

January 1, 2006

NEW YEAR'S DAY

10:00AM

The only things that matter in life are the imprints of love which we leave behind us after we are gone.
-- Albert Schweitzer --

PREPARING TO WORSHIP GOD

The Prelude Variations on *In Dulci Jubilo* Theodore Beck
The Welcome/Welcoming One Another
Church Family Announcements
Introit Anthem *A New Year's Carol* (Mustard Seeds Children's Choir) Benjamin Britten
Lighting of the Candles Acolyte:

PRAISING GOD

The Call to Worship
PASTOR: We come to worship this day joyfully celebrating the good news that our God has come to be one with us in and through Jesus the Christ.
PEOPLE: **Heaven and earth ring out an amazing message: Christ is born and the Spirit of love reigns among us!**
UNISON: **Let us proclaim that message and celebrate that love with all that is in us!**

*Hymn of Praise: #129 *Good Christian Friends, Rejoice* In Dulci Jubilo

*Prayer of General Confession (unison)
Amazing God, we give You thanks for the amazing message of this holy season. It is better than good news! Forgive us when we take the wonder and mystery of life for granted and fail to remain aware of Your presence in our lives. We confess that we do not always find the Christmas message of peace, hope, joy and love an easy one to live out in our daily lives. Guide our thoughts, words and deeds, and empower us to live our faith each and every day. Hear now in the silence our personal prayers of confession.

*Prayer of Personal Confession (in silence)
*Assurance of Forgiveness (responsively)
PASTOR: It is through the gift of the Christ Child that we are forgiven for the wrongs we have done and set free to hear the good news of the gospel:

PEOPLE: ***That our past is accepted, our present is possible, and our future opens before us with hope! Thanks be to God! Amen.***

HEARING GOD'S WORD

Scripture Lesson LUKE 2:25-40
Sermon HAPPINESS IS ... Dr. Gordon E. Ellis
*Hymn: #584 *I Am the Light of the World* Light of the World

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Presentation of Our Offerings & Tithes
Offertory Anthem: *Now Greet the Swiftly Changing Year* Alfred Fedak
*Doxology: *Praise God from who all blessings flow! Praise God, all creatures here below!*
Praise God above, you heavenly host! Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost!
*Prayer of Dedication

THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Invitation
Prayer of Consecration
The Sharing of the Bread & Cup
Prayer of Thanksgiving
*Hymn: #150 *Sing a Different Song*
*Words of Parting (unison)
Let us go forth seeking to grow closer to God and God's creation, trusting God to be at work in all the circumstances of our lives, and giving selflessly of ourselves to do the work of Christmas all year long, that we might know the peace, the joy and the fullness of life that Christ promises.
*Benediction
*Response: (join hands) *Joy to the World* Antioch
Words: *Joy to the world! The Lord has 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!*
Postlude: *In Dulci Jubilo* J. S. Bach

PLEASE JOIN US DOWNSTAIRS FOR COFFEE & CONVERSATION

Your church staff wishes you & yours a very blessed & wonderful New Year!

Ushers: Members of our Board of Deacons **Coffee Hour Hosts:** Deborah Leggett and Rick & Pat Diego
NEW: To provide flowers in memory/honor of a loved one/event ANY week this year, sign-up on our new FLOWER CHART in Memorial Hall.

