

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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**Deacons:** Hadley Shannon, Mary Bostwick, Sandy Cristman, Jenny Parke

**Ushers:** Sue Powers, Sue and Ray Brown

**Videographer:** Greg Beeman

**Memorial:** A generous offering and flowers provided by Joan and Jack Hungerford in memory of Merrill and Mimi Hungerford.



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

**WORSHIP WITH US:**

**DECEMBER 24, 2023**

**7PM**

**REV. JESSICA MOORE, PASTOR**

**ERIN GRAINGER, MUSIC AND CHORAL DIRECTOR**

**STEPHAN CONRADY, ORGANIST**

**MONICA NEWTON, OFFICE MANAGER**

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

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**WE GATHER AS GOD'S PEOPLE**

## CENTERING WORDS:

*Christ is born whenever human love appears in the ordinary lives of ordinary people. The child of Bethlehem is born whenever unexpected grace and kindness and joy break in.*

~ Rev. John M. Buchanan

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

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

PRELUDE: *Music for Christmas*

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

## EVENING PRAYER

ONE: *This night is one of profound mystery,*

**ALL: a night for unusual sounds and sights in the heavens.**

ONE: *This night is one of wonderful clarity,*

**ALL: a night for the blessed event of our Savior's birth into this world.**

ONE: *This night is one of far-reaching complexity,*

**ALL: a night for strangers crowding into a stable and kings starting on a journey.**

ONE: *This night is one of touching simplicity,*

**ALL: a night for receiving a gift and cradling God's love in our hearts. We gather to worship on this best of all nights!**

HYMN\*

**"What Child Is This, Who Laid to Rest"** Pilgrim Hymnal 140

***Joy To The World! The Lord Is Come***

**Joy to the world, the Lord is come!**

**Let earth receive her King;**

**let every heart prepare him room**

**and heaven and nature sing,**

**and heaven and nature sing,**

**and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.**

**Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!**

**Let men their songs employ,**

**while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains,**

**repeat the sounding joy,**

**repeat the sounding joy,**

**repeat, repeat the sounding joy.**

**He rules the world with truth and grace**

**and makes the nations prove**

**the glories of his righteousness**

**and wonders of his love,**

**and wonders of his love,**

**and wonders, wonders of his love.**

**❖ END OF SERVICE ❖**

As you leave, we ask that you deposit your service candle and the holder in the basket provided. Thank you.

\*PLEASE STAND IF YOU ARE ABLE

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CHRISTMAS MESSAGE: "Hope for a Weary World?"

ANTHEM *Night Song* Jim Ailor

OFFERTORY

DOXOLOGY Old Hundredth

***Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow;  
Praise God all creatures here below;  
Praise God above, all heavenly hosts:  
Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost. Amen.***

OFFERTORY PRAYER

## SHARING THE LIGHT WITH THE WORLD

HYMN\* ***"Silent Night, Holy Night"*** Pilgrim Hymnal 138

The Ushers will bring the light of Christ to those seated on the aisle. Please hold candles upright. Tip unlighted candle towards your neighbor's light. Supervise children who are holding candles.

BENEDICTION John 1:1-5, 14 The Light Shines in the Darkness

POSTLUDE

***"Joy To The World! The Lord Is Come"*** Back Inside Cover  
Pilgrim Hymnal 130

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

*Hadley and Alan Shannon*

Holy One, we give you thanks  
for your presence among us  
in Jesus, your Child,  
born into a poor family.  
Christ has entered our lives,  
and embraced our hope and our struggle;  
showing forth the power of your love  
in healing, teaching and challenging  
the powers of the world that lead to death.  
With confidence in your faithfulness,  
We welcome your beloved Child in our midst.  
**All: God be with us in the Light of Christ.**

## FESTIVAL OF LESSONS & CAROLS

FIRST LESSON: *Messiah's Birth Foretold*

ISAIAH 9:2-7

Nancy Holland

FIRST CAROL ***"O Come, All Ye Faithful"*** Pilgrim Hymnal 132

***O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant!***

***O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem!***

***Come and behold him, born the King of angels.***

***O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,***

***O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!***

***Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,***

***sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!***

***Glory to God, all glory in the highest***

***O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,***

***O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!***

SECOND LESSON: *Gabriel Visits Mary*

LUKE 1:26-38

Valerie Walden

SECOND CAROL      ***“Lo How A Rose”***      Pilgrim Hymnal 131

***Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming From tender stem hath sprung!  
Of Jesse's lineage coming As men of old have sung.  
It came, a flower bright, Amid the cold of winter  
When half-gone was the night.***

***Isaiah 'twas foretold it, The Rose I have in mind:  
With Mary we behold it, The virgin mother kind.  
To show God's love aright She bore to men a Savior  
When half-gone was the night.***

THIRD LESSON : *Jesus is Born*

LUKE 2:1-7

Alan Shannon

THIRD CAROL      ***“Away in a Manger”***      Pilgrim Hymnal 137

***Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,  
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.  
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,  
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.***

***The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,  
but little Lord Jesus no crying he makes.  
I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky,  
And stay by my side until morning is nigh.***

FOURTH LESSON      *Angels and Shepherds Adore Jesus*

LUKE 2:8-16

Sandy Cristman

FOURTH CAROL

***“Angels We Have Heard on High”***

Pilgrim Hymnal 116

***Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the  
plains  
And the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains***

***Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo***

***Come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels  
sing  
Come, adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the newborn  
King.***

***Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo***

FIFTH LESSON : *The Magi Honor Jesus*

MATTHEW 2:1-12

Stephen McLaughlin

FIFTH CAROL      ***“We Three Kings of Orient Are”***

Pilgrim Hymnal 143

***We three kings of Orient are; bearing gifts we traverse afar,  
Field and fountain, moor and mountain, following yonder  
star.***

***O star of wonder, star of light, star with royal beauty  
bright,  
Westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect  
light.***

***Glorious now behold him arise; King and God and sacrifice:  
Alleluia, Alleluia, sounds through the earth and skies.***

***O star of wonder, star of light, star with royal beauty  
bright,  
Westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect  
light.***