

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
GENE MARIE CALLAHAN, ORGANIST

MAY 24, 2020

PRELUDE *Shall We Gather at the River* - arr. Dale Wood

OPENING WORDS (responsive)

Sing to the Lord a new song;

Sing to the Lord, all the earth.

Let us worship the Lord in spirit and in truth.

May the way of peace open our hearts.

HYMN *My Country, 'Tis of Thee* **561**

(LYRICS REPRINTED AT THE END OF THE ORDER OF SERVICE)

Samuel Francis Smith (1808-95), a Baptist minister and Bostonian linguist, wrote the hymn. At the time of his death he knew 15 languages and was seeking a Russian text to learn Russian. He scribbled out the hymn in about a half-hour when he was 24 years old and a student at Andover Theological Seminary. He found the tune in a German music book given to him by Lowell Mason, prominent musician and educator, because Smith could read German. Mason then arranged the tune to be called AMERICA. The tune has origins that go back to Gregorian chants, Scottish carols, and the court of King Louis XIV. In England it was published to honor George II and given the title "National Anthem," and it was Russia's national tune until 1833.

OPENING PRAYER (unison)

O Lord, we come before you to confess that we often forget that we are yours. Sometimes we carry on our lives as if you were not there and neglect the gifts we have from you. Forgive us and give us strength. Give us clear minds and open hearts so we may witness to you in our world. Remind us who you would have us to be regardless of what we are doing or who we are with. Help us live with you and with those you have given us on earth in love and with renewed faith. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND GLORIA PATRI (579)

FIRST LESSON 1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11 p. 986

HYMN *Give Ear, Ye Children*

(LYRICS REPRINTED AT THE END OF THE ORDER OF SERVICE)

This paraphrase of Psalm 78:1-6 is from Jeremy Belknap's *Sacred Poetry, Consisting of Psalms and Hymns adapted to Public Worship* (Boston 1795). The first three stanzas are altered from Tate and Brady's *New Version of the Psalms*, 1696; the rest are from Isaac Watts's *Psalms of David Imitated*, 1719. Jeremy Belknap (1744-1798) served as a Congregational minister in Dover, New Hampshire, and later in Boston. A graduate of Harvard in 1762, he was elected an Overseer in 1792. He is also remembered as a founder of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

SECOND LESSON Acts 1:6-14 p. 884

SERMON *Mystic Chords of Memory*

HYMN *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory*

(LYRICS REPRINTED AT THE END OF THE ORDER OF SERVICE)

Julia Ward Howe (May 27, 1819 – October 17, 1910) was an American poet and author, known for writing "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" and the original 1870 pacifist Mother's Day Proclamation. She was also an advocate for abolitionism and a social activist, particularly for women's suffrage.

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.)

OFFERING

OFFERTORY *Whispering Hope*
- Alice Hawthorne arr. G. Callahan

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

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

HYMN *Eternal Father, Strong to Save* **562**

(LYRICS REPRINTED AT THE END OF THE ORDER OF SERVICE)

William Whiting wrote the text for a student about to set sail for America in 1860. He was master of Winchester College Choristers' School. John Dykes wrote the tune for this text. A vicar, he published over 300 hymn tunes. The tune, *Melita*, refers to Malta, where Paul was shipwrecked. The hymn is known as the Navy Hymn in this country and is also sung on English ships. It was Franklin Delano Roosevelt's favorite and was sung at his funeral in 1945.

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *America! America!* - Robert J. Hughes

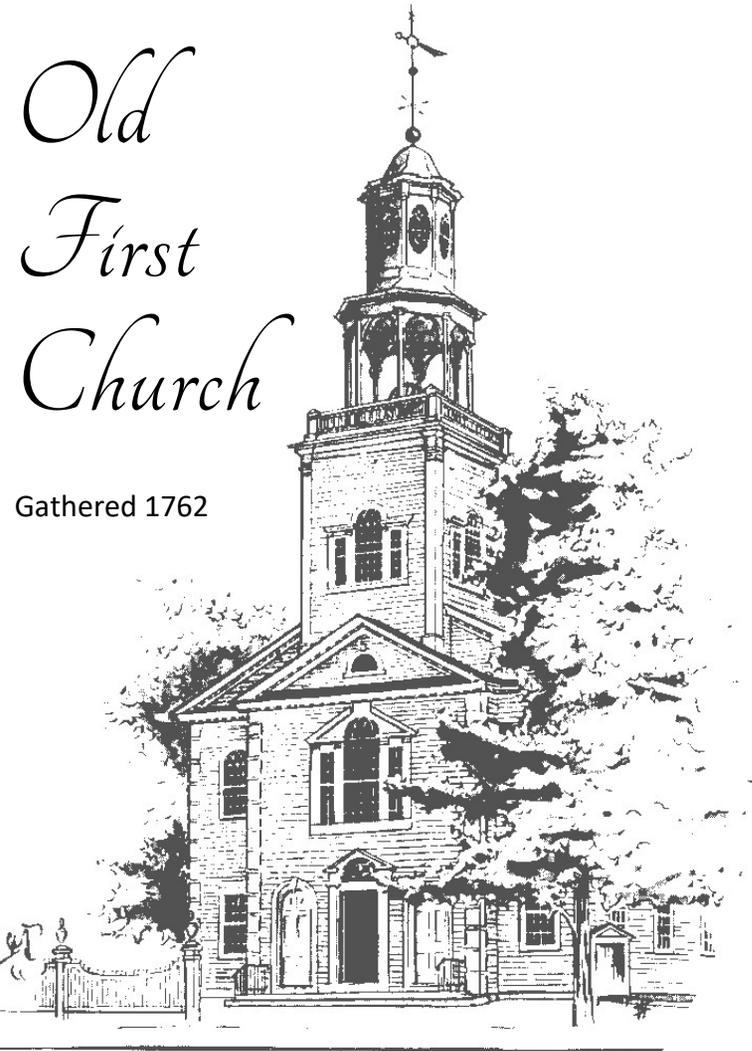
Deacons on call this month are Marsha Pilachowski and Wendy Schmitt.

