

**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 15, 2006 SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY**

**9:30AM**

*In our saner moments, we know full well that justice does not come out of the barrel of a gun but out of the conscience of a contrite heart. And we know, too, that human diversity is not some curse, not some problem to be solved, but rather the supreme expression of the creative spirit of God, a God of unconfined genius & imagination. It was a recognition of this principle, that diversity is a blessing & not a curse, that gave Martin Luther King the courage to dream for all America and for all others in the world. -- C. Eric Lincoln --*

**PREPARING TO WORSHIP GOD**

The Prelude *Romance, Op. 75:1* (Carol Ann Celella, violin) Antonin Dvorak  
The Welcome/Welcoming One Another  
Church Family Announcements  
Introit Anthem *Set the Sun Dancing* (Mustard Seeds Children's Choir) Helen Kemp  
Lighting of the Candles Acolyte: Katherine Maddy  
(Acolytes needed: please call Kim Cassarella: 860-621-5412)

**PRAISING GOD**

The Call to Worship  
PASTOR: We gather to celebrate our calling from God to be instruments of divine love and grace.  
PEOPLE: **As people of faith, we are to promote justice and peace in every circumstance, just as Jesus did.**  
PASTOR: As people of faith, we believe that all people everywhere are children of God and are to be welcomed, loved and valued, even if we disagree with them.  
PEOPLE: **Let us celebrate our diversity as a church family and sing God's praises!**

\*Hymn: #575 *O For a World* Azmon

\*Prayer of General Confession (unison)  
O God, we confess that we have remained cool to the fire of Your Word and not dared to live for others. We have failed as peacemakers and continue to accept violence in our homes, towns, country and world. We have refused Your freedom and remained trapped within our own narrow prejudices and the closed circles of the safe and the comfortable. We have failed to love, turned our backs on those who would love us, and chosen not to see those who need us. Forgive us, O God, and mold us into faithful disciples, following Jesus in the ways of love, justice and peace. 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**

The Sacrament of Christian Baptism: #A-1 (Worship Book)  
Solo: Ave Maria (Chris Celella, tenor) Franz Schubert  
*Children & Teachers Exit to Church School*  
Scripture Lesson AMOS 5:14-24  
Sermon UNTIL JUSTICE ROLLS DOWN LIKE WATER Dr. Gordon E. Ellis  
\*Hymn: #588 *Let Justice Flow Like Streams* St. Thomas

**RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD**

Prayers of the Church & Lord's Prayer (using *sins*)  
Presentation of Our Offerings & Tithes  
Offertory Anthem: *Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring* Johann Sebastian Bach  
\*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: #309 *We Are Your People* Whitfield  
\*Words of Parting (unison)  
Let us go forth striving to be what God calls us to be: a voice and a force for love and justice, righteousness and peace, in our homes, our communities, our country and our world.  
\*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: *O For a World* David Cherwein

**PLEASE JOIN US DOWNSTAIRS FOR COFFEE & CONVERSATION**

**Ushers:** Gail Fulop; Gary, Lisa & Garrett Cooper; George Moore; Judy Chatfield & Geoffrey Doble  
**Coffee Hour Hosts:** Kate & Doug Hutton & Melinda Baumgartner  
**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:** Timothy James Nivison, son of Dan & Sharon Nivison, & Lillian Amber Eaccarino, daughter of Glenn & Kim Eaccarino, receive *The Sacrament of Christian Baptism* today at 9:30 & 11:15 respectively. Chris Bushnell is SHS *Artist of the Month* & has his work on display this month at *The Southington Public Library*. Hospitalized: Jeannette Faitella & Lucille Gemmell. Gwen Sunderland is in Plainville Convalescent Center. Andrea Sinclair goes to NYC tomorrow for very intricate, extensive back surgery. We continue to pray for Lucille Gemmell; 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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**2006 CALENDAR FOR EVERY DOLLAR FEEDS KIDS:** For \$25 you get a **2006 Wall Calendar** that puts you in a drawing for a weekly *thank you* gift (average value: \$25). Call Church Office.  
**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.  
**SAFE CHURCH TRAINING:** THIS Wednesday, January 18, 7:00-8:30pm, rooms 201/202.

**CPR & AED TRAINING:** John Arens will teach **full training** (3 hours, get card) on Wednesday, January 25, and **refresher training** (90 minutes, get card) THIS Wednesday, January 18. Both 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!

**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).

**CHECK OUT OUR CHURCH'S WEBSITE, [www.firstchurchsouthington.org](http://www.firstchurchsouthington.org)**. You'll love it!

