



HALF OF THIS YEAR'S CHRISTMAS EVE OFFERINGS
WILL BE GIVEN TO INSPIRICA

Inspirica ... from homeless to home ... is one of the largest providers of services to the homeless in Connecticut and the largest in lower Fairfield County, housing approximately 300 people each night and 800 people each year. Inspirica's goal is to break the cycle of homelessness by helping people achieve and maintain permanent housing and stability in their lives.



THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF DARIEN

United Church of Christ
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DECEMBER 24, 2016
CHRISTMAS EVE – 10:00 P.M.
THE COMING OF CHRIST IN LESSONS AND CAROLS
**Those who are able are invited to stand.*

Silent Prayer of Preparation

Most Holy God,

*With the marveling shepherds, we praise you for all that
We are now about to hear, concerning the holy child Jesus.*

*We thank you for your Son Jesus. He is God-With-Us,
The abiding mystery of your divine Spirit, woven into our lives.*

Jesus comes to teach, to heal and to save us.

Jesus comes as the great light in our darkness.

We are drawn irresistibly to this Savior through whom

Your love and mercy are poured into our lives.

Open our hearts in gratitude, O God,

That we may love all people as Jesus did.

Enchant us with all of your creation as once again

Your plan of salvation for all of the earth unfolds.

Amen.

+ + +

MUSICAL PRELUDE

(9:30 p.m.-10:00 p.m.)

Senior Choir with Maxim Pakhomov and Special Guest, Lois Colin - Harp

*CAROL

“ONCE IN ROYAL DAVID’S CITY”

Irby

Verse 1-Solo, Verse 2-Choir

Verses 3, 5, 6 – All Uniting (below)

And through all his wondrous childhood

He would honor and obey,
Love and watch the lowly maiden,
In whose gentle arms he lay:
Christian children all must be
Mild, obedient, good as he.

And our eyes at last shall see him,
Through his own redeeming love,
For that child so dear and gentle
Is our Lord in heaven above;
And he leads his children on
To the place where he is gone

Not in that poor lowly stable,
With the oxen standing by,
We shall see him; but in heaven,
Set at God’s right hand on high;
When like stars his children crowned
All in white shall wait around.

SALUTATION

Rev. Dale B. Rosenberger, Senior Minister

BIDDING PRAYER

(all uniting)

Holy God, tonight we again hear the wondrous tale of you taking up our cause by taking on our flesh. It is a story foreshadowed by our waywardness, foreseen by prophets of old. Once again the boldness of your acts and the depth of your love surprise us. No limits can contain and no obstacle can defeat your intentions of salvation for all of the earth. Like ancient angels and maidens, seers and shepherds, we bring you our astonished praise for all that you bring us in the holy child, Jesus. We rejoice as you reveal the mystery of the Words made flesh to dwell among us. Take us, even unto Bethlehem, to receive this singular gift. Amen.

LESSON ONE

ISAIAH 9.2, 6-7

Ozzie McCarthy

Christ’s birth and kingdom are foretold by Isaiah.

CAROL

“O COME, O COME, EMMANUEL”

John M. Neale

O come, O come, Emmanuel and ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here, until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

O come, thou Wisdom from on high, and order all things, far and nigh;
To us the path of knowledge show,
And cause us in her ways to go.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

O come, Desire of nations, bind – All peoples in one heart and mind;
Bid envy, strife and quarrels cease;
Fill the whole world with heaven’s peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

LESSON TWO

ISAIAH 11.1-4, 6-9

Else Esmond

The peace that Christ will bring is foreshown.

***CAROL**

“IT CAME UPON THE MIDNIGHT CLEAR”

Richard Willis

It came upon the midnight clear, That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth To touch their harps of gold;
“Peace on the earth, good will to men, From heaven’s all gracious King.”
The world in solemn stillness lay To hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come, With peaceful wings unfurled,
And still their heavenly music floats O’er all the weary world;
Above its sad and lowly plains They bend on hovering wing,
And ever o’er its Bable sounds The blessed angels sing.

For lo, the days are hastening on, By prophet bards foretold,
When with the ever circling years Comes round the age of gold;
When peace shall over all the earth Its ancient splendors fling,
And the whole world send back the song Which now the angels sing.

LESSON THREE

MICAH 5.2-4

Marley McCarthy

The prophet Micah foretells the glory of little Bethlehem.

CAROL

“O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM”

Redner

O little town of Bethlehem, How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep The silent stars go by;
Yet in the dark streets shineth The everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years Are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary, And gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep Their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars, together Proclaim the holy birth!
And praises sing to God the King, And peace to men on earth.

How silently, how silently, The wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts The blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear his coming, But in this world of sin,
Where meek soul will receive him, still The dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem! Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin and enter in; Be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels The great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Emmanuel!

LESSON FOUR

LUKE 1.26-35, 38

Russell Parnon

The angel Gabriel salutes the Virgin Mary.

