

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
DAVE PILACHOWSKI, LAY READER
GENE MARIE CALLAHAN, ORGANIST

AUGUST 1, 2021

PRELUDE *Verset de Procession sur l'Adoro Te* - Leon Boellmann

OPENING WORDS (responsive)

Let us recall things of joy and gladness.

May God open our hearts this season.

Renew our spirit and lift us from any darkness.

In the beauty of the morning may God's truth shine.

***HYMN** *Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing* **356**

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).

OPENING PRAYER (unison)

Almighty and most merciful God, we have erred and strayed from Your ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against Your holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; and we have done those things which we ought not to have done; and there is nothing good in us. O Lord, have mercy upon us. Spare those, O God, who confess their faults. Restore those who are penitent; according to Your promises declared unto all in Christ Jesus our Lord. Grant that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life; to the glory of God's name. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND *GLORIA PATRI (579)

FIRST LESSON Exodus 16:2-15 p. 55

***HYMN** *God Is Our Refuge and Our Strength* **191**

The text is a metrical paraphrase of Psalm 46. It was altered by Jane Parker Huber, a member of the Psalm subcommittee for *The Presbyterian Hymnal* (1990).

SECOND LESSON John 6:24-35 p. 867

SERMON Bread of Life

***HYMN** *Bread of Heaven, on Thee We Feed* **501**

The text was written by Josiah Conder (1789-1855). He published it in his collection *The Star in the East, and Other Poems* (1824). Conder was the author of numerous poetry books and works of prose and was also known as a hymnbook editor. His most important collections were *The Congregational Hymn Book: A supplement to Dr. Watts's Psalms and Hymns* (1836; rev. 1844); and a revised edition of Dr. Watts' *Psalms and Hymns* (1851). He ranks close behind Watts and Doddridge as one of the most influential Congregational hymnists.

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 *Schmucke Dich*
- Johan Cruger setting by Alfred V. Fedak

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

SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER (insert)

The congregation is invited to participate in the service as found in the insert included in this order of service. *(Please note that grape juice is on the outer circle only and wine inside. We partake together after all have been served.)*

COMMUNION VOLUNTARY

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

***HYMN** *Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah* **281**

The text was written by the 18th century William Williams, known as the "Sweet Singer of Wales." He was a deacon in the Church of England who identified with the Calvinist Methodist movement and traveled throughout Wales, preaching, for 50 years. He wrote more than 800 Welsh hymns. The tune was written for a Welsh singing festival at Capel Rhonda in 1905 or 1907. The composer, John Hughes, was an active member of the Salem Baptist Church in Wales who succeeded his father as deacon and precentor (singing leader).

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *Alleluia! Sing to Jesus* - Samuel S. Wesley

- ANNOUNCEMENTS -

Deacons on call this month and ushers, greeters and Communion servers for today's service are Janet Andrea and Amy Tronsen.

Please join us after worship today for coffee hour in the Narthex. If you would like to host coffee hour or provide flowers some Sunday please sign up on the BLOG.

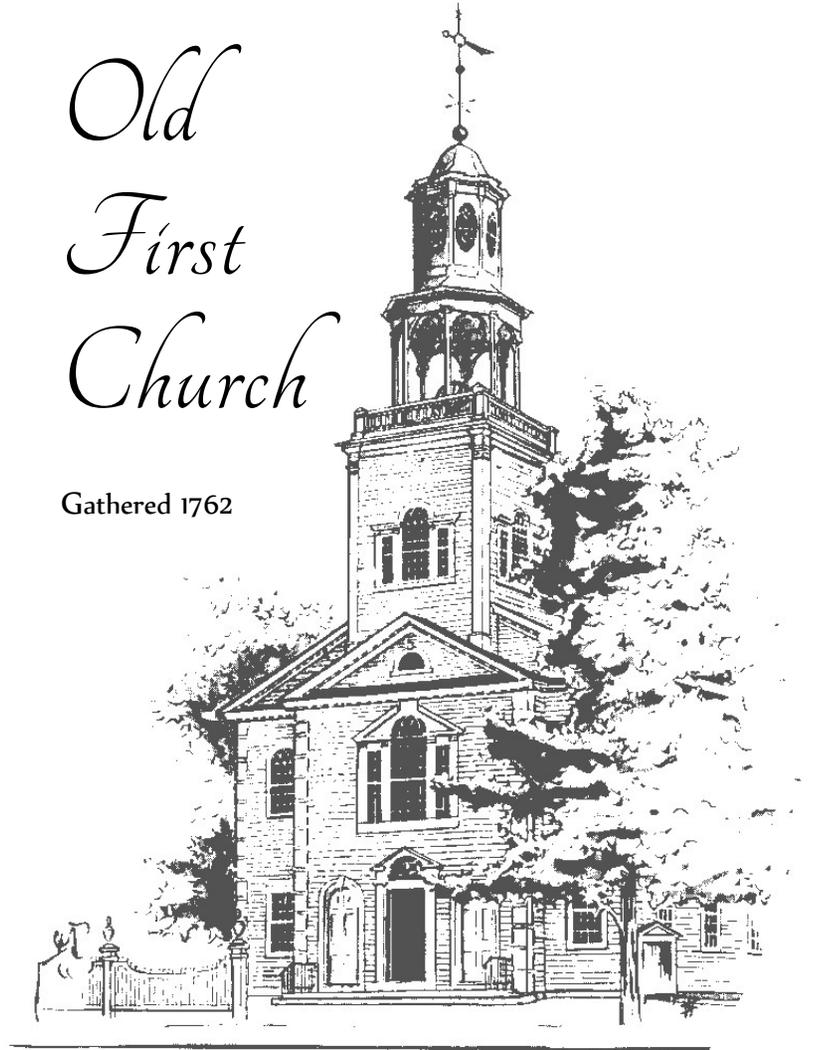
CHOIR REHEARSAL: Thursday August 12 at 7:00 p.m., interested singers will be rehearsing "Chester" for the "Battle Day" service on August 15. All singers must be fully vaccinated to participate. Please speak with Gene Marie Callahan for more information.

