

First Presbyterian Church

19 Seminary Street
Barre, Vermont

May 21, 2023 10:00 a.m.
7th Sunday in Eastertide

We are delighted that you joined us today! We hope you will find us an affirming, uplifting, and committed family of faith. Here we work to make everyone, without any exceptions, to feel accepted, inspired, and encouraged in their spiritual journey. In dialogue, we seek to understand. In encouragement, we seek to heal. In all things we yearn to live by love, for peace, with joy. This is a place where your intellect will be challenged, your heart will be nurtured, and your spirit refreshed. Varying beliefs are expressed openly and freely, and your doubts will not be suppressed. We trust that we are all, every person and part of creation, continuing to be blessed by God's grace; and that in community we can help each other to see this grace alive in our lives and relationships. We hope to share our gifts with you, even as we pray that you will want to share your gifts with us. Whoever you are and wherever you may be in your life's journey, we invite you to be a part of our lives and our spiritual home. Welcome!

✠ = Please rise in body or spirit as you are able!

CALLED TOGETHER AS SPIRITUAL FAMILY

Today's hymns are from the purple Glory to God hymnal, except where otherwise indicated.

Gathering on Abenaki Lands Acknowledgement

Announcements

Prelude

Welcome

✠ Centering Our Souls

“Inspired by Acts 1.1-14”

Like the disciples after the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, we go to the place where we last or most felt Jesus' presence.

They went to Mount Olivet, where the Garden of Gethsemane was.

There the Holy Spirit instructed them with appearances of Jesus telling them that they themselves would receive the Holy Spirit.

Like the disciples, we may not know what that means.

We may seek to wait still longer for God or Jesus to do something in our lives and world, rather than being motivated by the Holy Spirit to accomplish what they began.

Forgive us for our inaction to be the manifesters of your mission.

Remind us that your mission is not designed only for people from our family, our nationality, our religion, our sexual identity, our ethnicity, or even our specie.

You call us to be witnesses of your Holy Spirit living through us to the ends of the earth.

So while we lift Christ up in our consciousness, remind us that we, too, are to be lifted up by that same Holy Spirit which lifted Christ.

Forbid that we keep our gaze on heaven instead of turning it toward earth.

For you ask us to do the work we can in our own time and culture to bring Jesus' vision to fruition.

Together like the disciples, may we gather to pray and seek discernment; so that we may carry out Christ's uncompleted mission to all the world and creation. Blessings may we be.

✠ Hymn for Faithful Living

“Lead On, O King Eternal”

GtG #269

1. Lead on, O King eternal! The day of march has come; henceforth in fields of conquest your tents shall be our home. Through days of preparation your grace has made us strong, and now, O King eternal, we lift our battle song.
2. Lead on, O King eternal, till sin's fierce war shall cease, and holiness shall whisper the sweet amen of peace; for not with swords' loud clashing, nor roll of stirring drums; with deeds of love and mercy the heavenly kingdom comes.
3. Lead on, O King eternal: we follow, not with fears, for gladness breaks like morning where e'er your face appears; your cross is lifted o'er us: we journey in its light. The crown awaits the conquest; lead on, O God of might!

Prayer for Transformation and New Life

Unison

Resurrecting God, we too often feel that the tombs of life have enclosed upon us. Inspire in us faith to roll away the stones that keep us inactive. Let your Spirit live in and through us that we may be your resurrection people, bringing light and life to all of our experiences. Transform our lives and lifestyles that we may let your love, peace, and justice be our vision and our practices. Let us arise like Christ to live on in those whose lives we've touched. May it be so.

Words of Forgiveness and Grace

Death is not the final word. Life, resurrected, can transform our lives and our world. To those who know not love, love them till they see. To those who know not peace, show them gentleness and tenderness. For those whom justice has not been received, advocate for their well-being; not only in your thoughts and prayers, but in your words and actions, that they may come to understand that which has been missing in their lives.

This is how we live lives of forgiveness and grace. This is how we become Easter people.

Congregational Response

Tune: Gloria Patri

Honor to the Creator, who blesses us, and shows us how to bless.

May we ever love each other, and work for peace and justice;

Christ's light in us! May it be, may it be!

✠ Passing the Peace

Please help with Covid prevention by waving, making the peace sign, acknowledging with prayer hands, or by other methods of passing the peace that limit contact and maintain distancing.

