

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

APRIL 18, 2021

PRELUDE *At Eastertide* - Charles Villiers Stanford

OPENING WORDS (responsive)

Let the light of your face shine upon us, O God.
Put gladness in the hearts of all who seek you.
May we dwell in peace and safety.
Where the Lord is, there is love and joy.

HYMN *Spirit Divine, Attend Our Prayers* 325

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

The text was written by Andrew Reed (1787 – 1862) for a worship service organized by the London Board of Congregational Ministers. The service, held on Good Friday, was titled the “Day of Solemn Prayer and Humiliation.” It was to promote a revival of religion in the British Churches.

OPENING PRAYER (unison)

Lord make me an instrument of your peace
Where there is hatred let me sow love
Where there is injury, pardon
Where there is doubt, faith
Where there is despair, hope
Where there is darkness, light
And where there is sadness, joy
O divine master grant that I may
not so much seek to be consoled as to console
to be understood as to understand
To be loved as to love
For it is in giving that we receive
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned
And it's in dying that we are born to eternal life
Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND *GLORIA PATRI (579)

FIRST LESSON Acts 3:12-19 p. 887

HYMN *Psalm 4* 160

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

The text of this responsorial psalm is by Brother Anthony Teague. The psalm tone is St. Meinrad VII from the brothers of St. Meinrad Archabbey, Indiana (1973). Helen L. Wright (b. 1927) wrote the refrain for the Psalter Task Force of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), for which she served as chair.

SECOND LESSON Luke 24:36b-48 p. 861

SERMON Ghost Busters

HYMN *O God, We Bear the Imprint of Your Face* 385

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

Shirley Erena Murray (b. 1931) wrote the text, published first in her *In Every Corner Sing* collection (1987) where it was titled, “A Hymn About Racism.” She was born and works in New Zealand as language teacher, organist, Amnesty International coordinator in New Zealand, and hymn writer. The tune dates from 1623 by Orlando Gibbons, who was royal organist and died of a stroke at age 42 in Canterbury preparing music for King Charles’ reception of his bride, Queen Mary of France.

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 *Beautiful Savior* - F. Melius Christiansen

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

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

HYMN *Wherever I May Wander* 294

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

for Primary Children (1963) by Westminster Press for the United Presbyterian Church U.S.A. The tune NEW ENGLAND is a folk melody from New England. The present arrangement was first published by the Unitarian Universalist Association.

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *Epilogue* - Franklin Ritter

* Stand if able

Deacons of the Month: Bill Gordon and Wendy Schmitt

Greeters/check in: Susan and Wayne Kachmar

Upcoming meetings: (All meetings are open to members of the church)

Council meeting date to be set sometime in May.

5/10: Deacon's meeting, 4:00 PM in the church parlor & remote

5/10: Trustee's meeting, 5:30 PM in the church parlor & remote

Weekly BYO Picnic on the Village Green: All are invited to gather on the Green in front of the church after worship each week (weather permitting). Participants should provide everything needed for their own lunch and a chair to sit on. If the weather is forecasted to be bad, the group won't be gathering. This is an informal, reoccurring event for those who want to spend a little more time with their friends.

Free Sunday Supper: It will be our turn to host the Free Sunday Supper on **May 9th** and are looking for helpers to assemble the "take out" meals and for volunteers to provide food for the dinner. Please let us know if you can help by hosting or providing food (baked ziti with meat sauce and/or meatballs, salad, Italian bread, butter, cookies or brownies).

