



The _____
First Congregational Church
of Woodstock _____

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

January 3rd, 2021

The Order of Morning Worship

For assistance as we “gather” remotely and in-person to worship together.

January 3rd, 2021

Ten-thirty

Welcome

Elder Tom Johnston

Prelude & Silent Prayer

❖ Call to Worship

Psalm 146: 1 – 2, 10

Elder: Praise the LORD!
Praise the Lord, my soul

**Congregation: I will praise the Lord while I live;
I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.**

Elder: The Lord will reign forever,
Your God, Zion, to all generations.

**Congregation: Praise the LORD!
Praise the Lord, my soul**

❖ Hymn of Exultation

Number 196

Come, Thou Long – Expected Jesus

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

Waiting for the consolation of Israel. Luke 2:25

1. Come, thou long - ex - pect - ed Je - sus, born to set thy peo - ple free;
 2. Joy to those who long to see thee, Day-spring from on high, ap - pear;
 3. Come to earth to taste our sad - ness, he whose glo - ries knew no end;
 4. Born thy peo - ple to de - liv - er, born a child and yet a king,

from our fears and sins re - lease us; let us find our rest in thee.
 come, thou prom - ised Rod of Jes - se, of thy birth we long to hear!
 by his life he brings us glad - ness, our Re - deem - er, Shep - herd, Friend.
 born to reign in us for - ev - er, now thy gra - cious king - dom bring.

Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion, hope of all the earth thou art,
 O'er the hills the an - gels sing - ing news, glad tid - ings of a birth:
 Leav - ing rich - es with - out num - ber, born with - in a cat - tle stall;
 By thine own e - ter - nal Spir - it rule in all our hearts a - lone;

dear De - sire of ev - 'ry na - tion, joy of ev - 'ry long - ing heart.
 "Go to him, your prais - es bring - ing; Christ the Lord has come to earth."
 this the ev - er - last - ing won - der, Christ was born the Lord of all.
 by thine all - suf - fi - cient mer - it, raise us to thy glo - rious throne.

Scriptural Call to Repentance

Isaiah 53: 4 – 6

- ⁴ However, *it was* our sicknesses *that* He Himself bore,
And our pains *that* He carried;
Yet we ourselves assumed that He had been afflicted,
Struck down by God, and humiliated.
- ⁵ But He was pierced for our offenses,
He was crushed for our wrongdoings;
The punishment for our well-being *was laid* upon Him,
And by His wounds we are healed.
- ⁶ All of us, like sheep, have gone astray,
Each of us has turned to his own way;
But the LORD has caused the wrongdoing of us all
To fall on Him.

Collective Confession

Psalms 52: 1 – 4

Why do we boast in evil, we mighty men? The faithfulness of God *endures* all day long. Our tongue devises destruction, like a sharp razor, we are workers of deceit. We love evil more than good, lies more than speaking what is right. We love all words that devour, our deceitful tongue.

Proclamation of Forgiveness

2 Corinthians 7: 9 – 10

⁹ I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful *to the point of* repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to *the will of* God, so that you might not suffer loss in anything through us. ¹⁰ For the sorrow that is according to *the will of* God produces a repentance without regret, *leading* to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death.

Scripture Reading

Jeremiah 23: 5 – 6

- ⁵ “Behold, *the* days are coming,” declares the LORD,
“When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch;
And He will reign as king and act wisely
And do justice and righteousness in the land.
- ⁶ In His days Judah will be saved,
And Israel will live securely;

And this is His name by which He will be called,
'The LORD Our Righteousness.'

Elder: The Word of the Lord.

Congregation: Thanks be to God!

Pastoral Prayer

❖ Hymn of Reflection

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

Number 32

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

*Because of the LORD'S great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail.
They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. Lam. 3:22, 23*

♯ D G A⁷ Dsus D 7 G

1. Great is thy faith - ful - ness, O God my Fa - ther; there is no
2. Sum - mer and win - ter and spring - time and har - vest, sun, moon, and
3. Par - don for sin and a peace that en - dur - eth, thine own dear

D A⁷ D E B⁷ E⁷ A A⁷ D

shad - ow of turn - ing with thee; thou chang - est not, thy com -
stars in their cours - es a - bove, join with all na - ture in
pres - ence to cheer and to guide, strength for to - day and bright

Em D Gmaj⁷ Em⁷ Bdim D A⁷ D

pas - sions, they fail not; as thou hast been thou for - ev - er wilt be.
man - i - fold wit - ness to thy great faith - ful - ness, mer - cy, and love.
hope for to - mor - row, bless - ings all mine, with ten thou - sand be - side!

