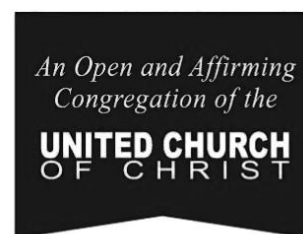




38 South Winooski Avenue
Burlington, Vermont



firstchurchburlington.org

January 29, 2023
10 a.m.

"In the ritual of baptism, our ancestors acted out the bizarre truth of the Christian identity: We are people who stand totally exposed before evil and death and declare them powerless against love. There's nothing normal about that."
— Rachel Held Evans

PRELUDE *Deep River* *arr. Hailstork*

WORDS OF WELCOME The Rev. Elissa C. Johnk

*Online worshipers (live stream) are invited to greet the congregation
by writing your name in the YouTube chat.*

*Please also submit any prayer requests via the YouTube chat -
prayer requests received prior to the sermon will be shared during "Prayers of the People."*

***CALL TO WORSHIP AND INVOCATION** David and Lindsay Lightbody
by Dorothy McRae-McMahon & Rex Hunt, adapt

Leader: As we enter into this sacred place,

All: let us put away the pressures of the world that ask us to perform, to take up masks, to put on brave fronts.

Leader: As we gather in community, silence the voices that ask you to be perfect. This is a community of compassion and welcoming.

All: We bring all that we are and all that we yet can be, to this safe and holy place.

Leader: For the opportunity to be together, to remember the past,

All: to write our future, to be fully alive in our present...

Leader: to come home in community,

All: we give you thanks, O God.

Leader: Let us pray:

All: Calling God, you have gathered us into this community. A place has been made for each of us. Let what we say and do here be restorative for us and honest to your creativity, and prepare us for the life of the world. Amen.

***OPENING HYMN** *Many Are the Lightbeams* #163 NCH

GOSPEL READING Matthew 3:13-17 William Gunger

TIME OF UNBURDENING *from Isaiah*

Leader: You have told us what you would choose for us:

People: to loose the bonds of injustice, to let the oppressed go free,

Leader: to share our bread with the hungry, and shelter the homeless,

People: to do away with the clenched fist and the wicked word.

Leader: For all the times we have failed to choose this path, O God,

People: forgive us, and help us to accept responsibility for our own journey, welcoming the transformation you are, even now, putting before us. Amen.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE PASSING OF THE PEACE

WORD OF GOD FOR (SM) ALL AGES

COVENANT RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS

(See below)

HEBREW BIBLE READING

Isaiah 42:1-9

SERMON

***HYMN OF THANKSGIVING**

I Was There to Hear Your Borne Cry

#351 NCH

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

This week's "Celebrations & Prayer's" list is available for you on the front page of our website – <https://firstchurchburlington.org/> - and among the links under the title of the YouTube live stream throughout this morning's live stream of the worship service.

PASTORAL PRAYER

SILENT PRAYER

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy 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 thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

CALL TO THE OFFERING

OFFERTORY

Wade in the Water

arr. Gilpin

You are invited to offer monetary gifts online using this link: <https://bit.ly/fccbonlinegiving> (also under the video title on YouTube)

or by texting FCCBUCC to 73256 - or mail a check payable to:

First Congregational Church at 38 South Winooski Avenue, Burlington, VT 05401

***DOXOLOGY**

STUTTGART

All the wealth that we may gather, Is for use in causes just.

We are stewards of the bounty, Loaned to us in solemn trust. Amen.

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

***CLOSING HYMN**

Sweet, Sweet Spirit

#293 NCH

***BIDDING TO MISSION AND BENEDICTION**

POSTLUDE

All Things Bright and Beautiful

arr. Rutter

**Please stand as you are able, in body or in spirit.*

Virtual Fellowship: Worship is followed by Fellowship at First Church – and remotely on [ZOOM](https://bit.ly/sundayfellowship) - the link is: <https://bit.ly/sundayfellowship>

In preparation for next week's Annual Meeting, download the Annual Report here: <https://bit.ly/fccbannualreport2022>

COVENANT SERVICE OF MEMBERSHIP

QUESTIONS OF THE CANDIDATES

QUESTION OF THE CONGREGATION

Before you stand God's people, God's gift to you, as you are to them. Will you welcome them with open hearts? Will you confirm the promises made to them at the time of baptism, offering them the love and support of the Christian church? And will you welcome the new challenges, questions, gifts and insights they bring, as together we grow in faith?

