

Press Release

Rev. Laney to Address The Da Vinci Code

May 21, 2006

Amidst the mounting anticipation and controversy surrounding the release of *The Da Vinci Code* in theaters, Reverend Matthew Laney of First Congregation Church will explore the best-selling novel's positive, negative, and historically dubious points on May 21st at 10:30 AM during the morning worship service.

The best-selling novel tells of an allegedly suppressed gnostic tradition that Jesus and Mary Magdalene were married, the early church invented the divinity of Christ in order to secure power (leading to the persecution of Mary), and consequently the gnostics revered Mary's body as the holy grail, a relic of the sacred feminine.

In light of the novel's claims, Rev. Laney acknowledges that Brown appeals to the concerns of many in light of recent church scandals, archaeological finds, and the patriarchal nature of the church. Nevertheless, Laney is concerned that Brown has misrepresented numerous groups and historical points.

In expressing his goal for the lecture, Rev. Laney commented, "I hope people will have a better understanding of why this book is so popular, it's legitimate qualms with the dark side of religion and the church, and why the book is not very trustworthy historically. I also want to affirm the book's critique of the church, while proposing solutions which are far more hopeful than the where *The Da Vinci Code* takes the reader."

First Congregational Church is located on Historic 7A, Main Street, in Manchester Village across from the Equinox Hotel. All inquiries may be directed to Beverly at 362-2709 or fstcongo@adelphia.net.

First Congregational Church is a vibrant active, spirit-filled community of thinking disciples who offer strong opportunities for believers, questioners and questioning believers to grow spiritually, worship and serve others in God's name.