

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

JANUARY 2, 2022

PRELUDE *This Day Is So Joyous* - Johann Pachelbel

OPENING WORDS (responsive)

This is the day which the Lord has made.

Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Teach us the ways of peace and the path of kindness.

Be with us, O Lord, in all we do and say.

***HYMN** *From Heaven Above* 54

Martin Luther wrote this text for the Christmas Eve celebration of his family. The original text has fourteen stanzas in addition to one rearranged from the popular "Aus fremden Landen komm' ich her." It was published in Joseph Klug's *Geistliche Lieder* (1535). The translation is that of the Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship for the *Lutheran Book of Worship* (1978).

OPENING PRAYER (unison)

Most merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against you
and against one another,
in thought, and word, and deed.
We are truly sorry for our pride,
and for our lack of faith, of understanding and of love.
We repent of our narrow-mindedness,
of our bitterness and our prejudices.
Pardon and forgive us,
save us and renew us,
that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND *GLORIA PATRI (579)

FIRST LESSON Revelation 21:1-6a p. 1007

***HYMN** *O Sing a New Song* 217

The refrain is first sung once by the choir and then repeated by the congregation. Then the choir will continue to sing the verses and at the appropriate time the congregation joins to sing the refrain. The refrain is to be sung when the "R" appears in the text."

Hal H. Hopson (born 12 June 1933) is a full-time composer and church musician residing in Cedar Park, Texas. He has over 3000 published works, which comprise almost every musical form in church music. With a special interest in congregational song, he continues to make a significant contribution to the new repertoire of hymn tunes and responsorial psalm settings as evidenced by the proliferation of his settings that are included in newly published hymnals and psalm collections.

SECOND LESSON Ecclesiastes 3:1-13 p. 537

SERMON All Things New

***HYMN** *Be Known to Us in Breaking Bread* 505

This hymn is one of four hundred written by James Montgomery. It was published in both *The Christian Psalmist* (1825), where it was titled "The Family Table." The stanzas refer to the Emmaus road incident in Luke 24.

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 *Sing Aloud on this Day* (Personent Hodie)
- Gustav Holst

***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** *All Beautiful the March of Days* insert

Wile, Mrs. Frances Whitmarsh. (Bristol Centre, New York, December 2, 1878--July 31, 1939, Rochester, N.Y.). Married A.J. Wile in 1901. Her lovely hymn for use in winter, beginning "All beautiful the march of days" was written about 1907 while she was a parishioner of Rev. William C. Gannett, in Rochester, N.Y., in consultation with him, and was included in Gannett and Hosmer's revised edition of *Unity Hymns and Chorals*, 1911, from which it passed into *The New Hymn and Tune Book*, 1914, and *Hymns of the Spirit*, 1937.

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *Old French Carol* - Cesar Franck

* 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 Pat Guerrero and Laurel Varker. Ushers and communion servers for today's service are Marsha Pilachowski and Laurel Varker.

Please join us in the narthex after worship today for coffee hour provided by Betsy Ehrenfreund and Audrey Pietrucha.

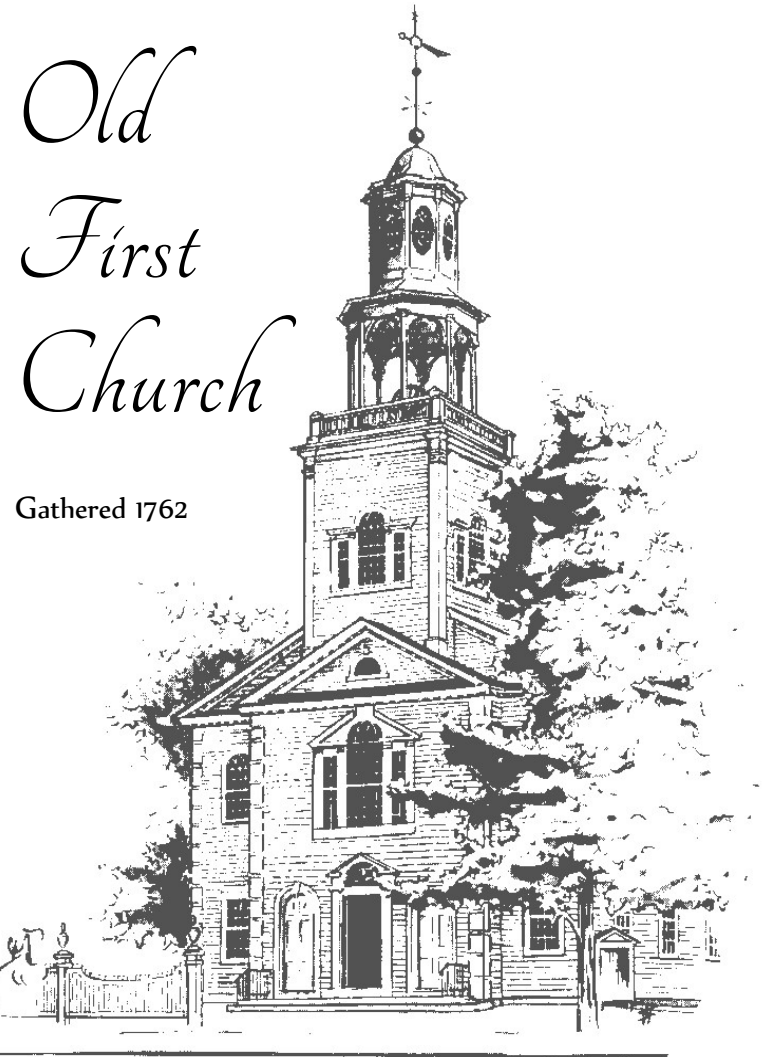
Thank you to those who provided memorial poinsettias this year. Everyone should feel free to take one (or more!) home today. Plastic sleeves are available on the bench to help protect them from the cold.

