

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
NOAH LANGFORD, LAY READER
GENE MARIE CALLAHAN, ORGANIST

MARCH 17, 2024

PRELUDE *Be Thou My Vision* - Steven Nisbet

OPENING WORDS (responsive)

The Lord has done great things.
Restore our health and faith.
God's love and mercy abide.
Revive our spirits this day.

***HYMN** *Be Thou My Vision* **339**
The text dates from an ancient Irish poem from ca. 700 A.D. The tune is an ancient Irish ballad named for the hill (Slane) where the first fires of Easter were lighted by St. Patrick as a challenge to King Laoghaire.

OPENING PRAYER (unison)

Christ be with me
Christ before me
Christ behind me
Christ in me
Christ beneath me
Christ above me
Christ on my right
Christ on my left
Christ where I lie
Christ where I sit
Christ where I arise
Christ in the heart of every one
who thinks of me
Christ in the mouth of every one
who speaks of me
Christ in every eye that sees me
Christ in every ear that hears me
Salvation is of the Lord.
O Lord hear our prayer. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND *GLORIA PATRI (579)

FIRST LESSON Jeremiah 31:31-34 p. 642

***HYMN** *The King of Love My Shepherd Is* **171**
The author, Henry Baker, was ordained in the Church of England and was involved in several hymnal publications and books, including, *Daily Prayers for the Use of Those Who Work Hard*. His last words as he lay dying were the third stanza of this hymn. The tune was first published in 1866 as an Irish tune. It's named for St. Columba, who brought Christianity to Ireland and, incidentally, was the first person to report seeing the Loch Ness monster.

SECOND LESSON John 12:20-23 p. 875

SERMON End of a Journey

***HYMN** *The Day of the Lord Is at Hand* **insert**
Kingsley, Charles, M.A., son of Charles Kingsley, of Battramsley, in the New Forest, was born June 12, 1819 at Home Vicarage, Devon. In 1838 he entered Magdalene College in Cambridge, and graduated as first class in classics, and senior optime. Subsequently Rector of Eversley 1814-1875; Canon of Chester 1869-1873; and Canon of Westminster 1873-1875. He held also other important appointments. He died at Eversley, Jan. 23, 1875. Canon Kingsley's prose works are too well known to be enumerated here, and his poetical productions have little in common with hymnology.

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 *If with All Your Heart from Elijah*
- Felix Mendelssohn
- David Roberts, Tenor

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

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

***HYMN** *Londonderry Air* **insert**
The Londonderry Air is an air that originated from County Londonderry in Ireland (now Northern Ireland). It is popular among the Irish diaspora and is very well known throughout the world. The tune is played as the victory anthem of Northern Ireland at the Commonwealth Games. The song "Danny Boy" uses the tune, with a set of lyrics written in the early 20th century.

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *Cead Mile Failte Romhat* - Irish Melody

* 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 Kate Musso and Marsha Pilachowski. Ushers and greeters for today's service are Wendy and Tom Schmitt.

Please join us at the Barn following worship today for the annual St. Patrick's Pot Luck Luncheon. All are welcome!

The flowers for worship are provided by Gene Marie Callahan in memory of Sean Gibbons.

CHRISTIAN ED: We will be having a special Easter craft and activity in the church parlor prior to worship on Easter Sunday, March 31, starting at 10:30. To help us with our planning if you know you will have friends or family visiting with children, let us know so we can have enough supplies for all. Activities are typically geared toward children 6 and under, but a little older is okay too!

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

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

3/17: St. Patrick's luncheon following worship, Barn

3/18: Old First Yoga, 4 PM, in the Barn

3/20: Trustee meeting, 5:30 PM, Church Parlor

3/25: Old First Yoga, 4 PM at the Barn

3/28: Maundy Thursday Service, 6:30 PM, Barn

3/28: Tenebrae Service, 8 PM, Church

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)

