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!

February 5, 2006 **CHAPEL COMMUNION** **8:00AM**

'Our kingdoms go' is the necessary & unavoidable corollary of 'Thy kingdom come'. For the more there is of self, the less there is of God. The divine eternal fullness of life can be gained only by those who have deliberately lost the partial, separative life of craving & self-interest. -- Aldous Huxley --

PREPARING TO WORSHIP GOD

Gathering Music
The Welcome/Welcoming One Another
Church Family Announcements

PRAISING GOD

The Call to Worship

PASTOR: We gather today to praise and worship the one and only living God!

PEOPLE: Let us turn away from the gods that we create, from our preoccupation with the things of this world, and from all things that draw our allegiance from God.

PASTOR: Let us, instead, ponder eternal truths and unseen realities.

PEOPLE: Let us open ourselves to the healing touch of Christ, who casts out the demons within us, freeing us to worship the one and only true God.

*Hymn of Praise: #436 *God of Grace and God of Glory*
*Prayer of General Confession (unison)

O God of all times, places and people, we confess our self-centeredness and arrogance. We have been pre-occupied with earthly pleasures, made gods of things that are not God, and failed to trust and worship You alone. Forgive us, O God, and open us to Christ's healing touch, that we might find the newness of life and fullness of life that He has promised to all who are faithful. Now in the silence, hear our personal prayers of confession.

*Prayer of Personal Confession (in silence)
*Assurance of Forgiveness

HEARING GOD'S WORD

Scripture Lessons JOHN 1:35-46 & MARK 1:21-28
Sermon PICKING A WINNER ! Rev. Dr. Gordon E. Ellis

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Prayers of the Church & Lord's Prayer (using *sins*)

THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Invitation
The Sharing of the Bread and Cup

(Please come forward, pew by pew, starting with the entire left side, front pew first. The right side can then follow, beginning in the rear. Break off a piece of bread & dip it into the cup.)

Prayer of Thanksgiving (join hands)
Benediction

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Joys & Concerns for Prayer: Hospitalized: Jeannette Faitella. Clive Greenough will have surgery on 2/16. Pat Livingstone will have surgery on 2/27. We continue to pray for Diane Lamb; Matthew Plourde; Andrea Sinclair; 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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***SOUPER BOWL OF CARING* TODAY:** Our youth will receive this special *Super Bowl Sunday* offering to help alleviate local hunger following each service TODAY. Please help!

USHERS NEEDED: Would you usher **1 Sunday/month at 9:30AM** starting in March? Training provided. Substitutes available. Get to know more people! Sign-up next to Gordon's office TODAY.

***JIM COLE* IN CONCERT:** Jim Cole, the James Taylor of Christian music, is known around the world for songs like *Humble Yourself as a Child*, *Master of My Heart*, *Every Generation*, & *In Bethlehem Tonight*. **Mark your calendar**: Jim Cole will be with us **all day** on **Sunday**, **March 26**. He'll sing alone & with our choir or band at all 4 services, then offer a wonderful, Spirit-filled **concert** in our **Meetinghouse at 7:00pm**! Tickets: **$10** ($5/under 18) from Church Office. **DON'T MISS IT !**

YOUTH MISSION TRIP SPONSORS: Would you like to be a sponsor for our February *Youth Mission Trip* to Washington, D.C. Youth will be at *Coffee & Conversation* TODAY and NEXT Sunday.

MOVIES THAT MATTER is **THIS Friday**, **2/10**, **7:00pm**, featuring ***Fiddler on the Roof* (sing-a-along)**. Sue Meissner & Clare Lindsey will lead a discussion of *Fiddler on the Roof* NEXT Sunday, 2/12, 7:30pm, in rooms #201/202. Join us for discussion whether you watch movie at church or home.

FUTURE *Movies*: March 10 (7pm) ***Life is Beautiful*** with **discussion** on 3/12, 7:30, led by Sharon Vocke & Clare Lindsey; **April 21 (7pm)** ***The Scarlet & the Black*** with **discussion:** 4/23, 7:30pm, led by Gabe Selmi & Alice Niemczyski & **May 12 (7pm)** ***12 Angry Men*** with **discussion:** 5/14, 7:30pm, led by Gordon Ellis & Sue Meissner. JOIN US for these ***Movies That Matter***!

MUSIC MINISTRY CONCERT: Our church is blessed with a fantastic music ministry! Join us to hear all of our musical groups: Senior Choir, Mustard Seeds Children's Choir, The Celebration Ringers (handbell choir) & *Branches* (our *T.G.I. Sunday* worship band & singers). It's **Saturday**, **March 11**, **7:00pm**, in our **Meetinghouse**. A free-will offering will be received for *Southington Social Services*.

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICES OF PENANCE: The holiest season on the year, Lent, begins on *Ash Wednesday*, March 1st. We offer 3 brief *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.

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!

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

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.

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.)