

**Welcome to
South Congregational Church, UCC
1301 Forbes St. East Hartford, CT 06118**



December 24, 2024

Interim Pastor
Minister of Music
Coordinator of CEFE

Christmas Eve

The Reverend Paul Goodman
Jeff Cregeur
Lisa Griffen

Meditation

“Darkness is everywhere, but God doesn’t give in to the darkness, not even when we do. God comes to us in the midst of darkness and offers us light and hope.” - Charles Tobias

SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

PRELUDE

“Christmas Time is Here”

Vince Guaraldi

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

“One Candle is Lit” (v. 5)

Rev. Paul Goodman
Chalice Hymnal #128

†CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: All the world this night rejoices. The stars shine more brightly,

People: the mountains echo their joy, for a Savior is born.

Leader: On this holy night, all the animals bow in adoration.

People: The birds lift their voices in song.

Leader: All creatures know the Good News of the birth of a Savior,

People: and we feel drawn to this holy night, beckoned by some deep longing for our lives to be made whole,

Leader: our hearts to be filled with joy and our lips to constantly sing praises.

People: All the world this night rejoices.

†CAROL

“O Come, All Ye Faithful”

#148

UNISON PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Holy God, come into this holy night with stars to light our way to the cradle of peace. Come with angels to sing us to a deep joy. Come to this moment and open our hearts so we may hear the familiar story new and fresh. Surprise us and remind us that the child in the manger is Immanuel – God with us, now and always. Amen

ANTHEM

“Advent Hymn”
Chancel Choir

by Christy Nockels

THE STORY FROM CREATION THROUGH GOD’S NEW COVENANT

God tells Adam and Eve that they have lost Paradise

Genesis 3:8-19

Leader: And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

Men: But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” He said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.” He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?”

Women: The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate.” Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent tricked me, and I ate.”

Men: The Lord God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you among all animals and among all wild creatures; upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and hers; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.”

Women: To the woman he said, “I will make your pangs in childbirth exceedingly great; in pain you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.”

All: And to the man[a] he said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

CAROL *“People, Look East”* #142

God promises Abraham that through him all the world will be blessed.

Gen. 22:15-18 read by Elly Milone

CAROL *“Good Christian Friends, Rejoice”* #164

The prophet Isaiah foretells the coming of the Savior

Isaiah 9:2-7 read by Keith Benson

CAROL *“O Little Town of Bethlehem”* #144

The peace that Christ shall bring is foretold

Isaiah 11:1-10 read by Alison Caruso

CAROL *“I Wonder as I Wander”* #161

The angel Gabriel greets the young woman Mary

Luke 1:26-38 read by Chickie Amberg

CAROL

"What Child Is This"

#162

The Holy Family goes to Bethlehem where Jesus is born

Luke 2:1-7 read by Jean Foisey

CAROL

"Away in a Manger"

#147

The Shepherds are told of Jesus' birth

Luke 2:8-15 read by Chris Rataic

CAROL

"It Came upon the Midnight Clear"

#153

The Shepherds go to the manger

Luke 2:15-20 read by Linda Russell

†CAROL

"Joy to the World"

#143

INVITATION TO OFFERING

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

"Noel, Noel" by Michael McElroy & Joseph Joubert
Chancel Choir

OFFERING OF OURSELVES AND OUR GIFTS

CHRISTMAS PRAYER OF DEDICATION AND THE LORDS PRAYER

Holy Jesus, by taking human form you have honored all human life. Help us honor you by the gentleness and reverence we show to your beloved brothers and sisters. Help us speak well of others and interpret their actions in the kindest possible way. In situations of stress and conflict help us protect the dignity of everyone. Help us be faithful to all our commitments. When we are in a position to relieve suffering, transform us from people who react with indifference to people who make a difference. When we ourselves are suffering, strengthen us with patience and self-control. Help the gifts we give and all who give them to be agents of peace on earth and examples of good will to all. Glory to God in the highest as with hearts full of the joy, love and hope of the season we pray as you taught us saying: Our Father, who art in heaven hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

“AMAZING PEACE – A Christmas Poem”

Dr. Maya Angelou

(Though written for the 2005 National Tree lighting in Washington, D.C., Dr. Angelou’s words remain profound and poignant to this day.)

