

Second Sunday in Lent

17 February 2008

10 o'clock in the morning

The Cross of the Uncrowded Way:



Difficult Disciplines of Discipleship

**W**e extend a warm welcome to everyone who has come to First Congregational Church this morning and those listening by Internet or radio. Our minister, Dr. David Young, is on a mission trip with our young people in Honduras. Today, Reverend Daniel England, our Interim Associate Minister, and Ron Halverson, our Minister of Pastoral Care will lead the service. You are invited to join us for coffee immediately following this service in the Auditorium (out the back of the sanctuary and up the stairs). We trust that during this service your faith will be strengthened and your hope renewed as we worship God in the name of his son, Jesus Christ.

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.

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### **PREPARING FOR WORSHIP**

\*All who are able please stand

‡Seating of latecomers

#### **PRELUDE**

An Wasserflüssen Babylon  
(By the Waters of Babylon)

*John Stansell, organ  
Johann Sebastian Bach*

#### **CALL TO COMMUNITY**

*Please sign and pass the red book.*

*Rev. Daniel B. England*

### **PRAISING GOD**

#### **CALL TO WORSHIP**

#### **\*‡OPENING HYMN AND PROCESSION**

High in the Heavens, Eternal God

*Pilgrim Hymnal 82*

#### **OPENING PRAYER**

Lord, we come this morning with open hearts

To seek the better way you have for us.

We are here because we acknowledge that you have made us

And therefore to know you is to know ourselves.

We have gathered together with others who also seek grace,

Who also want to find a more perfect way.

So help us Lord, in this hour, to catch a glimpse of your face

And to hear the word you have for us this day.  
Through Jesus Christ Our Lord we pray,  
Amen.

## CONFESSING TO GOD

### CALL TO CONFESSION

#### PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Lord how hard it is to change.  
Even when we are oppressed by  
Our habits,  
Our desires,  
Our thoughts  
And our passions,  
Still, we continue on as before  
In stubborn ignorance,  
In unworthy thoughts and words,  
In furtive actions and secret sins.  
Lord how hard it is to change.

Forgive us, Lord, and rescue us  
From our entrenched ways,  
From our stubborn “no” to life,  
From our turning from you,  
From our running away.  
Lord how hard it is to change.

But you, O Lord, can do what we cannot  
If we will ask you,  
If we will trust you,  
If we will obey you,  
If we will only let go.  
Lord how hard it is to change,  
But we know we must,  
Because the darkness does not really suit us  
And really, we long for light.  
Amen.

### WORDS OF ASSURANCE

## ‡Congregational Lenten Response

*Amazing grace, how sweet the sound,  
that saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost, but now am found,  
was blind but now I see.*

### HEARING GOD'S WORD

#### FIRST LESSON

*Betsy Kreuter*

Isaiah 35: 1-7a

**T**he wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,  
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;  
like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly,  
and rejoice with joy and singing.  
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,  
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.  
They shall see the glory of the LORD,  
the majesty of our God.

Strengthen the weak hands,  
and make firm the feeble knees.  
Say to those who are of a fearful heart,  
“Be strong, do not fear!  
Here is your God.  
He will come with vengeance,  
with terrible recompense.  
He will come and save you.”

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,  
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;  
then the lame shall leap like a deer,  
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.  
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,  
and streams in the desert;  
the burning sand shall become a pool,  
and the thirsty ground springs of water;  
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp,  
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

## ANTHEM

Day by day

Day by day, dear Lord, of thee three things I pray:  
to see thee more clearly,  
love thee more dearly,  
follow thee more nearly, day by day.

*The Chancel Choir*  
*Martin How*

## SECOND LESSON

John 9

As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" Some were saying, "It is he." Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am the man." But they kept asking him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' Then I went and washed and received my sight." They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know."

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see." Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And they were divided. So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened." He said, "He is a prophet."

The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" His parents answered, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself." His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, "Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner." He answered, "I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" He answered them, "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?" Then they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." The man answered, "Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." They answered him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?" And they drove him out.

Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" He answered, "And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him." Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he." He said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshipped him. Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgment so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind." Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, "Surely we are not blind, are we?" Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you

would not have sin. But now that you say, 'We see', your sin remains.

\*‡HYMN

O Word of God Incarnate

*Pilgrim Hymnal 252*

SERMON

*Rev. Daniel B. England*

*A Hamburger, a Statue and a Blind Man*

(Study)

### RESPONDING TO GOD

\*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

We believe that you can make the blind see,  
That you can make the deaf hear,  
That you can make the mute sing.

We have faith that you have not given up on us  
Or let us wander off too far.  
But like the good shepherd,  
You come to look for us, calling our name.

And we believe that you have led us to this time in history for  
a purpose,  
To these people for a reason,  
To the work of this church so that people might be made whole.

Above all, we believe that God was in Christ reconciling the  
world to Himself,  
Calling men and women to something more than they are,  
Calling your church to the great work of announcing salvation  
To those who wander in darkness still.

This we believe. Help thou our unbelief.

\*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

Eternal Light, Shine in My Heart

Eternal light, shine in my heart,  
eternal hope, lift up my eyes;  
eternal power, be my support,  
eternal wisdom, make me wise.

Eternal life, raise me from death,  
eternal brightness, help me see;  
eternal Spirit, give breath,  
eternal Savior, come to me:

Until by your most costly grace,  
invited by your holy word,  
at last I come before your face  
to know you, my eternal God.

*The Chancel Choir  
Bruce Saylor*

### \*Doxology

*(Pilgrim Hymnal 514)*

*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

If You But Trust in God to Guide You

*New Century Hymnal 410*

## \*CLOSING SENTENCES

*Leader: Seek the will of God this week.*

People: Open thou our eyes.

*Leader: Seek out those who are hurting.*

People: Open thou our eyes.

*Leader: Seek and ye shall find.*

People: And light will flood our being.

## \*BENEDICTION

## \*BENEDICTION RESPONSE

## POSTLUDE

Jesus Christus, unser Heiland  
(Jesus Christ, Our Savior)

*J. S. Bach*

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The flowers in the Meetinghouse are given in loving memory of Hans and Betty Farman, who were for many years devoted supporters of First Church.

The 10 am Service is broadcast live each week on WGCH 1490 AM Radio. In addition, the service is available through the church's website, [www.fccog.org](http://www.fccog.org), where a bulletin can be found as well as a link to the live broadcast.

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## *Calendar*

### TODAY

There are no **Church School** classes today as we welcome our children in worship this morning. Child Care is available as always. Please ask the ushers for directions. A reminder: keep filling your Heifer International collection box. Let Rosemary know (ext. 20) if you need one. Church School resumes next Sunday. Happy vacation to all who are off this week.

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.

Please join us this afternoon at 4, as **Sunday Afternoons Live** presents violinist Sarah Geller accompanied by pianist Wenhan Anderson in a program of Beethoven, Ravel and Gershwin (*Porgy and Bess* selections). The candlelight concert in the Auditorium begins with tea, cocoa and cookies served from 3:30. One more program remains on the schedule. Baritone and son of our congregation Thomas Woodman, accompanied by Stephen Sulich will perform Schumann's *Dichterliebe*

on Sunday, February 24. Additionally Tom will be singing some Neapolitan songs and a Rogers and Hammerstein set.

JPF / Junior Pilgrim Fellowship (6-8 grade) - No JPF.

SPF / Senior Pilgrim Fellowship (9-12 grade) - No SPF.

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## THIS WEEK

**JESUS 101** - The new series, Jesus 101 (*Saving Jesus*), is a just-released DVD-based program that is an exploration of Jesus Christ for the third millennium. It is similar in format to the *Living the Questions* series of a few years ago. Led by Marty Berlin with the assistance from time to time of David Young or Dan England, it involves learning and discussion after viewing a DVD segment. Featuring some of the leading religious voices of today such as Marcus Borg, John Dominic Crossan and Hans Kung, the series seeks to answer such questions as: "Who was Jesus?", "What can we know about Jesus (and how)?", "Who killed Jesus (and why)?" and "What do words like incarnation and atonement mean and how have they been understood through the ages?"

