

Welcome! Thank You for Worshiping With Us Today!

Welcome to *The First Congregational Church of Southington*. Ours is an **Open & Affirming** congregation dating from 1724 & worshipping in our present Meetinghouse since 1830. One of the larger, more vibrant *United Church of Christ* churches in New England, our church's 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 our church to be an accepting, caring, non-judgmental community, where faith is renewed, lives are transformed, & power for positive living is received. It's a church **where the Spirit is alive & miracles happen!** Welcome!

January 28, 2007 FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY 9:30AM

The battle we face everyday is that people keep trying to make us less than we know we ought to be. And our task is to realize it and find the courage to resist. The world wants you to be like everyone else, so the battle is for your personhood. And what makes this especially hard is that the battle is often waged against you by those who say they love you. -- Glenn Graves --

INFANT & TODDLER CARE BY ADULTS DURING ALL SERVICES IN CHURCH NURSERY

PREPARING TO WORSHIP GOD

Prelude *Prelude and Fugue in D Minor* Johann Gottfried Walther
The Welcome/Welcoming One Another
Church Family Announcements
Music for Meditation *God, When I Came Into This Life* Andrew Moore
Lighting the Candles Acolyte: *Karla Maddy*

PRAISING GOD

The Call to Worship:
PASTOR: Jesus Christ offered Himself as help for the hopeless and hope for the helpless.
PEOPLE: **Christ calls us to be His Body: to proclaim His name and display His character.**
PASTOR: We have heeded the summons, and we gather here to catch again His vision and renew our enthusiasm for His mission.
PEOPLE: **Let us lift up our hearts and voices praising the One who trusts us with so great a task and challenge!**

Hymn of Praise: #417 *This Is a Day of New Beginnings* Beginnings

*Prayer of General Confession (unison)
Loving God, we know that You call us by name and we are Yours, but too often we fail to hear and respond. We know that You call us to love You and serve Your purposes, but too often, we avoid listening by filling our lives with busyness and hurriedness. We know that You call us to stand up for what is good, right and true, even when others disagree or get angry, but too often we lack courage and commitment. Forgive us, O God, and help us talk the talk and walk the walk, following Your call. Now in the silence, hear our personal prayers of confession.

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

HEARING GOD'S WORD

Anthem *My Heart is in Your Keeping* John Carter
The Children's Message
Children & Teachers Exit to Church School
Scripture Lesson JEREMIAH 1:4-10 & LUKE 4:21-30
Sermon THAT'S JUST THE WAY IT IS...? Dr. Gordon E. Ellis
Hymn of Reflection: #354 *God, When I Came Into This Life* Land of Rest

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Prayer of the Church & Lord's Prayer (using *sins*)
Presentation of Our Offerings & Tithes
Offertory Anthem: *He, Watching Over Israel* Felix Mendelssohn
*Doxology *Praise God from whom all blessings flow! Praise God, all creatures here below!*
Praise God above, you heavenly host! Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost!
*Prayer of Dedication
*Hymn: #592 *God of the Ages, Who With Sure Command* National Hymn
*Words of Parting (unison)
Let us go forth listening for the voice of God calling us to stand up for what is right and good, just and life-giving. And may we dare to live differently, to live according to God's values and purposes, regardless of the pressure we endure to be like everyone else.
*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: *God, When I Came Into This Life* Charles Callahan

JOIN US DOWNSTAIRS NOW FOR COFFEE & CONVERSATION

Ushers: Kristopher Bates, Fred & Lita Nyren, Lori St. Pierre, Vikki Ferguson, Doris Smith & Nancy Smith
Greeters: Paul & Nancy Smith & Emily Jepson **Coffee Hour Host:** Donna Blakey & Ellen Simpson
Flowers: Given by the Gagnon family in loving memory of their parents: William & Margaret Stuckey and Rita Gagnon. **Our 2007 Flower Chart to provide flowers in honor/memory of loved ones is now available in Memorial Hall.**
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Joys & Concerns for Prayer: Isabella Rose Leggett, daughter of Jamie Leggett & Meghan McNicholas Leggett, receives the Sacrament of Christian Baptism at 11:15am today. Susan Parsons had surgery this week. Alan Beaudoin will have surgery tomorrow at Yale-New Haven Hospital. We pray for the Wasserman family, grieving the death of Nancy's dad & for Gloria Gelpke & family, grieving the death of her granddaughter. We continue to pray for Pat Diego; John Zigmont; Mary Carter; Shirley Penfield; Janet Crocker; Betsy Roberts; Maureen Curtis; Pat Livingstone; & our Stephen Ministers & care-receivers.
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PEACE CAFÉ: Our Church Council has officially re-named Fellowship Hall (under Meetinghouse). It will now be called *Peace Café*. Plan to join us on **Saturday, February 10**, for **our grand opening**, starting with a wonderful church family **pot-luck supper** in Memorial Hall at **6:00pm** to get acquainted with new and long-time members. Then we will adjourn to **Peace Café** for a special **dedication** of our new coffee house and theater, followed an evening of fun, music (by very talented church friends) & film. Anyone wishing to perform a song or two should contact Dee Elloian (860-674-8844) ASAP. You'll LOVE it!

