One,

We give you thanks for this holy meal, for Word made flesh, for Light born into the night.

In this bread and cup, you have met us, kindling your life within our own. Transform us from the inside out, until your light rests in our hearts and shines through our lives.

As we go from this place, send us forth changed and made anew, united and uniting, bearing the radiance no darkness can extinguish, until your light fills the world you so love. Amen.

ANTHEM

Stable Full Of Starlight

Rob Mathes

The 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

Allegro

Felix Alexandre Guilmant

†Please rise in body or in spirit

THE 2026 ANNUAL GIVING CAMPAIGN



As of Dec 22, we have received 131 pledges for over \$549,503 (73%) toward our goal of \$750,000 for 2026.

You can schedule your giving for 2026 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 amount for 2026, 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.

YEAR-END PLEDGE REMINDER



As the year-end quickly approaches, please consider your 2025 pledge fulfillment during this busy season. 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.



COZY CAROL SING – DECEMBER 28

On Sunday, December 28, our 10 a.m. worship service will be very casual and informal. Come in your pajamas, lounge pants, holiday attire (ugly sweaters or festive ones!) and join in a service full of Christmas Carols and holiday music. We will have a “shout your favorite carol” request time at several points in the service. Bring your family and friends and continue the spirit of the holidays.

TREE OF REMEMBRANCE

At the back of the Meetinghouse is a Christmas tree. This will be, through Epiphany Sunday on January 4, our Tree of Remembrance. Please take a label and write the name of your loved one, with or without the dates of birth and death, before hanging it on the tree. Write as many as you’d like. This will be a beautiful way to remember those we have lost and miss, particularly over this holiday period.



*For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord.
Romans 14:8*

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
Dr. Alan Vance Briceland and Penelope Warren Briceland	Vance Briceland
John and Betty Briggs	Eric, Pam, Chase, & Nina Kreuter
Kay and Joe Browne, and Carol and Jerry Kutzen	Tom, Peter, & Terri Browne Kutzen
Anne, Bill and Sue Denne	Their Family
Joan Denne	Her Family
Pat Geismar	The Kettle Quilters
Marian and Fred Hout	Susie Hout Baker – Sara, Charlie, Lizzy
Joan and Jim Kreuter	Betsy Kreuter, and Eric Kreuter & Family
Phyllis and John Kimball	From their loving daughter & granddaughter Karen Pacent & Nicole Pacent-Lindquist
Melita and John Magness	Their Family
Kenneth Olson	Erna Olson & daughters Beth & Christine
Kimberly Dawn Pacent, our cherished daughter and loving sister	Paul and Karen Pacent & Nicole Pacent-Lindquist
Our parents –	Ruth Reed & Claire Henry
Louise & Harrison Reed	
Margaret & Carleton Gisborne	
Gifford Reed	Love, Ruth
Charlie and Bill Robertson	Betsy Kreuter, and Eric Kreuter Family
Robert W. and Thelma M. Symons	Craig Symons
Purisma and Feliciano Teria, Louise and Richard Haviland	Erlinda & Larry Haviland
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 A. & Ronald C. Weigner
Marian, Warren, Peter, and Lori White	Thomas A. White
Rick Woodman, Harry Woodman,	Edmund Hawxhurst &
Robert Osker, Edmund and Shirley Hawxhurst	Lynn Woodman Hawxhurst

DONATIONS

Kit Mills
Glenn and Donna Hascher
Jane Finch



	<u>BUILDING CLOSED</u>
	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
sReverend 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

