



The _____
First Congregational Church
_____ of Woodstock _____

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

March 17th, 2024

The Order of Morning Worship

March 17th, 2024

Ten-thirty

Welcome

Pastor Doug Warren

Easter Offering Announcement

Anne Koop

Prelude & Silent Prayer

❖ Call to Worship

Psalm 122:1-4

Pastor

❖ Hymn of Exultation #4

*All Praise to God,
Who Reigns Above*

Congregation

Scriptural Call to Repentance

Matthew 5:13-16

Prayer of Collective Confession

based on Ezra 10:2-3

Congregation

We have broken faith with our God and have disobeyed His holy commands, but even now there is hope for God's People in spite of our sin. Therefore let us make a covenant with our God to flee from sin, according to the counsel of my lord and of those who tremble at the commandment of our God, and let it be done according to the Law.

Silent Reflection and Confession

Proclamation of Forgiveness

Psalm 32:1-2

Pastor

Pastoral Prayer

Pastor

Offering

(collected from back to front)

Congregation

Affirmation of Faith

*The Nicene Creed*¹

Congregation

Pastor: Christian, what is it that we believe?

Congregation: We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God,

¹ The Nicene Creed originated at the Council of Nicea (325). It was formulated to answer heresies that denied the biblical doctrine of the Trinity and of the person of Christ.

begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made; who for us and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge both the living and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets; and we believe in one holy catholic² and apostolic church; we acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

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|---------------------------|--|--------------|
| ❖ Creedal Song | <i>Barocha</i> | Congregation |
| ❖ Scripture Reading | Hosea 11:1-8 | Pastor |
| ❖ Hymn of Reflection #246 | <i>Man of Sorrows! What a Name</i> | Congregation |
| The Sermon | Mark 2:13-17 | Pastor |
| | <i>“The God Who Befriends Sinners”</i> | |
| ❖ Hymn of Response #498 | <i>Jesus! What a Friend
For Sinners!</i> | Congregation |
| ❖ Benediction | Numbers 6:24-26 | Pastor |

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

Postlude

*~~ Organist: Jonathan Denham ~~
~~ Please ensure cell phones are off ~~*

² The term “catholic” here means universal and does not mean any particular denomination.

Prelude: Mit Freuden Zart (Phillips)
Offertory: Jesus Paid it All (Mason)
Postlude: Fugue in F Major (J. S. Bach)

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**Easter Services**

Friday, March 29 **6:30-7:30 pm Good Friday Service**

**Sunday, April 9 – He Is Risen!**

**7:00 am** Sunrise Service on Mount Tom (meet at Faulkner Park at 6:00)

8:00-9:00 am Breakfast in the Billings Room

**10:30 am** Morning Worship Celebration

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Easter Flowers

Easter plants and flowers always bring beauty to the Easter service. If you would like to share a flowering plant for the Easter service in memory of a loved one and take it home after, please contact Elaine Johnston (802-474-3012) or Alison Briggs (802-775-8088) to order. Also, please remember to make your check out to FCCW.

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**Young Adult Fellowship Group will meet tonight at 6 pm**

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Easter Sacrificial Offering

On Easter Sunday we will take a special sacrificial offering for Caleb Rayapati and Harvest Ministries in Secunderabad, India. They are in need of a new vehicle to enable them to travel throughout the region and minister in many ways to these remote villages in the name of Jesus. Check out the front-page feature of the FCCW March Prayer Letter for more information and some pictures!

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**Greeter Sign Up**

There is a sign-up sheet in the Billings Room for Sunday morning greeters. If you would like to help welcome folks on Sunday morning please take a moment to sign up! Questions? Check with Rosmarie Vanderhoof.

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## Save the Date!

