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First Congregational Church
_____ of Woodstock _____

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

February 25th, 2024

The Order of Morning Worship

February 25th, 2024

Ten-thirty

Welcome

Pastor Doug Warren

Prelude & Silent Prayer

❖ Call to Worship Psalm 67 and 1 Chronicles 16 Pastor

❖ Hymn of Exultation #165 *Ye Servants of God,
Your Master Proclaim* Congregation

Scriptural Call to Repentance 1 John 1:8-9 Pastor

Collective Confession Luther's Prayer Congregation

O Lord, merciful and mighty, we unworthy sinners, come to You in humble repentance and confess how we have transgressed Your holy Law. We are guilty of sins of omission and commission, evil thoughts, improper words, and wrong deeds. Forgive our iniquity and shortcomings for the sake of the suffering and death of our Savior Jesus Christ. Let His obedience cover our disobedience, let His righteousness atone for our unrighteousness. Great God and Helper, You alone can forgive. With all our hearts we thank You for Your boundless mercy. Grant us grace with which we might accept Your gift of forgiveness with true faith and look upon the word of pardon as a message coming from You, assuring us and consoling our hearts before You. Let us treasure Your forgiveness and freely extend it to others by the power of Your resurrection. We pray in the name of our Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

Silent Reflection and Confession

Proclamation of Forgiveness Jeremiah 33:8 Pastor

Pastoral Prayer Pastor

Offering (collected from back to front) Congregation

Affirmation of Faith *The Heidelberg Catechism*¹ Congregation
Pastor: Why is Jesus called "Christ," meaning "anointed"?

¹ Catechisms are a question and answer format used for teaching in the church. The Heidelberg Catechism was written in 1563 and approved by the Church at the Synod of Dort (1618-1619). Today we are using Q & As 31 and 32.

Congregation: Because he has been ordained by God the Father and has been anointed with the Holy Spirit to be our chief prophet and teacher who fully reveals to us the secret counsel and will of God concerning our deliverance; our only high priest who has delivered us by the one sacrifice of his body, and who continually pleads our cause with the Father; and our eternal king who governs us by his Word and Spirit, and who guards us and keeps us in the freedom he has won for us.

Pastor: Why are you called a Christian?

Congregation: Because by faith I am a member of Christ and so I share in his anointing. I am anointed to confess his name, to present myself to him as a living sacrifice of thanks, to strive with a free conscience against sin and the devil in this life, and afterward to reign with Christ over all creation for eternity.

❖ Creedal Song	<i>Holy Holy Holy is the Lord of Hosts</i>	Congregation
❖ Scripture Reading	Colossians 2:8-15	Pastor
❖ Hymn of Reflection	<i>In Christ Alone</i>	Congregation
The Sermon	Mark 1:21-28	Pastor
	<i>“The Authoritative Word of God”</i>	
❖ Hymn of Response #92	<i>A Mighty Fortress</i>	Congregation
❖ Benediction	John 14:27	Pastor

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

Postlude

~~ Organist: Jonathan Denham ~~
~~ Please ensure cell phones are off ~~
Prelude: Prelude on Marion (Haan)
Offertory: Ein feste Burg (Reger)
Postlude: God of Grace and God of Glory (Manz)

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## Q & A with Pastor Doug

**Today** after the worship service there will be a Question and Answer time with Pastor Doug. He will give an update about the classes he is taking through The Master's Seminary and will answer questions about the classes and their content.

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Young Adult Fellowship Group will meet tonight at 6 pm

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## Save the Date!

**Today! 12:30-1:00 pm** — Q & A with Pastor Doug

**Friday, March 8, 6:30-8:00 pm** — Concert of Prayer

**Sunday, March 31** — Easter Sunday

**7:00 am** Sunrise Service on Mount Tom (meet at Faulkner Park at 6:00)

**8:00-9:00 am** Breakfast in the Billings Room

**10:30 am** Morning Worship Celebration

**Saturday, April 20, 5:30-8:00 pm** — Community Barn Dance & Potluck

**Thursday, May 30, 6:00 pm** — Supper Talk: Beyond "Sinners in the Hand of an Angry God": Who was Jonathan Edwards and why should you know about him? Meal at 6 pm followed by the presentation given by Paul Hoehner

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The February Prayer Letter is available on the back table.

