

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
MARSHA PILACHOWSKI, LAY READER
GENE MARIE CALLAHAN, ORGANIST
OLD FIRST CHURCH CHOIR

JANUARY 19, 2025

PRELUDE *My Lord, What a Morning* - arr. H.T. Burleigh

OPENING WORDS (responsive)

O Lord, in your light we see light.

By your love our world is made new.

By your strong spirit we take courage.

Your faithfulness extends to all creation.

***HYMN** *Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound* 280
Verses 1-3

The text was written for the people of Olney, Buckinghamshire, England by the pastor. In 1748 he had been captain of a slave ship, where a storm at sea brought a spiritual awakening. The tune's origin is unknown, but it may be based on an African melody.

OPENING PRAYER (unison)

O Lord our God,
you know us better than we know ourselves.

As we come before you now,
believers and doubters alike,
we all share a deep need,

for we are all lost without your grace.

Search us, O God, and know our hearts,
test us and know our troubled thoughts.

Give us true repentance.

Forgive us all our wrongs.

Transform us by your Spirit to live for you each day,

to learn to serve each other

and, through your grace

to come at last to heaven.

This we pray in Jesus' name.

Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND *GLORIA PATRI (579)

FIRST LESSON Psalm 36:5-10 p. 443

***HYMN** *In Christ There Is No East or West* 440

The text was originally from a play, "The Pageant of Darkness and Light," written for the London Missionary Society exhibition on the Orient in 1908. The author was a wholesale grocer and writer of 42 novels and 25 collections of poetry and hymns, including "Hymns for Men at the Front," which sold 8 million copies in World War I. The spiritual tune was the setting for "I Know the Angel's Done Changed My Name" in an 1884 hymn collection "Jubilee Songs," and was later adapted and named for Elmer McKee, rector of St. George's Protestant Episcopal Church in New York City in the 1930's.

SECOND LESSON 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 p. 933

SERMON Righteousness Like Mountains

***HYMN** *There Is a Balm in Gilead* 394

The text answers the question in Jeremiah 8:22 and reflects the hope in black spirituals. The tune is also African American.

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 *This Little Light of Mine* - Traditional Spiritual

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

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

***HYMN** *Precious Lord, Take My Hand* 404

Thomas A. Dorsey, the most influential figure in the gospel song music, wrote this hymn in 1932 when his first wife died. He was born in Georgia in 1899 and died in Chicago in 1993. He was choir director of the Pilgrim Baptist Church in Chicago for 40 years. The tune by George Allen in 1842 received its popularity through Dorsey's arrangement of it for this text.

***BENEDICTION**

***POSTLUDE** *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot* - arr. H.T. Burleigh

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

Please join us for fellowship and refreshments in the foyer after the service. Our thanks to Kate Musso and Audrey Pietrucha.

Flowers for worship have been provided by Vicky Printz to honor her husband Gary.

Offering envelopes for 2025 contributions can be picked up in the foyer. Please be sure to indicate the box number and your name on the sign-out sheet.

The Church's Annual Meeting is scheduled for Sunday, February 9. If you are a Chair or Advocate on the Church Council, please prepare a 2024 year-end report and get it to the church office by January 24.

The blanket drive continues during the winter months. Donations of new and gently used blankets are greatly appreciated. Please know that we cannot accept electric blankets. Donations can be left in the foyer of the church or downstairs in the parlor. For more information, speak with Jeannette Lesser.

