



The \_\_\_\_\_  
**First Congregational Church**  
of Woodstock \_\_\_\_\_

*Declaring, "Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today,  
and forever." Hebrews 13:8*

*December 24th, 2021*

# *Christmas Eve Service*

December 24, 2021

Five o'clock & Seven o'clock

*Welcome! Tonight is a night of holy wonder. The God of all Creation has entered into the physical world to rescue His people. Mighty God has been born a lowly infant. Listen to the Scriptures read. Sing along with the songs of praise. Declare together to all the world, "Jesus Christ is born!"*

Prelude

Welcome

Pastor Doug Warren

Advent Candle Lighting

Denham Family

Call to Worship

Pastor: Tonight, we remember that the whole world lay in deep darkness for millennia. People walked in darkness without hope except for the promise given by the Maker of Light.

**Congregation: Lord God, we need Your light!**

Pastor: God is faithful to keep all of His promises. He has sent us His light.

**Congregation: Jesus said, "I am the light of the world."**

Pastor: Fully God and Fully Man, Jesus came to accomplish what no one else could do for us. We come now to worship God together.

**Congregation: Lord Jesus, we praise You!**

Invocation

Pastor Warren

Scripture Reading #1

Isaiah 9: 6 – 7

<sup>6</sup> For to us a child is born, to us a son is given;  
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,  
and his name shall be called

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

<sup>7</sup> Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end,  
on the throne of David and over his kingdom,  
to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness  
from this time forth and forevermore.

The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

195

Joy to the World! The Lord Is Come

Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth. Ps. 98:4

1. Joy to the world! The Lord is come: let earth re - ceive her  
 2. Joy to the earth! The Sav - ior reigns: let men their songs em -  
 3. No more let sins and sor - rows grow, nor thorns in - fest the  
 4. He rules the world with truth and gra - ce, and makes the na - tions

King; let ev - ery heart pre - pare him room,  
 ploy; while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains  
 ground; he comes to make his bless - ings flow  
 prove the glo - ries of his righ - teous - ness

and heav'n and na - ture sing, and heav'n and na - ture  
 re - peat the sound - ing joy, re - peat the sound - ing  
 far as the curse is found, far as the curse is  
 and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his  
 and heav'n and na - ture sing,

sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.  
 joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.  
 found, far as, far as the curse is found.  
 love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.  
 heav'n and na - ture sing.

<sup>18</sup> Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. <sup>20</sup> But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” <sup>22</sup> All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

<sup>23</sup> “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,  
and they shall call his name Immanuel”

(which means, God with us). <sup>24</sup> When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, <sup>25</sup> but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

❖ Hymn #207

*Good Christian Men, Rejoice*

Congregation

## Good Christian Men, Rejoice

Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.  
Luke 2:11

1. Good Chris - tian men, re - joice, with heart and soul and voice;  
2. Good Chris - tian men, re - joice, with heart and soul and voice;  
3. Good Chris - tian men, re - joice, with heart and soul and voice;

give ye heed to what we say: Je - sus Christ is born to - day;  
now ye hear of end - less bliss: Je - sus Christ was born for this!  
now ye need not fear the grave: Je - sus Christ was born to save!

earth and heav'n be - fore him bow, and he is in the man - ger now.  
He hath o - pened heav - en's door, and man is bless - ed ev - er - more.  
Calls you one and calls you all to gain his ev - er - last - ing hall.

Christ is born to - day! Christ is born to - day!  
Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!  
Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup>This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup>And all went to be registered, each to his own town. <sup>4</sup>And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, <sup>5</sup>to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. <sup>6</sup>And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. <sup>7</sup>And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

<sup>8</sup>And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup>And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. <sup>10</sup>And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. <sup>11</sup>For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. <sup>12</sup>And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” <sup>13</sup>And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

<sup>14</sup>“Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”

<sup>15</sup>When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” <sup>16</sup>And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. <sup>17</sup>And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. <sup>18</sup>And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. <sup>19</sup>But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. <sup>20</sup>And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? Matt. 2:2

1. What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mar - y's lap - is sleep - ing?  
 2. Why lies he in such mean es - tate, where ox and ass are feed - ing?  
 3. So bring him in - cense, gold, and myrrh; come, peas - ant, king, to own him;

Whom an - gels greet with an - thems sweet, while shep - herds watch are keep - ing?  
 Good Chris - tian, fear; for sin - ners here the si - lent Word is plead - ing.  
 the King of kings sal - va - tion brings, let lov - ing hearts en - throne him.

