

LENT



WHO

IS



JESUS,



REALLY

February 25, 2007

Welcome to this Service of Worship at First Congregational Church
as we begin our Lenten Sermon Series, may we seek to discern our way as a part of God's way. And may the light of Christ which we now celebrate guide and direct us in all our choices and journeys.

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

Ave Marie *Arcadelt-Liszt*

Cheryll Hadley, organ

CALL TO COMMUNITY

Rev. Susan M. Craig

PRAISING GOD

INTROIT

The Cherub Choir
Stephanie Hanbury-Brown, Director,
Debbie Berner, accompanist

Father, We Adore You *Terrye Coelho*

CALL TO WORSHIP

*‡ OPENING HYMN AND PROCESSION

In the Cross of Christ I Glory *New Century Hymnal # 193*
to the tune RATHBUN

OPENING PRAYER (In Unison)

Our hearts, O God, seem less like growing things than like street corners where windblown rubbish and many strangers pass in the changing weather of the world. Deep root our affections in the beauty of your grace, and we shall be as trees planted by the rivers of water who in due season bring forth your fruit. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

CONFESSING TO GOD

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Bountiful God, we often survey the empty fields of our lives and see not promises, but pain; not possibility but problems. Wherever we labor, it seems too hard to break new ground, and too easy to lose sight of the harvest. Though we may succeed in planting, we grow weary waiting for luxuriant growth. Send the rains of your Spirit upon us that we may be nourished and stand tall in the sunshine of your love. Amen.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

‡CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

Amen. Amen. Amen.

HEARING GOD'S WORD

FIRST LESSON

Pat Larrabee

Deuteronomy 26: 1-11

When you have come into the land that the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance to possess, and you possess it, and settle in it, you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from the land that the LORD your God is giving you, and you shall put it in a basket and go to the place that the LORD your God will choose as a dwelling for his name. You shall go to the priest who is in office at that time, and say to him, 'Today I declare to the LORD your God that I have come into the land that the LORD swore to our ancestors to give us.' When the priest takes the basket from your hand and sets it down before the altar of the LORD your God, you shall make this response before the LORD your God: 'A wandering Aramean was my ancestor; he went down into Egypt and lived there as an alien, few in number, and there he became a great nation, mighty and populous. When the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, by imposing hard labor on us, we cried to the LORD, the God of our ancestors; the LORD heard our voice and saw our affliction,

our toil, and our oppression. The LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with a terrifying display of power, and with signs and wonders; and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. So now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground that you, O LORD, have given me.' You shall set it down before the LORD your God and bow down before the LORD your God. Then you, together with the Levites and the aliens who reside among you, shall celebrate with all the bounty that the LORD your God has given to you and to your house.

SCRIPTURE ANTHEM

The Chancel Choir

O For a Heart to Praise My God *Richard DeLong*

O for a heart to praise my God, A heart from sin set free,
A heart that always feels thy blood so freely spilt for me.
A heart resigned, submissive, meek, My great Redeemer's throne,
Where only Christ is heard to speak, Where Jesus reigns alone:
A humble, lowly, contrite heart, Believing, true, and clean:
Which neither life nor death can part from him that dwells within:
A heart in every thought renewed, And full of love divine;
Perfect and right and pure and good, A copy, Lord, of Thine.
Thy nature, gracious Lord, impart; Come quickly from above.
Write Thy new name upon my heart, Thy new, best name of love.

Charles Wesley

SECOND LESSON

Jeremiah 24: 4-7

Then the word of the LORD came to me: Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Like these good figs, so I will regard as good the exiles from Judah, whom I have sent away from this place to the land of the Chaldeans. I will set my eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them back to this land. I will build them up, and not tear them down; I will plant them, and not pluck them up. I will give them a heart to know that I am the LORD; and they shall be my people and I will be their God, for they shall return to me with their whole heart.

Mark 4: 1-9

Again he began to teach beside the lake. Such a very large crowd gathered around him that he got into a boat on the lake and sat there, while the whole crowd was beside the lake on the land. He began to teach them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them: 'Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and it sprang up quickly, since it had no depth of soil. And when the sun rose, it was scorched; and since it had no root, it withered away. Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. Other seed fell into good soil and brought forth grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirty and sixty and a hundredfold.' And he said, 'Let anyone with ears to hear, listen!'

‡*SERMON HYMN

Savior, Who Dying Gave

New Century Hymnal # 452

to the tune SOMETHING FOR JESUS

The Sixth Grade and Pastor's Class leave for their classrooms.

SERMON "The Farmer in the Dell"

Dr. David D. Young

RESPONDING TO GOD

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (In Unison)

I believe that we can live on earth according to the teachings of Jesus and that the greatest happiness will come in the world when persons obey his commandment: "Love ye one another."

I believe that every question between one person and another is a religious question and that every social wrong is a moral wrong.