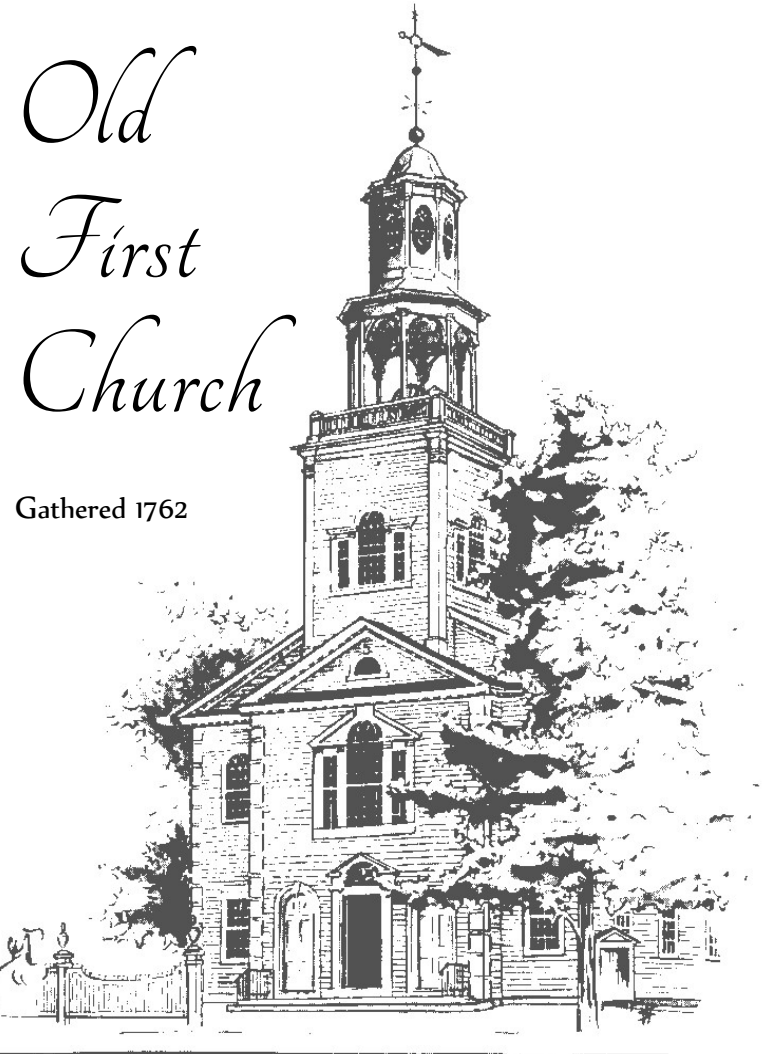
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Be Thou My Vision

Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
naught be all else to me, save that thou art—
Thou my best thought, by day or by night,
waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.

Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise,
Thou mine inheritance, now and always:
Thou and Thou only, first in my heart,
High God of heaven, my treasure Thou art.

Be Thou my wisdom, and Thou my true word;
I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord;
heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

FIRST LESSON

Jeremiah 31:31-34

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, “Know the Lord,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

The King of Love My Shepherd Is

The King of love my Shepherd is,
whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am His
and He is mine forever.

Where streams of living water flow
My ransomed soul He leadeth,
And where the verdant pastures grow,
With food celestial feedeth.

Perverse and foolish oft I strayed,
but yet in love He sought me,
and on His shoulder gently laid,
and home, rejoicing, brought me.

In death's dark vale I fear no ill
with Thee, dear Lord, beside me;
thy rod and staff my comfort still,
Thy cross before to guide me.

Thou spreadest a table in my sight;
Thy unction, grace bestoweth;
and O what transport of delight
From Thy pure chalice floweth!

And so through all the length of days
Thy goodness faileth never;
Good Shepherd, may I sing Thy praise
Within Thy house for ever.

SECOND LESSON

John 12:20-23

Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.

The Day of the Lord is at Hand

The day of the Lord is at hand, at hand;
Its storms roll up the sky;
The nations sleep starving on heaps of gold;
All dreamers toss and sigh;
The night is darkest before the morn;
When the pain is sorest the child is born,
And the day of the Lord at hand, at hand,
The day of the Lord at hand.

Who would sit down and sigh for a lost age of gold,
While the Lord of all ages is here?
True hearts then will leap at the trumpet of God,
And those who can suffer can dare.
Each old age of gold was an iron age too,
And the meekest of saints may find stern work to do
In the day of the Lord at hand, at hand,
In the day of the Lord at hand.

Londonderry Air

I would be true, for there are those who trust me;
I would be pure, for there are those who care;
I would be strong, for there is much to suffer;
I would be brave, for there is much to dare,
I would be friend of all, the foe, the friendless;
I would be giving, and forget the gift;
I would be humble, for I know my weakness;
I would look up, and laugh, and love, and lift. Amen