Prayers

Sharing Our Joys and Concerns, and Acts of Compassion or Kindness

Silent Meditation: The Prayers of the People

Pastoral Prayer

Unison Easter Prayer

“Prayer for Abundant Living”

O God of empty tombs and resurrection living:

Make us mindful of the pervasiveness of hope,
the determination of faith,
and the persistence of love.

In a world where suffering is ever near,
and where terrorism provokes fear,
instill in us a resolve

to live peacefully, justly, and compassionately.

May we be the agents of healing and reconciliation
when opposed by the forces of destruction and alienation.

May we be the beacons of beneficence
when others are the harbingers of hatred.

Call us to be your resurrection people:

those who trust in kindness more than might,
in forgiveness more than revenge,
in gentleness more than harshness,
and in virtue more than prudence.

May beauty flow forth from our spirits,
truth from our lips,
and mercy from our hands.

Help us to live the life that is light,
that we may, like Jesus,
rise above the shadows of death and despair
and shine forth the blessings of love on all of creation.

In the Spirit of the risen and still rising Christ, may it be so.

✠ **Hymn of Christ's Ascension** "You, Lord, Are Both Lamb and Shepherd" **GtG #274**

1. You, Lord, are both Lamb and Shepherd. You, Lord, are both prince and slave. You, peace maker and sword bringer of the way you took and gave. You, the everlasting instant; you, whom we both scorn and crave.
2. Clothed in light upon the mountain, stripped of might upon the cross, shining in eternal glory, beggared by a soldier's toss, you, the everlasting instant; you who are both gift and cost.
3. You, who walk each day beside us, sit in power at God's side. You, who preach away that's narrow, have a love that reaches wide. You, the everlasting instant; you, who are our pilgrim guide.
4. Worthy is our earthly Jesus! Worthy is our cosmic Christ! Worthy your defeat and your victory; worthy still your peace and strife. You, the everlasting instant; you, who are our death and life.

WE LISTEN FOR THE SACRED IN THE MIDST OF OUR LIVES

Scripture Lesson

Acts 1.1-14

In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and teach ²until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. ³After his suffering he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. ⁴While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem but to wait there for the promise of the Parent. "This," he said, "is what you have heard from me; ⁵for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

⁶So when they had come together, they asked him, "Rabbi, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Parent has set by God's own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." ⁹When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. ¹¹They said, "People of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

¹²Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. ¹³When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying: Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. ¹⁴All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

Message

"The Uncompleted Mission"

✠ **Hymn for Ascending with Christ**

"O Christ, When You Ascended"

see insert

O Christ, When You Ascended

1. O Christ, when you as - cen - ded you took your right - ful throne;
 2. We look at earth - ly ru - lers and see what they com - mand:
 3. We're tempt - ed, Lord, to leave you in sto - ries nice - ly told;
 4. It's of - ten quite a chal - lenge to fol - low in your way;
 5. One day, O Lord, we'll know you, as we are ful - ly known;

your time on earth had end - ed, yet we weren't left a - lone.
 we note their years of pow - er, the bor - ders of their land.
 some - times we don't be - lieve you and say your ways are old.
 we're eas - i - ly dis - tract - ed! It's hard, Lord, to o - bey.
 one day this world of sin - ners will bow be - fore your throne.

You reign o'er earth and hea - ven; your spir - it guides our way.
 Yet, Lord, you are not bound - ed by things like time and space;
 Some - times we feel so lone - ly and live in doubt and fear.
 Some - times we give you Sun - days, an hour, may - be two.
 One day, God's whole cre - a - tion will sing and praise your name;

Your prayers up - hold your peo - ple; you lead your church each day.
 your reign is ne - ver - end - ing, you rule in eve - ry place.
 But your as - cen - sion means, Lord, you're pre - sent with us here.
 But your as - cen - sion means, Lord, all life be - longs to you.
 on earth as now in hea - ven, we'll cel - e - brate your reign.

Biblical References: Acts 1:1-11; Luke 24:50-53; Mark 16: 9-20; John 3:13, 6:62-63;
 20:17; Romans 8:34; Philippians 2:6-9; Colossians 3:1; Ephesians 4:7-10;
 Hebrews 1:3, 2:9, 4:14-16, 12:2; 1 Timothy 3:16; 1 Peter 3:22; Revelation 5:6, 13.

Tune: Henry Thomas Smart, 1835.

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Email: carolynshymns@gmail.com New Hymns: www.carolynshymns.com

WE DEDICATE OURSELVES TO GOD'S SERVICE THROUGH FAITHFULNESS

Giving of Our Offerings

We invite you to place your offering in the offering plate at the rear of the sanctuary as you leave, or you may give online or by mail. Thank you!

