

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
BENNINGTON, VERMONT

*Vermont's Colonial Shrine: Welcoming all to share God's light,
and proclaiming God's embracing love since 1806*

THE REV. KENNETH A. CLARKE, MINISTER
DAVID VARKER, LAY READER
GENE MARIE CALLAHAN, ORGANIST
OLD FIRST CHURCH CHOIR

MARCH 9, 2025

PRELUDE *We Walk by Faith and Not by Sight* - David Cherwien

OPENING WORDS (responsive)

We gather in prayer and praise.

God is our refuge and our strength.

God's word calls to us.

Open our hearts this hour.

***HYMN** *God of Grace and God of Glory* 420

The text was written in 1930 for the opening of Riverside Church in New York City by the pastor, Harry Emerson Fosdick, when the congregation moved from Park Avenue to its new building. John Hughes, a deacon in the Salem Baptist Church in Wales, wrote the tune in 1907 for a Welsh singing festival. It is named for the principal coal town in Glamorganshire.

OPENING PRAYER (unison)

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent, for the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND *GLORIA PATRI (579)

FIRST LESSON Psalm 91:1-16 p. 477

***HYMN** *O Lord, Make Haste to Hear My Cry* 249

The present text of this metrical setting of Psalm 141 first appeared as number 386 in The Psalter (1912). The present text is the first four stanzas of the original with the archaic language removed. The tune: CANNONS was composed by George Frederick Handel (c. 1750) and was originally used with Charles Wesley's text, "Sinners, Obey the Gospel Word." It is one of three tunes by Handel which were published as settings for Wesley's text by Samuel Wesley in 1826.

SECOND LESSON Luke 4:1-13 p. 835

SERMON Keeping Things Right

***HYMN** *The Glory of These Forty Days* 87

This hymn is ascribed to one of the oldest authors in our hymnal, Gregory the Great (c. 540-604). A Roman senator, he became a Benedictine monk after his father's death and established six monasteries on his father's land. He became pope in 590. His Gregorian chant became a standard in the Western church. Some think the tune was by Martin Luther, with harmony by J. S. Bach, who based his Cantata 126 on the tune.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS OF THE CHURCH (Visitors are kindly requested to fill out one of the visitor's cards in the pew and put it in the offering plate or hand it to an usher after the service.)

OFFERING
OFFERTORY *Dust and Ashes Touch Our Face* - Hal H. Hopson

***DOXOLOGY (592) AND PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

CLOSING PRAYER AND THE LORD'S PRAYER (debts/debtors) p. 16

***HYMN** *Come, Labor On* 415

The author was Jane Laurie Borthwick, a member of the Free Church of Scotland. Known primarily as a translator along with her sister, they published together four volumes titled *Hymns from the Land of Luther*. She published this text in 1857 in her book, *Thoughts for Thoughtful Hours*. The tune was written by Thomas Tertius Noble in 1918. He was a noted composer and organist in York, England and at St. Thomas Church, New York City.

***BENEDICTION**

***POSTLUDE** *How Firm a Foundation* - David Cherwien

We extend a warm welcome to our guests and visitors and we are delighted to have you worship with us. Please fill out a visitor's card found in the pew and be sure to identify yourself so we can present you with a gift bag.

Deacons on call this month are Marsha Pilachowski and Wendy Schmitt. Ushers for today's service are Dave and Marsha Pilachowski.

Please join us after worship today for coffee hour provided by Sandy Bechtel, Nancy Coseo, Betsy Ehrenfreund, Joyce Goeke, Kate Musso, Audrey Pietrucha, Marsha Pilachowski, Vicky Printz, Pat Ross, and Wendy Schmitt.

The Church's Annual Meeting follows worship today. All members of the church are expected to meet in the sanctuary after coffee hour.

Flowers for worship are provided by Wendy Schmitt.

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS: (All meetings are open to members of the church)

Choir practice, Sunday mornings, 9:45 AM in the choir loft

3/13, 3/20; 3/27: Bible Study, 7:00 PM, Parlor

3/16: St. Patrick's luncheon following worship

3/20: Deacon's meeting, 3:30 PM, Barn

3/27: Trustee's meeting, 5:30 PM

3/30: Open Church meeting, following worship

If you are interested in discussing matters of faith and want to inquire about Christian membership in the church, please contact Rev. Clarke. We welcome the chance to have you join us in our historic, but active-in-the-world, community of faith!

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

(OLD FIRST CHURCH)

