

*Old Greenwich,
Connecticut*

THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH OF GREENWICH

*United Church
of Christ*

Founded in 1665

The Fifth Sunday of Easter

Confirmation Sunday

22 May 2011

10 o'clock in the morning



2011 Confirmation Class Spring Retreat

We welcome you to this very special service of Confirmation at First Congregational Church of Greenwich as thirty-four young people join our fellowship. We hope it inspires your faith and strengthens your loyalty as you worship and witness this significant moment in the life of these young people and this Body of Christ.

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

Please silence all cell phones and other electronic devices.

*All who are able please stand

‡Seating of latecomers

PRELUDE

Trumpet Minuet

Dr. Craig Scott Symons, organ

Alfred Hollins

CALL TO COMMUNITY

Please sign and pass the red book.

Dr. David D. Young

PRAISING GOD

CALL TO WORSHIP

Natalie Anibal:

I sense God in kindness, forgiveness and understanding...when I feel supported or understood. God brings people together to help each other, to help those in need.

People:

God who helps us, be with us now.

Jeff Aselin:

I believe that God is everywhere. God does not judge us but accepts us as we are. Everyone has their own personal relationship with God.

People:

God known to us in many ways, be with us now.

Sophie Thalheim:

I believe God can be any race. Everybody should be able to identify themselves within God.

People:

God in whom we are reflected, be with us now.

Austin Cantwell:

God has many qualities. One is that God is all-loving. I see God at work when there is light at the end of a tragedy...like the Haiti earthquake, it was very bad but at the end, the world united to help people that needed it most.

People:

God of love and unity, be with us now.

Peter Russell:

God also needs us. God needs us to carry out God's work in the world. God needs us to fill the world with light.

People:

God who calls us, show us the way.

Natalie, Jeff, Sophie, Austin and Peter:

God, you know us, you love us and you reveal yourself to us in many different ways. Be with us now in this time of worship. Amen.

***‡OPENING HYMN AND PROCESSION**

Holy Spirit, Come, Confirm Us

New Century (black) Hymnal 264

OPENING PRAYER

Will Dempsey

God, through the teaching of Jesus we hope to represent your best intentions by caring for one another and for creating the world you would like. We are a friendly, open community gathered to worship you. We are people who are experiencing hard times and problems, but here we are among friends. God we ask that this time together be a time of worship, of support and of new understandings of you. Amen.

CONFESSING TO GOD

CALL TO CONFESSION

Lisa Ghaffari:

In this time, let us recognize that we live in a less-than-perfect world. There are choices that we make as humans that are regrettable.

Sin, evil and suffering are around us and we learn at an early age the sins that humans can commit. We do wrong, but we are just making mistakes. Most of these mistakes, these sins, are regretted.

Maddie Graham:

When a tragedy happens, many people question God's presence, we may even blame it on God. However, when evil happens in the world, it makes us that much happier to see the good.

Trevor Hanson:

But sin is a difficult concept to grasp. We can do wrong because of troubled lives, addictions, and emotional problems. Horrible things even happen to great people. We must recognize suffering and pray for our world.

Thomas Ng-Yow:

We commit wrong in the world, often for mental or physical personal gain. God has a reason for allowing suffering, but it is hard to understand. We respond to this suffering with anger, depression, confusion and even acceptance.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (*In Unison*)

God, at times heaven seems as if a thin veil separates it from us. At other times, heaven seems light years away. When we see suffering, when we suffer from evil ourselves, we wonder how heaven could exist at all. We are a people who want to always feel whole and happy, however, at times we find ourselves broken and downtrodden. In these times, remind us that you are with us. In these times, remind us of the love you have for us and for this world. In times of joy and sorrow, in times when the journey is easy and those times when it is difficult, remind us of your prayer:

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.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Thomas Ng-Yow:

God loves us. God forgives evil and sin and teaches us that we should too.

Trevor Hanson:

So, yes, we pray for the world. But, throughout history we hear stories of people helping others through crisis. We can do the same.

Maddie Graham:

Instead of blaming God for our struggles, we should fight through our sadness.

Lisa Ghaffari:

There are places all over the world in need of help. We can respond to this need.

Taylor Ingraham:

Jesus was a caring, kind, compassionate man who spread a new way of thinking and loved everyone. He was God's son and came to teach us how to live.

Jennifer Whitehill:

We are asked to respond, to believe, to love, to accept one another.

God is with us in the world to guide us and help us through our lives. God forgives us.

