

**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!

**February 25, 2007**

**FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT**

**9:30am**

*Sometimes being tempted makes us feel dirty. An important lesson for disciples is this: Temptation is not sin. Satan may tempt us by putting evil thoughts into our minds, but we can push them right out again with God's help. I've always appreciated a saying attributed to Martin Luther: 'You can't help it if a bird flies over your head, but you don't need to let him make a nest in your hair.' Temptation is not sin. -- Ralph E. Wilson --*

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

**PREPARING TO WORSHIP GOD**

Prelude *Chaconne in E Minor* Dietrich Buxtehude  
The Welcome/Welcoming One Another  
Church Family Announcements  
Music for Meditation *We Yearn, O Christ, for Wholeness* Michael Burkhardt  
Lighting the Candles Acolyte: *Matthew Andrini*

**PRAISING GOD**

The Call to Worship  
PASTOR: We gather to begin Lent as pilgrims on the journey of faith.  
PEOPLE: **We come seeking awareness of God's presence with us as we travel on.**  
PASTOR: We come seeking light for our darkness and strength in our weakness.  
UNISON: **Shine in our hearts, O God, with the light of Your love. Make Your presence known to us in and through Jesus the Christ. Amen.**

Hymn of Praise: #211 *Lord Jesus, Who Through Forty Days* St. Flavian

\*Prayer of General Confession (unison)  
Holy God, we come asking Your forgiveness and seeking Your direction. The Bible says, *Woe to those who call evil good*, but that's exactly what we have done. We have exploited the poor and called it the lottery and globalization. We have abused power and called it politics. We have coveted our neighbor's possessions and called it ambition. We have polluted the media with profanity, violence and pornography and called it freedom of expression. We have ridiculed the time-honored values of our ancestors and called it enlightenment. Forgive us, O God, and help us stop assuming that there is nothing we can do in the face of evil. 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 *A Lenten Prayer* Robert J. Powell  
Children's Message  
*Children & Teachers Exit to Church School*  
Scripture Lesson LUKE 4:1-13  
Sermon Dr. Gordon E. Ellis  
Hymn of Reflection: #179 *We Yearn, O Christ, for Wholeness* Passion Chorale

**RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD**

Prayer of the Church & Lord's Prayer (using *sins...*)  
Presentation of Our Offerings & Tithes  
Offertory Anthem: *Wash Me Thoroughly From My Wickedness* G. F. Handel  
\*Doxology *All things are Yours: we make that true when we return our gifts to You; And so we give, and so we share, in Christ's strong name expressing care.*  
\*Prayer of Dedication  
\*Hymn: #451 *Be Now My Vision* Slane  
\*Words of Parting (unison)  
Let us go forth promising to prepare ourselves for the big tests to come, that we might remain on the narrow, but rock-solid pathway that leads to life in all its fullness.

\*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: *Lord Jesus, Who Through Forty Days* Healy Willan

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

Ushers: Fred & Lita Nyren, Lori St. Pierre, Vikki Ferguson, Doris Smith & Nancy Smith  
Greeters: Paul & Nancy Smith & Emily Jepson **Coffee Hour Host:** Arthur & Sandy Hansen  
Flowers: Given in loving memory of Dustin Arigoni by the Dobratz family.  
**Our 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:** We pray for our 21 youth & 6 advisors returning today from our *Youth Mission Trip* doing *Hurricane Katrina* reconstruction in Mississippi. We pray for Bill Korp as he prepares to leave for Uganda, where he will serve in the *Peace Corps*. We pray for Joe Mercuri & Alan Beaudoin, hospitalized this week. We continue to pray for Sue Parsons; 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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**LAST CALL! SIGN-UP TODAY! SACRED CIRCLE COVENANT GROUPS FOR LENT:** All church members & friends are urged to make a 5-week Lenten commitment (2/26 - 4/1) to spend 1½ hours/week in a group with 6 to 8 others from church exploring & learning to live ***The Sacred Circle of Discipleship*** (presented by Gordon in a recent 3-part sermon series). Groups meet at different times on different days in different settings for your convenience. Sign-up near our Chapel & ramp (to VGNS).

**THE CRISIS IN DARFUR PROGRAM TODAY:** Our church & *Gishrei Shalom Jewish Congregation* are co-sponsoring this important educational event **TODAY, 4:00pm**, in Memorial Hall, featuring Christopher Doucet. The editor of *The Hartford Catholic Worker* will offer an historical context to the genocide in Darfur & an update on the current situation there. All are welcome. **GORDON'S SERMON NEXT SUNDAY** will be ***Divine Improv***, based on Philippians 3:17 – 4:1.