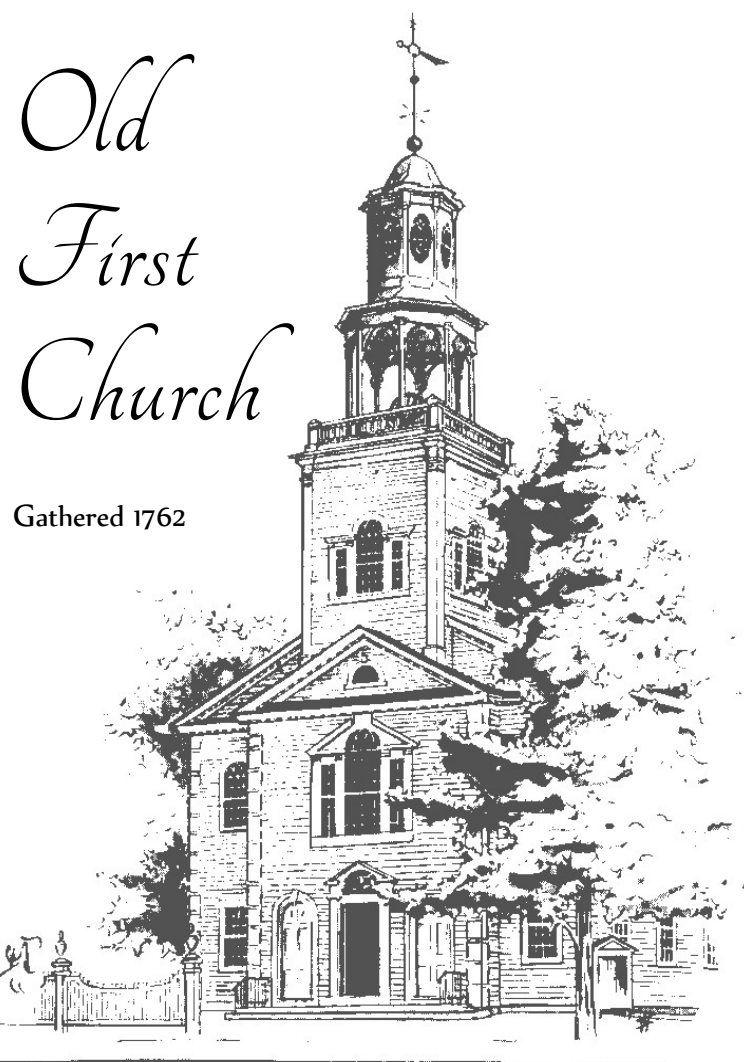
VT RTE. 9 AND MONUMENT AVENUE

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God of Grace and God of Glory

God of grace and God of glory,
on Thy people pour Thy power.
Crown Thine ancient church's story;
bring its bud to glorious flower.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
for the facing of this hour,
for the facing of this hour.

Lo! the hosts of evil round us
scorn Thy Christ, assail Thy ways!
From the fears that long have bound us
free our hearts to faith and praise.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
for the living of these days,
for the living of these days.

Cure Thy children's warring madness,
bend our pride to Thy control;
shame our wanton, selfish gladness,
rich in things and poor in soul.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
lest we miss Thy kingdom's goal,
lest we miss Thy kingdom's goal.

Set our feet on lofty places;
gird our lives that they may be
armored with all Christ-like graces,
pledged to set all captives free.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
that we fail not them nor Thee!
that we fail not them nor Thee!

Save us from weak resignation
to the evils we deplore;
Let the gift of Thy salvation
be our glory evermore.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
serving Thee whom we adore,
serving Thee whom we adore.

FIRST LESSON

Psalm 91:1-16

You who live in the shelter of the Most High, who abide in the shadow of the Almighty,

will say to the LORD, "My refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust."

For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence;

he will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness is a shield and buckler.

You will not fear the terror of the night, or the arrow that flies by day,

or the pestilence that stalks in darkness, or the destruction that wastes at noonday.

A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you.

You will only look with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked.

Because you have made the LORD your refuge, the Most High your dwelling place,

no evil shall befall you, no scourge come near your tent.

For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.

On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.

You will tread on the lion and the adder, the young lion and the serpent you will trample under foot.

Those who love me, I will deliver; I will protect those who know my name.

When they call to me, I will answer them; I will be with them in trouble, I will rescue them and honor them.

With long life I will satisfy them, and show them my salvation.

O Lord, Make Haste to Hear My Cry

O Lord, make haste to hear my cry.
To You I call, on You rely.
Incline to me a gracious ear,
And when I call, in mercy hear.

When in the morning unto You
I call in supplication new,
Then let my prayer as incense rise
To God enthroned above the skies.

When unto You I look and pray
With lifted hands at close of day,
Then as the evening sacrifice
Let my request accepted rise.

O guard my thoughts, I now implore,
And of my lips O keep the door;
Nor leave my sinful heart to stray
Where evil footsteps lead the way.

SECOND LESSON

Luke 4:1-13

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished. The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread." Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone.'" Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And the devil said to him, "To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'" Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'" Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

The Glory of These Forty Days

The glory of these forty days
We celebrate with songs of praise;
For Christ, by whom all things were made,
Himself has fasted and has prayed.

Alone and fasting, Moses saw
The loving God who gave the law;
And to Elijah, fasting, came
The steeds and chariots of flame.

So Daniel trained his mystic sight,
Delivered from the lion's might;
And John, the Bridegroom's friend, became
The herald of Messiah's name.

Then grant that we like them be true,
Consumed in fast and prayer with You;
Our spirits strengthen with Your grace,
And give us joy to see Your face.

Come, Labor On

Come, labor on.
Who dares stand idle on the harvest plain
while all around us waves the golden grain?
And to each servant does the Master say,
"Go work today."

Come, labor on.
Claim the high calling angels cannot share;
to young and old the gospel gladness bear.
Redeem the time; its hours too swiftly fly.
The night draws nigh.

Come, labor on.
Away with gloomy doubts and faithless fear!
No arm so weak but may do service here.
Though feeble agents, may we all fulfill
God's righteous will.

Come, labor on.
No time for rest, till glows the western sky,
till the long shadows o'er our pathway lie,
and a glad sound comes with the setting sun,
"Well done, well done!"