We know that we are forgiven because we have experienced it through the spirit of God and because God has reminded us...in Jesus Christ we are forgiven, restored and made new. Amen.

‡ CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.

(At this time, the Church School children and teachers will leave for their classrooms. Children in second grade and older will leave independently. Children in kindergarten and first grade will meet their teachers at the back of the Meetinghouse (narthex) and will go to their classrooms as a group. Note to fifth graders - please go to Room 303 upstairs for today's class.)

HEARING GOD'S WORD

INTRODUCTION TO THE SCRIPTURE READING:

James DeFazio:

The Bible is like other books in some ways, and unlike other books as well. The Bible is a holy book that contains stories about God and Jesus Christ. It is also a very inspiring book and will always be in our lives. The focus and intent of the Bible is to tell and share stories about God and Jesus Christ.

Alex Mair:

The Bible helps us to understand God before and after Jesus Christ. It is the most important book to the Christian faith and can guide us like no other written source. I believe the intent of the Bible is to show us how to live our lives. It helps us understand what God expects of us.

Marisa Goff:

The Bible was meant to be a book to teach us how to be good people, and to nurture our faith in God. I believe that the majority of the stories, such as that of Genesis and the fish and bread, are mythical and should not be taken literally. Yet, they are still effective in expressing the main idea or the "So What?" of the Bible. They are meant to be lessons for our lives. Hear then this lesson:

SCRIPTURE READING

Ashton Vines

John 1:43-51

The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth." Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said of him, "Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!" Nathanael asked him, "Where did you get to know me?" Jesus answered, "I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you." Nathanael replied, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" Jesus answered, "Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these." And he said to him, "Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

SCRIPTURE ANTHEM

O Love, How Deep

The Chancel Choir
Eric Thiman

O love, how deep, how broad, how high, How passing thought and fantasy; that God, the Son of God, should take our mortal form for mortals' sake!

For us he prayed; for us he taught; for us his daily works he wrought; by words and signs and actions thus still seeking not himself, but us.

For us to wicked men betrayed, scourged, mocked, in purple robe arrayed, he bore the shameful cross and death, for us at length gave up his breath.

For us he rose from death again; for us he went on high to reign; for us he sent his Spirit here, to guide, to strengthen and to cheer.

*To him whose boundless love has won salvation for us through his Son, to God the Father, glory be both now and through eternity.
Amen.*

SERMON:

"A Tale of Three Cities"

Rev. Susan J. Murtha with Shaw Speer, Shira Rieke, and Ellie Dempsey

RESPONDING TO GOD

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Laura Miller:

I have sometimes doubted God. Going through confirmation I realize that God will always be with me. I also think that, really instead of doubting God, I have doubted myself. As I believe in God I should also believe in myself.

Trevor Ingraham:

God is always around, through the Holy Spirit. My family prays at night for the next day to be good ...and for us to bring joy to one another. I think this is an experience of the Holy Spirit, feeling joy, feeling different.

Jackson Jacoby:

I cannot remember a time when I didn't believe in God. God is a force and also a human. God is with us even if we don't sense or feel it.

Chris Keller:

I believe that God came to earth as Jesus Christ and ascended into heaven. Today, he is above us and in a spiritual form everywhere around us. God is accepting of everyone, no matter what the person has committed in the past.

Olivia Hartwell:

God is a spirit that exists in all people and is the spirit of goodness. God is a metaphysical representation of good, watching over us almost like a conscience, telling us the correct thing to do.

Tommy Heidt:

I believe that we are all created from God and we are all children of God. We should follow his morals and live by those in our lives. The most important way to do this is being respectful of God and each other.

Natasha Sibirzeff:

I believe in a higher power or spirit. This spirit is with you no matter if you are rich or poor. It sees everyone the same.

Colin Ingraham:

God is with us, a sense of comfort especially when we are feeling alone. When we feel alone, the Holy Spirit sort of touches us on the shoulder and gives us a sense of warmth reminding us that God is there.

People:

When we find ourselves at a crossroad in our journey, we are aware that our faith shifts. Our faith becomes an interpretation of that moment. God may appear to us as the steadfast being God has always been or God may show up in a way that is completely unexpected. At that time, we may recognize God immediately and clearly, or we may find ourselves questioning where God may be. In all of this, we know that God is indeed present, waiting to respond to us in a way that will allow our lives to be made new. Amen.

