

The _____
First Congregational Church
of Woodstock _____

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

December 19th, 2021

The Order of Morning Worship

December 19th, 2021

The Fourth Sunday in Advent

Ten-thirty

Welcome

Elder Tom Johnston

Moment for Missions

Daniel & Elizabeth Ransom, Perugia, Italy

Prelude & Silent Prayer

❖ Call to Worship

Psalm 19

Congregation

Pastor: The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands.

Congregation: Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they acknowledge His glory.

Pastor: There is no land or nation where their voice is not heard.

Congregation: Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.

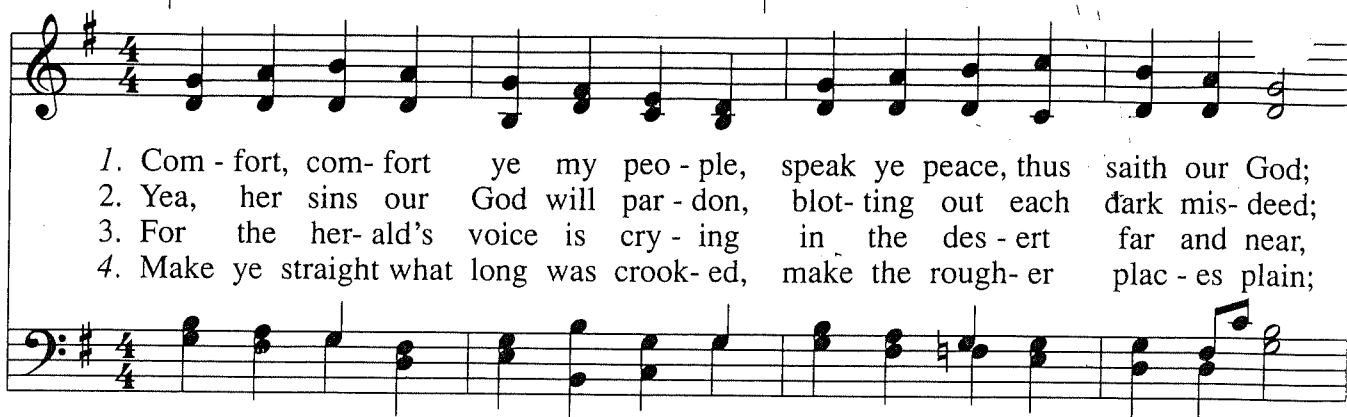
❖ Hymn of Exultation #197

*Comfort, Comfort Ye
My People*

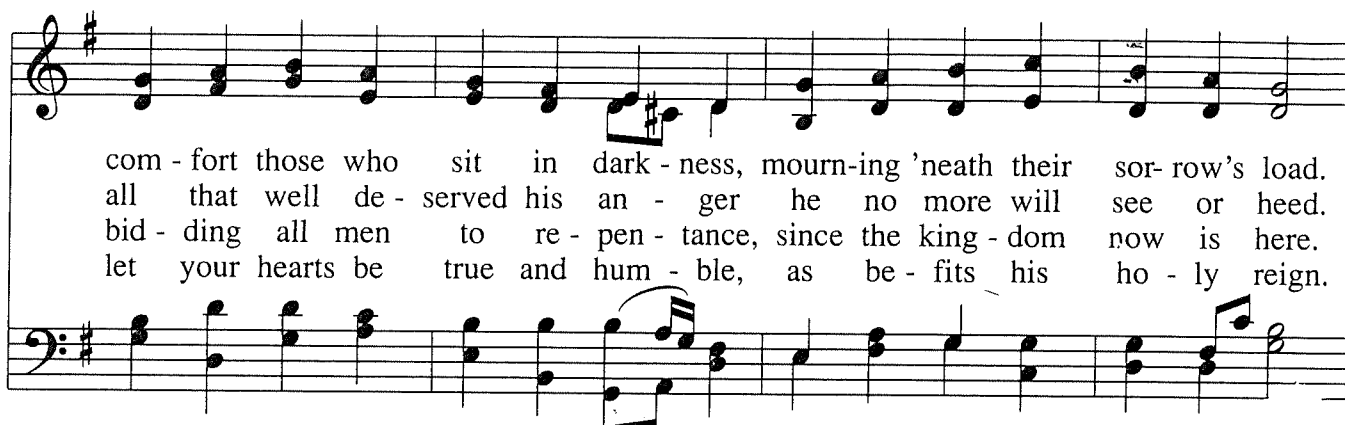
