





**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 – 2:30 P.M. AND 4:00 P.M. *\*Those who are able are invited to stand.*

*Children are always welcome at our worship services.*

*For parents who wish to remain with their children,  
the church Library has a live audio feed of the worship service.*

### PRELUDE

Mr. John Hanulik, Oboe and Mr. Maxim Pakhomov

### SALUTATION (*responsively*)

Mr. Gary Morello, Associate Minister

The season of Advent has brought us to the moment of truth,  
a moment of hope, a moment when darkness brims with light.

**Awaiting the dawn, as the cold night grows darkest,  
the world is reborn at the birth of the Christ child.**

Tonight we join with Christians worldwide  
who celebrate what Christ's coming means.

**So let us hush at the sound of the angel chorus.  
Be still and rejoice: our God is a God of miracles!**

\*CAROL

“O, COME ALL YE FAITHFUL”

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!

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!

GREETING AND WELCOME

Rev. Dale Rosenberger, Senior Minister

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH AND CHRIST CANDLE

Candle Lighters: The Westbrook Family (2:30 p.m.) The Osberg Family (4:00 p.m.)

Deacon Readers: Al Nickerson (2:30 p.m.) Mandy Teare (4:00 p.m.)

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.

**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”**

**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!"**

**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!"**

*(continued)*

**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 2:1-14**

In those days a decree went out from Emperor 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 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 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!’

**SERMON**

**“THE ABC’S OF CHRISTMAS”**

Rev. Rosenberger

**OFFERTORY**

Mr. Hanulik and Mr. Pakhomov

**\*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 2,000 years have not quenched the flame. May Jesus' love burn brightly in us until it warms all of the earth. Use our gifts to ignite the world with such compassion and care that all your children may know hope and peace, love and joy, in Jesus' name. Amen.**

**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.**

**PRAYERS AT THE NATIVITY OF JESUS**

*(responsively)*

For all who give you a face, Lord Jesus.

**By spreading the light of your love in the world, we praise you.**

For all who give you hands, Lord Jesus,

**By doing their best toward sisters and brothers, we praise you.**

For all who give you a mouth, Lord Jesus,

**By speaking on behalf of the weak and broken, we praise you.**

For all who give you eyes, Lord Jesus,

**By seeing every bit of love in the hearts of others, we praise you.**

For all who give you a heart, Lord Jesus,

**By respecting the poor and protecting the feeble, we praise you.**

For all who reveal your beauty by their integrity, Lord Jesus,

**By leading lives of character and truthfulness, we praise you.**

*(continued)*

(All uniting)

**You, Lord, are the God of a thousand faces.**

**Yet in no face, so much as the babe of Bethlehem,**

**do we see the goodness and grandeur of your face, O God.**

**Continue the mystery of Christmas in our living.**

**Let your Son, our living Lord, become flesh in us**

**so that we may reveal your great love for the world. Amen.**

**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**

Rev. Rosenberger

**POSTLUDE**

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

\* \* \*

**TONIGHT’S USHERS are:**

(2:30 p.m.) Marianne Lauer, Anne MacInnes, Al Nickerson and Steve Weeden.

(4:00 p.m.) Gary Holmes, Al Nickerson, Heather Raker and Mandy Teare.



# **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 Westbrooks*

**IN MEMORY OF SUSIE BUCHMAYR**  
*The Westbrooks*



*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 a.m.

Visit us at [www.uccdarien.org](http://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*