

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
MARSHA PILACHOWSKI, LAY READER
GENE MARIE CALLAHAN, ORGANIST
OLD FIRST CHURCH CHOIR

NOVEMBER 7, 2021

PRELUDE *Prelude in E minor* - J.S. Bach

OPENING WORDS (responsive)

Let us give thanks to God with our whole heart.

May this time of prayer and praise refresh our souls.

May God's wisdom give us peace and new perspective.

May we rest in the love of God.

***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).

OPENING PRAYER (unison)

Lord God, your love for humankind
present in the beginning of all things,

extends throughout history
and touches even this hour.

Your love sees failings
and forgives.

Your love feels pain
and wipes away our tears.

Your love knows grief
and comforts the sorrowful.

Your love sees sin
and still loves the sinner.

Forgive us when we fail to live
lives that reflect your love.

Forgive us the many times
when we take for granted

all that you have done for us.
Transform us, through your Spirit,
and empower us to serve you,
this day and all days. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND *GLORIA PATRI (579)

FIRST LESSON 1 Kings 17:8-16 p. 282

***HYMN** *I'll Praise My Maker* 253

This metrical paraphrase of Psalm 146 was written by Isaac Watts and later adapted by John Wesley for *Collection of Psalms and Hymns. Charles Town. Printed by Lewis Timothy (1736-1737)*. Wesley handed out the hymn to the congregation during the last worship he conducted. He sang the first two stanzas just two days before his death and on the day he died, Wesley was heard trying to sing the hymn but was only able to repeat the words "I'll praise, I'll praise".

SECOND LESSON Mark 12:38-44 p. 825

SERMON Watching the Crowd

***HYMN** *Come, Risen Lord* 503

This text was one of sixteen contributed to the volume *Songs of Praise (1931)*, where the last line of stanza I was altered to read "In this our sacrament of bread and wine." *The Presbyterian Hymnal (1990)* has restored the original text.

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 *Built on the Rock the Church doth Stand*
- setting by Jan Bender

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

MOMENT FOR STEWARDSHIP David Varker

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** *Today We All Are Called to Be Disciples* **434**

The text was written in 1985 by a Presbyterian minister in Duarte, California for a national stewardship campaign. The tune was first published in *English Country Songs* (1893) and was later named for the village where Ralph Vaughn Williams, the most important composer of his generation, heard it, after which he wrote the harmony for *The English Hymnal* (1906).

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *Toccata from Partita on Built on the Rock*
- Alfred V. Fedak

* 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, ushers, greeters and Communion servers for today's service are Wendy Schmitt and Laurel Varker.

Please join us after worship today for coffee hour in the Narthex provided by Marsha Pilachowski.

Flowers for worship are in loving memory of Jeff Munson.

Rug raffle tickets can be purchased after worship today – seek out Amy Tronsen 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.

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS: *(All meetings are open to members of the church)*

Choir practice, Sunday mornings, 9:30 AM in the choir loft

11/10: Open Church Docent Lunch, 12:30 PM, church sanctuary

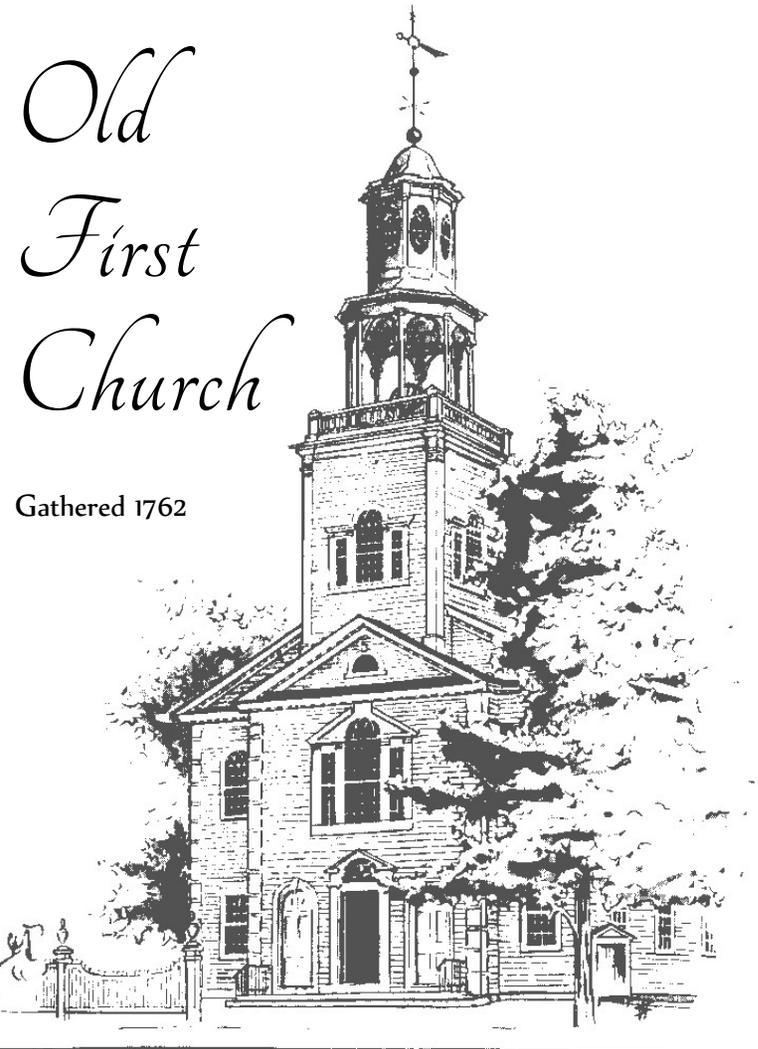
If you are interested in discussing matters of faith and want to inquire about Christian membership in the church, please contact Rev. Clarke. We welcome the chance to have you join us in our historic, but active-in-the-world, community of faith!