PASTA DINNER: We thank all who helped out, especially Linda Accuosti, our coordinator.

LAST CALL FOR JEWISH SABBATH: The Jewish Congregation has invited all interested to attend their environmental Sabbath service THIS Friday, 7pm. Sign-up next to Gordon's office.

SOUPEL BOWL OF CARING: NEXT Sunday (*Super Bowl Sunday*) is *Souper Bowl of Caring Sunday*. Our youth join youth nationwide collecting money for the hungry & hurting. In 2006, 11,000 groups in all 50 states & beyond generated over \$5 million. All money is donated to local charities selected by the participants. Our young people will hold soup pots at all exits for *Bread for Life*, our community soup kitchen. Please support our youth in loving our neighbors by dropping \$1 into a soup pot next Sunday!

ASH WEDNESDAY IS FEBRUARY 21st: Our holiest season, Lent, begins on Wednesday, 2/21. We offer **3 Ash Wednesday Services of Penance**, when you may receive ashes. Services are at **7:00AM in Chapel** (30 min.), **12:00Noon in Meetinghouse** (30 min.) & **7:00PM in Meetinghouse** (45 min.). Plan to attend one. A luncheon (\$3) follows the 12:00N service.

SACRED CIRCLE COVENANT GROUPS will be offered during Lent. As a Lenten discipline, we hope all church members & friends will attend one. It's a 5-week commitment (2/26 - 4/1) spending 1½ - 2 hours/week in a group with 6 to 8 others from church exploring & learning to live according to *The Sacred Circle of Discipleship* (that Gordon presented in a 3-part sermon series in October). Groups will be at different times on different days for your convenience. **SOME** sign-up sheets are available TODAY near our Chapel & ramp (to Village Green Nursery School). More are coming. Please sign-up ASAP!

OUR CHURCH GODSPELL TRIP IS SOLD OUT, but limited tickets are still available through *The Warner Theater* in Torrington (small theater across from main theater). Call them direct: (860) 489-7180.

PUZZLE SWAP on Sunday, 2/25, all day in Memorial Hall. Bring in & take home puzzles for adults & children (children's puzzles not more than 100 pieces). For info, contact Lois Hall (860-828-4219).

WINTER ART CAMP: Award-winning artist & teacher, John Baker, offers an *Art Camp* February vacation (2/19 - 2/23) for kids (with lessons in painting, drawing, clay, collage, mixed media & illustration) in our new *Peace Café*. Sessions are 2 hours (grades 1-3 = 9:30-11:30am & grades 4-7 = 1:30-3:30pm). Also learn about art from around the world & help friends create artwork for our new *Peace Café*. Cost: \$150 (includes all materials). Register today; space is limited. Contact John (203-536-5642 or at Johnnysings@excite.com).

WE CAN DO BETTER THAN AN A-! Our pledge income for the first 6 months of our fiscal year (7/1/06-12/31/06) was 92% of what was pledged. That give us an A-! Please help us raise it to an A+!

A QUIET CANDLELIGHT PRAYER SERVICE in the style of Taize is held **EVERY Tuesday, 6:30-7:00pm**, in our Chapel. All welcome & encouraged to attend for quiet, reflective worship.

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

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

HOME REPAIR HELP NEEDED! Help church family members in need with **one-time/short term home maintenance or repair**. We have a need for both **skilled & unskilled labor** for occasional projects: a great way to make a positive impact on someone's life while getting to know others in your church family! To sign-up, contact Clare Lindsey (860-628-0298) or mlcb158@hotmail.com (preferred).

INFANT/TODDLER NURSERY VOLUNTEERS NEEDED DURING ALL SERVICES: Adults & teens needed! Please call Beth Winne (621-6159).

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY WORK DAY: Our next work day is **SATURDAY, 2/17** (& 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!

COVENANT TO CARE NEEDS: Placement packs for all ages, including: **Infant & Toddler** (baby blankets, pacifiers, bottles, onesies, washcloths, wipes, sippy cups, diapers, toothbrushes, baby rattles/teethers, infant formula, baby food, baby cereal); **Preschool** (toiletries, wipes, color books/crayons, hand/body lotion, combs/brush, stuffed animals, small toy, books, small packaged snacks); **School Age** (backpacks, markers, deodorant & other toiletries, pens/pencils, books, clothes, etc.). Items may be left in our *Mission Hope Chest* in the Narthex. For more info, call Kim Rees (860-621-7768). THANKS!