This, this is Christ the King, whom shep - herds guard and an - gels sing:  
 Nails, spear, shall pierce him through; the cross be borne for me, for you:  
 Raise, raise the song on high, the vir - gin sings her lul - la - by:

haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mar - y.  
 hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mar - y.  
 joy, joy for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mar - y.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup>All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. <sup>4</sup>In him was life, and the life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

<sup>6</sup>There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup>He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

<sup>9</sup>The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. <sup>10</sup>He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. <sup>11</sup>He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. <sup>12</sup>But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, <sup>13</sup>who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

<sup>14</sup>And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Christmas Eve Offertory

*Once in Royal David's City*

❖ Hymn #214

*Angels We Have Heard on High*

Congregation



# Angels We Have Heard on High

*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.*  
Luke 2:14

1. An - gels we have heard on high, sweet - ly sing - ing o'er the plains,  
2. Shep - herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro - long?  
3. Come to Beth - le - hem and see him whose birth the an - gels sing;

and the moun - tains in re - ply ech - o back their joy - ous strains.  
Say what may the tid - ings be, which in - spire your heav'n - ly song?  
come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ the Lord, the new - born King.

REFRAIN

Glo - - - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o,

glo - - - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.

*“The Lord’s Delight”*

<sup>1</sup>Behold my servant, whom I uphold,  
my chosen, in whom my soul delights;  
I have put my Spirit upon him;  
he will bring forth justice to the nations.

<sup>2</sup>He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice,  
or make it heard in the street;

<sup>3</sup>a bruised reed he will not break,  
and a faintly burning wick he will not quench;  
he will faithfully bring forth justice.

<sup>4</sup>He will not grow faint or be discouraged  
till he has established justice in the earth;  
and the coastlands wait for his law.

<sup>5</sup>Thus says God, the LORD,  
who created the heavens and stretched them out,  
who spread out the earth and what comes from it,  
who gives breath to the people on it  
and spirit to those who walk in it:

<sup>6</sup>“I am the LORD; I have called you in righteousness;  
I will take you by the hand and keep you;  
I will give you as a covenant for the people,  
a light for the nations,

<sup>7</sup>to open the eyes that are blind,  
to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,  
from the prison those who sit in darkness.

<sup>8</sup>I am the LORD; that is my name;  
my glory I give to no other,  
nor my praise to carved idols.

<sup>9</sup>Behold, the former things have come to pass,  
and new things I now declare;  
before they spring forth  
I tell you of them.”

# O Come, All Ye Faithful

208

Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about. Luke 2:15

1. O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant,  
2. God of God, Light of Light;  
3. Sing, choirs of an - gels, sing in ex - ul - ta - tion,  
4. Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this hap - py morn - ing;

O come ye, O come ye to Beth - le - hem; come and be - hold him  
lo, he ab - hors not the Vir - gin's womb: ver - y God, be -  
sing, all ye cit - i - zens of heav'n a - bove; glo - ry to God  
Je - sus, to thee be all glo - ry giv'n; Word of the Fa - ther,

REFRAIN

born the King of an - gels;  
got - ten, not cre - a - ted;  
in the high - est; O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let  
late in flesh ap - pear - ing;

us a - dore him, O come, let us a - dore him, Christ the Lord.

<sup>37</sup> On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. <sup>38</sup> Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’” <sup>39</sup> Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

<sup>40</sup> When they heard these words, some of the people said, “This really is the Prophet.” <sup>41</sup> Others said, “This is the Christ.” But some said, “Is the Christ to come from Galilee? <sup>42</sup> Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?” <sup>43</sup> So there was a division among the people over him.

### Candle Lighting \*

*Jesus is the light of the world. He has made us to be His torchbearers and to pass that light on to others. We pause now to receive the light and then to pass it on until the whole assembly bears His light as we sing His praise.*

❖ Hymn #210

*Silent Night! Holy Night!*

Congregation

### \* A Note about Candles

Parents, please use your best judgement as to which of your children should be holding candles. Please allow no wax to drip or be scratched off the candles. Be aware of the hair and clothing of those around you. **When lighting candles, the burning candle remains upright and the candle is to be lit is tipped toward the flame and immediately righted when lit.**

Thank you for helping to make this a safe and enjoyable time for everyone.

# Silent Night! Holy Night!

210

*They hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. Luke 2:16*

Capo 1: ♮ B<sup>b</sup>(A)      ♮ F<sup>7</sup>(E<sup>7</sup>)      B<sup>b</sup>(A)      E<sup>b</sup>(D)

1. Si - lent night! Ho - ly night! All is calm, all is bright round yon  
 2. Si - lent night! Ho - ly night! Shep- herds quake at the sight! Glo - ries  
 3. Si - lent night! Ho - ly night! Son of God, love's pure light ra - diant  
 4. Si - lent night! Ho - ly night! Won - drous star, lend thy light; with the

B<sup>b</sup>(A)      E<sup>b</sup>(D)      B<sup>b</sup>(A)

vir - gin moth - er and child. Ho - ly in - fant, so ten - der and mild,  
 stream from heav - en a - far, heav'n - ly hosts sing al - le - lu - ia;  
 beams from thy ho - ly face, with the dawn of re - deem - ing grace,  
 an - gels let us sing al - le - lu - ia to our King;

F<sup>7</sup>(E<sup>7</sup>)      B<sup>b</sup>(A)      ♮      F<sup>7</sup>(E<sup>7</sup>)      B<sup>b</sup>(A) ♮

sleep - in heav - en - ly peace, sleep in heav - en - ly peace.  
 Christ, the Sav - ior, is born! Christ, the Sav - ior, is born!  
 Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth, Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth.  
 Christ, the Sav - ior, is born! Christ, the Sav - ior, is born!

