

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

MARCH 14, 2021 ~ FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

PRELUDE *Elegaic Prelude on Jerusalem* - Charles Callahan

OPENING WORDS (responsive)

The Lord has done great things.

Restore our health and faith.

God's love and mercy abide.

Revive our spirits this day.

HYMN *Be Thou My Vision* **339**

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

The text dates from an ancient Irish poem from ca. 700 A.D. The tune is an ancient Irish ballad named for the hill (Slane) where the first fires of Easter were lighted by St. Patrick as a challenge to King Laoghaire.

OPENING PRAYER (unison)

Christ be with me

Christ before me

Christ behind me

Christ in me

Christ beneath me

Christ above me

Christ on my right

Christ on my left

Christ where I lie

Christ where I sit

Christ where I arise

Christ in the heart of every one

who thinks of me

Christ in the mouth of every one

who speaks of me

Christ in every eye that sees me

Christ in every ear that hears me

Salvation is of the Lord. O Lord hear our prayer. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND GLORIA PATRI (579)

FIRST LESSON

Numbers 21:4-9

p. 122

HYMN

The King of Love My Shepherd Is

171

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

The author, Henry Baker, was ordained in the Church of England and was involved in several hymnal publications and books, including, *Daily Prayers for the Use of Those Who Work Hard*. His last words as he lay dying were the third stanza of this hymn. The tune was first published in 1866 as an Irish tune. It's named for St. Columba, who brought Christianity to Ireland and, incidentally, was the first person to report seeing the Loch Ness monster.

SECOND LESSON

Ephesians 2:1-10

p. 949

SERMON

Good Works

HYMN

The Day of the Lord Is at Hand

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

Kingsley, Charles, M.A., son of Charles Kingsley, of Battramsley, in the New Forest, was born June 12, 1819 at Home Vicarage, Devon. In 1838 he entered Magdalene College in Cambridge, and graduated as first class in classics, and senior optime. Subsequently Rector of Eversley 1814-1875; Canon of Chester 1869-1873; and Canon of Westminster 1873-1875. He held also other important appointments. He died at Eversley, Jan. 23, 1875. Canon Kingsley's prose works are too well known to be enumerated here, and his poetical productions have little in common with hymnology.

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

Irish

- Healy Wilan

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

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

HYMN

Londonderry Air

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

The Londonderry Air is an air that originated from County Londonderry in Ireland (now Northern Ireland). It is popular among the Irish diaspora and is very well known throughout the world. The tune is played as the victory anthem of Northern Ireland at the Commonwealth Games. The song "Danny Boy" uses the tune, with a set of lyrics written in the early 20th century.