Joys & Concerns for Prayer: We celebrate the births of Lauren Elizabeth Bottino (12/22), daughter of Chris & Becky Bottino; granddaughter of Sue & John Parsons; AND of Haley Jensen (12/29), daughter of Erik & Amy Jensen. Hospitalized: Jeannette Faitella, Lucille Gemmell, & Gwen Sunderland. Andrea Sinclair goes to NYC on 1/16 for very intricate, extensive back surgery. We continue to pray for Jacqui Maddy; Bill Bennett; Diane Lamb; Judy Costa; Maureen Curtis; Walter Smith; Pat Diego; Janis Leger; Dorothy & Clive Greenough; Mary Lou Thompson; Donna Morin; John O'Connor; Matthew Currao; Pat Livingstone; our Stephen Ministers & care-receivers.
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PASTA DINNER: Sr. C.I.A. (gr. 9-12) will host a **Pasta Dinner on Saturday, January 14** (note date change), **5:00-8:00pm**, in Memorial Hall for support their February **Youth Mission Trip** to work in Washington, D. C. **\$6/adults & \$3/ages 6 & under:** tickets on sale TODAY at *Coffee & Conversation*.
2006 CALENDAR FOR EVERY DOLLAR FEEDS KIDS: To thank you for a minimum donation of **\$26**, our **EDFK** Board of Directors will give you a **2006 Wall Calendar** which, thanks to local merchants & board members, provides a weekly *thank you* gift (average value: \$25) to the person whose name is drawn from the names of those who purchase calendars (or those they designate if calendars are given as gifts). The person selected each week will be contacted & the gift may be either mailed or picked up at our Church Office. All names will be included in all drawings, regardless of how many times each is drawn. View & order your calendars **TODAY** at *Coffee & Conversation!*

YOUTH SKI TRIP: Youth, grades 6-12, & **their parents** are invited on Monday, January 16. Watch for more details soon & sign-up next to Gordon's office. For info, call Rick Haverly (860/620-0513).
CHECK OUT OUR CHURCH'S WEBSITE, www.firstchurchsouthington.org. You'll love it!

LOCAL MISSION WORK: THANKS for a great response to our *Covenant to Care & Angel Tree* gift tags! **168 gifts** (valued at \$3,192) were purchased by our members & delivered to our many D.C.F. kids, as well as 7 kids of incarcerated Southington residents. Our *Salvation Army* bell-ringers on 12/10 raised **\$1,408** for *Southington Social Services*. **17** of our members helped deliver **379** Christmas food baskets to neighbors in need around town on 12/17. AND our *Christmas Gift Cards* raised a total of **\$1177.50** to benefit **4** wonderful mission organizations: *Prudence Crandall Center*, Southington's *Manna Fund*, *Hartford Habitat for Humanity & Every Dollar Feeds Kids*. Doesn't it feel GREAT?

SAFE CHURCH TRAINING: NEXT Sunday (1/8), 7:30-9:00pm, & Wednesday, January 18, 7:00-8:30pm, rooms 201/202.

CPR & AED TRAINING: John Arens will teach **full training** (3 hours, get card) on 2 Wednesdays, January 11 or 25, and **refresher training** (90 minutes, get card) on 2 Wednesdays, January 4 or 18. All begin at 7:00pm. Please sign-up next to Gordon's office ASAP.

2006 ENTERTAINMENT BOOKS AVAILABLE from Rose Dunlap (860/628-8778). Choose Hartford area, New Haven area, or out-of-state for \$30 each. Great gifts!

QUIET WORSHIP IN THE STYLE OF TAIZE is offered **EVERY Tuesday, 6:30-7:00pm**, in our **chapel**. It includes 10 minutes of silence, along with scripture, prayers & simple choruses. Join us!

VIDEOS OF SUNDAY SERVICES & SPECIAL EVENTS are available in our Church Library.

CHILD CARE for infants/toddlers is offered at all 4 Sunday services in our Infant/Toddler Nursery.

EVERY DOLLAR FEEDS KIDS OFFERING ENVELOPES are available next to Church Office.

THE WORK OF CHRISTMAS

By Howard Thurman

When the song of the ANGELS is STILLED,

When the STAR in the sky is GONE,

When the kings and princes are HOME,

When the shepherds are BACK with their FLOCK,

THEN, the WORK of Christmas begins:

To FIND the LOST,

To HEAL the BROKEN,

To FEED the HUNGRY

To RELEASE the PRISONER,

To REBUILD the NATIONS,

To bring PEACE among ALL people,

AND, to make MUSIC in the heart.

All small groups are open to everyone, whether or not you've ever attended before.

CRUZ'IN CONGOS TRAVEL CLUB: Watch for more *Cruiz'in Congos Travel Club* plans soon!

QUILTS FOR CHILDREN IN NEED GROUP meets **every other WEDNESDAY, 10:00AM**, room #207, to sew quilts to comfort children in need. No need to sew; you may cut, piece or tie. **Next meeting: January 4 & 18 and February 1 & 15.** For more info, call Carole Lantz.

