

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

AUGUST 9, 2020

PRELUDE *On the Tune Crimond* - Charles Callahan

OPENING WORDS (responsive)

Let us gather to worship and praise the Lord.

For the goodness of this life and the promise of each day.

Let us remember God's guiding spirit and give thanks.

For works of mercy, love and peace we have known.

HYMN *Here, O Lord, Your Servants Gather* 465

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

This hymn was written by Tokou Yamaguchi (b. 1900) in 1958 for the World Council of Christian Education Convention held in Tokyo. It was translated by Everett Stowe, a United Methodist missionary in Japan at the time. Isao Koizumi (b. 1907) wrote the tune for the text, basing it on the ancient gagaku, traditional Japanese music whose form was imported from the Tang dynasty of China.

OPENING PRAYER (unison)

Almighty and merciful God, from whom comes all that is good, we praise you for your mercies, for your goodness that has created us, your grace that has sustained us, your patience that has borne with us, and your love that has redeemed us. Forgive our misdeeds or neglects. Help us to love you, and to be thankful for all your gifts by serving you and delighting to do your will, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND GLORIA PATRI (579)

FIRST LESSON Matthew 14:22-33 p. 796

HYMN *This Is the Day the Lord Hath Made* 230

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

This paraphrase of Psalm 118 by Isaac Watts was first published in *The Psalms of David* (1719), where he headed it "Hosanna; The Lord's Day; or Christ's Resurrection, and Our Salvation." Watts's intention was for it to be sung on Easter Day or on Sundays.

SECOND LESSON Genesis 37:1-4, 12-28 p. 30

SERMON Troubled Waters

HYMN *Like the Murmur of the Dove's Song* 314

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

This text, written by the Reverend Carl P. Daw, Jr. M.A., M.Div., Ph.D. (born in Louisville, Kentucky in 1944) is an American Episcopal priest. Now Curator of Hymnological Collections and Adjunct Professor of Hymnology at Boston University School of Theology, he previously was Executive Director of the Hymn Society in the United States and Canada from 1996-2009. In May 2011, he was named a Fellow of the Royal School of Church Music. He has written over thirty hymn texts, among the most popular being "Surely It is God Who Saves Me" and the present text.

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 *The King of Love My Shepherd Is* - arr. Dan Forrest

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

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

HYMN *Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise* 263

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

The author of the text, Walter Chalmers Smith (1824-1908), was a minister in the Free Church of Scotland and was its Moderator in 1893. He published several books, his last one being *A Heretic and Other Poems*. The tune is a Welsh folk melody from the early 19th century.

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *Concluding Voluntary* - R.G. Thompson

Deacons on call this month are Sandy Bechtel and Laurel Varker.

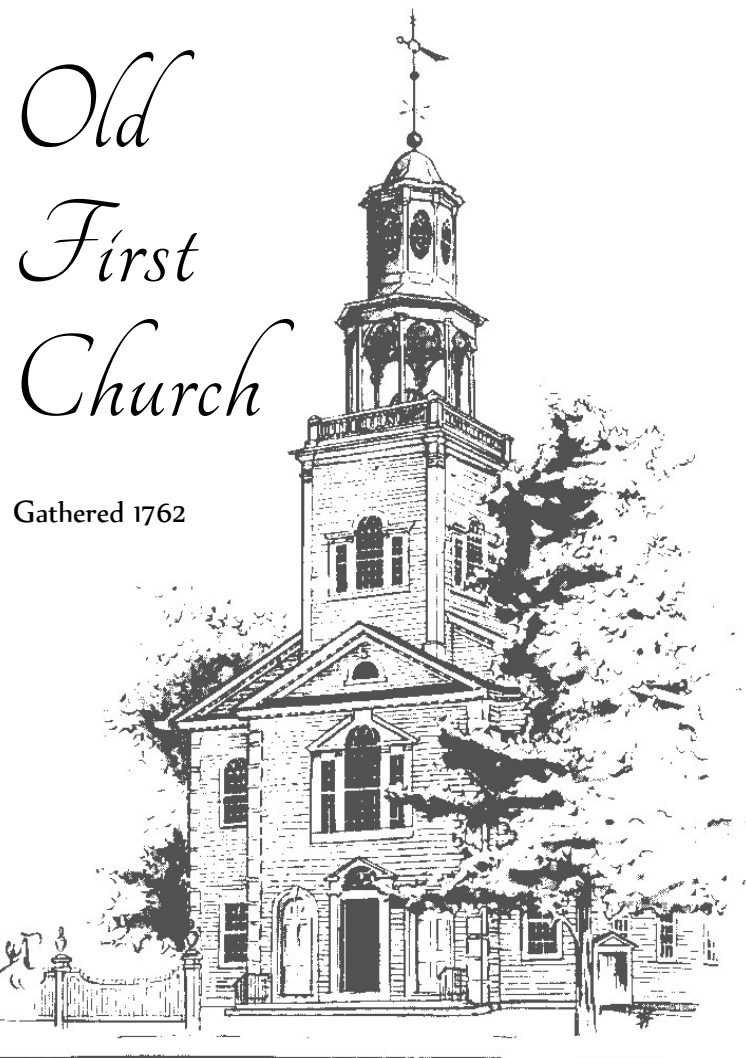
CHURCH PICNIC: All are welcome to an outside gathering in front of the church at 12:00 PM this Sunday (August 9), weather permitting, which will include prayers and a “BYOE” picnic. Those who wish to attend should pack everything needed for your own picnic lunch and a chair or blanket to sit on.

