

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

JULY 19, 2020
SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

PRELUDE *Echo from French Suite* - JS Bach

OPENING WORDS (responsive)

O be joyful in the Lord all ye lands.

Serve the Lord with gladness and come before God's presence with a song.

It is God who has made us and we ourselves.

We are God's people and the sheep of God's pasture.

HYMN *God, You Spin the Whirling Planets* 285

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

Jane Parker Huber wrote the text for a 1979 national meeting of church women whose theme was, "In the Image of God." Huber was born in 1926 of Presbyterian missionary parents in China and is a prolific writer of new words to familiar hymn tunes. She chose this tune because the opening night of the conference featured a rendition of Haydn's *Creation*. Haydn wrote this tune, which is a variant of a Croatian folksong, and after hearing "God Save the King" at Westminster Abbey in 1791, so his Austrian people would have their own national anthem.

OPENING PRAYER (unison)

God of all creation, our chief end
is to glorify you,
and enjoy you forever.

Our deep delight is in your presence,
our fondest thoughts are of you,
our strongest longing is for your house.

In this hour of worship,
help us to become who we are meant to be--
a community that breathes thankfulness,
voicing your praise in all we do. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND GLORIA PATRI (579)

FIRST LESSON Psalm 86:1-11 p. 473

HYMN *You Are Before Me, Lord* 248

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

This paraphrase of Psalm 139 is by Ian Pitt-Watson. He wrote the text in 1973 and revised it extensively in 1989. The new "authorized version" appears in *The Presbyterian Hymnal* (1990).

SECOND LESSON Genesis 28:10-19a p. 22

SERMON A Good Night's Sleep

HYMN *We Are Climbing Jacobs Ladder*

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

Is a spiritual song, that depicts the Biblical story of Jacob's Ladder. The spiritual saw a parallel in the ladder's steps representing the upcoming exiles of the Jews with the tribulations of American slavery, with both to be ended by example of God's covenant to Jacob.

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 *Trio* - Josef Rheinberger

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

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

HYMN *Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing* 356

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

This text was written by Robert Robinson (1735-1790) about 1758 and was included in *A Collection of Hymns Used by the Church of Christ in Angel-Alley, Bishopsgate* (1759). It was later included with the tune NETTLETON in John Wyeth's *Repository of Sacred Music, Part Second* (1813).

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *In Thee Is Gladness* - Ralph C. Schultz

Deacons on call this month are Marietta Hibbard, Jeannette Lesser and Amy Tronsen.

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:

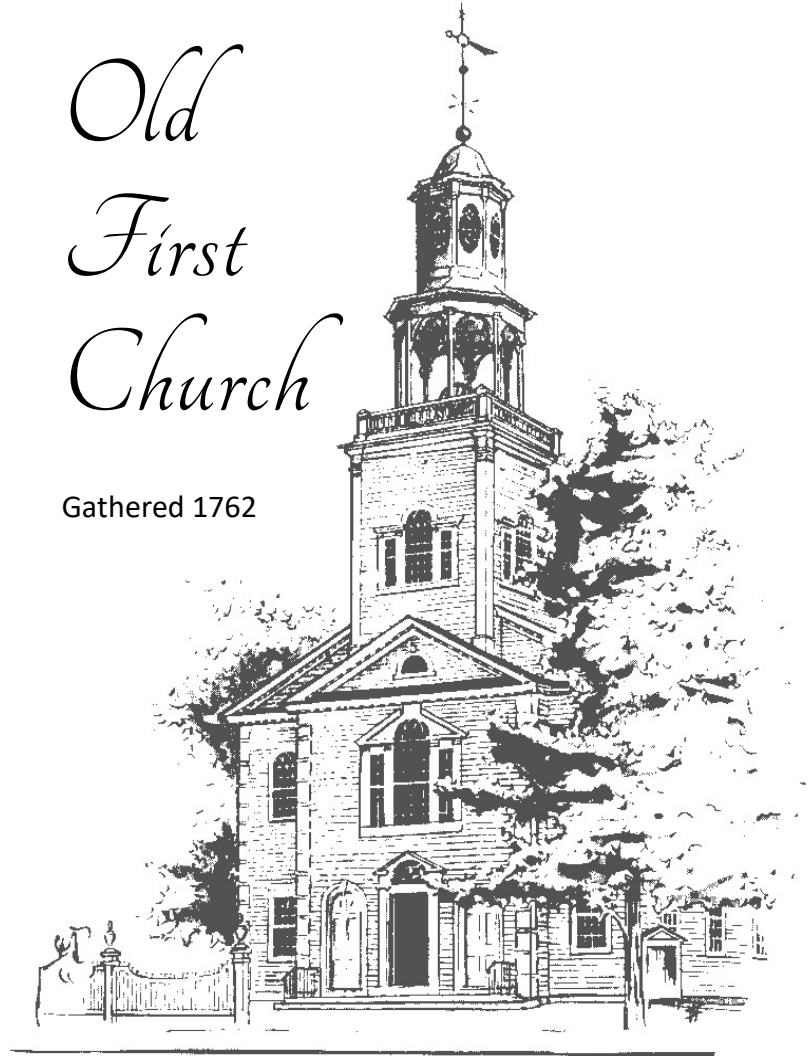
<http://oldfirstchurchbenn.org/worship/worship-here-and-now/>