2 PARENTS & TOTS GROUPS: **Tuesdays & Wednesdays, 9:30-11:00AM**, Fellowship Hall (under Meetinghouse). More info? Contact Lisa Christensen (860-276-0235). Fun for kids; fellowship for parents!

PRAYER CIRCLE: **EVERY TUESDAY, 7:00PM, Church Parlor.** Join us anytime! Leave prayer requests & addresses (card will be sent) in the folder next to Office marked, "**Prayer Requests.**"

FIRST CHURCH SINGLES deals with the joys & struggles of being single. The group meets monthly on the **2nd Tuesday, 7:00-8:30PM** & occasionally for social activities. **Child care** arranged upon request. **Next meeting: JANUARY 10 (room 204).** All singles welcome! For more info, call Charlaine Ogren (860-621-2677), Sally Dispenza (203/574-0664) or Rose Dunlap (860/628-8778).

SEEDS OF HOPE GROUP works in & through our church to foster awareness, communication, educational opportunities & action regarding our role as compassionate Christians living in a small, small world & taking seriously Jesus' statement, *Whatever you do to even the least of your brothers & sisters, you do it to me.* The group sponsors forums, speakers, film & book discussions & more.

Next meeting: JANUARY 22, 7:30PM, in room #204. ALL WELCOME!

ProCRAFTinators is a group for those who enjoy crafts. We meet the 2nd & 4th Thursdays of every month in Memorial Hall. Bring a craft to work on or share. For more info, call Meredith (860-628-8982).

OUR ADDICTION ASSISTANCE NETWORK is for individuals/families needing confidential assistance with problem drinking, drug use, gambling, etc. Contact Steve & JoAnn Ray (203-591-1291).

SMALL GROUPS

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

JOIN OUR DRAMA MINISTRY PLANNING TEAM: Those interested in helping plan our future drama endeavors &/or participate in skits at contemporary worship, please attend our *Drama Ministry* meetings. Our first meeting is **Monday, January 16, 7:00pm.**

NEW STEPHEN MINISTER TRAINING PROGRAM BEGINS IN JANUARY: After training, this wonderful caring ministry program matches Stephen Ministers individually with people in crisis for support & friendship through a life crisis period. For info, contact Rev. Cyndie Holden (860/628-6958).

RING, RING THOSE BELLS !! If you have enjoyed the sound of handbells, consider joining our bell choir. Practice is on Mondays, 7:15 - 8:30pm. We'll teach you what you need to know. We ring monthly at 9:30am *Morning Worship*. For more info, call Beverly Simpson (860-621-6217).

TWIGS CONTEMPORARY CHILDREN'S CHOIR, for grades 1-8, rehearses 1st & 2nd Tuesdays of each month, 6:00-6:45pm in our Meetinghouse, & sings on the 3rd Sunday of each month at either our 11:15am or our 6:00pm service. For more info, contact Crystal Sullivan (860-276-8614).

INFANT/TODDLER CARE PROVIDERS NEEDED during 11:15AM & 6PM services. Even 1 Sunday/month will help; *Safe Church* training provided. Can you help out? Please call Beth Crowley after 6:00PM (860/621-6159) or e-mail her at Crowleyba@cox.net.

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY WORK DAY: Our next work day is **SATURDAY, 1/21** (& monthly on the 3rd Saturday). Sign-up TODAY next to Gordon's office! Men, women & teens (16 & over) welcome. If you can't join us to work, please consider providing fuel for the volunteers, **SNACKS**, morning break food for 15-20 people. Call Michael Halloran, (860/426-1304) for more info or to sign-up. Thanks!

AMERICARES HOMEFRONT DAY IS BACK !

NOW IS THE TIME TO APPLY !

AmeriCares HomeFront Day is a community-based home repair program that culminates in a 1-day repair event, targeting homeowners who are physically or financially unable to maintain their homes or properties. The *Southington Faith Community*, comprised of volunteers from *First Congregational Church, Plantsville Congregational Church, Mary Our Queen Church, & St. Paul's Church*, is the local sponsoring team & performs the home repairs. All work, material, & repairs are performed at no cost to recipients. If you or someone you know is interested in this amazing, no-cost program, please **hurry and apply** for our upcoming, May 6, 2006, *AmeriCares HomeFront Day*.