Benediction

Numbers 6: 24 – 26

Pastor Warren

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

*The Congregation may be seated after the Benediction for silent prayer.*

Postlude

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~~ Organist: Jonathan Denham ~~

~~ Violinist: Leah Eells ~~

~~Vocalists: Preston Bristow, Keri Bristow, Jonathan Denham,  
Anne Denham, Christine Morton, Dick Atwood~~

~~ Please ensure cell phones are off~~

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Poinsettias Given in Loving Memory of:

Evelyn and Richard Englishman by Elaine Brown

Olga & Arthur Rolland by Elaine Johnston

Fred Forthman by Dottie Forthman

Robert L. Powell, Marion and Louis Van Dyk by Carol Powell

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Christmas Eve Offering Recipients

First Congregational Church of Woodstock is a congregation by god's grace committed to Christ's mission both here and abroad. This year the Christmas Eve Offering will go to help meet the special needs of three of our ministry partners. **Ben & Sarah Courtemanche** provide leadership to the Navigators' collegiate ministry on campuses throughout New England and New York. They have faced significant shortfalls due to Covid-related issues and our gifts will help them to continue to minister to students. **Elevation Academy** serves at-risk youth here in Vermont, providing education and mentoring, and offering hope and healing in the name of Christ to these teens and their families. Our gifts will help them in a time of transition as they seek to provide educational opportunities for more students. **Daniel & Elizabeth Ransom** are engaged in church-planting and discipleship in Perugia, Italy. Although they are feeling very blessed to have solid ongoing support, they have some special needs this year as their house has needed extensive repairs. Our gifts will help them continue to focus on their mission in Italy. Please prayerfully consider giving towards these missions in the offering tonight.

# Cliff Notes on Christmas

Why did Jesus come as a baby born in Bethlehem?

Jesus was born in fulfillment of many promises made by God<sup>1</sup> to His people to deliver us and save us from our sin. We have these promises in the Bible where God explains that in humanity's rebellion against Him, we have received the penalty of our sin, which is spiritual death.<sup>2</sup>

Unable to resuscitate ourselves, we are lost and without hope unless God Himself comes to save us.<sup>3</sup> But that is exactly what He did! Jesus, God the Son, as only He could, came to win us back to right relationship with God the Father. This role of mediator between God and human beings was long foretold as the unique work of the true King of Israel who would be born in Bethlehem, the city of David, Israel's greatest king.

## What are we supposed to do?

Jesus calls us to repent from our disobedience, to believe and put our trust in Him for the salvation we so desperately need, and to identify with His people as the recipients of His grace. Let's look at each one of these things.

**Repent.** This means to turn from all the ways we disobey God and to start obeying Him instead. God has made Himself evident to all people<sup>4</sup> even though we suppress that knowledge, but if we want to know Him as He truly is, the Bible shows us how to live in obedience to His holy calling.

**Believe.** Jesus calls us to stop believing that we can save ourselves or that any other thing can save us. He tells us to trust that He is the only way to God the Father. To believe *in* Christ is more than just believing that He was born; it's trusting Him to the exclusion of all else. What this baby King was born to do was to live the perfect life of obedience we fail to live and then die as the perfect sacrifice for our sins. His death on the cross paid the penalty for our rebellion and His resurrection from the dead on Easter morning declared that sacrifice was accepted by God the Father. To believe in Jesus is to trust His life, death, and resurrection to the exclusion of all else.

**Identify.** Jesus doesn't just save us as individuals; He saves us into His family. He adopts His followers as brothers and sisters. The practice of baptism is the historic way of identifying with this family of God. If you have never been baptized then you should confirm your belief in Christ by being baptized into membership of a Bible-believing church. If you have already been baptized, then you should profess your faith in Christ and be joined officially as a member.

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<sup>1</sup> The Bible presents itself as God's self-revelation to His people starting as they came up out of Egypt into the Promised Land. These footnotes include references to books in the Bible by listing the name of the book followed by the chapter and verse in which to find the idea summarized above.

<sup>2</sup> Romans 6:23.

<sup>3</sup> Ephesians 2:11-22.

<sup>4</sup> Romans 1:18-23.