***GLORIA**

New Century (black) 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 OFFERING

Kevin Goggins:

It is amazing how a homeless man can come into this church just wearing rags and yet we treat him like he is no different from the wealthy businessman. Everyone is welcome to come before God. When we share our gifts with others, it reminds them that they are a part of our community.

Lindsay Erickson:

Our Youth trip to Belize transformed me into a better person as I had the satisfaction of helping people through our work and our contributions to them. I saw firsthand how our gifts have helped make others' lives easier.

Ben Wurst:

I think the most valuable aspect of the church is the community service we provide in the way of money and members' time. It brings the church members together and shows that we care about the world.

God shares gifts with all people all over the world. As we have received gifts in abundance, let us share our gifts with others. The morning offering will be received.

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

You Are One in Christ Jesus

The Chancel Choir

Gerre Hancock

For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 3: 27-28

***DOXOLOGY**

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below; Alleluia, Alleluia!
Praise God for all that love has done;
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!*

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

Johnny Simmons

God you are mysterious and holy. You bring us happiness through the gifts you have shared with us. Thank you for the opportunity to share these gifts with others. In Your name we pray. Amen.

RITE OF CONFIRMATION

Rev. Mark Montgomery, Dr. David D. Young, Rev. Susan J. Murtha

Opening Words

Rick Woodman

Roll Call of Candidates

Lesley Schless, Senior Deacon

(Candidates will stand as their names are called.)

Commitment of Confirmands and Congregation

Pastor: Do you desire to affirm your baptism into the faith and family of Jesus Christ? If so, please answer, "I do."

Confirmands: I do.

Pastor: Will you love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength and your neighbor as yourself? If so, please answer, "I will."

Confirmands: I will.

Pastor: Do you promise, according to the grace given you, to grow in the Christian faith, to share regularly in the worship of God, to participate in the life and mission of this church as it serves this community and the world, and to live with us in the bonds of Christian fellowship? If so, please answer, "I promise with the help of God."

Confirmands: I promise with the help of God.

Pastor: Brothers and sisters of this household of faith, we commend to your love these Confirmands who we receive as members of the family of God. Will you support them as they continue on their journey of faith and share in our church life? If so, please say, "We will."

Congregation: We will.

Declaration of Membership

Prayer of Confirmation (*seated*)

Laying on of Hands

Presentation of the Jerusalem Crosses

Affirmation of Support

GOING FORTH TO SERVE GOD

***CLOSING HYMN AND PROCESSION**

O Jesus, I Have Promised

Pilgrim (red) Hymnal 218

***CLOSING SENTENCES**

Melanie Pfetsch:

God is a guardian figure who knows me, accepts me and will always forgive me.

People:

As known, accepted and forgiven people, we go forth to share what we know about God with the world.

Jessie Vissicchio:

When we struggle to find our connection with God, we are reminded that we are surrounded by the Holy Spirit...that the Holy Spirit is within us...that all around us God seeks to connect with us.

People:

We hope that this week, we may find a renewed connection with God.

James Graham:

In this place, we have learned to be followers of God. In this place, we have found a connection with God, lifted up our prayers and given thanks.

People:

May we find the courage to be God's followers in all that we do.

Kelly Dodd:

God is always around, and especially present during times of great need. At some points God shows us miracles in our lives and recognizing these are critical for making us better people.

People:

God may our eyes be open to the miracles around us.

***BENEDICTION**

***BENEDICTION RESPONSE**

POSTLUDE

Christ the Life of All the Living

Anton Leopold

The 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.

We have **child care for babies and toddlers** every Sunday. Your children are always welcome for the entire service or for a respite time if needed. Please see an usher if you need directions.

The 10:00 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. A bulletin can be found there as well as a link to the live broadcast. Previous sermons may also be found there.

Confirmation Class 2011

Natalie Claire Anibal
Jeffrey Brooks Aselin
Austin Danforth Cantwell
James Freeman DeFazio
Helen Alison Dempsey
William Dunham Dempsey
Kelly Levering Dodd
Lindsay Baines Erickson
Lisa Christine Ghaffari
Marisa Anne Goff
Kevin Peter Goggins
James Campbell Graham
Madeleine Helena Graham
Trevor Holland Hanson
Olivia Jane Hartwell
Thomas Clark Heidt
Taylor Nicole Ingraham

