



THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF DARIEN

United Church of Christ
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DECEMBER 24, 2016
CHRISTMAS EVE –5:30 P.M.
**Those who are able are invited to stand.*

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.

PRELUDE

Mr. Maxim Pakhomov

GREETING AND WELCOME

Mr. Gary Morello, Associate Minister

CAROL

“GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN”

Daniel Hague

SALUTATION

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH AND CHRIST CANDLE

Candle Lighters: Doug and Annette Madden-Kline and family.

Deacon Reader: Gary Holmes

PRAYER (RESPONSIVE)

Family Member: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them light has shined.

Congregation: Thou hast multiplied the nation, thou hast increased its joy; they rejoice before thee as with joy at the harvest, as men rejoice when they divide the spoil.

(continued)

Family member: For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, thou hast broken as on the day of Mid'ian. For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire.

Congregation: For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Family Member: Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David, and over his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and for evermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this. (Isaiah 9:2-7)

DEACON READER:

A CHRISTMAS PRAYER

(all uniting)

**Strong and tender God,
One candle can pierce a land of deep darkness.
One solitary, flickering flame can kindle new vision.
One voice on fire can set human hearts ablaze.**

**Passionate and gentle God,
You are the source of our light,
and we burn as your many candles.
Touch us. Light us. Warm us. Purify us.
May a flame rise within us and burn bright,
this holy and fiery night.**

**Let it be so unto us,
in the name of Jesus,
the newborn king. Amen.**

***CAROL**

"HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING"

(led by Youth)

**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)**

**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!"**

**Hail the heaven-born Prince of peace!
Hail the Son of righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
Risen with healing in his wings,
Mild he lays His glory by,
Born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth.
Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"**

GOSPEL LESSON

LUKE 2:6-20

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 for them in the inn.

In that 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 Saviour, 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 favours!’

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.’ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

SERMON

“J.O.Y.”

Mr. Morello

OFFERTORY

“BREATH OF HEAVEN”

***DOXOLOGY**

*Praise God from whom all blessing flow; Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above ye heav'nly host; Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.*

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

Thank you, God, for coming to us in a human life so expressive of love that two millennia have not quenched the flame. May Jesus' love burn so brightly in us until it warms all of the earth. Use our gifts to ignite the world with such compassionate care that all your children may know hope and peace, love and joy, in Jesus' name. Amen.

MESSAGE OF JOY

Rich and Missy Almy

***CAROL**

“SILENT NIGHT”

(Lighting of the lights)

**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.**

***CAROL**

“JOY TO THE WORLD! THE LORD IS COME”

**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.**

***A CHRISTMAS BLESSING**

Mr. Morello

POSTLUDE

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

* * *

TONIGHT'S USHERS are: Karen Brennan, Gary Holmes, Bill Lattimer and Kathy Monro



CHRISTMAS FLOWERS



IN MEMORY OF THOMAS J. MORRISON

Kathy Cramer

IN MEMORY OF RICHARD STERLING FRANKS

The Esmond Family

IN GRATITUDE FOR OUR FAMILIES

Joan and Bob Hopkins

IN GRATITUDE OF OUR PARENTS: KAE JACOBS, ASHLEY & HOYT AMMIDON

The Jacobs Family

IN MEMORY OF JAY W. JACOBS

Eliot and Philip Jacobs

IN MEMORY OF JEAN MILLER

Dave and Nina Miller

IN MEMORY OF JUDY NELSON

Debbie and Peter Nelson

IN MEMORY OF FRANK AND PAT CLARK

Debbie and Peter Nelson

(continued)



CHRISTMAS FLOWERS



IN HONOR OF LINDA OSBERG
The Osberg Family

IN MEMORY OF JOAN MICHEL
The Osberg Family

IN GRATITUDE FOR PARENTS: W.T. STEWART AND MURIEL STEWART
Theodora Osgood

IN GRATITUDE FOR OUR LARGE, LOVING FAMILY
Tucker and Elaine Scott

IN CELEBRATION OF FAMILY & FRIENDS
The Westbrook

IN MEMORY OF SUSIE BUCHMAYR
The Westbrook

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 a.m.

Visit us at www.uccdarien.org.



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



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*