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!



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

(OLD FIRST CHURCH)

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Here, O Lord, Your Servants Gather

- 1). Here, O Lord, your servants gather,
hand we link with hand;
looking toward our Savior's cross,
joined in love we stand.
As we seek the realm of God,
we unite to pray:
Jesus, Savior, guide our steps
for You are the way.
- 2). Many are the tongues we speak,
scattered are the lands;
yet our hearts are one in God,
one in love's demands.
E'en in darkness hope appears,
calling age and youth;
Jesus, teacher, dwell with us,
for You are the truth.
- 3). Nature's secrets open wide,
changes never cease;
where, O where, can weary souls
find the source of peace?
Unto all those sore distressed,
torn by endless strife,
Jesus, healer, bring Your balm,
for You are the life.
- 4). Grant, O God, an age renewed,
filled with deathless love;
help us as we work and pray.
Send us from above
truth and courage, faith and power
needed in our strife:
Jesus, Savior, be our way,
be our truth our life.

This Is the Day the Lord Hath Made

This is the day the Lord hath made;
The hours are all God's own;
Let Heaven rejoice, let earth be glad,
And praise surround the throne.

Hosanna to the anointed King,
To David's holy Son!
Help us, O Lord; descend and bring
Salvation from the throne.
Blest be the Lord, who comes in power
With messages of grace,
Who comes in this accepted hour
To save our sinful race.

Hosanna in the highest strains
The church on earth can raise!
The highest heavens, in which God reigns
Shall now resound with praise.

Like the Murmur of the Dove's Song

Like the murmur of the dove's song,
Like the challenge of her flight,
Like the vigor of the wind's rush,
Like the new flame's eager might:
Come, Holy Spirit, come.

To the members of Christ's body,
To the branches of the Vine,
To the church in faith assembled,
To her midst as gift and sign:
Come, Holy Spirit, come.

With the healing of division,
With the ceaseless voice of prayer,
With the power to love and witness,
With the peace beyond compare:
Come, Holy Spirit, come.

Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise

Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
in light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
Almighty, victorious, Thy great name we praise.

Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,
nor wanting, nor wasting, Thou rulest in might;
Thy justice like mountains high soaring above
Thy clouds, which are fountains of goodness and love.

To all, life Thou givest, to both great and small;
in all life Thou livest, the true life of all;
we blossom and flourish like leaves on the tree,
then wither and perish; but naught changeth Thee.

Thou reignest in glory, Thou rulest in light,
Thine angels adore Thee, all veiling their sight;
All praise we would render; O help us to see
"Tis only the splendor of light hideth Thee!

MATTHEW 14:22-33

Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid." Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

GENESIS 37:1-4, 12-28

Jacob settled in the land where his father had lived as an alien, the land of Canaan. This is the story of the family of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was shepherding the flock with his brothers; he was a helper to the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father. Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his children, because he was the son of his old age; and he had made him a long robe with sleeves. But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him.

Now his brothers went to pasture their father's flock near Shechem. And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers pasturing the flock at Shechem? Come, I will send you to them." He answered, "Here I am." So he said to him, "Go now, see if it is well with your brothers and with the flock; and bring word back to me." So he sent him from the valley of Hebron. He came to Shechem, and a man found him wandering in the fields; the man asked him, "What are you seeking?" "I am seeking my brothers," he said; "tell me, please, where they are pasturing the flock." The man said, "They have gone away, for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.'" So Joseph went after his brothers, and found them at Dothan. They saw him from a distance, and before he came near to them, they conspired to kill him. They said to one another, "Here comes this dreamer. Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits; then we shall say that a wild animal has devoured him, and we shall see what will become of his dreams." But when Reuben heard it, he delivered him out of their hands, saying, "Let us not take his life." Reuben said to them, "Shed no blood; throw him into this pit here in the wilderness, but lay no hand on him" — that he might rescue him out of their hand and restore him to his father.

So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the long robe with sleeves that he wore; and they took him and threw him into a pit. The pit was empty; there was no water in it. Then they sat down to eat; and looking up they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, with their camels carrying gum, balm, and resin, on their way to carry it down to Egypt. Then Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and not lay our hands on him, for he is our brother, our own flesh." And his brothers agreed. When some Midianite traders passed by, they drew Joseph up, lifting him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.