

MINISTER'S COLUMN, Scott Couper

Dear Friends in Christ:

April brings us what is arguably the highest Christian holiday in the calendar: **Easter (Sunday, April 9)**! With Easter comes, we hope and pray, Spring (*de facto* in April, rather than *de jure* in March). I love the 'new green' colored life on branches that have for so many months been withered, gray, and bare.

The season of **Lent** (Wednesday, February 23 - Thursday, April 6) is much like Winter. During Lent and Winter, we are focused on our 'interiors' be they our homes or our hearts. Due to cold temperatures, snow, ice, and dangerous roads, during Lent and Winter we are often less gathered and thus more isolated. Inclement weather keeps us apart as there is not enough sun and warmth to gather us together outside. **Maundy Thursday (April 6)** and **Good Friday (April 7)** are the penultimate days during Holy Week when we feel perhaps the melancholiest. This year, we will experience **Maundy Thursday at First Congregational Church (UCC)** in West Brattleboro, **6:00pm** and **Good Friday at the Guilford Community Church, (UCC), 6:00pm**. It is right and good that we worship with fellow Christian brothers and sisters in faith on these special days.

I am giddy, clicking my heels, the first time I see blossoms our church's tree that abuts Main Street. When Easter and Spring come, we have so much for which to look forward! With Easter and Spring, we celebrate resurrection, new and eternal life! Easter is full of 'new green' as our hearts and gardens thaw and warm with the increased temperatures and abundant life blooms. On Easter Sunday, we will enjoy a '**sunrise**' service on our lawn (8:00am) and special '**triumphant**' service in our sanctuary (10:00am). We will celebrate the positive impact that Jesus' life, death, and resurrection has had on our lives. Like the two disciples on the way to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35), we will confide with one another "Were not our hearts burning within us while [the liturgist and minister] opened the Scriptures to us?"

At Centre Church, we celebrate our Christian life together. I foresee that our ministries will continue to expand after Easter. I foresee that our outdoor ministry, **The Green at Centre** (May to December), will flourish, getting better and better with each year. After Easter, we will celebrate life in all its joy and happiness with dance (the May Pole), with singing (many bands), and with food and fellowship (the **Fundraising Committee** is ramping-up activity this year after an understandable long three-year COVID hibernation). During the year, our church will continue to welcome new people who are searching for a spiritual home. Let us do all that we can to encourage the increasing sound of boisterous children in our sanctuary.

Yes, I am giddy! Are you?! Yes, in Christ Jesus, I am! Be well.
Love always, Scott



CENTRE BELLS

April 2023

The newsletter of
Centre Congregational Church,
United Church of Christ

Council Chair, LYNN HERZOG

On March 11 Scott, April, and I attended a conference on Church Vitality sponsored by the Vermont Conference of the UCC. The speaker was Rev. Patty Kogut from the Southern New England conference, and she provided a lively and interesting day. There were many churches represented, including our neighbors from Guilford and Dummerston, and some from places so small that I'd never heard of them (North Pomfret?). Although no one ever defined what Church Vitality is, I learned some interesting things about it. What interested me most was what it was not. It is not associated with 1) Growth in numbers, 2) Younger people in the congregation, nor 3) 'Contemporary' worship service. 'Vital' congregations more likely had a diverse congregation, a good fit between pastor and congregation, and 'Inovative' worship.

Although she said several times that vitality comes from within, and can't be achieved by 'technical' fixes, she did mention a technical change that her church had made. They re-organized the committees of their church into three teams – Welcome, Worship, and Witness. We (April, Scott, and I) were excited to hear this because Welcome, Worship, and Witness corresponds very closely to our own vision of Belonging (welcome, hospitality), Believing (worship, spiritual growth) and Becoming (witness – carrying our mission out in to the community). What if we dissolved our current committee structure (5 boards, 7 committees, and 2 teams) and divided into three groups – Belonging, Believing, and Becoming? And even better, what if everyone in the congregation joined one of these groups? Each group would decide how best to implement their vision, and how to delegate the work. It would be a big change, but it might solve our problem of too many committees and not enough members. And it might even rejuvenate some of our weary workers. I think it's worth considering.



