

Welcome! Thank You for Worshiping With Us Today!

Welcome to the First Congregational Church of Southington, dating from 1724, & worshipping 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 22, 2006 THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY 9:30AM

Faith is being grasped by the power of love.... Faith is recognizing that if at Christmas God became like us, it was so that thereafter, we might become like God... that our lives too can become channels for divine mercy to flow out to save the lost & the suffering. -- William Sloane Coffin, Jr. --

PREPARING TO WORSHIP GOD

The Prelude *Fugue in F Major* J. S. Bach
The Welcome/Welcoming One Another
Church Family Announcements
Music for Meditation *Lord, You Give the Great Commission* Hector Olivera
Lighting of the Candles Acolyte: *Karla Maddy*
(Acolytes needed: please call Kim Cassarella: 860-621-5412)

PRAISING GOD

The Call to Worship
PASTOR: Jesus began His ministry by calling disciples to follow Him and share His mission.
PEOPLE: He still calls disciples to follow and serve Him. He calls us!
PASTOR: His mission is divine and extraordinary, but it is in the ordinary places of our lives that we hear Him asking, *Whom shall I send? Who will go for me?*
PEOPLE: Let us respond, Here am I, Lord! Send me! offering thanks and praise that we are entrusted with a mission so vital and important.

*Hymn of Praise: #N-5 (Worship Book) *Here I Am, Lord* Dan Schutte

*Prayer of General Confession (unison)
Holy God, as disciples of Jesus Christ today, our mission is to offer Your love, peace and justice to all people everywhere, regardless of race, nationality, creed, sexual orientation or economic status. We confess, however, that we have not been faithful. We have judged and misjudged our neighbors; been prejudiced against those who are different; and allowed violence, injustice, abuse, and persecution to continue in our homes, country and world. Forgive us, O God, and empower us to be true and faithful, loving and just, and daring and disciplined in loving and serving both You and our neighbors everywhere. 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 Message
Children & Teachers Exit to Church School

A Brief Interview with Bob Beaudoin

Scripture Lessons ISAIAH 6:1-8, 1 CORINTHIANS 1:26-31, MARK 1:16-20
Sermon **HERE AM I! SEND ME!** Dr. Gordon E. Ellis
*Hymn: (see insert) Austrian Hymn

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Prayers of the Church & Lord's Prayer (using *sins*)
Presentation of Our Offerings & Tithes
Offertory Anthem: *Here I Am, Lord* Dan Schutte, arr. Craig Courtney
*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: #S-8 (Worship Book, omit vs. 3) *Lord, You Give the Great Commission* Abbot's Leigh

*Words of Parting (unison)
The challenge before each of us, regardless of our age or what activities fill our days, is to recognize and acknowledge that God is calling us. May we not only hear God's call, but readily respond: *Here am I! Send me!*

*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: David Lasky

PLEASE JOIN US DOWNSTAIRS FOR COFFEE & CONVERSATION

Ushers: Kristopher Bates, Fred & Lita Nyren, Lori St. Pierre, Laurie & Jim Lynch, Robert/Vikki Ferguson
Coffee Hour Hosts: Arthur & Sandra Hansen, Lynn Grenier & Vanessa Joyce
Greeters: Geoffrey, Susan & Tad Meissner & Elaine Rodriguez
Flowers: Given by Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Mauri in loving memory of loved ones.
To give flowers in memory/honor of a loved one/event, sign-up on Memorial Hall FLOWER CHART.

Joys & Concerns for Prayer: We celebrate the birth of Ella Adeline Huard (1/17), daughter of Ron & Beth Huard, granddaughter of Bob & Bev Huber. We pray for the families of Lucille Gemmell & Dale Smith, grieving their deaths. Hospitalized: Andrea Sinclair, Gavin Haines, Clive Greenough, Jeannette Faitella, Jonathan Stroop, Walter Smith. We continue to pray for Diane Lamb; Judy Costa; Maureen Curtis; Pat Diego; Janis Leger; Dorothy Greenough; Mary Lou Thompson; Donna Morin; John O'Connor; Matthew Currao; Pat Livingstone; our Stephen Ministers & care-receivers.
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LAST CALL: VILLAGE GREEN NURSERY SCHOOL accepts church member registrations first, but TODAY is the last day. Leave registration form in **VGNS folder** outside Church Office (extra forms in folder). Public registration starts tomorrow. Don't wait!

SEEDS OF HOPE GROUP MEETS TONIGHT: 7:30PM, room #204. Details? See *Small Groups* page on bulletin insert! ALL WELCOME!

CHECK OUT OUR CHURCH'S WEBSITE, www.firstchurchsouthington.org. You'll love it!
MEXICO MISSION TRIP INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS for this summer's working mission trip to Mexico will be offered by Rick Haverly in our Chapel following all 4 services. ALL welcome!

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.
CPR & AED TRAINING: John Arens will teach **full training** (3 hours, get card) THIS Wednesday, 1/25, 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!
MOVIES IN THE MEETINGHOUSE happens again on Friday, February 10, 7:00pm, with the movie, *Fiddler on the Roof* (sing-a-long). Sue Meissner & Clare Lindsey will lead a discussion on *Fiddler on the Roof* on Sunday, February 12, 7:30pm, in rooms #201/202. Join us for discussion whether you watch movie at church or at home... **FUTURE Movies:** **March 10 (7pm)** *Life is Beautiful* with discussion on 3/12, 7:30, led by TBA; **April 21 (7pm)** *The Scarlet & the Black* with discussion: 4/23, 7:30pm, led by Gabe Selmi & Alice Niemczynski & **May 12 (7pm)** *12 Angry Men* with discussion: 5/14, 7:30pm, led by Gordon Ellis & Sue Meissner. 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).
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.

Proposed Open and Affirming Statement

(to be voted on by the congregation at our Annual Meeting of the Church on Monday, June 19, 2006)

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.

(Watch for educational & discussion opportunities coming soon.)

SMALL GROUPS

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

DRAMA MINISTRY GROUP plans &/or participates in church dramas & musicals, including brief worship dramas. **Next meeting: Monday, February 20, 7:00pm, in the Meetinghouse.** For info, call Crystal Sullivan (860/276-8614).

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 meetings: 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 Church Office marked, "Prayer Requests."

FIRST CHURCH SINGLES meets monthly on the 2nd Tuesday, 7:00-8:30PM & occasionally for social activities. **Child care** arranged upon request. **Next meeting: FEBRUARY 14 (room 204).** All singles welcome! 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: TONIGHT, 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).

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. All NEW 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.

EXPLORING THE WAY is a 1-hour, 7-week class introducing the spiritual journey. Led by Bob & Martha Beaudoin, it meets Sundays, 1/29-2/26, 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.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

NEW STEPHEN MINISTER TRAINING PROGRAM IS BEGINNING NOW: 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 Winne 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, 2/18** (& 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.americashomefront.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!