

Fourth Sunday in Lent

2 March 2008

10 o'clock in the morning

The Cross of the Uncrowded Way:



Difficult Disciplines of Discipleship

Welcome to this service of worship at First Congregational Church as we continue our Lenten Sermon Series **The Cross of the Uncrowded Way: Difficult Disciplines of Discipleship**. Today we explore the discipline of submission and struggle to find ways to live out our faith in these words of Martin Luther:

“A Christian person is the most free Lord of all, and subject to none; a Christian person is the most dutiful servant of all, and subject to everyone.”

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

If You But Trust in God to Guide You, BWV 647

Terence J. Flanagan, organ
Johann Sebastian Bach

CALL TO COMMUNITY

Please sign and pass the red book.

Rev. Daniel B. England

PRAISING GOD

CHORAL INTROIT

Lead me, Lord

Lead me, Lord, lead me in your righteousness,
make your way plain before my face.

For it is you, Lord, you, Lord, only, that makes me to dwell in safety.

(Psalms 5: 8, 4: 9)

The Cherub and Chancel Choirs
Samuel Sebastian Wesley

CALL TO WORSHIP

***‡OPENING HYMN AND PROCESSION**

Awake, Awake to Love and Work

Pilgrim Hymnal 34

OPENING PRAYER

We come before you today, O God,
to listen,
to sing,
to pray,
to search,
to grow.

As we do, may your Spirit
reach out and embrace us where we are,
enhancing,
renewing,
and empowering our lives,
That we may become symbols of your love
in this world. Amen.

CONFESSING TO GOD

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

O God, our God, we confess that we have not always lived
for you.

You have invited us into new life, yet we have closed our
eyes and ears and hearts against that invitation.

You have offered us your help, but we have chosen our own path
in neglect of Christ's way.

You have called us to the ministry of reconciliation, yet we often
find ourselves tempted to turn away from others.

You have challenged us to a life of generosity and service,
but many times we would rather keep to ourselves.

Forgive us in this time of honesty, for living as island people
in a world of connectedness.

Release us from the bonds of self-sufficiency, for we would be
joined together with you in a renewed openness to your love
and energized this week by the empowering presence of
Christ in whose name we pray. 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

Pat Larrabee

Acts 5: 27-32

When they had brought them, they had them stand before the council. The high priest questioned them, saying, "We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and you are determined to bring this man's blood on us." But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than any human authority. The God of our ancestors raised up Jesus, whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior that he might give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him."

ANTHEM

The Youth Choir; Carolyn Paulus, director

Slow Down

Edwin T. Childs

Slow down and see Jesus.

Slow down and see the Lord face to face.

Slow down, oh foolish one with eyes so blinded, and see His face.

Slow down and hear His words, soft and clear.

Slow down the noise that crowds out the Saviour's speaking.

Slow down and hear His voice.

Slow down and feel Jesus.

His hands and feet were wounded for you.

Slow down, you troubled soul and busy mind, and feel the peace
that He gives.

(adapted from Luke 24: 13-41)

SECOND LESSON

Mark 8: 34-38

He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

*‡HYMN

Beneath the Cross of Jesus

Pilgrim Hymnal 160

As the hymn begins, the Sixth Grade and Pastors' Class leave for their classes.

SERMON

The Way of the Yield Sign
(Submission)

Dr. David D. Young

RESPONDING TO GOD

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

*Leader: The wind bloweth where it listeth --
so is everyone that is born of the spirit.*

*People: And the light shineth in the darkness
and the darkness comprehended it not.*

*Leader: Like wind---in it, with it, of it. Of it just like a sail, so light
and strong that, even when it is bent flat,
it gathers all the power of the wind,
without hampering its course.*

*People: Like light---in light, lit through by light,
transformed into light,
like the lens which disappears in the light it focuses.*

*Leader: Like wind. Like light.
Just this---on these expanses, on these heights.*

*People: Bless your uneasiness as a sign that
there is still life within you.*

Leader: I don't know who – or what – put the question, I don't know when it was put. I don't even remember answering.

People: But at some moment I did answer Yes to Someone - or Something – and from that hour I was certain that existence is meaningful, and that, therefore, my life, in self-surrender, had a goal.

Dag Hammarskjöld, Markings

***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 OFFERING

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

*The Chancel Choir
Paul Hofreiter*

He Leadeth Me

He leadeth me, O blessed thought!
Oh, words with heavenly comfort fraught!
Whate'er I do, where'er I be,
Still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me.

Sometimes mid scenes of deepest gloom,
Sometimes where Eden's flowers bloom,
By waters calm o'er troubled sea,
Still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me.

He leadeth me, he leadeth me.
By his own hand he leadeth me.
His faithful follower I would be,
For by his hand he leadeth me.

Lord, I would clasp thy hand in mine,
Nor ever murmur nor repine.
Content whatever lot I see,
Since 'tis my God that leadeth me.

And when my task on earth is done,
When by thy grace the victory's won,
E'en death's cold wave I will not flee,
Since God through Jordan leadeth me.

***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

SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER (seated)

Prayer of Consecration

Serving of the Bread and Cup

In the tradition of our church, let us partake of the bread as it is served, remembering our individual uniqueness in the eyes of God and our diversity within the Body of Christ. Let us hold the cup until all have been served, remembering our oneness with God and our unity in the Body of Christ.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Since, dear God, in this place, at this table, we have touched, we have tasted, and we have heard the signs of your love for us, grant that we may go away from this house filled with our love for you and overflowing with your love for those who are around us and who share our lives. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior, who taught us to pray saying...

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.

GOING FORTH TO SERVE GOD

*CLOSING HYMN AND PROCESSION

Blessed Assurance

New Century Hymnal 473

*CLOSING SENTENCES

*Leader: What is your only comfort, in life
and in death?*

People: That I belong - - body and soul,
in life and in death - - not to myself
but to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ.

