

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
DAVID VARKER, LAY READER
GENE MARIE CALLAHAN, ORGANIST
OLD FIRST CHURCH CHOIR

DECEMBER 5, 2021
SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

PRELUDE *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* - George Lachenauer

OPENING WORDS (responsive)

Love and faithfulness meet this day.

Righteousness and peace come together.

Let us wait with hope this season.

The darkness shall give way to light.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE Mary Elizabeth Groupé

***HYMN** *On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry* 10

Charles Coffin, mid-18th century rector of the University of Paris, wrote the Latin text. John Chandler, vicar of Witley, England, translated the hymn and published it in *Hymns of the Primitive Church*, mistakenly thinking Coffin's hymn was ancient. The tune is from Hamburg, 1690, and harmonized in 1847 by William Monk, choirmaster of King's College, London.

OPENING PRAYER (unison)

We come with thanksgiving,
for the beauty of this day,
for the wonder of life,
for the fellowship of this place,
for the freedom to meet and worship,
and for the Gospel message of this Advent Season.
So we rejoice, with the universal Church,
as we journey through Advent in worship and in faith.
Make us ready for the coming of our Lord.
We make our prayer to you, O Lord.

Lord, bless me with your peace.
Center me in your love
that I may be secure in whose I am.
Still my raging mind

that I may be free to focus on what really matters.
Quieten my prodigal tongue
that I may be careful in the words I choose.
Calm my body
that I may be rested and ready to journey.
Open my heart
that I may be responsive to those who need me.
Make me a well of your peace.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND *GLORIA PATRI (579)

FIRST LESSON Malachi 3:1-4 p. 778

***HYMN** *Savior of the Nations, Come* 14

This hymn is one of twelve definitely ascribed to Ambrose by the late John Julian. Both Augustine (372) and Pope Celestine (430) point to Ambrose as the author. Although schooled as a lawyer, at the age of thirty-five Ambrose was elected bishop of Milan. He was the father of Latin hymnody and was known for introducing antiphonal singing into the Western church. As a bishop he is best known for his fight against Arianism. In 1523 Martin Luther translated the text from Latin into German.

SECOND LESSON Luke 3:1-6 p. 834

SERMON "In the Days of Old"

***HYMN** *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* 9

The roots of this hymn go back to the 9th century and a series of seven Advent antiphons sung at vespers, all beginning with "O" (e.g., O Root of Jesse, O Dayspring, O Emmanuel). Arrangement of the hymn developed in the 12th, 13th and 18th centuries. The tune is French, originally sung at funerals, and was adapted by an Anglican priest, son of a congregationalist minister, who established a plainsong choral tradition in 19th century English churches.

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 *Creator of the Stars of Night*
- Sarum Plainsong Mode IV harm. C. Winfred Douglas

***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

***HYMN** *"Sleepers, Wake!" A Voice Astounds Us* 17

This hymn known as the "king of chorales" was written by Philipp Nicolai while in Unna in Westphalia (1596-1598). The text is based on the parable of the "wise and foolish bridesmaids" in Matthew 25:1-13. It was composed during a time of widespread disease when thousands were dying. Nicolai wrote in the preface: "To leave behind me (if God should call me from this world) as a token of my peaceful, joyful, Christian departure, or (if God should spare me in health) to comfort other sufferers whom He should also visit with the pestilence."

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *Savior of the Nations Come* - Wayne L. Wold

* 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 and communion servers for today's service are Marsha Pilachowski and Amy Tronsen.

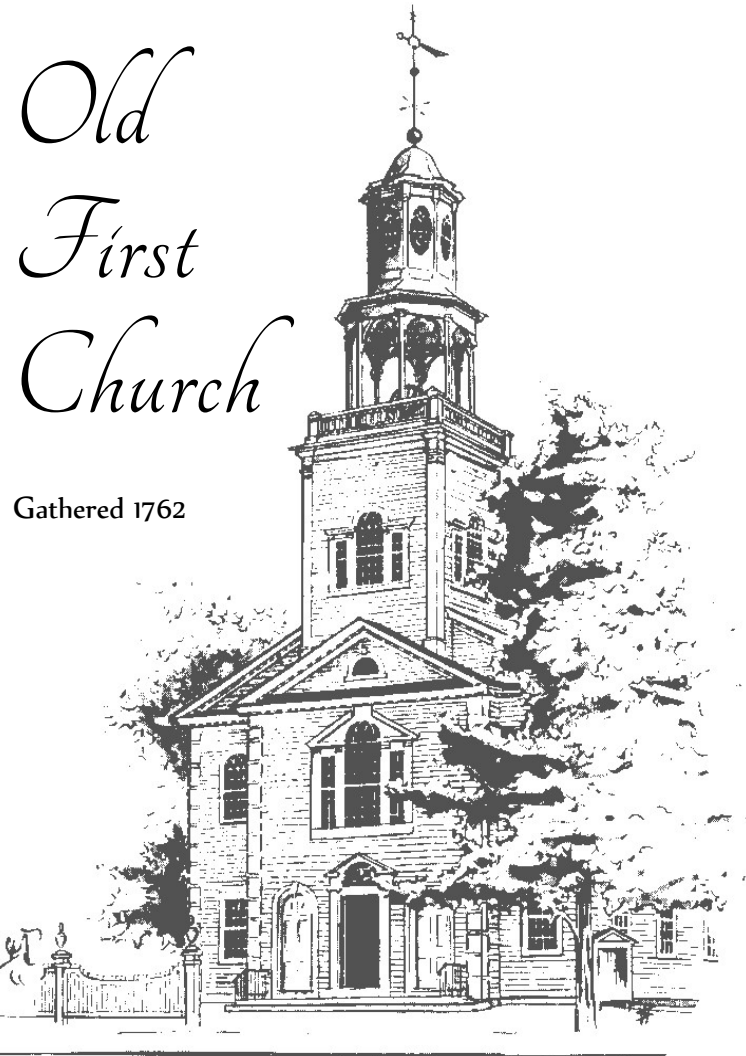
Special thanks to Peter and Monique Geannelis for donating the wreaths and tree to the church this year. We appreciate all who participated in decorating the sanctuary this morning and to those who provided food for breakfast and coffee hour.

