



Senior Minister's March Reflection

Lent is a time to request God's presence to form peace in our chaotic life. It calls to mind an old Spiritual song – “Come by Here, My Lord”. I sang this during a worship service at a local Baptist church. “God in your justice and mercy and love, come by here.” The words ring out a sophisticated Christian theology. When we sang this Spiritual during a Black History Month celebration I received a warm glow around me that God comes to meet us where we are. That God is Lord, and that our lived experience of God is that God responds. This is indeed the Christian life, expressed right here in this Spiritual.

In addition, the call to God to come by is a reminder that we as spiritual people, we who follow Jesus, must be present to the suffering and realities of our brothers and sisters. We do well to remember that we are the image and likeness of God. We are God's presence in the world, and we need to come by the suffering and pain of others. What we do to the least, we do to God.

Many of us learned a similar children's chorus, “Come into my heart, Lord Jesus. Come in today, come in to stay. “Similarly, the Spiritual of the day, at times called Kumbaya, reveals an expectant confidence,

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that God will come by and address the issues of the day. There is nothing more radical than inviting God to come by and be near us.

The faith of the slaves was strong enough for them to invite God into their horrible situation. When they were crying, dying, and trying to survive day to day, still they sought God. In this sense, the slaves demonstrated a powerful grasp of incarnational theology: God is the God who comes by “here”.

My mother often got upset if I invited friends over without advanced warning, because in her mind, she didn’t have time to prepare the house properly. The subversive nature of this Spiritual is this: if our society creates conditions of inhumanity, squalor, and suffering, then that is the reality into which Jesus will be invited to stay. Jesus meets us where we are.

Blessings,
Rev. Dennis



March

Happy Birthday to the following Church Members!

David Bruno 3/3
Jean Barker 3/4
John Gordon 3/5
Stacy Brites 3/8
Ralph Crouse 3/9
Patricia Perillo 3/11
Anne Tyskewicz-Erwin 3/11
Dana Silva 3/11
Katherine Kazimer 3/13
Dennis McGuire 3/15
Phyllis Anderson 3/18



James Trenske 3/19
Abigayle Trenske 3/20
Maria Rosa Arias 3/21
George Gardner 3/22
Harold Elwell 3/24
Kathryn St. George 3/24
Adrian Stephenson 3/24
Robert Mitchell 3/27
Miller Kane 3/27
Nora Berrohes 3/29



Food Pantry
Donations Needed

GWIM FOOD BANK DONATIONS

Peanut Butter & Jelly, Canned Meats, Cold Cereal, Mac & Cheese, Pasta & Pasta Sauce,

Juice, tuna, canned soups-stews-chili, canned fruits, canned vegetables, beans (canned or dried), rice pouches, etc.

Other donations will be welcomed, but these will be the main focus. The food basket will be available each week in the Narthex.

Added needed for GWIM to prepare meals are: chili powder, boxed mashed potatoes, garlic powder and Lawrys Seasoned salt.



WISH LIST FOR SAFE HAVEN SHELTER

- ◆ Shampoo
- ◆ Body Wash
- ◆ Paper Towels
- ◆ Deodorant
- ◆ Toilet Paper
- ◆ Women's socks (new)
- ◆ Women's Body lotion
- ◆ Women's Underwear (new)
- ◆ Hair Brushes/combs
- ◆ Diapers (large & ex-large)
- ◆ Sanitary Napkins/Tampons
- ◆ Children's Socks (new)
- ◆ Children's Underwear(new)
- ◆ Baby lotion/baby wash
- ◆ Wash Cloths/ loofah's
- ◆ Gift Certificates

Safe Haven currently provides the following bilingual (English/Spanish) services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault: up to 60 days of shelter for women and their children; individual and peer group counseling; 24 hour crisis hotlines for domestic violence and sexual assault; legal advocacy information and referral; community education for adults and children; and court based family violence victim advocacy.

All information obtained through counseling remains confidential. They do not subscribe to Caller I. D. Please bring all your donations for Safe Haven on the third Sunday of the month.





NOTES FROM OUR Director of Music

As we enter the month of March, we continue our journey through Lent, as a season of reflection, prayer, and preparation. In worship, music takes on a different color during this time. It becomes more contemplative, more spacious and often more intimate.

Annual Egg Hunt will be on Saturday, March 28 from 11:00am - 1:00 pm rain or shine! We can always use some volunteers for this annual event. For more information please inquire with Stewart Crouse.

The Chosen dates are as follows: 3/4/26 & 3/18/26 at 6:00pm, weather permitting. Please bring a dish to share!

Christian Cinema will present "David" on 3/20/26 at 7:00pm. David was released in 2025, an animated story of David & Goliath! Movies are free to the general public with popcorn & soda available.

