

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

JULY 27, 2025

PRELUDE *Reflection* - Kerry J. Beaumont

OPENING WORDS (responsive)

Call to mind things of joy and gladness.

May God open our hearts this season.

Renew our spirit and lift us from any darkness.

In the beauty of the morning may God's truth shine.

***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)

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 the grace of Jesus Christ our Lord,
to come at last to heaven.
This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND *GLORIA PATRI (579)

FIRST LESSON Psalm 85 p. 473

***HYMN** *Our God, Our Help in Ages Past* 210

Isaac Watts, the "father of English hymnody" based this hymn on Psalm 90:1-5. He wrote his first hymn at 15, and thus began a revolution in Reformed worship using contemporary words or loosely translated Psalms. The tune, *St. Anne*, is named for St. Anne's Church, Soho, England, where composer William Croft was organist, and was used by Handel and Bach.

SECOND LESSON Luke 11:1-13 p. 845

SERMON Sins, Bread and Trespasses

***HYMN** *O God of Bethel, by Whose Hand* 269

Philip Doddridge, one of 20 children, and orphaned at an early age, had the offer from a duchess to send him to Cambridge if he'd become an Anglican priest. Instead, he attended the nonconformist academy, becoming a nonconformist minister. He was a supporter of John Wesley and George Whitfield and wrote over 400 hymns, this one in 1737 to complement a sermon he preached on Genesis 28:20-22, "Jacob's Vow." The tune is from the Scottish Psalter (1615).

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 *Deep Within* - David Haas
Audrey Pietrucha, alto and David Roberts, tenor

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

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

***HYMN** *God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending* 422

The text by Robert Edwards was one of the ten winners of the 1961 Hymn Society of America's competition for stewardship hymns. The tune first appeared in the 1844 Philadelphia publication, *Sacred Harp*, by B.F. White and Elisha King; the 1958 harmony is by James Wood.

***BENEDICTION**

***POSTLUDE** *Psalm 19* - Benedetto Marcello

* 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 Kate Musso and Sherry Schreiber.

Please join us for fellowship and refreshments in the foyer after the service provided by Nancy Coseo, Betsy Ehrenfreund and Jane Radocchia.

Flowers for worship are provided by Janet Van Derpoel-Andrea in memory of Karen Huber-Rowley.

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!

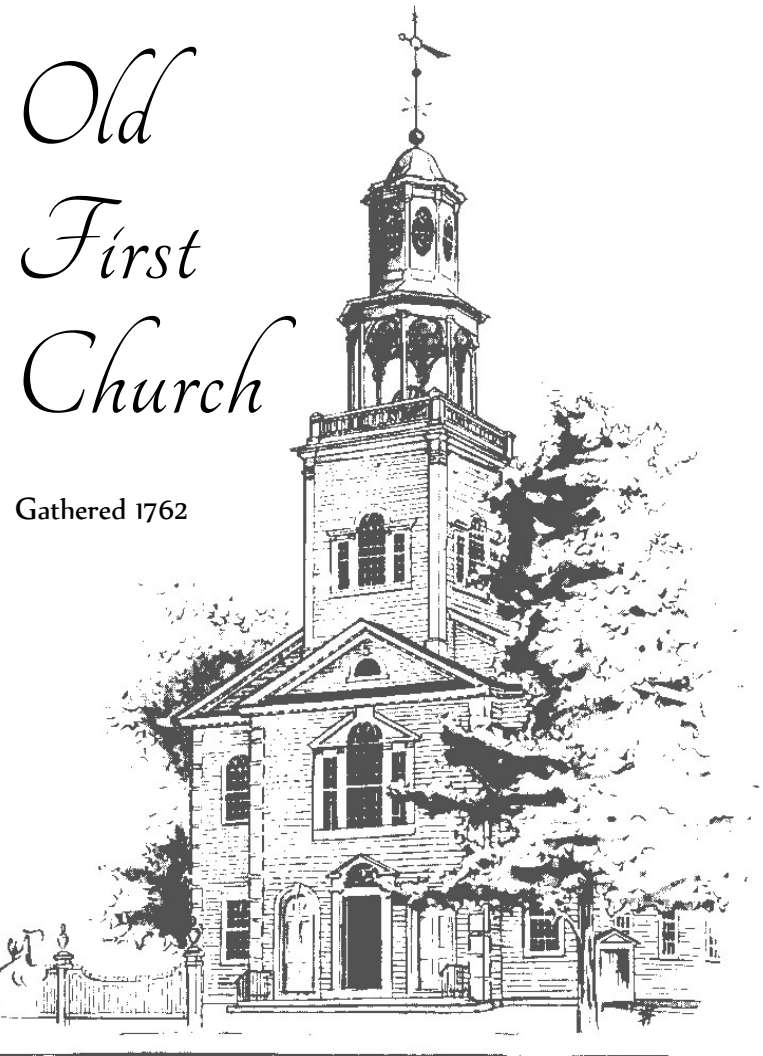
To maintain the healthiest standards for public gathering, indoor air is constantly being exchanged with fresh air with a LifeBreath circulation system operating during the service today.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

