

The First Congregational Church
(United Church of Christ)
Canton Center, Connecticut

December 24, 2008

6:00 PM

CHRISTMAS EVE

CHIMES Karen Olejniczak

PRELUDE: "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desire" -J.S. Bach

WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHORAL INTROIT: "Do You Know" -Keefe
Cherub Choir

CALL TO WORSHIP (**responsively**): Emily LeGeyt

The splendor of God has been revealed among us.

A child has come to change all our ways.

We who have walked in the shadows have seen the light.

We have given up the unnecessary burdens we carry.

Authority has been assigned to the Wonderful Counselor.

Peace and justice will prevail through eternity.

We will leave judgment to God, whose equity we trust.

We are free to rejoice in the beauty God reveals.

Worship the One who breaks yokes and frees us.

Great is our God, and greatly to be praised.

Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice.

We are ready to declare God's marvelous works.

*HYMN **132** (*Pilgrim*) "O Come, All Ye Faithful"

*PRAYER OF INVOCATION (in **unison**) followed by

THE LORD'S PRAYER (using debts & debtors): Kayla Brasfield

You keep surprising us, gracious God. Just when we get settled into our routines, you offer us a transforming birth. While we focus on greatness, you appear in humble circumstances among ordinary people, in out-of-the-way places. Amid the noise of our busyness, the angel suddenly penetrates our dulled awareness, and we must listen again. O God, keep us from fear or cynicism, lest we miss this opportunity to hear good news that is meant for us, and all of God's children. In Jesus' name we pray, and also saying, *Our Father...*

*GLORIA PATRI (*Pilgrim #513*)

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

Jamie Haberern, Kailynn Maloy, Rose Minichiello

*HYMN **134** (*Pilgrim*) "O Little Town of Bethlehem"

A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

*HYMN **137** (*Pilgrim*) "Away in a Manger"

THE CHRISTMAS FUND OFFERING

Offertory Anthem: "We Three Kings" -Hopkins/Dobranski
Cherry Brook Chimes Bell Choir

*DOXOLOGY (*Pilgrim # 515*)

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION (in **unison**): April Oswald

Thank you God, for all the gifts you have given us. Most of all, we are grateful for the human child who became the embodiment of your Love. With our offerings, we worship the babe of Bethlehem and recommit ourselves as disciples of the man of Nazareth whom he grew up to be. May the ministry and mission of this church be true to our crucified and risen Savior, in whose name we pray. Amen.

THE CANDLE LIGHT CEREMONY

"O Holy Night" -Adam/Dressler
Bill Thomas, soloist

*HYMN "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.**

*PRAYER (in unison):

We thank thee, O God, for the light that came into our world in the life of Jesus. We pray that His spirit be in our hearts; that the love that sent Him may dominate our lives, that the faith which all His life sustained Him may be kindled in us. Let us this night and always rejoice in that radiant light of your love that stooped to a stable and yet is more enduring than the stars...the light of Him who causes heaven and nature to sing with great joy. Amen.

*CANDLES EXTINGUISHED

*HYMN

“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.

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.

*BENEDICTION

*RESPONSE

*POSTLUDE: “Donkey Carol”

-Rutter

(*All who are able, please stand)

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE, 6:00 P.M.

Rev. Susan M. Prichard	Interim Minister
Mary Lou Keefe	Organist; Director of Music
Sarah LeGeyt	Director of Christian Education & Youth
Eric Herbek	Duty Trustee

OUR APPRECIATION is extended to all that are participating in the service tonight:

Deacons: Barbara Lowell, Matt Solomon, Geri Bunnell, Curt Johnson, Lydia Petersen, Dave Ayres.

Greeters/Ushers/Candle Bearers: Ashley Deming, Ashley Enns, Carly Giddings, Carrie Hefler, Chris Mutch.

Members of the Cherub Choir, directed by Judy Robinson.

Members of the Cherry Brook Chimes Bell Choir.

Lights Dimmer: Dr. Larry Carlton.

WE ARE GRATEFUL to those donors of the memorial poinsettias that grace our church tonight. Please leave your plant until after the **second** service. Any plants left after tonight will be available for pick-up during office hours this coming week or next Sunday.

THE OFFERING RECEIVED TONIGHT will support the Christmas Fund of the United Church of Christ. This special fund:

- provides Christmas grants to low income retired clergy and widowed spouses
- provides emergency and disability grants
- supplements small pensions for low income retired clergy and widowed spouses
- subsidizes health plan costs for qualifying low income lay workers and clergy retirees.

