

Welcome! Thank You for Worshiping With Us Today!

Welcome to the First Congregational Church of Southington, dating from 1724, & worshiping in this Meetinghouse since 1830. We are one of the larger, more vibrant United Church of Christ churches in New England. Our purpose is to love & worship God; extend God's radically-inclusive love to all people everywhere; make more & better disciples of Jesus Christ; & inspire people & society to become more & more just, loving, compassionate & Christ-like. You will find here an accepting, caring, non-judgmental community, where lives are transformed, faith is renewed & power for positive living is received. Welcome!

January 8, 2006 FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY 9:30AM

PREPARING TO WORSHIP GOD

The Prelude Fantasia on *Wie schon leuchtet der Morgenstern* Dietrich Buxtehude
The Welcome/Welcoming One Another
Church Family Announcements
Music for Meditation *Wie schon leuchtet der Morgenstern Op. 65:4* Sigrid Karg-Elert
Lighting of the Candles (Acolytes needed: please call Kim Cassarella: 860-621-5412) Acolyte: *Katherine Maddy*

PRAISING GOD

The Call to Worship
PASTOR: The windows of heaven are open whether we realize it or not.
PEOPLE: The Spirit is moving like a dove whether we welcome her or not.
PASTOR: This is the new age of Christ whether we serve it or not.
PEOPLE: This is the hour of salvation, whether we celebrate it or not.
PASTOR: Here and now, people of God, I invite you to a sharpened realization, an open-hearted welcome, and an over-abundant celebration.

*Hymn: #59 *Holy Spirit, Ever Dwelling* Nettleton

*Prayer of General Confession (unison)
God, our Creator and Savior, we are creatures who need Your constant assistance. Without it we will never completely break free from those forces, sometimes subtle and sometimes blatant, that compromise our spirit, and make an unholy alliance with the evil in the world around us. Our need is not for a quick-fix, with cheap forgiveness, followed by pious but impractical good intentions. Rather we pray for an ongoing radical transformation within our deepest being. We ask for more and more of Your saving grace, for the ability to discern our own secretive sins and to muster the desire to sincerely repent. We need a mercy that reaches into those depths where spiritual hungers and furtive corruptions co-exist. We want You to forgive our self-treachery, to eradicate any mutiny, and then to liberate those holy desires which long to rise up into loving thoughts and faithful deeds. Please immerse us in Your healing waters of love. Baptize us with Your Spirit. Let us know that we are truly made in Your image and destined for heights more beautiful than we can ever imagine. Through Christ Jesus, who for our sake was baptized by water and the Spirit. Now in the silence hear our personal prayers of confession...

*Prayer of Personal Confession (in silence)
*Response **Words:** *Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy*
*Assurance of Forgiveness

HEARING GOD'S WORD

Children's Sermon
Children & Teachers Exit to Church School
Scripture Lessons ACTS 19:1-11 & MARK 1:4-11
Sermon THE NEW & IMPROVED MODEL Rev. Rick Haverly
*Hymn: #285 *O Holy Dove of God Descending* O Holy Dove

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Prayers of the Church & Lord's Prayer (using *sins*)
Presentation of Our Offerings & Tithes
Offertory Anthem: *There Shall A Star from Jacob Come Forth* Felix Mendelssohn
When Jesus, our Lord, was born in Bethlehem, in the land of Judea; behold, from the east to the city of Jerusalem There came three wise men & said: "Say, where is he born, the king of Judea? For we have seen his star, & are come to Adore him." There shall a star from Jacob come forth, & a Sceptre from Israel rise up. And dash in pieces Princes and Nations. How brightly beams the morning star! With sudden radiance from afar, with light & comfort glowing! Thy Word, Jesus, inly feeds us, Rightly leads us, Life bestowing. Praise, oh praise such love o'erflowing!
*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
*Hymn: #170 *Your Ways Are Not Our Own* Schumann
*Words of Parting (unison)
Let us go forth into the world with a sharpened realization, an open-hearted anticipation, and an over-abundant celebration of the God who will be with us every step of the journey.
*Benediction
*Response: (join hands) *Blest Be the Tie That Binds*
Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love. The fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above.
Postlude: *Wie schon leuchtet der Morgenstern* Paul Manz

PLEASE JOIN US DOWNSTAIRS FOR COFFEE & CONVERSATION

Ushers: Judy Miller, Doug & Kate Hutton, Joy & Rick White, Kay Dickson, Joe Yevich & Rose Dunlap
Coffee Hour Hosts: Maureen Lyon & Cindy Barley
Flowers: Given by Bob & Janet Schmidt in loving memory of loved ones.

NEW: To provide flowers in memory/honor of a loved one/event, sign-up in Memorial Hall.

Joys & Concerns for Prayer: These older children receive *The Sacrament of Christian Baptism* at 11:15am today: Chad Peter Mehmel, son of Ed & Marsha Mehmel, and Jack William & Joseph Anthony DePaolo-Boisvert, sons of Valerie DePaolo & Michelle Boisvert. Hospitalized: Gwen Sunderland, Jeannette Faitella & Lucille Gemmell. Ken Sullivan had knee surgery this week. Lyndsey Ellis and Michael & Jennifer Miceli are on a mission for *Every Dollar Feeds Kids* in Guayaquil, Ecuador. Andrea Sinclair goes to NYC on 1/16 for very intricate, extensive back surgery. Matthew Currao, a U. S. Marine, is now in Fallujah, Iraq. 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; Pat Livingstone; our Stephen Ministers & care-receivers.
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GORDON ELLIS will be in Florida this week attending *Conversations*, an educational conference for senior ministers of large churches in our *United Church of Christ*. He returns Saturday & preaches & leads worship NEXT Sunday.

PASTA DINNER: Sr. C.I.A. (gr. 9-12) will host a **Pasta Dinner THIS Saturday, 1/14, 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*.

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).

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: 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 Wednesdays, January 18. All begin at 7:00pm. Please sign-up next to Gordon's office ASAP.

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!

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*!

CHECK OUT OUR CHURCH'S WEBSITE, www.firstchurchsouthington.org. You'll love it!

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.

SMALL GROUPS

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 18 & 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).

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.

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!*

SPIRITUAL GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

SIGN-UP TODAY NEXT TO GORDON'S OFFICE

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, 1/15-2/26, 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 is **THIS Friday, 1/13, 7:00pm,** with the movie, **CRASH.** It will be shown in **Fellowship Hall** (under Meetinghouse). Jane DeLuca & Tori Hickerson will lead a discussion of **Crash** NEXT Sunday, 1/15, 7:30pm, 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.**