**USHERS NEEDED** for 1 Sunday/month at 9:30am? It's a great way to meet more people AND serve your church. Training & substitutes provided! Please sign-up next to Gordon's office.

**LENTEN NOONDAY SERVICES:** Join us for a special 30-minute Lenten service at 12:00N each Wednesday through April 4 in our Chapel. This week's worship leader: **Rev. Linda Fernandes-Bailey**. Lenten luncheons in Memorial Hall follow each Lenten Noonday Service for just \$3. ALL welcome!

**HOLY WEEK VIGIL:** Sign-up today for our *Holy Week Vigil*, when people will be in our chapel 'round the clock' (Maundy Thursday, 4/5, 9PM, through Easter Sunrise, 4/8, 6AM) for 1 hour each, worshipping, praying, meditating on behalf of all of us. Sign-up next to Gordon's office today!

**PROGRESSIVE DINNER:** There are only 20 seats at this fabulous meal to benefit *Red Cloud Indian School*. It's Saturday, 3/3, 6pm. Tickets are \$30/person. For tickets, call Paul Vivian (860-621-8729).

**CHURCH WOMEN UNITED'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER** is Friday, 3/9, 12:00N, *St. Thomas Church* Hall, Bristol Street. Lunch & program = \$8. For tickets, call Doris Smith by 3/2 (860-426-9205).

**DVD'S OF WEEKLY WORSHIP:** Thanks to Gabe Selmi, our *Church Library* will again have DVD copies of our weekly worship services for those unable to attend. Gabe generally records whichever service is convenient for him, but prior arrangement can be made with him to record a specific service for you & provide you with a copy. Call Gabe to make arrangements (860-620-9587).

**REV. DR. DAVIDA FOY CRABTREE**, Conference Minister of our CT Conference, UCC, will be our guest preacher on Sunday, March 11, at all 4 services. Please come welcome her & show her what a special & wonderful church family this is!

**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.

**PUZZLE SWAP TODAY**, 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).

**SUMMER CAMP:** Our *United Church of Christ* runs a wonderful summer camp experience for children & teens at *Silver Lake Conference Center* in Sharon, CT. Registration is on-line: [www.ctucc.org](http://www.ctucc.org) (click on "Silver Lake"). Some scholarships available. (See Karlene Archambeault or Carole Lantz.)

**MOVIES THAT MATTER** will be offered on the big screen with surround sound **THIS Friday, 3/2, at 7:00pm**, in *Peace Café*. The movie, *An Inconvenient Truth*, will be shown, followed by a discussion led by Anne McCarty & Janet Crocker. Child care (\$3/child for the evening) will be offered & refreshments will be available. All are welcome! Suggested donation \$2/person. Our NEXT movie will be *Jesus Camp* on Friday, **March 23**, 7:00pm, with discussion leaders, Sue Meissner & Clare Lindsey.

**USHERS NEEDED** for 1 Sunday/month at 9:30am? It's a great way to meet more people AND serve your church. Training & substitutes provided! Please sign-up next to Gordon's office.

**NURSERY VOLUNTEERS NEEDED** especially for during our 6:00pm service on the 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays of each month. Adults & teens needed! Please call Beth Winne (860-621-6159).

**HABITAT FOR HUMANITY WORK DAY:** Our next work day is **SATURDAY, 3/17** (& 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!

**NEW COVENANT TO CARE NEEDS:** Kitchen table & chairs, mattresses (full & twin), bedsheets, pillows, bedroom sets for adult & a 5-year old. **ALSO needed** (as always): 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!

## **Today's Scripture Lesson**

**LUKE 4:1-13** <sup>1</sup>Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan & was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, <sup>2</sup>where for 40 days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, & when they were over, he was famished. <sup>3</sup>The devil said to him, *If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread.* <sup>4</sup>Jesus answered him, *It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone.'* <sup>5</sup>Then the devil led him up & showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. <sup>6</sup>And the devil said to him, *To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please.* <sup>7</sup>*If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.* <sup>8</sup>Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, & serve only him.'" <sup>9</sup>Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, *If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here,* <sup>10</sup>*for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you,'* <sup>11</sup>*and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'* <sup>12</sup>Jesus answered him, *It is said, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'* <sup>13</sup>When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