Please join us in the Lounge on Tuesday at 7:30 pm or for the repeat of the program the following Sunday at 11:15 am.

Our hope and pledge is that you will go away with a greater and more satisfying understanding of Jesus, the center of our faith.

**Join the Chorus!** For the next five weeks, the first 45 minutes of Chancel Choir rehearsal will be devoted to our music for Good Friday, Dale Wood's *Service of Darkness*. The Choir would welcome extra singers for that occasion. Talk to John this morning, or simply show up on Thursday.

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## NEXT SUNDAY

JPF - No JPF.

SPF - No SPF.

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## NEWS AND NOTICES

Come to the **Leap Year Family Movie Night** hosted by Women's Ministries on Friday, February 29. Pizza is served at 6:00 pm and movies begin at 6:45. Your choices will be *Ratatouille*, rated G or *Evan Almighty*, rated PG. Children are welcome to come in PJ's, bring a blankie and a parent, and be comfortable. Everyone is welcome to join this intergenerational event! RSVP to the office or see the signup sheets in Coffee Hour.

**First Church Growers for the Hungry.** There may yet be more cold and snowy weather before winter ends, but the Growers already have their sights set on a fifth season of producing nutritious, organic vegetables for hungry people in our community. Preparation of the garden will begin in early March, and soon thereafter we will need volunteers of all shapes, sizes and abilities to help with the planting, tending, and picking of our crops. An informational meeting will be held in Room 203 after Coffee Hour on **March 9, 2008**. If you aren't able to attend the meeting but are interested in learning more about the Growers, please call Marge York at 637-4207.

**Share your name**

You may have noticed that we have been inviting you to make a name tag as you enter the Meetinghouse each Sunday. As a welcoming, vital, and caring church, we want to get to know each other better. Please wear your name tag when you are in church and at coffee hour so we can greet each other by name.

**Committees Looking for Members!** Have you been thinking about ways to be involved at First Church but didn't quite know how to get started, or, is there something you thought you might like to do for awhile now but no one ever asked you? Well, here is how to do it. Call the following people to find out more about the opportunities listed:

- Membership Committee: Ginny Breismeister, ext. 26 or  
Bob Mendelsohn, 637-5773
- Parish Life: John Leidy 531-7938
- Music Committee: John Stansell, ext. 24 or  
Barbara Norrgard, 637-3703
- Church School Task Force: Rosemary Lamie (ext 20)

**Volunteers Needed for Call-A-Ride** - Call-A-Ride helps seniors to remain independent. Volunteer drivers are needed to drive seniors to doctor's appointments, grocery shopping, hair appointments, visiting friends, etc, in Greenwich. Drivers can either be responsible for a weekly three and a half hour time frame or fill in when they are available. The cars used have been purchased with donations from participating churches, such as the First Congregational Church or donations from Greenwich residents. You do not have to drive your own car. We have two retired policemen who set up our schedules and are on a two-way radio connection to help with directions. Orientation rides can help you become familiar with the process. If you would like to help, please call Bobby Littlefield at 967-3341 for further information.

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*First Congregational Church of Greenwich*

108 Sound Beach Avenue, Old Greenwich, Connecticut, 06870

203-637-1791

[www.fccog.org](http://www.fccog.org)

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Ministers: The Members of The First Congregational Church of Greenwich

Senior Pastor: David D. Young

Interim Associate Pastor: Daniel B. England

Minister of Pastoral Care: Ronald E. Halvorsen

Director of Music/Senior Organist: John Stansell

Associate Organist/Director: Terence J. Flanagan

Directors of Youth Ministries: Steve and Debbie Crawford

Director of Church School: Rosemary Lamie

Director of Membership: Ginny Breismeister

Parish Nurse: Susan Asselin

Pastors Emeriti: Thomas L. Stiers and Sally Colegrove