

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: 2pm-4pm; Tuesday 8am-2pm; Wednesday 9am-Noon; Thursday 8am-2pm; Friday 10am-Noon.

Church Office Phone Number: 802-524-4555

Pastor Jessica's Office Hours: Tues. & Wed, 9am-12pm, and by appt.

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: Louise Haynes



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

**WORSHIP WITH US:**

**DECEMBER 10, 2023**

**10 AM**

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:

We must allow the Word of God to confront us, to disturb our security, to undermine our complacency and to overthrow our patterns of thought and behavior. — John Stott

**❖ BEGINNING OF SERVICE ❖****THE PREPARATION**

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

## PRELUDE

## WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

## CHORAL CALL TO WORSHIP

*Hodie Christus natus est*

from A Ceremony of Carols B. Britten

## SUNG CALL TO WORSHIP Come and Fill Our Hearts (Taizé)

***Come and fill our hearts with your peace,***

***You alone, O God, are holy.***

***Come and fill our hearts with your peace,***

***Al-le-lu--ia!***

MORNING PRAYER<sup>1</sup> (Unison)

**All: Spirit of God, who dwells within our hearts, Wean it from that which aims to separate us from you. In this moment of collective worship Take the dimness of our souls away. Let us seek you. Let us find you. Teach us to feel that you are always nigh As we lift up our voices with strength to worship you. Amen.**

**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. Including, Adorn Aprons and Franklin County Quilt Guild.

WH works with local housing case workers from:

- ➔ F/GI Community Action
- ➔ Voices Against Violence
- ➔ Samaritan House
- ➔ Restorative Justice Center
- ➔ Pathways
- ➔ Reach-Up

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.

**Advent Candle Lighting:****Greg Beeman**

The prophet Isaiah announced God's coming to a people exiled in a parched wilderness. He declared that God's redemption would make a highway in the desert and make the rough places plain. God would come as a shepherd—feeding, leading, and cradling the weary flock. This Advent, we seek God, the shepherd. Let us light the candle of peace.

HYMN\*

***"Joyful, Joyful, We Adore You"*** NCH 4PRAYER OF CONFESSION<sup>1</sup> (Unison)

**We come to you, Creator, not asking for an empty or entitled peace; We come to you asking that you call us to the carpet. Remind us to dig deeper to the wells of truth. Help us see beneath the surface level arguments and beyond viral news clips. Embolden us to be the revolutionaries you have called us to be So that all injustice might be eradicated And peace that surpasses understanding may reign. Amen**

PAUSE FOR REFLECTION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

PASSING OF THE PEACE

**THE MESSAGE**

TIME WITH CHILDREN

ANTHEM

*As dew in Aprille*  
from A Ceremony of Carols B. Britten

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Luke 1:39-45, 56

MEDITATIONS ON MARY: BLESSEDNESS

HYMN\*

***"O Come All You Faithful"*** (1,2,3) NCH 135

**THE THANKSGIVING**

SHARING OUR JOYS AND CONCERNS

CHORAL CALL TO PRAYER

*Hear Our Prayer, O lord*

D. Welpton

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**

CHORAL RESPONSE TO PRAYER

*"THOU WILT KEEP HIM IN PERFECT PEACE, WHOSE MIND IS STAYED ON THEE."*

SCOTTISH PSALTER, 1615

**OFFERTORY**OFFERTORY MUSIC *Spring Carol*

from A Ceremony of Carols B. Britten

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\* **"O God of Love, O God of Peace"** NCH 571

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

❖ END OF SERVICE ❖**ANNOUNCEMENTS:****A Special Note of Gratitude From All of Us At FCC:**

- ★ Greg Beeman Thank You for fixing the railing in the staircase to the choir loft!

**Open Mic Night****Free & For All Ages****December 16****7:00-9:00PM**

Music\* Spoken Word\* Skits\* Bad Jokes

Everyone is welcome: beginners, experts and everyone in between. For information, call Greg at 802-324-0308

**Christmas Eve Candlelight Service****December. 24th 7:00PM**

Our traditional Christmas Eve service- lessons and carols! Bring a friend and soak in the beauty of our sanctuary in all its Christmas splendor!

**Music Notes:** Our thanks to soloists from Saint Michael's Singers for sharing music in worship this morning: Sadie Gage, Katrina Gallagher, Amanda Lyons, Lina Torres, and Cassandra Vanderhoof. Saint Michaels Singers is directed by Erin Grainger. They present a concert at McCarthy Recital Hall on Wednesday, December 13 at 7:30pm, with a special guests Counterpoint vocal ensemble.