REFRAIN
A D B⁷ Em A⁷

Great is thy faith - ful - ness! Great is thy faith - ful - ness! Morn - ing by

D Bdim A E⁷ A A⁷ D Em D

morn - ing new mer - cies I see: all I have need - ed thy hand hath pro -

vid - ed — Great is thy faith - ful - ness, Lord, un - to me!

Thomas O. Chisholm, 1923

FAITHFULNESS 11.10.11.10.ref.
William M. Runyan, 1923

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The Sermon

Pastor John Meinen

“The Great Pursuit”

Matthew 2: 1 – 12

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, ² “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him.” ³ When Herod the king heard *this*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴ And gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵ They said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for this is what has been written by the prophet:

⁶ ‘AND YOU, BETHLEHEM, LAND OF JUDAH,
ARE BY NO MEANS LEAST AMONG THE LEADERS OF JUDAH;
FOR FROM YOU WILL COME FORTH A RULER
WHO WILL SHEPHERD MY PEOPLE ISRAEL.’”

⁷ Then Herod secretly called for the magi and determined from them the exact time the star appeared. ⁸ And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the Child; and when you have found *Him*, report to me, so that I too may come and worship Him.” ⁹ After hearing the king, they went on their way; and behold, the star, which they had seen in the east, went on ahead of them until it came to a stop over *the place* where the Child was *to be found*. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. ¹¹ And after they came into the house, they saw the Child with His mother Mary; and they fell down and worshiped Him. Then they opened their treasures and presented to Him gifts of gold,

frankincense, and myrrh. ¹² And after being warned *by God* in a dream not to return to Herod, *the magi* left for their own country by another way.

❖ Hymn of Response

Number 455

And Can It Be That I Should Gain

While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Rom. 5:8

Chords: G G, Am/C D7, G 7, Am/C D7

1. And can it be that I should gain an in - t'rest
 2. 'Tis mys - t'ry all! Th'Im - mor - tal dies: who can ex -
 3. He left his Fa - ther's throne a - bove (so free, so
 4. Long my im - pris - oned spir - it lay fast bound in
 5. No con - dem - na - tion now I dread; Je - sus, and

Chords: G, D/A A7, D, G/D, D, G

in the Sav - ior's blood? Died he for me, who caused his
 plore his strange de - sign? In vain the first - born ser - aph
 • in - fi - nite his grace!), hum - bled him - self (so great his
 sin and na - ture's night; thine eye dif - fused a quick - ning
 all in him, is mine! A - live in him, my liv - ing

Chords: D, C, G, G/D, D7, G, D, G

pain? For me, who him to death pur - sued? A - maz - ing love!
 tries to sound the depths of love di - vine. 'Tis mer - cy all!
 • love!), and bled for all his cho - sen race. 'Tis mer - cy all,
 ray; I woke, the dun - geon flamed with light; my chains fell off,
 Head, and clothed in righ - teous - ness di - vine, bold I ap - proach

How can it be that thou, my God, shouldst
 Let earth adore, let angel minds in -
 im - mense and free; for, O my God, it
 my heart was free; I rose, went forth, and
 th'e - ter - nal throne, and claim the crown, through

die for me?
 quire no more. A - maz - ing love! How can it
 found out me. A - maz - ing love! How
 fol - lowed thee. A - maz - ing love! How
 Christ, my own.