Both Handbell & Chancel Choirs will be performing on Palm Sunday & Easter Sunday, if you would like to sing with us, rehearsals are on Thursday evenings.

Bell Choir 6:30-7:30 pm
Chancel Choir 7:30pm - 8:45pm

Stewart Crouse
Director of Music



**SPRING
AHEAD**

**DAYLIGHT SAVINGS
TIME BEGINS!**

Daylight Savings Time will begin Sunday, March 8, 2026- at 2:00 a.m. Turn your clocks **AHEAD** one hour on Saturday evening March 7th.



A Request from Outreach



Our committee would like to continue with our hygiene kit Ministry, therefore we are asking the Congregation to help with donations of the following items:

Toothpaste/toothbrushes -
Deodorant - Washcloths

Hand towels - Razors for (men & women)
Pocket combs - Hairbrushes (women)
VO5 shampoo- fits nicely in freezer bags gal size
Sanitary napkins - Socks

The Outreach Committee thanks you for your continued support.

Annual Easter Egg Hunt



**Saturday, March 28, 2026
11 AM – 1 PM**

**First Congregational Church
222 West Main Street,
Waterbury
Rain or Shine!**

(games, crafts, snacks & giveaways)

Donations Welcomed!

Call 203-757-0331 for reservations!

**Church Members: Donations of candy, plastic eggs
(can be found at any dollar store) and snack items
(juice, cookies, and chips) would be appreciated!
Please drop off in the church office**



Attention Members:

If you need to have anything put into the bulletin please make sure that I receive that information before Wednesday of that given week. If you need to put something in the newsletter, please make sure that I receive it by the 15th of the month, to be put in the following month's news.

Thank you so much, Roxanne



Holy Week and Easter Services



Come Worship With Us!

Palm Sunday, March 29, 2026

8:00 am **Palm Sunday Breakfast** at
South Congregational Church
160 Piedmont Street, Waterbury CT 06706

Palm Sunday Service

10 am – Sanctuary- First Congregational Church

Maundy Thursday, April 2, 2026

Maundy Thursday Communion Service

6:00 pm – Simple Meal Clinton Hall

7:00 PM Sanctuary - First Church

Good Friday – Church Closed

Easter Sunday, April 5, 2026

Easter Sunday Sunrise, 7:00 AM

Waterbury Baptist Ministries & First Church

Will be in the Chapel

WBM – Breakfast 9:00 am in Clinton Hall

Easter Sunday Service, 10:00 AM

First Congregational Church (Sanctuary)



A Note From Our Associate Pastor

Let me begin my first contribution to our newsletter with a heartfelt and humble thank you. I am truly blessed to have this calling to pursue, and doubly so at the faith this church has

put in me to be a part of your spiritual journey. I would love to meet with anyone who wishes to talk about theirs, mine or the path of our church and its congregation. You will find me here Sunday through Thursday, with extended hours on Tuesday for our bible study at 6 PM. Please come, sit and let's get to know one another!

In spiritual journeys, we come to a pivotal time in our calendar; that of Lent. These 40 days are in commemoration of Jesus's 40 days in the wilderness before his ministry began. As was the point of his, ours isn't meant to be a time of suffering, but of connection. If we look at the crux of original sin, we see that it wasn't from trickery (though certainly Eve was deceived) but of a conscious choice that we could do a better job than God in taking care of ourselves. It was a lack of trust that broke our connection with God's blessing. That stain is the hallmark of humanity: our independence.

Indeed, it was the plan of God in creation that we should live in paradise, food ripe for the taking, walking with Him as we make our way through life. Pain and suffering were never the point, and that is something we need to look at in this season. Lent isn't giving something up for the sake of suffering, but removing something we chose for ourselves that keeps us further from our loving God.

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It is a deliberate choice to lean on Him and trust in His provision and His timing in our lives for blessings. It is also a time of temptation, just as Jesus faced at the end of his fast. Those things we love and give up give rise to temptation continually to trust in our own provisions, comforts and vanities; all things that keep us from the plans of the Lord.

Silent whispers that tell us “just one won’t hurt”, or “no one will know”. Face them head on, and realize the shackles that bind us are there of our own accord.

Take time this season, and do not choose to practice this essential act of devotion out of liturgical necessity to say you did it. Jesus warns of such behaviors (Matthew 7:5-8). Take time in prayer and thought to find something that is in the way of your relationship with God, and remove it. Get closer, begin to trust more. It may not even be something that has to be removed, maybe something is missing that needs to be added. In all we do as Christians, we need to be deliberate and act with intention. It is in those decisions that we are able to give our best fruits to a God that wants us all to live under his blessing and grace.

May your Lent season be filled with the presence, grace and love of God the Father, and Christ Jesus our Lord. I hope to see you soon.

Pastor Jay