

First Congregational Church of Berlin
Berlin Corners, Vermont
An inclusive, open & affirming church
Rev. Simon Ruth de Voil, Guest Leader
Christopher McWilliams, Music Director

Whoever you are and wherever you are on life's journey, you're welcome here.

January 12, 2025



Do You Know Who You Are?

New year beckons us with resolutions to change ourselves — we'll be better, we promise! But God calls us forth into something much deeper than self improvement: stepping into who we already are.

WE GATHER TOGETHER

*Indicates that you may stand

RINGING OF THE BELL

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

PRELUDE *Prelude in D Major Opus 23 No. 4, by Sergei Rachmaninoff*

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

INTROIT *Jesus Come! For We Invite You* **FCCB Choir**

CALL TO WORSHIP (Responsive)

(An adaptation of Living Psalm 139 for Epiphany by Maria Mankin.)

Leader: It's something, isn't it, to imagine being known so thoroughly that the pain you hold is understood without you having to say a single word, without you having to testify about your decision from last year or ten years ago or yesterday, when you said the thing that led to the other thing that brought you so low you thought you'd never be known for more than the pain that crystallized around your hopes and your heart?

ALL: Before a word is on my tongue God, you have known its meaning through and through.

Leader: It's something, isn't it, to believe in One who isn't afraid of your broken parts or ugly deeds or the cowardice or the fear or the anger or the hundred other ways you have tried to make yourself disappear when you felt unworthy of a great and abiding love and had persuaded yourself that forgiveness was beyond reach and grace, an undeserved gift?

ALL: You created me and shaped me in. You gave me life within my mother's womb.

Leader: It's something, isn't it, to be loved by God, to be both fearfully and wonderfully made just as you are – not happier, not a work in progress, or with fewer secrets or scars – but just you, as you are, welcome at the table?

ALL: Safe in your hands all creation is made new.

OPENING PRAYER

ANTHEM *You Raise Me Up*, by Josh Groban **FCCB Choir, Jordan Mensah, drums**

***HYMN** *Blue Boat Home*, by Peter Meyer (tune of *Hyfrydol*, led by Rev. Simon Ruth)

1. Though below me I feel no motion
Standing on these mountains and plains
Far away from the rolling ocean
Still my dry land heart can say
I've been sailing all my life now
Never harbor nor port have I known
The wide universe is the ocean I travel
And the Earth is my blue boat home

2. Sun, my sail and moon, my rudder
As I ply the starry sea
Leaning over the edge in wonder
Casting questions into the deep

Drifting here with my ship's companions
All we kindred pilgrim souls
Making our way by the lights of the
heavens In our beautiful blue boat home

3. I give thanks to the waves upholding
me Hail the great winds urging me on
Greet the infinite sea before me
Sing the sky my sailor's song
I was born upon the fathoms
Never harbor or port have I known
The wide universe is the ocean I travel
And the Earth is my blue boat home

WE LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Isaiah 43:1-7 (pew Bible p. 585)

Luke 3:15-17, 21-22 (pew Bible p. 834)

MESSAGE *"Do You Know Who You Are?"* Rev. Simon Ruth de Voil

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

***HYMN** *Pescador de Hombres*, by Cesáreo Gabarain

1. Lord you have come to the seashore,
Neither searching for the rich nor the
wise, Desiring only that I should follow.

CHORUS

**O lord with your eyes set upon me,
Gently smiling, you have spoken my
name. All I long for, I have found by
the water, At your side I will seek other
shores.**

2. Lord, see my goods, my possessions;
In my boat you find no power, no wealth.
Will you accept them, my nets and
labour? **CHORUS**

3. Lord, take my hands and direct them.
Help me spend myself in seeking the
lost, Returning love for the love you
gave me. **CHORUS**

4. Lord, as I drift on the waters, Be the
resting place of my restless heart, My
life's companion, my friend and refuge.
CHORUS

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

PASTORAL PRAYER

THE LORD'S PRAYER in song

Our Father, which 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, Amen.

OFFERING

OFFERTORY *Benedictus from Christmas Oratorio*, by Camille Saint-Saëns,
Erin McIntyre, soprano, Arthur Zorn, baritone

DOXOLOGY

**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.**

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

WE DEPART TO SERVE AS GOD'S PEOPLE

***HYMN** *Immortal Love, Forever Full* NCH #166

**1 Immortal Love, forever full,
forever flowing free,
Forever shared, forever whole,
a never-ebbing sea!**

**2 Our outward lips confess the Name
all other names above;
love only knows from where it came
and comprehends God's love.**

**3 We may not climb the heavenly
steeps to bring the Sovereign down;
In vain we search the lowest deeps
for One no depths can drown.**

**4 But warm, sweet, tender, even yet
this One our help will be;
For faith has still its Olivet,
and love its Galilee.**

**5 The healing of Christ's seamless
dress still soothes our beds of pain;
We touch it in life's throng and press,
and we are whole again.**

**6 Through Christ our earliest prayers
are said with words we scarce can
frame; The last low whispers of our
dead still echo with Christ's name.**

BENEDICTION sung by Rev. Simon Ruth

POSTLUDE *Variations in D Major*, by Dennis Alexander

*The vision of First Congregational Church of Berlin is to be a friendly,
inviting spiritual home that practices the deep caring of Jesus within the
congregation and in the wider community.*

www.fccbvt.com

Announcements

- Next Sunday, January 19, the FCCB Council will lead our worship.
- Wednesdays: Choir Practice 1-2 pm, Drumming 6:30-7:45 pm
- Bible Study meets on Thursdays at 6:00 pm; see Ellen Moody for in-person location or to join on Zoom.



FCCB Care Team

A member of First Congregational Church of Berlin's Pastoral Care Team will be happy to connect with you at any time. Call anyone on the list below and one of us will get to you as soon as possible.

- Nancy Fowler- 802-4772715
- Ellen Moody 802-522-7728
- Rob Griffin. 802- 272-2376
- Gary Isham- 802-917-8027
- Thanna Adams 802-249-2626
- Rick Theken 802-479-9002

"The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth." -Psalm 145:18



DEACONS FUND

An anonymous monetary collection to financially and confidentially help members of the church and community when emergency needs are made known to a member of the Deacons Fund Committee or the minister. *(see envelope in pew)*



The collection for **January** is infant items small enough to fit in a diaper bag.

Examples: hygiene items, bottles, rattles, bibs, diapers, wipes, board books.

Please leave donations in designated basket in the Narthex.

Thank you!