Congregation

Comfort, Comfort Ye My People

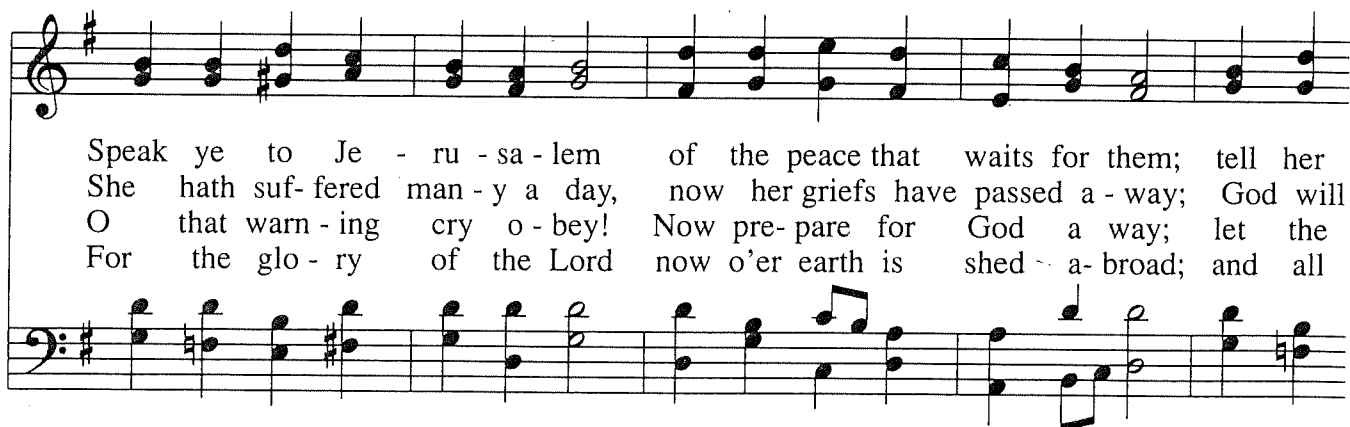
Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem. Is. 40:1, 2



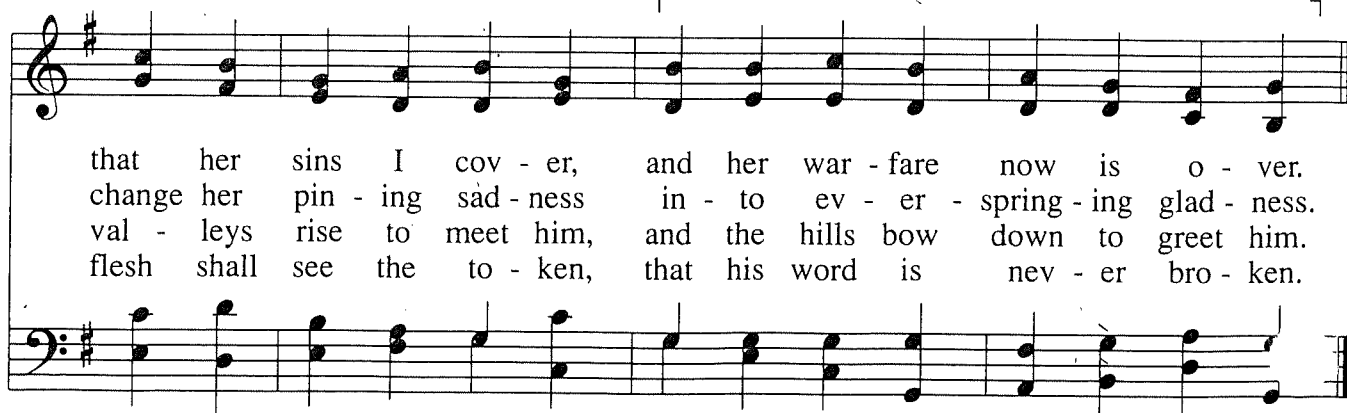
1. Com - fort, com - fort ye my peo - ple, speak ye peace, thus saith our God;
 2. Yea, her sins our God will par - don, blot - ting out each dark mis - deed;
 3. For the her - ald's voice is cry - ing in the des - ert far and near,
 4. Make ye straight what long was crook - ed, make the rough - er plac - es plain;



com - fort those who sit in dark - ness, mourn - ing 'neath their sor - row's load.
 all that well de - served his an - ger he no more will see or heed.
 bid - ding all men to re - pen - tance, since the king - dom now is here.
 let your hearts be true and hum - ble, as be - fits his ho - ly reign.