The rug raffle will take place during coffee hour today!!!! We will be selling tickets right after worship for a few minutes prior to the drawing. Seek out Wendy Schmitt who will have them. Tickets are \$5 each or 6 for \$20, all proceeds benefit the Church's Preservation Fund.

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

Choir practice, Sunday mornings, 9:30 AM in the choir loft
12/6: Deacon meeting, 4:00 PM, church parlor and remotely
12/13: Trustee meeting, 5:30 PM, church parlor and remotely
12/16: Council meeting, 5:00 PM, church parlor and remotely
12/19: Candlelight Service of Lessons and Carols, 7:00 PM
12/24: Christmas Eve Service, 5:00 PM

CANDLELIGHT SERVICE RESERVATIONS: The balcony seating will be closed for the Candlelight Service this year. In an effort to maximize space on the main floor we hope to fill each pew box with 5 or 6 adults. It would be appreciated if you would talk with friends and form your own groups. If you are signing up with a group of less than five, expect that others might be added to your pew, so it is best to fill up your reservation with friends or family. Reservations can be made on the BLOG insert or by contacting the church office. Please note, reservations are open to our congregation only for two weeks and then will be open to the public starting on December 10th. Reserve early!



Gathered 1762

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
(OLD FIRST CHURCH)

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On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry

On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry
announces that the Lord is nigh;
Awake and harken, for he brings
glad tidings of the King of kings!

Then cleansed be every life from sin;
make straight the way for God within,
and let us all our hearts prepare
for Christ to come and enter there.

We hail You as our Savior, Lord,
our refuge, and our great reward;
o let Your face upon us shine
and fill the world with love divine.

All praise to You, eternal Son,
whose advent has our freedom won,
whom with the Father we adore,
and Holy Spirit, evermore.

FIRST LESSON

Malachi 3:1-4

See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years.

Savior of the Nations, Come

Savior of the nations, come,
virgin's Son, make here Your home.
Marvel now, O heaven and earth,
that the Lord chose such a birth.

From the God-head forth You came,
And return unto the same,
Captive leading death and hell.
High the song of triumph swell!

You, the chosen Holy One,
Have o'er sin the victory won.
Boundless shall Your kingdom be;
When shall we its glories see?

Brightly does Your manger shine,
Glorious is the light divine.
Let not sin o'er-cloud this light;
Ever be our faith thus bright.

SECOND LESSON

Luke 3:1-6

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'"

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.

[Refrain]

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

O come, Thou Day-spring, come and cheer
Our spirits by Thine advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight. [Refrain]

O come, Desire of nations, bind
All peoples in one heart and mind;
Bid envy, strife, and discord cease;
Fill the whole world with heaven's peace. [Refrain]

Sleeper's Wake, A Voice Astounds Us

"Sleepers, wake!" A voice astounds us;
the shout of rampart-guards surrounds us:

"Awake, Jerusalem, arise!"

Midnight's peace their cry has broken,
their urgent summons clearly spoken:

"The time has come, O maidens wise!

Rise up, and give us light;
the Bridegroom is in sight.

Alleluia!

Your lamps prepare and hasten there,
that you the wedding feast may share."

Zion hears the watchmen singing,
her heart with joyful hope is springing;
she wakes and hurries through the night.

Forth he comes, her Bridegroom glorious
in strength of grace, in truth victorious:

her star is risen, her light grows bright.

Now come, most worthy Lord,
God's Son, Incarnate Word,

Alleluia!

We follow all and heed Your call
to come into the banquet hall.

Lamb of God, the heavens adore You;
let saints and angels sing before You,
as harps and cymbals swell the sound.

Twelve great pearls, the city's portals:
through them we stream to join the immortals
as we with joy Your throne surround.

No eye has known the sight,
no ear heard such delight:

Alleluia!

Therefore we sing to greet our King;
for ever let our praises ring.