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

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

1/23, 1/30: Bible Study, 7:00 PM, Parlor

1/23: Deacon's meeting, 4:00 PM, Barn

1/23: Trustee's meeting, 5:30 PM, Parlor

2/9: Annual Meeting, following worship in the Meetinghouse

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

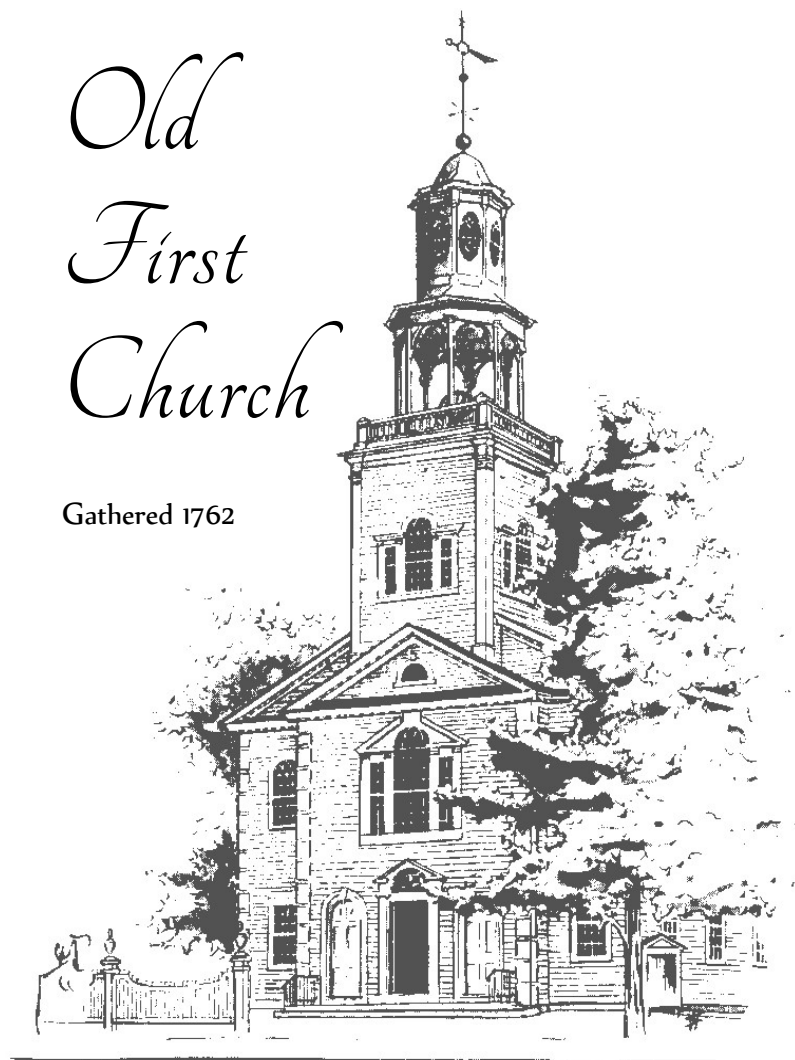
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*Old
First
Church*

Gathered 1762



Amazing Grace

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now I am found,
was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
and grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed!

Through many dangers, toils, and snares,
I have already come;
‘Tis grace has brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

In Christ There Is No East or West

- 1) In Christ there is no east or west,
In Him no south or north;
But one great fellowship of love
Throughout the whole wide earth.
- 2) In Christ shall true hearts everywhere
Their high communion find;
His service is the golden cord
Close binding humankind.
- 3) Join hands, disciples in the faith,
Whate'er your race may be.
All children of the living God
Are surely kin to me.
- 4) In Christ now meet both east and west,
In Him meet south and north;
All Christly souls are one in Him
Throughout the whole wide earth.

FIRST LESSON

Psalm 36:5-10

Your steadfast love, O Lord, extends to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds.

Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains, your judgments are like the great deep; you save humans and animals alike, O Lord.

How precious is your steadfast love, O God! All people may take refuge in the shadow of your wings.

They feast on the abundance of your house, and you give them drink from the river of your delights.

For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light.

O continue your steadfast love to those who know you, and your salvation to the upright of heart!

SECOND LESSON

1 Corinthians 12:1-11

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. You know that when you were pagans, you were enticed and led astray to idols that could not speak. Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says “Let Jesus be cursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except by the Holy Spirit. Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

There Is a Balm in Gilead

Refrain:

There is a balm in Gilead
To make the wounded whole.
There is a balm in Gilead
To heal the sin-sick soul.

Sometimes I feel discouraged,
And think my work's in vain,
But then the Holy Spirit
Revives my soul again. *[Refrain]*

Don't ever feel discouraged,
For Jesus is your friend,
And if you lack for knowledge
He'll not refuse to lend. *[Refrain]*

If you cannot preach like Peter,
If you cannot pray like Paul,
You can tell the love of Jesus
And say, "He died for all." *[Refrain]*

Precious Lord, Take My Hand

Precious Lord, take my hand,
Lead me on, help me stand;
I am tired, I am weak, I am worn;
Through the storm, through the night,
Lead me on to the light;
Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.

When my way grows drear,
Precious Lord, linger near;
When my life is almost gone,
Hear my cry, hear my call,
Hold my hand lest I fall;
Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.