

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: Mon. 10am - Noon; Tues. - Fri. 9am-2pm

Church Office Phone Number: 802-524-4555

Pastor Jessica's Office Hours: Friday 9:30 am - Noon

Email: [pastorjessica@firstcongregationalstalbans.org](mailto: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: Valerie Odrechowski  
Acolytes: Mykala Pryor and Ada Sanders



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

**WORSHIP WITH US:**

**DECEMBER 22, 2024**

**10 AM**

REV. JESSICA MOORE, PASTOR

BAILEY BROWN, MUSIC & CHOIR DIRECTOR

STEPHAN CONRADY, ORGANIST

STEPHEN McLAUGHLIN, 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:

The practice of love offers no place of safety. We risk loss, hurt, pain. We risk being acted upon by forces outside our control.

— bell hooks

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

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

PRELUDE    *Es ist ein Ros entsprungen*    German Hymn

## WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Holy God,**

**The stories of Advent are stories many of us have heard before.**

**We've arranged the nativity scenes.**

**We've read the children's books.**

**We've seen the movies.**

**We've sung the songs.**

**But as we come to your scripture this morning, we pray: help us begin again.**

**Clear the distractions from our minds.**

**Center us in this space.**

**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> SANCTIFIED ARTS

MUSIC, COPYRIGHT PERMISSIONS: CCLI #4799426 AND SJMP #14586

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

- Chris Guzman, Maria Barresi, Mary Bostwick, and Ellen Read Thank You for organizing, harvesting, and distributing the warm woolies from the Mitten Tree!
- Park Newton Thank You for answering the emergency call to the Manse and the misfiring boiler!
- Valerie Odrechowski Thank You for organizing the Cookie Swap - so joyfully delicious!
- Nancy Holland Thank You for your ongoing Monday Morning Office Ministry!

**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!

**Holiday Potluck Drop-In: Saturday, December 28, 3-6 pm**

Sweet and/or savory finger food.

At Jan Johnson's house, **22 Rugg St., St. Albans** (parking and entrance in rear).

**Zoom Bible Study: Companionship on the Road**

Wednesday 7:00-8:00pm

No Bible Study on Dec. 25

**Next Bible Study: January 1**

Matthew 2:1-12

Contact Pastor Jessica for the link.

**Online Giving:**

**Wi-Fi:**

Sanctuary  
sanctuary123



**Move through the protective barriers we surround ourselves with and speak to us here and now.**

**We are listening.**

**We are hopeful. Amen**

CANDLE LIGHTING LITURGY: LOVE

Chauncy Scates & Ira Wilkens

One: In a weary and worn world, how do we begin again?  
Where do we start?

**All: Let us begin with tenderness. Let us begin with our hearts on our sleeve. Let us begin from a place of vulnerability and hope. Let us begin with love.**

One: Yes, let us start with love.

Today we light the candles of hope, peace, joy, and love.

**All: May the warmth of these lights be our cornerstone. May the truth in these lights help us begin again.**

One: May it be so! Amen.

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

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION<sup>1</sup> (UNISON)**

Gracious God, You paint pictures of what could be,  
but we declare those visions impossible.

You speak of the lion lying down with the lamb,  
but we spout skepticism and uncertainty.

You dream of a more just day,  
but we poke holes in the plan, unable to fathom that horizon.

Forgive us for losing sight of hope.

Forgive us for assuming that what we see is all there is.

Open up our hearts to see the world as you see it.

Open up our hearts to risk hope, to dream dreams,  
and to not be afraid of either.

**With gratitude we pray, amen.**

PAUSE FOR REFLECTION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

PASSING OF THE PEACE

## THE MESSAGE

TIME WITH CHILDREN

ANTHEM *My Soul Cries Out With A Joyful Shout* R. Cooney

SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 1:46-55

CONTEMPORARY READING

*Despite it All*

Sarah Are Speed

MORNING REFLECTION:

*All In*

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

OFFERTORY MUSIC

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***

(1,2,4) NCH 133

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *From Heaven Above to Earth I Come*

❖ END OF SERVICE ❖