

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
CAROL POPPE, LAY READER
ROB ELLIS, GUEST MUSICIAN

AUGUST 4, 2024

PRELUDE *Air on a G String* - J.S. Bach

OPENING WORDS (responsive)

Let us recall things of joy and gladness.

May God open our hearts this season.

Renew our spirit and lift us from any darkness.

In the beauty of the morning may God's truth shine.

***HYMN** *Come, Thou Font of Every Blessing* 356

This text was written by Robert Robinson (1735-1790) about 1758 and was included in *A Collection of Hymns Used by the Church of Christ in Angel-Alley, Bishopsgate* (1759). It was later included with the tune NETTLETON in John Wyeth's *Repository of Sacred Music, Part Second* (1813).

OPENING PRAYER (unison)

O Lord our God,
you know us better than we know ourselves.
As we come before you now,
believers and doubters alike,
we all share a deep need,
for we are all lost without your grace.
Search us, O God, and know our hearts,
test us and know our troubled thoughts.
Give us true repentance.
Forgive us all our wrongs.
Transform us by your Spirit to live for you each day,
to learn to serve each other
and, through the grace of Jesus Christ our Lord,
to come at last to heaven.
This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND *GLORIA PATRI (579)

FIRST LESSON Exodus 16:2-4, 9-16 p. 55

***HYMN** *Come, All You Servants of the Lord* 242

This paraphrase of Psalm 134 by Arlo D. Duba was written after hearing the tune DANBY which was brought to the attention of the Psalter Task Force of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) by Kenneth E. Williams. It was first published in *A Psalm Sampler* (1986).

SECOND LESSON John 6:24-35 p. 867

SERMON Extended Play

***HYMN** *For the Bread Which You Have Broken* 508

Louis Benson wrote the text in 1924. Benson started his career as a lawyer, but abandoned it after seven years to become a Presbyterian minister, after which he became editor of several hymnals, and taught hymnody at Auburn and Princeton Seminaries. The tune was written in 1959 by V. Earle Copes, a 1940 graduate of Davidson College. Copes is a Methodist minister, and has served as minister of music in a number of churches and on college faculties.

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 *Canon in D* - Johann Pachelbel

***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** *How Clear Is Our Vocation, Lord* 419

Fred Pratt Green wrote the text in 1981, in response to a request for a hymn on vocation. Green has been credited with starting the 20th century's hymn-writing explosion. C. Hubert Parry wrote the tune for an oratorio, *Judith*, in 1888. Parry was director of the Royal College of Music, professor of music at Oxford, and was knighted in 1898.

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *What a Friend We Have in Jesus* -Joseph M. Scriven

* 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 and ushers, greeters and communion servers for today's service are Mary Elizabeth Groupé and Jeannette Lesser.

Please join us for fellowship and refreshments in the foyer after the service. Our thanks to Joyce Goeke, Mary Elizabeth Groupé, Marsha Pilachowski and Hillary Stewart for providing coffee hour this morning.

Flowers for worship are provided by Kate Musso.

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

8/6: Speaking of Congregationalism, 3:30 PM, Barn

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

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

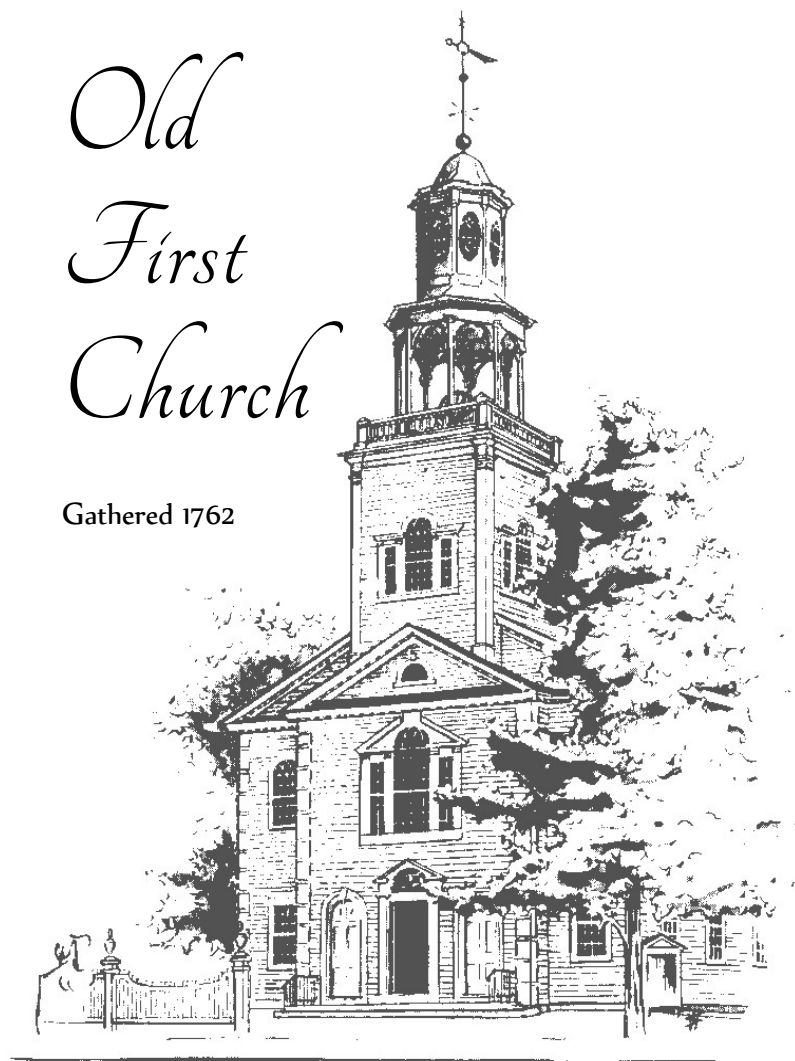
1 MONUMENT CIRCLE • BENNINGTON, VERMONT 05201 • (802) 447-1223

