



Difficult Journey - Transition to Bethlehem, by Fritz von Uhde, 1890

## **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 Holt, Organist and Director

**December 15, 2024**

**The Third Sunday of Advent**

**10:00 AM**

Prelude

Handbell Introit: **“Good Christian Folk, Rejoice”** arr. Kevin McChesney Old Lyme Ringers

\*Processional Hymn: #114 “O Come, O Come Emmanuel” (use lyrics as below)

1. O come, O come, Emmanuel Refresh us at your life-giving well.  
All people long to feel your grace, Pour out your Spirit on every place.

***Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel, shall come to thee wherever you may dwell.***

2. O come to us, our Everlasting Home, Your people lost and broken, roam,  
And seek a place of welcome and peace, From war and violence, may they know release.

***Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel, shall come to thee wherever you may dwell.***

3. O come Beloved, hear your peoples’ plea The wounded soul, the homeless refugee.  
May ‘Welcome’ be our own heart’s call, ‘Till there be room and justice for us all.

***Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel, shall come to thee wherever you may dwell.***

(Words by Juanita L. Austin – Nov. 29 2017)

\*Call to Worship:

In this season of Advent,  
we are called home from the exile of selfish oppression.

**We are called to the freedom of justice,  
the balm of healing,  
and the joy of sharing.**

We are called into the holy work  
of becoming friends to strangers and victims,  
companions of those whom others shun,  
**This season, we journey toward the happiness  
of those whose hearts are broken.**

**O come, O come Emmanuel.  
Let us worship God.**

\*Prayer of Invocation and The Lord's Prayer

Welcome and Announcements

Advent Wreath Lighting: The Candle of Joy

Jonathan, Allie and Kate Ardrey

Hymn: #119 “Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence”

*(During the hymn children and youth will leave for Sunday School.)*

Offering Invitation

Offertory Anthem: **“Candlelight Carol”**

by John Rutter

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.

\*Offering Prayer

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 score includes treble and bass clefs, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a common time signature (C).

Scripture: Luke 2: 15-16, Philippians 2: 4-7, Galatians 5: 13-23 (The Message)

Sermon: Let Us Go Now to Bethlehem: Nativity and the Constraints of Freedom”

Rev. Dr. Steven Jungkeit

Closing Hymn: #151 **“O Little Town of Bethlehem”**

Benediction

Benediction Response

Postlude

\*Congregation Standing

## Scripture Readings

### **Luke 2: 15-16**

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.

### **Philippians 2: 4-7**

Let each of you look not to your own interests but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

who, though he existed in the form of God,  
did not regard equality with God  
as something to be grasped,  
but emptied himself,  
taking the form of a slave,  
assuming human likeness.

### **Galatians 5: 13-23 (The Message)**

It is absolutely clear that God has called you to a free life. Just make sure that you don't use this freedom as an excuse to do whatever you want to do and destroy your freedom. Rather, use your freedom to serve one another in love; that's how freedom grows. For everything we know about God's Word is summed up in a single sentence: Love others as you love yourself. That's an act of true freedom. If you bite and ravage each other, watch out—in no time at all you will be annihilating each other, and where will your precious freedom be then?

My counsel is this: Live freely, animated and motivated by God's Spirit. Then you won't feed the compulsions of selfishness.

It is obvious what kind of life develops out of trying to get your own way all the time: repetitive, loveless, cheap sex; a stinking accumulation of mental and emotional garbage; frenzied and joyless grabs for happiness; trinket gods; magic-show religion; paranoid loneliness; cutthroat competition; all-consuming-yet-never-satisfied wants; a brutal temper; an impotence to love or be loved; divided homes and divided lives; small-minded and lopsided pursuits; the vicious habit of depersonalizing everyone into a rival; uncontrolled and uncontrollable addictions; ugly parodies of community. I could go on.

This isn't the first time I have warned you, you know. If you use your freedom this way, you will not inherit God's kingdom.

But what happens when we live God's way? God brings gifts into our lives, much the same way that fruit appears in an orchard—things like affection for others, exuberance about life, serenity. We develop a willingness to stick with things, a sense of compassion in the heart, and a conviction that a basic holiness permeates things and people. We find ourselves involved in loyal commitments, not needing to force our way in life, able to marshal and direct our energies wisely.

## Handbell Ringers Introit and Choir Anthem Today

Handbell Introit: “*Good Christian Folk, Rejoice*”

arr. Kevin McChesney  
Old Lyme Ringers

*Good Christian Folk, Rejoice* is a handbell arrangement of Hymn 158 “Good Christians All, Rejoice,” found in our hymnal. The tune IN DULCI JUBILO is a German melody from the 14th century.

**Offertory Anthem: “Candlelight Carol”**

by John Rutter

How do you capture the wind on the water? How do you count all the stars in the sky? How can you measure the love of a mother, or how can you write down a baby's first cry? *Candlelight, angel light, firelight and starglow shine on his cradle till breaking of dawn. Gloria in excelsis Deo! Angels are singing; the Christ child is born.*

Shepherds and wise men will kneel and adore him, Seraphim round him their vigil will keep; nations proclaim him their Lord and their Savior, but Mary will hold him and sing him to sleep. *Candlelight, angel light, firelight and starglow shine on his cradle till breaking of dawn. Gloria in excelsis Deo! Angels are singing; the Christ child is born.*

Find him in Bethlehem laid in a manger: Christ our Redeemer asleep in the hay. Godhead incarnate and hope of salvation: child with his mother that first Christmas Day. *Candlelight, angel light, firelight and starglow shine on his cradle till breaking of dawn. Gloria in excelsis Deo! Angels are singing; the Christ child is born.*



