

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
AUDREY PIETRUCHA, LAY READER
CAROL POPPE, PIANIST

JULY 6, 2025

PRELUDE *America the Beautiful* by Samuel Ward,
some variations taken from a choral arrangement by Richard Nichols

OPENING WORDS (responsive)

God's goodness is over all creation.

Let us give thanks and praise.

In love and compassion God's spirit is known.

Let us offer prayers of peace and goodwill.

***HYMN** *Lift Every Voice and Sing* **563**
Two brothers wrote this hymn, first published in 1921. The text was by James Weldon Johnson, who was self-taught in law and admitted to the Florida bar. He was a U.S. consul in Venezuela and Nicaragua, authored several books and was secretary of the NAACP for 14 years. J. Rosamund Johnson wrote the tune. He was educated at the New England Conservatory of Music, toured in vaudeville, directed Hammerstein Opera House in London and the Music School in NYC, and composed Broadway scores. The hymn is the official song of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

OPENING PRAYER (unison)

Gracious God, source of all life, hear our prayer.

We confess that we are incomplete.

We come before you in need of healing:

The healing of our bodies and souls,

The healing of our relationships,

The healing of our pride and fear and apathy.

**We know that with you, nothing is impossible,
not even such healing,**

Not even the harmony of the whole world.

So we pray for your healing presence in our world,

That we may be your people in freedom and in truth,

As Christ calls us. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND *GLORIA PATRI (579)

FIRST LESSON Luke 10:1-11; 16-20 p. 844

***HYMN** *I to the Hills Will Lift My Eyes* **234**

Here we go back to our singing roots and sing a Psalm. The text is a metrical setting of Psalm 121 from the 1912 hymnal, *The Psalter*, which was a joint work of nine U.S. and Canadian Reformed traditions. The tune is from the 1615 Scottish Psalter, *CL Hymns of David*.

SECOND LESSON Galatians 6:1-16 p. 948

SERMON Bearing Burdens

***HYMN** *My Country, 'Tis of Thee* **561**

Samuel Francis Smith (1808-95), a Baptist minister and Bostonian linguist, wrote the hymn. At the time of his death he knew 15 languages and was seeking a Russian text to learn Russian. He scribbled out the hymn in about a half-hour when he was 24 years old and a student at Andover Theological Seminary. He found the tune in a German music book given to him by Lowell Mason, prominent musician and educator, because Smith could read German. Mason then arranged the tune to be called AMERICA. The tune has origins that go back to Gregorian chants, Scottish carols, and the court of King Louis XIV. In England it was published to honor George II and given the title "National Anthem," and it was Russia's national tune until 1833.

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 *Ashokan Farewell*

By Jay Unger, from the soundtrack of PBS Series "The Civil War" a film by Ken Burns, (Narration of a letter by a Soldier to his Sweetheart is read)
Violin: Mary Elizabeth Groupe

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

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

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

***HYMN** *O Beautiful for Spacious Skies* **564**

Katherine Lee Bates, Wellesley College professor of literature, was inspired to write the text after an 1893 visit to the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, where she felt a patriotic feeling, and afterwards wrote, "We went on, my New England eyes delighting in the wind-waved gold of the vast wheat fields." It was after seeing amber skies from Pikes Peak that she then wrote the hymn in Colorado Springs. Samuel Augustus Ward, a Newark, NJ music supply, piano and organ salesperson, wrote the tune in 1882. First used for the hymn, *O Mother Dear, Jerusalem*, his widow gave permission for it to be used with Bates' text in 1912.

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *God of Our Fathers, Whose Almighty Hand*

Daniel C. Roberts, a country parson, wrote the words of this hymn for the centennial Fourth of July in Brandon, Vermont. George W. Warren wrote the music, and the song became known as Warren's National Hymn. It was first sung at St. Thomas' Church in New York City in 1892.

* 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 and ushers, greeters and communion servers for today's service are Kate Musso and Marsha Pilachowski.

Please join us for fellowship and refreshments in the foyer after the service. Our thanks to Audrey Pietrucha and Marsha Pilachowski for providing coffee hour this morning.

Flowers for worship are provided by Audrey and Larry Pietrucha in honor of their daughter, Elizabeth's birthday.