From Music Director, MARY MILKEY-MAY

I am delighted to report that more donations have come in for the piano fund and we have now surpassed our goal! Any excess funds will be placed in a special music account that will be tapped were the piano to need repairs. The fund might also be used for any general music purpose as we have had no budget for special musicians or to purchase music for several years now. Special thanks go to Peter and Marion Abell, Martha Swanson, Jenifer Ambler, Clyde Johnson, and an anonymous donor. Clyde Johnson's donation is dedicated to Ruth Johnson "for her many years of dedication to the choir". The anonymous donation is "in memory and honor of the Ed Milkey family". I am so grateful for the support we have received. Thank you to all who participated in this fundraiser.

The choir has already begun working on anthems for Palm Sunday and Easter. Both anthems are new, so we need extra time to fully learn them. It's exciting to do new pieces—it is more work, and we have gotten out of the habit of starting from scratch! Despite the minor grumbling, I think they will be lovely!



DEACONS

Lent has been our 40-day period of preparation to celebrate the Lord's Resurrection at Easter. Our Easter celebration will include all these opportunities to be together!

April 2 - Palm Sunday, commemorating Jesus' entry into Jerusalem for Passover. (Centre Church, 10:00am)

April 6 - Maundy Thursday, commemorating Jesus Christ's institution of Eucharist during the Last Supper (First Congregational Church, W. Brattleboro, 6:00pm)

April 7 - Good Friday, commemorating the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ (Guilford Community Church, 6:00pm)

April 9 - Easter Sunday at 8:00 am and 10:00am, commemorating Jesus Christ's resurrection (Centre Church, 10:00am)

Bring your family and friends and join in our week of celebrations!!

HE IS RISEN!!

AFGHAN CO-SPONSORSHIP TEAM

The family has successfully moved to Bethesda, Maryland, within walking distance of the father's work. All three school-aged children are in school - three different schools. It took a couple of weeks to make that transition due to paperwork and records being transferred. A couple from our UCC group traveled to Bethesda in January and was able to deliver a package to the family which made everyone happy. The new baby girl, born in Brattleboro on December 16, is described as very calm and growing day by day. Recently, the father mentioned that while they are physically in Maryland, their hearts are in Brattleboro. They are very grateful for all the help they received while here. (Update contributed by super Volunteer Debbie Gassway-Hayward)

Further, the UCC Co-Sponsorship Team had a wrap-up ZOOM session with Ethiopian Community Development Council in January. It was a great way to conclude our co-sponsorship and bring to light our best moments and challenges. If anyone of our congregation or friends of our congregation are interested in supporting Afghan families in Brattleboro, please contact Gabriella Martin: cipolla.gabi@gmail.com

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

April this year brings both Palm Sunday and Easter, two of the most important days in the Christian calendar. We are inviting our children to help pass out the palm fronds as greeters on Palm Sunday and look forward to their help with this activity. The Palm Sunday message will bring to them, and all of us, the story of Jesus' triumphant arrival in Jerusalem.

On Easter Sunday, the CE board will have a basket at the front entrance filled with eggs, treats, and words of inspiration. There will be a bag for each child, and some extras made in case of guests and visitors. We hope to have joyful 'halleluiahs' ring out from all corners of our sanctuary. The message on Easter will tell the story of the women who went to the tomb and found that Jesus has risen. Halleluliah!

BUILDING & GROUNDS

Although we don't have long deliberating meetings, the Building & Grounds Board of Centre Church is active in tackling opportunities to improve on our inheritance. Here's what we have been accomplishing during these past few months.

We continue to lighten and brighten the many rooms, nooks and crannies, both inside and outside in spite of the snow and chilly wintry weather. The steeple stands but the inner workings needed some attention. Equipped with the appropriate tools, Ron Svec, Peter Abell, a volunteer from Greenfield, and a church clock expert from New Hampshire climbed the ladders to determine how to get the large clock and bell to work properly. Now, the clock shows the correct time and the bell clapper strikes the bell on each hour with the correct number of dongs! As always, the view of our town was terrific!

