

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

DAVE PILACHOWSKI, LAY READER

GENE MARIE CALLAHAN, ORGANIST OLD FIRST CHURCH CHOIR

JUNE 2, 2024

PRELUDE *Prelude, Op. 14 No. 5* - Edward Elgar

OPENING WORDS (responsive)

Make a joyful noise all the earth.

Let us worship the Lord with gladness.

For the Lord is good, God's love endures forever.

God's Spirit is in all times and generations.

*HYMN *For the Beauty of the Earth* 473
(verses 1-4)

The text's author was briefly a headmaster and literature teacher at a college in England, but an inheritance allowed him to spend the rest of his life traveling and writing. This text was originally written as a communion hymn to infuse a note of joy into the then otherwise solemn service. The tune's original author was choirmaster and organist at Stuttgart, and modified to be the setting of William Dix's "As With Gladness Men of Old."

OPENING PRAYER (unison)

Lord, let us not dwell in the past, nor worry about the future. We cannot undo what is done. We cannot foresee what will come. Let us instead dwell in your peace, love and be loved, heal and be healed. We give the past to you and rest in your forgiveness. We give the future to you and rest in your love. We live in your light, open our eyes that we may see. We live in your love, let your love flow through us, to the fulfillment of your kingdom. This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND *GLORIA PATRI (579)

FIRST LESSON Mark 2:23-3:6 p. 814

*HYMN *God Is My Strong Salvation* 179

Psalm 27 was adapted for singing by James Montgomery in 1822. A son of Moravian missionaries, he was a newspaper publisher and poet in Yorkshire, England. The tune is by Melchior Vulpius (1560-1615), who was a teacher and prolific composer of motets and hymns for German worship. The tune's title means, "Christ, he is my life," and was the basis for a chorale by Vulpius, and also Cantata 95 by J.S. Bach.

SECOND LESSON 2 Corinthians 4:5-12 p. 939

SERMON *Shining Light*

*HYMN *Now to Your Table Spread* 515

The author is editor and executive secretary of the New Zealand Hymnbook Trust and in addition to being a pianist and organist, has served with Amnesty International, and a research unit of the New Zealand Parliament's Labor party. The tune was composed for the text of hymn #76 in 1918 by John Ireland on the back of a menu, during a lunch when a friend passed him a poem, asking that he write a tune for it. Ireland was an organist and prolific composer in England.

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 *Agnus Dei* - P. Dentella

*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 *O God of Love, O God of Peace* 295

Henry Williams Baker was an English baronet, Church of England clergy member, and hymnal editor. He wrote the text for the 1861 *Hymns Ancient and Modern* with the caption, "In Times of Trouble." England and France were at war; Italy was in a civil war involving also France and Austria, and civil war in the U.S. had just broken out. The tune was first published in 1847.

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *Voluntary* - Edward Elgar

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 Janet Van Derpoel-Andrea and Joyce Goeke.

Please join us after worship today at the Barn for our annual Monumental Tag Sale Kickoff Luncheon.

The flowers for worship are provided by Janet Van Derpoel-Andrea in memory of Karen Huber Rowley.

Spread the word...The Old First Monumental Tag Sale is **NEXT Saturday**, June 8, 9 a.m.–3 p.m. at the Barn. Posters are on the marble table in the narthex if you wish to post somewhere OR display on your car window!!! We will need your help with set up during the week as well as on the day of the sale.

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

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

6/2: Tag Sale Kickoff Luncheon following worship

6/3-6/7: Tag Sale Week! Set up at the Barn 9AM - 4PM

6/8: Old First Church Monumental Tag Sale, doors open at 9:00 AM

6/19: Deacon's meeting, 4:30 PM, Parlor

6/19: Trustee's meeting, 5:30 PM, Parlor

6/21: Monumental Music, 7:00 PM at the 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.