**Friday, March 29, 6:30-7:30 pm** — Good Friday service

**Sunday, March 31** — Easter Sunday

**7:00 am** Sunrise Service on Mount Tom (meet at Faulkner Park at 6:00)

**8:00-9:00 am** Breakfast in the Billings Room

**10:30 am** Morning Worship Celebration

**Saturday, April 20, 9:00 am-3:30 pm** — CCEF Conference

**Saturday, April 20, 5:30-8:00 pm** — Community Barn Dance & Potluck

**Thursday, May 30, 6:00 pm** — Supper Talk: Beyond "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God": Who was Jonathan Edwards and why should we know about him? Meal at 6 pm followed by the presentation given by Paul Hoehner

**Friday, June 7** — Concert of Prayer

**Sunday, July 21** — Church Picnic on the WCCC playground (rain date July 28)

**Saturday, August 24** — Libby Warren's wedding here at FCCW

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The March prayer letter is available on the back table.

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## Nursery Staff Position

We are looking to hire someone as our Nursery Attendant. Please join us in praying for the Lord to raise up a mature, responsible adult (18+) who loves Jesus and children and who would be the anchor for caring for the little ones on Sunday mornings, assisted by volunteers from the congregation. For more information or to apply, please contact Karl Huck at [karlhuck@gmail.com](mailto:karlhuck@gmail.com). Thank you.

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## Community Barn Dance & Potluck

Come to a community barn dance on **April 20** at First Congregational Church of Woodstock!

Come sample the hilarity and joy of moving through simple figures with neighbors in your community. Singles, couples, and children are all welcome. All dances taught in a walk through by dance leader Ruth Holleran (aka "Hootin' and Holleran"). No experience necessary. Smiles guaranteed!

Dance to the New England fiddle music of stellar contradance band recordings. These are the dances and fiddle tunes that have survived in rural pockets of New England from the days of English, Irish, and French-Canadian settlers. Foot-tapping good, they support upbeat cardio exercise and a cheerful social experience. Come join us for an evening of fun doing circles, easy contras, longways reels, and more!

Potluck at 5:30 (food supplied by the church), Dance 6:30 - 8:00 pm. Wear comfortable clothes and shoes. Chairs will also be available if you want to observe! Bring your water bottle and invite your friends to this fun and free event!

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Weekly Gathering Opportunities

Sundays, 6:00 pm — Young Adult Fellowship Group in the library

Tuesdays, 7:00 am — Middle School & High School Bible Study—meet at Maplefields to grab breakfast, then on to the church for study, discussion, and prayer.

Tuesdays, 10:00 am — Ladies' Bible Study meets in person at the Thompson Senior Center and via ZOOM, please contact Bonnie Atwood at (802) 457-4120 or email bonhope2@gmail.com.

Tuesdays, 6:00 pm — Prayer Meeting, in person in the library and via ZOOM

Wednesdays, 6:15 am — Men's Bible Study, in person in the library and via ZOOM, please contact Dick Atwood at (802) 457-4120 or email rbatwood1@gmail.com.

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## **Mark's Gospel—Jesus' True Identity Reveals the Magnitude of His Sacrifice**

10:30 Morning Worship Service:

Mark 2:13-17

### **The God Who Befriends Sinners**

*Jesus Is the God Who Transforms Sinners into Saints.*

- 1. Jesus Teaches the Truth about Sin (13).**
- 2. Jesus Actually Loves Dreadful People (14-15).**
- 3. Jesus Eviscerates the Self-Righteous (16-17).**

**Conclusion:** In recording Christ's call of Levi as a disciple, Mark shows us the radical love of God for sinners. Jesus demonstrates His faithful love for the faithless, like a traitorous tax collector, like us. He also demonstrates His loathing for self-righteous hypocrites who study His Word but twist it to demean others rather than to love them. Does Christ's scandalous mercy take your breath away or puff up your sense of superiority? Let us love like Jesus!

### **Hosea 11:1-3, 8**

When Israel was a child, *I loved him*, and out of Egypt I called my son.  
The more they were called, the more they went away;  
they kept sacrificing to the Baals and burning offerings to idols.

Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk;

I took them up by their arms, but they did not know that I healed them.

How can I give you up, O Ephraim? How can I hand you over, O Israel?

How can I make you like Admah? How can I treat you like Zeboiim?

My heart recoils within me; *my compassion grows warm and tender*.

### **Romans 5:6-8**

For while we were still helpless, at *the right time Christ died for the ungodly*. For one will hardly die for a righteous person; though perhaps for the good person someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that *while we were still sinners, Christ died for us*.

### **First John 4:7-11**

Beloved, *let us love one another*, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. *Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another*.

