

First Congregational Church of St. Albans (FCC) is a welcoming community of spiritual seekers, believers, and doubters.

**Please know that no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you're welcome here.**

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH VISION STATEMENT

To create an open and loving community that encourages a joyous exploration with God.

To work together to care for and nurture the wider community.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission as a community resource church is to provide a safe place for spiritual exploration and personal growth. To affirm the value of each person and to meet them where they are.

To connect to the community through personal service, giving, and pastoral care.

**Please feel free to contact us:**

Administrative Office: Monday: 10am–Noon; Tuesday 8am–2pm; Wednesday closed; Thursday 8am–2pm; Friday 10am–Noon.

Church Office Phone Number: 802-524-4555

Pastor Jessica's Office Hours: T-W-F, 9am–12pm

Email: [pastorjessica@firstcongregationalstalbans.org](mailto:pastorjessica@firstcongregationalstalbans.org)

For urgent, pastoral matters outside of regular office hours, call Pastor Jessica at 207-632-5544.

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**OUR WORSHIP SERVICE** IS BROADCAST OVER THE LOCAL PUBLIC ACCESS CHANNEL 1079 ON SUNDAYS AT 4 PM.

**SCRIPTURE READER:** SANDY CRISTMAN



**"WE WELCOME YOU AND SERVE ALL THROUGH FAITH."**

**WORSHIP WITH US:**

**AUGUST 20, 2023**

**9AM**

**REV. JESSICA MOORE, PASTOR**

**STEPHAN CONRADY, ORGANIST**

**MONICA NEWTON, OFFICE MANAGER**

**27 CHURCH STREET, ST. ALBANS, VT 05478**

**802-524-4555**

**[INFO@FIRSTCONGREGATIONALSTALBANS.ORG](mailto:info@firstcongregationalstalbans.org)**

**[WWW.FIRSTCONGREGATIONALSTALBANS.ORG](http://www.firstcongregationalstalbans.org)**

**WE GATHER AS GOD'S PEOPLE**

## CENTERING WORDS:

"A seed neither fears light nor darkness, but uses both to grow." — Matshona Dhliwayo

**THE PREPARATION**

*The beginning of the prelude is a call to enter into the spirit of prayer and community.*

PRELUDE                      *Amazing Grace*                      Traditional

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP<sup>1</sup>

One: God moves among us.

**Many: We welcome your presence, Lord, no matter by what means you arrive.**

One: Reach out your hand and I shall always be with you.

**Many: We reach for you, Jesus, and trust that you are present when we fear or ache.**

One: Your presence, Oh Lord, calms the seas as it calms our hearts.

**Many: May we rest assured that you are ever present with us, assuaging our worries as you love our anxieties into softness.**

MORNING PRAYER<sup>1</sup>

Beloved disciples, welcome! We gather as people reconciled to one another and God through grace, a gift freely and lovingly given that we do not earn or deserve. We receive the marvelous work of grace in our lives, and we wonder, "Is it fair?"

**No! God's grace is not fair, but a gift of God's mercy.**

**Welcome to all visitors:** We are delighted that you chose to worship with us today and are strengthened by your participation in our service!

If you are new to First Congregational Church of St. Albans, please sign the guest book in the narthex (main entrance of the church).

If you would like more information about our church and its programs or would like to receive our Morning Reflections, and weekly e-newsletter, "From the Manse," please fill out a Welcome Card and place it in the Offering tray (be sure to include your email address).

**After the service please join us for fellowship, conversation, coffee, and refreshments.**

\*PLEASE STAND IF YOU ARE ABLE

<sup>1</sup>UCC, WORSHIP WAYS

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## Mission Highlight

### The Welcome Home Initiative:

First Congregational Church of St. Albans is a founding member of the Welcome Home Initiative (WH). WH provides people transitioning from homelessness to permanent housing in Franklin and Grand Isle Counties of Vermont with new- home essentials (mop, broom, dishes, cleaners, trash can, pots & pans, etc.), personal items (shampoo, deodorant, etc.), and a full pantry, fridge, and freezer stock of food.