In the Sanctuary, Ron devoted a great deal of time climbing up behind the organ pipes to scrape, prime and paint the ceiling in this area.

Another less chilly, warmer project was to rehabilitate and refurbish the men's restroom on the upper level of our building. With all of the rooms currently rented on this floor, this room was in need of some attention. Ron Svec and Marion Abell spent a couple of days removing the door and fixtures, maneuvering a ladder into this tight space, prepping the walls, painting them, then reattaching all the necessary parts to complete this effort. We engaged our sexton, Emelio McCalla, to strip and wax the hallway on this level, which is now clean and bright.

In early spring, we plan to improve our front lawn. We will fill in the depressions in the grassy area and reseed the lawn in preparation for future activities planned by Bonnie Girvan for the Green@Centre. If you have ideas or suggestions for our board, please share them with any one of us.



Sunday Spirit Book Discussion Group

After an extended and fascinating discussion over the last several months of Kristin Dobes Du Mez's "Jesus and John Wayne: *How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith and Fractured A Nation* (2020), we will be deciding on a new book to start in April. We meet in the Heritage Room at 9:00am on Sundays. No homework! About five of us read orally and discuss at the time.

New participants are always welcome. For more information, please contact Judy Palmer: judithp41@gmail.com / 603-353-0590.

MISSION & SERVICE

Thank you again for supporting the missions of our church. Whether you are making contributions to our Second Sunday offerings, volunteering at *Loaves & Fishes (L&F)* or *Carry Me Home*, making desserts for *L&F*, reading at *Brattleboro Centre for Children*, supplying food for the monthly Groundworks meal, serving on one of these boards, or supporting an event *The Green@Centre*. THANK YOU!!! There are so many ways to be a part of our missions and service and we hope that you find a way that is possible for you to participate. Let us know if you need more information about any of these and others in which our church is active.

Second Sunday Offerings

January's special offering was for *Groundworks* and \$402 was sent to this organization. February was for *Luz del Mundo*, the scholarship fund that supports our Sister Parish children's education and \$159 was collected. This will be added to funds from December made from the sale of El Salvador items at the church's bazaar. March was *One Great Hour of Sharing*, a 5 for 5 UCC offering and will be reported on next month.

April's Second Sunday offering will be collected for the *Partners in Service (PINS)* program and for the *Summer Meal Program*. Both of these programs impact our local children who are most at risk. This month we will hear briefly about these programs and collect our offering on the first Sunday of the month.

PINS links religious congregations in Vermont with children in state custody and helps to provide children in foster care with clothing, school supplies, etc. In the past, money that we have donated has gone toward purchasing needed car seats, summer activities, and more.

The *Summer Meal Program* bridges the gap between school years providing children in the poverty level, age 18 and under, the fuel they need to play and grow throughout the summer and return to school ready to learn. During the school year, these children receive breakfast, lunch, and snacks at school. But in the summer, without school in session, these students would potentially be hungry or under nourished. The summer meals help to keep children healthy and fed, decreasing obesity and 'summer learning loss'. In summer 2022, Vermont served almost 800,000 meals at almost 300 sites across the state.

We look forward to the events and arts of *The Green@Centre* which will be starting up in full swing in May. Bonnie Girvan has led the organizing of this, with the fundraising committee, offering food and refreshments through much of the summer. Mark Baxter and Bonnie are working on posters and leaflets with the schedule. We hope that you will offer to help and to attend this amazing community outreach that our church is doing. Help is needed on the first Friday of each month, which coincides with Gallery Walk. Your presence and support makes the events more easily set up and broken down, as well as more fun for all! Let Bonnie know how you are able to help:

902.307.1623 / bonnie@girvangardens.com.

