

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
THE REV. LOUIS N. GUARINIELLO, GUEST MINISTER
WAYNE KACHMAR, LAY READER
ROB ELLIS, PIANIST

AUGUST 10, 2025

PRELUDE *Largo From 7th Symphony* -Beethoven

OPENING WORDS (responsive)

Grace and peace to you from God and Christ!

Our hearts are filled with thanksgiving and praise!

For God in Christ has redeemed us and freed us from bondage to sin and death.

And calls us to live in responsiveness and responsibility to the wonderful gift of freedom we have received.

*HYMN *O God of Earth and Space* 274
Both text and tune were written for the 100th anniversary of Concordia Lutheran Church, Kirkwood, Missouri.

OPENING (unison) AND SILENT PRAYERS

O Holy One, we are reluctant to turn to you. We would rather hide from your judgment and pretend that we have everything under control. We justify our ways, and we reject the standards and values you build into life, as if they were relics of a bygone era. We close ourselves off from you, and then we are swayed by those who proclaim you dead. O God, the paths we have chosen are leading us nowhere except into confusion and despair. Save us from our destructive choices, that we may reclaim the vision you set before us. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND *GLORIA PATRI (579)

FIRST LESSON 1 Samuel 3:1-10 p. 215

SECOND LESSON RESPONSIVE John 1:43-51 [See Insert Sheet]

*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.

THIRD LESSON 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 p. 929

SERMON “with liberty and justice for all”

*HYMN *Make Me a Captive, Lord* 378
This hymn by George Matheson was first published in his only poetic work *Sacred Songs* (1890). He titled it “Christian Freedom.” Born in Glasgow, Scotland, he attended the University of Glasgow and became a pastor of Innellan in Argyllshire and then St. Bernard’s Parish Church in Edinburgh, where he remained until 1899. Although Matheson was blind, he was an author and poet due to the devotion of his sister. He is best known for his hymn “O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go,” hymn number 384 in our hymnal.

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 *Largo From 1st Symphony* -Rob Ellis

*DOXOLOGY (592) AND PRAYER OF DEDICATION

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

*HYMN *Called as Partners in Christ's Service* 343
Jane Parker Huber was born of Presbyterian missionary parents in China and has worked on women’s issues in the church. She has written several hymn texts to familiar tunes in our hymnal. For this hymn, in 1981, Huber was thinking of the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women as elders, and the 25th as ministers in her church. The tune was first published in 1870 by John Zundel, a church organist in Brooklyn and New York City.

*RESPONSIVE BENEDICTION

Go forth to answer God’s call to service, sharing the love of Christ with all you meet.

We have heard God’s word for our day and want to follow where Christ leads.

You are set free from bondage and fear; you shall be called by a new name.

We will glorify God in our bodies and welcome the Spirit’s dwelling within. Amen.

*POSTLUDE *What a Friend We Have in Jesus*
{Instrumental on traditional Methodist Hymn}

* 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 Pat Guerrero and Amy Tronsen. Ushers and greeters for today's service are Courtney Cowan and Sherry Schreiber.

Please join us for fellowship and refreshments in the foyer after the service. Our thanks to Janet Van Derpoel-Andrea, Jeannette Lesser, Kate Musso, and Marsha Pilachowski 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)

8/21: Trustee meeting, 5:30 PM, Parlor

8/24: Council meeting, following worship, Parlor

9/7: Church Picnic, 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

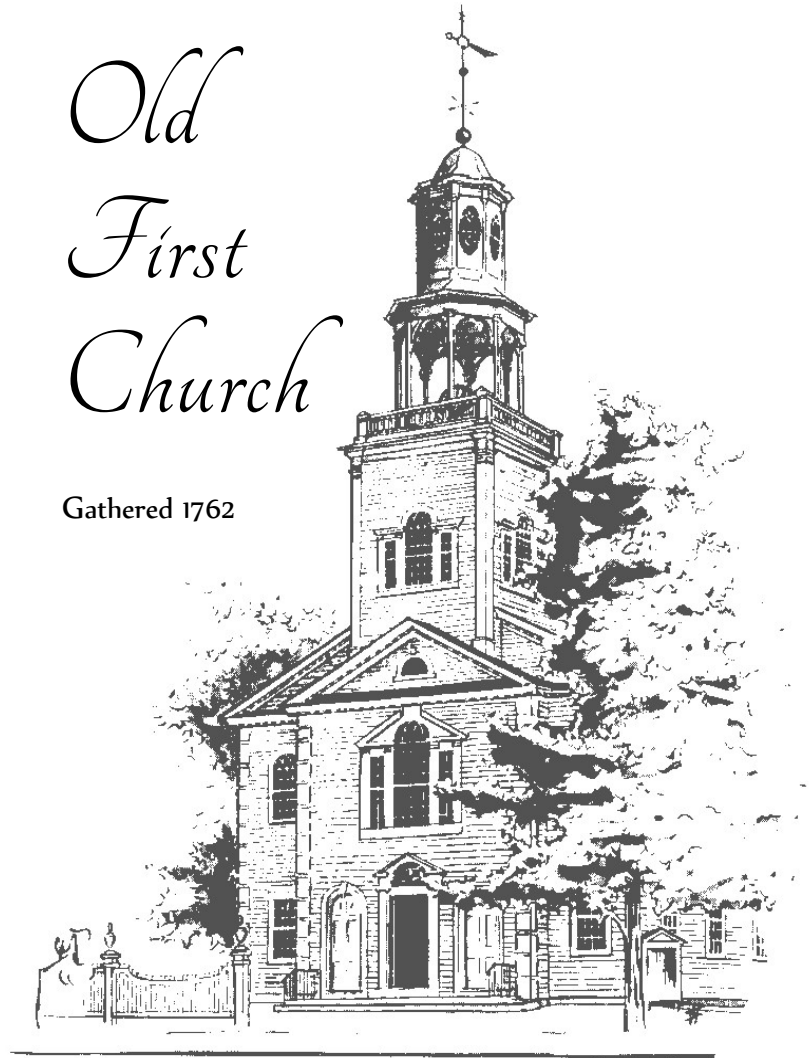
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Old First Church

