



The _____
First Congregational Church
_____ of Woodstock _____

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

July 30th, 2023

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

Postlude

*~~ Organist: Jonathan Denham ~~
~~ Please ensure cell phones are off ~~*

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### Save the Date!

- Sunday, August 13** — 4:00-7:00 pm Cookout and Missionary Visit with the Megills
- Friday, August 25** — 5:00-7:00 pm COT Hot Dogs & S'mores on the FCCW lawn
- Saturday, August 26** — 8:00 am-6:30 pm Jonathan Edwards Historical Bus Tour
- Wednesday, August 30** — 6:30-7:30 pm 250 Years of Amazing Grace—a History of FCCW presentation at the Woodstock History Center
- Saturday, September 9** — 11:00 am-1:00 pm Alice Frick Memorial Service
- Sunday, October 29** — Missionary Visit with the Klassens (stay tuned for details!)

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Nursery Volunteers Needed

Can you give one Sunday to help minister to the youngest members of our church family? We have a full-time nursery attendant, but we need a volunteer to help her each Sunday from 9-11 (July-August) or 10-12 (September-December). If you are willing to help one Sunday or more, you can find the sign-up sheet in the Billings Room, or contact Karis Warren at karis.warren@gmail.com or (207) 329-4190. Thank you!

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## 250 Years of Amazing Grace

If you were unable to join our evening of music and history, as we looked back over God's grace to FCCW since our first gathering 250 years ago, there is a video recording available. It can be viewed at:

[sermonaudio.com/sermon/7272314859449](http://sermonaudio.com/sermon/7272314859449)

Preston Bristow will also be sharing his digital slide presentation on the history of FCCW at the Woodstock History Center on Wednesday, August 30<sup>th</sup> at 6:30. All are welcome to attend.

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Young Adult Fellowship will begin again  
*next* Sunday, August 6<sup>th</sup>.

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## Jonathan Edwards History and Fellowship Retreat

Jonathan Edwards, a leading figure in the American Enlightenment, was a great theologian, writer, philosopher, and missionary to the Mohican Indians. After we explore his stomping grounds and delve into the history of the First Great Awakening, you will have time to visit the vibrant Main Street of Stockbridge, MA that has the look and feel of a 1950's movie. A Parisian Patisserie, an eclectic General Store, a chocolatier, a timeless Music Shop, plus a variety of other unique shops provide opportunities to experience the culture and flavor of Stockbridge. There is also the Norman Rockwell Museum (an additional admission fee is required), which encompasses 10 galleries and a scenic 36-acre campus, offering engaging programs and exhibits of this American artist. Join Paul Hoehner as our tour guide leading us through the history and teachings of Jonathan Edwards as we ride on a luxury bus to Stockbridge. We will meet at the Woodstock Union High School at 7:45 am on Saturday, August 26. Depart for Stockbridge, MA and return around 6:30 pm. Bring a bag lunch or eat in one of the quaint local cafes. Tickets are \$25 and can be purchased from Terri DeDell. Cash, check, or Venmo accepted. If you have any questions or would like to purchase tickets, Terri can be contacted at [dedellcrew@gmail.com](mailto:dedellcrew@gmail.com).

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Greeters Needed

Would you like to help welcome folks to worship on Sunday mornings? We need two volunteers each Sunday from 9:10 until the beginning of worship. If you would like to serve in this way there is a sign-up sheet in the Billings Room near the punch bowl. Questions? Contact Diana Snider at dennisnider@msn.com.

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- Athletic Director
- Physical Education Teacher

Call MVCS @ 802-295-6800 or email [headofschool@mvcs.info](mailto:headofschool@mvcs.info) for more information or to apply.

