

**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 21, 2021 ~ FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

PRELUDE *Jesus, Priceless Treasure* - Michael Burkhardt

OPENING WORDS (responsive)

Let us come and worship God.

O God be with us in this time.

Let hope and love lead us.

In this season let us begin anew.

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

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

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.

OPENING PRAYER (unison)

Look to this day!

For it is life, the very life of life.

In its brief course

Lie all the verities and realities of your existence:

The bliss of growth;

The glory of action;

The splendor of achievement;

For yesterday is but a dream,

And tomorrow is only a vision;

But today, well lived, makes every yesterday

a dream of happiness,

And every tomorrow a vision of hope.

Be with us, O Lord, we pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND GLORIA PATRI (579)

FIRST LESSON Jeremiah 31:31-34 p. 642

HYMN *Have Mercy on Us, Living Lord* **195**

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

This metrical version of Psalm 51 written by Fred R. Anderson was first published in *Singing Psalms of Joy and Praise* (1986). He intentionally set it to Hal Hopson's tune PTOMEY. Hopson exercised considerable influence on Anderson's early work and encouraged him by giving him a number of hymn tunes to use as settings.

SECOND LESSON Hebrews 5:5-10 p. 973

SERMON Law Breaking and Other Adventures

HYMN *O Jesus, I Have Promised* **388**

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

The text, by an Anglican priest, was written for his children's confirmation. The tune was originally for another hymn setting by the organist and choirmaster at King's College, Cambridge, England, who was an expert on Handel.

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 *Jesu Meine Freude* - Johann Gottfried Walther

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

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

HYMN *Our God, to Whom We Turn* **278**

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

The text was written by Edward Grubb (1854-1939) and published in *The Light of Life: Hymns of Faith and Consolation* (1925). Grubb was an English Quaker. The present setting includes four of the five stanzas from *The Hymnbook* (1955).

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *Wondrous Love* - Anthony Giamanco

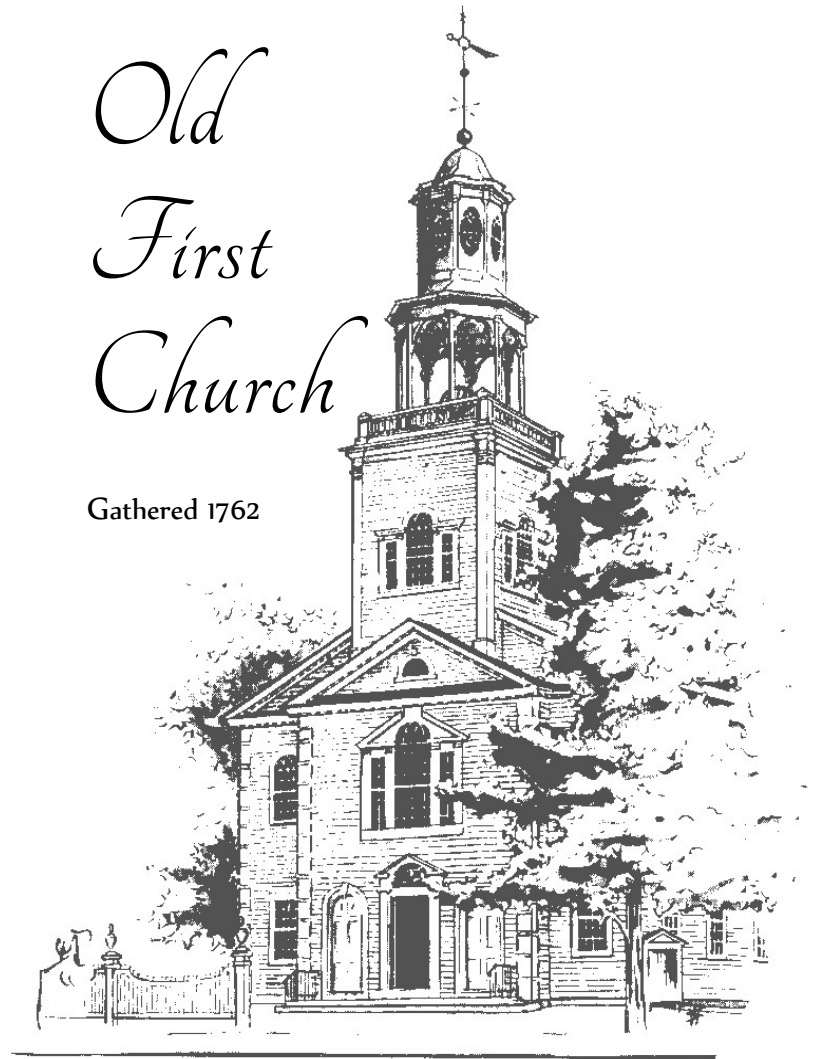
Worship and life at Old First is changing in response to the need to reduce activity as we work to get through the challenge of the COVID-19 presence in our life. Our prayers and thoughts go to everyone immediately affected and thanks go to all people who work to provide care and supply our needs in 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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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.