WE WELCOME YOU on this blessed night and hope that our service will be meaningful for you. Also, to ensure that our Candle Light Ceremony be not only inspirational but also safe, we ask that you

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING:

THE CANDLE LIGHT CEREMONY:

The candles of the candle lighters are lit from the Christ Candle, which symbolizes our Lord, Jesus Christ, the Light of the World. They will bring their light to the first worshiper in each pew. **REMEMBER THAT THE LIGHTED CANDLE REMAINS UPRIGHT, AND THE UNLIGHTED CANDLE IS TIPPED TO THE LIGHTED. PLEASE BE CAREFUL.** Candles are to be extinguished after the prayer that follows the singing of "Silent Night." Candles should be placed in the aluminum receptacles when exiting.

WHO MAY HAVE CANDLES. The church's policy, for safety reasons, is that **NO ONE UNDER THE AGE OF TEN (10)** may receive a candle to hold during the candle lighting ceremony. However, a parent or adult guardian may share the holding of a candle with a young child during the candle light portion of the service. We hope that everyone will understand the need for this policy and will comply. Thank you!

The First Congregational Church
(United Church of Christ)
Canton Center, Connecticut

December 24, 2008

7:30 PM

CHRISTMAS EVE

CHIMES

Bob Oswald

PRELUDE: "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desire"

-J.S. Bach

Organ; Linda Ripley, Flute; Lauren McAllister, oboe

WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHORAL INTROIT: "Jesus is Born, Prince of Peace"

-Larson

Ladies of the Senior Choir

CALL TO WORSHIP (**responsively**):

The splendor of God has been revealed among us.

A child has come to change all our ways.

We who have walked in the shadows have seen the light.

We have given up the unnecessary burdens we carry.

Authority has been assigned to the Wonderful Counselor.

Peace and justice will prevail through eternity.

We will leave judgment to God, whose equity we trust.

We are free to rejoice in the beauty God reveals.

Worship the One who breaks yokes and frees us.

Great is our God, and greatly to be praised.

Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice.

We are ready to declare God's marvelous works.

*HYMN **132** (*Pilgrim*)

"O Come, All Ye Faithful"

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*GLORIA PATRI (*Pilgrim #513*)

ANTHEM: "We Three Kings"

-Hopkins/Dobrinski

Cherry Brook Chimes Bell Choir

THE PROMISE OF HIS COMING

SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 11:1-4

HYMN **110** (*Pilgrim*)

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

THE HOLY BIRTH

SCRIPTURE: Luke 2:1-7

ANTHEM: "Breath of Heaven" (Mary's Song)

-Eaton/Grant

Linda Ripley, soloist

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

The Goeben Family

HYMN **140** (*Pilgrim*)

"What Child Is This"

GOOD NEWS OF A GREAT JOY

SCRIPTURE: Luke 2:8-16

ANTHEM: "This Christmas Day"

-Jean and Dave Perry

Senior Choir

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

HYMN **129** (*Pilgrim*)

"It Came Upon the Midnight Clear"

THE CHRISTMAS FUND OFFERING

Offertory Anthem: "A Gift of Alleluia"

-Martin

Senior Choir

*DOXOLOGY (*Pilgrim # 515*)

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION (in **unison**):

Thank you God, for all the gifts you have given us. Most of all, we are grateful for the human child who became the embodiment of your Love. With our offerings, we worship the babe of Bethlehem and recommit ourselves as disciples of the man of Nazareth whom he grew up to be. May the ministry and mission of this church be true to our crucified and risen Savior, in whose name we pray. Amen.

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Bill Thomas, soloist

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Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.**

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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.**

*PRAYER (in unison):

**We thank thee, O God, for the light that came into our world
in the life of Jesus. We pray that His spirit be in our hearts; that
the love that sent Him may dominate our lives, that the faith which
all His life sustained Him may be kindled in us. Let us this night
and always rejoice in that radiant light of your love that stooped to
a stable and yet is more enduring than the stars...the light of Him
who causes heaven and nature to sing with great joy. Amen.**

*CANDLES EXTINGUISHED

*HYMN “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.**

*BENEDICTION and *RESPONSE

*POSTLUDE: “Donkey Carol” -Rutter
(*All who are able, please stand)

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE, 7:30 P.M.

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Mary Lou Keefe	Organist; Director of Music
Sarah LeGeyt	Director of Christian Education & Youth
Katha Kerr	Duty Trustee

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Greeters/Ushers/Candle Bearers: Keith Goeben and the deacons.

Members of the Senior Choir.

Members of the Cherry Brook Chimes Bell Choir.

Lights Dimmer: Dr. Larry Carlton.

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