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

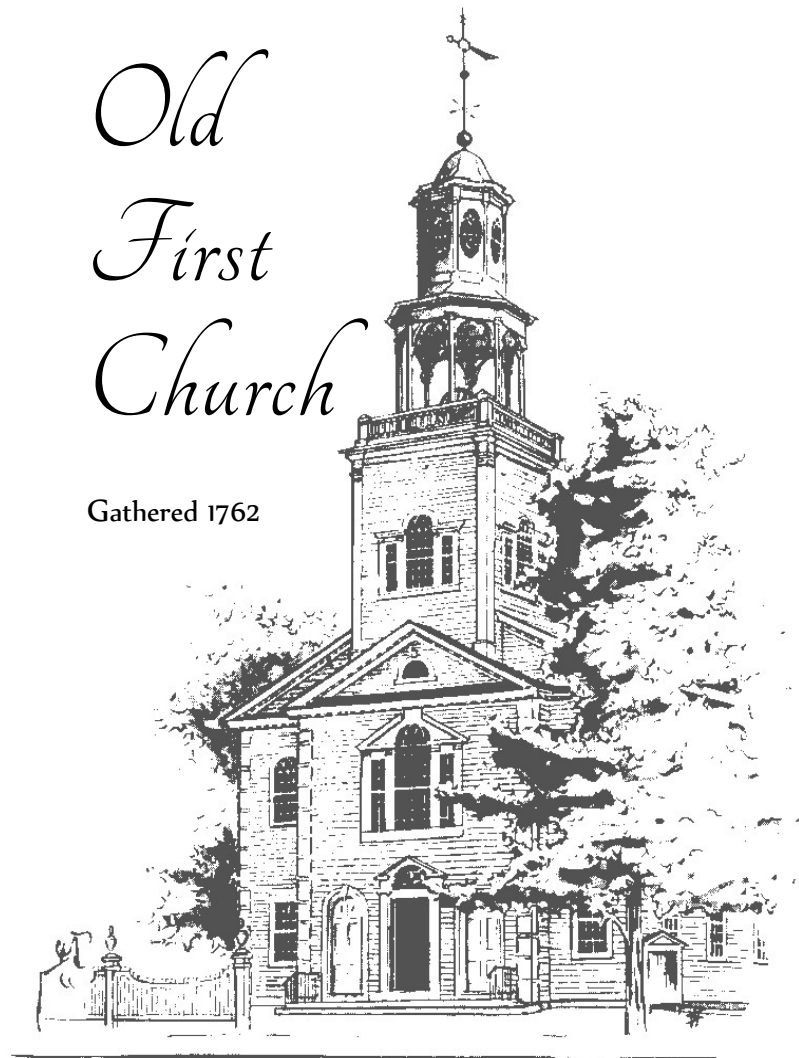
(OLD FIRST CHURCH)

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Old First Church

Gathered 1762



Spirit Divine, Attend Our Prayers

Spirit divine, attend our prayers,
And make this house Your home;
Descend with all Your gracious powers;
O come, great Spirit, come!

Come as the light; to us reveal
Our emptiness and woe;
And lead us in those paths of life
Where all the righteous go.

Come as the fire and purge our hearts
Like sacrificial flame;
Let our whole soul an offering be
To our Redeemer's name.

Come as the dove and spread Your wings,
The wings of peaceful love;
And let your church on earth become
Blest as the church above.

Spirit divine, attend our prayers;
Make a lost world Your home;
Descend with all Your gracious powers;
O come, great Spirit, come!

FIRST LESSON:

Acts 3:12-19

When Peter saw it, he addressed the people, “You Israelites, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we had made him walk? The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our ancestors has glorified his servant Jesus, whom you handed over and rejected in the presence of Pilate, though he had decided to release him. But you rejected the Holy and Righteous One and asked to have a murderer given to you, and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. And by faith in his name, his name itself has made this man strong, whom you see and know; and the faith that is through Jesus has given him this perfect health in the presence of all of you. “And now, friends, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. In this way God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, that his Messiah would suffer. Repent therefore, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out,

Psalm 4

Refrain:

*In the night I can take my rest,
You alone keep my life secure.*

When I call, You give heed, O Lord, righteous God;
free me from my anguish, pity, hear my prayer.
How long will they all remain hard of heart?
How long will their lies and their vanity endure? *[Refrain]*

Remember, the Lord does wonders for the godly,
the Lord will hear when I call on the holy name.
Do not sin but tremble;
As you lie on your bed, in silence reflect. *[Refrain]*

Offer praise and worship to God,
put your trust in the Lord.
Many sigh as they pray: Lord, show us Your joy;
When shall I see the light of Your face? *[Refrain]*

In my heart You have poured the fullness of joy,
far richer than their harvests of grain and wine.
In peace I lie down and sleep comes at once,
For You, Lord, alone, keep my life secure. *[Refrain]*

SECOND LESSON:

Luke 24:36b-48

While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. He said to them, “Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.” And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate in their presence. Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.” Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.

O God, We Bear the Imprint of Your Face

O God, we bear the imprint of Your face:
the colors of our skin are Your design,
and what we have of beauty in our race
as man or woman, You alone define,
who stretched a living fabric on our frame
and gave to each a language and a name.

Where we are torn and pulled apart by hate
because our race, our skin is not the same;
while we are judged unequal by the state
and victims made because we own our name,
humanity reduced to little worth,
dishonored is Your living face on earth.

O God, we share the image of Your Son
whose flesh and blood are ours, whatever skin,
in His humanity we find our own,
and in His family our proper kin:
Christ is the brother we still crucify,
His love the language we must learn, or die.

Wherever I May Wander

Wherever I may wander,
Wherever I may be,
I'm certain of my Maker's love;
God's care is over me.
God made the great high mountains,
And made the wide blue sea;
God made the sky where airplanes fly;
God made the world, and me.

Throughout the whole creation
I see God's loving care
For everyone in every land,
God's children everywhere.
Wherever I may wander,
Wherever I may be,
I'm certain of my Maker's love
God's care is over me.

April 18, 2021

Hymns

&

Readings

Parishioners attending worship in the meetinghouse are asked to refrain from singing the hymns. Our thanks to Gene Marie Callahan for playing the organ and singing.