Speak ye to Je - ru - sa - lem of the peace that waits for them; tell her
 She hath suf - fered man - y a day, now her griefs have passed a - way; God will
 O that warn - ing cry o - bey! Now pre - pare for God a way; let the
 For the glo - ry of the Lord now o'er earth is shed - a - broad; and all



that her sins I cov - er, and her war - fare now is o - ver.
 change her pin - ing sad - ness in - to ev - er - spring - ing glad - ness.
 val - leys rise to meet him, and the hills bow down to greet him.
 flesh shall see the to - ken, that his word is nev - er bro - ken.

For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea... “Of what value is an idol, since a man has carved it? Or an image that teaches lies? For he who makes it trusts in his own creation; he makes idols that cannot speak. Woe to him who says to wood, ‘Come to life!’ Or to lifeless stone, ‘Wake up!’ Can it give guidance? It is covered with gold and silver; there is no breath in it. But the LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him.”

Collective Confession

Psalm 25

Congregation

Remember Your mercy, O LORD, and Your steadfast love, for they have been from of old. Remember not the sins of our youth or our transgressions; according to Your steadfast love remember us, for the sake of Your goodness, O LORD! For Your name's sake, O LORD, pardon our guilt, for it is great. Turn to us and be gracious to us, for we are lonely and afflicted. The troubles of our hearts are enlarged; bring us out of our distresses. Consider our affliction and our trouble, and forgive all our sins.

Silent Reflection and Confession

Proclamation of Forgiveness

Romans 8:1

Elder

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Offering

(collected from back to front)

Congregation

Affirmation of Faith

*The Nicene Creed*¹

Congregation

Pastor: Christian, what is it that we believe?

Congregation: We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made; who for us and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us

¹ The Nicene Creed originated at the Council of Nicea (325). It was formulated to answer heresies that denied the biblical doctrine of the Trinity and of the person of Christ.

under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge both the living and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets; and we believe in one holy catholic² and apostolic church; we acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

❖ Creedal Song

Barocha

Congregation

² The term "catholic" here means universal and does not mean any particular denomination.

Barocha

Words and Music by
Michael Card

B \flat 7 E \flat B \flat E \flat /B \flat E \flat A \flat



1. The Lord _____ bless you and keep _____ you. The Lord make His
(2. The) Lord be gra - cious to _____ you. The Lord turn His

6 E \flat B \flat A \flat /B \flat B \flat




face shine up - on _____ you, and give you peace, and give you
face _____ to - wards _____ you, and give you peace, and give you

12 B \flat 7 E \flat A \flat /E \flat E \flat B \flat 1. E \flat 2. B




peace, and give you peace _ for - ev - er. 2. The er. The
peace, and give you peace _ for - ev -

18 E B E/B E A E/A F \sharp /A E D \sharp /E C \sharp /E




Lord bless you and keep _____ you. The Lord make His face shine up -

24 B C \sharp /B B N.C. B B7(no3)




-on _____ you, and give you peace, and give you peace,

30 E A/E E D \sharp /E C \sharp /E B B \flat 9sus E B



and give you peace _ . for - ev - er. And give you peace,

36 N.C. B E B E



and give you peace, and give you peace _ for - ev - er.

²¹ Then they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. ²² And when he had removed him, he raised up David to be their king, of whom he testified and said, ‘I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my heart, who will do all my will.’ ²³ Of this man’s offspring God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, *as he promised*. ²⁴ Before his coming, John had proclaimed a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. ²⁵ And as John was finishing his course, he said, ‘What do you suppose that I am? I am not he. No, but behold, after me one is coming, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie.’

²⁶ “Brothers, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, to us has been sent the message of this salvation. ²⁷ For those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers, because they did not recognize him nor understand the utterances of the prophets, which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled them by condemning him. ²⁸ And though they found in him no guilt worthy of death, they asked Pilate to have him executed. ²⁹ And when they had carried out all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb. ³⁰ But God raised him from the dead, ³¹ and for many days he appeared to those who had come up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses to the people. ³² And we bring you *the good news that what God promised to the fathers*, ³³ *this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus...*”

Pastor: The grass withers, the flower fades,

Congregation: but the Word of our God will stand forever.

