



# FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF BERLIN

1808 Scott Hill Road, Berlin, VT 05602 ~ 802-229-0338

"No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here." ✝ That they may all be one. ~ John 17:21

## Corner Chronicle for December 2025

An Inclusive, Open & Affirming Church



### From the Pastor's Desk

As we enter the month of December, we step once again into the sacred season of Advent - a time of waiting and preparing our hearts for the coming of Christ. Advent invites us to slow down in an often hurried season and to reflect on the deep hope, peace, joy and love that God brings into the world through Jesus. Each candle we light reminds us that even in uncertain or chaotic times Christ's light shines steadily guiding us toward God's promise of redemption and renewal.

We invite you and your family and friends to join us for our Christmas Eve Service (7PM) as we celebrate the birth of our Savior. This beautiful candlelit worship gathering offers scripture, carols, and a message of hope for all. Whether Christmas is a season of joy or a season of struggle for you this year, we pray that worshipping together will bring comfort, peace, and a renewed sense of God's presence. Come and share in this holy night when heaven touched earth in the form of a child.

Throughout the month of December we will also be offering a special Advent Bible Study on Thursday evenings at 6:00 pm designed to help us dive deeper into the themes of the season. Each week we will explore scripture that speaks to Christ coming both

in the manger and in our daily lives. This one-hour study provides time for reflection, conversation and prayer as we prepare our hearts for Christmas. All are welcome, whether you are new to bible study or a long time participant.

Peace of Christ be with you - Pastor Doug



Join the fun as The Aldrich Library celebrates the holidays with "LIGHT UP THE LIBRARY" December 1-15. Over 50 businesses and community members have donated all kinds of gift cards, artificial wreaths, trees, centerpieces, and more. You need to see it to believe it.

To kick off the annual event, Donna Thunder and her band will be playing at the library on Monday, December 1st, from 3 to 5 in the Milne room.

Refreshments will be served.

This will be your first chance to purchase tickets to try to win some of these fabulous items. The tickets are a dollar each or 6 for \$5. You put the tickets in the canisters for the items you are interested in winning.

On December 15th at 11 AM, we will draw the winners and they will be notified immediately. We have artificial trees from the Friends of the Library, the Barre City Skating club, the Kessler family, The Library Staff, Paula Dolan and her family, and several more. The Aldrich Library is fully accessible and there will be items on all three floors. It's just a beautiful way to celebrate this fabulous library, raise funds for all its great programs and bring some cheer to the holiday season. The library is open 10-6 M-F and Saturday 10-2. (Karen Foote, Nancy Fowler, and Shidaa Project have all donated items.)



## “Enchanted Christmas” Concert

On Saturday December 13 at 4 pm, Christopher McWilliams and friends will present an “Enchanted Christmas” at First Congregational Church of Berlin (FCCB), 1808 Scott Hill Road, Berlin VT. Joining Christopher and the FCCB choir for this concert is Denise Ricker (flute). The program includes a rich variety of music in celebration of the holiday season, including “Ring Out, Solstice Bells” by Roger Emerson and the “A Gloucestershire Wassail” arranged by Ralph Vaughan Williams. Admission is free, with donations to benefit Capstone Community Action. Following the concert there will be a reception in the FCCB Community Hall for the opening of “Fascinating Florals and More”, a new exhibit of paintings by Arthur Zorn. For more information about the concert and reception, see the FCCB website ([fccbvt.org](http://fccbvt.org)) or contact Rob Griffin at [griffinsuter@hotmail.com](mailto:griffinsuter@hotmail.com).



New Exhibition and Opening Reception for Paintings by Arthur Zorn

On Saturday December 13 at 5:30 pm, First Congregational Church of Berlin (FCCB), 1808 Scott Hill Road, Berlin VT will hold an opening reception for “Fantastic Florals and More” a new exhibition of paintings by Arthur Zorn. Arthur, an abstract expressionist who creates paintings out of contemplation, emotions, and deconstructed scenes

from flowers to natural landscapes, has held many exhibitions at FCCB and elsewhere. This new exhibition will be available in the FCCB Community Hall through Feb. 1, 2026. It can be viewed Sundays 10:30 am to 1 pm, and by appointment. For more information about the exhibition and reception, contact Arthur Zorn at 802 522 7649 [vermontartmusic@gmail.com](mailto:vermontartmusic@gmail.com) or see the FCCB website ([fccbvt.org](http://fccbvt.org)).

