

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

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

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

Scripture Reader: Lane McElree



"WE WELCOME YOU AND SERVE ALL THROUGH FAITH."

WORSHIP WITH US:

DECEMBER 17, 2023

10 AM

REV. JESSICA MOORE, PASTOR

ERIN GRAINGER, MUSIC AND CHOIR DIRECTOR

STEPHAN CONRADY, ORGANIST

MONICA NEWTON, OFFICE MANAGER

27 CHURCH STREET, ST. ALBANS, VT 05478

802-524-4555

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WE GATHER AS GOD'S PEOPLE

CENTERING WORDS:

"My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God"

❖ BEGINNING OF SERVICE ❖**THE PREPARATION**

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

PRELUDE

Advent Music

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

Come and fill our hearts with your Joy,

You alone, O God, are holy.

Come and fill our hearts with your Joy,

Al-le-lu--ia!

MORNING PRAYER¹ (Unison)

**God of Mary, Mother of Jesus – and all of the lowly who seek
to be lifted –**

**God of Isaiah, who felt the Spirit upon him calling him to
bring Good News—**

Let your Spirit fall upon us in this hour.

Out of the ruins, remind us of your everlasting covenant.

**Anoint us as we seek to share and experience your Good
News.**

Bind our broken hearts.

Awaken us to the liberation within and among us.

Embolden us to proclaim your favor

As we seek you more deeply.

Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:**A Special Note of Gratitude From All of Us At FCC:**

★ Judy Miller Thank You for organizing the Mitten Tree,
it's been another spectacular year!

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!

Mitten Tree Helpers!

Dec 18 and 19; contact Judy Miller for details

Bible Study:

**Bible Study is on Christmas Break we will return to our
usual day and time on January 3.**

Music notes: This morning's anthem is a wonderful of the
medieval carol *Orientis partibus*, retaining a lovely medieval
flair. The text by Carol McClure has several verses, here are
the first and final verses: Desert, blossom as a Rose Rising,
radiant as it grows, / All arrayed is crimson show; Come to us,
O God of Hope. / King of Glory, Soul of Bliss, Everlasting life is
this: / Thee to know, thy power to prove, Thus to sing, and
thus to love!

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

*PLEASE STAND IF YOU ARE ABLE

¹UCC, WORSHIP WAYS

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THE MESSAGE

ANTHEM *Advent Carol* Alfred Fedak

SCRIPTURE READING: Luke 1:45-55

MEDITATIONS ON MARY: PROPHETIC WITNESS

HYMN* ***“What Child Is This”*** NCH 148

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

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 Little Town of Bethlehem”*** NCH 133

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Advent Music

Advent Candle Lighting:

Nancy Holland and Mykala Pryor

Today is the 3rd Sunday of Advent. It is a joyous celebration that is set up to provide relief or a break from the more reflective rituals, as well as focus away from all of the hardships in our midst. The rose-colored candle reminds us to be encouraged, to lean into a softer sentiment. Let us light the candle of joy.

HYMN* ***“Love Divine, All Loves Excelling”*** (1, 2, 3) NCH 43

PRAYER OF CONFESSION¹ (Unison)

Merciful God,

We know that you love us and that you call us to fullness of life, but around us and within us we see the brokenness of our world and our ways. Forgive our willful neglect of your world, our insensitivity to the needs of others and our failure to feed the spirit that is within us. Restore us to Your joy-filled path of hope and peace. Amen

PAUSE FOR REFLECTION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

PREPARATION & RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS

BAPTISM: Marina Perron

ANOINTING: Amanda Parrott

One: Friends in Christ . . .

Questions to the Candidate(s)

Do you promise, by the grace of God, to be Christ’s disciples, to follow in the way Jesus showed us, to resist oppression, to show love and justice, and to witness to the work of Jesus Christ as best you are able?

Candidate(s): **I promise, with the help of God.**

One: Do you promise, according to the grace given you, to grow in Christian faith and to be a faithful member of the Church, celebrating Christ's presence and furthering Christ's mission in all the world?

Candidate(s): **I promise, with the help of God.**

One: Do you promise to participate in the life and mission of this family of God's people, sharing regularly in the worship of God and enlisting in the work of the First Congregational Church of St. Albans, as it serves the community and the world?

Candidate(s): **I promise, with the help of God.**

One: Do you, the members of First Congregational Church, offer your love, support, and guidance as they become a part of this congregation?

Congregation: **We promise, with the help of God.**

Deacon: Let us, the members of the First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, of St. Albans Vermont, express our welcome and affirm our common ministry in Christ.

Congregation: **We welcome you with joy into the common life of this church. We promise you our friendship and our prayers as we share the hopes and labors of the church of Jesus Christ. By the power of the Holy Spirit, may we continue to grow together in God's knowledge and love, and be witnesses of our risen Savior.**

Deacon: As an affirmation of our common ministry in Jesus Christ, let us read together the covenant of this congregation:

All: **Acknowledging Jesus Christ to be our Savior, and relying for wisdom upon the teachings of the Bible and communion with God in prayer, we do now, in the sight of God, solemnly covenant and agree with each other to associate ourselves to be a church of Jesus Christ. We will endeavor to follow the example of Jesus and strive to do God's will in all things. We agree to walk together and serve one another in Christian love, submitting ourselves to the orderly administration of the affairs of this church. And we promise to labor together for the coming of God's Kingdom of righteousness and peace and love through the whole earth.**

Deacon: In the name of Jesus Christ, and on behalf of the First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, of St. Albans, we extend to you the hand of Christian love, welcoming you into the covenant membership of the church.

Presentation of Membership Certificates

Closing Prayer

Deacon: Eternal God, we praise you for calling us to faith and for gathering us into the body of Christ. We thank you for your people gathered as this church, and we rejoice in those who have joined as new members this morning. Together may we live in the Spirit, building up one another in love, sharing in the life and worship of the church, and serving the world as faithful disciples of our Friend and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

GREETING NEW MEMBERS