

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
REG JONES, LAY READER

OCTOBER 24, 2021

PRELUDE *Andante Maestoso* - Arcangelo Corelli

OPENING WORDS (responsive)

God is our refuge and strength

A very present help in trouble.

Therefore we will not fear.

Draw near and call on the Lord.

***HYMN** *Praise Ye the Lord, the Almighty* **482**

The text's author, Joachim Neander, took the Calvinist faith seriously but also lived a "rather unruly existence" before his pastor and others influenced him to make some changes in his life. In 1674 he became a grammar school headmaster. 66 of his hymn texts were published in 1691. The valley Neanderthal, where he took long walks, was named in his honor (and was where the famous skeleton was discovered 200 years later in 1856). The tune may have had secular origins but was used by J.S. Bach in three cantatas and an organ setting, as well as Neander's hymn.

OPENING PRAYER (unison)

I believe in God the Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth:

And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord,
Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
Born of the Virgin Mary,
Suffered under Pontius Pilate,
Was crucified, dead, and buried:
He descended into hell;
The third day he rose again from the dead;
He ascended into heaven,
And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost;
The holy Catholick Church;

The Communion of Saints;
The Forgiveness of sins;
The Resurrection of the body,
And the Life everlasting.
Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND *GLORIA PATRI (579)

FIRST LESSON Jeremiah 31:31-34 p. 642

***HYMN** *How Happy Is Each Child of God* **239**

The text is a paraphrase of Psalm 128 by Dwyn M. Mounger. While a pastor in Valdosta, Georgia, Mounger tried to remain faithful to the Common Lectionary's choice of Psalms and scripture lessons for Sundays. There were psalms that *The Hymnbook* (1955) did not have either to be read responsively or to be sung. He and his associate began to paraphrase the psalms and set them to familiar tunes. This text was one of those paraphrases. It became a favorite of the congregation and was sung on Christian Family Sunday every year.

SECOND LESSON Mark 10:46-52 p. 823

SERMON How the World Will End

***HYMN** *Holy Spirit, Truth Divine* **321**

This text was written by Samuel Longfellow and first published in his *Hymns of the Spirit* (1864), where it was subtitled "The Holy Spirit Desired." Samuel Longfellow (1819-1892) was born in Portland, ME and educated at Harvard College and Divinity School. He was ordained a Unitarian minister and served in churches in Fall River, MA; Brooklyn, NY; and Germantown, PA. The intervening years he spent as a freelance preacher, writer, and editor. His intermittent pastorates were caused largely by poor health. Longfellow moved to "Craigie House" to write the *Life of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow* (1886), his older brother, and *Final Memorials of H.W. Longfellow* (1887).

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 Heavens are Telling* - Beethoven

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

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

***HYMN** *Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound* **280**
(vs. 1-3)

The text was written for the people of Olney, Buckinghamshire, England by the pastor. In 1748 he had been captain of a slave ship, where a storm at sea brought a spiritual awakening. The tune's origin is unknown, but it may be based on an African melody.

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Toccata in E Minor - Johann Pachelbel

* Stand if able

We welcome all visitors and hope you will return! Please fill out a visitor's card found in the pew and be sure to identify yourself so we can present you with a gift bag.

Deacons on call this month are Janet Andrea and Pat Guerrero. Ushers and greeters for today's service are David and Laurel Varker.