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



Old First Church

Gathered 1762



Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing

1. Come, Thou Fount of every blessing,
tune my heart to sing Thy grace;
streams of mercy, never ceasing,
call for songs of loudest praise.
Teach me some melodious sonnet,
sung by flaming tongues above;
praise the mount! I'm fixed upon it,
mount of God's unchanging love!
2. Here I raise my Ebenezer,
hither by Thy help I'm come;
and I hope, by Thy good pleasure,
safely to arrive at home.
Jesus sought me when a stranger,
wandering from the fold of God;
He, to rescue me from danger,
Interposed His precious blood.
3. O to grace how great a debtor
daily I'm constrained to be!
Let that grace now, like a fetter,
bind my wandering heart to Thee:
prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
prone to leave the God I love;
here's my heart, O take and seal it;
seal it for Thy courts above.

FIRST LESSON

Exodus 16:2-4, 9-16

The whole congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. The Israelites said to them, "If only we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger." Then the Lord said to Moses, "I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day the people shall go out and gather enough for that day. In that way I will test them, whether they will follow my instruction or not. Then Moses said to Aaron, "Say to the whole congregation of the Israelites, 'Draw near to the Lord, for he has heard your complaining.'" And as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the Israelites, they looked toward the wilderness, and the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud. The Lord spoke to Moses and said, "I have heard the complaining of the Israelites; say to them, 'At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall have your fill of bread; then you shall know that I am the Lord your God.'"

In the evening quails came up and covered the camp; and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. When the layer of dew lifted, there on the surface of the wilderness was a fine flaky substance, as fine as frost on the ground. When the Israelites saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, "It is

the bread that the Lord has given you to eat. This is what the Lord has commanded: 'Gather as much of it as each of you needs, an omer to a person according to the number of persons, all providing for those in their own tents.'"

Come, All You Servants of the Lord

Come, all you servants of the Lord,
Who work and pray by night, by day,
Come, bless the Lord within this place;
With lifted hands your homage pay.

The Lord now bless from heaven above
And shine on you with radiant face;
The Lord who heaven and earth has made
Illumine you with peace and grace.

SECOND LESSON

John 6:24-35

So when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus. When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?" Jesus answered them, "Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal."

Then they said to him, "What must we do to perform the works of God?" Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent." So they said to him, "What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe you? What work are you performing? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" Then Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always." 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.

For the Bread Which You Have Broken

For the bread which You have broken,
For the wine which You have poured,
For the words which You have spoken,
Now we give You thanks, O Lord.

By this promise that You love us,
By Your gift of peace restore,
By Your call to heaven above us,
Hallow all our lives, O Lord.

With the saints who now adore You
Seated at the heavenly board,
May the church still waiting for You
Keep love's tie unbroken, Lord.

In Your service, Lord, defend us;
In our hearts keep watch and ward;
In the world to which You send us
Let Your kingdom come, O Lord.

How Clear Is Our Vocation, Lord

How clear is our vocation, Lord,
When once we heed Your call:
To live according to Your word,
And daily learn, refreshed, restored,
That You are Lord of all
and will not let us fall.

But if, forgetful, we should find
Your yoke is hard to bear,
If worldly pressures fray the mind
and love itself cannot unwind
Its tangled skein of care:
Our inward life repair.

We mark Your saints, how they become
In hindrances more sure,
Whose joyful virtues put to shame
The casual way we wear Your name,
And by our faults obscure
Your power to cleanse and cure.

In what You give us, Lord, to do,
Together or alone,
In old routines or ventures new,
May we not cease to look to You -
The cross You hung upon -
All you endeavored done.

**Order of Service for
The Lord's Supper or Communion
At the First Congregational Church
Bennington, Vermont**

Scripture Sentences

Opening Words and Invocation

Prayer of Confession (read by the Minister and People in Unison)

We come not into thy presence, most holy Lord God, trusting in our own righteousness but in thy manifold and abiding mercies. Remembering this day the great heart and passion of a son of man of long ago, we are conscious of our shortcomings. We would here be turned to the way of his brave and tender spirit, and find that wholeness of life which shall be at once a divine blessing for us and a divine ministry from us. Forgive our failures and shortcomings, and by thy grace strengthen our desire for goodness, that we may henceforth serve thee without fear and without shame, all the days of our lives. Amen.

Responsive Reading

Let us hear the words of Jesus which speak of the way of blessedness.

Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

BLESSED ARE THEY THAT MOURN; FOR THEY SHALL BE COMFORTED.

Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth.

BLESSED ARE THEY WHICH DO HUNGER AND THIRST AFTER RIGHTEOUSNESS; FOR THEY SHALL BE FILLED.

Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy.

BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART; FOR THEY SHALL SEE GOD.

Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God.

BLESSED ARE THEY WHICH ARE PERSECUTED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS' SAKE; FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

THIS IS THE FIRST AND GREAT COMMANDMENT.

And the second is like unto it, namely this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

ON THESE TWO COMMANDMENTS HANG ALL THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS.

Offertory and Communion Prayer

The Lord be with you.

AND ALSO WITH YOU.

Lift up your hearts

WE LIFT THEM TO THE LORD.

It is right to give our thanks and praise

LET US GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD OUR GOD

Words of Institution

The Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread; and, when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said: This is my body which is broken for you. This do in remembrance of me.

After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood. This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

Take and eat this in remembrance of Christ.

Take and drink this in remembrance of Christ.

Silent Prayer

The service continues and concludes as found in today's order of service.