Trevor Robert Ingraham
Colin Robert Ingraham
Jackson Maxwell Joseph Jacoby
Christopher Hout Keller
Alexander Martin Mair
Laura Adams Miller
Thomas David Ng-Yow
Melanie Emma Pfetsch
Shira Helen Rieke
Peter James Russell
Eva Natasha Sibirzeff
John Winfield Simmons
Shaw Edward Speer
Sophie M. Thalheim
Jessica Rose Vissicchio
Jennifer Ames Whitehill
William Benjamin Wurst

Calendar

TODAY

Church School

Classes will be held today but not next Sunday because of the Memorial Day weekend. Then we have classes on June 5 followed by Church School Recognition Sunday when our children will participate fully in worship. If you are thinking about teaching Church School next year, now is the perfect time to ask questions and sign up. There will be an easel displayed during Coffee Hour.

Youth Choir

Youth Choir will have rehearsal today from 11:15 am to 12:30 pm in the Choir Room.

Parish Nurse

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

Bible Study

While Bible Study class will meet today at its normal time, there will be no class next Sunday, May 29 due to Memorial Day Weekend.

Youth Ministry

There is no JPF or SPF today.

THIS WEEK

Book Discussion Group

Hats Off!, the popular women's book discussion group has finished for the season. A luncheon will be held at Jean Watkins' house this *Thursday, May 26*.

NEWS AND NOTICES

International Mission Team – School Supplies Needed by June 5

The International Mission Team is returning to Guatemala to build a home with Common Hope from June 12 to June 18. *“Common*

Hope promotes hope and opportunity in Guatemala, partnering with children, families, and communities who want to participate in a process of development to improve their lives through education, health care, and housing.” - Commonhope.org mission statement. In addition to building a home, we will bring down school supplies. We will be collecting the school supplies in the church office and in the auditorium during coffee hour until June 5. Please help the children in Guatemala by donating the following needed items: **black/blue/red pens, pencils, erasers, sharpeners, glue bottles, 12-pack colored pencils, children’s scissors, rulers, watercolors, scientific calculators, compasses, protractors. Please no notebooks, paper, or folders or other items needed at this time.** Any questions please call Kathy Fraser at 203-637-1060 or email her at kathyfraser1@gmail.com.

News from The Rummage Room

Manager Maria’s Wish List – Father’s Day ties, shirts, golf clubs, picture frames, and gift type items. Handbags, shoes, jewelry, bric-a-brac, bikes for all ages. A Radio Flyer Red Rocket with push buttons. Bridal dresses and all things for June brides. Clothing for women and children.

The appeal for spring and summer clothing is sounding like a broken record but The Rummage Room seriously needs your donated clothing, jewelry, and bric-a-brac for those customers wishing to buy. And those organizations who wish for funding in order to give to their women and children’s projects seriously need the monetary help provided from your donations. Winter doesn’t seem to want to go away which means our patrons are not going through their closets yet. Please try and find a few minutes this next week to tackle your closets. Donation hours are 9:30 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday, and 9:30 am to 12:30 pm on Saturday. Thank you.

It is the aim of The Rummage Room to bring the joy of giving to those in need which means we all work together for the betterment of all people. Our fellowship is based on a common passion to serve the world with loving kindness, and to walk humbly with God in peace.

Food Collection

A reminder that the Food Collection Barrel remains in the back of the Meetinghouse, so please contribute food each week. Adding a

few items to your weekly grocery store visit will make a significant difference at Neighbor to Neighbor. Items currently in need are:

- Cereal
- Oatmeal
- Pasta Sauce
- Dried Beans
- 100% Juice
- Canned Tomatoes
- Peanut Butter (no larger than 28 oz., please)
- Jelly

If you've forgotten your food items this morning, feel free to email fccoghungermission@gmail.com with your contact information and someone will pick up the food from your home and deliver to the Church for Neighbor to Neighbor.

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The 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: Rev. Dr. David D. Young

Associate Pastor for Youth Ministry: Rev. Mark D. Montgomery

Associate Pastor for Christian Education: Rev. Susan J. Murtha

Minister of Communication and Adult Education: Rev. Daniel B. England

Minister of Pastoral Care: Rev. Avery C. Manchester

Director of Music: Dr. Craig Scott Symons

Director of Church School: Rosemary Lamie

Director of Membership: Ginny Breismeister

Director of Publications: Barbara Wilkov

Parish Nurse: Susan Asselin, RN

Pastors Emeriti: Rev. Dr. Thomas L. Stiers and Rev. Sally Colegrove

Director of Music Emeritus: Dr. John Stansell