UPCOMING MEETINGS: *(All meetings are open to members of the church)*
8/9: Trustee meeting, 5:30 PM, church parlor and remotely

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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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.

FIRST LESSON

Exodus 16:2-15

The whole congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. The Israelites said to them, "If only we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger." Then the Lord said to Moses, "I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day the people shall go out and gather enough for that day. In that way I will test them, whether they will follow my instruction or not. On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather on other days." So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, "In the evening you shall know that it was the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt, and in the morning you shall see the glory of the Lord, because he has heard your complaining against the Lord. For what are we, that you complain against us?" And Moses said, "When the Lord gives you meat to eat in the evening and your fill of bread in the morning, because the Lord has heard the complaining that you utter against him—what are we? Your complaining is not against us but" against the Lord. Then Moses said to Aaron, "Say to the whole congregation of the Israelites, 'Draw near to the Lord, for he has heard your complaining.'" And as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of

the Israelites, they looked toward the wilderness, and the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud. The Lord spoke to Moses and said, "I have heard the complaining of the Israelites; say to them, 'At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall have your fill of bread; then you shall know that I am the Lord your God.'" "

In the evening quails came up and covered the camp; and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. When the layer of dew lifted, there on the surface of the wilderness was a fine flaky substance, as fine as frost on the ground. When the Israelites saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, "It is the bread that the Lord has given you to eat.

God Is Our Refuge and Our Strength

God is our refuge and our strength,
Our ever-present aid,
And therefore, though the earth remove,
We will not be afraid.

Though hills amid the seas be cast,
Though foaming waters roar,
Yea, though the mighty billows shake
The mountains on the shore.

Where God abides a river flows;
That city will rejoice.
But nations fear and kingdoms shake
Before God's thundering voice.

Since God is in the midst of it,
The city walls shall stand,
Secure and safe with God's sure help,
When trouble is at hand.

So when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus. When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, “Rabbi, when did you come here?” Jesus answered them, “Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal.”

Then they said to him, “What must we do to perform the works of God?” Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.” So they said to him, “What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe you? What work are you performing? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’” Then Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” They said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.” Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

Bread of Heaven, on Thee We Feed

Bread of heaven, on thee we feed,
for thou art our food indeed.
Ever may our souls be fed
with this true and living Bread,
day by day with strength supplied
through the life of Christ who died.

Vine of heaven, thy love supplies
this blest cup of sacrifice.
'Tis thy wounds our healing give;
to thy cross we look and live.
Thou our life! O let us be
rooted, grafted, built on thee.

Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah

Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah,
Pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but Thou art mighty;
Hold me with Thy powerful hand;
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven,
Feed me till I want no more,
Feed me till I want no more.

Open now the crystal fountain,
Whence the healing stream doth flow;
Let the fire and cloudy pillar
Lead me all my journey through;
Strong deliverer, strong deliverer,
Be Thou still my strength and shield,
Be Thou still my strength and shield.

When I tread the verge of Jordan,
Bid my anxious fears subside;
Death of death and hell's destruction,
Land me safe on Canaan's side;
Songs of praises, songs of praises
I will ever give to Thee,
I will ever give to Thee.