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John 3:1-15

Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, *unless one is **born again** he cannot see the kingdom of God.*”⁴ Nicodemus said to him, “*How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?*”⁵ Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, *unless one is **born of water and the Spirit**, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.*”⁶ That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is *born of the Spirit is spirit.*⁷ Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘**You must be born again.**’⁸ The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. *So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.*”

⁹ Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?”¹⁰ Jesus answered him, “Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things?”¹¹ Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but *you do not receive our testimony.*¹² If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things?¹³ No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.¹⁴ And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up,¹⁵ that **whoever believes in him may have eternal life.**

John 1:9-13

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

James 1:17-18

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.¹⁸ *Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth,* that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

Ezekiel 36:26-28

And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and *give you a heart of flesh.*²⁷ *And I will put my Spirit within you,* and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.²⁸ You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, *and you shall be my people, and I will be your God.*

Second Corinthians 5:17-21

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, *he is a new creation.* The old has passed away; *behold, the new has come.*¹⁸ **All this is from God,** who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation;¹⁹ that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.²⁰ Therefore, *we are ambassadors for Christ,* God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.²¹ For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Taking Gathered Worship Home

What do you think about when you hear the phrase, “born again”? Is it what the Scripture means by being “born of God” in First John? How are we to understand this peculiar phrase? What difference does it make to our daily living?

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 **First John 5:1-5; John 1:9-13; 3:1-15; 14:15-17; James 1:16-18; Ezekiel 36:26-28; Second Corinthians 5:17-21; Psalm 133**. DISCUSS What does it mean to be *born of God*? How is this related to *being born again*? Have you been born again? How do you know? MEDITATE on **John 14:15-17**. PRAY “Jesus, *You* are the God of life. Thank You for coming to give us life that we might love You and one another.”

Sunday Evening

Young Adult Fellowship will begin again *next* Sunday, August 6th.

Monday

READ **First John 5:1-5; John 3:1-15; Psalm 133**. DISCUSS Why did Jesus tell Nicodemus that he *must* be born again? Who is the “Son of Man” referred to here? Who has descended from heaven and ascended again? Why? What has He accomplished? How does this relate to the psalm? SERVE by taking time to help someone! MEDITATE on **John 14:15-17**. PRAY, “Father God, You are faithful throughout generations; increase our trust in You.”

Tuesday

READ **First John 5:1-5; John 1:9-13; Ezekiel 36:26-28**. DISCUSS How is Jesus described in these verses? What did Jesus give to those who believed in His name? What does it mean to believe in His name? According to Ezekiel *why do we obey*? Is that you? MEDITATE on **John 14:15-17**. PRAY, “Lord, Thank You for giving us Yourself as true light. Thank You for opening our eyes that we might look upon You by faith. Teach us to trust You and so behave as the children of God should.”

Wednesday

READ **First John 5:1-5; James 1:16-18; Psalm 133**. DISCUSS How much did we contribute to our new birth? Who should get the glory for it? Why? MEDITATE on **John 14:15-17**. PRAY, “Jesus, You alone are worthy of all glory. Thank You for rescuing us from sin and death and giving us new life in Your name.”

Thursday

READ **First John 5:1-5; Second Corinthians 5:17-21**. DISCUSS How are we made new? To whom is Christ’s righteousness credited? Why? SERVE by putting someone else’s interests *above your own!* MEDITATE on **John 14:15-17**. PRAY, “God above all gods, You alone are the Giver of Life and we praise You!”

Friday

READ **First John 5:1-5; John 1:9-13; 3:1-15; 14:15-17; James 1:16-18; Ezekiel 36:26-28; Second Corinthians 5:17-21; Psalm 133**. DISCUSS What has God been teaching you this week? SERVE by *caring for someone in need!* MEDITATE on **John 14:15-17**. PRAY that we at FCCW would *live in a manner worthy of our calling*.

Saturday

PREPARE today for *gathered Sunday worship tomorrow*. CONSIDER What can you do today to be better prepared for gathering with God’s people tomorrow? READ **Psalm 86:1-17**. *Invite others to join you tomorrow for the worship service @ 9:30 am*. PRAY, “Lord, prepare Your people for Your praises. Gather us together to delight in You.”

John 14:15-17

“*If you love me, you will keep my commandments*. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom *the world cannot receive*, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.”