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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God, You Spin the Whirling Planets

1). God, You spin the whirling planets,
Fill the seas and spread the plain,
Mold the mountains, fashion blossoms,
Call forth sunshine, wind, and rain.
We, created in Your image,
would a true reflection be
Of Your justice, grace, and mercy,
And the truth that makes us free.

2). You have called us to be faithful
In our life and ministry.
We respond in grateful worship
Joined in one community.
When we blur Your gracious image,
Focus us and make us whole.
Healed and strengthened as Your people,
We move onward toward Your goal.

3). God, Your word is still creating,
Calling us to life made new.
Now reveal to us fresh vistas
Where there's work to dare to do.
Keep us clear of all distortion.
Polish us with loving care.
Thus, new creatures in Your image,
We'll proclaim Christ everywhere.

You Are Before Me, Lord

You are before me, Lord, You are behind,
And over me You have spread out Your hand;
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
Too high to grasp, too great to understand.

Then from Your Spirit where, Lord, shall I go;
And from Your presence where, Lord, shall I fly?
If I ascend to heaven You are there,
And still are with me if in hell I lie.

If I should take my flight into the dawn,
If I should dwell on ocean's farthest shore,
Your mighty hand will rest upon me still,
And Your right hand will guard me evermore.

If I should say, "Let darkness cover me,
And I shall hide within the veil of night,"
Surely the darkness is not dark to You:
The night is as the day, the darkness light.

Search me, O God, search me and know my heart;
Try me, O God, my mind and spirit try;
Keep me from any path that gives You pain,
And lead me in the everlasting way.

We Are Climbing Jacob's Ladder

We are climbing Jacob's ladder,
We are climbing Jacob's ladder,
We are climbing Jacob's ladder,
Soldiers of the cross.

Ev'ry round goes higher, higher,
Ev'ry round goes higher, higher,
Ev'ry round goes higher, higher,
Soldiers of the cross.

Children, do you love my Jesus?
Children, do you love my Jesus?
Children, do you love my Jesus?
Soldiers of the cross.

If you love him, why not serve him?
If you love him, why not serve him?
If you love him, why not serve him?
Soldiers of the cross.

Rise, shine, give God glory,
Rise, shine, give God glory,
Rise, shine, give God glory,
Soldiers of the cross.

Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing

1). Come, Thou Fount of every blessing,
tune my heart to sing Thy grace;
streams of mercy, never ceasing,
call for songs of loudest praise.
Teach me some melodious sonnet,
sung by flaming tongues above;
praise the mount! I'm fixed upon it,
mount of God's unchanging love!

2). Here I raise my Ebenezer,
hither by Thy help I'm come;
and I hope, by Thy good pleasure,
safely to arrive at home.
Jesus sought me when a stranger,
wandering from the fold of God;
He, to rescue me from danger,
Interposed His precious blood.

3). O to grace how great a debtor
daily I'm constrained to be!
Let that grace now, like a fetter,
bind my wandering heart to Thee:
prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
prone to leave the God I love;
here's my heart, O take and seal it;
seal it for Thy courts above.

Psalm 86

Incline your ear, O LORD, and answer me, for I am poor and needy.

Preserve my life, for I am devoted to you; save your servant who trusts in you. You are my God;

be gracious to me, O Lord, for to you do I cry all day long.

Gladden the soul of your servant, for to you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love to all who call on you.

Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer; listen to my cry of supplication.

In the day of my trouble I call on you, for you will answer me.

There is none like you among the gods, O Lord, nor are there any works like yours.

All the nations you have made shall come and bow down before you, O Lord, and shall glorify your name.

For you are great and do wondrous things; you alone are God.

Teach me your way, O LORD, that I may walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart to revere your name.

Genesis 28:10-19a

Jacob left Beer-sheba and went toward Haran. He came to a certain place and stayed there for the night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place. And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, the top of it reaching to heaven; and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And the LORD stood beside him and said, "I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring; and your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and all the families of the earth shall be blessed in you and in your offspring. Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place—and I did not know it!" And he was afraid, and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." So Jacob rose early in the morning, and he took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it. He called that place Bethel; but the name of the city was Luz at the first.