Groundworks meals continue. Thank you to all who helped in March, especially as it was on Saturday, not our usual Sunday. April's date is back to a Sunday, April 16. To sign up on line, use this link:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0f4dada82da6ffce9-groundworks#/>

You can also sign up on the bulletin board in the hall opposite the parlor. Food can be dropped off by 5:00pm (or brought to church that morning and given to someone who will be going at 5:00pm). Dishes should be fully heated and in disposable containers.

Questions? Contact:

Priscilla Svec: 802.505.8925 / svecpriscilla4@gmail.com or

Jenifer Ambler: 802.380.2805 / amblerj@sover.net

Please consider a donation.



COMMUNICATION from the WIDER COMMUNITY

April marks our time to step back, and step forward to appreciate the amazing EARTH on which we live. We are here briefly, but how we live, use and preserve our EARTH makes a mark, sometimes small and temporary, and sometimes our mark is long and forever. How will we, here at Centre Church and we, here in Brattleboro, Vermont choose to live?

This month on our hallway at Centre Church, we have the opportunity to display the beginnings of an exhibit and project being undertaken by faculty, students and friends of Putney School in Putney, VT. *The Tempestry Project* will be here for the month of April.

"The Tempestry Project is personal and collaborative fiber art, environmental education, and climate activism through data representation all rolled into a sprawling community of friends, artists, crafters, teachers, scientists, nature lovers, activists, and more. *The Tempestry Project* was begun in 2016 by Emily McNeil, Marissa Connelly, and Justin Connelly using climate data from the Naval Air Station on Whidbey Island, Washington. Having read about climate scientists trying to preserve climate data, the friends joked that there should be a return to more concrete forms of data and thus, *The Tempestry Project* was born." As of December 2018, crafters have created tempestries in nearly every U.S. state and twenty other countries."

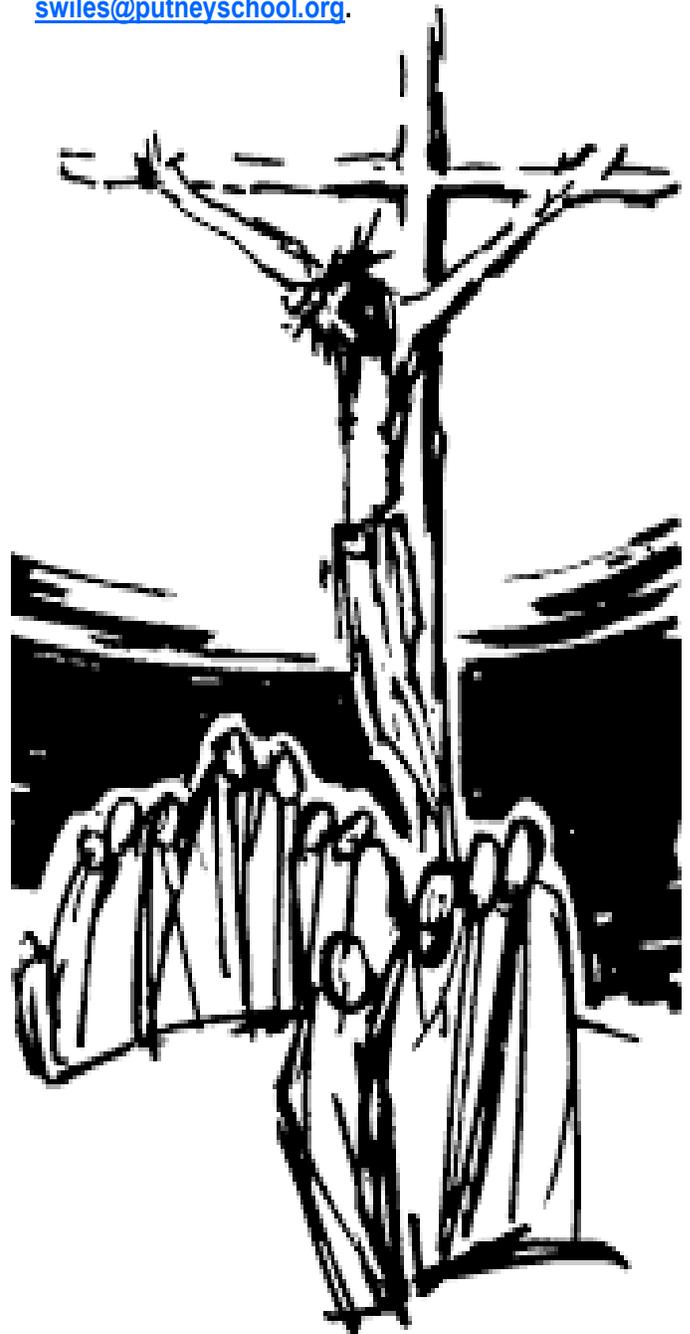
Each "tempestry" is a knitted bar graph of the daily temperature for one geographic location. Each row represents a specific day and the color of the yarn represents a specific temperature range of five degrees. Each bar graph begins with January 1st of a given year and ends with December 31st of the same year. "All tempestries use the same same yarn colors and temperature ranges in order to create a visually cohesive narrative across a wide expanse of makers, places, and eras. This consistency is an important aspect of the project."