REFRAIN

be that thou, my God, shouldst die for me?
 can it be that thou, my God,

Charles Wesley, 1738
 Alt. 1990

SAGINA L.M.D.
 Thomas Campbell, 1825

Communion

Congregation

❖ Communion Hymn

Number 457

Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing

Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing

457

Samuel ... named it Ebenezer, saying, "Thus far has the LORD helped us." 1 Sam. 7:12

F D A⁷ D A D G D A⁷ D

1. Come, thou fount of ev - 'ry bless - ing, tune my heart to sing thy grace;
 2. Here I raise my Eb - en - e - zer; hith - er by thy help - I'm come;
 3. O to grace how great a debt - or dai - ly I'm con - strained to be;

A⁷ D A D G D A⁷ D

streams of mer - cy, nev - er ceas - ing, call for songs of loud - est praise.
 and I hope, by thy good plea - sure, safe - ly to ar - rive at home.
 let that grace now, like a fet - ter, bind my wan - d'ring heart to thee.

A⁷ D G D A⁷ D G D

Teach me some me - lo - dious son - net, sung by flam - ing tongues a - bove;
 Je - sus sought me when a strang - er, wan - d'ring from the fold of God:
 Prone to wan - der—Lord, I feel it—prone to leave the God I love:

A⁷ D A D A⁷ D

praise the mount! I'm fixed up - on it, mount of God's un - chang - ing love.
 he, to res - cue me from dan - ger, in - ter - posed his pre - cious blood.
 here's my heart, O take and seal it, seal it for thy courts a - bove.

Benediction

Numbers 6: 24 – 26

Pastor: May the Lord bless you and keep you; may the Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; may the Lord turn His face toward you and give you peace.

Congregation: Thanks be to God. Amen.

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

Postlude

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...
...
~*~

~~ Organist: Anne Hablitzel ~~
~~ Please ensure cell phones are off ~~

Christmas Eve Offering

This year's recipient of the Christmas Eve Offering will be Bethany Birches Camp in Plymouth, VT. They have many needs but in particular a new camp vehicle. Their old vehicle died, and they currently have a donated vehicle but that too is old. Through their virtual auction some funds were pledged to purchase a new camp vehicle but not enough. The Christmas Eve Offering will go towards helping to purchase the new camp vehicle. For more information about Bethany Birches, please go to <https://www.bethanybirches.org/>.

If you were unable to attend the Christmas Eve Service, but would like to give to the Christmas Eve Offering, you still can put your contribution in the offering box; mail it to FCCW at 36 Elm Street, Woodstock, VT 05091; or give online until January 10. Make checks payable to FCCW with a note in the memo line stating Christmas Eve Offering. Please put cash in an envelope with Christmas Eve Offering written on the outside of the envelope.

Any questions, please contact the Mission Board: Keri Bristow, Bonnie Atwood, Dave Christensen, Anne Koop, Stacy Selbo, or Nancy Stockwell.

John Meinen's Bio

John is the campus minister for Reformed University Fellowship on the UVM campus. Reformed University Fellowship (RUF) is a campus ministry that encourages students to build a personal relationship with Christ based on the Reformed Theology through fellowship and Bible Study.

After graduating from the University of Colorado in Boulder, John began chasing a career in international development. He lived in Bangladesh for half a year in 2005, and became burned out. Without any spiritual resources, he converted to atheism. In 2006, he went to Uganda where he encountered Christians who leaned toward suffering. They were living lives that begged a question only Jesus could answer. John asked them, "Why are you doing this?" They talked of a God who moves toward suffering. He always thought, "Oh, Christians," but their witness brought him to the table in a new way.

Long story short, John was invited to participate in the Falls Church Fellowship Program, a church-based leadership development program for recent college graduates, and that year he became a Christian. From there, he went to Gordon Conwell Seminary. He didn't intend to become a minister. He just wanted to learn to read the Bible in the original languages. In 2012, John earned his Masters of Divinity from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, was ordained later that same year, and has been a RUF campus minister ever since.

In 2010, John married a wonderful woman named Megan. Since graduating from Davidson College in 2007, Megan has done some really cool stuff: she spent 35 days in Patagonia mountaineering with NOLS, pursued a Masters in outdoor education at the University of Edinburgh, directed a place-based summer camp at the Crane Estate in Ipswich, MA, and more! She currently manages the UVM ropes course.

