

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  
PATRICE NOLAN-FOX, LAY READER  
ROB ELLIS, GUEST MUSICIAN

AUGUST 11, 2024

**PRELUDE** *Our Father* -Albert Hay Malotte

**OPENING WORDS** (responsive)

Bless the Lord, O my soul.

**Let all that is in me bless God's name.**

Mercy and justice are the Lord's.

**May God's presence seen in love and peace.**

**\*HYMN** *Sing Praise to God, Who Reigns Above* 483

This hymn was originally titled, "Hymn of Thanksgiving." Johann Schütz was a lawyer in Frankfurt who sympathized with the pietist movement in the Lutheran Church. The translator, Frances Elizabeth Cox, was one of the foremost translators into English of German hymns. The tune is from the 1566 Bohemian Brethren's *Kirchengeseng*.

**OPENING PRAYER** (unison)

Almighty and merciful God, from whom comes all that is good, we praise you for your mercies, for your goodness that has created us, your grace that has sustained us, your patience that has borne with us, and your love that has redeemed us. Forgive our misdeeds or neglects. Help us to love you, and to be thankful for all your gifts by serving you and delighting to do your will, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND \*GLORIA PATRI (579)**

**FIRST LESSON** 1 Kings 19:4-8 p. 284

**\*HYMN** *All People That on Earth Do Dwell* 220

The metrical version of Psalm 100 was published in 1561 in the Anglo-Geneva Psalter by William Kethe. He was a Scotsman who fled to the continent during the reign of Mary, was a chaplain to English soldiers at Havre, and was one of the Geneva Bible translators. The tune *Old Hundredth* by Louis Bourgeois was first the setting of a 1551 version of Psalm 134; but since 1562 it has been linked with this Psalm. Bourgeois got into trouble in Geneva for changing tunes of Psalms people already knew. Of course, we sing this tune each week as a Doxology, as well.

**SECOND LESSON** John 6:35, 41-51 p. 868

**SERMON** Close Encounters

**\*HYMN** *Lord, Make Us Servants of Your Peace* 374

The text is a new paraphrase of Francis of Assisi's poem, by Fr. James Quinn, a Jesuit priest. He has made the hymn corporate by pluralizing the first-person pronouns. Francis was a wealthy cloth merchant's son and was imprisoned for a year during an Italian city war. Later, he heard the voice of Jesus from a crucifix asking him to repair the church; so he sold the cloth in his father's warehouse, was publicly disinherited by his father, and handed over the money to rebuild three churches and establish a religious order in 1212. The composer, from the Bristol-Myers family, was director of public relations before changing careers. He was an Episcopal lay reader and President of Westminster Choir College in Princeton. The tune was named for Dickinson College, where in 1959 Bristol received one of his 11 honorary doctoral degrees.

**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** *Adoramus Te Christe* 15<sup>th</sup> century Melody

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

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

**\*HYMN** *In Christ There Is No East or West* 440

The text was originally from a play, "The Pageant of Darkness and Light," written for the London Missionary Society exhibition on the Orient in 1908. The author was a wholesale grocer and writer of 42 novels and 25 collections of poetry and hymns, including "Hymns for Men at the Front," which sold 8 million copies in World War I. The spiritual tune was the setting for "I Know the Angel's Done Changed My Name" in an 1884 hymn collection "Jubilee Songs," and was later adapted and named for Elmer McKee, rector of St. George's Protestant Episcopal Church in New York City in the 1930's.

**BENEDICTION**

**POSTLUDE** *O Happy Day* - Edwin Hawkins

\* 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 Mary Elizabeth Groupé and Jeannette Lesser. Ushers and greeters for today's service are Audrey Pietrucha and Marsha Pilachowski.

Please join us for fellowship and refreshments in the foyer after the service. Our thanks to Janet Van Derpoel-Andrea, Audrey Pietrucha, and Marsha Pilachowski for providing coffee hour this morning.

Flowers for worship are provided by Patrice Nolan-Fox in memory of her mother Joan Nolan-Morneau.

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

8/13: Speaking of Congregationalism, 3:30 PM, Barn

8/15: Bible Study, 7:00 PM, Parlor

8/20: Speaking of Congregationalism, 3:30 PM, Barn

8/21: Trustee Meeting, 5:30 PM, Parlor

8/22: Bible Study, 7:00 PM, Parlor

8/29: Bible Study, 7:00 PM, Parlor

**Sunday School:** Informal drop in Sunday School will continue to run in the half hour before worship. Programs for summer include crafts, games, and classic Bible stories and lessons. All are welcome, but materials best suited for kids under 7.

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)

