

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  
DAVID VARKER, LAY READER  
GENE MARIE CALLAHAN, ORGANIST

AUGUST 3, 2025

PRELUDE *Air from Water Music* - G. F. Handel

OPENING WORDS (responsive)

Listen, people: Jesus Christ is the living bread, which gives life to the world.

**Those who come to him will not hunger, but will eat and live forever.**

That bread is of divine origin and is heaven-sent for the sustenance of all who partake.

**Let us give thanks to God, who invites us to the great spiritual feast.**

\*HYMN *Sing Praise to God, Who Reigns Above* 483

This hymn was originally titled, "Hymn of Thanksgiving." Johann Schütz was a lawyer in Frankfurt who sympathized with the pietist movement in the Lutheran Church. The translator, Frances Elizabeth Cox, was one of the foremost translators into English of German hymns. The tune is from the 1566 Bohemian Brethren's *Kirchengeseng*.

SILENT AND OPENING PRAYERS (unison)

O Sovereign God, we confess that our plans for ourselves ignore the needs of many of our sisters and brothers. We try to shut out the larger world that does not fit our comfortable design. We are angry when called to account and bitter when circumstances do not work out to our advantage. We are quick to see the sins of others and slow to recognize our own. Keep us from throwing stones, O God, and protect us from the missiles others would throw at us. Forgive our preoccupation with minor concerns in the midst of major problems. Lead us, so we may imitate your ways and walk in your love, through Christ. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND \*GLORIA PATRI (579)

FIRST LESSON Psalm 107:1-9, 43 p. 487

\*HYMN *Let the Whole Creation Cry* 256

This hymn is based on Psalm 148. The liberal views of the author, Stopford Brooke, a priest in Ireland and London, led him to leave the Anglican church in 1880. Jacob Hintze, town musician of Barnam, Germany, may have written the tune, first published in 1678. J. S. Bach harmonized it.

SECOND LESSON The Gospel of Luke 12:13-21 p. 847

SERMON Be Mindful

\*HYMN *Help Us Accept Each Other* 358

The text by Fred Kaan in 1975 was inspired by a Bible study written by a colleague, Jackie Mattonen, for the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. The tune was written for this text by Doreen Potter the same year. The several Biblical references include one for our text from Matthew.

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 *Come Unto Him from Messiah* - G. F. Handel  
Surabhee Arjunwadkar, soprano

\*DOXOLOGY (592) AND PRAYER OF DEDICATION

\*COMMUNION HYMN *For the Bread Which You Have Broken* 508  
[Stanzas 1 & 2]

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

THE PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION LET ALL UNITE

Eternal God, we give you thanks for this holy mystery in which you have given yourself to us. Grant that we may go into the world in the strength of your Spirit, to give ourselves for others, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**\*HYMN**      *Today We All Are Called to Be Disciples*      **434**

The text was written in 1985 by a Presbyterian minister in Duarte, California for a national stewardship campaign. The tune was first published in *English Country Songs* (1893) and was later named for the village where Ralph Vaughn Williams, the most important composer of his generation, heard it, after which he wrote the harmony for *The English Hymnal* (1906).

**BENEDICTION**

**POSTLUDE**      *Allegro Vivace from Water Music* - G. F. Handel

\* 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, greeters and communion servers for today's service are Jeannette Lesser and Amy Tronsen.

Please join us for fellowship and refreshments in the foyer after the service. Our thanks to Marsha Pilachowski and Pat Ross.

Flowers for worship are provided by Marsha and Dave Pilachowski.

