

Twenty-fifth Sunday after Pentecost
26 November 2006
10 o'clock in the morning



Welcome to this Service of Worship at First Congregational Church as we gather on this unique Sunday between Thanksgiving and the beginning of Advent. Today we will look at the importance of hope as a part of all the gifts of life for us as individuals and a congregation. In the words of Ruben Alves,

“Hope is hearing the melody of the future. Faith is to dance it.”

First Congregational Church of Greenwich declares itself to be open and affirming; open to all for participation, membership, leadership and employment, and affirming of all who wish to join us as children of God. We continue to give thanks for God's guidance in our journey of faith.

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

*All who are able please stand

‡Seating of latecomers

PRELUDE

Cheryll Hadley, organ

Variations on *KREMSE* Benjamin Logan

CALL TO COMMUNITY

Dr. David D. Young

Please sign and pass the red book.

PRAISING GOD

CALL TO WORSHIP

*OPENING HYMN AND PROCESSION

Pilgrim Hymnal 195 to the tune CORONATION

All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name

OPENING PRAYER (in unison)

O God, in mystery and silence you are present in our lives, bringing new life out of destruction, hope out of challenge, growth out of difficulty. We thank you that you do not leave us alone but guide us in healing. Help us to perceive your unseen hand in the unfolding of our lives, and to attend to the gentle guidance of your Spirit, that we may know the joy you give your people. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

CONFESSING TO GOD

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (in unison)

O God, our God, we celebrate the new life which you have given us. We have experienced broken lives made whole, old wounds of alienation healed over, and tired spirits rejuvenated with new hope. Gracious God, we are so grateful for the purpose and possibilities you have placed before us. Yet there are times when doubt has overcome hope, cynicism has replaced dedication, the world's values have captured us more than yours. Forgive us those times, we pray. Help us let go of the past that we might move joyfully into a new future that points to your love, justice, and hope. Amen.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

‡ CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Cody Michael Baker, son of Jessica and Craig Baker

Ava Lynne Kilmurray, daughter of Tamara and Daniel Kilmurray

BAPTISMAL RESPONSE *sung to tune of "Morning Has Broken"*

Water has cleansed us, bathed with forgiveness,
has with clear blessings, washed sin away.

Jordan's strong currents God's son announcing,
made a beginning, baptismal day.

HEARING GOD'S WORD

FIRST LESSON

Stuart McCalley

Psalm 62:5-8

For God alone my soul waits in silence,
for my hope is from him.
He alone is my rock and my salvation,
my fortress; I shall not be shaken.

On God rests my deliverance and my honour;
my mighty rock, my refuge is in God.
Trust in him at all times, O people;
pour out your heart before him;
God is a refuge for us.

SCRIPTURE ANTHEM

The Chancel Choir

Verleih' uns Frieden *Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy*
Verleih' uns Frieden gnädiglich, Herr Gott, zu unsern Zeiten!
Es ist doch ja kein Andrer nicht, der für uns könnte streiten,
denn du, unser Gott alleine.
Graciously grant us peace, Lord God, in our time.
For there is indeed no one else who can defend us
Other than you, our God, alone.

(From a prayer based on the words of Luther)

SECOND LESSON

Romans 5:1-5

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

‡*HYMN

Pilgrim Hymnal 77 to the tune FINLANDIA
Be Still, My Soul

(The Pastor's Class and Sixth Grade leave for their classes)

SERMON

"Growing Hope"

Rev. Ronald E. Halvorsen

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH(in unison)

God is the power
who formed and transforms our world.

Jesus is the Messiah
who was the most complete expression of God's love.
The Holy Spirit is the strength
by which we live.
By God's grace we affirm that:
To believe is to reach out in the darkness
and ask for healing,
To Hope is to be in the constant state of discovery,
To Love is to be responsible for someone,
to sacrifice oneself for someone,
to risk and to share,
To Pray is to receive God's Communications,
to be attentive,
to listen,
To Be in Grace is to let things and people happen
to us while God slips in among them,
To Worship is to celebrate all this as best we can.
(excerpt from Don Kimball)

*Gloria Patri (*Pilgrim Hymnal 513*)
*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world
without end. Amen. Amen.*

CALL TO PASTORAL PRAYER

Rev Susan M. Craig

PASTORAL PRAYER AND QUIET MEDITATION

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

RESPONDING TO GOD

CALL TO OFFERING

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

*The Chancel Choir,
Carolyn Paulus & Katie Anderson, sopranos*

I Waited for the Lord (*Lobgesang*) *Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy*
I waited for the Lord; he inclined unto me, he heard my complaint.
O blessed are they that hope and trust in the Lord.