**VIDEOS OF SUNDAY SERVICES & SPECIAL EVENTS** 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.

### **Proposed Open and Affirming Statement**

We, the members of *The First Congregational Church* of Southington, Connecticut, hereby declare ourselves to be an open and affirming congregation. We accept the challenges and joys of Christian faith, a faith profound enough to embrace even uncertainty. We struggle with the difficult issues of our day, understanding that God's Word touches and guides us as a congregation and as individuals.

With God's grace, we welcome and affirm the total identity of all people as beloved children of God. We are a congregation that seeks to break down the barriers of prejudice, declaring respect for the worth and dignity of all persons, embracing differences in age, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, ethnicity, nationality, socio-economic status, and physical, emotional, and mental capability. We also recognize and affirm loving, committed, and diverse families. We actively welcome all people to become members of our church and to share fully in our church's life and leadership, ministry and fellowship, worship and sacraments, and responsibilities and blessings.

## **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 of being single. The group meets monthly on the **2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday, 7:00-8:30PM** & occasionally for social activities. **Child care** arranged upon request. **Next meeting: FEBRUARY 14 (room 204).** All singles welcome! For more info, call Charlene Ogren (860-621-2677), Sally Dispenza (203/574-0664) or Rose Dunlap (860/628-8778).

**First Church Singles Game Night** – Board game "*Battle of the Sexes*" on January 29<sup>th</sup> at 7:30pm in Memorial Hall. All Singles welcome, bring a friend! Questions? Call 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: NEXT SUNDAY, 1/22, 7:30PM**, in room #204. ALL WELCOME!

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

**Pot Luck Supper** to greet New Members on Saturday, January 28 at 6:00pm in Memorial Hall. ALL WELCOME! For more info, call Stacy Jagello (203/729-0892) or Barbara Stubbs (203/440-8958).

**Group Trip** to see "*The Exonerated*" at Theaterworks in Hartford on Sunday, January 29. The 90 minute play is based on the stories of people who were on death row and released after being found innocent. We'll leave the church at 1pm. Cost is \$25/person, and a discussion will follow. Sign up outside Gordon's office.

## 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 **TOMORROW, 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 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesdays of each month, 6:00-6:45pm in our Meetinghouse, & sings on the 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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**, -POSPONED UNTIL SPRING.

**EXPLORING THE WAY** is a 1-hour, 7-week class introducing the spiritual journey. Led by Bob & Martha Beaudoin, it meets **Sundays, TODAY-3/12, 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](mailto:gordon@firstchurchsouthington.org) or 860/628-6958). Only **1 to 2** spaces left! After that, you'll be put on a **waiting list**.

## Today's Scripture Lesson

**Amos 5:14-24** <sup>14</sup> Seek good and not evil, that you may live; and so the LORD, the God of hosts, will be with you, just as you have said. <sup>15</sup> Hate evil and love good, and establish justice in the gate; it may be that the LORD, the God of hosts, will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph. <sup>16</sup> Therefore thus says the LORD, the God of hosts, the Lord: In all the squares there shall be wailing; and in all the streets they shall say, "Alas! alas!" They shall call the farmers to mourning, and those skilled in lamentation, to wailing; <sup>17</sup> in all the vineyards there shall be wailing, for I will pass through the midst of you, says the LORD. <sup>18</sup> Alas for you who desire the day of the LORD! Why do you want the day of the LORD? It is darkness, not light; <sup>19</sup> as if someone fled from a lion, and was met by a bear; or went into the house and rested a hand against the wall, and was bitten by a snake. <sup>20</sup> Is not the day of the LORD darkness, not light, and gloom with no brightness in it? <sup>21</sup> I hate, I despise your festivals, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. <sup>22</sup> Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals I will not look upon. <sup>23</sup> Take away from me the noise of your songs; I will not listen to the melody of your harps. <sup>24</sup> But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

## Today's Anthem Words

Introit Anthem

*Set the Sun Dancing* (Mustard Seeds Children's Choir)

Helen Kemp

Set the sun dancing! New life has begun! Star, you must fade, for your journey is done.

New Year rides onward now, Christmas is gone. Carry the light with us as we move on. *Refrain:*

For the light that is shining is our light to hold. Light that's not hidden where Good News is told

Wise men with riches of knowledge and thought found greater treasure than ever they brought.

Here is Epiphany, wrapped in a shawl, Christ who is light, who is wiser than all. *Refrain:*

Offertory Anthem:

*Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring*

Johann Sebastian Bach

Jesu, joy of man's desiring, Holy wisdom, love most bright;

Drawn by Thee, our souls aspiring, soar to uncreated light,

Word of God our flesh that fashioned, with the fire of life impassioned,

Striving still to Truth unknown, soaring, dying round Thy throne.