

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

LAY SERVICE PARTICIPANTS: WAYNE KACHMAR, CYNTHIA LOCKLIN,

DAVE PILACHOWSKI, MARSHA PILACHOWSKI

ROB ELLIS, GUEST MUSICIAN

JULY 28, 2024

PRELUDE *It is Well with My Soul* - Phillip Paul Bliss

OPENING WORDS (responsive)

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth!

Serve the Lord with gladness!

Come into God's presence with singing!

Give thanks to God and bless God's name!

For the Lord is good;

God's steadfast love endures forever.

***HYMN** *Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken* 446

The text by John Newton first appeared in 1779. It was intended to be used to illustrate Isaiah 33:20-21. Newton, who also wrote *Amazing Grace*, was a pastor who had been a sea captain and slave trader; in 1748 he had a spiritual awakening during a storm at sea. Franz Joseph Haydn wrote the tune in 1797 for the birthday of the Austrian emperor. A prolific composer, Haydn expressed his gratefulness by prefacing all his compositions with the words, "In nomine Domini," and ended them with "Laus Deo."

OPENING PRAYER (unison)

O God, Your holiness, love, and majesty fill the earth. All creatures praise You as God and King. We gather with thankful hearts, and join them in singing joyous songs of love for You. We long to express our love for You, but too often mere human words fail us. Forgive us for those times when we have had the opportunity to express our faith in You, but have remained silent. Forgive us for disappointing You by acting on some of our poor decisions. Lead us in the way that we should go when we pray to you in faith. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND *GLORIA PATRI (579)

***HYMN** *What a Friend We Have in Jesus* 403

The text's author, Joseph Scriven, moved from Dublin to Ontario, Canada in 1844 when he was 25. Influenced heavily by the Plymouth Brethren, he generously gave to the poor and was known as the man who "saws wood only for poor widows and sick people who cannot pay." His hymn is extremely popular in Korea. Charles Converse, a lawyer in Erie with a degree from Albany Law School, wrote a number of hymn tunes, this one in 1868.

FIRST LESSON Ephesians 3:14-21 p. 949

***HYMN** *Here I Am, Lord* 525

Daniel Shutte wrote the text and tune in 1981 for a diaconate ordination. He was a Roman Catholic priest in South Dakota but is now a layperson, and serves as music director of a Roman Catholic parish in Milwaukee.

***HYMN** *Go Tell It on the Mountain* 29

After hearing the refrain, John Wesley Work II wrote the stanzas around 1900. It was included in the collection, *American Negro Songs and Spirituals* (1940). Work and his brother were leading figures in the preservation, performance and study of African-American spirituals. This carol was arranged by Work's son, who continued the work (!) begun by his father and uncle. The harmony is by the chair of the committee that organized this hymnal, Melva Costen.

SECOND LESSON John 17:1-8, 11-12 p. 879

***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.

***HYMN** *All Things Bright and Beautiful* 267

The text was written by a Sunday school teacher to teach her children the truth of the beginning of the Apostles' Creed. She contributed to many hymnals in her day and established a school for the deaf in Ireland. The tune is an English folk melody which Martin Shaw, known for editing several hymnals and for encouraging the revival of English folk music, adapted in 1915.

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 *Ave Maria* - adapted from J.S. Bach melody

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

***HYMN** *Amazing Grace v. 1, 2, 5* 280

The text was written for the people of Olney, Buckinghamshire, England by the pastor. In 1748 he had been captain of a slave ship, where a storm at sea brought a spiritual awakening. The tune's origin is unknown, but it may be based on an African melody.

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

***HYMN** *How Great Thou Art* 467

The original text by Carl Gustav Boberg was written in 1885 after a midday thunderstorm followed by brilliant sun, and he heard birds singing. He wrote a nine-stanza poem, "O Store Gud," and later, returning to Varmland where he wrote it, was surprised to hear the congregation singing his poem to an old Swedish folk melody. There have been various translations into English, German, Russian, and Korean. The present text and harmonization is by Stuart Hine (b. 1899), a missionary to Russia, and it was popularized by the Billy Graham Team during a London Crusade.