CAROL

“Silent Night, Holy Night”

#145

(As we sing “Silent Night,” please light your candle.)

†John unfolds the mystery of the Incarnation

John 1:1-20

†CAROL

“Hark! the Herald Angels Sing”

#150

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

“Skating”

Vince Guaraldi

Many thanks to our guest musicians Jordan Brint, bass & Christopher Calderon, percussion for providing music to lift our hearts and spirits during this evening’s service.

Our offerings at Christmas go to support the **Christmas Fund** of the United Church of Christ. This fund offers to retired clergy, church workers and their spouses, financial assistance to help defray the costs of medical care, housing, and other life necessities. Help us help those who labored in the Lord’s fields for many faithful years.

The Staff: Pastor Paul, Minister of Music Jeff Cregeur, Office Manager Krista Goh, Coordinator of CEFE Lisa Griffen, and members of South Congregational United Church of Christ in East Hartford extend to you and yours the richest of Christmas blessings today and throughout the coming year!

**MERRY CHRISTMAS!
GOD BLESS US, EVERYONE!**



Welcome to Our Church

The South Church family extends a warm welcome to all newcomers and visitors this morning. We hope you will find this worship service meaningful, the fellowship friendly, and that you will consider making this your church home. If you are a first-time visitor, please fill out the Pew Card that can be found in the pew or at the Welcome Station outside the sanctuary. You may give this card to any usher or put it in the offertory plate. We also encourage you to speak with the pastor.

Hearing devices are available for use during worship service. Please see an Usher if you're in need of one.

~

The choral anthem "Advent Hymn" was purchased with a generous donation by Sherry & Stephen Loomis in loving memory of Shirley Berner.

The choral anthem "Noel, Noel" was purchased with a generous donation by Deb & Chris Rataic in loving memory of Prudence Hodder.

~

Steeple lighting for the month of December is provided by Sylvia Johnson in loving memory of Catherine Brewer, Marion Brewer, Clifford Brewer, Lee McIntyre, and Michael Demers

Service Volunteers:

-Ushers: Elly Milone and Barbara Benson

-Readers: Elly Milone, Keith Benson, Alison Caruso, Chickie Amberg, Jean Foisey, Chris Rataic, Linda Russell,

-Deacons for the month of December: Bob Handel and Peggy Schoen

-Audio Visual: Chuck Pelletier, Bryan Denman, Bob Handel

-Flower Contacts: Jean Foisey, Lisa Handel, Gayle Juliani



Poinsettias

In Honor of:

Pastor Paul Goodman
Barbara Abbott
Our Grandchildren
Cameron & Bennett Jack
Lionel & Georgette Pelletier

Given by:

South Church Family
Charlie Goding
Sheryl & Don Caldwell
Bob & Lisa Handel
Chuck Pelletier

In Memory of:

Loved Ones
Thomas Juliani
Our Parents
Our Parents
Villa Perkins
Erin Handel
Rosemary & Calvin Symons
Rev. Al Turner
George & Eleanor Emmerling
Leola Wheeler
Robert & Sheila Duffy
Parents Angelina Gange and
George Goodman and
Sophie & Anthony Timpanelli;
departed family & friends
His mother Joyce Bole's upcoming 100th
birthday on January 12, 2025

Given by:

Bill Fagan IV
His Family
Gayle Juliani
Janet & Chris Lynch
Janet Lynch
Bob & Lisa Handel
Pat Zendzian
His Family
Liz O'Donnell
Gary Armentrout
Erin Pelletier
Paul Goodman & Patrick Timpanelli

Paul Bole



Scan QR code to visit our website



facebook.com/SouthUCC/
youtube.com/@southchurcheasthartford7863
southucc.org
office@southucc.org