I believe that we can live on earth according to the fulfillment of God's will, and that when the will of God is done on earth as it is in heaven, all of us will love our fellow journeyers and act toward them as we desire they should act toward us.

I believe that life is given to us so that we may grow in love, and I believe that God is in me as the sun is in the color and fragrance of a flower – the Light of my darkness, the Voice of my silence.

Helen Keller from Midstream: My Later Life

*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. Ronald E. Halvorsen

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.

CALL TO OFFERING

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

The Chancel Choir

Fear Not, O Land *William H. Harris*
(from Joel 2:21-26)

*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

How Firm A Foundation

New Century Hymnal # 407

to the tune FOUNDATION

*CLOSING SENTENCES

Leader: Now in this morning hour, rest from your little cares among God's growing things, where silences are prayers.

People: Rest from your little cares and let God's love expand your heart to loving care for folk in every land.

Leader: Among God's growing things, pray that God's love may grow in all hearts and everywhere around the earth 'twill show.

People: Where silences are prayers, learn reverently still, to love the Creator's love, to will the Creator's will. *Jane Merchant*

BENEDICTION

*BENEDICTION RESPONSE

POSTLUDE

Triumphal March from "Sigurd Jorsalfar" *Edvard Grieg*

The last few pews in the Meetinghouse are reserved for latecomers and families with children. The back wall pews are reserved for the ushers.

Ushers: Dana Low, Michael Pellegrino, Ted Hoster, Mariann Ekernas, Marcia Livingston, Bobby Littlefield, Joyce Nye
Greeters and Coffee Hour Hosts: Tina Birkic, Ted Hoster, Karen Pacent, Mike Russell

Flower Delivery: Betty Bonsal

The flowers in the Meetinghouse are given in loving memory of Madeline McConnell by the McConnell family.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 25

CHURCH SCHOOL continues today including worship in the Daniels Center. Child care is available in the Undercroft for babies and toddlers.

SUNDAY AFTERNOONS LIVE.—4:00. Yale Russian Chorus. Tea and hot chocolate from 3:30. Performance at 4:00.

THE WELLNESS COMMITTEE will have cookbooks available at coffee hour for those that sign up to cook a dish for *Cooking for the Heart* potluck dinner on Tuesday. See more about this event under the February 27 listing.

THE SENIOR PILGRIM FELLOWSHIP (SPF – High School) –6:30pm
-- in the Youth Room.

THE JUNIOR PILGRIM FELLOWSHIP (JPF –Middle School)—
5:30pm --in the Youth Room.

FEBRUARY, 27 -- 4:00-5:15 -- “LIVING THE QUESTIONS” Bible
Study at Edgehill. A DVD/discussion format facilitated by Marty Berlin.
All are welcome.

FEBRUARY 27 – 6:30- 8:30pm -- COOKING FOR THE HEART. Dine
on heart-healthy cuisine while listening to Dr. Robert Stark, Medical
Director of Greenwich Hospital’s Cardiovascular Prevention Program. Dr.
Stark is dedicated to promoting awareness, prevention and early detection
of cardiac disease. Participants are encouraged to bring a prepared heart-
healthy dish to share, recipes provided. Speak to Sue Asselin, Parish Nurse,
at ext. 21, to RSVP and be assigned a recipe.

FEBRUARY 28 – 7:30pm – NEW MEMBER CLASS meets in the
Lounge. Please consider this class to explore becoming a member of our
congregation.

SUNDAY, MARCH 4 -- THE NEIGHBOR TO NEIGHBOR FOOD
BARREL will be out again. Most needed are: cereal, canned fruit, canned
beans (kidney, black, NOT green beans), dry beans, and peanut butter.

TUESDAYS, MARCH 20 – APRIL 24, 4:00 – 5:30pm in the lounge.

THE NEW DAY PROGRAM: A JOURNEY FROM GRIEF TO
HEALING. Anyone bearing the recent or past loss of a loved one will find
understanding of the natural process of grieving, and the promise of living
beyond the loss, in this six-week seminar led by Rev. Ron Halvorsen and
Sue Asselin RN. The group will use The New Day Journal, which is based
on the premise that sharing your thoughts, feelings, and experiences is one
of the most helpful ways to heal from the pain of loss.

Pre registration is required and the size of the group will be limited. For
more information and to register, call Ron at 637-1791, extension 28.

NEWS AND NOTICES

Hospital Admissions

Are you or a loved one going into the hospital? If so, would you please
contact the church office at 637-1791. Or upon admission, please list First
Congregational Church of Greenwich as your church affiliation. Similarly,
if you know someone who is homebound and would benefit from a Clergy
or Parish Nurse visit, please let the church know.

Lost & Found

A number of items - car keys, glasses, umbrellas -- are in the church office.
Check for yours. On 3/15, what remains will go to the Rummage Room.