

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  
KATE MUSSO, LAY READER  
GENE MARIE CALLAHAN, ORGANIST  
OLD FIRST CHURCH CHOIR

FEBRUARY 16, 2025

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**PRELUDE** Meditation on Woodworth ("Just as I Am")  
- Elizabeth A. Krouse

**OPENING WORDS** (responsive)

Lord, be with us as we gather here.

**Be with us with the gift of your grace.**

Be with us in understanding and love.

**Comfort us and set us on the path of kindness.**

**\*HYMN** *Morning Has Broken* 469  
Eleanor Farjeon, the author of nursery rhymes and singing games, wrote the text for this tune. It was first published in 1931. A more recent popular recording by Cat Stevens made the song popular in this country. *Bunessan* is a Gaelic melody first published in 1888. The present arrangement was made for the Christian Reformed Church hymnal in 1985.

**OPENING PRAYER** (unison)

Merciful God,  
we confess that we have sinned against you  
in thought, word, and deed,  
by what we have done,  
and by what we have left undone.  
We have not loved you  
with our whole heart and mind and strength.  
We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.  
In your mercy forgive what we have been,  
help us amend what we are,  
and direct what we shall be,  
so that we may delight in your will  
and walk in your ways,  
to the glory of your holy name.  
Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

**ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND \*GLORIA PATRI (579)**

**FIRST LESSON** Jeremiah 17:5-10 p. 628

**\*HYMN** *Why Are Nations Raging* 159  
Fred Anderson wrote this metrical setting for Psalm 104 in 1986. He is pastor of the Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York City and has been metering Psalms for 21 years.

**SECOND LESSON** Luke 6:17-26 p. 838

**SERMON** According to Their Ways

**\*HYMN** *We Give Thee but Thine Own* 428  
William Walsham How wrote the text for the offertory. He was ordained in the Church of England in 1846 and wrote all his hymns while pastor at Whittington. The tune first appeared in the 1850 collection, *Canticus Laudis* and was described as an arrangement of an unidentified piece by Robert Schumann. The collection was an effort to take melodies of great composers and adapt them for choir and congregation in order to develop an appreciation for music.

**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** *Slow Down* - Edwin T. Childs

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

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

**\*HYMN** *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling* 376  
This hymn was written by Charles Wesley and was first published in 1747. Wesley was the 18<sup>th</sup> child of Samuel and Susanna ("She Must Have Been a Saint") Wesley. Charles was an Anglican priest, dedicated to the Methodist movement, and he wrote between 6,000 and 6,500 hymns. Rowland Hugh Pritchard wrote the Welsh tune *Hyffrydol* in 1831 before his 20<sup>th</sup> birthday. He was an assistant loom tender for the Welsh Flannel Manufacturing Company. An interesting point about the melody is that with one exception, it lies within the first five notes of the scale.

**\*BENEDICTION**

**\*POSTLUDE** *Wade in the Water* - Truuke Ameigh

\* 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 Wendy Schmitt.

**KEEPING OUR COMMUNITY WARM:** We are still collecting new or gently used blankets for the homeless as well as jackets, hats, mittens, gloves, scarves and socks for area grade school kids. Donations can be brought to the church on Sundays or brought to the church office during the week. Gently used blankets must be clean and no electric blankets please. For more information speak with Jeannette Lesser regarding the blankets and Anastasia Gauthier regarding the winter clothing.

**22<sup>ND</sup> LENTEN DEVOTIONAL BOOKLET:** Submissions for our *Meditations for Lent* booklet, by and for members and friends of Old First Church, are being accepted. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, March 5 and the deadline for submissions is February 17. Email is the best way to get it to the church office. The devotionals are printed on a half-sheet of 8 ½ x 11" paper so please keep your selections brief.

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

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

2/18: Deacons Meeting, 4 PM, Barn

2/27: Trustee Meeting, 5:30 PM, Parlor

2/20, 2/27: Bible Study, 7:00 PM, Parlor

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!

## FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

(OLD FIRST CHURCH)

VT RTE. 9 AND MONUMENT AVENUE

OLD BENNINGTON, VERMONT

### MAILING ADDRESS & CONTACT INFORMATION

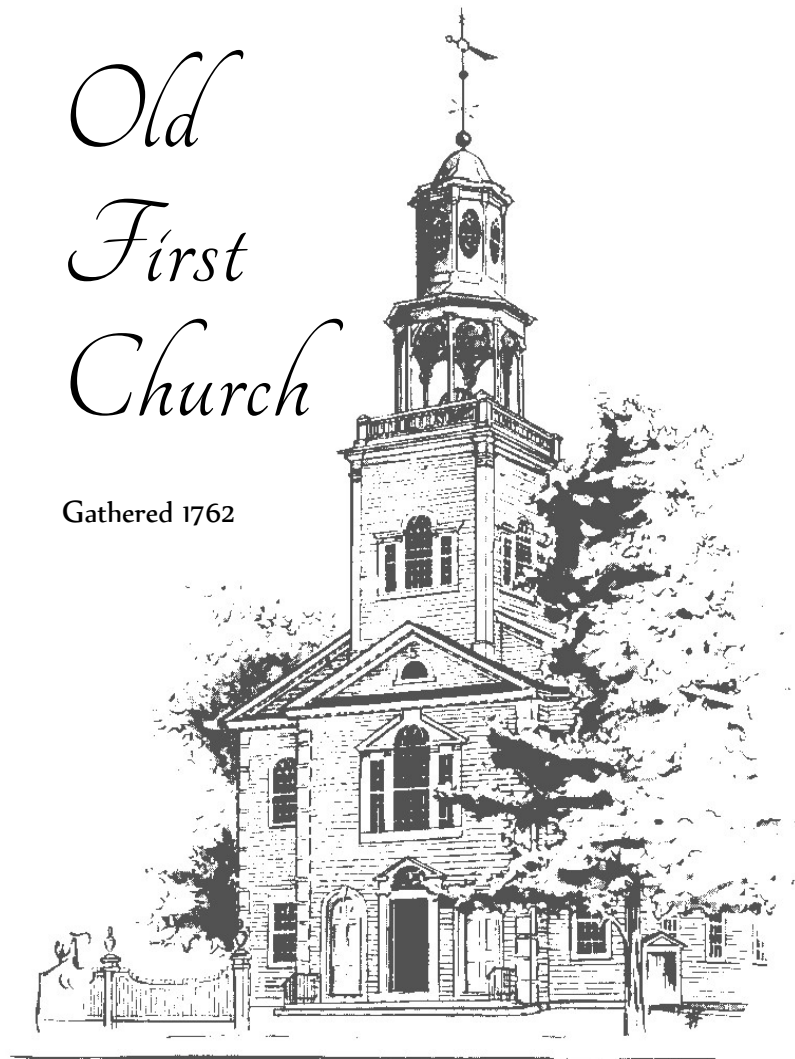
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# Old First Church

