

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!

March 4, 2007

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

9:30am

The cross leads us to joy & not just happiness. There is a difference.... Happiness is a checkbook that has money, a car that works, a good date for Saturday night. Happiness is the absence of major hassles, or terrorism or crime; happiness is kids' getting good report card and spouse's getting a raise. Happiness is something we know as enhancement or protection of our own lives. Joy comes in connection with another or with Jesus. Joy can happen without money or a working car. Joy happens when we get to the core of life & realize love is at the core. Joy befriends us; love accompanies us. -- Donna Schaper --

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

PREPARING TO WORSHIP GOD

Prelude *O Lamm Gottes unschuldig (O Lamb of God, Most Holy)* J. S. Bach
The Welcome/Welcoming One Another
Church Family Announcements
Music for Meditation *Improvisation: Wunderbarer König* J. Parsons
Lighting the Candles Acolyte: *Megan Enright*

PRAISING GOD

The Call to Worship
PASTOR: We gather for this time of worship in reverent awe, for this is holy ground!
PEOPLE: We are here to feel the presence and power of the Living God!
PASTOR: There is so much of God that we do not know or understand. God's purposes are far beyond our comprehension.
PEOPLE: In these moments and in all of life, let us be open to the unexpected. And let us celebrate that ours is a redeeming God, always at work in our lives and world.
Hymn of Praise: #66 *God Is Truly With Us* Wunderbarer König

*Prayer of General Confession (unison)
Holy God, we are called to be imitators of Christ, but we often mimic the world. We are called to be citizens of Your Kingdom, but we fall in love with the kingdoms of this world. We are called to walk the walk of faith and to place our trust in You, but too often we are content just to talk the talk, as we trust the powers, principalities and pleasures of this world. Forgive us, O God, and help us become the faithful people You call us to become. Now in the silence, hear our personal prayers of confession.
*Prayer of Personal Confession (in silence)
*Response: #745 *Holy God, holy and mighty One, holy immortal One, have mercy upon us.*
*Assurance of Forgiveness

HEARING GOD'S WORD

Scripture Lesson PHILIPPIANS 3:17-4:1
Sermon DIVINE IMPROV Dr. Gordon E. Ellis
Hymn of Reflection: #63 *Holy Spirit, Truth Divine* Mercy

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Prayer of the Church & Lord's Prayer (using *sins...*)
Presentation of Our Offerings & Tithes
Offertory Anthem: *Open Thou Mine Eyes* John Rutter
*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 Christi's strong name expressing care.*
*Prayer of Dedication

THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Invitation
The Sharing of the Bread and Cup (jazz improv by Matt Knoegel)
The Prayer of Thanksgiving
*Hymn: #436 *God of Grace and God of Glory* CWM Rhondda
*Words of Parting (unison)
God's tune is *Transformation*, and it's a fabulous, love-filled *divine improv*. Let us go forth trusting God and watching and listening with awe as God's song of love unfolds.
*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."
Music for Contemplation: *God of Grace and God of Glory* Wilbur Held

JOIN US DOWNSTAIRS NOW FOR COFFEE & CONVERSATION

Ushers: Members of our Board of Deacons **Greeters:** Ed & Bonnie Perry and Colin Daigle
Coffee Hour Host: Rick & Pat Diego
Flowers: Given in loving memory of Sophia George Chaltas by the Chaltas family.
Our Flower Chart to provide flowers in honor/memory of loved ones is now available in Memorial Hall.
* * * * *

Joys & Concerns for Prayer: We pray for Bill Korp, who left Friday for Uganda, where he will serve for 2+ years in *The Peace Corps*. Diane Lamb had surgery this week. Also hospitalized this week: Alan Beaudoin & Graham Hall. We continue to pray for Sue Parsons; John Robison; Pat Diego; John Zigmont; Mary Carter; Janet Crocker; Betsy Roberts; Maureen Curtis; Pat Livingstone; & our Stephen Ministers & care-receivers.
* * * * *

NEXT SUNDAY: REV. DR. DAVIDA FOY CRABTREE, our Conference Minister in our *CT Conference* of the *United Church of Christ*, will be our guest preacher. Please come welcome her & show her what a special & wonderful church family we are!