## Lectionary Readings

### Sun Dec 07: Second Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 11:1-10, Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19, Romans 15:4-13, Matthew 3:1-12

### Sun Dec 14: Third Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 35:1-10, Psalm 146:5-10, James 5:7-10, Matthew 11:2-11

### Sun Dec 21: Fourth Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 7:10-16, Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19, Romans 1:1-7, Matthew 1:18-25

### Sun Dec 28: First Sunday after Christmas

Isaiah 63:7-9, Psalm 148, Hebrews 2:10-18, Matthew 2:13-23

## Worship Lay Readers and Ushers

December 07 - Reader - Sarah Launderville

Usher - Blair Austin-Bradley

December 14 - Reader - Heather Mensah

Usher - Aileen Peake

December 21 - Reader - Thanna Adams

Usher - Joan Garcia

December 28 - Reader - Cheryl Poor

Usher - Mary Ellen Hill







### **Birthday**

12/01 - Daniel L. Verchereau

12/02 - Tucker Morse

12/05 - Paige Haggett

12/07 - Anita Flanagan

12/08 - Christopher Newland

12/11 - Thanna Adams

12/13 - Marsha Cadmus

12/17 - Joel Cookson

12/17 - Michael Clark Jr

12/17 - Aiden Plant

12/29 - David Mullen

12/31 - Brent Adams

12/31 - Brian Foote

### **Anniversaries**

12/31 - Stephen and Beth Cody (1999)



First Congregational Church of Berlin (FCCB)  
Annual Meeting Minutes  
November 9, 2025

Moderator Ellen Moody called the meeting to order at 10:25 am. 28 members were present in the sanctuary; a quorum was declared. Pastor Doug Cameron shared a prayer for the group.

The 2025 Annual Report, which included Team Leader reports, was presented for review by the congregation. Ellen expressed gratitude for all involved with the active life of our church. Two typos were noted. Rob Griffin made the motion to accept the Report, and Gary Isham seconded it. The Annual Report was approved.

The 2026 budget was presented by Treasurer Rob Griffin, who explained the higher projected expenses are due to having a settled pastor. It is a goal, therefore, to limit future expenses to just smaller projects in order to focus on getting an accessible lift installed near the Parish Hall. Rob made the motion to accept the budget, and Cheryl Poor seconded it. The budget was accepted as presented. The Council members' slate for 2026 is keeping the members from 2025, however Ellen encouraged anyone to attend Council meetings and get involved. Judy Cookson motioned to accept the Council slate, and Thanna Adams seconded it. The Council slate was approved.

A discussion about communication efforts was held; the weekly email newsletter has been discontinued. The weekly worship bulletin will contain our Prayer List and a basic schedule of events. Urgent messages for the good of the congregation will still be emailed out as needed. The monthly Corner Chronicle newsletter (which is emailed and hard copy mailed) will contain more detailed information, and our website ([www.fccbvt.org](http://www.fccbvt.org)) is also a source of information.

There needs to be some people to manage the Zoom service in the sanctuary, especially when Nancy Fowler leaves Vermont for the winter months. Nancy shared that Evan Launderville will take the job most Sundays, but there still needs to be others to help fill in when needed.

Gary Isham reported that the church building has new smoke alarms that are combined with carbon detectors; one for the cellar stairs is still needed. Rob Griffin shared that with help from John Carson and his son Scott, the sanctuary's speaker sound system (particularly affecting the Zoom sound) is being improved.

Hearing no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:45 am after a motion from Rob and a second from Karen Foote.

Respectfully submitted - Karen Foote - Clerk



## Finance, Stewardship & Trustees

## Worship & Church Life

**Deacon's Fund** - Deacons Fund donations will be collected on Communion Sundays. There are special envelopes in the Pew holders. If you are writing a check make it out to the First Congregational Church of Berlin and indicate on the memo line Deacons Fund. Donations can be made anytime by putting it into the Sunday collection basket or mailing check to the church at PO Box 1157, Montpelier, VT 05601.

### Deacons Fund Committee

Gordon Clow, Andy Lacasse and Joan Verchereau

### Pastoral Relations Committee

Ellen Moody, Andy Lacasse, Blair Austin-Bradley, Thanna Adams

\*\*\*\*\* Cheryl Poor will continue to assign ushers and lay readers as well as keeping the contact list up to date. \*\*\*\*\*

## Faith Formation

## Missions & Outreach

Our Advent mission drive again this year is to partner with The Green Mountain United Way (GMUW) and Tatum's Totes to provide gifts for 28 children in Vermont's foster care program to receive at Christmas.

- Please visit the Advent Owl wall hanging located in the Narthex to select a child. Please feel free to take more than one child if you wish. ***I should have the tags and Advent Owl ready for Nov 16.***
- Write your name next to the child(ren) you choose on the Master List spreadsheet hanging near the Advent Owl. **The tag # is the second printed line on the tag (example GMUW#: B1)**
- The pocket numbers on the Advent Owl don't necessarily match the number assigned by GMUW. I have used a blue and pink highlighter in the upper left corner of the tags to designate if the tag is for a boy or girl.
- **Please don't lose the child's tag, you will need to attach it to the bag that you place the items in in order for GMUW to identify each child's bag of gifts.**

- Please also attach a separate piece of paper with the value of the gifts so we can accurately give a total gifts value to GMUW.
- In order to sponsor a child, we are asking that donors provide age-appropriate gifts from the child's interest and needs list on the tag. The Tag we provide will include details about the child's age, gender, interests and needs. Some include favorite color and preferred clothing style.
- **PLEASE don't wrap the gifts**, instead place in gift bags with the Tatum's Totes Gift Tag stapled to the outside of the bag. If you don't have access to a gift bag you may use a different type of bag as long as the items are not wrapped and the tag is on the bag.
- **All items will need to be dropped off at the church by Sunday December 7, 2025.**
- Please contact Joni Verchereau (javo968@ymail.com) with questions.

