



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

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

*March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2024  
Palm Sunday*

# *The Order of Morning Worship*

March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Ten-thirty

Welcome

Pastor Doug Warren

Easter Offering Announcement

Nancy Stockwell

Prelude & Silent Prayer

- ❖ Call to Worship      Zechariah 9:9 and John 12:13      Pastor  
    Pastor: Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!  
    **Congregation: Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!**  
    Pastor: Behold, your King is coming to you;  
    **Congregation: Righteous and having salvation is He,**  
    Pastor: Humble and mounted on a donkey,  
    **Congregation: On a colt, the foal of a donkey.**  
    Pastor: Hosanna!  
    **Congregation: Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord,**  
    **All: Even the King of Israel!**

*Those who would like to participate are invited to bring a palm frond forward and lay at the foot of the cross during the last verse of the hymn. This is what the crowd did before Jesus as an ancient symbol of recognizing their King. The Date Palm was a symbol of the king's provision for his people.*

- ❖ Hymn of Exultation #235      *All Glory, Laud, and Honor*      Congregation  
Scriptural Call to Repentance      based on John 12 & 19      Pastor  
Collective Confession      Congregation

**Lord Jesus, You are Lord of all Creation. You are the ruling King of all the earth and we humble ourselves before You. We sing to You our hosannas, like Your people of old, yet we confess that with these same mouths that praise You, we have often denied You. As much as we might join in the assembly to lay palm branches before You, testifying that You are the rightful King, we likewise rebel against You. We have ignored Your commands. We have disparaged Your name. We have claimed our own authority instead of submitting to Yours. Lord, we pray, forgive us for our disloyalty. Make us faithful servants. Heal us from our defiance, we pray in Christ's holy name.**

Silent Reflection and Confession

Proclamation of Forgiveness

Psalm 118:14

Pastor

Pastoral Prayer		Pastor
Offering	(collected from back to front)	Congregation
Affirmation of Faith	<i>The Westminster Shorter Catechism</i> <sup>1</sup>	Congregation
Pastor:	How does Christ reign as King?	
Congregation:	<b>Christ reigns as King, in subduing us to Himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all His and our enemies.</b>	
❖ Scripture Reading	First Peter 1:3-9	Pastor
❖ The Lord's Prayer		Congregation
	<b>“Our Father, Who is in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.”</b>	
❖ Hymn of Reflection #198	<i>Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates</i>	Congregation
The Sermon	Mark 2:18-22	Pastor
	<i>“A Time to Feast, and a Time to Fast”</i>	
❖ Hymn of Response #310	<i>Rejoice, the Lord is King</i>	Congregation
❖ Benediction	Philippians 4: 7	Pastor

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

## Postlude

*~~ Organist: Jonathan Denham ~~*

*~~ Please ensure cell phones are off ~~*

*Prelude: Prelude and Fugue in G Minor (Bach)*

*The Palms (Faure)*

*Offertory: Were You There (Trad., Arr. Sharik)*

*Postlude: Postlude on St. Theodulph (Gawthrop)*

*Handbells: Jonathan Denham, Heidi Tucker*

<sup>1</sup> A catechism is a question and answer format for teaching the truths contained in Scripture. The Westminster Shorter Catechism was written in 1647 in England primarily as an aid for teaching children. It has been used by congregations and families in both worship and instruction for the past 350 years.

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## Easter Services

Friday, March 29 **6:30-7:30 pm Good Friday Service**

*This day when Jesus was betrayed, beaten, and brutalized on a cross is called "good," as in holy, for what was accomplished for all who trust in Jesus for salvation.*

**Sunday, March 31 – He Is Risen!**

**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

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## Easter Flowers

Easter plants and flowers always bring beauty to the Easter service. If you would like to share a flowering plant for the Easter service in memory of a loved one and take it home after, please contact Elaine Johnston (802-474-3012) or Alison Briggs (802-775-8088) to order. Also, please remember to make your check out to FCCW.

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## Save the Date!

**Friday, March 29, 6:30-7:30 pm** — Good Friday service

**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

**Friday, April 12-Saturday, April 13** — Intro to FCCW Workshop

**Saturday, April 20, 9:00 am-3:30 pm** — CCEF Conference

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

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

**Friday, June 7** — Concert of Prayer

**Sunday, July 21** — Church Picnic on the WCCC playground (rain date July 28)

**Saturday, August 24** — Libby Warren's wedding here at FCCW

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Young Adult Fellowship Group will meet tonight at 6 pm  
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### Easter Sacrificial Offering

On Easter Sunday we will take a special sacrificial offering for Caleb Rayapati and Harvest Ministries in Secunderabad, India. They are in need of a new vehicle to enable them to travel throughout the region and minister in many ways to these remote villages in the name of Jesus. Check out the front-page feature of the FCCW March Prayer Letter for more information and some pictures!

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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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### Introduction to FCCW Workshop

Interested in knowing more about FCCW? Want to explore questions about the Bible in a small group? What does it mean to be a member? What opportunities are there to serve at FCCW? Consider attending the *Introduction to FCCW Workshop* being offered **Friday** night, **April 12**, from **6-9 pm** (includes dinner) and **Saturday** morning, **April 13**, from **9 am-noon** (includes continental breakfast.) This two-part workshop will give insight into how FCCW functions and the importance of membership. To register, please contact Kristen at [fccwinfo@gmail.com](mailto:fccwinfo@gmail.com).