Applications and Information available:

Locally at *Southington Social Services* Online at <http://www.americareshomefront.org>
By phone at 1-(800)-887-4673 (if necessary leave a clear message including your name, address, and phone number).

SPONSORS ALSO NEEDED

Our church seeks businesses/individuals to make financial contributions to our church's portion of the cost. If you can help, please send checks (payable to *First Congregational Church*, but clearly noted *AmeriCares Homefront Day*) to: Gordon E. Ellis, *First Congregational Church, 37 Main Street, Southington, CT 06489. THANK YOU !*

FAITH LESSONS FROM THE HOLY LAND is a video discussion series filmed at sacred sites in the Holy Land by biblical scholar & teacher, Ray Vander Laan. The newest is *In the Dust of the Rabbi: Becoming a Disciple*. Gordon Ellis will lead this 3-session experience on what it really means to be a disciple of Jesus on **3 Wednesdays, February 1, 8 & 15 at 10:00 am & 7:00pm, rooms 201/202.**

UNVEILING THE SECRET LIFE OF BEES, a 6-week book study of the novel by Sue Monk Kid, will be **Wednesdays, 1/18-2/22, 7:00pm, room #207.**

THE HEART OF CHRISTIANITY, an exploration of Christianity as presented by Marcus Borg in his book by the same title, will be offered **Tuesdays, 1/10-3/28, 7:00-9:00pm**, with Linda Fernandes-Bailey. See the essence of Christianity with new eyes!

THE WAY OF GRACE: This *Companions in Christ* program studies the Gospel of John & is offered **Wednesdays, 1/11-3/8, 7:00pm**, led by Jean Anderson DeVito.

EXPLORING THE WAY is a 1-hour, 7-week class introducing the spiritual journey. Led by Bob & Martha Beaudoin, it meets **Sundays, 1/8-2/19, 10:00-11:00am.**

EVERY DAY SIMPLICITY, exploring Robert J. Wick's book by the same title & led by Rich Szulczewski, meets 2 Mondays, 1/23 & 1/30, 7:00pm, room #207. A practical guide to spiritual growth, this book offers advice on how to achieve a spiritual life & have a deeper relationship with God no matter how busy you are.

MOVIES IN THE MEETINGHOUSE happens again on **Friday, January 13, 7:00pm**, with the movie, *CRASH*. Jane DeLuca & Tori Hickerson will lead a discussion of *Crash* on Sunday, January 15, 7:30pm, in rooms #201/202. Join us for discussions whether you watch movies at church or at home...

Upcoming Movies in the Meetinghouse 7:00pm, in the Meetinghouse

February 10 *Fiddler on the Roof Sing-a-long*

Discussion: February 12, 7:30pm, led by Sue Meissner & Clare Lindsey

March 10 *Life is Beautiful*

Discussion: March 12, 7:30, led by TBA

April 21 *The Scarlet & the Black*

Discussion: April 23, 7:30pm, led by Gabe Selmi & Alice Niemczyski

May 12 *12 Angry Men*

Discussion: May 14, 7:30pm, led by Gordon Ellis & Sue Meissner

THE HEART OF ITALY: A 14-DAY TRAVEL SEMINAR TO ITALY hosted by Gordon & Diane Ellis, will be offered June 28 – July 11, 2006. The cost, \$3695/person, covers literally everything except daily lunches & 5 dinners. If you have an interest, please contact Gordon Ellis or our Church Office for a detailed brochure. (gordon@firstchurchsouthington.org or 860/628-6958). Only **1 (2 if a couple)** space left! After that, we'll have to put you on a **waiting list**.

HOLY LAND TOUR: Gordon Ellis is considering leading a trip to the Holy Land of Israel & Palestine in March of 2007 to tour the sacred sites of our faith. He would like to know the interest level. Without committing yourself, please let him know whether you might be interested in joining him on this tour.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

SIGN-UP TODAY NEXT TO GORDON'S OFFICE