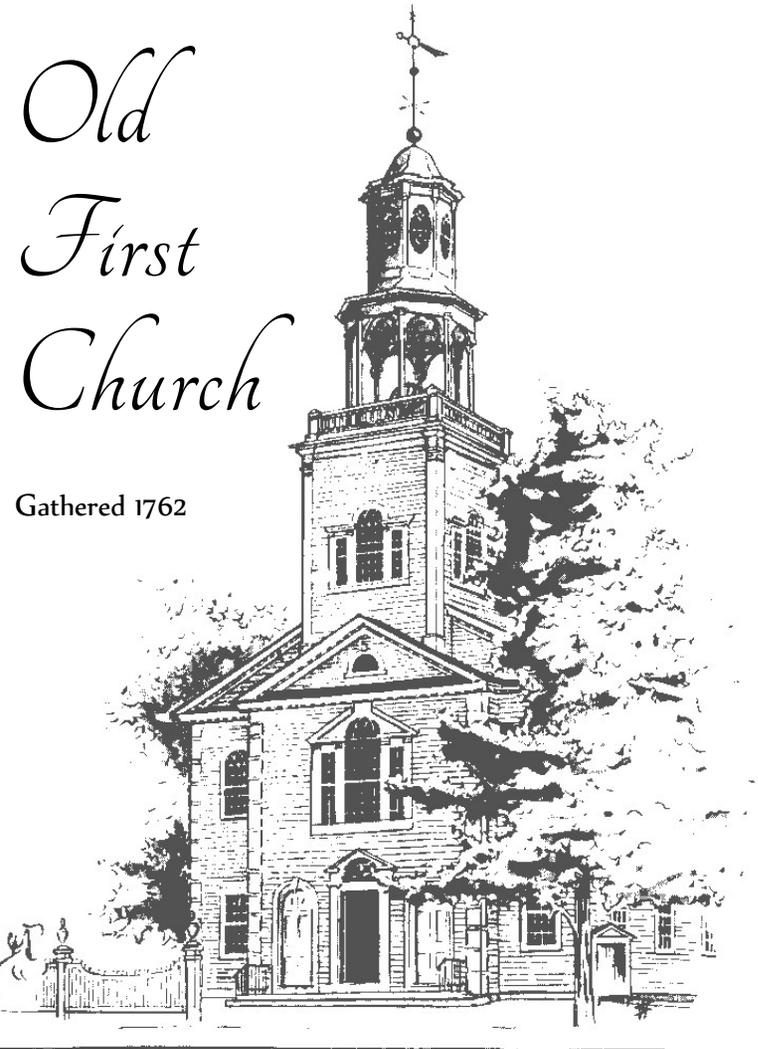
Please join us after worship today at the Barn (1 Monument Circle) for our annual Harvest Meal.

Rug raffle tickets can be purchased at the Harvest Meal today – seek out Susan Katz who will have them. Tickets are \$5 each or 6 for \$20, all proceeds benefit the Church's Preservation Fund. The drawing will be held on Dec. 5.

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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Praise Ye the Lord, the Almighty

Praise ye the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!
O my soul, praise Him, for He is thy health and salvation!
All ye who hear, now to His temple draw near;
join me in glad adoration!

Praise ye the Lord, who o'er all things so wondrously reigneth,
shelters the under His wings, yea, so gently sustaineth!
Hast thou not seen how thy desires e'er have been
sent by his gracious ordaining?
Granted in what He ordaineth?

Praise ye the Lord! O let all that is in me adore Him!
All that hath life and breath, come now with praises before Him!
Let the amen sound from His people again;
gladly for aye we adore Him.

How Happy Is Each Child of God

How happy is each child of God
Who walks within God's ways!
You'll reap good fruit from honest work,
And joy in life always.

With fruitful spouse you'll parent now
Your children strong, adored;
Like olive shoots they shall surround
Your laden table board!

How happy is the family
Who honors God above!
The Lord shall send all help and grace
To bless your home with love.

May God's great peace, good health and joy
Forever fill your home;
May you and your descendants know
Forever God's shalom!

FIRST LESSON

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.

SECOND LESSON

Mark 10:46-52

They came to Jericho. As he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” Jesus stood still and said, “Call him here.” And they called the blind man, saying to him, “Take heart; get up, he is calling you.” So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. Then Jesus said to him, “What do you want me to do for you?” The blind man said to him, “My teacher, let me see again.” Jesus said to him, “Go; your faith has made you well.” Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.

Holy Spirit, Truth Divine

Holy Spirit, truth divine,
dawn upon this soul of mine;
Word of God, and inward light,
wake my spirit, clear my sight.

Holy Spirit, love divine,
glow within this heart of mine;
kindle every high desire;
perish self in Thy pure fire.

Holy Spirit, power divine,
fill and nerve this will of mine;
by Thee may I strongly live,
bravely bear, and nobly strive.

Holy Spirit, right divine,
make my conscience wholly Thine;
Be my law, and I shall be
firmly bound, forever free.

Amazing Grace

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now I am found,
was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
and grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed!

Through many dangers, toils, and snares,
I have already come;
'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.