Gathered 1762



O God of Earth and Space

O God of earth and space,
Of sea and fire and air,
Your providence surrounds us here
And everywhere.
In fruit and grain and tree,
In shelter from the cold,
In cooling breezes, flowing wells,
Now as of old.

Where faithfulness is shown,
Where love and truth abound,
Where beauty graces human life,
There You are found.
Inspirer of all thought!
Creative force of art!
The melody on every tongue,
In every heart!

Wherever freedom reigns,
Where sin is overthrown,
Where justice fused with mercy rules,
There You are known.
Give us the courage clear
To make the earth a home
For all to live in harmony
In Christ's shalom.

Your word commands response
And summons us to life.
We follow, strengthened by Your grace,
In calm or strife.
Our ever-present help,
Our challenge and our prod,
We praise You now and to life's end
Eternal God.

FIRST LESSON

1 SAMUEL 3:1-10

Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the Lord under Eli. The word of the Lord was rare in those days; visions were not widespread. At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God

was. Then the Lord called, "Samuel! Samuel!" and he said, "Here I am!" and ran to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down. The Lord called again, "Samuel!" Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. The Lord called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived that the Lord was calling the boy. Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down, and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

Now the Lord came and stood there, calling as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

SECOND LESSON RESPONSIVE

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN 1:43-51

The left side of the congregation will read the italicized lines.
The right side will read the bolded lines

The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "*We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth.*"

Nathanael said to him,

"Can anything good come out of Nazareth?"

Philip said to him,
"Come and see."

When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said of him,

"Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!"

Nathanael asked him,
"Where did you get to know me?"
Jesus answered,

"I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you."

Nathanael replied,
"Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"

Jesus answered,

**"Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree?
You will see greater things than these."**

And he said to him,

[UNISON] "Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

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.

THIRD LESSON

1 CORINTHIANS 6:12-20

"All things are permitted for me," but not all things are beneficial. "All things are permitted for me," but I will not be dominated by anything. "Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food," and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is meant not for sexual immorality but for the Lord and the Lord for the body. And God raised the Lord and will also raise us by his power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Should I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a

prostitute? Never! Do you not know that whoever is united to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For it is said, "The two shall be one flesh." But anyone united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Shun sexual immorality! Every sin that a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against the body itself. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body.

Make Me a Captive Lord

Make me a captive, Lord,
And then I shall be free;
Force me to render up my sword,
And I shall conqueror be.

I sink in life's alarms
When by myself I stand;
Imprison me within Thine arms,
And strong, shall be my hand.

My heart is weak and poor
Until it master find;
It has no spring of action sure.
It varies with the wind.

It cannot freely move
Till Thou hast wrought its chain;
Enslave it with Thy matchless love,
And deathless it shall reign.

My will is not my own
Till Thou hast made it Thine;
If it would reach a monarch's throne,
It must its crown resign;

It only stands unbent
Amid the clashing strife,
When on Thy bosom it has leant,
And found in Thee its life.

Called as Partners in Christ's Service

Called as partners in Christ's service,
Called to ministries of grace,
We respond with deep commitment
Fresh new lines of faith to trace.
May we learn the art of sharing,
Side by side and friend with friend,
Equal partners in our caring
To fulfill God's chosen end.

Christ's example, Christ's inspiring,
Christ's clear call to work and worth,
Let us follow, never faltering,
Reconciling folk on earth.
Men and women, richer, poorer,
All God's people, young and old,
Blending human skills together
Gracious gifts from God unfold.

Thus new patterns for Christ's mission,
In a small or global sense,
Help us bear each other's burdens,
Breaking down each wall or fence.
Words of comfort, words of vision,
Words of challenge, said with care,
Bring new power and strength for action,
Make us colleagues, free and fair.

So God grant us for tomorrow
Ways to order human life
That surround each person's sorrow
With a calm that conquers strife.
Make us partners in our living,
Our compassion to increase,
Messengers of faith, thus giving
Hope and confidence and peace.