The Putney School, in Putney, VT was founded in 1935 and remains on the same beautiful piece of Vermont farmland today. The Tempestry Project began in 2021 as a faculty/student project and was then brought to the wider community in 2022 at the school's annual Harvest Festival. Our goal is to knit one tempestry for each year the school has been in existence, with an ultimate goal of 89 tempestries. These will be displayed in the Currier

Gallery during Harvest Festival 2023. The large display will allow the community to visualize how climate change has impacted Putney, VT in the last 89 years. All tempestries are being knitted or crocheted by current students and staff, along with alums, former employees, and local community members.

The tempestries displayed represent just a portion of the tempestries that are "under construction." That said, we are still seeking knitters and crocheters who'd like to help create a tempestry. If you are interested in participating in the project, please contact Sarah Wiles, The Putney School Librarian at:

swiles@putneyschool.org.



PEOPLE



A word of good cheer would be warmly received by members and friends of our church who are in nursing homes, assisted living centers, or are housebound as of March 26.

Karen Getty Peter—Pine Rock Manor
3 Denny Hill Rd., Warner, NH 03278

Alice Stockwell—Vernon Hall
13 Greenway Dr., Vernon, VT 05354
802.254.8091

Please let the Administrator know if we've missed someone.

BIRTHDAYS

- 05 Nancy DiMauro
Caroline McCarthy
- 11 Amy Balin
- 13 Sandy Daly
- 14 Deborah Brown
Judi Miller
- 17 Arnold Young
- 19 Beverly Webster
- 22 Margaret Harriman
- 25 Alison Hale
- 27 Anne Doesburg



ANNIVERSARIES

- 1 Dart & Joy Everett
- 12 Matthew & Holly Kennedy
- 13 Roger & Judi Miller



CONGRATULATIONS

Marilyn & Arnold Young

who welcome the birth of twin great-grandsons,

Elijah and George Archibold

born to grand-daughter, Becky
and her husband, Fabian Archibold
on February 28, 2023

Both are big, healthy babies.

They are delighted to have twins join the family.

NEW FRIENDS OF CENTRE CHURCH

Melissa Mertz

297 Hinsdale Rd., Winchester, NH 03470
melissacmertz@gmail.com / 603.937.5869

NEW CONTACT INFORMATION

William (Bill) Pearson

17 Carol Brown Way #16, Putney, VT 05346
802.536.5297

OBITUARY—Diane A. Bassett, March 7, 1940 - February 10, 2023

Diane Allen Bassett, 82, of Brattleboro, VT, died February 10, 2023 following a period of declining health. The daughter of the late Harold and Margaret Allen, Diane was born in Brattleboro on March 7, 1940.

Diane attended school in Brattleboro, graduating from Brattleboro Union High School in 1958. She continued her education at Colby College in Waterville, Maine, graduating with a degree in government in 1962. After graduation, Diane moved to Massachusetts, where she started her family. She moved back to her home town in 1985, and worked for many years as a legal assistant in the law offices of William McCarty and Potter Stewart, Jr.