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Bridge Over Troubled Water

- Simon and Garfunkel

* 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 Janet Van Derpoel-Andrea and Sue Philpott. Ushers and greeters for today's service are Courtney Cowan and Sue Philpott.

Please join us for fellowship and refreshments in the foyer after the service. Our thanks to Betsy Ehrenfreund, Audrey Pietrucha and Marsha Pilachowski for providing coffee hour this morning.

Flowers for worship are provided by Kate Musso.

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!

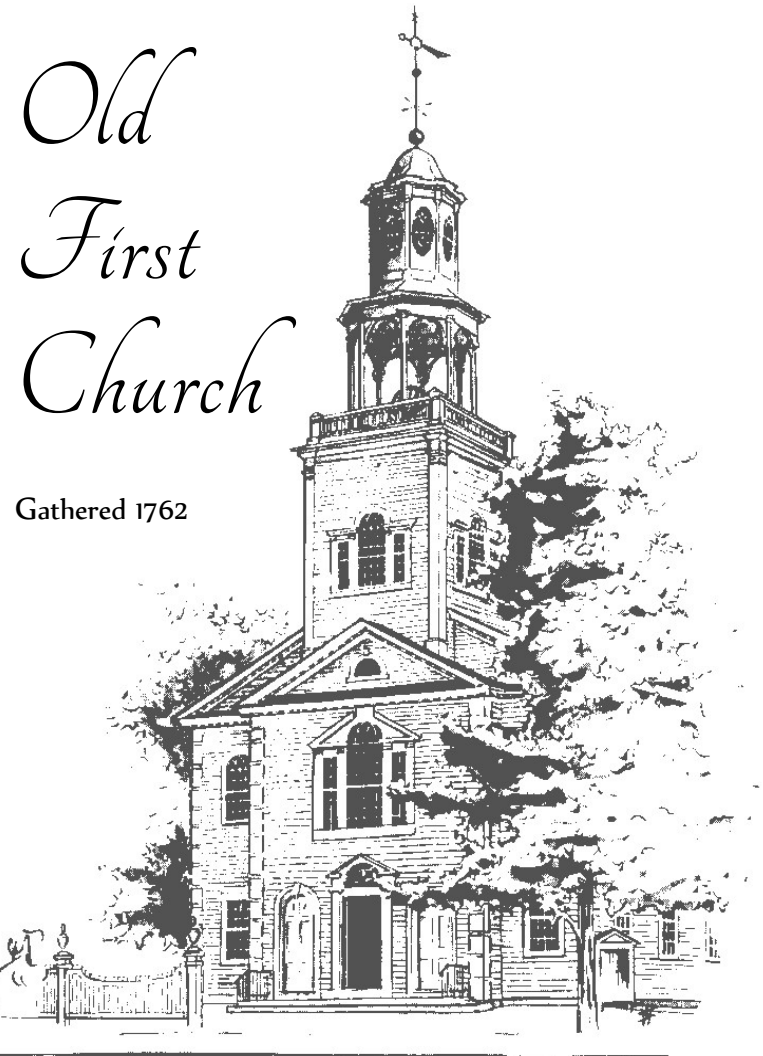
To maintain the healthiest standards for public gathering, indoor air is constantly being exchanged with fresh air with a LifeBreath circulation system operating during the service today.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

(OLD FIRST CHURCH)
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Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken

- 1). Glorious things of thee are spoken,
Zion, city of our God;
God, whose word cannot be broken,
formed thee for a blessed abode.
On the rock of ages founded,
what can shake thy sure repose?
With salvation's walls surrounded,
thou may'st smile at all thy foes.
- 2). See, the streams of living waters,
springing from eternal love,
well supply thy sons and daughters,
and all fear of want remove.
Who can faint while such a river
ever flows their thirst to assuage?
Grace, which like the Lord the giver,
never fails from age to age.
- 3). Round each habitation hovering,
see the cloud and fire appear
for a glory and a covering,
showing that the Lord is near.
Thus deriving from their banner
light by night and shade by day,
safe they feed upon the manna
which God gives them when they pray.