Worship and life at Old First is changing in response to the need to reduce activity as we work to get through the challenge of the COVID-19 presence in our life. Our prayers and thoughts go to everyone immediately affected and thanks go to all people who work to provide care and supply our needs in this time. An audio version of our weekly worship services can be found on the church's website by clicking on the "Worship" tab and selecting "Worship Here and Now". Or simply paste the following into your computer's browser at the top of the page:

<http://oldfirstchurchbenn.org/worship/worship-here-and-now/>

If this link appears in blue on the device you are using to read this, you can also just "click on the link" and you will be there! The church office has been temporarily moved to the home of our office administrator. Please use email, phone or U.S. Mail for correspondence.

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!



Old First Church

Gathered 1762

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

(OLD FIRST CHURCH)

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My Country, 'Tis of Thee

1. My country, 'tis of thee,
Sweet land of liberty,
Of thee I sing;
Land where my fathers died,
Land of the pilgrims' pride,
From every mountainside,
Let freedom ring.
2. My native country, thee,
Land of the noble free,
Thy name I love;
I love thy rocks and rills,
Thy woods and templed hills;
My heart with rapture thrills,
Like that above.
3. Let music swell the breeze,
And ring from all the trees,
Sweet freedom's song;
Let mortal tongues awake;
Let all that breathe partake;
Let rocks their silence break,
The sound prolong.
4. Our fathers' God, to Thee,
Author of liberty,
To Thee we sing;
Long may our land be bright
With freedom's holy light;
Protect us by Thy might,
Great God, our King.

Give Ear, Ye Children

1. Give ear, ye children, to my law
Devout attention lend,
Let the instructions of my mouth
Deep in your hearts descend.
2. My tongue, by inspiration taught,
Shall parables unfold:
Dark oracles, but understood,
And owned for truths of old,
3. Which we from sacred registers
Of ancient times have known,
And our forefathers' pious care
To us has handed down.
4. Let children hear the mighty deeds,
Which God performed of old,
Which in our younger years we saw,
And which our fathers told.
5. Our lips shall tell them to our sons,
And they again to theirs, --
That generations yet unborn,
May teach them to their heirs.

Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord;
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;
He hath loosed the fateful lightning of his terrible swift sword;
His truth is marching on.

Glory, glory, hallelujah,
Glory, glory, hallelujah,
Glory, glory, hallelujah;
His truth is marking on.

He has sounded forth a trumpet that shall never call retreat;
He is sifting out the hearts of men before his judgement seat,
O be swift, my soul, to answer him: be jubilant, my feet;
Our God is Marching on.

Glory, glory, hallelujah,
Glory, glory, hallelujah,
Glory, glory, hallelujah;
Our God is marking on.

In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea,
With a glory in his bosom that transfigures you and me;
As he died to make men holy, let us die to make men free,
While God is marching on.

Glory, glory, hallelujah,
Glory, glory, hallelujah,
Glory, glory, hallelujah;
While God is marching on.

Eternal Father, Strong to Save

1. Eternal Father, strong to save,
Whose arm has bound the restless wave,
Who bade the mighty ocean deep
Its own appointed limits keep:
O hear us when we cry to Thee
For those in peril on the sea.
2. O Savior, whose almighty word
The winds and waves submissive heard,
Who walked upon the foaming deep,
And calm amid its rage did sleep:
O hear us when we cry to Thee
For those in peril on the sea.
3. O Holy Spirit, who did brood
Upon the chaos wild and rude,
And bade its angry tumult cease,
And gave for fierce confusion, peace:
O hear us when we cry to Thee
For those in peril on the sea.
4. O Trinity of love and power,
All travelers guard in danger's hour;
From rock and tempest, fire and foe,
Protect them where-so-e'er they go;
Thus evermore shall rise to Thee
Glad praise from air and land and sea.

1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed. If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, is resting on you. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you.

Discipline yourselves, keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour. Resist him, steadfast in your faith, for you know that your brothers and sisters in all the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering.

And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the power forever and ever. Amen.

Acts 1:6-14

So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But 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." When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, "Men 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."

Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey away. When 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. All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.