*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.*

*The flowers this morning are given in memory of Joan Bonvicin by her family.  
She loved this church and she loved Christmas.*

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*The hosts for the Fellowship Hour this morning are the Clark Family.*

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*The nursery is open today with Miss Tiffany Goss.*  
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## **Events and Meeting**

**Green Grass Meeting** *Today, Sunday December 15th at 11:30 am* in the Library.

**Grief Group** *Tuesday, December 17th at 5:00 pm* in the Hoag Parlor.

**“A Quiet Christmas Service”** *Tuesday, December 17th at 6:30 pm* in the Meetinghouse.

**Board of Deacons Meeting** *Tuesday, December 17th at 7:30 pm* in the Library.

**Old Lyme Ringers Rehearsal** *Wednesday, December 18th at 6:30 pm* in the Fellowship Hall.

**Senior Choir Rehearsal** *Wednesday, December 18th at 7:30 pm* in the Sheffield Auditorium.

**Writers at the Well** *Friday, December 20th at 10:00 am* in the Hoag Parlor.

**Food Pantry** *Saturday, December 14th at 8:30 am* in the Fellowship Hall.

**Pageant Dress Rehearsal** *Saturday, December 21st at 3:00 pm* in the Meetinghouse.

**Christmas Pageant Service** *Sunday, December 22nd at 10:00 am* in the Meetinghouse.

### **A Quiet Christmas Service to Light up the Darkness:**

*Tuesday, December 17th at 6:30 pm* in the Meetinghouse.

The weeks leading up to Christmas can be a time of joy and hectic anticipation as well as pain and loss. For some, it can be a season of hardship and illness, disappointment or anxiety. Many of us, too, are acutely aware of the chaos of our world and looking for hope in the darkness. Join us for a contemplative service of music, prayer and candle lighting as we gather to create sacred space for one another this Advent. We'll honor the blessings that come from attending to what is deepest and most in need of healing. Featuring the music of Elm City Winds, a woodwind quintet from New Haven. All are welcome!

## **Christmas Pageant and Rehearsal (Rehearsal Sat. 21st, Pageant Sun. December 22nd)**

God's Neighborhood has begun rehearsals during Sunday school for the Christmas Pageant scheduled for Sunday, December 22nd! On Saturday December 21st at 3:00 pm, the players of God's Neighborhood will take the stage for a dress rehearsal. Arrayed in their garb and demonstrating all they've learned, they will present their artistic interpretation in preparation for the next morning's pageant production! Pizza served at rehearsal, too!

## **Christmas Eve Service Memorial Music & Flowers**

If you would like to contribute to our special Christmas Eve music and flowers in memory of a loved one, please email or call the church office, [fccol@fccol.org](mailto:fccol@fccol.org) or 860-434-8686. Our deadline for preparing the memorial list is Friday, December 20th.

## **Gifts for the Homeless Hospitality Center of New London**

Under our Meetinghouse Christmas tree we are gathering gifts for the folks at HHC. They would appreciate socks (any kind – for men or women ) and also coffee (ground, please). A check made out to HHC is always welcome. You could place it in an envelope under the tree. Presents need not be wrapped. Thank You!

## **Bible Study Goodness, Greed and Grace: Journeys through Genesis and Exodus**

Bible Study will resume on Thursday, January 16th at 11:00am.

## **Sunday Flowers**

We're scheduling members and friends who would like to provide pulpit flowers for Sundays. To sign up, call Jill Harned, 603-398-9004. Thank you!

## **Housing Wanted**

We regularly hear from folks who are in need of an affordable rental. If you have any information that could be helpful, please let Anne in the office know. Even for a room to rent for a period of time would be greatly appreciated.

## **Diaper Bank First Saturday of Every Month**

The diaper bank inventory is low. We are in need of sizes 4, 5, and 6. Any donation: package or case, is greatly appreciated. Consider adding diapers to your Christmas list. Thank you, on behalf of our babies and toddlers who receive these items. Diapers can be left at or near the food pantry box at the top of the basement stairs.

## **A Note from the Treasurer:**

As we approach the end of the year, we hope that everyone will be able to satisfy their pledge commitments for 2024. Almost a year ago we reluctantly had to present a deficit budget to the congregation since our projected income was not forecast to cover expected expenses. As always, and especially this year, additional contributions are welcome and needed. Early in December we will be mailing 2024 contributions statements to ensure our records match yours. Please call Julie or me in the church office (860-434-8686) with any questions or concerns. Thanks to all who faithfully support our church!



**A QUIET CHRISTMAS SERVICE  
TO LIGHT UP THE DARKNESS**

Tuesday, December 17th at 6:30pm.

For those of us desiring a more contemplative and meditative Christmas, please join us for a quiet Advent service of music, prayer and candle lighting in the name of healing and peace for one another and the world. Featuring the wonderful woodwind quintet, Elm City Winds, from New Haven.

**ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PAGEANT**

Sunday, December 22nd at 10:00 AM

**CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES**

Tuesday, December 24th:

***THE LIVING MANGER***

5:00 pm Service for families with young children

***CANDLELIGHT SERVICE OF LESSONS & CAROLS***

8:00 PM and 10:00 PM Services

**CHRISTMAS DAY**

Wednesday, December 25th

the church will be open for prayer and meditation.

**EPIPHANY SERVICE AND BRUNCH**

Sunday, January 5<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 am