### **John 13:21-27**

After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit, and testified, “Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.” The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he spoke. One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was *reclining at table at Jesus’ side*, so Simon Peter motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking. So that disciple, leaning back against Jesus, said to him, “Lord, who is it?” Jesus answered, “It is he to whom *I will give this morsel of bread* when I have dipped it.” So when he had dipped the morsel, *he gave it to Judas*, the son of Simon Iscariot. Then after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, “What you are going to do, do quickly.”

### **First Corinthians 6:9-11**

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And *such were some of you*. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.



# Taking Gathered Worship Home

How can a holy, righteous, perfect God love sinners like Levi? It is astounding! Yet that is a central truth to the gospel. He loves us. At the same time He neither minimizes our sin, nor compromises His holiness.

*Please use the devotional material below each day this week to praise Christ. Ask Jesus to teach us His ways that we may walk in them to accomplish His purposes.*

## Sunday Morning

READ **Mark 2:13-17; Hosea 11:1-8; Romans 5:6-8; First John 4:7-11; John 13:21-27; First Corinthians 6:9-11.** DISCUSS Were the scribes right about Jesus fraternizing with sinners? What did they miss? Why did they hate sinners? Was it because of righteous indignation? Why do you? SERVE someone in need. MEDITATE on **Ephesians 2:13.** PRAY “Friend of Sinners, forgive me for my arrogance. Transform me in Your grace to love others as You love me.”

## Sunday Evening

Young Adult Fellowship meets at **6pm** in the church library (back door).

## Monday

READ **Mark 2:13-17; Hosea 11:1-8; Romans 5:6-8.** DISCUSS Why did Jesus’ love for sinners threaten the scribes? Why does it bother you? How does Hosea’s God-appointed love for Gomer instruct us? Why did Jesus die for the ungodly? Did it compromise His holiness? Why or why not? SERVE by putting someone else’s interests *above your own!* MEDITATE on **Ephesians 2:13.** PRAY, “Friend of Sinners, forgive my arrogance. Please soften my heart to love others as You love me.”

## Tuesday

READ **Mark 2:13-17; Romans 5:6-8; First John 4:7-11.** DISCUSS How did demonstrate His love for us? Why is self-sacrifice necessary for us to love others? How does Christ’s sacrifice for us free us to sacrificially love others? SERVE by considering someone else’s needs *above your own!* MEDITATE on **Ephesians 2:13.** PRAY, “Friend of Sinners, forgive my arrogance. Enable me to truly embrace people who I can’t stand on my own as You have loved me.”

### Wednesday

READ **Mark 2:13-17; First John 4:7-11; John 13:21-27**. DISCUSS What does propitiation mean? If Christ has done that for us, how should we relate to our neighbors? How did Jesus treat Judas who was about to betray Him? SERVE by *caring about someone else* more than yourself! MEDITATE on **Ephesians 2:13**. PRAY, “Friend of Sinners, forgive my arrogance. Teach me to listen to people with empathy and understanding as You have loved me.”

### Thursday

READ **Mark 2:13-17; John 13:21-27; First Corinthians 6:9-11**. DISCUSS How are we changed from what we were before Christ to the saints He is making us to be? How can that happen to our co-workers, friends, and family members? What if it doesn't work and they are not converted? SERVE by putting someone else's interests *above your own!* MEDITATE on **Ephesians 2:13**. PRAY, “Friend of Sinners, forgive my arrogance. Make me more like You in sacrificial love for others as You have loved me.”

### Friday

READ **Mark 2:13-17; Hosea 11:1-8; Romans 5:6-8; First John 4:7-11; John 13:21-27; First Corinthians 6:9-11**. DISCUSS, What has the Holy Spirit been teaching you this week through these passages? MEDITATE on **Ephesians 2:13**. PRAY that we at FCCW would *be transformed together by God's Word through Mark*.

### Saturday

PREPARE for *gathered worship tomorrow*. READ **Mark 2:1-3:6**. Invite others to join you tomorrow for the *worship service @ 10:30*. Ask Jesus to *reveal Himself to us in His Word by His Spirit*.

## Meditate on Ephesians 2:13

*“But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.”*