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## Concert of Prayer

Calling all members and regular attenders of FCCW! We will be gathering Friday night, **March 8**, at **6:30 pm** for a concert of prayer. Our focus will be asking the Lord to guide us as we reach out together by faith in Christ. We want to love our neighbors faithfully in word and deed to the honor of Jesus. This evening of prayer should be a great time in God's presence together with praise music and prayer.

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## Nursery Staff Position

We are looking to hire someone as our Nursery Attendant. Please join us in praying for the Lord to raise up a mature, responsible adult (18+) who loves Jesus and children and who would be the anchor for caring for the little ones on Sunday mornings, assisted by volunteers from the congregation. For more information or to apply, please contact Karl Huck at [karlhuck@gmail.com](mailto:karlhuck@gmail.com). Thank you.

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Deacons' Fund

The Deacons' Fund enables the deacons to minister to and provide assistance to people in need, both within our congregation as well as in the broader community. While the deacons never provide money, they do help with things like, but not limited to, gas and grocery cards, rental assistance, auto repairs, and help with medical bills. Due to increased need the Deacons' Fund balance is extremely low. We are asking for your prayers for wisdom and stewardship as well as your consideration of making a donation to the Deacons' Fund to allow us to continue to meet the growing need in our community. Your assistance is greatly appreciated!

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## Community Barn Dance & Potluck

Come to a community barn dance on **April 20** at First Congregational Church of Woodstock!

Come sample the hilarity and joy of moving through simple figures with neighbors in your community. Singles, couples, and children are all welcome. All dances taught in a walk through by dance leader Ruth Holleran (aka "Hootin' and Holleran"). No experience necessary. Smiles guaranteed!

Dance to the New England fiddle music of stellar contradance band recordings. These are the dances and fiddle tunes that have survived in rural pockets of New England from the days of English, Irish, and French-Canadian settlers. Foot-tapping good, they support upbeat cardio exercise and a cheerful social experience. Come join us for an evening of fun doing circles, easy contras, longways reels, and more!

Potluck at 5:30 (food supplied by the church), Dance 6:30 - 8:00 pm. Wear comfortable clothes and shoes. Chairs will also be available if you want to observe! Bring your water bottle and invite your friends to this fun and free event!

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## Weekly Gathering Opportunities

**Sundays, 6:00 pm** — Young Adult Fellowship Group in the library

**Tuesdays, 7:00 am** — Middle School & High School Bible Study—meet at Maplefields to grab breakfast, then on to the church for study, discussion, and prayer.

**Tuesdays, 10:00 am** — Ladies' Bible Study meets in person at the Thompson Senior Center and via ZOOM, please contact Bonnie Atwood at (802) 457-4120 or email [bonhope2@gmail.com](mailto:bonhope2@gmail.com).

**Tuesdays, 6:00 pm** — Prayer Meeting, in person in the library and via ZOOM

**Wednesdays, 6:15 am** — Men's Bible Study, in person in the library and via ZOOM, please contact Dick Atwood at (802) 457-4120 or email [rbatwood1@gmail.com](mailto:rbatwood1@gmail.com).

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Isaiah 55:1-5

“Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters;
and he who has no money, come, buy and eat!

Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

² Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread,
and your labor for that which does not satisfy?

Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food.

³ Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live;
and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David.

⁴ Behold, I made him a witness to the peoples,
a leader and commander for the peoples.

⁵ Behold, you shall call a nation that you do not know,
and a nation that did not know you shall run to you,
because of *the LORD your God*, and of *the Holy One of Israel*,
for he has glorified you.

Matthew 12:22-30

²² Then a *demon-possessed man* who was blind and mute was brought to him, and he healed him, so that the man spoke and saw. ²³ And all *the people were amazed*, and said, “*Can this be the Son of David?*” ²⁴ But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, “It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons.” ²⁵ Knowing their thoughts, he said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand. ²⁶ And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? ²⁷ And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. ²⁸ *But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.* ²⁹ Or how can someone enter a strong man’s house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house. ³⁰ Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.

