



Painting by Irakli Parjiani (1950–1991), 1990

The First Congregational Church of Old Lyme

**2 Ferry Road,
Old Lyme, Connecticut
(860) 434-8686
Website: www.fccol.org**

SUNDAY WORSHIP

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

January 4, 2026

Worship Service

10:00 AM

Prelude

Introit: **“Nativity Carol”**

by John Rutter (born 1945)

*Processional Hymn: #162 “We Three Kings of Orient Are”

*Call to Worship:

In this, the time of the year when night is longest,

We look upon darkness,

Discerning the flashes of light will guide us.

As the magi followed the star in search of wisdom,

We too journey through the night,

Trusting that our search leads toward life, toward hope, toward love.

Let us worship God!

*Prayer of Invocation and The Lord’s Prayer

Welcome and Announcements

*Hymn: #159 “Love Came Down at Christmas”

Special Music: **“Walking in the Air”** by Howard Blake from the film *“The Snowman”*
by Rachael and Sabina Jungkeit

Offering Invitation

Offertory Anthem: **“Behold a Star from Jacob Shining”** from “Christus”
by Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

*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 image shows a musical score for a hymn in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of three systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff. 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 music is written in a simple, accessible style with many chords and some melodic lines.

Scripture Readings: Psalm 119: 97-105, Matthew 2: 1-12, John 1: 14

Sermon: “Scripts for the Pageant”

Rev. Dr. Steven Jungkeit

*Closing Hymn: #168 “As with Gladness Men of Old”

Benediction

Benediction Response

Postlude

**Congregation Standing*

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, her or their 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.

Scriptures

Psalm 119: 97-105

Oh, how I love your law!
It is my meditation all day long.
Your commandment makes me wiser than my enemies,
for it is always with me.
I have more understanding than all my teachers,
for your decrees are my meditation.
I understand more than the aged,
for I keep your precepts.
I hold back my feet from every evil way,
in order to keep your word.
I do not turn away from your ordinances,
for you have taught me.
How sweet are your words to my taste,
sweeter than honey to my mouth!
Through your precepts I get understanding;
therefore I hate every false way.
Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path.

Matthew 2: 1-12

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, magi from the east came to Jerusalem, asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star in the east and have come to pay him homage.” When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him, and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea.

Then Herod secretly called for the magi and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.” When they had heard the king, they set out, and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen in the east, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

John 1: 14

And the Word became flesh and lived among us.

Choir Anthem

Introit: “Nativity Carol”

by John Rutter (born 1945)

Text: Born in a stable so bare, Born so long ago; Born 'neath light of star, He who loved us so. *Far away, silent he lay, Born today, your homage pay, For Christ is born for aye, Born on Christmas Day.* Cradled by mother so fair, Tender her lullaby; Over her son so dear Angel hosts fill the sky. *Far away, silent he lay, Born today, your homage pay, For Christ is born for aye, Born on Christmas Day.* Wise men from distant far land, Shepherds from starry hills Worship this babe so rare, Hearts with his warmth he fills. *Far away, silent he lay, Born today, your homage pay, For Christ is born for aye, Born on Christmas Day.* Love in that stable was born Into our hearts to flow; Innocent dreaming babe, Make me thy love to know. *Far away, silent he lay, Born today, your homage pay, For Christ is born for aye, Born on Christmas Day.*

Offertory Anthem: “Behold a Star from Jacob Shining”

from "Christus"

by Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

Text: Behold a star from Jacob shining, and a scepter from Israel rising. To reign in glory over the nations. Like some bright morning star is he, the promise of the coming day, beyond the night of sorrow. Break forth, O Light! We, our joyful hearts uplifting with thanksgiving, hail the brightness of Thy rising.

The 2026 Offering Envelopes have not arrived yet. There are printed white envelopes in the narthex and on the table in the connector hallway, that you can put offering in and please write your name on the envelope. The numbered envelopes should arrive by next Sunday

The flowers this morning are given in gratitude for Gavin Lodge and for all the creativity and love he put into the Children's Christmas Pageant this past year.

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*The host for the Fellowship Hour this morning is Barbara Smith.*

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The nursery is open today with Miss Erin Cameron.

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## Events and Meetings

**Ladies Who Stitch** *Monday, January 5th at 10:00 am* in the Sheffield Auditorium.

**WES Meeting** *Monday, January 5th at 1:00 pm* in the Library

**Grief Group** *Wednesday, January 7th at 5:00 pm* in the Hoag Parlor.

**Old Lyme Ringers Rehearsal** *Wednesday, January 7th at 6:30 pm* in the Fellowship Hall.

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

**ReBbellion Rehearsal** *Thursday, January 8th at 4:30 pm* in the Fellowship Hall.

**Food Pantry and Diaper Bank** *Saturday, January 10th at 8:30 am* in the Fellowship Hall.

**Cup-A-Joe Café** *Saturday, January 10th at 8:15 am* in the Library.

**Adult Forum with Rev. Clare Robert** *Sunday, Jan. 11th at 11:30 am* in the Sheffield Aud.



**God's Neighborhood Sunday School** *resumes on Sunday, January 11th.*

**Save the Date, FCCOL's Annual Meeting:** Sunday, January 25, 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 purpose of the annual meeting is to: receive the reports of the ministers, boards and committees, and church officers for the year 2025; 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 2026; and conduct such other old or new business as shall properly come before the meeting **All Board and Committee chairs, please submit your annual reports by the deadline of January 9.**

### Weekly Bible Study

Please join us as we continue to discuss The Book of Exodus: Stories of Exile and the Search for Freedom which will begin again on Thursday, January 15th and continue every Thursday from 11:00 -12:00 pm in the Library. Call or email the church for the Zoom link.