John and Megan live in the Old North End and attend Church at the Well. John loves mountain biking, fly fishing, and writing. (He is currently attempting to write a poem a day. Ask him about it!) They are the proud parents of Willa (4 year old daughter) and Fella (black lab). They love sharing meals with friends, watching anything good on Netflix, and playing outside. If you want to know more about them, RUF, etc., please don't hesitate to contact John via email (john.meinen@ruf.org), cell (802.922.4202), or on Facebook.

Pastor Doug is away

Pastor Doug is away from December 28 through January 10 for some much needed rest. If you have an emergency, please contact one of the Elders.

Elder Keith Tallon:	802-484-1274	tallon49@gmail.com
Elder John Haas:	802-345-7855	jhaas@ara.com
Elder Gil Emery:	802-457-4950	Hgemery@aol.com
Elder Tom Johnston:	802-457-3012	tajdmd1@gmail.com
Elder Peter Vanderhoof:	802-483-9430	pdvanderhoof@gmail.com

Please prayer for Pastor Doug and his family as they have time together to rest and enjoy the holiday season.

No Young Adult Fellowship Group
January 3 or January 10.

Copies of Pastor Doug's Christmas Booklet
are available in the Narthex.

Taking Gathered Worship Home

One of the chief themes throughout the Christmas story is the joyful obedience of God's people in light of His incredible provision. Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds hear God's announcement that the Christ is born and then do what He says. The chief thing His followers do today is to gather together to worship Him.

Sunday

Please join together with God's people in gathered worship either in-person or by participating in the live-stream. *If you are able to go in-person at all*, please do so today as it is communion Sunday and that is only something you are able to fully participate in through being there physically.

READ: The Scripture passage from this morning's sermon text (Mt 2:1-12).

DISCUSS: How can we encourage one another to trust Christ in our daily lives?

SING: *Angels We Have Heard on High*

PRAY: "Glory to God in the highest! You are worthy of all our praise." Now thank Him for specific ways in which He is worth all of your praise!

Monday

READ: Matthew 6:16-34.

DISCUSS: How do you see Jesus providing everything we need?

SING: *Angels We Have Heard on High* and *Good Christian Men, Rejoice!*

PRAY: "Glorious God, we praise You for giving us the Light of the world. Lord Christ, we do believe in Your name. It is through Your name that we are made children of God, co-heirs with You. We worship and adore You."

Tuesday

READ: Matthew 7:1-12; *Heidleberg Catechism* Question & Answer #36

How does the holy conception and birth of Christ benefit you? He is our Mediator; with His innocence and perfect holiness He removes from God's sight my sin—mine since I was conceived.

SING: *Good Christian Men, Rejoice!*

DISCUSS: How are followers of Christ to obey the commands of the Bible?

PRAY: Merciful Lord, teach us to rest in You. Cease our striving. Still our frantic spirits. Makes us to know Your love fully so that we might obey You.

Wednesday - The Feast of the Epiphany
Christ Worshipped by Gentiles

READ ALOUD: Matthew 2:1-12

The promise of redemption had been given time and again to God's people. He chose to work through the nation of Israel in order to bless all the nations of the world. Read God's promise given to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3.

SING: *As with Gladness Men of Old*

DISCUSS: What is the significance of Gentiles coming to praise the King of Israel?

PRAY: Thank the Lord for sovereignly ruling and reigning over all nations.

FEAST: Enjoy a special meal as a thanksgiving offering to the King of Kings!

Thursday

READ: Mark 1:39-35

DISCUSS: What did Jesus do the first thing that day? Why? Is Jesus doing the things He was sent to do? How should I give thanks to God for His ministry?

PRAY: Thank you Father for the plan You have put in place to fulfill Your plan. Guide us Holy Spirit, to work on earth doing what You have called us to do.

Friday

READ: Philippians 2:1-11

DISCUSS: Do I have encouragement being united to Christ? Do I have any comfort being united to Christ? Why? Why not? What should my attitude be? Am I selfish? Do I live in such a way as to consider my interest above others?

PRAY: Lord, thank You for giving to me Your Holy Spirit. Holy Spirit, move me to listen to You and refrain from my selfish ways.

Saturday

PREPARE today for the gathered worship service tomorrow. **READ** Hebrews 3:1-6 and I Corinthians 1:15-18. Invite others to watch the *live-stream service* with you tomorrow.