

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
MARIE GUARINIELLO, LAY READER
GENE MARIE CALLAHAN, ORGANIST
OLD FIRST CHURCH CHOIR

APRIL 28, 2024

PRELUDE *In Christ there is no East or West* (St. Peter) - Healey Willan

OPENING WORDS (responsive)

May God's voice guide us and strengthen us this day.

Let us listen for the word of God.

May God's love change us.

Help us, O God, to live in your peace.

***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)

Everlasting God, in whom we live and move and have our being: You have made us for yourself, so that our hearts are restless until they rest in you. Give us purity of heart and strength of purpose, that no selfish passion may hinder us from knowing your will, no weakness keep us from doing it; that in your light we may see light clearly, and in your service find perfect freedom. Free us from unconcern and haste, keep us in your wisdom and forgive our faults and failings. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND *GLORIA PATRI (579)

FIRST LESSON John 15:1-8 p. 878

***HYMN** *This Is the Day the Lord Hath Made* 230

This paraphrase of Psalm 118 by Isaac Watts was first published in *The Psalms of David* (1719), where he headed it "Hosanna; The Lord's Day; or Christ's Resurrection, and Our Salvation." Watts's intention was for it to be sung on Easter Day or on Sundays.

SECOND LESSON 1 John 4:7-21 p. 991

SERMON Love Each Other?

***HYMN** *We Sing of Golden Mornings* insert

Ralph Waldo Emerson, son of a Unitarian Minister, was born in Boston, May 25, 1803. He was educated for the Unitarian Ministry, and acted, 1829-32, as one of their ministers. Ultimately he left the ministry, and devoted himself to lecturing and literature. As a philosopher, essayist, and poet he rose to a distinguished position. He died at Concord, Massachusetts, April 27, 1882. His published works include poems, orations, lectures, and addresses. His hymns are not numerous.

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 or hand it to an usher after the service.)

OFFERING

OFFERTORY *I am the Vine*
- text by George van Popta; tune "O Waly Waly"

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

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

***HYMN** *O God of Earth and Space* 274

Both text and tune were written for the 100th anniversary of Concordia Lutheran Church, Kirkwood, Missouri.

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *Aria from Water Music* - G. F. Handel

* Stand if able

We extend a warm welcome to our guests and visitors and we are delighted to have you worship with us. 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 Ross and Wendy Schmitt. Ushers and greeters for today's service are Larry Ross and Tom Schmitt.

Please join us for fellowship and refreshments in the foyer after the service. Our thanks to Jen Daks, Jeannette Lesser and Marsha Pilachowski for providing coffee hour this morning.

Flowers for worship are provided by Jen Daks in honor of her son, Jonathan's birthday.

Monumental Tag Sale, June 8th: We will be having a tag sale meeting after worship today. If you are able to help with the sale this year, please fill out the BLOG insert and bring it to the meeting with you. If you are unable to stay for the meeting, but are able to help with the sale, drop the insert on the offering plate.

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

Choir practice, Sunday mornings, 9:45 AM in the choir loft

Church office closed from May 9th – 14th

5/10: Adult Ed 6-8 PM: Traditional Shabbat Services and Dinner at Israel Congregation in Manchester, VT (see BLOG insert for more information)

5/11: Open Church Docent meeting, 10 AM at the Barn

5/16: Deacon's meeting, 4 PM. Church Parlor

5/19: Adult Ed, 12:30 – 2:30 PM Light Lunch and Learn (see BLOG insert for more information)

5/22: Trustee Meeting, 5:30 PM, Church Parlor

5/24: Monumental Music "Remembrances", 7 PM, Barn

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!

To maintain the healthiest standards for public gathering, indoor air is constantly being exchanged with fresh air with a LifeBreath circulation system operating during the service today.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

(OLD FIRST CHURCH)