What A Friend We Have in Jesus

- 1). What a friend we have in Jesus,
All our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer!
O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pain we bear,
all because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer!
- 2). Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged:
Take it to the Lord in prayer!
Can we find a friend so faithful,
who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness;
take it to the Lord in prayer!
- 3). Are we weak and heavy laden,
Cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Savior, still our refuge—
Take it to the Lord in prayer!
Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?
Take it to the Lord in prayer!
In His arms He'll take and shield thee,
Thou wilt find a solace there.

FIRST LESSON: Ephesians 3:14-21

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Here I Am, Lord

- 1). I, the Lord of sea and sky,
I have heard my people cry.
All who dwell in deepest sin
My hand will save.
I who made the stars of night,
I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear My light to them?
Whom shall I send?
- 2). I, the Lord of snow and rain,
I have borne My people's pain.
I have wept for love of them,
They turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone,
Give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak My word to them.
Whom shall I send? [*Refrain*]

Refrain:

Here I am, Lord
Is it I, Lord?
I have heard You calling in the night
I will go, Lord,
If You lead me.
I will hold Your people in my heart.

- 3). I, the Lord of wind and flame,
I will tend the poor and lame.
I will set a feast for them,
My hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide
Till their hearts be satisfied.
I will give My life to them.
Whom shall I send? [*Refrain*]

Go, Tell It on the Mountain

Refrain:

Go, tell it on the mountain
Over the hills and everywhere;
Go, tell it on the mountain
That Jesus Christ is born!

While shepherds kept their watching
O'er silent flocks by night,
Behold throughout the heavens
There shone a Holy light. *[Refrain]*

The shepherds feared and trembled
When lo! Above the earth,
Rang out the angel chorus
That hailed our Savior's birth. *[Refrain]*

Down in a lowly manger
The humble Christ was born,
And God sent us salvation
That blessed Christmas morn. *[Refrain]*

SECOND LESSON: John 17:1-8, 11-12

After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.

"I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me.

And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them in your name that you have given me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost, so that the scripture might be fulfilled.

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.

All Things Bright and Beautiful

Refrain:

All things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful:
The Lord God made them all.

Each little flower that opens,
Each little bird that sings:
God made their glowing colors.
God made their tiny wings. *[Refrain]*

The purple headed mountain,
The river running by,
The sunset, and the morning
That brightens up the sky, *[Refrain]*

The cold wind in the winter,
The pleasant summer sun,
The ripe fruits in the garden:
God made them every one. *[Refrain]*

God gave us eyes to see them,
And lips that we might tell
How great is God Almighty,
Who has made all things well. *[Refrain]*

Amazing Grace

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now I am found,
was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
and grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed!

When we've been there ten thousand years,
bright shining as the sun,
we've no less days to sing God's praise
than when we'd first begun.

How Great Thou Art

Oh Lord, my God! when I in awesome wonder
Consider all the worlds Thy hands have made,
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,
Thy power throughout the universe displayed;

Refrain: Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to Thee,
How great Thou art, how great Thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to Thee,
How great Thou art, how great Thou art!

When through the woods and forest glades I wander
And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;
When I look down from lofty mountain grandeur
And hear the brook and feel the gentle breeze; *[Refrain]*

And when I think that God, His Son not sparing,
Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in;
That on the cross, my burden gladly bearing,
He bled and died to take away my sin; *[Refrain]*

When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation
And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart!
Then I shall bow in humble adoration,
And there proclaim, my God, how great Thou art! *[Refrain]*