



First Congregational Church

9 September 2007

10 o'clock in the morning

Welcome to this service of worship at First Congregational Church on Homecoming Sunday. We gather in community to grow in faith at the beginning of a new church year. And so we set out on a Fall Sermon Series which focuses on the theme of **Opening Opportunities: Windows for Discovery** – looking for what unfolds within our life together and within the witness of scripture. May what we do here today strengthen you, recalling the words of the German mystic, Meister Eckhart:

“There is a capacity in my soul which is unreservedly open to God. Of this I am sure as that I live. Nothing is as close to me as God. God is nearer to me than I am to myself. God’s presence is my being.”

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

Sonate IV (Larghetto - Allegro - Siciliana – Allegro)

Mary Fike, flute

George Frideric Handel

CALL TO COMMUNITY

Please sign and pass the red book.

Dr. David D. Young

PRAISING GOD

CALL TO WORSHIP

***‡OPENING HYMN AND PROCESSION**

God Is Here! As We Your People Meet *New Century Hymnal 70*

OPENING PRAYER

God who brought light from darkness, help us to see your light so well that it not only illumines our path, but reflects off us to illumine others. We pray this prayer in the name of the One who was called the light of the world. Amen.

CONFESSING TO GOD

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God, we confess that we have not always
been a light in the world.

We have allowed the temptations of life
to consume our living.

The journey with You has not always been faithful.

For all the times that we have not reflected Your light to others,
we are sorry and ask for forgiveness.

We admit that there are things in our lives
which prevent us from following You.

We promise to release that which distracts us from You
and brings darkness to ourselves and others

so that we can bring Your light and love into the world.

Help us to put on the true nature of Christ Jesus. Amen.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

‡Congregational Response

Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.

HEARING GOD'S WORD

FIRST LESSON

Rev. Ronald E. Halvorsen

Isaiah 60: 1-2

Arise, shine; for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.
For darkness shall cover the earth,
and thick darkness the peoples;
but the LORD will arise upon you,
and his glory will appear over you.

ANTHEM

Arise, Shine

*The Chancel Choir
Richard Shephard*

SECOND LESSON

Matthew 5: 14-16

“**Y**ou are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

*‡HYMN

Take My Gifts

New Century Hymnal 562

SERMON

Let Your Light Shine

Dr. David D. Young

RESPONDING TO GOD

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

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 colour and fragrance of a flower – the Light of my darkness, the Voice of my silence.

Helen Keller from Midstream: My Later Life

*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

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

This Little Light of Mine

*The Chancel Choir
Arranged by Edward Tyler*

*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

Jesus Shall Reign

New Century Hymnal 300

CHURCH SCHOOL COMMISSIONING

Church School Director: Celebrating Faith Through Many Voices, our church school theme this year, inspires us to speak, worship, write and pray in many ways. As we begin this year's celebrations and learning, let us commit ourselves to being in covenant with God and with each other.

Minister: A covenant is a special kind of agreement, a sacred one in which God is a part. In a covenant we respond to God's love for us, by promising to love and serve God and each other. We are all teachers and learners - children, young people, and adults alike. Let us now covenant with those working with our children

and young people during this church school year. Would all teachers and task force members please read your part of the covenant.

Teachers and Task Force Members: As teachers and task force members we look forward to the challenges and rewards in this new year. We promise before God to prepare carefully, to listen patiently, to care deeply and to share ourselves willingly as we grow and learn together as God's people.

Parents and the Congregation: We celebrate and support your covenant to love and learn and grow. We promise before God to support you in all your efforts with our prayers and resources.

Chair of Religious Education: I will represent you and support you, bringing news of your progress to the Church Committee and seeking their care and support of all you do. Children and young people, I would like to ask you to repeat after me your covenant.

Children and Young People: We promise before God to take part faithfully, to listen carefully, to care deeply for others and to share ourselves willingly as we grow together, all of us, God's children.

Parents and Congregation: We celebrate our covenant with our children and young people to love and learn and grow. We promise before God to support them in all their efforts with our prayers and resources.