Colossians 2:8-15

⁸ See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to *the elemental spirits of the world*, and not according to Christ. ⁹ For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, ¹⁰ and you have been filled in him, *who is the head of all rule and authority.* ¹¹ In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, ¹² having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. ¹³ And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, ¹⁴ by *canceling the record of debt* that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵ *He disarmed the rulers and authorities* and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

Taking Gathered Worship Home

There is so much in this world that does not reflect the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. But the Good News that His rule and reign have already begun is true. Even more amazing is that He is working through people like you and me to make His Kingdom more evident until, at last, He will come again!

Please use the devotional material below each day this week to praise Christ. Ask Jesus to teach us His ways that we may walk in them to accomplish His purposes.

Sunday Morning

READ Mark 1:21-28; Isaiah 55:1-5; Matthew 12:22-30; Deuteronomy 26:16-19; Colossians 2:8-15; 2 Corinthians 2:14-17; Ephesians 6:10-20; Psalm 145:1-21. **DISCUSS** How is King Jesus' Kingdom evident in this passage? How is it manifest in your life? At FCCW? **SERVE** someone in need. **MEDITATE** on **Colossians 2:15**. **PRAY** "Father God, please bring Your kingdom come, and Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

Sunday Evening

Young Adult Fellowship meets at **6pm** in the church library (back door).

Monday

READ Mark 1:21-28; Isaiah 55:1-5; Matthew 12:22-30; Psalm 145:1-21. **DISCUSS** In Isaiah with whom is the Holy One parallel? In Matthew what is the significance of casting out demons? How are you rejoicing in Christ's kingdom today? **SERVE** by putting someone else's interests *above your own!* **MEDITATE** on **Colossians 2:15**. **PRAY**, "Jesus, Thank You for coming to begin Your Kingdom. Make us Your joyful subjects."

Tuesday

READ Mark 1:21-28; Deuteronomy 26:16-19; Colossians 2:8-15; Psalm 145:1-21. **DISCUSS** What is the King's command? How are we His subjects? On whose merits do we serve Him? **SERVE** by considering someone else's needs *above your own!* **MEDITATE** on **Colossians 2:15**. **PRAY**, "Holy One, You are the King who has rescued us and called us to obedient faith. Enable us to live as You command. Make us more and more faithful ambassadors!"

Wednesday

READ **Mark 1:21-28; 2 Corinthians 2:14-17; Ephesians 6:10-20; Psalm 145:1-21**. DISCUSS What is Christ's triumphal procession? How are we in it? What does His victory accomplish? Over whom has He won? SERVE by *caring about someone else* more than yourself! MEDITATE on **Colossians 2:15**. PRAY, "Holy Spirit, thank You for giving us eyes to see and ears to hear the wonder of the gospel of the Kingdom of God!"

Thursday

READ **Mark 1:21-28; Luke 10:17-20; Psalm 145:1-21**. DISCUSS Not only are the demons subject to Jesus, but also to all He sends out in His name. Yet Jesus stresses something else. What is it? Why? SERVE by putting someone else's interests *above your own*! MEDITATE on **Colossians 2:15**. PRAY, "Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we praise You for Your work in our salvation!"

Friday

READ **Mark 1:21-28; Isaiah 55:1-5; Matthew 12:22-30; Deuteronomy 26:16-19; Colossians 2:8-15; 2 Corinthians 2:14-17; Ephesians 6:10-20**. DISCUSS, What has the Holy Spirit been teaching you this week through these passages? MEDITATE on **Colossians 2:15**. PRAY that we at FCCW would *be transformed together by God's Word through Mark*.

Saturday

PREPARE for *gathered worship tomorrow*. READ **Mark 1:1-45**. Invite others to join you tomorrow for the *worship service @ 10:30*. Ask Jesus to *reveal Himself to us in His Word by His Spirit*.

Meditate on this—Colossians 2:15

"[God] disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in [Christ]."