



**The First Congregational Church of Old Lyme**  
**2 Ferry Road**  
**Old Lyme, Connecticut**  
**(860) 434-8686**  
Website: [www.fccol.org](http://www.fccol.org)

## SUNDAY WORSHIP

Steven R. Jungkeit, Senior Minister  
Laura Fitzpatrick-Nager, Senior Associate Minister  
Carleen R. Gerber, Associate Minister  
Simon D. Holt, Director of Music

**December 31, 2023**      **On the Cusp of a New Year:  
A Service of Poetry and Song**      **10:00 AM**

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Prelude

Introit: *A New Year Carol*

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)  
Lisa Feltes, *soprano soloist*

\*Call to Worship (adapted from poem by Amanda Gorman, “Call Us What We Carry”):  
Everyday we are learning  
How to live with essence, not ease.

**How to move with haste, never hate.  
How to live this pain that is beyond us, behind us**

Just like a skill or any art,  
We cannot possess hope without practicing it.  
It is the most fundamental craft we demand of ourselves.

**Come, let us worship God.**

\*Processional Hymn: #161 “O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright”

\*Invocation and The Lord’s Prayer

Welcome and Announcements

\*Hymn: #153 “What Child Is This”

Poem: *Amazing Peace: A Christmas Poem*

Maya Angelou

Thunder rumbles in the mountain passes  
And lightning rattles the eaves of our houses.  
Flood waters await us in our avenues.

Snow falls upon snow, falls upon snow to avalanche  
Over unprotected villages.  
The sky slips low and grey and threatening.

We question ourselves.  
What have we done to so affront nature?  
We worry God.  
Are you there? Are you there really?  
Does the covenant you made with us still hold?

Into this climate of fear and apprehension, Christmas enters,  
Streaming lights of joy, ringing bells of hope  
And singing carols of forgiveness high up in the bright air.  
The world is encouraged to come away from rancor,  
Come the way of friendship.

**It is the Glad Season.**

**Thunder ebbs to silence and lightning sleeps quietly in the corner.  
Flood waters recede into memory.  
Snow becomes a yielding cushion to aid us  
As we make our way to higher ground.**

**Hope is born again in the faces of children  
It rides on the shoulders of our aged as they walk into their sunsets.  
Hope spreads around the earth. Brightening all things,  
Even hate which crouches breeding in dark corridors.**

In our joy, we think we hear a whisper.  
At first it is too soft. Then only half heard.  
We listen carefully as it gathers strength.  
We hear a sweetness.  
The word is Peace.  
It is loud now. It is louder.  
Louder than the explosion of bombs.

We tremble at the sound. We are thrilled by its presence.  
It is what we have hungered for.  
Not just the absence of war. But, true Peace.  
A harmony of spirit, a comfort of courtesies.  
Security for our beloveds and their beloveds.

**We clap hands and welcome the Peace of Christmas.  
We beckon this good season to wait a while with us.  
We, Baptist and Buddhist, Methodist and Muslim, say come.  
Peace.**

**Come and fill us and our world with your majesty.  
We, the Jew and the Jainist, the Catholic and the Confucian,  
Implore you, to stay a while with us.  
So we may learn by your shimmering light  
How to look beyond complexion and see community.**

It is Christmas time, a halting of hate time.

On this platform of peace, we can create a language  
To translate ourselves to ourselves and to each other.

At this Holy Instant, we celebrate the Birth of Jesus Christ  
Into the great religions of the world.

We jubilate the precious advent of trust.  
We shout with glorious tongues at the coming of hope.  
All the earth's tribes loosen their voices  
To celebrate the promise of Peace.

**We, Angels and Mortal's, Believers and Non-Believers,  
Look heavenward and speak the word aloud.  
Peace. We look at our world and speak the word aloud.  
Peace. We look at each other, then into ourselves  
And we say without shyness or apology or hesitation.**

**Peace, My Brother.  
Peace, My Sister.  
Peace, My Soul.**

Offertory Invitation

Offertory Solo: *I Wonder As I Wander*

John Jacob Niles (1892-1980)

Lisa Feltes, *soprano soloist*

\*Doxology: Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise God, all creatures here below;  
Praise God for all that love has done;  
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One. Amen.

\*Offertory Prayer

Scripture Lessons: Psalm 90:12, Luke 2:19-20

Psalm 90:12

“Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.”

Luke 2:19-20

“But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.”

Poem: *The Layers*

Stanley Kunitz

\*Hymn: O God We Hear Your Word of Grace by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette  
(hymn: #149 "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear")

O God, we hear your word of grace;  
The Psalmist tells us this:  
That love and faith will soon embrace  
And peace and justice kiss.  
Then all will sing out, "God is good!"  
Then harvests will increase.  
And we will listen, loving Lord,  
As you proclaim your peace.

The world proclaims a different word:  
How can these things be so?  
For all around this hurting earth  
The seeds of discord grow.  
When war and conflict, greed and pride  
Would claim our loyalty,  
Too often we have turned aside  
From what we're called to be.

Lord, show us what we're called to do  
As we await your day.  
For waiting well means serving, too,  
And walking in Christ's way.  
Now by your Spirit, may we be  
The bearers of your grace,  
Till peace and justice both shall meet  
And love and faith embrace.

