



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

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

*December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022  
Christmas Eve Candlelight Service*



# *Christmas Eve Service*

December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022

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

Leader: This night we celebrate what millions of people waited so long to come! Why do we light the advent candles?

**Family: Jesus said, "I am the Light of the world. He who follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the Light of Life."**

Leader: What is the meaning of the lighted *Christ Candle*?

**Family: The lighted candle is a reminder that Christ, the true Light, has come into the world as promised, our Messiah—Prophet, Priest, and King.**

Leader: What do the gospels say about Christ?

**Family: The Gospels assure us that "the true Light that gives light to every man had already come into the world, though the world did not recognize Him. He came to that which was His own, but His own did not receive Him. Yet to all that received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God." (John 1:9-13)**

Invocation

Pastor

Lesson #1 *Curse & Promise of Deliverance* Genesis 3:8-19; 22:15-18

<sup>3:8</sup> And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence

of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.<sup>9</sup> But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?”<sup>10</sup> And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.”<sup>11</sup> He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?”<sup>12</sup> The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.”<sup>13</sup> Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

<sup>14</sup> The Lord God said to the serpent,

“Because you have done this,  
cursed are you above all livestock  
and above all beasts of the field;  
on your belly you shall go,  
and dust you shall eat  
all the days of your life.

<sup>15</sup> I will put enmity between you and the woman,  
and between your offspring and her offspring;  
he shall bruise your head,  
and you shall bruise his heel.”

<sup>16</sup> To the woman he said,

“I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing;  
in pain you shall bring forth children.  
Your desire shall be contrary to your husband,  
but he shall rule over you.”

<sup>17</sup> And to Adam he said,

“Because you have listened to the voice of your wife  
and have eaten of the tree  
of which I commanded you,  
‘You shall not eat of it,’  
cursed is the ground because of you;

in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;  
<sup>18</sup> thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you;  
and you shall eat the plants of the field.

<sup>19</sup> By the sweat of your face  
you shall eat bread,  
till you return to the ground,  
for out of it you were taken;  
for you are dust,  
and to dust you shall return.”

<sup>22:15</sup> And the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven <sup>16</sup> and said, “By myself I have sworn, declares the Lord, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, <sup>17</sup> I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, <sup>18</sup> and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.”

❖ Carol #195 *Joy to the World* Congregation

Lesson #2 *God will raise up a Prophet* Deuteronomy 18:15-19

<sup>15</sup> “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen— <sup>16</sup> just as you desired of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God or see this great fire any more, lest I die.’ <sup>17</sup> And the Lord said to me, ‘They are right in what they have spoken. <sup>18</sup> I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. <sup>19</sup> And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him.

Duet *What Child Is This/Child of the Poor*

Sopranos: Anne Denham and Leah Eells

Lesson #3 *God will raise up a Priest* Psalm 110; Hebrews 9:11-14

Psalm 110 The Lord says to my Lord:

“Sit at my right hand,  
until I make your enemies your footstool.”

<sup>2</sup> The Lord sends forth from Zion  
 your mighty scepter.  
 Rule in the midst of your enemies!

<sup>3</sup> Your people will offer themselves freely  
 on the day of your power,  
 in holy garments;  
 from the womb of the morning,  
 the dew of your youth will be yours.

<sup>4</sup> The Lord has sworn  
 and will not change his mind,  
 “You are a priest forever  
 after the order of Melchizedek.”

<sup>5</sup> The Lord is at your right hand;  
 he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath.

<sup>6</sup> He will execute judgment among the nations,  
 filling them with corpses;  
 he will shatter chiefs  
 over the wide earth.

<sup>7</sup> He will drink from the brook by the way;  
 therefore he will lift up his head.

Hebrews 9:11 But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) <sup>12</sup> he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. <sup>13</sup> For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, <sup>14</sup> how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

❖ Carol #208	<i>O Come, All Ye Faithful</i>	Congregation
Sacrificial Offering Description		Pastor
Lesson #4	<i>God will raise up a Davidic King</i>	Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

<sup>9:2</sup> The people who walked in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,  
on them has light shone.

<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.

❖ Carol #194                      *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*                      Congregation  
Lesson #5                              *Gabriel is sent to Mary*                              Luke 1:26-38

<sup>26</sup> In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, <sup>27</sup> to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup> And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" <sup>29</sup> But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup> And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup> And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. <sup>32</sup> He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, <sup>33</sup> and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

<sup>34</sup> And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"

<sup>35</sup> And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.”<sup>36</sup> And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. <sup>37</sup> For nothing will be impossible with God.” <sup>38</sup> And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

❖ Carol #230                                      *Thou Who Wast Rich*                                      Congregation

Lesson #6      *Jesus’s Birth in Bethlehem as the Messiah*      Luke 2:1, 3-16

<sup>2:1</sup> In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.

<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.

Sacrificial Offering	Board of Christian Missions
Christmas Eve Offertory	<i>Once in Royal David's City</i> Soprano: Susannah Denham
Christmas Eve Message	Psalm 72:1-4 Pastor

*“To Defend His People and to Crush the Oppressor”*

Give the king your justice, O God,  
and your righteousness to the royal son!  
<sup>2</sup> May he judge your people with righteousness,  
and your poor with justice!  
<sup>3</sup> Let the mountains bear prosperity for the people,  
and the hills, in righteousness!  
<sup>4</sup> May he defend the cause of the poor of the people,  
give deliverance to the children of the needy,  
and crush the oppressor!

❖ Carol (see insert)	<i>Psalm 72:1-4</i>	Congregation
Lesson #7	<i>Jesus Came as He Promised</i>	Acts 3:13-26

<sup>13</sup> The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus, whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him. <sup>14</sup> But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, <sup>15</sup> and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. <sup>16</sup> And his name—by faith in his name—has made this man strong whom you see and know, and the faith that is through Jesus has given the man this perfect health in the presence of you all.

<sup>17</sup> “And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. <sup>18</sup> But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer, he thus fulfilled. <sup>19</sup> Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, <sup>20</sup> that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed



# Pastor Doug's 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.