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First Congregational Church
of Woodstock _____

*Declaring, "Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today,
and forever." Hebrews 13:8*

*December 3rd, 2023
The First Sunday in Advent*

The Order of Morning Worship

December 3rd, 2023

The First Sunday in Advent

Ten-thirty

Welcome & Announcements

Elder Steve Briggs

Prelude & Silent Prayer

The Advent Reading

Cora Koop and Anne Koop

Leader: Come, *let us light the first Advent Candle!*

Family: We can't wait to see Jesus who is coming back for us!

Leader: How do candles point us to Jesus who is *the Light of the World?*

Family: Jesus said, "I am the Light of the world. He who follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the Light of Life." (John 8:12)

Leader: What is the promise God has given to His people?

Family: The promise was first given by God that a child born of the woman would deliver us from sin and death.

Leader: Who is this promised Deliverer?

Family: Our Deliverer, Jesus, who is Messiah, the anointed One, came just as He promised. (John 4:25-26)

Leader: What else did Messiah promise?

Family: Jesus promised that He will return for us and save all who trust in Him as true Messiah. (John 14:1-7)

Leader: Hebrews 6:13-20

For when *God made a promise to Abraham*, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself, saying, "Surely I will bless you and multiply you." And thus Abraham, having patiently waited, obtained the promise. For people swear by something greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. *So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath*, so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us. *We have this as a sure and*

steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

Family: Thanks be to God.

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| ❖ Call to Worship | Psalm 8:1-2 | Elder |
| ❖ Hymn of Exultation #194 | <i>O Come, O Come, Emmanuel</i> | Congregation |
| Scriptural Call to Repentance | Isaiah 30:15b, 18 | Elder |
| Prayer of Collective Confession | Psalm 51 | Congregation |
| <p>Have mercy on us, O God, according to Your steadfast love; according to Your abundant mercy blot out our transgressions. Wash us thoroughly from our iniquity, and cleanse us from our sin! For we know our transgressions, and our sin is ever before us. Against You, You only, have we sinned and done what is evil in Your sight, so that You may be justified in Your words and blameless in Your judgment.</p> | | |
| <p>Silent Reflection and Confession</p> | | |
| Proclamation of Forgiveness | Hebrews 2:18 | Elder |
| Missions Moment | | Teen Challenge Men |
| Pastoral Prayer | | Pastor Doug Warren |
| Offering | (collected from back to front) | Congregation |
| ❖ Scripture Reading | Numbers 6:22-27 | Elder |
| ❖ Hymn of Reflection #216 | <i>Infant Holy, Infant Lowly</i> | Congregation |
| The Sermon | Luke 1:5-25 | Pastor |
| <p><i>“The Gospel Comes to Zechariah & Elisabeth”</i></p> | | |
| ❖ Hymn of Response #196 | <i>Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus</i> | Congregation |
| Communion | | Congregation |
| ❖ Communion Hymn #195 | <i>Joy to the World</i> | Congregation |
| ❖ Benediction | Hebrews 13:20-21 | Pastor |

The Congregation may be seated after the Benediction for silent prayer.

Postlude

~~ Organist: Jonathan Denham ~~

~~ Please ensure cell phones are off ~~

Prelude: Wake, Awake, for Night is Flying (Bach)

Offertory: Gratitude (Lake)--performed by Teen Challenge

Postlude: Joy to the World (Lasky)

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**Save the Date!**

**Today! Sunday, December 3** — Lunch with Teen Challenge Men

**Friday, December 8-Saturday, December 9** — Wassail Weekend

Friday, 4:30 & 5:30 pm — FCCW Building & History Tours

Friday, 5:00 pm — Organ Concert

Saturday, 11:00 am-2:00 pm — Hot Wassail and DIY s'mores on the lawn

Saturday, 2:00 pm — Wassail Parade Watch Party

Saturday, 3:00 pm — The Ten of NYC Concert

**Sunday, December 24** — 5:00 pm Candlelight Christmas Eve Service

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Teen Challenge Vermont

Today we have the privilege of hearing from the Teen Challenge Men, both in the worship service and at a pizza lunch after the coffee hour.

The men also have some woodworking projects that they have done for sale. If you are looking for that perfect Christmas gift, help the men out by buying one of the wood crafts they have done in their woodworking shop!

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**Young Adult Fellowship Group will meet tonight  
at 6 pm in the church library.**  
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## Wassail Weekend

If you'd like to help with Wassail drinks and s'mores on the FCCW front lawn on Saturday, Dec 9th from 11am-2pm or with handing out tickets for The Ten concert at 3:00 please contact Keri Bristow at [kerilynbristow@gmail.com](mailto:kerilynbristow@gmail.com) or (603) 359-3948.

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Christmas Poinsettias

Poinsettias always add to the festive color of Christmas and can be given as a memorial to a loved one and taken home after the Christmas Eve Service. To order a 6" red or white Poinsettia, contact Christine Morton or Alison Briggs before December 14, 2023. The cost for each Poinsettia will be \$10. Please remember to make your check out to FCCW.

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## Advent and Christmas Devotional Booklet

Today marks the beginning of the Advent season, and for the next several weeks we will be using the Advent and Christmas booklet for daily devotions rather than the weekly Taking Gathered Worship home. Be sure to pick up your copy from the back table!

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Christmas Eve Service

This year our traditional Christmas Eve Candlelight Service will be held on Sunday, December 24 at 5:00 pm. Pick up a few of the invitations on the back table and invite your friends and family to join you as we celebrate Christ's birth.

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## **The Gospel Comes to Zechariah & Elisabeth**

- 1. God Prepared Everything to Fulfill His Promise (5-17).**
- 2. Even As God Works Miraculously, We Still Struggle (18-23).**
- 3. He Is Redeeming Us Out of Our Shame and Reproach (24-25).**

\*For Daily Devotionals please see the Advent & Christmas booklet\*