



# FIRST WORD

March 2008

*From the Pastor...*

### ***“The Essence of Easter”***

Easter is coming early this year—on March 23. It’s also coming during the private school Spring break, which means many of you will likely be celebrating Easter somewhere besides First Church.

No matter where you are on Easter day, you don’t have to “miss” Easter. Wherever you celebrate Easter—whether on a ski slope, a beach or in a church—the hopeful message of resurrection and new life is the same.

For Easter is not just one day of the year, but is a daily reality. Yes, Easter Sunday is filled with soaring anthems, enthusiastic alleluia’s and an uplifting message. Yet, as the Avery and March song, *Every Morning Is Easter Morning*, reminds us:

*Ev’ry morning is Easter morning*

*from now on!*

*Ev’ry day’s resurrection day, the past is over and gone!*

*Good-bye guilt, goodbye fear, good riddance! Hello, Lord, Hello, sun!*

*I am one of the Easter People!*

*My new life has begun!*

In the 4th century, St. Augustine wrote, “We are an Easter people, and alleluia is our song...” The essence of Easter is that it lives within us and is a part of all of our life.

Because Easter is a daily reality, we can live hopefully even in the face of death. Death seems like a final end to life. Easter is the good news that God has triumphed over death in its many forms. Death is not the final word about us—new life is!

Because Easter is a daily reality, we can live joyfully even in the face of disappointment, failure and suffering. Easter joy is not based on

the changing circumstances of our lives, but upon the rock-solid reality of God’s loving presence. Because God is with us in all of life—and especially in life’s dark moments—we can experience deep joy even when life goes against us.

Because Easter is a daily reality, we can live lovingly. Easter celebrates the victory of love over the forces of hatred, violence and cruelty. The cross represents the very worst humans can do: torture and kill an innocent person. Easter proclaims that love is stronger than any other force and can overcome hatred and violence.

Gerard Manley Hopkins once wrote, “Let Him Easter in us!” He was pointing to the inner reality of Easter. When the hope, joy and love of Easter become a living part of us, our everyday lives are shaped and directed this reality.

So, wherever you are, Easter is there. You are carrying the essence of Easter within yourself. Alleluia!

*Bob*

## **Holy Week Worship**

### **Palm/Passion Sunday**

March 16, 10:00 am

### **Good Friday**

March 21, 12 - 3 pm

Ecumenical Service at Christ Church, 254 E. Putnam Ave.

### **Easter Sunday**

March 23, 9:30 am and 11 am

Identical celebrations of the Resurrection  
(Childcare at both services-no church school)

## **Winter Concert a “Feast”**

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On Sunday, February 3, members of our choir offered a concert of love songs and arias called "Feast of Love." As usual, the quality of the performances was superb. A free will offering was taken to benefit the John Augustine Fund and Families in Recovery.

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### Christian Education – Holy Week

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The stories of Holy Week and Easter are important parts of our Christian faith. During the month of March our Elementary School students will hear the stories of Palm Sunday, the Last Supper, the prayer in the garden of Gethsemane, the empty tomb, and Jesus' appearance on the road to Emmaus. This unit will help the children understand what an amazing event we celebrate at Easter.

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**awaited official opening of the new Youth Room. Enjoy an extraordinary coffee hour in our brand new room!**

*Susanne Frank, CE Director*

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#### YOUTH GROUP IN MARCH

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**March 2<sup>nd</sup>** – Off-site church visit to the Journey Church in NYC. This will be followed by ice skating in Bryant Park. 8:45 am – 3 pm.

**March 28<sup>th</sup>** - Times Square Friday night service. We will be heading over to Times Square Church for their youth service. We will be sure to grab some grub beforehand (4 – 10 pm).

**March 30<sup>th</sup>** – Youth Room Opening! Please join us for coffee hour after the service that day to celebrate this occasion. It will also give you an opportunity to sponsor a child for out 30 hour famine.

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During March, the Thursday morning adult study will focus on the three great monotheistic religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. This study is open to all and meetings on Thursdays from 11:30-12:30 at the church. The group will not meet on Holy Thursday (March 20).

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### Baptism Celebrated

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On Sunday, February 3, we celebrated the sacrament of baptism for Nicolas Curiel Blanco, son of Line and Gama Blanco. Parents, godparents and congregation took vows to do their part in nurturing Nicolas in a community of faith and love.

#### Extra Gifts Needed

Our 2008 stewardship campaign, "Reaching Out in Faith," is nearing its conclusion. To date, we have received 42 pledges/gifts for \$267,595. This amount is approximately the same as we raised in pledges/gifts in 2007. The stewardship campaign is the principle source of funding. A secondary source of funding we rely on is the rental income from the parsonage and an upstairs, approximately \$80,000. Unfortunately, this source of funding has been significantly reduced due to a new pastor and family living in the parsonage beginning in July and Just Wee Two needing one classroom instead of two.

The Finance Committee's plans for dealing with this deficit are: (1) ask families who can to increase their financial support of the church, (2) seek two large gifts of \$20-25,000, (3) delay making Outreach allocations of \$50,000 until late in the year, (4) if needed, ask the Trustees to allocate funds from the Endowment to help close the gap. *If you can help, please contact our Stewardship Chair. José Morales: iose.t.morales@accenture.com or call the church office.*

**Come join us on March 30<sup>th</sup> for a special celebration of the long**

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**"World Religions"  
Focus of Study**

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Daisy Melo, Youth Director  
Annie Callahan, Secretary  
Sandy Regan, Financial Secretary  
Ernesto Damm, Property Manager

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