Gathered 1762



### *Morning Has Broken*

Morning has broken like the first morning,  
Blackbird has spoken like the first bird.  
Praise for the singing! Praise for the morning!  
Praise for them, springing fresh from the Word!

Sweet the rain's new fall sunlit from heaven,  
Like the first dew fall on the first grass.  
Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden,  
Sprung in completeness where God's feet pass.

Mine is the sunlight! Mine is the morning  
Born of the one light Eden saw play!  
Praise with elation, praise every morning,  
God's recreation of the new day!

### **FIRST LESSON**      **Jeremiah 17:5-10**

Thus says the Lord: Cursed are those who trust in mere mortals and make mere flesh their strength, whose hearts turn away from the Lord. They shall be like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see when relief comes. They shall live in the parched places of the wilderness, in an uninhabited salt land. Blessed are those who trust in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord. They shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not fear when heat comes, and its leaves shall stay green; in the year of drought it is not anxious, and it does not cease to bear fruit. The heart is devious above all else; it is perverse— who can understand it? I the Lord test the mind and search the heart, to give to all according to their ways, according to the fruit of their doings.

### *Why Are Nations Raging*

Why are nations raging  
and conspiring plots in vain?  
Rulers of the world rise up,  
Weaving webs of death and pain.  
Then against the Lord they cry,  
And against God's holy Son,  
"Let us tear their bonds from us  
And with their control be done."

But the Lord has scorn on them,  
Laughing and enthroned on high.  
God brings wrath upon their work;  
Filled with anger God replies:  
"It is My own holy will  
That the Christ on earth shall reign,  
And on Zion's holy hill,  
My anointed I'll maintain."

God's decree unto the King  
Tells us what the Lord did say:  
"You are My own holy child;  
I've begotten You this day.  
Ask of Me and I will make  
All the nations Your own stay.  
These possessions You shall rule,  
Strong as Iron smashing clay."

Therefore, leaders of the earth,  
Serve the Lord with holy fear;  
Trembling come before the throne  
Or God's anger will appear.  
Kiss God's feet in trembling awe  
Or the Lord will use the rod,  
Making beggars of all the kings.  
Blest are those who trust in God.

He came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea, Jerusalem, and the coast of Tyre and Sidon. They had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. And all in the crowd were trying to touch him, for power came out from him and healed all of them.

Then he looked up at his disciples and said: "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. "Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled. "Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh. "Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven; for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets. "But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. "Woe to you who are full now, for you will be hungry. "Woe to you who are laughing now, for you will mourn and weep. "Woe to you when all speak well of you, for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets.

### *We Give Thee but Thine Own*

We give Thee but Thine own,  
What e'er the gift may be;  
All that we have is Thine alone,  
A trust, O Lord, from Thee.

May we Thy bounties thus  
As stewards true receive,  
And gladly, as Thou blessest us,  
To Thee our first-fruits give.

To comfort and to bless,  
To find a balm for woe,  
To tend the lonely in distress,  
Is angels' work below.

The captive to release,  
To God the lost to bring,  
To teach the way of life and peace  
It is the Christ-like thing.

And we believe Thy Word,  
Though dim our faith may be;  
Whate'er for Thine we do, O Lord,  
We do it unto Thee.

### *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling*

Love divine, all loves exceling,  
Joy of heaven to earth come down,  
Fix in us Thy humble dwelling,  
All Thy faithful mercies crown!  
Jesus, Thou art all compassion,  
Pure, unbounded love Thou art;  
Visit us with Thy salvation,  
Enter every trembling heart.

Breathe, O breathe Thy loving Spirit  
Into every troubled breast!  
Let us all in Thee inherit,  
Let us find the promised rest;  
Take away the love of sinning;  
Alpha and Omega be;  
End of faith, as its beginning,  
Set our hearts at liberty.

Come, Almighty to deliver,  
Let us all Thy life receive;  
Suddenly return, and never,  
Never more Thy temples leave.  
Thee we would be always blessing,  
Serve Thee as Thy host above;  
Pray, and praise Thee without ceasing,  
Glory in Thy perfect love.

Finish, then, Thy new creation;  
Pure and spotless let us be;  
Let us see Thy great salvation  
Perfectly restored in Thee;  
Changed from glory into glory,  
Till in heaven we take our place,  
Till we cast our crowns before Thee  
Lost in wonder, love, and praise.