

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  
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GENE MARIE CALLAHAN, ORGANIST  
OLD FIRST CHURCH CHOIR

JANUARY 14, 2024

**PRELUDE** *If Thou but Suffer God to Guide Thee* - Harold. R. Vetter

**OPENING WORDS** (responsive)

O Lord, in your light we see light.

**By your love our world is made new.**

Let us sing with thanks and praise to God.

**Your faithfulness extends to all creation.**

**\*HYMN** *Morning Has Broken* **469**

Eleanor Farjeon, the author of nursery rhymes and singing games, wrote the text for this tune. It was first published in 1931. A more recent popular recording by Cat Stevens made the song popular in this country. *Bunessan* is a Gaelic melody first published in 1888. The present arrangement was made for the Christian Reformed Church hymnal in 1985.

**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 your grace

to come at last to heaven.

This we pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

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

**FIRST LESSON** Jonah 3:1-5, 10 p. 753

**\*HYMN** *My Soul in Silence Waits for God* **197**  
(verses 1-2, 6)

According to the author, Fred R. Anderson, this metrical version of Psalm 62 is a reworking of number 161 in *The Psalter* (1912). While the images are similar, the language has been extensively changed for the contemporary church. Anderson began the work at the request of the Psalter Task Force of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The hymn is published here for the first time.

**SECOND LESSON** Mark 1:14-20 p. 812

**SERMON** Time Fulfilled

**\*HYMN** *They Cast Their Nets in Galilee* **insert**

William Alexander Percy (May 14, 1885 – January 21, 1942) was a lawyer, planter, and poet from Greenville, Mississippi. His father [LeRoy Percy](#) was the last [United States Senator](#) from Mississippi elected by the legislature. In a largely [Protestant](#) state, the younger Percy championed the [Roman Catholicism](#) of his French mother. Percy's most well-known work is his memoir, *Lanterns on the Levee: Recollections of a Planter's Son* (Alfred A. Knopf, New York 1941). His other works include the text of "They Cast Their Nets in Galilee," which is included in the *Episcopal Hymnal* (1982) and the *Collected Poems* (Knopf 1943).

**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** *Slow Down* - Edwin T. Childs

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

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

**\*HYMN** *Precious Lord, Take My Hand* **404**

Thomas A. Dorsey, the most influential figure in the gospel song music, wrote this hymn in 1932 when his first wife died. He was born in Georgia in 1899 and died in Chicago in 1993. He was choir director of the Pilgrim Baptist Church in Chicago for 40 years. The tune by George Allen in 1842 received its popularity through Dorsey's arrangement of it for this text.

**BENEDICTION**

**POSTLUDE** *Sonata on the First Tone* - Jose Lidon

**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 Janet Van Derpoel-Andrea and Sue Philpott. Ushers and greeters for today's service are Joyce Goeke and Darlene Munson.

Please join us for fellowship and refreshments in the foyer after the service. Our thanks to Joyce Goeke, Marsha Pilachowski, Wendy Schmitt for providing coffee hour this morning.

Flowers for worship are provided by Kate Musso.

**21<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL LENTEN DEVOTIONAL BOOKLET:** Submissions for our *Meditations for Lent* booklet, by and for members and friends of Old First, are being accepted. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 14. The deadline for submissions is February 5. Email is the best way to get it to the church office. The devotionals are printed on a half-sheet of 8 ½ x 11" paper so please keep your selections brief.

The Church's Annual Meeting is scheduled for Sunday, Feb. 11 following worship. If you are a Chair or Advocate on the Church Council, please prepare a 2023 year-end report and get it to the church office by January 22.