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

(OLD FIRST CHURCH)

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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.

FIRST LESSON

1 Kings 17:8-16

Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "Go now to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and live there; for I have commanded a widow there to feed you." So he set out and went to Zarephath. When he came to the gate of the town, a widow was there gathering sticks; he called to her and said, "Bring me a little water in a vessel, so that I may drink." As she was going to bring it, he called to her and said, "Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand." But she said, "As the LORD your God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of meal in a jar, and a little oil in a jug; I am now gathering a couple of sticks, so that I may go home and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die." Elijah said to her, "Do not be afraid; go and do as you have said; but first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterwards make something for yourself and your son. For thus says the LORD the God of Israel: The jar of meal will not be emptied and the jug of oil will not fail until the day that the LORD sends rain on the earth." She went and did as Elijah said, so that she as well as he and her household ate

for many days. The jar of meal was not emptied, neither did the jug of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD that he spoke by Elijah.

I'll Praise My Maker

I'll praise my Maker while I've breath;
And when my voice is lost in death,
Praise shall employ my nobler powers.
My days of praise shall ne'er be past,
While life and thought and being last,
Or immortality endures.

How happy they whose hopes rely
On Israel's God, who made the sky
And earth and seas with all their train;
Whose truth forever stands secure,
Who saves the oppressed and feeds the poor,
And none shall find God's promise vain.

The Lord pours eyesight on the blind;
The Lord supports the fainting mind
And sends the laboring conscience peace.
God helps the stranger in distress,
The widowed and the parentless,
And grants the prisoner sweet release.

I'll praise my Maker while I've breath;
And when my voice is lost in death,
Praise shall employ my nobler powers.
My days of praise shall ne'er be past,
While life and thought and being last,
Or immortality endures.

SECOND LESSON

Mark 12:38-44

As he taught, he said, "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets! They devour widows' houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation."

He sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. Then he called his disciples and said to them, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For all of them have

contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.”

Come, Risen Lord

Come, risen Lord, and deign to be our guest;
Nay, let us be Thy guests, the feast is Thine;
Thyself at Thine own board make manifest
In Thine own sacrament of bread and wine.

We meet, as in that upper room they met,
Thou at the table, blessing, yet dost stand;
“This is My body”; so Thou givest yet:
Faith still receives the cup as from Thy hand.

One body we, one body who partake,
One church united in communion blest;
One name we bear, one bread of life we break,
With all Thy saints on earth and saints at rest.

One with each other, Lord, for one in Thee,
Who art one Savior and one living head;
Then open Thou our eyes, that we may see;
Be known to us in breaking of the bread.

Today We All Are Called to Be Disciples

Today we are all called to be
Disciples of the Lord,
To help to set the captives free,
Make plow-share out of sword,
To feed the hungry, quench their thirst,
Make love and peace our fast,
To serve the poor and homeless first,
Our ease and comfort last.

God made the world and at its birth
Ordained our human race
To live as stewards of the earth,
Responding to God's grace.
But we are vain and sadly proud,
We sow not peace but strife,
Our discord spreads a deadly cloud
That threatens all of life.

Pray justice may come rolling down
As in a mighty stream,
With righteousness in field and town
To cleanse us and redeem.
For God is longing to restore
An earth where conflicts cease,
A world that was created for
A harmony of peace.

May we in service to our God
Act out the living Word,
And walk the road the saints have trod
Till all have seen and heard.
As stewards of the earth may we
Give thanks in one accord
To God who calls us all to be
Disciples of the Lord.