An avid golfer, Diane was a long-time member of the Brattleboro Country Club. She also enjoyed reading, working in her garden, and spending time with family and friends.

Besides her parents, she was predeceased in death by Timothy Ryan, Jr., her partner of over 25 years.

She leaves behind: her two children, Douglas and Elisabeth, both of Brattleboro; her grandson, Daniel McCauley-Bassett of Chesapeake, VA; her twin brother, Douglas Allen of Marcellus, NY; along with many extended family members and friends.

Burial will take place at Meetinghouse Hill Cemetery in Brattleboro at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, contributions in Diane's name may be made to:

Windham County Humane Society, P.O. Box 397, Brattleboro, VT 05302.

To send flowers to the family of Diane, please [visit our floral store](#).

APRIL 2023

**ZOOM events
*Holy Communion

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1
2 Palm Sunday 9 ⁰⁰ Book Discussion 10 ⁰⁰ Worship* 11 ³⁰ Hospitality Time	3 4 ⁰⁰ Sermon discussion** 4 ³⁰ Christian Ed 7 ⁰⁰ Pub Theology	4 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 7 ⁰⁰ Dharma evening 7 ⁰⁰ WWAC event	5 11 ⁰⁰ Staff meeting 12 ⁰⁰ Help Fund 4 ⁰⁰ Centred Yoga 5 ⁰⁰ Contemplative Prayer 7 ⁰⁰ VT Humanities First Wednesday	6 Maundy Thursday 10 ⁰⁰ UCC Devotional** 1 ⁰⁰ Quilting ministry 4 ³⁰ Women's Spirit 5 ³⁰ Choir rehearsal 6 ⁰⁰ Worship— 1 st Cong. Church, W. Brattleboro	7 Good Friday 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 6 ⁰⁰ Worship Guilford Church	8
9 Easter Sunday 8 ⁰⁰ Worship 9 ⁰⁰ Book Discussion 10 ⁰⁰ Worship / FIA 11 ³⁰ Hospitality Time	10 4 ⁰⁰ Sermon discussion** 5 ⁰⁰ Sacred Places Team 7 ⁰⁰ Christian Theology	11 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 12 ³⁰ BAILA 7 ⁰⁰ Dharma evening	12 11 ⁰⁰ Staff meeting 12 ⁰⁰ Help Fund 4 ⁰⁰ Centred Yoga 5 ⁰⁰ Contemplative Prayer 6 ⁰⁰ Mission & Service	13 10 ⁰⁰ UCC Devotional** 1 ⁰⁰ Quilting ministry 3 ³⁰ BCC Board 4 ³⁰ Women's Spirit 5 ³⁰ Choir rehearsal	14 CB DEADLINE 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 11 ³⁰ L & F Board	15 9 ⁰⁰ Buddhist 1/2 day Sitting
16 9 ⁰⁰ Book Discussion 10 ⁰⁰ Worship / FIA 11 ³⁰ Hospitality Time 5 ⁰⁰ SOS Meal	17 4 ⁰⁰ Sermon discussion** 4 ⁰⁰ Compassionate Brattleboro 7 ⁰⁰ PubTheology	18 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 7 ⁰⁰ Dharma evening	19 11 ⁰⁰ Staff meeting 12 ⁰⁰ Help Fund 4 ⁰⁰ Centred Yoga 5 ⁰⁰ Contemplative Prayer 6 ⁰⁰ Church Council 6 ³⁰ NAACP	20 10 ⁰⁰ UCC Devotional** 1 ⁰⁰ Quilting ministry 4 ³⁰ Women's Spirit 5 ³⁰ Choir rehearsal	21 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes	22 10 ⁰⁰ Patricia Neer Memorial Svce
23 9 ⁰⁰ Book Discussion 10 ⁰⁰ Worship / FIA 11 ³⁰ Hospitality Time	24 4 ⁰⁰ Sermon discussion 5 ⁰⁰ Sacred Places Team 7 ⁰⁰ Christian Theology	25 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 7 ⁰⁰ Dharma evening	26 MAIL CB 11 ⁰⁰ Staff meeting 12 ⁰⁰ Help Fund 4 ⁰⁰ Centred Yoga 5 ⁰⁰ Contemplative Prayer 6 ⁰⁰ WWAC Salon	27 10 ⁰⁰ UCC Devotional** 1 ⁰⁰ Quilting ministry 4 ³⁰ Women's Spirit 5 ³⁰ Choir rehearsal	28 VT Conference Annual Meeting 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 3 ⁰⁰ Kappa Kappa Gamma	29 VT Conference Annual Meeting 7 ³⁰ Kappa Kappa Gamma
30 9 ⁰⁰ Book Discussion 10 ⁰⁰ Worship / FIA 11 ³⁰ Hospitality Time						