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

Choir practice, Sunday mornings, 9:30 AM in the choir loft

1/22: Annual reports due in the church office

1/26: Monumental Music at the Barn, 7 PM, see BLOG for more information

2/11: Annual Meeting following worship

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

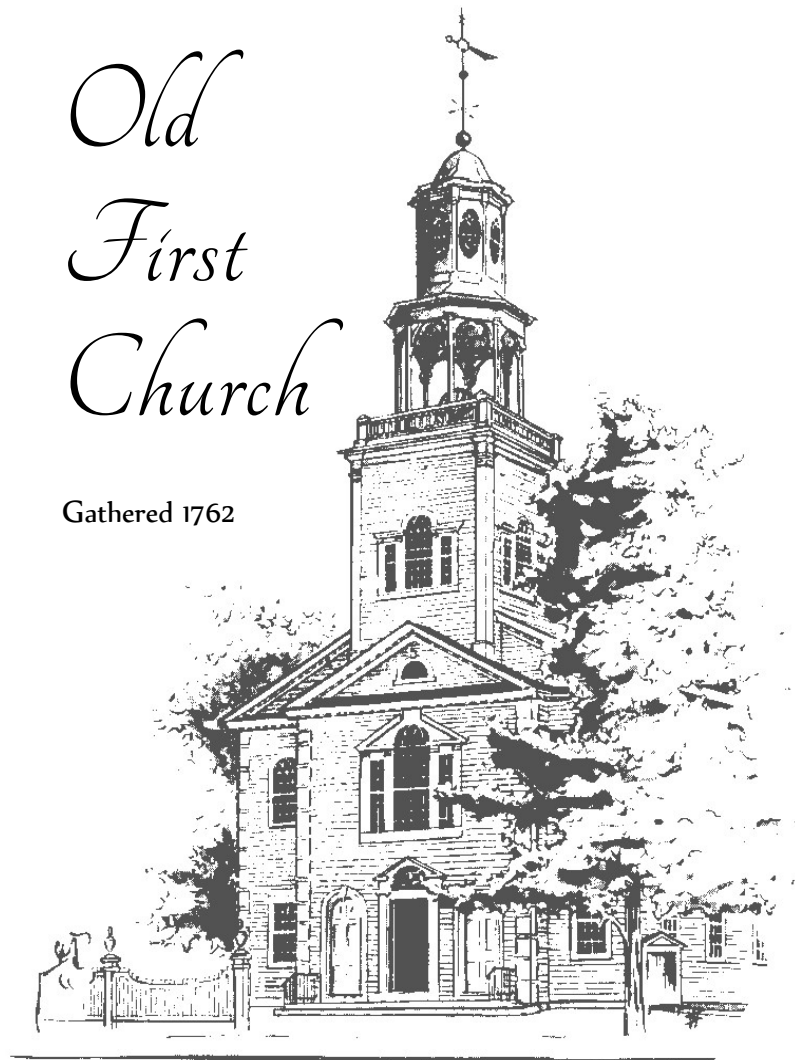
### MAILING ADDRESS & CONTACT INFORMATION

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# Old First Church

Gathered 1762



### *Morning Has Broken*

Morning has broken like the first morning,  
Blackbird has spoken like the first bird.  
Praise for the singing! Praise for the morning!  
Praise for them, springing fresh from the Word!

Sweet the rain's new fall sunlit from heaven,  
Like the first dew fall on the first grass.  
Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden,  
Sprung in completeness where God's feet pass.

Mine is the sunlight! Mine is the morning  
Born of the one light Eden saw play!  
Praise with elation, praise every morning,  
God's recreation of the new day!

### *My Soul in Silence Waits for God*

My soul in silence waits for God,  
Who my own hope has proved.  
A rock and stronghold is my God,  
I never shall be moved.

In God alone my honor rests,  
Who brings deliverance sure;  
My rock of strength is found in God,  
My refuge most secure.

For so it is that sovereign grace  
Belongs to You, O Lord;  
For You according to our work  
Shall everyone reward.

### **FIRST LESSON**

#### **Jonah 3:1-5, 10**

The word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time, saying, "Get up, go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to it the message that I tell you." So Jonah set out and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly large city, a three days' walk across. Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's walk. And he cried out, "Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!"

And the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and everyone, great and small, put on sackcloth. When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it.

### **SECOND LESSON**

#### **Mark 1:14-20**

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news." As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, "Follow me and I will make you fish for people." And immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

### *They Cast Their Nets in Galilee*

They cast their nets in Galilee  
Just off the hills of brown;  
Such happy, simple fisherfolk,  
Before the Lord came down.

Contented, peaceful fishermen,  
Before they ever knew  
The peace of God That filled their hearts  
Brimful, and broke them too.

Young John, who trimmed the flapping sail,  
Homeless in Patmos died.  
Peter, who hauled the teeming net,  
Head-down was crucified.

The peace of God, it is no peace,  
But strife closed in the sod.  
Yet, brothers, pray for but one thing—  
The marvelous peace of God.

### *Precious Lord, Take My Hand*

Precious Lord, take my hand,  
Lead me on, help me stand;  
I am tired, I am weak, I am worn;  
Through the storm, through the night,  
Lead me on to the light;  
Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.

When my way grows drear,  
Precious Lord, linger near;  
When my life is almost gone,  
Hear my cry, hear my call,  
Hold my hand lest I fall;  
Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.