

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  
LOU GUARINIELLO, LAY READER  
GENE MARIE CALLAHAN, ORGANIST  
OLD FIRST CHURCH CHOIR

FEBRUARY 23, 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** Luke 6:27-38 p. 838

**\*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** Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40 p. 443

**SERMON** How Calm?

**\*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 *Hyfrydol* 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. Ushers for today's service are Tom and Wendy Schmitt.

Please join us after worship today for coffee hour provided by Janet Van Derpoel-Andrea.

Flowers for worship are provided by Kate Musso.

**ANNUAL MEETING WARNING:** The Church's Annual Meeting has been rescheduled to **Sunday, March 9** to be held in the church sanctuary following worship and a brief (but "beefed up") coffee hour. It will be a time to receive reports from advocates and boards as well as a report from the nominating committee electing people to various responsibilities within the life of the church. All members of the church are encouraged to attend this important meeting.

**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.

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

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

2/26: Bible Study, 7:00 PM, Parlor

2/27: Trustee Meeting, 5:30 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)

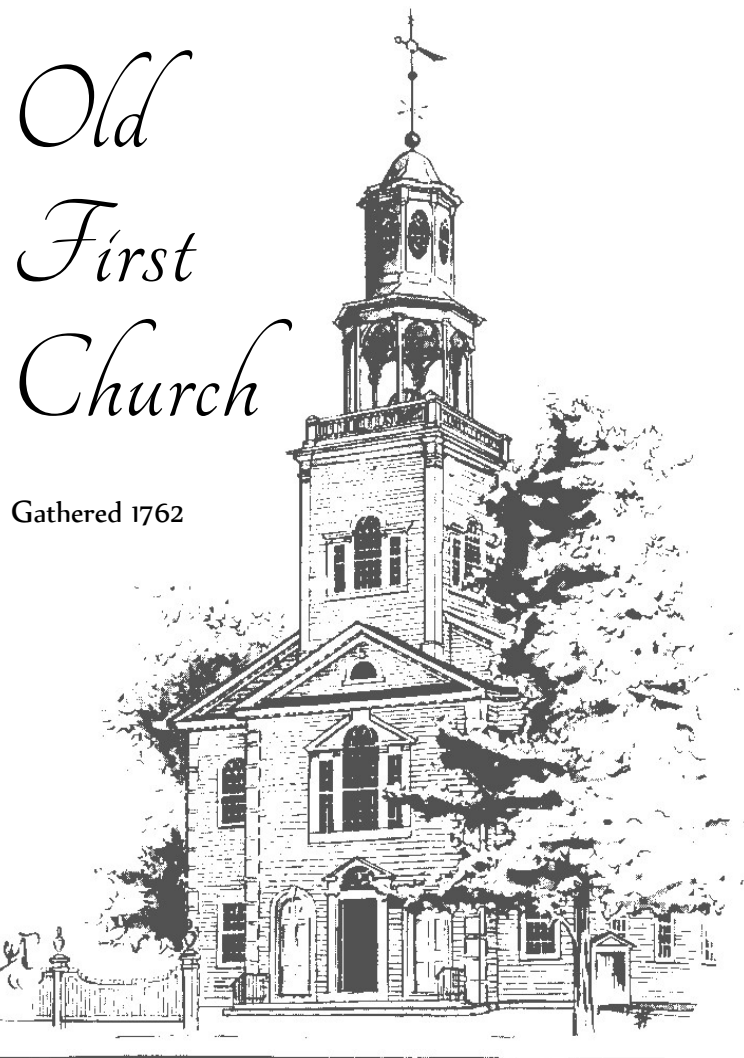
VT RTE. 9 AND MONUMENT AVENUE

OLD BENNINGTON, VERMONT

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### *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**

### **Luke 6:27-38**

“But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. Do to others as you would have them do to you. “If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

“Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.”

### *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.

**SECOND LESSON****Psalm 37**

Do not fret because of the wicked; do not be envious of wrongdoers,  
for they will soon fade like the grass, and wither like the green herb.

Trust in the Lord, and do good; so you will live in the land, and enjoy  
security.

Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.

Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him, and he will act.

He will make your vindication shine like the light, and the justice of your  
cause like the noonday.

Be still before the Lord, and wait patiently for him; do not fret over those  
who prosper in their way, over those who carry out evil devices.

Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath. Do not fret—it leads only to evil.

For the wicked shall be cut off, but those who wait for the Lord shall inherit  
the land.

Yet a little while, and the wicked will be no more; though you look  
diligently for their place, they will not be there.

But the meek shall inherit the land, and delight themselves in abundant  
prosperity.

The salvation of the righteous is from the Lord; he is their refuge in the time  
of trouble.

The Lord helps them and rescues them; he rescues them from the wicked,  
and saves them, because they take refuge in him.

***We Give Thee but Thine Own***

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|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>1). We give Thee but Thine own,<br/>What e'er the gift may be;<br/>All that we have is Thine alone,<br/>A trust, O Lord, from Thee.</p> | <p>3). To comfort and to bless,<br/>To find a balm for woe,<br/>To tend the lonely in distress,<br/>Is angels' work below.</p>           |
| <p>2). May we Thy bounties thus<br/>As stewards true receive,<br/>And gladly, as Thou blessest us,<br/>To Thee our first-fruits give.</p>  | <p>4). The captive to release,<br/>To God the lost to bring,<br/>To teach the way of life and peace<br/>It is the Christ-like thing.</p> |
| <p>5). And we believe Thy Word,<br/>Though dim our faith may be;<br/>Whate'er for Thine we do, O Lord,<br/>We do it unto Thee.</p>         |                                                                                                                                          |

***Love Divine, All Loves Excelling***

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| <p>1). Love divine, all loves exceling,<br/>Joy of heaven to earth come down,<br/>Fix in us Thy humble dwelling,<br/>All Thy faithful mercies crown!<br/>Jesus, Thou art all compassion,<br/>Pure, unbounded love Thou art;<br/>Visit us with Thy salvation,<br/>Enter every trembling heart.</p> | <p>3). Come, Almighty to deliver,<br/>Let us all Thy life receive;<br/>Suddenly return, and never,<br/>Never more Thy temples leave.<br/>Thee we would be always blessing,<br/>Serve Thee as Thy host above;<br/>Pray, and praise Thee without ceasing,<br/>Glory in Thy perfect love.</p>            |
| <p>2). Breathe, O breathe Thy loving Spirit<br/>Into every troubled breast!<br/>Let us all in Thee inherit,<br/>Let us find the promised rest;<br/>Take away the love of sinning;<br/>Alpha and Omega be;<br/>End of faith, as its beginning,<br/>Set our hearts at liberty.</p>                  | <p>4). Finish, then, Thy new creation;<br/>Pure and spotless let us be;<br/>Let us see Thy great salvation<br/>Perfectly restored in Thee;<br/>Changed from glory into glory,<br/>Till in heaven we take our place,<br/>Till we cast our crowns before Thee<br/>Lost in wonder, love, and praise.</p> |