*Leader: We know that in everything God works
for good with those who love him,
who are called according to his purpose.*

People: It is God who... has put his seal upon
us and given us his Spirit in our
hearts as a guarantee.

The Heidelberg Catechism/Romans 8: 28; II Corinthians 1: 22, 23

***BENEDICTION**

***BENEDICTION RESPONSE**

POSTLUDE

If You But Trust in God to Guide You, BWV 642 *J. S. Bach*

The flowers in the Meetinghouse are given in loving memory of Arnold and Sally Anderson by their daughter Sandra Anderson Boles and family.

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, where a bulletin can be found as well as a link to the live broadcast. Previous sermons can be found there as well.

Calendar

TODAY

The **Church School** classes have a choice of lessons for the next two weeks. Some will follow the curriculum and others will focus on the events of Holy Week. The 3rd graders and their parents enjoyed our annual Bible Breakfast this morning which culminated in a spirited game of Bible Jeopardy. Please Note: Egg Saturday (March 15) this year is the day before Palm Sunday (not Easter).

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.

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 Dan England this morning, 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. **We will not meet this Tuesday, March 4, but please join us the following Sunday.**

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

NEWS AND NOTICES

Ushers - There will be a meeting for all ushers in the Meetinghouse after conclusion of the worship service on Sunday, March 9. Anyone interested in becoming an usher is cordially invited to attend! We will discuss the recent changes in the worship service, how this affects us, and also provide a quick overview of procedures for anyone new. Please see Paul Pacent if you have any questions.

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, natural 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 the Auditorium 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.

Beginning the second week of March, we will start an **audio Bible study** that will be available on the church's website. The audio Bible study will be a commentary on the Letter of Paul to the Romans and will be led by Dan England. Here's how it will work:

Beginning on or about March 14 (technical gremlins demand we say "on or about") a segment about Romans will be posted on a special page on the church's website. Each segment will be in "bite sized" fifteen minute episodes that will be listed in the order that they are recorded. By clicking on the link, you can listen to the segment on your computer. If you prefer, you can download the segment onto your MP3 player or similar device.

If you don't have a computer or if you are unable to download the segments, we will make CDs of the segments (or multiple segments, depending on how they roll out) for you. We'd like to limit these to people who really need them because there is some expense and trouble involved in producing them. Nevertheless, the CDs will be available in the church office the Sunday following the appearance of segment(s) on the website. However, if you plan to get a disk, you must register your request with Marge York at yormar@sbcglobal.net or by calling her at 637-4207. (Thanks Marge!) Bob Small and Pat Larrabee are handling other aspects

of this production. (Thanks Bob, thanks Pat!) CD reservations by March 10 please.

CPR Training

Classes are forming for Saturdays March 29 or April 5, from 9 am to 11:30 am. The course, which includes the use of our automatic external defibrillator AED, is for those in need of recertification as well as those interested in becoming newly certified. A third class in the afternoon can be formed if needed. Thanks to the generosity of the Greenwich EMS, and to First Congregational Church for covering the reduced fees, we can offer the classes at no cost to the participants. Please contact Sue Asselin, Parish Nurse at extension 21 to register.

Save the Date and Time: Tuesday, April 8, 8 am - 5:30 pm: Join the Women's Ministries luxury bus trip, *Almost All of the Best of the City of Hartford, Part II*, with a tour of the exhibit *Impressionism by the Sea* at the Hartford Atheneum, a tour of one of the oldest statehouses in the nation (1796), a beautiful building designed by Charles Bulfinch in downtown Hartford; and lunch at Hartford's best restaurant, Max Downtown, with new and old friends and our favorite bus driver. It is the kind of trip that the Women's Ministries has come to expect; all for \$56.00.

Scholarship funds are available. Please see David Young or Ginny Breismeister.

A sign-up sheet is in the office. Please make checks payable to the Women's Ministries. The deadline for reservations is Friday, March 21.

The Lenten Project 2008 Needs Your Contributions! This year we complete our three-year commitment to address the basic human needs of food and shelter, both in our local community and at H.O.M.E. Co-op in rural Maine. The past two years have seen our participation and contributions rise dramatically in response to these needs. But in a challenging economy, our neighbors' needs have become much greater. Our goals for 2008 are 100% Participation and \$78,000 in contributions. Please take the time to read about the Lenten Project in the mailing which was recently sent to all members of our congregation. And, please respond by joining us in doing even more to provide shelter and warmth for the people of H.O.M.E. and nutritious foods for our hungry neighbors in Fairfield County.

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! If you've been thinking about ways to be involved at First Church but don't quite know how to get started, or, if there is something you might like to do but have not been asked, here are some opportunities for you. Contact the following people to find out what is required:

Membership Committee: Ginny Breismeister, ext. 26 or

Bob Mendelsohn, 637-5773

Parish Life:

John Leidy, 531-7938

Music Committee: John Stansell, ext. 22 or
Barbara Norrgard, 637-3703
Church School Task Force: Rosemary Lamie, ext. 20
Wellness Committee: Sue Asselin, ext. 21

Meals-On-Wheels needs drivers to deliver one day per week. Most routes take less than two hours and are less than 15 miles round trip. If you are interested in taking a spin on one of our routes with a current driver to see what it is like, please call Deborah Warfield at 869-1312.

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.

Quilt for Susie Craig

Hurrah! The quilt we stitched for Susie Craig is finished and will be displayed today and next week (March 9) in the Auditorium during coffee hour. Also on display will be two hand-quilted pillow covers for Susie made by Joyce Nye.

Thanks to all who contributed their time and talent. I am sure Susie will be very happy to receive this quilt.

Inge Thalheim

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: 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