Pastoral Prayer

Elder

❖ Hymn of Reflection #201

O Little Town of Bethlehem

Congregation

O Little Town of Bethlehem

Bethlehem Ephrathah; though you are small ... out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times. Mic. 5:2

1. O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie
 2. For Christ is born of Mar - y; and gath - ered all a - bove
 3. How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly, the won - drous gift is giv'r
 4. O ho - ly child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us, we pray

a - bove thy deep and dream-less sleep the si - lent stars go by:
 while mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep their watch of won - d'ring love.
 So God im - parts to hu - man hearts the bless - ings of his heav'
 cast out our sin and en - ter in; be born in us to - day.

yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing Light;
 O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er pro - claim the ho - ly birth!
 No ear may hear his com - ing, but in this world of sin,
 We hear the Christ - mas an - gels the great glad tid - ings tell;

the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.
 And prais - es sing to God the King, and peace to men on earth.
 where meek souls will re - ceive him still, the dear Christ en - ters in.
 O come to us, a - bide with us, our Lord Em - man - u - el.

“Prepare the Way of the Lord”

Isaiah 40:1-11

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.

² Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her

that her warfare is ended,

that her iniquity is pardoned,

that she has received from the LORD's hand
double for all her sins.

³ A voice cries:

“In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD;
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

⁴ Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.

⁵ And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,
and all flesh shall see it together,
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

⁶ A voice says, “Cry!”

And I said, “What shall I cry?”

All flesh is grass,

and all its beauty is like the flower of the field.

⁷ The grass withers, the flower fades
when the breath of the LORD blows on it;
surely the people are grass.

⁸ The grass withers, the flower fades,
but the word of our God will stand forever.

⁹ Go on up to a high mountain,
O Zion, herald of good news;
lift up your voice with strength,
O Jerusalem, herald of good news;
lift it up, fear not;

say to the cities of Judah,

“Behold your God!”

¹⁰ Behold, the Lord GOD comes with might,

and his arm rules for him;
behold, his reward is with him,
and his recompense before him.
¹¹ He will tend his flock like a shepherd;
he will gather the lambs in his arms;
he will carry them in his bosom,
and gently lead those that are with young.

❖ Hymn of Response #198

*Lift Up Your Heads,
Ye Mighty Gates!*

Congregation

Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates!

Lift up your heads, O you gates; be lifted up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. Ps. 24:7

1. Lift up your heads, ye might - y gates! Be - hold, the
 2. A help - er just he comes to thee, his char - iot
 3. O blest the land, the cit - y blest, where Christ the
 4. Fling wide the por - tals of your heart; make it a

King of glo - ry waits; the King of kings is
 is hu - mil - i - ty, his king - ly crown is
 Rul - er is con - fessed! O hap - py hearts and
 tem - ple, set a - part from earth - ly use for

draw - ing near, the Sav - ior of the world is here.
 ho - li - ness, his scep - ter, pi - ty in dis - tress.
 hap - py homes to whom this King in tri - umph comes!
 heav'n's em - ploy, a - dorned with prayer and love and joy.

5. Redeemer, come! I open wide
 my heart to thee; here, Lord, abide!
 Let me thy inner presence feel;
 thy grace and love in me reveal.

6. So come, my Sovereign, enter in!
 Let new and nobler life begin!
 Thy Holy Spirit, guide us on,
 until the glorious crown be won.

❖ Benediction

2 Corinthians 13: 14

Elder

Pastor: The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

Congregation: Thanks be to God. Amen.

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

Postlude

~~ Organist: Jonathan Denham ~~

~~ Please ensure cell phones are off ~~

Christmas Eve

FCCW will have two in-person Christmas Eve services this year, at 5:00 pm and 7:00 pm. Reserved seating is required. Seats may be reserved at www.fccw.net/ChristmasEve. The services will also be streamed live. Nursery will be available for the 5:00 service.

Young Adult Fellowship Group will meet tonight
at 6 pm in the church library.

Property Manager/Custodian Position

We are looking for a Property Manager and Custodian for FCCW as Justin & Stephanie Sterling are transitioning out of the position after three years of exceptional service. This position requires the person to work a flexible schedule, be able to handle a variety of tasks, and be a good steward of FCCW property. Please contact Karl Huck at 802-457-3072 or e-mail him at karlhuck@gmail.com for more details or to submit an application. Thank you.

Guest Speaker: Ernest Shipman

I was born in 1959 & grew up in Atlanta, GA. I was raised in a Christian home and came to faith at age 14. I moved to NH in 1985 to get married. I have been married to Wendy since 1986. We have two adult children: Sam, who lives in Chattanooga (who incidentally is friends with Molly Holleran, whose parents go to the church) and Emma, who is married & lives near us.

