

*Welcome to this Service of Worship
at First Congregational Church*

as our Lenten journey brings us to the identity of Jesus as Healer. May the life we share together in this time of outward and upward aspiration be a source of energy and prodding for us on our journey of faith, perhaps illumined by a word of one of the early saints of the church, Origen of Alexandria:

“Stranger than all the evils
in the soul is the Word,
and the healing power
that dwells in him.”

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

Rhosymedre (Three Welsh Hymn Preludes)

Jayson Engquist, organ

Ralph Vaughan Williams

CALL TO COMMUNITY

Dr. David D. Young

PRAISING GOD

CALL TO WORSHIP

***‡OPENING HYMN AND PROCESSION**

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

Pilgrim Hymnal #228

OPENING PRAYER (In Unison)

When the winds of change seem to encircle us O God, we need your presence in the midst of all obstacles as the sense of courage, and compassion, and inner integrity, that no moment of ours might be lost in careless abandonment of the course you have set for us through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

CONFESSING TO GOD

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (In Unison)

God of hopefulness, we confess our flirtation with casual despair, preferring to embrace an inner darkness as opposed to the light which you bring.

God of helpfulness, we confess our passion for self-sufficiency, choosing as our path the way we have crafted in neglect of Christ's Way, which leads to truth and life.

God of healing, we confess our determination to live with our pain, ignoring the energy you bring for personal renewal.

Forgive us in this time of honesty for living as island persons in a world of connectedness, for we would be energized this day by the presence of Christ whose face of healing helps us to hope, and live from out of the strength you bring.

In Christ's spirit we pray. Amen.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

‡CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

Amen. Amen. Amen.

HEARING GOD'S WORD

FIRST LESSON

Stuart McCalley

Hebrews 4: 14-16

Since, then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

SCRIPTURE ANTHEM

The Chancel Choir

There's a Wideness in God's Mercy *Lee Dengler*

Text is found at New Century Hymnal 23, with these added lines:

But we make God's love too narrow by false limits of our own;
And we magnify God's strictness with a zeal God will not own.

SECOND LESSON

John 12: 1-8, 14: 18-24

Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, 'Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?' (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) Jesus said, 'Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me.'

"I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little

while

the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.” Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, “Lord, how is it that you will reveal yourself to us, and not to the world?” Jesus answered him, “Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; and the word that you hear is not mine, but is from the Father who sent me.”

‡***SERMON HYMN**

My Song Is Love Unknown

Pilgrim Hymnal #169

SERMON

“The Intimate Connector”

Dr. David D. Young

RESPONDING TO GOD

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH** (In Unison)

We believe that God was in love with the world and could not keep the secret. The telling of it was creation. We believe that God’s love is constantly being shown as creation continues and continues every moment of every day.

We believe that Jesus is our window to divinity and our mirror of humanity. Through Jesus, we find God’s love for us fully revealed and we discover that God’s will for us is that we love one another in full humanness.

We find God’s presence of love with us in the Holy Spirit which often speaks to us in the voices of other people. Therefore, we affirm that openness to God and openness to others are two sides of the same coin and that really listening to others can help us hear God.

We believe that God never gives up on us and that nothing can separate us from God's love. Amen.

***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

Holly Sorensen, mezzo-soprano

There is a Balm in Gilead *arranged by William A. Dawson*

***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.

***Prayer of Dedication**

GOING FORTH TO SERVE GOD

***CLOSING HYMN AND PROCESSION**

Before the Cross of Jesus

Pilgrim Hymnal #161

***CLOSING SENTENCES**

Leader: Believing in the God whose will is wholeness,

People: Believing in the Christ who will guide us on the journey,

Leader: Believing in the Holy Spirit who gives each the power to do more than we can believe or dare to ask for,

People: Believing all this, we step across the edge of time, through the door into the future on our journey to wholeness in Christ.

Martha Edens

***BENEDICTION**

***BENEDICTION RESPONSE**

POSTLUDE

Hyfrydol (Three Welsh Hymn Preludes)

Ralph Vaughan Williams

The last few pews in the Meetinghouse are reserved for latecomers.

Ushers: Tina and Dan Videtto, Jacky Schofield, John and Barbara Davidson

Greeters: Sue McCalley and Deborah LaCivita

Coffee Hour: Sue and Stu McCalley

Flower Delivery: Beth Rollins

The flowers in the Meetinghouse are given in celebration of the

105th birthday of Reginald Gisborne by his family.

Calendar

TODAY, March 25

Church School continues today including worship in the Daniels Center. Sixth graders and Pastors' Class begin in the Meetinghouse. Childcare is available in the Undercroft for babies and toddlers.

Blood Pressure Screening after 11:15 am. A member of the Wellness Committee is available to check blood pressures in room 203 following Church School.

The Confirmation Class is on retreat at Silver Lake.

No Junior Pilgrim Fellowship (JPF -- Middle School)

The Senior Pilgrim Fellowship (SPF – High School), 6:30 pm in the Youth Room.

THIS WEEK

March 31 at 9:00 am and 10:30 am. **Two CPR Refresher Courses** are planned for Saturday. Individuals certified in CPR should contact Sue Asselin, Parish Nurse, at extension 21, to register for this non-mandatory practice. Anyone interested in becoming newly certified in CPR should also speak to Sue.

HOLY WEEK

April 5 at 6 pm. **Maundy Thursday Supper and Service** -- Join the Parish Life Committee, staff and deacons at 6 pm in the Auditorium to celebrate the Last Supper during Holy Week with a

special meal and service of Tenebrae. This meaningful evening features matzos, candlelight, delicious food, and a service that draws you close to Jesus as he first broke bread and offered the cup. Parents are encouraged to bring children for this special night. Donations are requested in suggested amounts of \$5 for adults and \$3 for children. Please sign up at Coffee Hour or in the Front Office (during the week) to help with the planning.

April 7 at 9:00 am - 11:00 am, **Egg Saturday**. Bring the family for a bagel breakfast and join us on Saturday morning to dye your Easter eggs, decorate cookies, and share in the stories and traditions of Easter. Bring along a basket, hardboiled eggs, and we will supply the rest! We also need your help to dye some eggs to decorate First Church for Easter morning. Children of all ages are welcome. Younger children should be accompanied by a parent.

NEWS AND NOTICES

Easter Decorations

The Chancel Committee invites memorial contributions for decorations for our church this Easter. Any amount is welcome. The Church Office needs the completed form (below) with your check (payable to First Church Flower Fund) on or before April 2.

.....

In memory or honor (circle one)
of

by

HOLY WEEK 2007

April 1- Palm Sunday

10:00 am Festival Service and Palm Parade with Children
(No Church School – child care available)

April 5 - Maundy Thursday

6:00 pm Supper and Service of Tenebrae.
(See announcements in this bulletin for details)

April 6 - Good Friday

10:00 am Family and Children's Service

12:00 pm SPF carries cross to the beach

8:00 pm Music for Good Friday
John Rutter's *Requiem*
with the Chancel Choir,
Instrumental Ensemble,
Carolyn Paulus, soprano

April 7 - Egg Saturday

9:00 am – 11:00 am for the whole family
(See announcements in this bulletin for details)

April 8 - Easter

6:00 am Sunrise Service at Tod's Point

9:00 am and 11:00 am Festival Services
with brass and timpani