We will, with the help of God.

WELCOME AND RECEPTION

Deacon: Let us, the members and friends of the First Congregational Church of Burlington, United Church of Christ, express our welcome and affirm our mutual ministry in Christ. Since with them we are changed in body, we reunite ourselves by reciting our church's historic covenant together:

(UNISON) We covenant with the Lord and with one another to respond to God's call that we be people of God in the name of Jesus Christ. We take this to be our Church, promising to walk with our fellow members in faithfulness and Christian love. We accept as our responsibility the worship of God, the fellowship of this community, and the witness of our church. We claim as our mission the promotion of justice, human dignity and peace, and participation in meeting the unfolding needs of God's people. We bind ourselves to follow the leadings of God's spirit as God reveals them to us.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION AND THANKSGIVING

JOINING TODAY



Paul Bloomhardt: I grew up in Burlington, attended Edmunds Jr. High and Burlington High School and was confirmed as a member of First Congregational Church in 1965! After college I was a TV producer for 25 years in Pittsburgh and Boston, returning to Vermont in 1994, where I worked in media and at Johnson State College. Since retiring in 2013 I have pursued a hobby of international travel, visiting over 25 countries before Covid hit. I live in Shelburne and have two adult children, one in Boston and one in Washington, DC. I am looking forward to rejoining the First Church.



Julie Cadwallader Staub: I retired in 2021 after a career in education and social services, with much of it focused on increasing access to high quality, affordable childcare. Now, I'm enjoying being able to focus on my avocation of poetry – writing, reading, sharing, and teaching it. I live in South Burlington and have three adult children, one in LA, one in Minneapolis, and one in Waterbury. I'm delighted to be joining this community of faith!



Jeff and Jennifer Trussell: We recently moved to Shelburne from the DC area with our three kids, and we feel like we made the best decision! We own a small video production agency, and when we're not working we're usually out exploring new surroundings with the kids. We're really happy to have found a great church to be part of and are looking forward to getting involved and giving back.

WELCOME VISITORS!

Welcome to First Congregational Church in Burlington. Our faith is over 2,000 years old, but our thinking is not! First Church opens its doors to the Greater Burlington area, to seekers, to tourists from near and far, to those in need, to an array of building users, and to a congregation (of members, friends, and family—both curious and the committed) who call our faith community their church home.

We celebrate the sacred worth of all persons as unique individuals made in the image of God. Whatever your age, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, or physical, cognitive, or emotional ability, we invite you to find a safe and nurturing spiritual home with us. All are welcome to participate, fully and without reservation, in the life, leadership, ministry and mission of this church as we seek to grow together in a community of faith.

The First Congregational Church of Burlington is an Open & Affirming Church of the United Church of Christ. This means everyone – **everyone** – is welcome.
Including YOU!

Staff Directory

Elissa Johnk, *Lead Minister*

Caroline Catlin, *Office & Nursery Administrator*

Lucy Samara, *Communications Coordinator*

Jennifer Coleman, *Bell Choir Director*

Laura Elder-Connors, *Children's Choir Director*

Derik Breen, *Building & Grounds*

Amy Shortt, *Director of Music*

Hilah Clarke, *Faith Formation Director*

Max Johnson, *A/V Coordinator*

Jason Vanderlaan, *Youth Ministries*

Ian Rock-Jones, *Security Staff*

Jesse O'Gorman, *Security Staff*

Paul Hobbs, *Head Usher*

Linda Elrick and Sara Wilcoxson, *Welcomers*

Lou Rochford, *Digital Usher*

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