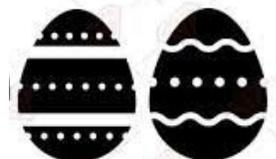
SCOTT'S SERMONS can be accessed at the church website: www.centrechurhvermont.org -or-
facebook page: <http://www.centrechurhvermont.org/audio--video.html> -or-
https://www.facebook.com/pg/Centre-Congregational-Church-Brattleboro-VT-632678343519640/notes/?ref=page_internal -or-
From the website *Welcome* page, click *Audio & Video* in the top list (or click *More* or *Other* on the top right).

APRIL LECTIONARY TEXTS

Sunday, April 2, Palm Sunday (palms) Ps 118:1-2, 19-29; Matt 21:1-11 (passion) Isa 50:4-9a; Ps 31:9-16; Phil 2:5-11; Matt 26:14-27:66 or Matt 27:11-54	Sunday, April 9, Easter Sunday Acts 10:34-43 or Jer 31:1-6; Ps 118:1-2, 14-24; Col 3:1-4 or Acts 10:34-43; John 20:1-18 or Matt 28:1-10
Thursday, April 6, Maundy Thursday Ex 12:1-4, (5-10), 11-14; Ps 116:1-2, 12-19; 1 Cor 11:23-26; John 13:1-17, 31b-35	Sunday, April 16, 2nd Sunday of Easter Acts 2:14a, 22-32; Ps 16; 1 Peter 1:3-9; John 20:19-31
Friday, April 7, Good Friday Isa 52:13-53:12; Ps 22; Heb 10:16-25 or Heb 4:14-16, 5:7-9; John 18:1-19:42	Sunday, April 23, 3rd Sunday of Easter Acts 2:14a, 36-41; Ps 116:1-4, 12-19; 1 Peter 1:17-23; Luke 24:13-35
Saturday, April 8, Holy Saturday Job 14:1-14 or Lam 3:1-9, 19-24; Ps 31:1-4, 15-16; 1 Peter 4:1-8; Matt 27:57-66 or John 19:38-42	Sunday, April 30, 4th Sunday of Easter Acts 2:42-47; Ps 23; 1 Peter 2:19-25; John 10:1-10



Centre Bells is published monthly by **Centre Congregational Church, UCC**
News items, articles, address changes, and requests to be added or removed from the
Centre Bells mailing list should be submitted to the church office:
802.254.4730 / admin@centrechurhvt.org



APRIL



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**CENTRE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**
193 Main Street Brattleboro, Vermont 05301
centrechurch@centrechurchvt.org
CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

CENTRE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

193 Main Street, Brattleboro, VT 05301-2842

Office Hours: M – F / 8:30am–12:30pm

Scott's days off: Friday and Saturday

Church Office: 802.254.4730 / admin@centrechurchvt.org

Website: www.centrechurchvt.org

Facebook: [Centre Congregational Church-Brattleboro VT](https://www.facebook.com/Centre-Congregational-Church-Brattleboro-VT)

Current news/information in the larger UCC Community:

VT Conference: www.vtcucc.org / National: www.ucc.org

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