“Generosity arises from gratitude like heat arises from fire. Like fire, gratitude is lovely to see; but when it warms others with generosity, that is when it becomes a true blessing.”

Unison Prayer of Dedication

We are a resurrection people! By rising with hope, we overcome apathy. By rising with courage, we overcome fear. By rising with joy, we overcome dejection. By rising with faith, we overcome powerlessness. By rising with perseverance, we overcome pain. By rising with forgiveness, we overcome anger. By rising with kindness, we overcome cruelty. By rising with generosity, we overcome poverty. By rising with Christ, we overcome death. May the tithes, gifts, and offerings we share empty the crosses and open the tombs of our own and others' lives. May we be beautiful like blossoming lilies, and graceful like fluttering butterflies, that we may rise with love for all and proclaim peace forever. Blessings be.

Choral Anthem

“Sing A Brand New Song”

Neil Ferguson

Encouragement for the Journey

Go to be a blessing! This is your calling.
Do not worry whether your task is difficult, or your efforts are successful.
Life is serendipitous; so what you may think will or has failed may actually renew a life.
Advocate for justice for those unlike you.
Work for peace with those opposed to you.
Kindness offered and love delivered can transform relationships.
Trust in this! Live by this!
Let God be responsible for the outcome;
just commit yourself to the journey of sacred living.
If you do, you will find that you will have not only been a blessing to others,
but that the synergy of life will have created a blessing for you.

Benediction

7-fold Amen by John Stainer

in honor of Allan Taylor

Postlude

Rev. Bret Myers is preaching today.
Today Roxanne Casadonte is our worship leader.
Alison Cerutti will be making music today.

Permission to podcast/stream the music in this service obtained from ONE LICENSE #734910-A.

*The liturgies for this morning's worship were written by Rev. Bret S. Myers except where otherwise noted.
Biblical quotations are adaptations from the NRSV (unless otherwise noted); using variations of word translations from the original languages, as well as paraphrased non-hierarchical and inclusive language.*

P.S. Don't forget to continue your "Random/Intentional Acts of Kindness / Intentional Deeds of Compassion" this week and every week! I'm looking forward to hearing your stories!

Prayers – Each week we pray for a different person or family in our church. This week we invite you to keep James & Kay Paterson in your prayers. Gracious God, we give thanks for them and their presence in this congregation. Hold them in the palm of your hand and let them feel your love. Give them the wisdom and strength to do your will and the faith and courage to face whatever challenges may arise.

As part of being the connectional Presbyterian Church, we keep in our prayers other ministries within the Presbytery of Northern New England. This week our prayers are with the Marturia Presbyterian Church, Rochester, NH. – In Pastoral Transition.

Our Church Session (Board) & Deacons

Chris Fuhrmeister, Clerk – Personnel and Worship
Roxanne Casadonte - Outreach
Dotty Ricks – Outreach
Lee Aura Bonamico - Outreach
Cathy Jamieson – Finance and Faith Development
Peg Lawson – Worship & Fellowship
Diane Nichols-Fleming – Finance
Jim Nichols-Fleming – Outreach and Personnel
Dan Krymkowski - Worship
Board of Deacons - Sylvia Mitton, Chairperson

OUR CHURCH

You the members and participants!
Treasurer – Kathy Adams
Pianist / Organist – Alison Cerutti / Dan Krymkowski
Administrative Assistant – Cindy Hooker
Choir Director – Peg Lawson
Custodian – Jennifer Milne
Elder of the Month – Diane Nichols-Fleming
Deacon of the Month – Pam Cyr
Interim Pastor – Rev. Bret S. Myers

*Please make an appointment with Pastor Bret if you would like to meet with him.
You may email him at revbmyers@yahoo.com, or call/text his cell at 608-370-9472.*

Video chatting is also available via Zoom.

Office Hours are: Sundays 11 a.m.-1 p.m.; Mondays, Tuesdays, & Thursdays 1-5 p.m. and by appointment.

To Contact the Church

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[Website: fpccbarre.org](http://fpccbarre.org)

For our Admin. Asst. Cindy Hooker

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Announcements:

Points to Ponder and Nourishment for the Journey will be in our weekly eNote and on our Facebook page but will not be in the bulletin. If you want to have a hard copy, let us know.

Starting in June, we will, as we did last summer, move our Sunday services from the church building to Lee Aura Bonamico's house at 341 Camp Street. Please let us know if you need a ride to her place.