(OLD FIRST CHURCH)
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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!

Surely his salvation is at hand for those who fear him,
that his glory may dwell in our land.

Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;
righteousness and peace will kiss each other.

Faithfulness will spring up from the ground,
and righteousness will look down from the sky.

The Lord will give what is good,
and our land will yield its increase.

Righteousness will go before him
and will make a path for his steps.

FIRST LESSON

Psalm 85

Lord, you were favorable to your land;
you restored the fortunes of Jacob.

You forgave the iniquity of your people;
you pardoned all their sin. *Selah*

You withdrew all your wrath;
you turned from your hot anger.

Restore us again, O God of our salvation,
and put away your indignation toward us.

Will you be angry with us forever?
Will you prolong your anger to all generations?

Will you not revive us again,
so that your people may rejoice in you?

Show us your steadfast love, O Lord,
and grant us your salvation.

Let me hear what God the Lord will speak,
for he will speak peace to his people,
to his faithful, to those who turn to him in their hearts.

Our God, Our Help in Ages Past

Our God, our help in ages past,
our hope for years to come,
our shelter from the stormy blast,
and our eternal home:

Before the hills in order stood,
or earth received its frame,
from everlasting Thou art God,
to endless years the same.

A thousand ages in Thy sight
are like an evening gone;
short as the watch that ends the night
before the rising sun.

Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
soon bears us all away;
We fly forgotten, as a dream
dies at the opening day.

Our God, our help in ages past,
our hope for years to come,
be Thou our guard while life shall last,
and our eternal home.

SECOND LESSON

Luke 11:1-13

He was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.” He said to them,

“When you pray, say:

Father, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come.

Give us each day our daily bread.

And forgive us our sins,

for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us.

And do not bring us to the time of trial.”

Perseverance in Prayer

And he said to them, “Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, for a friend of mine has arrived, and I have nothing to set before him.’ And he answers from within, ‘Do not bother me; the door has already been locked, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.’ I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is a friend, at least because of his persistence he will get up and give him whatever he needs.

“So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish? Or if the child asked for an egg, will give a scorpion? If you, then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

O God of Bethel, by Whose Hand

O God of Bethel, by whose hand
thy people still are fed,
who through this weary pilgrimage
hast all Thy servants led,

Our vows, our prayers, we now present
before Thy throne of grace;
God of passages, be the God
of their succeeding race.

Through each perplexing path of life
our wandering footsteps guide;
give us each day our daily bread,
and raiment fit provide.

O spread Thy covering wings around
till all our wanderings cease,
and at our God's beloved abode
our souls arrive in peace.

God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending

1. God, whose giving knows no ending,
from Your rich and endless store,
Nature's wonder, Jesus' wisdom,
Costly cross, grave's shattered door:
Gifted by You, we turn to You,
Offering up ourselves in praise;
Thankful song shall rise forever,
Gracious donor of our days.
2. Skills and time are ours for pressing
Toward the goals of Christ, your Son:
All at peace in health and freedom,
Races joined, the church made one.
Now direct our daily labor,
Lest we strive for self alone;
Born with talents, make us servants
Fit to answer at Your throne.

3. Treasure too You have entrusted,
Gain through powers Your grace conferred;
Ours to use for home and kindred,
And to spread the gospel Word.
Open wide our hands, in sharing,
As we heed Christ's ageless call,
Healing, teaching, and reclaiming,
Serving You by loving all.