

The Fourth Sunday of Easter
April 29, 2007
10 o'clock in the morning



WELCOME to this Service of Worship at First Congregational Church as together, on these spring Sundays, we are considering the existential question for our lives, “Does God Really Make a Difference?” Today we are focusing on prayer as we seek to deepen our commitment and relationship with God.

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

John Stansell, organ

Sonata VI *Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy*

Chorale with variations: Vater unser im Himmelreich

Fugue – Finale

Today’s prelude is based on one of Martin Luther’s catechism chorales, “Vater unser,” in which each stanza expands on a phrase from the Lord’s Prayer. To me Sonata VI represents Mendelssohn’s own statement about prayer. The variations build to a loud climax, followed by a quieter fugue. The first part of the fugue subject echoes the first phrase of the chorale; the second part, a simple descending scale, symbolizes God’s answer to our prayers. The finale is quiet, at peace. You can find the “Vater unser” melody in the Pilgrim Hymnal, # 44 –JS

CALL TO COMMUNITY

Rev. Ronald E. Halvorsen

PRAISING GOD

CALL TO WORSHIP

‡*OPENING HYMN AND PROCESSION

Not My Brother, nor My Sister *New Century Hymnal 519*

OPENING PRAYER (In Unison)

Almighty God, from whom every good prayer comes, and who pours out on all who desire it the spirit of grace, keep us as we worship, from coldness of heart and wanderings of mind, that with kindled affections and steadfast thoughts we may worship you in spirit and in truth, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

CONFESSING TO GOD

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (In Unison)

Slow us down, Lord. Ease the pounding of our hearts
by the quieting of our minds. Steady our hurried pace
with a vision of the eternal reach of time.

Give us, amid the confusion of our days,
the calm of the everlasting hills.

Break the tensions of our minds
and muscles with the soothing music of the
singing streams that live in our memories.

Help us to know that there is more to life than
increasing its speed.

Slow us down, Lord. Amen.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

‡CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.

HEARING GOD'S WORD

Psalms 73: 1-3, 13-28

Truly God is good to the upright,
to those who are pure in heart.
But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled;
my steps had nearly slipped.
For I was envious of the arrogant;
I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

All in vain I have kept my heart clean
and washed my hands in innocence.
For all day long I have been plagued,
and am punished every morning.

If I had said, "I will talk on in this way,"
I would have been untrue to the circle of your children.
But when I thought how to understand this,
it seemed to me a wearisome task,
until I went into the sanctuary of God;
then I perceived their end.
Truly you set them in slippery places;
you make them fall to ruin.
How they are destroyed in a moment,
swept away utterly by terrors!
They are like a dream when one awakes;
on awaking you despise their phantoms.

When my soul was embittered,
when I was pricked in heart,
I was stupid and ignorant;
I was like a brute beast towards you.
Nevertheless I am continually with you;
you hold my right hand.
You guide me with your counsel,
and afterwards you will receive me with honor.

Whom have I in heaven but you?

And there is nothing on earth that I desire other than you.

My flesh and my heart may fail,

but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.

Indeed, those who are far from you will perish;

you put an end to those who are false to you.

But for me it is good to be near God;

I have made the Lord GOD my refuge,

to tell of all your works.

SCRIPTURE ANTHEM

The Chancel Choir

Expectans Expectavi *Charles Wood*

This sanctuary of my soul,

Unwitting I keep white and whole,

Unlatched and lit, if Thou should'st care

To enter or to tarry there.

With parted lips and outstretched hands

And listening ears Thy servant stands.

Call Thou early, call Thou late,

To Thy great service dedicate. *(C. H. Sorley)*

SECOND LESSON

Matthew 6: 1-15

Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their

reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

“Pray then in this way:
Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come.
Your will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
As we also have forgiven our debtors.
And do not bring us to the time of trial,
But rescue us from the evil one.”

For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

‡*SERMON HYMN

New Century Hymnal 506

What a Friend We Have in Jesus

During the hymn, the sixth Grade and the Pastor's Class will leave for their classrooms.

SERMON “The Problems of Prayer”

Dr. David D. Young

RESPONDING TO GOD

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (In Unison)

God is the power who formed and transforms our world.

Jesus is the Messiah

for whom our mothers and fathers waited,
who was the most complete expression of God's love,
who continues to come to us as the Christ.

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 a
cure.

To Hope is to be in the constant state of discovery,

To Love is to be responsible 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 of this as best we can,
for 'nothing is profane for those who know how to see.'”

*Gloria (*New Century Hymnal* # 754)

Glory to God the Creator, and to the Christ, and to the Holy
Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever.

Amen. Amen.