ACTORS NEEDED

for

THE EXONERATED

Our dramatic reading of *The Exonerated* will be offered 3 times on **Palm Sunday weekend**, offering a poignant message for Holy Week, when we remember Jesus on death row, a victim of capitol punishment. This powerful drama, based on the true stories of 6 wrongfully-accused death row survivors, will be directed by professional actor, John Baker, who recently toured with *The Sound of Music*.

Performances will be in our new **Peace Café** on **Friday, March 30** (7:30pm), **Saturday, March 31**, (7:30pm) & **Sunday, April 1** (2:00pm). Tickets will be free, but necessary. A free-will offering will be received.

OPEN AUDITIONS

Monday, February 5, 6:30pm, in our Meetinghouse.... ALL welcome!

For more information, contact Crystal Sullivan (860-276-8614 or kencryss@sbcglobal.net).

SMALL GROUPS

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

R.E.S.T., OUR SPIRITUAL BOOK CLUB (short for *Reading for Enrichment & Spiritual Transformation*) is led by Rev. Linda Fernandes-Bailey & meets monthly on the 3rd Sunday, **7:30 – 8:30pm, room #207**. For **February 18**, read *Left to Tell: Discovering God Amidst the Rwandan Holocaust* by Immaculee Ilibagize. You're invited to read any or all books & attend any or all monthly sessions.

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 31**. For more info, call Carole Lantz.

PARENTS & TOTS GROUPS meet **Tuesdays & Wednesdays, 9:30-11:00AM**, in Fellowship Hall (under Meetinghouse). For info, call 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.**"

SEEDS OF HOPE GROUP works in & through our church & community to foster awareness, communication, educational opportunities & action regarding our role as compassionate Christians living in a small, small world, who take 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, promoting peace, justice, environmental concerns & more. **ALL WELCOME!**

Next meeting: TONIGHT, 7:30pm, room #204.

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).

Why Attending Church School is Important

Church School plants the seeds & nourishes the roots of your children's faith. Their faith foundation plays a major part of their growth & development, & by bringing your children to Church School, you are telling them that their Christian Education is important to you. We have a great staff of loving, caring teachers who are giving our children a gift that they will spend their lives unwrapping because the Bible stories are about real life. If they know the stories, they'll remember the stories & themes later on as they need them on their life journey.

Most of our kids love Church School, but some don't. One of our Jr. High kids asked if it counted to God that he had come, even if he didn't want to, because his parents made him come. Good question! I think God is just glad that he showed up & his parents should be commended for bringing him. If he didn't want to brush his teeth or go to the dentist, would that be okay? How about going to the orthodontist each week? We don't see results right away, but in the long run, it works. Church School can be the same for some children, when you bring them, even if they don't love it, you are giving them the opportunity to build a solid faith foundation & showing them that their spiritual growth & Christian education matters just as much as their mental & physical development. Thank you for letting us share our faith with your children.

Love, Karlene Archambeault, C. E. Director

Today's Scripture Lesson

JEREMIAH 1:4-10 ⁴Now the word of the LORD came to me saying: ⁵*Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.*

⁶Then I said: *Ah, Lord GOD! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy.* ⁷But the LORD said to me: *Do not say, 'I am only a boy'; for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and you shall speak whatever I command you.* ⁸*Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, says the LORD.* ⁹Then the LORD put out his hand and touched my mouth; and the LORD said to me: *Now I have put my words in your mouth.* ¹⁰*See, today I appoint you over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to pull down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.*

LUKE 4:21-30 ²¹Then he began to say to them: *Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.* ²²All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, *Is not this Joseph's son?* ²³He said to them: *Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, 'Doctor, cure yourself!' And you will say, 'Do here also in your hometown the things that we have heard you did at Capernaum.'* ²⁴And he said: *Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet's hometown.* ²⁵*But the truth is, there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a severe famine over all the land;* ²⁶*yet Elijah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon.* ²⁷*There were also many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.* ²⁸When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage. ²⁹They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff. ³⁰But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way.

Today's Anthem Texts

My Heart Is In Your Keeping

My heart is in your keeping, Lord, wherever I may be.

My heart is in your keeping Lord, you're everything to me.

My mind is in your keeping, Lord, wherever I may be.

My life is in your keeping, Lord, I'll serve you faithfully.

My hands, my eyes are yours, dear Lord, my feet will choose your ways.

My hands, my eyes, all that I am, is yours for all my days,

My heart is in your keeping, Lord, working, waking, sleeping, Lord.

My heart is in your keeping, Lord, wherever I may be.

My heart is in your keeping Lord, you're everything to me.

-Mary Kay Beall

He, Watching Over Israel

He, watching over Israel, slumbers not nor sleeps. Shouldst thou walking on grief languish, He will quicken thee.