Session One—Worship

Session Two—Joyous Knowledge

Session Three—Radical Love for One Another

Session Four— Extending His Grace

Session Five— Belonging to His Community

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## Community Barn Dance & Chili Supper

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!

Chili Supper 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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The March prayer letter is available on the back table.

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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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## Greeter Sign Up

There is a sign-up sheet in the Billings Room for Sunday morning greeters. If you would like to help welcome folks on Sunday morning please take a moment to sign up! Questions? Check with Rosmarie Vanderhoof.

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## **Mark’s Gospel—Jesus’ True Identity Reveals the Magnitude of His Sacrifice**

10:30 Morning Worship Service:

Mark 2:18-22

### **A Time to Feast, and a Time to Fast**

*Jesus Is the Bridegroom of His People.*

**1. The Bridegroom Has Come to Prepare His Bride (19-20).**

**2. The People Mistake Jesus for One of the Ushers (18).**

**3. The Wedding Will Be Soon—We Must Get Ready (21-22)!**

Conclusion: Traditions can help us remember important realities, but unfortunately, they can also supplant the very thing(s) they are meant to highlight. Fasting is a God-ordained way of grieving over our sin and sharpening our minds as we seek God’s guidance. Feasting is also a means for our benefit that God has appointed to aid our celebration of His many blessings. In this passage of Scripture, we see not only a confusion over which is appropriate in their setting, but more importantly the reality of Jesus’ position as *the Bridegroom who has the authority to direct which is right and when*. How does understanding Jesus as our Bridegroom help us to follow Him in both grief and celebration?



### **Ecclesiastes 3:1-8**

*For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:  
a time to be born, and a time to die;  
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;  
a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;  
a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;  
a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together;  
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;  
a time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;  
a time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;  
a time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace.*

### **Romans 12:9-15**

*Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.*

### **First Peter 1:3-9**

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be *born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead*, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation *ready to be revealed in the last time*. In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and *rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory*, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

# Taking Gathered Worship Home

What does it mean for Jesus to be the Bridegroom of His people? When is it appropriate to grieve? When is it time to celebrate? How does the gospel alone provide us unspeakable joy in the midst of grief?

*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 2:18-22; Ecclesiastes 3:1-8, 11a; First Peter 1:3-9; Romans 12:9-15; John 2:1-12; 14:1-7; Psalm 37:1-40.** DISCUSS What does it mean that Jesus is the Bridegroom of His people? How is this a claim to divinity? Does that fill you with hope? Why or why not? SERVE someone in need. MEDITATE on **John 3:29-30.** PRAY “Sweet Beloved of Our Souls, *enflame our hearts with love for You, our Betrothed.* Help us to yearn for Your return. Order all our affections accordingly.”

## Sunday Evening

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

## Monday

READ **Mark 2:18-22; Ecclesiastes 3:1-8, 11a; First Peter 1:3-9.** DISCUSS What was the significance of this moment in redemptive history that those questioning Jesus did not understand? What do we tend to miss in our own moment? How does the gospel lead to joy even in difficulty? SERVE by putting someone else’s interests *above your own!* MEDITATE on **John 3:29-30.** PRAY, “Jesus, forgive us for the many ways our love grows cold. Holy Spirit, help us know how to love Christ as we should and our neighbors as ourselves sharing their joy and grief.”

## Tuesday

READ **Mark 2:18-22; First Peter 1:3-9; Romans 12:9-15.** DISCUSS How does the gospel free us to weep and rejoice appropriately? In what ways are you demonstrating this? SERVE by considering someone else’s needs *above your own!* MEDITATE on **John 3:29-30.** PRAY, “Jesus, You are the perfect Bridegroom. We love You! Holy Spirit, enable us to grow in that love and make us faithful to Him.”

### Wednesday

READ **Mark 2:18-22; John 2:1-12; Psalm 37:1-40**. DISCUSS How did Jesus participate in the wedding in Cana? How does this help us delight in His beauty as our Bridegroom? What is the role of faith as we wait for His return for us? SERVE by *caring about someone else* more than yourself! MEDITATE on **John 3:29-30**. PRAY, “Beloved, forgive our arrogance and presumption. It is only through Your grace that we are Your Bride. Teach us to walk as befits Your holiness, patience, and love.”

### Thursday

READ **Mark 2:18-22; John 14:1-7; Psalm 37:1-40**. DISCUSS Where is Christ now? What is He doing? How does this shape your celebrations and grief? How are you (we) trusting our Bridegroom in our emotions? SERVE by putting someone else’s interests *above your own!* MEDITATE on **John 3:29-30**. PRAY, “Jesus, You know perfectly what is appropriate and when. Holy Spirit, grant us wisdom and discernment so that we might love people more appropriately.”

### Good Friday

READ **Mark 15:6-39; Psalm 22:1-31**. Privately confess your sins and grieve the horror that they cost Christ on the cross.

ATTEND the *Good Friday Service at FCCW* tonight at 6:30pm.

PRAY that we at FCCW would *be transformed together by God’s Word through Mark*.

### Saturday

PREPARE for Easter Sunday *gathered worship tomorrow*. READ **Mark 16:1-8**. Invite others to join you tomorrow for **Easter worship services at 7:00 am** on Mt Tom and **10:30 at the church building**. Ask Jesus to *reveal Himself to us in His Word by His Spirit*.

## Meditate on John 3:29-30

[John the Baptist said] “The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom’s voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete. He must increase, but I must decrease.”