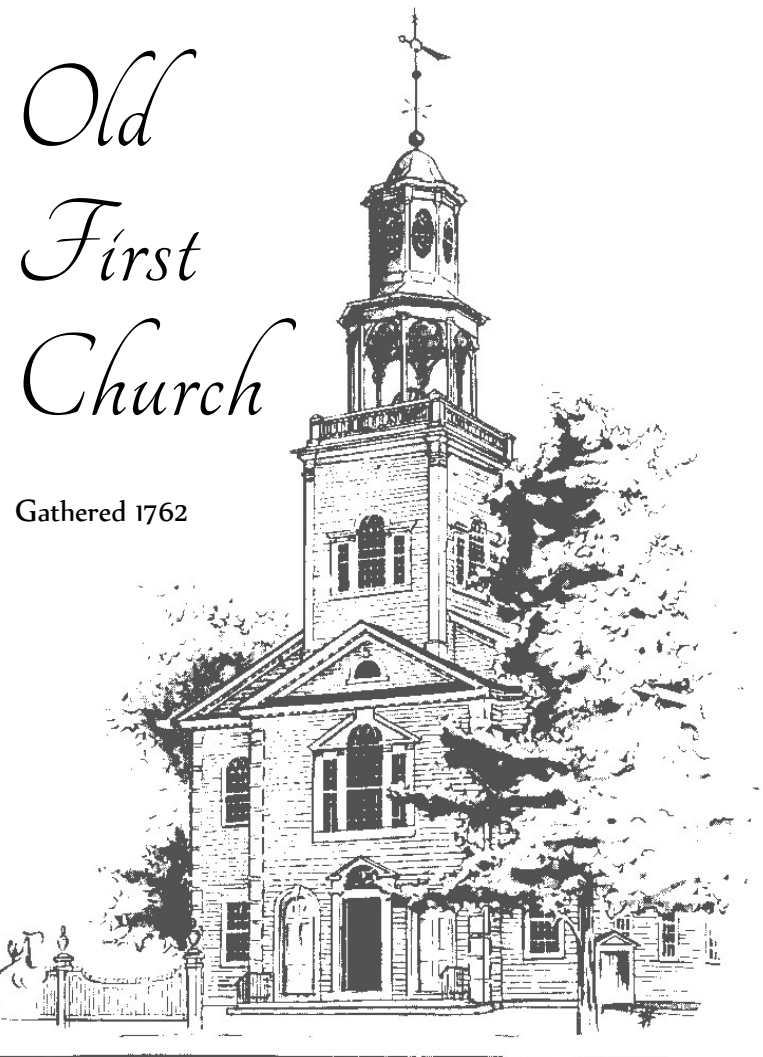
VT RTE. 9 AND MONUMENT AVENUE

OLD BENNINGTON, VERMONT

MAILING ADDRESS & CONTACT INFORMATION

1 MONUMENT CIRCLE • BENNINGTON, VERMONT 05201 • (802) 447-1223

office@oldfirst.comcastbiz.net • www.oldfirstchurchbenn.org



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.

FIRST LESSON

John 15:1-8

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.

This Is the Day the Lord Hath Made

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 This is the day the Lord has made;
He calls the hours His own;
let heav'n rejoice, let earth be glad,
and praise surround the throne. | 3 Hosanna to th' anointed King,
to David's holy Son.
help us, O LORD, descend and bring
salvation from Your throne. |
| 2 Today He rose and left the dead,
and Satan's empire fell;
today the saints His triumphs spread,
and all His wonders tell. | 4 Blest be the Lord, who comes to us
with messages of grace;
who comes, in God His Father's name,
to save our sinful race. |

SECOND LESSON

1 John 4:7-21

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.

And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.

Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. We love because he first loved us. Those who say, "I love God," and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

We Sing of Golden Mornings

We sing of golden mornings,
we sing of sparkling seas,
of prairies, valleys, mountains,
and stately forest trees.
We sing of flashing sunshine
and life bestowing rain,
of birds among the branches,
and springtime come again.

We sing the heart courageous,
the youthful, eager mind;
we sing of hopes undaunted,
of friendly ways and kind.
We sing the roses waiting
beneath the deep-piled snow;
we sing, when night is darkest,
the day's returning glow.

O God of Earth and Space

O God of earth and space,
Of sea and fire and air,
Your providence surrounds us here
And everywhere.
In fruit and grain and tree,
In shelter from the cold,
In cooling breezes, flowing wells,
Now as of old.

Where faithfulness is shown,
Where love and truth abound,
Where beauty graces human life,
There You are found.
Inspirer of all thought!
Creative force of art!
The melody on every tongue,
In every heart!

Wherever freedom reigns,
Where sin is overthrown,
Where justice fused with mercy rules,
There You are known.
Give us the courage clear
To make the earth a home
For all to live in harmony
In Christ's shalom.

Your word commands response
And summons us to life.
We follow, strengthened by Your grace,
In calm or strife.
Our ever-present help,
Our challenge and our prod,
We praise You now and to life's end
Eternal God.