Pastoral Prayer

Pastoral Prayer Response: *As We Are Gathered*

The musical score is written for voice and piano in G major and 4/4 time. It consists of three systems of staves. The first system is labeled 'Refrain' and contains the lyrics: 'As we are gath-ered, Je - sus is here; one with each'. The second system is labeled 'Fine' and contains the lyrics: 'oth - er, Je - sus is here. Joined by the Spir - it'. The third system is labeled 'to Refrain' and contains the lyrics: 'built up in love, part of the bod - y, the church of God.' The piano accompaniment provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines in both hands.

\*Hymn: #167 “Arise Your Light Is Come!”

Poem: *Perhaps the World Ends Here*

Joy Harjo

\*Hymn: #160 “Go Tell It on the Mountain”

Poem: *The Year as a House*

Jan Richardson

Benediction

Postlude

*\*Congregation Standing*

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**We thank you for worshipping with us. Following the life and teachings of Jesus, we are a church that strives to be a place of grace, welcoming all regardless of theological expression, age, race, gender, sexual identity, national origin or financial means. In our Church Constitution we recognize that “each member shall have the undisturbed right to follow the word of God according to the dictates of his or her own conscience, under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit.” The First Congregational Church of Old Lyme, established in 1665, cherishes this proud Pilgrim tradition. We are honored by your presence among us, and we invite you to help us become what we endeavor to be.**

## ANNUAL MEETING

On Sunday, January 28, at 11:15 am, the church will hold its annual meeting, during which, among other things, we will elect officers and board members, and approve the church budget for the coming year.

The "2023 Annual Report" available later in the month contains the agenda for the meeting and other informative materials. All Board and Committee chairs, please submit your annual reports by the deadline of January 10.

The purpose of the annual meeting is to:

- receive the reports of the ministers, boards and committees, and church officers for the year 2024;
- receive and approve the report of the nominating committee;
- elect officers and board members for the coming year;
- approve the church budget for the year 2024; and
- conduct such other old or new business as shall properly come before the meeting.

*The image on the cover of the bulletin is an image of  
New Years Eve fireworks in Ohio.*

*The flowers are given by Brett & Sue Lardner in loving memory of their parents  
Rich & Vee Lardner and Ray & Zella Hibbert.*

*The host for the Fellowship Hour this morning is Lee Whitaker.*

*The Nursery is open today with Miss Mulanga Kazadi.*

**Prayers for West Africa travelers.** Our 11 travelers have begun their journey to West Africa to visit Ghana, Togo and Benin. Please keep all of them in your prayers, as they stretch their minds, their hearts, and their imaginations, considering the many ways of exercising faith in our world. They will return on January 12th.

Kevin Booker, Jr.  
Jolene Brant  
Lee Carpenter  
Dana Dixon

Our travelers:  
Carleen Gerber  
Lecia Harbison  
Drew Johnson  
Steve Jungkeit

Miriame Kazadi  
Cathy Mathis  
Susan Switzer

**Epiphany Party:** There is an Epiphany Party during Fellowship Hour on Sunday, January 7th. Cultures all over the world celebrate Three Kings Day and Epiphany. Bring a treat to share and a picture of someone or something that inspires you on the cusp of this new year!

**God's Neighborhood:** The nursery will remain open every Sunday. The Sunday School is on winter break and will plan to return January 14th with the start of the new session of our curriculum. The nursery is open each Sunday!

**Senior Center Luncheons:** The Lymes' Senior Center will be holding their luncheons in the Church's Fellowship Hall on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays each week for the foreseeable future while their facility on Town Woods Road undergoes a major renovation. Any questions about attending the luncheons should be directed to the Senior Center's executive Director, Stephanie Gould, 860-514-5425.

**Interested in Confirmation?** Confirmation classes for 1st, 2nd or 3rd year high school students will begin on Sunday, January 28th from 4-6 pm. Classes will meet January-May and include field trips, films and a service project. Confirmation is offered every other year. For more information contact Laura at 860-304-9096 or [lfitz.nager@gmail.com](mailto:lfitz.nager@gmail.com).

**Chili Cookoff:** Calling all chefs for the Ground Hog Day Chili Cookoff tentatively scheduled for Friday, February 2nd at 5:30-7:00 pm. Chefs please email the office.

**Save the Date.** Walking in their Footsteps: A Civil Rights Learning Trip for Teens during April vacation from April 6th - 11th. This is a 5-day journey. We'll fly round trip to Atlanta, Georgia and visit sights there and drive to Birmingham, Alabama among other places. For more information or to reserve a spot, email Jolene Brant at [jmbrant2023@gmail.com](mailto:jmbrant2023@gmail.com).

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### **Calendar of Events and Meetings**

**Office Closed** *Monday, January 1st.*

**Senior Center Luncheon** *Tuesday, January 2nd at 12:00 pm* in Fellowship Hall.

**Senior Center Luncheon** *Wednesday, January 3rd at 12:00 pm* in Fellowship Hall.

**Blood Drive** *Thursday, January 4th at 9:00 am* in Fellowship Hall.

**Senior Center Luncheon** *Thursday, January 4th at 12:00 pm* in Sheffield Auditorium.