



# FIRST WORD

July 2008

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## FROM THE PASTOR

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### *“Soul Searching”*

An article I read recently in the Science section of *The New York Times* started me thinking about the soul in general and my soul in particular. The article by Cornelia Dean was titled, “Science of the Soul? ‘I Think, Therefore I Am’ Is Losing Force.”

Dean details the challenge that evolutionary scientists are bringing to the religious concept of humans having a soul. Some scientists point to evidence that moral reasoning (one of the soul’s central attributes) is a result of physical traits that have evolved over time. In other words, what we call a soul is really combination of brain synapses firing. As the brain evolves, so does the soul.

My question to this scientific challenge of the soul’s existence is, “What do you mean by ‘soul’?”

You can’t find much about the soul in the Old or New Testaments. In Hebrew thought, there was no concept of a soul separate from the body. In the New Testament, there’s a lot of talk about spirit, but almost nothing about soul.

The truth is that Greek philosophy introduced the concept of an immortal soul as separate from the body. Platonism regarded the soul as divine and indestructible. In this view, salvation is the soul’s liberation from the body, the source of evil.

Christianity, however, affirmed the goodness of the body. While Platonists

hoped for immortality, Christians looked for the resurrection of the dead. As Christianity evolved, some theologians combined these two concepts and advocated a “resurrection of the soul.”

My own understanding of the soul is that it stands for the spiritual dimension in our lives. “Soul” is the name we give to the center of our reasoning, will and emotions. I would consider “self” and “personality” as pretty good synonyms for soul.

Therefore, I don’t believe we “have” a soul; we *are* souls. Humans are an essential unity of body, mind and spirit/soul. These different terms are simply ways to talk about different aspects of the whole person.

The issue is not whether we have souls—for everyone is a self, a person—but how we are tending to the spiritual dimension of our selves. Our souls are fed by our relationship with the One who created us, a relationship characterized by grace and love. According to the creation story in Genesis, humans became “living souls” when God breathed life into us.

Want to find your soul? Just look in a mirror. The person you see there is you—body, mind and soul—created and loved by God. So let us take good care of our soul because it is a gift from God.

*Bob*

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## SUMMER CHURCH SCHOOL BEGINS

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Our Sunday School summer program has started and will run through the month of July. We are providing a “one classroom” program for Kindergarten through grade 5. Our infant and toddler care will continue throughout the whole summer. The regular Sunday School classes will resume on September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

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## MANY THANKS FROM SUSANNE

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My heartfelt **Thanks** to our students for an awesome “Children’s Sunday” service! It not only showed off your acting talents but your knowledge of different parables, your creativity, as well as your dedication to our Sunday School/Youth Group!

**Thank You** to our teachers, for sharing your talents and time with our children, and for providing an interesting and fun environment for our Sunday School students. Your enthusiasm is inspiring!

Ernesto and Annie, **Thank You** for all your help and support throughout the year!

*Susanne Frank, CE Director*

## September Preview

### **Rally Sunday!**

Church School and  
Choir Resumes  
Sunday, September 9

### **Youth Group Pool Party!**

Sunday, September 9

### **Fall Picnic!**

Following Worship With  
Christ Church of South  
India  
Sunday, September 23

Congratulations  
Confirmands!

On Sunday, June 3, we confirmed four new members: *Parker Abbott, Spencer Dahl, Francesca Giammalva* and *Cody Nilsen*. These four youth spent nine months in confirmation training and developed their own "statements of faith" which they read during the worship service. In addition to being confirmed, *Cody Nilsen* was baptized. We are delighted to welcome these newest members of First Church!

**"DIETRICH BONHOEFFER" IS  
ADULT STUDY FOCUS**

On Mondays in July, the adult study group will be watching sections of the movie, "The Life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer" and discussing them. Bonhoeffer was a theology professor in Germany during WWII and participated in a plot against Adolph Hitler. He was executed just a few days before the Allies liberated Germany. In addition to watching the movie, we will be discussing selections from Bonhoeffer's writings. The group is open to all and meets from 1:30-2:30 p.m.

MULTIPLE MYELOMA  
RESEARCH SUPPORTED

On June 10, the youth from First Church participated in a 5K Multiple Myeloma Run for Research in New Canaan. The kids had a great time and raised \$1,050 for their efforts! First Church member Karen Andrews is a co-founder of the Multiple Myeloma Research Foundation.

**A/C Installed in  
Sanctuary/Parlor**

A new central air condition system has been installed in the sanctuary and parlor. This was done in response to a request from the Christ Church of South India congregation that worships in the sanctuary beginning at noon on Sundays. The past few years, some hot summer Sundays have been unbearable. The a/c will also extend the life of our pipe organ. "It's too hot" is no longer an excuse for missing summer worship!

**Wedding**

On June 2, Bob Walker united Nancy Pelgrift and Matt Kocian in Christian marriage. Congratulations to Nancy and Matt.

**Service set for Bus  
Cobean**

Our deepest sympathy and prayers are with Jean Cobean and her family as they grieve the death of Warren "Bus" Cobean on June 27. Bus celebrated his 84<sup>th</sup> birthday on June 26. He was a much-loved member of First Church and will be greatly missed. *A service of Thanksgiving and Remembrance for Bus will be held at First Church on Saturday, June 30, at 3 p.m.*

**New Youth Ministry  
Initiative!**

A new and expanded Christian Youth Ministry program will be launched in September. This expanded program is a response to the large number of youth in grades 6-9 in First Church.

This exciting program will involve:

- Sunday morning music and drama from the "Flood" series
- A Friday night movie and game night twice a month
- Trips to Playland, New York City and New Roc City
- Contemporary songs and artists
- A new upstairs Youth

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*"First Church of Round Hill is a Christian community, rich in heritage, open and caring, bound together by our faith."*