Weekly offering envelopes are available on the glass top table in the narthex. Be sure to indicate the envelope number located on the front of the envelope box along with your name on the sign out sheet.

The Church's Annual Meeting is scheduled for Sunday, February 6 following worship. If you are a Chair or Advocate on the Church Council, please prepare a 2021 year-end report and email, mail or drop it in the mail slot at the Barn by January 23.

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

Choir practice, Sunday mornings, 9:30 AM in the choir loft
1/10: Deacon meeting, 4:00 PM, church parlor and remotely
1/10: Trustee meeting, 5:30 PM, church parlor and remotely
1/13: Council meeting, 5:00 PM, church parlor and remotely
2/6: Annual Meeting, following worship in the church sanctuary



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

(OLD FIRST CHURCH)

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From Heaven Above

From heaven above to earth I come
To bring good news to everyone one!
Glad tidings of great joy I bring
To all the world, and gladly sing:

To you this night is born a child
Of Mary, chosen virgin mild;
This newborn child of lowly birth
Shall be the joy of all the earth.

This is the Christ, God's Son most high
Who hears your sad and bitter cry;
He will Himself your Savior be
And from all sin will set you free.

"Glory to God in the highest heaven,
Who unto us the Christ has given."
With angels sing the Savior's birth,
A glad new year to all the earth.

O Sing a New Song

The refrain is first sung once by the choir and then repeated by the congregation. Then the choir will continue to sing the versicles and at the appropriate time the congregation joins to sing the refrain. The refrain is to be sung when the "R" appears in the text."

Refrain:

*O sing a new song to the Lord,
Sing to the Lord, Sing all the earth.*

O sing a new song to the Lord,
sing to the Lord, all the earth!
Sing to God and praise the Name.

Proclaim God's salvation day by day,
tell of God's glory among the nations,
and God's marvels to all the people. [R]

The Lord is great and worth of all praise,
to be feared more than all gods;
all other gods are merely idols.

For the Lord made the heavens!
O the splendor and majesty of God's presence!
O the power and beauty of God's temple. [R]

Let the heavens be glad, let the earth rejoice,
let the sea roar, and all its creatures;
be glad, you fields, and all your fruit.

Shout for joy, all the trees of the woods,
at the presence of God, who now comes
to judge the earth with right and the people with truth. [R]

FIRST LESSON

Revelation 21:1-6a

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them as their God; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away." And the one who was seated on the throne said, "See, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true." Then he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life.

SECOND LESSON

Ecclesiastes 3:1-13

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to throw away; a time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace. What gain have the workers from their toil? I have seen the business that God has given to everyone to be busy with.

He has made everything suitable for its time; moreover he has put a sense of past and future into their minds, yet they cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. I know that there is nothing better for them than to be happy and enjoy themselves as long as they live; moreover, it is God's gift that all should eat and drink and take pleasure in all their toil.

Be Known to Us in Breaking Bread

Be known to us in breaking bread,
But do not then depart;
Savior, abide with us,
And spread Thy table in our heart.

There sup with us in love divine:
Thy body and Thy blood,
That living bread, that heavenly wine,
Be our immortal food.

All Beautiful the March of Days

All beautiful the march of days,
As seasons come and go;
The hand that shaped the rose has wrought
The crystal of the snow;
Hath sent the hoary frost of heaven,
The flowing waters sealed,
And laid a silent loveliness
On hill and wood and field.

O'er white expanses sparkling pure
The radiant morns unfold;
The solemn splendors of the night
Burn brighter through the cold;
Life mounts in every throbbing vein,
Love deepens round the hearth,
And clearer sounds the angel hymn,
"Good will to men on earth."

O Thou from whose unfathomed law
The year in beauty flows,
Thyself the vision passing by
In crystal and in rose,
Day unto day doth utter speech,
And night to night proclaim,
In ever changing words of light,
The wonder of thy name.