The Welcome Home Initiative is a collaboration among:

Franklin/Grand Isle CVOEO- Community

Action

First Congregational Church of St Albans

Grace Episcopal Church, Sheldon

Sheldon Methodist Food Shelf

Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, Swanton

As well as other churches and businesses

that have donated to the Initiative.

WH works with local housing case workers from:

F/GI Community Action

Voices Against Violence

Samaritan House

Restorative Justice Center

Pathways

First Congregational Church functions as the fiscal agent, collection center and pick-up hub for the program. WH serves on average 6-7 individuals/families to be housed a month.

We gather as neighbors who have experienced difficulties of every kind. We feel uncertain, fearful, and overwhelmed, and we wonder, “Is it fair?” **No! Our difficulties are not fair, and God’s grace meets our uncertainty with mercy and love.**

We gather as a community that knows the suffering of our neighbors. We look at the effects of poverty, food insecurity, and trauma in our neighborhoods, and we wonder, “Is it fair?” **No! The suffering of our neighbors is not fair, and God’s grace calls us to respond to suffering with mercy and justice.**

We gather as people who question how to live into God’s abundance and flourishing in a world built on scarcity and greed, and we wonder, “Is it fair?” **Yes! God’s life of abundance and flourishing is fair, because it is merciful. May God’s grace form us into people of mercy, justice, compassion, and truth-telling as we gather today. Amen.**

HYMN\*

**“O God of Love, O God of Peace”**

**NCH 571**

PRAYER OF CONFESSION<sup>1</sup> (Unison)

**Precious Lord, strip away the mask I wear during the week to “get by.” Lay my soul bare before you today. Let me see genuine love. Show me the loves that hates evil and holds onto what is good. Strip away the mask that holds my emotions in check when I should share your love with someone. Let me see the joy of giving to others. Show me the power of blessing those who persecute me. Strip away the mask that grins and lies and lets the world think otherwise about a child of God. Amen.**

PAUSE FOR REFLECTION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

PASSING OF THE PEACE

## THE MESSAGE

TIME WITH CHILDREN

SPECIAL MUSIC: *Under a Tree* (fr. Nocturnal Rainbows)  
S. Conrady

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Psalm 133:1-3 and Isaiah 56:1, 6-8

MORNING REFLECTION

“Is it Fair?”

HYMN\*

***“What Wondrous Love Is This?”*** **NCH 223**

## THE THANKSGIVING

SHARING OUR JOYS AND CONCERNS

PASTOR’S PRAYER~

LORD’S PRAYER

**Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever, Amen**

## OFFERTORY

DOXOLOGY

***Praise God from whom all blessing flow  
Praise God all creatures here below;  
Praise God above, all heavenly hosts:  
Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost. Amen.***

OFFERTORY PRAYER

## THE DEPARTURE

HYMN\*

***“Blessed Be The Tie That Binds”*** **NCH 393**

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *I Was Mute For Half a Century* S. Conrady

## ANNOUNCEMENTS:

### A Special Note of Gratitude From All of Us At FCC:

Thank You: Doug Klette, Robin Genetti, and Rev Darcey Mercier for filling in while Pastor Jessica is away.

Melissa and Greg Beeman Thank You for hosting an all church cookout! It was a wonderful time in a beautiful spot!

**Open Mic  
August 19  
7-9pm**

**Theme: Surf and Summer!**

Summer is still here . . . let's make the most of it!

Join us for poetry, singing, storytelling, refreshments and fellowship!

Everyone is welcome: beginners, experts and everyone

**Pastor Jessica's Next Vacation August 14-29**

**Special Guest Preachers:**

August 20: Robin Genetti

August 27: Doug Klette

**Emergency Pastoral Care:**

Rev. Darcey Mercier from St. Luke's and Grace  
Episcopal churches: 802 393-0363