I have two other connections to the church! In the mid 1990's, Wendy's sister took a job at Dartmouth Hospital and she attended the church. We used to visit her often and Sunday mornings were always a treat. We got to be friends of the Koops as well. I am an ordained ruling elder in the Presbyterian Church in America, and I am friends with Pastor Warren as he and I are both members of the same presbytery.

In addition to being a ruling elder (and a member of Exeter Presbyterian church), I have been called to preach and have been licensed by the Presbytery. I do pulpit supply and preach as I am needed. To help facilitate this calling I have joined the staff of Reformed Evangelistic Fellowship as a missionary, non-ordained evangelistic worker. My passion is preaching the Gospel and doing one-on-one discipleship. I also recently published a book on discipleship for adults using the Westminster Shorter Catechism.

When not in ministry, Wendy & I have a mini farm (really a former blueberry farm) in New Durham, NH. I am now retired from the business world, having been self-employed since 1991. I recently sold both of my businesses: I used to own a commercial sign shop (my wife is very artistic), and I used to also own a small retail firearms store.

God has been very faithful to us!

My life verse is:

Only fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart. For consider what great things he has done for you. 1st Samuel 12:24

Nursery Volunteers Needed!

We are so thankful that we have been able to reopen the nursery and have received much appreciation from the families who benefit from it. However, we are very much in need of additional helpers! If you can help one Sunday or several please sign up on the schedule in the Billings Room or contact Karis at (207) 329-4190 or karis.warren@gmail.com.

Teachers Needed

WCCC is in need of **Teachers/Assistants**, and **Substitutes**. Please contact Ruth Brisson at rbrissonwccc@gmail.com or 410-925-7959, if you are interested in serving in any of these roles.

The December prayer letter is on the table in the narthex.

There will be no Sunday School on December 26 and January 2.

Prepare the Way of the Lord

1. The LORD prepares the way by securing our *Pardon* (1-2).

2. The LORD prepares the way through His *Providence* (3-5).

3. The LORD prepares the way through His *Promise* (6-8).

4. The LORD prepares the way through His *Peace* (9-11).

CONCLUSION: The LORD not only prepares the way in providentially working out the details of our redemption, promising the pardon for our sin, and securing peace for us. The LORD *is* the Way! Jesus said “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me...”. As the passage in Isaiah 40 opens with “Comfort, comfort,” Jesus said, “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” And as the passage in Isaiah ends with “He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms...”, Jesus says, “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.” John 10:4 says, “When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.” We as believers should strive to follow Jesus, letting him go before us, listening for his voice to guide and direct us in all we do.

John 10:1-5

“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. ² But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. ⁵ A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.”

Psalm 25:11-15

¹¹ For your name’s sake, O Lord, pardon my guilt, for it is great.

¹² Who is the man who fears the Lord?

Him will he instruct in the way that he should choose.

¹³ His soul shall abide in well-being, and his offspring shall inherit the land.

¹⁴ The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear him, and he makes known to them his covenant.

¹⁵ My eyes are ever toward the Lord, for he will pluck my feet out of the net.

Jeremiah 29:10-14

¹⁰ “For thus says the Lord: When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. ¹¹ For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. ¹² Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. ¹³ You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. ¹⁴ I will be found by you, declares the Lord, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, declares the Lord, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.

Acts 13:21-32

²¹ Then they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. ²² And when he had removed him, he raised up David to be their king, of whom he testified and said, ‘I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my heart, who will do all my will.’ ²³ Of this man’s offspring God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, *as he promised*. ²⁴ Before his coming, John had proclaimed a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. ²⁵ And as John was finishing his course, he said, ‘What do you suppose that I am? I am not he. No, but behold, after me one is coming, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie.’

²⁶ “Brothers, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, to us has been sent the message of this salvation. ²⁷ For those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers, because they did not recognize him nor understand the utterances of the prophets, which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled them by condemning him. ²⁸ And though they found in him no guilt worthy of death, they asked Pilate to have him executed. ²⁹ And when they had carried out all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb. ³⁰ But God raised him from the dead, ³¹ and for many days he appeared to those who had come up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses to the people. ³² And we bring you *the good news that what God promised to the fathers*, ³³ this he has *fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus...*”

John 16:32-33

³² Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me. ³³ I have said these things to you, *that in me you may have peace*. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”