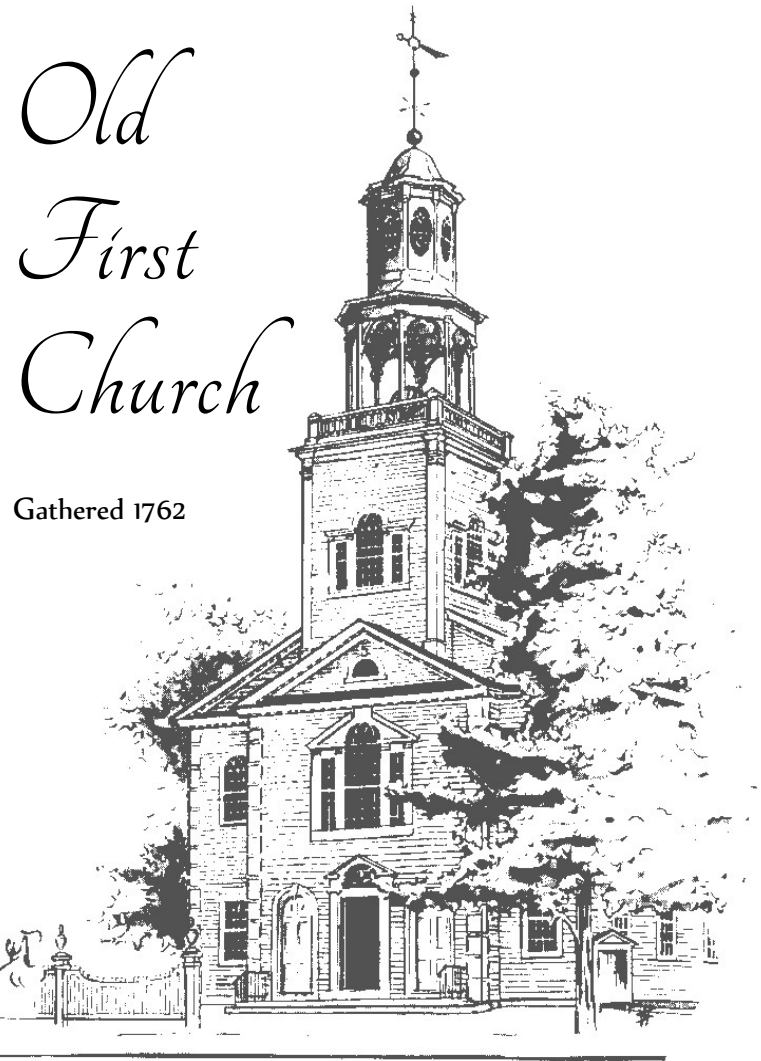
VT RTE. 9 AND MONUMENT AVENUE

OLD BENNINGTON, VERMONT

**MAILING ADDRESS & CONTACT INFORMATION**

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

[office@oldfirst.comcastbiz.net](mailto:office@oldfirst.comcastbiz.net) • [www.oldfirstchurchbenn.org](http://www.oldfirstchurchbenn.org)



*Old  
First  
Church*

Gathered 1762

### *Sing Praise to God, Who Reigns Above*

- 1) Sing praise to God, who reigns above,  
the God of all creation,  
the God of power, the God of love,  
the God of our salvation;  
With healing balm my soul is filled,  
and every faithless murmur stilled:  
To God all praise and glory!
- 2) What God's almighty power hath made,  
God's gracious mercy keepeth;  
by morning glow or evening shade  
God's watchful eye ne'er sleepeth;  
Within the kingdom of God's might,  
Lo! All is just and all is right:  
To God all praise and glory!
- 3) The Lord is never far away,  
but through all grief distressing,  
an ever present help and stay,  
our peace, and joy, and blessing;  
As with a mother's tender hand,  
God gently leads the chosen band:  
To God all praise and glory!
- 4) Thus all my gladsome way along,  
I sing aloud Thy praises,  
that all may hear the grateful song  
my voice unwearied raises.  
Be joyful in the Lord, my heart,  
both soul and body take your part:  
To God all praise and glory!

### **FIRST LESSON**

#### **1 Kings 19:4-8**

But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a solitary broom tree. He asked that he might die: "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my ancestors." Then he lay down under the broom tree and fell asleep. Suddenly an angel touched him and said to him, "Get up and eat." He looked, and there at his head was a cake baked on hot stones, and a jar of water. He ate and drank, and lay down again. The angel of the Lord came a second time, touched him, and said, "Get up and eat, otherwise the journey will be too much for you." He got up, and ate and drank; then he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb the mount of God.

### *All People That on Earth Do Dwell*

All people that on earth do dwell,  
Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice;  
Him serve with mirth, His praise forth tell,  
Come ye before Him and rejoice.

Know that the Lord is God indeed;  
Without our aid He did us make;  
We are His folk, He doth us feed,  
And for His sheep He doth us take.

O enter then His gates with praise,  
Approach with joy His courts unto;  
Praise, laud and bless His name always,  
For it is seemly so to do.

For why? The Lord our God is good,  
His mercy is forever sure;  
His truth at all times firmly stood,  
And shall from age to age endure.

### **SECOND LESSON**

#### **John 6:35, 41-51**

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. Then the Jews began to complain about him because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." They were saying, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?" Jesus answered them, "Do not complain among yourselves. No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me; and I will raise that person up on the last day. It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me. Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father. Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."

*Lord, Make Us Servants of Your Peace*

Lord, make us servants of Your peace:  
Where there is hate, may we sow love;  
Where there is hurt, may we forgive;  
Where there is strife, may we make one.

Where all is doubt, may we sow faith;  
Where all is gloom, may we sow hope;  
Where all is night, may we sow light;  
Where all is tears, may we sow joy.

Jesus, our Lord, may we not seek  
To be consoled, but to console,  
Nor look to understanding hearts,  
But look for hearts to understand.

May we not look for love's return,  
But seek to love unselfishly,  
For in our giving we receive,  
And in forgiving are forgiven.

Dying, we live, and are reborn  
Through death's dark night to endless day:  
Lord, make us servants of Your peace  
To wake at last in heaven's light.

*In Christ There Is No East or West*

In Christ there is no east or west,  
In Him no south or north;  
But one great fellowship of love  
Throughout the whole wide earth.

In Christ shall true hearts everywhere  
Their high communion find;  
His service is the golden cord  
Close binding humankind.

Join hands, disciples in the faith,  
Whate'er your race may be.  
All children of the living God  
Are surely kin to me.

In Christ now meet both east and west,  
In Him meet south and north;  
All Christly souls are one in Him  
Throughout the whole wide earth.