CALL TO PASTORAL PRAYER

Rev. Susie 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.

CALL TO OFFERING

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

The Chancel Choir

Jesu, the Very Thought of Thee *Simon Lole*

(text at Pilgrim Hymnal # 225)

*Doxology *(New Century Hymnal # 776)*

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Christ, all
creatures here below; Praise Holy Spirit, Comforter; One God,
Triune, whom we adore. Amen. Amen.

*Prayer of Dedication

GOING FORTH TO SERVE GOD

*CLOSING HYMN

Now Thank We All Our God

Pilgrim Hymnal 29

*CLOSING SENTENCES

Leader: Do not pray for easy lives, pray to be strong persons.

People: Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers, but pray for
powers equal to your tasks.

*Leader: Then the doing of your work will be no miracle, but you shall
be a miracle.*

People: Every day you shall wonder at yourself, at the richness of life
which has come to you by the Grace of God. *Phillips Brooks*

*BENEDICTION

*BENEDICTION RESPONSE

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

Ushers: Sue Baker, Rima Zaitoon, Bud Crossman, Afif El-Folh,
Susan Gilbert, Richard Gilbert

Greeters: Membership Committee

Coffee Hour: Membership Committee

Flower Delivery: Eva and Bill Fossum

TODAY, APRIL 29

Church School classes continue today. Child Care for babies and toddlers is available in the Undercroft.

Immediately following worship, a special 10 – 15 minute presentation on the stained glass windows will take place in the sanctuary.

Parish Nurse, Sue Asselin, RN, is available today in room 203, after Church School (11:15). Stop in to have your blood pressure checked or discuss any health concerns.

The Junior Pilgrim Fellowship (JPF -- Middle School) will meet today at 5:00- 6:45pm for MOVIE MANIA. Wear comfy clothes – p.j.s, whatever you like. Bring a sleeping bag, pillow, blanket, and get comfortable on the floor. We'll get pizza and have popcorn during the movie. Bring \$4 to help with the cost of the pizza.

NOTE: JPF ends at 6:45 because of the movie!

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

Stained Glass Window Project: Following the Worship Service today there will be a special presentation in the Meetinghouse to take a look at our stained glass windows and plans for their restoration. We hope all can attend.

MAY CELEBRATIONS

May 6 Church School Recognition Sunday
May 13 Confirmation Sunday
May 20 Music Sunday
May 27 Heritage Sunday

NEWS AND NOTICES

Women's Fellowship Quilt Raffle - We are pleased to announce that the 37th Annual Quilt Raffle will be held during our Spring Brunch on May 16, 2007 between 10:00 and 12:00noon. The Kettle Quilters of First Church have created a lovely queen size quilt in an "Irish Chain" pattern on an off-white background. The quilt will be on display at the Rummage Room during the week of April 30th as well as at the Coffee Hours on May 6 and May 13.

Tickets are \$2.50 each and are available at the Rummage Room and the church office. They will also be available at the Coffee Hours on May 6 and May 13 and before the drawing on the day of the brunch.

All proceeds from this raffle will help assist many local, national and international organizations. The Women's Fellowship greatly appreciates your continued support. Any questions, please contact Susan Tedford (637-8251) or Lori White (637-5251). Please SIGN UP at Coffee Hour or by calling the Church Office!

Help Weave the Magic The Maypole Dance is a wonderful part of our Music Sunday tradition. Perhaps your child(ren) would like to be part of it this year. Rehearsals will take place in the Daniels Center after worship on May 6 and May 13. We need twelve or sixteen girls and boys, ideally in 3rd^r & 4th grades, who can learn the simple steps and commit to the two rehearsals. If you are interested, please sign up with Rosemary Lamie at extension 20 or John Stansell at extension 22. The church phone is 637-1791.

Volunteers Needed for Call-a-Ride: Volunteers are needed to drive seniors to appointments, in Greenwich. Volunteers can drive on a regular schedule or fill in when available. Call Bobby Littlefield at 967-3341.

First Congregational Church of Greenwich www.fccog.org
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203.637.1791

Ministers: The Members of The First Congregational Church of
Greenwich

Senior Pastor: David D. Young

Senior Associate Pastor: Susan M. Craig

Minister of Pastoral Care and Adult Ed: Ronald E. Halvorsen

Director of Music/Senior Organist: John Stansell

Associate Organist/Director: Terence J. Flanagan

Director of Middle School Ministry: Debbie Bocchino

Director of High School Ministry: Josh Ziac

Director of Church School: Rosemary Lamie

Parish Nurse: Susan Asselin

Director of Membership: Ginny Breismeister

Pastors Emeriti: Thomas L. Stiers and Sally Colegrove