Minister: We have made a covenant to be God's people, to love, to learn, to grow, and to support one another. May God's blessing be with us and guide us as we journey together into this new church school year.

SUNG RESPONSE

Jesus loves me! This I know, for the Bible tells me so.

Little ones to him belong; they are weak, but he is strong.

Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me!

Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.

CLOSING SENTENCES

Leader: Home is where we tie one end of the thread of life.

People: And though these shattering walls are thin, may they be strong to keep hate out and love in.

Leader: Home by different ways, yet all homeward bound through prayer and praise.

People: Young with old and great with small, home by different ways.

Buxbaum / Untermeyer / Rossetti

BENEDICTION

BENEDICTION RESPONSE

POSTLUDE

Andante con moto e maestoso (from Thirty-Five Miniatures)

Flor Peeters

All children will go to a special event in the auditorium. Coffee will be available for adults in the memory garden. In case of rain, children will stay in the Meetinghouse and coffee will be in the auditorium.

The flowers in the Meetinghouse this morning are given in memory of those who lost their lives on September 11, 2001 and to honor all those who tried to save them.

Greeters and Coffee Hour Hosts: Stephen Ministers

Ushers: Sue Baker, Michael Pellegrino, Beth Beam, Ted Hoster and Ken & Erna Olson

Flower Delivery: Sue Baker

The 10 am Service is broadcast live on WGCH 1490 AM Radio.

Calendar

TODAY

Parish Nurse

Sue Asselin, RN is available today in room 203 after the Worship Service. Stop in to have your blood pressure checked or discuss any health concerns.

Have you Signed Susie's quilt? Today you can find Susie's quilt in the auditorium following morning worship. If you have not yet had a chance to sign the quilt, please do so today. Let's make this a truly memorable gift for Susie.

NEWS AND NOTICES

JPF will be meeting on Sundays from 5:00 – 6:00 pm beginning on September 23. If you have any questions please contact Debbie Crawford at 536-6895 or Steve Crawford at 253-7501.

SPF will be meeting on Sundays from 6:30 – 8:00 pm beginning on September 23. If you have any questions please contact Debbie Crawford at 536-6895 or Steve Crawford at 253-7501.

It's Harvest Time, and First Church Growers for the Hungry need your help!

The 2007 growing season is nearing the end, and we need a few more volunteers to finish up a fantastic summer of providing lots of nutritious, organic vegetables for hungry people in our community. See the bulletin board or visit the Growers' table at the Homecoming Picnic to see the beautiful vegetables and learn about the opportunities for joining in this very rewarding Outreach project. For more information, contact Marge York at 637-4207 or yormar@sbcglobal.net.

Calling All Calligraphers

There are a number of new entries that should be recorded in the Book of Remembrances. The book, in the glass display case in the Narthex of the Meetinghouse, contains the names of those to whom memorial gifts have been dedicated and the names of those who have given to First Church in memory of friends and other loved ones. The entries in the book are done in calligraphy and some of the pages are particularly beautiful. If you know of anyone who has this skill, please call George Handley, Church Business Administrator at the church office – 637-1791, extension 29.

The Rummage Room has reopened. Thank you to everyone who helped make our Grand Opening Day a huge success! Once again all previous records for opening day total receipts were broken with \$9,180.00 collected. A special thanks to everyone for your highly saleable donations. We are always looking for new volunteers to join our happy ranks, especially on Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoons. Please call 637-1875 if you are interested in volunteering, AND, please come visit us!

First Congregational Church of Greenwich

108 Sound Beach Avenue, Old Greenwich, Connecticut, 06870

203-637-1791

www.fccog.org

Ministers: The Members of The First Congregational Church of Greenwich

Senior Pastor: Dr. David D. Young

Minister of Pastoral Care: Ronald E. Halvorsen

Director of Music/Senior Organist: John Stansell

Associate Organist/Director: Terence J. Flanagan

Director of Junior Pilgrim Fellowship: Debbie Bocchino

Director of Church School: Rosemary Lamie

Director of Membership: Ginny Breismeister

Parish Nurse: Susan Asselin

Pastors Emeriti: Thomas L. Stiers and Sally Colegrove