**\*\*\*Per Green Mountain United Way - all items donated must be new / unused items. They cannot accept used items\*\*\***

When donating by cash or check please clearly mark that it is for Tatum's Totes and who it is from. You may give your monetary donation to Rob or place in the collection basket or mail to FCCB so that the donation can be accounted for.

When donating goods please include a total dollar value. The GMUW gives us a monthly statement with the estimated cash value of all goods received that month.

Please contact Joan Verchereau if you have questions about this mission.

**From the organ bench:**

## Admin and Communication

**\*\*\*\*\*Check it out - the FCCB web page**

<http://www.fccbvt.org>



## FCCB Pastor Contact information

Pastor Doug Cameron

Email: [dougc9927@gmail.com](mailto:dougc9927@gmail.com)

Home: 802-276-3404

Cell: 8802-356-0578

Office Hours: Wednesdays 10:00a - 2:00p

### **Council Members 2025**

COUNCIL CHAIR & MODERATOR ~ Ellen Moody,  
[ellenmoody777@gmail.com](mailto:ellenmoody777@gmail.com), 802-522-7728

VICE CHAIR ~ Ginger Anderson,  
[quedaV06@gmail.com](mailto:quedaV06@gmail.com), 802-229-1665

TREASURER ~ Rob Griffin, [griffinsuter@hotmail.com](mailto:griffinsuter@hotmail.com),  
802-272-2376

ADMINISTRATION & COMMUNICATION and CLERK ~  
Karen Foote, [kbf789@aol.com](mailto:kbf789@aol.com), 802-223-7286

MISSIONS & OUTREACH ~ Heather Mensah,  
[withheather@yahoo.com](mailto:withheather@yahoo.com), 617-780-2458

FINANCE, STEWARDSHIP & TRUSTEES ~ Rob Griffin,  
[griffinsuter@hotmail.com](mailto:griffinsuter@hotmail.com), 802-272-2376 and Gary  
Isham, [glisham@yahoo.com](mailto:glisham@yahoo.com), 802-917-8027

WORSHIP & CHURCH LIFE ~ Carole Lacasse,  
[calacasse@netscape.com](mailto:calacasse@netscape.com), 802-229-9504

FAITH FORMATION ~ Beth Cody,  
[codyscastle@gmail.com](mailto:codyscastle@gmail.com), 802-279-5921

MEMBER-AT-LARGE - Mary Ellen Hill,  
[meqhill@yahoo.com](mailto:meqhill@yahoo.com), 802-279-8704

MEMBER-AT-LARGE - Nancy Fowler,  
[fowler5vt@gmail.com](mailto:fowler5vt@gmail.com), 802-477-2715

### **FCCB email address:**

[firstcongregationalchurchberlin@yahoo.com](mailto:firstcongregationalchurchberlin@yahoo.com)

### **FCCB Mailing Address:**

PO Box 1157, Montpelier, VT 05601

*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*

### **Candles That Tell a Story**



Lighting its candles each Sunday is a treasured tradition during the four weeks of Advent. Depending on denomination, churches use different color combinations for the candles. Some place four blue candles around the wreath with a white one in the center, while others use all white. Many light purple candles on the first two Sundays, pink on the third, purple again on the fourth, and then a large white candle on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day.

Each part of the wreath carries symbolic meaning:

- **The wreath:** Its circular shape represents the everlasting love of God, having no beginning or end. The green symbolizes eternal life.
- **The four candles:** Mark the four weeks of Advent. One tradition says that each candle also represents 1,000 years, totaling 4,000 years from Adam and Eve to Christ's birth.
- **Purple candles:** in ancient times, was expensive and was considered the color of royalty and kings. On Christmas, Christ is proclaimed King of Kings. Purple also symbolizes humility and penitence. The first purple candle represents Hope; the second, Peace; and the final purple candle, Love.
- **Blue candles:** Blue is another color often used as a symbol of royalty. Some churches use blue candles to symbolize the night sky and the anticipation of the announcement of Christ's birth. Blue also symbolizes the beginning of a new creation as in the waters of Genesis 1.
- **The pink candle:** Lit on the third Sunday, it represents Joy and marks the halfway point of Advent.
- **The white candle:** The large white candle in the center is the Christ candle. Its light symbolizes Christ the Savior – "the light of the world."

The beauty and brightness from the glow of all five candles is a reminder that Christ's life was the light for all earth's people – "The light shines in the

darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it”  
(John 1:5, NRSV).

The Advent wreath is more than just greenery and candles—it’s a symbol of watchfulness and growing joy as Christmas draws near.

### **Christmas Prayer: The True Gift**



Dear Lord,

You have brought us to Christmastime once more.  
Help us not to get lost in the glitter and the glow,  
but to see the true glory of the birth of Your only  
begotten Son. Keep our hearts from clinging too  
tightly to parties, presents and decorations, and turn  
our eyes instead to Christ — who bears Your very  
image and brings us Your message of love and hope.

In the glorious name of Christ, we pray. Amen.