**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)

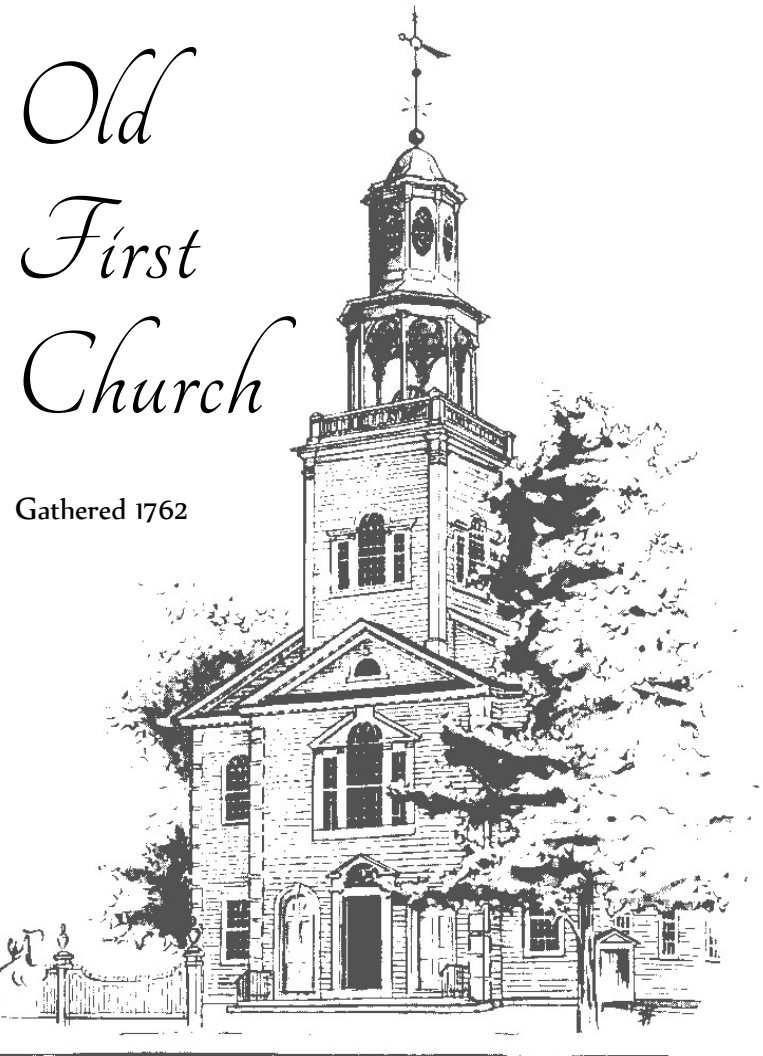
VT RTE. 9 AND MONUMENT AVENUE

OLD BENNINGTON, VERMONT

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## *Sing Praise to God, Who Reigns Above*

1. Sing praise to God, who reigns above,  
the God of all creation,  
the God of power, the God of love,  
the God of our salvation;  
With healing balm my soul is filled,  
and every faithless murmur stilled:  
To God all praise and glory!
2. What God's almighty power hath made,  
God's gracious mercy keepeth;  
by morning glow or evening shade  
God's watchful eye ne'er sleepeth;  
Within the kingdom of God's might,  
Lo! All is just and all is right:  
To God all praise and glory!
3. The Lord is never far away,  
but through all grief distressing,  
an ever present help and stay,  
our peace, and joy, and blessing;  
As with a mother's tender hand,  
God gently leads the chosen band:  
To God all praise and glory!
4. Thus all my gladsome way along,  
I sing aloud Thy praises,  
that all may hear the grateful song  
my voice unwearied raises.  
Be joyful in the Lord, my heart,  
both soul and body take your part:  
To God all praise and glory!

### **FIRST LESSON**

#### **Psalm 107:1-9, 43**

O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,  
for his steadfast love endures forever.

Let the redeemed of the Lord say so,  
those he redeemed from trouble

and gathered in from the lands,  
from the east and from the west,  
from the north and from the south.

Some wandered in desert wastes,  
finding no way to an inhabited town;

hungry and thirsty,  
their soul fainted within them.

Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble,  
and he delivered them from their distress;

he led them by a straight way,  
until they reached an inhabited town.

Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love,  
for his wonderful works to humankind.

For he satisfies the thirsty,  
and the hungry he fills with good things.

Let those who are wise give heed to these things,  
and consider the steadfast love of the Lord.

### *Let the Whole Creation Cry*

Let the whole creation cry,  
"Glory to the Lord on high."  
Heaven and earth, awake and sing,  
"God is our eternal King."  
Praise God, all ye hosts above,  
ever shining forth in love;  
sun and moon, uplift your voice;  
night and stars, in God rejoice!

Men and women, young and old,  
raise the anthem manifold;  
join with children's song of praise  
worship God through length of days.  
From the north to southern pole  
let the mighty chorus roll:  
"Holy, holy, holy One,  
glory be to God alone!"

### **SECOND LESSON**

#### **The Gospel of Luke 12:13-21**

Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me." But he said to him, "Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?" And he said to them, "Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions." Then he told them a parable: "The land of a rich man produced abundantly. And he thought to himself, 'What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?' Then he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.' But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God."

### *Help Us Accept Each Other*

Help us accept each other  
as Christ accepted us;  
teach us as sister, brother,  
each person to embrace.  
Be present, Lord, among us  
and bring us to believe  
we are ourselves accepted  
and meant to love and live.

Teach us, O Lord, Your lessons,  
as in our daily life  
we struggle to be human  
and search for hope and faith.  
Teach us to care for people,  
for all, not just for some,  
to love them as we find them  
or as they may become.

Let Your acceptance change us,  
so that we may be moved  
in living situations  
to do the truth in love,  
to practice Your acceptance  
until we know by heart  
the table of forgiveness,  
and laughter's healing art.

Lord, for today's encounters  
with all who are in need,  
who hunger for acceptance,  
for righteousness and bread,  
we need new eyes for seeing,  
new hands for holding on;  
renew us with Your Spirit,  
Lord, free us, make us one!

### *For the Bread Which You Have Broken*

[Stanzas 1 & 2]

For the bread which You have broken,  
For the wine which You have poured,  
For the words which You have spoken,  
Now we give You thanks, O Lord.

By this promise that You love us,  
By Your gift of peace restore,  
By Your call to heaven above us,  
Hallow all our lives, O Lord.

### *Today We All Are Called to Be Disciples*

Today we are all called to be  
Disciples of the Lord,  
To help to set the captives free,  
Make plow-share out of sword,  
To feed the hungry, quench their thirst,  
Make love and peace our fast,  
To serve the poor and homeless first,  
Our ease and comfort last.

God made the world and at its birth  
Ordained our human race  
To live as stewards of the earth,  
Responding to God's grace.  
But we are vain and sadly proud,  
We sow not peace but strife,  
Our discord spreads a deadly cloud  
That threatens all of life.

Pray justice may come rolling down  
As in a mighty stream,  
With righteousness in field and town  
To cleanse us and redeem.  
For God is longing to restore  
An earth where conflicts cease,  
A world that was created for  
A harmony of peace.

May we in service to our God  
Act out the living Word,  
And walk the road the saints have trod  
Till all have seen and heard.  
As stewards of the earth may we  
Give thanks in one accord  
To God who calls us all to be  
Disciples of the Lord.

**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.