## **Today's Anthem Text**

### **A Lenten Prayer**

Robert J. Powell

Lord, I ask a blessing for my soul today; give me peace from heaven as I kneel and pray.  
Forty days did Jesus face temptation strong; give me strength to conquer knowing right from wrong.  
Lord, I ask a blessing for my soul today; give me peace from heaven as I kneel and pray.  
I would be like Jesus turning from all sin, with His love to keep me true and faithful within.  
Lord, I ask a blessing for my soul today; give me peace from heaven as I kneel and pray.  
When I look to Jesus, He will show the way, help me come to meet Him pure on Easter day. --Billie Echols--

Offertory Anthem: **Wash Me Thoroughly From My Wickedness** G. F. Handel  
Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sin. -- Psalm 51:2 --

**VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

**SMALL GROUPS**

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

**SPIRITED WOMEN: A WOMEN'S RETREAT** with Rev. Linda Fernandes-Bailey, happens **March 9-11** at *Wisdom House* in Litchfield. It's a special opportunity for women to come together to listen to one another's stories, pray, worship, & claim the Spirited woman that you are! Cost is \$181 for weekend program, lodging & meals. **Sign-up today** next to Gordon's office; **just 3 spaces left!**

**CRUISIN' CONGOS: Family fun day in NYC!** Choose either *The Bronx Zoo* or *The New York Botanical Gardens* on **Saturday, June 23**. Leave municipal lot next to church at **8:00am** & leave NYC for home at **4:00pm**. The cost is \$25 for bus & tip. Admission costs & lunch are on your own. Children must be accompanied by a responsible adult. Send full payment to Fred Nyren (276 Carriage Dr., Southington, CT 06489). Questions? Call Meredith Mann (860-628-8982). **ALSO: Save Oct. 3-4** for our ***Adirondack Foliage Adventure*** with lots of wonderful, fun activities. More details coming soon!

**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 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday, **7:30 – 8:30pm, room #207**. For **March 18**, read *God's Politics* by Jim Wallis. 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 meetings: February 28 and March 14 & 28**. 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: Sunday, March 4, 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).

**NEW & COMING SOON! A DRUM CIRCLE!** Watch for details coming soon!

## **THE CLOTHESLINE PROJECT**

*The Clothesline Project* is on display in *Peace Café* today through next Sunday. It is an exhibit of shirts decorated by women affected by domestic violence. The decorated shirts, hung on a clothesline, may be

viewed as testimony to the huge problem of violence against women. They were all created by victims of domestic violence as a way of helping them express their feelings & find healing.

**Parents: Please note that this is a graphic display, so parental discretion is advised.**

*The Clothesline Project* helps heal & bears witness to the survivors & victims of domestic violence, as well as to the loved ones of those who have died because of it. It also seeks to educate the general public regarding the magnitude of the problem of violence against women. It was started in Massachusetts in 1990 by *The Cape Cod Women's Agenda*, & was inspired by a Cape Cod artist, Rachel Carey-Harper. Currently there are over 100 local chapters of *The Clothesline Project* in 26 states & 3 foreign countries (England, Canada & Tanzania), & there are more than 10,000 shirts for display with all the local chapters. To create a national display of all the shirts already made, we would need to erect a clothesline as long as 67 football fields. Normally during a display of *The Clothesline Project*, a whistle blows every 15 minutes to symbolize another woman's murder from domestic violence; a bell chimes every minute as another woman is raped; & a gong sounds every 10 seconds as a woman is battered.

**Did you know** that 1 out of every 3 girls is sexually abused before reaching the age of 18?

**Did you know** that between 7/1/05 & 6/30/06, 18 domestic violence shelters in Connecticut provided services to 54,641 victims of domestic violence?

**Did you know** that 51,000 women were murdered in the U.S. by men who supposedly loved them during the same period that the Vietnam War was waging, which killed 58,000 U.S. soldiers?

**Did you know** that our church has a relationship with *Prudence Crandall Home*, a shelter for victims of domestic violence in New Britain. Among other assistance, our Missions Committee shops for & delivers a supply of perishable groceries each & every week.

There is no charge to view the display in *Peace Café*, but to help raise funds *The Clothesline Project* sells logo T-shirts, buttons & bumper stickers, in addition to the general donation box. You'll also find an information table in the display area with educational brochures & lists of local services available to victims of domestic violence.

In the display, **WHITE** shirts are for women who have died from violence because they were women; **YELLOW** or **BEIGE** shirts are for women who have been battered or assaulted because they are women; **RED**, **PINK** or **ORANGE** shirts are for women who have been raped or sexually assaulted; **BLUE** or **GREEN** shirts are for women survivors of incest or childhood sexual abuse; & **PURPLE** or **LAVENDER** shirts are for women who were attacked because they are lesbian.