### Children's Handbell Choir—ReBELLion

A new season of handbell ringing for children and youth begins very soon. ReBELLion focuses on learning to read music, the basic skills of handbell ringing, and the experience of bell ringing in front of the congregation. The group will meet on Thursday afternoons from 4:30 to 5:15, starting on January 8. There is room for no more than 14 participants, so if you and your child have an interest in this unique experience, please contact Gary Jungkeit, either in person, or by email: [gjungkeit@gmail.com](mailto:gjungkeit@gmail.com), or by text: 423-782-6308, or contact the church office: 860-434-8686.

### Moth Stories and Potluck

Please join us for the next Moth Stories and Potluck dinner on **Friday, January 23rd**. The dinner will be at 6:00 and there will be a host of storytellers to follow. Contact Tom Sherer for more information at ([tesjr299@outlook.com](mailto:tesjr299@outlook.com)).

**2026 Stewardship Campaign Update.** So far we have received commitments of \$566,808 from 242 generous members and friends, or 87% of our goal of \$650,000. If you have not yet responded, please do so by email or phone so that we can fully fund our missions and ministries for 2026. Thank you!

### **Reading the Bible in One Year:**

The Bible is probably the most frequently cited book in the world, and the least read. It is so ubiquitous that we think we know what's in it, even if that bears little resemblance to what's actually there. But this year, why not change that? And why not do it in a progressive context, free of the dogma and coercion so often attached to reading the Bible?

This year, Steve is inviting all who wish to join him on an intellectual and spiritual pilgrimage: a day by day reading of the Bible that will take us from Genesis to Revelation in 12 months. We'll cover three or four chapters a day, across 365 days. On selected Sundays, we'll meet after church to talk about what we've covered - asking questions, sharing insights, voicing frustrations and encouraging one another along the way.

Recommended versions: The New Revised Standard (most theologically and linguistically responsible), the King James (most poetic), and the Message (most contemporary).

A year-long reading plan can be found in the narthex, the church office, or online. The adventure begins on January 1.

### **Confirmation: THE BIG QUESTIONS January-May 2026:**

A Confirmation Class is forming for high schoolers beginning January 25th from 4:00-5:30 (includes tacos). At FCCOL, Confirmation is a way for us to affirm the amazing young adults growing into adulthood in our midst. Classes meet twice a month through May (once on a Sunday night for class together and once as a service or field trip). We'll wrestle together with the questions of our shared humanity as well as the big ones about faith, life, doubt, current events, justice, and what/who God might be to each of us. Ultimately, we'll wonder together about what it means to live a meaningful life. We'll learn about what makes FCCOL tick, visit other faith communities (a synagogue, mosque, Buddhist Meditation Center, etc.) and engage in service projects. Each Confirmand will be paired up with a church mentor as well. We'll have a Confirmation ceremony in May and a final retreat weekend on Cape Cod May 29th-31st. Join us-bring a friend! For more information email Laura at [lfitz.nager@gmail.com](mailto:lfitz.nager@gmail.com)

### **Film Screening at FCCOL of "Will and Harper"**

Film Screening: *"Will and Harper"* (2024), on Friday, January 16th at 5:30 pm at FCCOL. Join us for this award winning witty and charming documentary with comedian, Will Farrell, and Harper, his long time friend of many years and writer from Saturday Night Live. The friends decide to go on a cross-country road trip to explore a new chapter in their relationship as Harper is transitioning genders. See review here: (Will and Harper - review by Roger Ebert). Bring a friend! Pizza and Popcorn will be served and we'll leave time for a discussion following the movie. Sponsored by the TransParent Group.

## All This Sainted Difference: A Spiritual Pilgrimage to Brazil

**August 10-20, 2026**

In her poetry collection *The Cachoeira Tales*, Marilyn Nelson writes of a contemporary group of pilgrims, each with a story to tell, traveling together not to Canterbury, but to Cachoeira, Brazil. There, the pilgrims encounter the Sisters of Our Lady of the Good Death, who blend African, Indigenous, and Catholic ritual elements. Founded by those who had been enslaved during the 19th century, the sisterhood was established to serve the poor, while keeping alive the sacred traditions of Africa, handed down as a precious inheritance from one generation to the next. Every year in Cachoeira, the Sisters offer a three-day celebration of music and of dance, where the Orixas (African divinities who bear a striking resemblance to Christian saints) come in order to bless, heal, chasten, and encourage contemporary people. It is in Cachoeira that the pilgrims in Marilyn's poems converge. And it is in Cachoeira that pilgrims from FCCOL shall converge this coming August.

This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to explore the African ritual traditions of Brazil. Visiting not only Cachoeira, but locating ourselves in and around the city of Salvador, we'll encounter the rituals, music, dance, foodways, and visual art that have sheltered and protected human lives through generations of hardship. We'll visit *terreiros* (house temples) around the city and throughout the surrounding countryside. And we'll discover how these dynamic and aesthetically charged spiritual systems (Candomblé and Umbanda) have evolved across time. The centerpiece of our journey will be the Feast of Our Lady of the Good Death, where we shall witness how the Sisters become a living bridge between this world and the other.



Designed to resonate and to link with our travels to Haiti, Cuba, New Orleans, and West Africa, our pilgrimage to Cachoeira and Salvador will be organized with the help of our friend Ned Sublette, and his vast network of contacts in Brazil. It is a fabulous opportunity to explore a beautiful part of Latin America (it will be winter in Salvador, meaning we can expect temperatures in the 70's and 80's), together with the history and spirituality of the African descended peoples of Bahia.

Contact Steve Jungkeit for more information, at [steven@jungkeit.net](mailto:steven@jungkeit.net).