*CAROL

“HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING”

Mendelssohn

Hark the herald angels sing
"Glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With the angelic host proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"

(continued)

“HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING” *(continued)*

Christ, by highest heaven adored;
Christ the everlasting Lord!
Late in time behold Him come,
Offspring of the Virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
Hail the incarnate Deity,
Pleased as man with man to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel.
Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"

LESSON FIVE

MATTHEW 1.18-23

Kristin Desautelle

Matthew narrates the birth of Jesus Christ.

CAROL

“LO, HOW A ROSE E’ER BLOOMING

Gustav Holst

(Choir will sing 1 verse in German, Congregation will then sing 2 verses below)

Lo, how a Rose e’er blooming From tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse’s lineage coming As men of old have sung.
It came, a floweret bright, Amid the cold of winter,
When half spent was the night.

Isaiah ‘twas foretold it, The Rose I have in mind,
With Mary we behold it, The Virgin Mother kind.
To show God’s love aright, She bore to men a Savior,
When half spent was the night.

LESSON SIX

LUKE 2.1, 3-7

Dave Miller

Luke narrates the birth of Jesus Christ

***CAROL**

“O COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL”

Adeste Fideles

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;
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come let us adore him, Christ, the Lord.

(continued)

“O COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL” *(continued)*

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest;
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come let us adore him, Christ, the Lord.

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning,
Jesus, to thee be all glory given;
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing;
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come let us adore him, Christ, the Lord.

LESSON SEVEN

LUKE 2.8-16

Mariann Bigelow

Heavenly angels send the shepherds to the manger.

OFFERING

“GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST (MESSIAH)”

G.F. Handel

Half of this year's Christmas Eve Offerings will be given to Shelter for the Homeless.

LESSON EIGHT

MATTHEW 2.1-11

Mandy Teare

The star leads the Magi to Jesus, Mary and Joseph

CAROL

“IN THE BLEAK MID-WINTER”

Cranham

In the bleak mid-winter Frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron, Water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,
In the bleak mid-winter, Long ago.

Our God, heav'n cannot hold him Nor earth sustain;
Heav'n and earth shall flee away When he comes to reign;
In the bleak mid-winter A stable place sufficed The
Lord God Almighty Jesus Christ.

Angels and arch angels May have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim Thronged the air: But
Only his mother In her maiden bliss
Worshipped the Beloved With a kiss.

(continued)

“IN THE BLEAK MID-WINTER” *(continued)*

What can I give him, Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd I would bring a lamb;
If I were a wise man I would do my part; Yet
What I can I give him Give my heart.

LESSON NINE

JOHN 1.1-14

Rev. Dale Rosenberger

John unfolds the great mystery of the Incarnation.

SERVICE OF CANDLELIGHTING

Hold glow sticks aloft during final verse of Silent Night.

***CAROL**

“SILENT NIGHT, HOLY NIGHT”

Stille Nacht

(Choir will sing 1 verse in German, Congregation will then sing 3 verses below)

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.

PASTORAL PRAYER

Dale Rosenberger

***LORD'S PRAYER**

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.

***CAROL**

“JOY TO THE WORLD! THE LORD IS COME”

Antioch

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.

BLESSING

Rev. Rosenberger

POSTLUDE

(those who prefer to do so may remain seated, to hear the Postlude.)

* * *

TONIGHT’S USHERS are Lou Converse, Dave Miller and Mandy Teare.

UPCOMING WORSHIP SERVICES

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25

Worship Service of Carols and Poetry, 10:00 a.m.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 1

Worship Service at 10:00 a.m.

(no 8:30 service)



Give us, O God, the vision which can see Your love in the world in spite of human failure.

Give us the faith to trust Your goodness in spite of our ignorance and weakness.

Give us the knowledge that we may continue to pray with understanding hearts. And show us what each one of us can do to set forward the coming of the day of universal peace.

-- Frank Borman, Apollo 8 space mission, 1968

*Merry Christmas from,
Dale, Gary, Dennis, Pam, Karen, Mary Jo, Dan, Marc, Teri,
Carlos and Ruth*



WELCOME TO THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF DARIEN

**"Where God's extravagant love welcomes and affirms,
where Christ's transforming truth enlivens and compels."**

We are an accepting community where faith in Christ makes a difference. We welcome you to worship with us wherever you are on your journey. As a spiritual home, our hallmarks are education, fellowship and pastoral care. Children have a special place in our church family, and are embraced with love, guidance and opportunities for spiritual growth. We are a church of conscience, unafraid of the issues of today and serving as a reconciling force among different faiths.

Sunday services are at 8:30 a.m. and 10:00 a.m.

Visit us at www.uccdarien.org.



Ministers: Every member of the congregation.

Clergy and Staff:

The Rev. Dale Rosenberger, *Senior Minister (emergency pager)* 1-(203) 368-7789

Gary M. Morello, *Associate Minister*

The Rev. Ronald T. Evans, *Pastor Emeritus*

Mary Jo Colman, *Church School Director*

Daniel Hague, *Music Director* Maxim Pakhomov, *Organist*

Teri Manning, *Nursery School Director* Karen Hansen, *Treasurer*

Pamela Toason, *Church Administrator (M, T)* Dennis Hanlon, *Church Administrator (W, Th, Fri)*

Carlos Maya, *Weekday Sexton* Ruth Salazar, *Sunday Sexton*