Have Mercy on Us, Living Lord

1. Have mercy on us, living Lord,
Remember not our sin.
According to Your steadfast love
Come, cleanse us deep within.
2. Our sin and guilt are heavy, Lord,
And evil in Your sight.
Against You only have we sinned;
Your judgment, Lord, is right.
3. We're born into a guilty world
And sinful in our ways.
Lord, teach us wisdom in our hearts
And lead us all our days.
4. So come and purify our lives,
Our hearts with love redeem.
Restore us to Your life-filled ways.
Come, Lord, and make us clean.
5. Your spirit place within our hearts
That we may teach Your ways,
And all the people of the earth
Shall learn to sing Your praise.
6. You are not pleased with sacrifice,
It brings You no delight.
A humble spirit given in love
Is pleasing in Your sight.
7. Rebuild Your people with Your love,
Renew us every day;
With hearts renewed, in all our work,
Our lives shall sing Your praise.

O Jesus, I Have Promised

1. O Jesus, I have promised
To serve Thee to the end;
Be Thou forever near me,
My Master and my friend;
I shall not fear the battle
If Thou art by my side,
Nor wander from the pathway
If Thou wilt be my guide.
2. O let me feel Thee near me!
The world is ever near;
I see the sights that dazzle,
The tempting sounds I hear;
My foes are ever near me,
Around me and within;
But, Jesus, draw Thou nearer,
And shield my soul from sin.
3. O let me hear Thee speaking
In accents clear and still,
Above the storms of passion,
The murmurs of self-will;
O speak to reassure me,
To hasten, or control;
O speak, and make me listen,
Thou guardian of my soul.
4. O Jesus, Thou hast promised
To all who follow Thee
That where Thou art in glory
There shall Thy servant be;
And, Jesus, I have promised
To serve Thee to the end;
O give me grace to follow,
My Master and my Friend.

Our God, to Whom We Turn

1. Our God, to whom we turn
When weary with illusion,
Whose stars serenely burn
Above this earth's confusion,
Thine is the mighty plan,
The steadfast order sure,
In which the world began,
Endures, and shall endure.
2. Thou art thyself the truth;
Though we, who fain would find Thee,
Have tried, with thoughts uncouth,
In feeble words to bind Thee,
It is because Thou art
We're driven to the quest;
Till truth from falsehood part,
Our souls can find no rest.
3. All beauty speaks of Thee:
The mountains and the rivers,
The line of lifted sea,
Where spreading moonlight quivers,
The deep-toned organ blast
That rolls through arches dim,
Hints of the music vast
Of Thine eternal hymn.
4. Thou hidden fount of love,
Of peace, and truth, and beauty,
Inspire us from above
With joy and strength for duty;
May Thy fresh light arise
Within each clouded heart,
And give us open eyes
To see Thee as Thou art.

JEREMIAH 31:31-34

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, “Know the Lord,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

HEBREWS 5:5-10

So also Christ did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him,

“You are my Son,
today I have begotten you”;
as he says also in another place,
“You are a priest forever,
according to the order of Melchizedek.”

In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.