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

A Gaelic Blessing

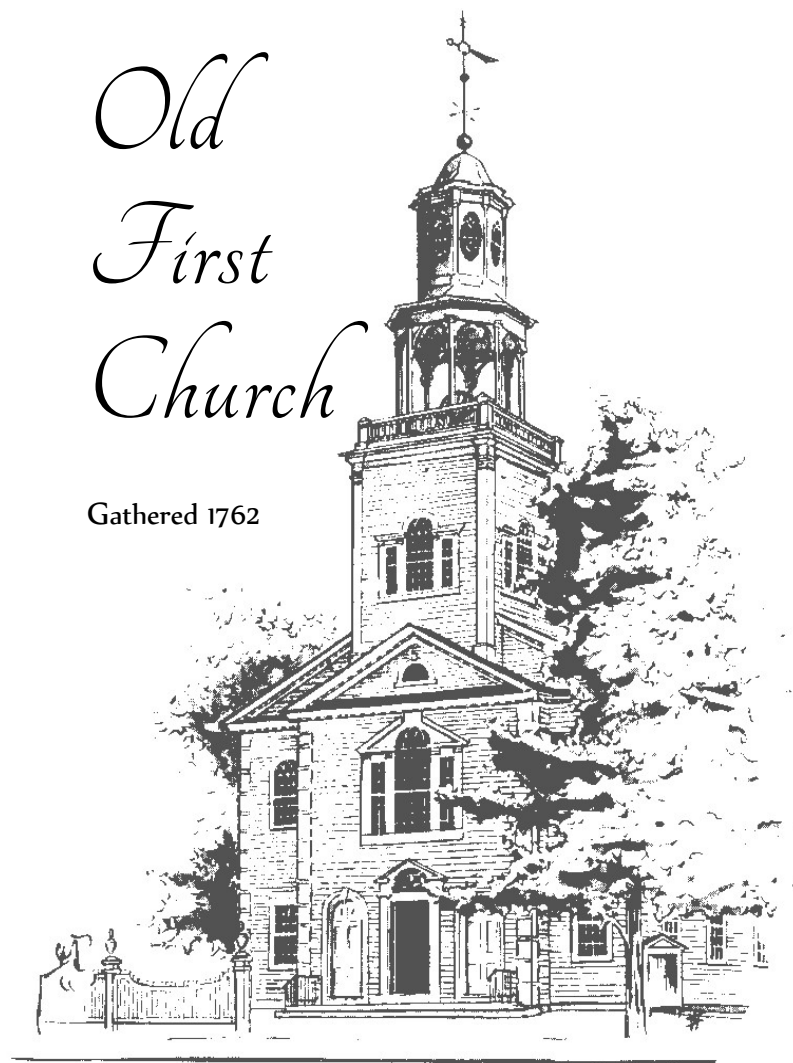
- John Rutter

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)

1 Monument Circle • Old Bennington, Vermont 05201 • (802) 447-1223

office@oldfirst.comcastbiz.net • www.oldfirstchurchbenn.org

Be Thou My Vision

Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
naught be all else to me, save that thou art—
Thou my best thought, by day or by night,
waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.

Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise,
Thou mine inheritance, now and always:
Thou and Thou only, first in my heart,
High God of heaven, my treasure Thou art.

Be Thou my wisdom, and Thou my true word;
I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord;
heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

The Day of the Lord is at Hand

The day of the Lord is at hand, at hand;
Its storms roll up the sky;
The nations sleep starving on heaps of gold;
All dreamers toss and sigh;
The night is darkest before the morn;
When the pain is sorest the child is born,
And the day of the Lord at hand, at hand,
The day of the Lord at hand.

Who would sit down and sigh for a lost age of gold,
While the Lord of all ages is here?
True hearts then will leap at the trumpet of God,
And those who can suffer can dare.
Each old age of gold was an iron age too,
And the meekest of saints may find stern work to do
In the day of the Lord at hand, at hand,
In the day of the Lord at hand.

The King of Love My Shepherd Is

1. The King of love my Shepherd is,
whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am His
and He is mine forever.
2. Where streams of living water flow
My ransomed soul He leadeth,
And where the verdant pastures grow,
With food celestial feedeth.
3. Perverse and foolish oft I strayed,
but yet in love He sought me,
and on His shoulder gently laid,
and home, rejoicing, brought me.
4. In death's dark vale I fear no ill
with Thee, dear Lord, beside me;
thy rod and staff my comfort still,
Thy cross before to guide me.
5. Thou spreadest a table in my sight;
Thy unction, grace bestoweth;
and O what transport of delight
From Thy pure chalice floweth!
6. And so through all the length of days
Thy goodness faileth never;
Good Shepherd, may I sing Thy praise
Within Thy house for ever.

Londonderry Air

I would be true, for there are those who trust me;
I would be pure, for there are those who care;
I would be strong, for there is much to suffer;
I would be brave, for there is much to dare,
I would be friend of all, the foe, the friendless;
I would be giving, and forget the gift;
I would be humble, for I know my weakness;
I would look up, and laugh, and love, and lift. Amen

NUMBERS 21:4-9

From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; but the people became impatient on the way. The people spoke against God and against Moses, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food.” Then the Lord sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. The people came to Moses and said, “We have sinned by speaking against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord to take away the serpents from us.” So Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said to Moses, “Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live.” So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

EPHESIANS 2:1-10

You were dead through the trespasses and sins in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient. All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else.

But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God— not the result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.