



**Sixth Sunday
after Epiphany
February 11, 2024**

**Service of Release
for
Amy Shortt, Director of Music**

*“True spiritual love is not a feeble imitation and anticipation of death,
but a triumph over death, not a separation of the immortal form from the mortal,
of the eternal from the temporal, but a transfiguration of the mortal into the immortal, the
acceptance of the temporal into the eternal.*

*False spirituality is a denial of the flesh; true spirituality is the regeneration of the flesh, its
salvation, its resurrection from the dead.”*

— Vladimir Solovyov

*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 – to be shared during “Prayers of the People.”*

GATHERING MUSIC

Amy Shortt

PRELUDE

Over My Head
Bellana Driscoll, *soloist*

WORDS OF WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Rev. Elissa Johnk

***CALL TO WORSHIP AND INVOCATION**

Mandy Grace

by Revs. Rob Smith and Joanna Harader, adapted

One: Beyond our busyness, above the cold winter floor
there is a glory rising born of heaven and reaching out to each one of us,

**All: a light that shines through the clouds,
an invitation seeking all of who we are, that transfigures the world.**

One: That transforms darkness into hope, that brings life from a cross,
where old life ends and new life is born.

All: We seek that transformation today.

One: Sometimes God shows up in ways we cannot deny, in a place we can go
in a light we can see, in a voice we can hear, in a stone we can touch.
Sometimes there is a veil, a cloud, questions. Wondering. Silence.
But always, God shows up.

All: So we have shown up here, now.

One: May God give us eyes to see. Amen.

***OPENING HYMN** *When in Our Music God Is Glorified* #561 NCH

SCRIPTURE READING 2 Kings 2:1-12 John Floyd

TIME OF UNBURDENING

***WORDS OF ASSURANCE AND PASSING THE PEACE**

ANTHEM *A Love Round* arr. Nancy Gifford
Alleluia and Cherub Choirs

WORD OF GOD FOR (SM)ALL AGES Hilah Clarke

Children are always welcome in worship. Those who wish to join their peers for Kidz Lab are invited to follow Hilah to their classrooms now.

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 • 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.

***HYMN OF RESPONSE** *How Can I Keep From Singing* #476 NCH

CALL TO THE OFFERING

*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*

OFFERTORY *Prayer of Consecration* Deborah Dresei

Sanctuary Choir

*Lord of life, sing through me. Give my heart a melody
So sweet and pure, good and true That I may offer a song to You.
Come to me and still my fear Until my song is Yours alone.
Sing through me, Lord of Life; Make my voice Your own!
Lord of life, pray through me. Fill my mind with quiet peace
So sweet and pure, good and true, That I may have only thoughts of You.
Come to me and still my doubt Until my dreams are Yours alone.
Pray through me, Lord of Life; Make my mind Your own!
Lord of life, live through me. Keep my soul in harmony
So sweet and pure, good and true, That through my living I'll honor You.
Come to me and still my will Until my deeds are Yours alone.
Live through me, Lord of life; Make my heart Your own!*

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

***SONG OF PRAISE**

#780 NCH

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, you heavenly host; Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost. Amen.*

SERMON

***HYMN OF THANKSGIVING** *Sing Praise to God, Our Highest Good*

#6 NCH

SERVICE OF RELEASE

GREETING AND REMEMBRANCE

Laura Elder-Connors
Children's Choir Director

LITANY OF RELEASE

Jamie Polli, *Church President*

Pres.: In 2022, Amy began her service as Director of Music Ministries.

Amy: I thank First Church, its members and friends, [...] As I leave, I carry with me all that I have learned here.

All: We receive your thankfulness, offer forgiveness, and accept that you now leave to continue your journey elsewhere.

We express our gratitude for your time among us.

We ask your forgiveness for our mistakes.

Your influence on our music and faith life will not leave us at your departure.

Amy: I forgive you and accept your gratitude, trusting that our time together and our parting are pleasing to God.

QUESTIONS OF THE CONGREGATION AND QUESTIONS OF AMY

Pastor: Do you, the members and friends of First Church release Amy from the duties of Director of Music Ministries?

All: We do, with the help of God.

Pastor: Do you offer your encouragement for her music ministry as it unfolds in new ways?

All: We do, with the help of God.

PRAYER

Leader: O God, we give thanks for [...] Your name saw our laughter and tears, our hopes and disappointments.

All: Guide us as we hold these cherished memories but move in new directions, until that time to come when we are completely one with you and with each other.

Pastor: In the name of Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.

All: Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC

A Million Dreams
Lilly Merchant and Luke Wille, *duet*

B. Pasek and J. Paul

*Welcoming All.
Seeking Justice.
Finding God.*

38 South Winooski Avenue
Burlington, Vermont



*An Open and Affirming
Congregation of the*
**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**


firstchurchburlington.org

***BIDDING TO MISSION AND BENEDICTION**

***SUNG BENEDICTION**

Now Go with God

arr. Gail Allen

POSTLUDE

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

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!

The flowers on the pulpit this morning are given by the Sanctuary Choir in honor of our Director of Music Amy Shortt, and in grateful appreciation of her ministry among us.

Staff Directory

Elissa Johnk, *Lead Minister*

Caroline Catlin, *Office & Nursery Administrator*

Hilah Clarke, *Faith Formation Director*

Lucy Samara, *Communications Coordinator*

Jennifer Coleman, *Bell Choir Director*

Ava Bilton, *Director of Congregational Life*

Amy Shortt, *Director of Music*

Emerson Grow, *Interim A/V Coordinator*

Jason Vanderlaan, *Youth Ministries*

Jesse O’Gorman, *Security Staff*

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

Derik Breen, *Building & Grounds*

Paul Hobbs, *Head Usher*

Patty Thomas and Sara Wilcoxson, *Welcomer*

Lou Rochford, *Digital Usher*

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