THE EXONERATED: Our adaption of *The Exonerated*, directed by John Baker (who recently toured with *The Sound of Music*) comes to *Peace Café* on **March 30 & 31, 7:30pm, & April 1, 2:30pm**. It chronicles the stories of 4 wrongly-accused death row inmates. Infused with poignant music, it's a thought-provoking start to Holy Week, as we remember another death row inmate, Jesus! Space limited; get **free tickets** at *Coffee & Conversation* or from Shelley Nyren (860-628-2523 or shelnyren@sbcglobal.net). Free-will offering at event. Due to adult themes & language, play is not recommended for children under age 16.

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!

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. Rick Haverly**. Lenten luncheons in Memorial Hall follow each Lenten Noonday Service for just \$3. ALL welcome!

DARFUR INTERVENTION: Chris Doucet, last Sunday's speaker on *The Crisis in Darfur*, urged us to write to former President Clinton, asking him to travel to Darfur to witness & publicize the genocide there. Letters for your signature are in Memorial Hall & next to our Church Office. You may sign & send one yourself, sign one & leave it for us to send or compose your own, but please help the suffering people of Darfur! *Your Missions Committee*

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 loan to those unable to attend. While Gabe generally records whichever service is convenient for him, prior arrangement can be made with him to record a specific service for you & provide you with a copy (such as if your child is being baptized or you are participating in worship). Call Gabe to make arrangements (860-620-9587).

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.

SUMMER CAMP: Our *United Church of Christ* runs a wonderful summer camp experience for children & teens at *Silver Lake Conference Center* in Sharon, CT. Brochure & registration is now available on-line at www.ctucc.org (click on "Silver Lake"). We also have some scholarship assistance available. See Karlene Archambeault or Carole Lantz.

MOVIES THAT MATTER will be offered on the big screen with surround sound on **Friday, 3/23**, at **7:00pm**, in *Peace Café*. The movie, *Jesus Camp*, will be shown, followed by a discussion led by Sue Meissner & Clare Lindsey. Child care (\$3/child for the evening) will be offered & refreshments will be available. All are welcome! Suggested donation: \$2/person. Our April movie will be *Brokeback Mountain* on Friday, **April 20**, 7:00pm, with discussion leader, Rich Szulczewski.

CHURCH COUNCIL MEETS TOMORROW, 7:00pm, in room #203. All boards & committees should be represented.

OUR SEEDS OF HOPE GROUP MEETS TONIGHT, **7:30pm**, in **room #204**. Check out the group's description on the insert under *Small Groups* & join us tonight! It's extremely IMPORTANT!

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

BREAD FOR LIFE needs canned fruit. Please leave in our *Mission Hope Chest* in the Narthex. Thanks!

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

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

PHILIPPIANS 3:17 - 4:1 ¹⁷Brothers and sisters, join in imitating me, and observe those who live according to the example you have in us. ¹⁸For many live as enemies of the cross of Christ; I have often told you of them, and now I tell you even with tears. ¹⁹Their end is destruction; their god is the belly; and their glory is in their shame; their minds are set on earthly things. ²⁰But our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. ²¹He will transform the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of His glory, by the power that also enables Him to make all things subject to Himself. ^{4:1}Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved.

Today's Anthem Text

Open Thou Mine Eyes by John Rutter

Open thou mine eyes and I shall see. Incline my heart and I shall desire. Order my steps and I shall walk in the ways of Thy commandments. O Lord God, be Thou to me a God and beside Thee let there be none else, no other, nought else with Thee. Vouchsafe to me to worship Thee and serve Thee according to Thy commandments: in truth of spirit, in reverence of body, in blessing of lips, in private and public.

-- Lancelot Andrewes (1555-1626) --

SMALL GROUPS

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

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

LAST CALL FOR SPIRITED WOMEN: A WOMEN'S RETREAT with Rev. Linda Fernandes-Bailey, **March 9-11** at *Wisdom House*, Litchfield. It's a special opportunity for women 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. See details in March newsletter!

CHANGE OF SCHEDULE: R.E.S.T., OUR SPIRITUAL BOOK CLUB (short for *Reading for Enrichment & Spiritual Transformation*) is led by Rev. Linda Fernandes-Bailey & meets monthly, **7:30 – 8:30pm, room #207**. For **April 29th**, 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: 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: 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).

DRUMMING THE SPIRIT OF LIFE: A DRUM CIRCLE: Historically people have used the beat of the drum to connect with the Divine. Whether you've drummed before or not, this group is for you. Toes tapping & spirit soaring, your heart will beat to the rhythm of the drum. You will fill with energy & want to move. Bring a willingness to participate, meditate & praise God. We have some drums, but bring one if you can (hand drums only). Watch for sign-ups or call Nelly Lazariel (860-426-9268).