(from Psalm 40)

*Doxology (*Pilgrim Hymnal 515*)

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise him, all creatures
here below; Praise him above, ye heavenly host: Praise Father, Son,
and Holy Ghost. Amen.*

*Prayer of Dedication

GOING FORTH TO SERVE GOD

*CLOSING HYMN AND PROCESSION

New Century Hymnal 46 to the tune ANCIENT OF DAYS
Hope of the World

*CLOSING SENTENCES (read responsively)

*Leader: Most precious to me is the assurance of the grace of God—
and its availability! To me this means that God loves me.*

People: That God accepts me as I am.

Leader: That God forgives me, again and again.

People: That every new day I have a chance to hope for
healing and new beginnings.

*Leader: It is this grace which gives me courage to attempt to do
more than I am able to do, and to become more than I
can ever become.*

People: God's grace frees all of us to dare, to risk, and to hope.

Margeret L. Sonnenday

*BENEDICTION

*BENEDICTION RESPONSE

POSTLUDE

Postlude on *WIE SCHÖN LEUCHTET*

Paul Taylor

The flowers in the Meetinghouse today are given in celebration of the baptism of Cody Michael Baker by his family and in celebration of the baptism of Ava Lynne Kilmurray by her family.

Ushers: Deacons

Greeters and Coffee Hour Hosts: Deacons

Flower Delivery: Lucia Hoffman

Calendar

TODAY

Church School Worship in the Daniels Center before class for Kindergarten - 5th Grades. 6th grade & Pastors' Class begin in the Meetinghouse. All classes meet until 11:15 AM. Baby & toddler childcare is available in the undercroft.

Parish Life meeting in room 103 at 11:15 AM.

"Sing for your Supper" tickets on sale at Coffee Hour. An evening of Christmas carols, food and fun in the Auditorium Sunday, December 10 at 5:00 PM.

Blood Pressure Screening Get your blood pressure checked in Room 203 following Church School (11:15).

JPF 5 - 6 PM Room 103

SPF 6:30 - 8 PM Room 103

THIS WEEK

Children's Choir Wed Nov 29th 5 - 6 PM in the Choir Room

First Church Preschool Holiday Boutique Thurs Nov 30th 9 AM - 4 PM in the Auditorium

Hats Off will meet promptly at 9:30AM this Thurs Nov 30th to pick their next book and then cook for the Soup Kitchen.

Chancel Choir rehearsal Thurs Nov 30th 7:30 - 9:00 PM

Christmas Tree Sale begins Dec 2nd at 9 AM

NEXT SUNDAY

Is the first Sunday of the month and the Food Barrel will be out for food donations to Neighbor-to-Neighbor.

Flu Vaccine Clinic Flu shots will be available to people at least 18 years of age, for a fee of \$25, next Sunday, December 3, from 11:15 AM to 12:00 PM (or until supplies last) in room 203. Please bring payment of cash or check (made out to FCCOG). Medicare recipients may wish to get their shot at a Town of Greenwich clinic, as it will be covered by Medicare. Pregnant women, and young people under the age of 18 should see their private physicians. The Wellness Committee thanks you for your cooperation.

FOR ALL CURRENT USHERS AND THOSE INTERESTED IN USHERING, there will be a meeting next Sunday, December 3 at 11:20AM in the Meetinghouse. to discuss changes in the worship service and how they effect the ushers, answer questions, and discuss 2007 monthly assignments with all those interested. For more info, contact Paul Pacent at 637-5800.

Advent Craft Workshop 2 PM Make cards, ornaments, gifts. Sponsored by the Church School Task Force

NEXT WEEK

Faith and the Work Place Dec 7th 7-8 AM Church Lounge

NEWS AND NOTICES

Women's Fellowship Survey available at Coffee Hour OR go to the First Church website homepage, click on the survey sentence in the Messages box and complete the survey online! The responses are coming in. We want to know what YOU think. Thank you for your participation!

Gifts for H.O.M.E. need to be at church by Dec 3rd

MESSIAH 2006 –December 16 & 17, 4 PM. No tickets needed.

100-voice chorus & professional orchestra; soloists Victoria Baker, Holly Sorensen, Terry Beaurline & Edward Pleasant. Come -- or sing with us. Rehearsals December 5, 6, 12 & 13 at 8 PM.

General Synod is coming to Hartford. Visitor registration is available at <http://www.ucc.org/synod/> effective December 1. We encourage you to register early as thousands will want to attend. Since this is the first time the Synod has ever convened in CT, this is a rare opportunity to experience the whole life of our denomination, especially in this 50th Anniversary year. And don't forget to volunteer by visiting [http://www.ctucc.org/synod2007/!](http://www.ctucc.org/synod2007/)