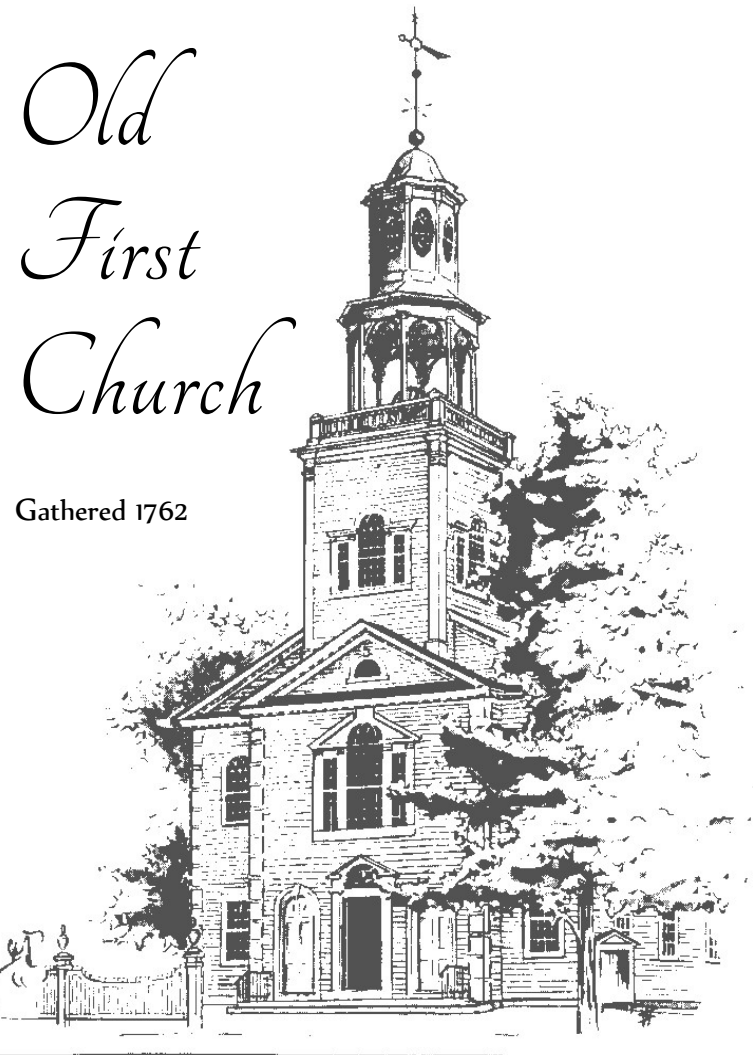
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

(OLD FIRST CHURCH)
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OLD BENNINGTON, VERMONT

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For the Beauty of the Earth

For the beauty of the earth,
For the glory of the skies,
For the love which from our birth
Over and around us lies.

Refrain: Lord of all to Thee we raise
This our hymn of grateful praise.

For the wonder of each hour,
Of the day and of the night,
Hill and vale, and tree and flower,
Sun and moon, and stars of light. (*Refrain*)

For the joy of ear and eye,
For the heart and mind's delight,
For the mystic harmony
Linking sense to sound and sight, (*Refrain*)

For the joy of human love,
Brother, sister, parent, child,
Friends on earth and friends above,
For all gentle thoughts and mild. (*Refrain*)

God Is My Strong Salvation

God is my strong salvation;
What foe have I to fear?
In peril and temptation
My light, my help, is near.

Though hosts encamp around me,
Firm to the fight I stand;
What terror can confound me,
With God at my right hand?

Place on the Lord reliance,
My soul, with courage wait;
God's truth be thine affiance,
When faint and desolate.

God's might thy heart shall strengthen,
God's love thy joy increase;
Mercy thy days shall lengthen;
The Lord will give thee peace.

FIRST LESSON

Mark 2:23-3:6

One sabbath he was going through the grainfields; and as they made their way his disciples began to pluck heads of grain. The Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the sabbath?" And he said to them, "Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need of food? He entered the house of God, when Abiathar was high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and he gave some to his companions." Then he said to them, "The sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the sabbath; so the Son of Man is lord even of the sabbath."

Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there who had a withered hand. They watched him to see whether he would cure him on the sabbath, so that they might accuse him. And he said to the man who had the withered hand, "Come forward." Then he said to them, "Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the sabbath, to save life or to kill?" But they were silent. He looked around at them with anger; he was grieved at their hardness of heart and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was restored. The Pharisees went out and immediately conspired with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.

SECOND LESSON

2 Corinthians 4:5-12

For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake. For it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us.

We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies. For while we live, we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you.

Now to Your Table Spread

Now to Your table spread
we come, each one in faith
that You alone provide the words of life or death:
in wine and bread,
in promised food
we find Your loving heart, O God.

Hands of the world stretch out
Your mystery to touch
in longing to believe a truth beyond our reach,
to sing in joy,
to cry in grief,
to know Your meaning for our life.

Here is our common wealth
in sharing what is good,
as though all humankind around one table stood,
this bread to break,
this wine to taste:
one people in the name of Christ.

O God of Love, O God of Peace

O God of love, O God of peace,
Make wars throughout the world to cease;
The wrath of nations now restrain:
Give peace, O God, give peace again!

Remember, Lord, Thy works of old,
The wonders that Thy people told;
Remember not our sin's deep stain:
Give peace, O God, give peace again!

Whom shall we trust but Thee, O Lord?
Where rest but on Thy faithful word?
None ever called on Thee in vain:
Give peace, O God, give peace again!

Where saints and angels dwell above,
All hearts are knit in holy love;
One bind us in that heavenly chain:
Give peace, O God, give peace again!

**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.