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

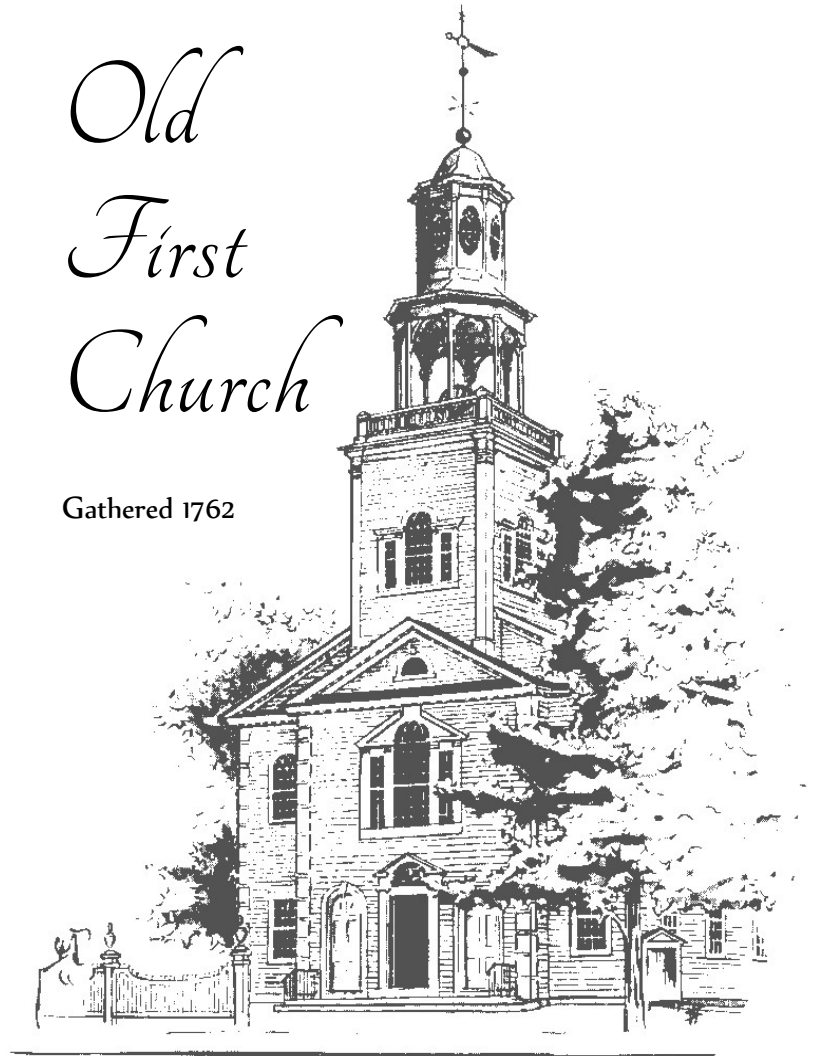
MAILING ADDRESS & CONTACT INFORMATION

1 MONUMENT CIRCLE • BENNINGTON, VERMONT 05201 • (802) 447-1223
office@oldfirst.comcastbiz.net • www.oldfirstchurchbenn.org



Old First Church

Gathered 1762



Lift Every Voice and Sing

Lift every voice and sing till earth and heaven ring,
ring with the harmonies of liberty.
Let our rejoicing rise high as the listening skies;
let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us;
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us;
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,
let us march on till victory is won.

Stony the road we trod, bitter the chastening rod,
felt in the days when hope unborn had died;
yet with a steady beat, have not our weary feet
come to the place for which our father's sighed?
We have come over a way that with tears has been watered;
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered,
out from the gloomy past, till now we stand at last
where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

God of our weary years, God of our silent tears,
thou who hast brought us thus far on the way;
thou who hast by Thy might led us into the light;
keep us forever in the path, we pray.
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee;
lest our hearts, drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee;
shadowed beneath Thy hand may we forever stand,
true to our God, true to our native land.

FIRST LESSON

Luke 10:1-11; 16-20

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. He said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals, and greet no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house!' And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the laborer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; cure the sick who are there, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' But whenever you enter a town and they do not welcome you, go out into its streets and say, 'Even the dust of your town

that clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you. Yet know this: the kingdom of God has come near.'

"Whoever listens to you listens to me, and whoever rejects you rejects me, and whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me."

The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, "Lord, in your name even the demons submit to us!" He said to them, "I watched Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning. See, I have given you authority to tread on snakes and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice at this, that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

I to the Hills Will Lift My Eyes

I to the hills will lift my eyes;
From whence shall come my aid?
My help is from the Lord alone,
who heaven and earth has made.

God will not let your foot be moved,
your guardian never sleeps;
God's watchful and un-slumbering care
protects and safely keeps.

Your faithful keeper is the Lord,
your shelter and your shade;
'Neath sun or moon, by day or night,
you shall not be afraid.

From evil God will keep you safe,
provide for all you need;
Your going out, your coming in,
God will forever lead.

SECOND LESSON

Galatians 6:1-16

My friends, if anyone is detected in a transgression, you who have received the Spirit should restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness. Take care that you yourselves are not tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. For if those who are nothing think they are something, they deceive themselves. All must test their own work; then that work, rather than their neighbor's work, will become a cause for pride. For all must carry their own loads.

Those who are taught the word must share in all good things with their teacher.

Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for you reap whatever you sow. If you sow to your own flesh, you will reap corruption from the flesh, but if you sow to the Spirit, you will reap eternal life from the Spirit. So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up. So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all and especially for those of the family of faith.

See what large letters I make when I am writing in my own hand! It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh that try to compel you to be circumcised—only that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. Even the circumcised do not themselves obey the law, but they want you to be circumcised so that they may boast about your flesh. May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me and I to the world. For neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything, but a new creation is everything! As for those who will follow this rule—peace be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.

My Country, 'Tis of Thee

My country, 'tis of thee,
Sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing;
Land where my fathers died,
Land of the pilgrims' pride,
From every mountainside let freedom ring!

My native country, thee,
Land of the noble free, thy name I love;
I love thy rocks and rills,
Thy woods and templed hills;
My heart with rapture thrills, like that above.

Let music swell the breeze,
And ring from all the trees sweet freedom's song;
Let mortal tongues awake;
Let all that breathe partake;
Let rocks their silence break, the sound prolong.

Our fathers' God, to Thee,
Author of liberty, to Thee we sing;
Long may our land be bright
With freedom's holy light;
Protect us by Thy might, Great God, our King.

O Beautiful for Spacious Skies

Oh, beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
Above the fruited plain!
America! America!
God shed His grace on thee,
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea.

Oh, beautiful for pilgrim feet,
Whose stern, impassioned stress
A thoroughfare of freedom beat
Across the wilderness!
America! America!
God mend thine every flaw,
Confirm thy soul in self-control,
Thy liberty in law.

Oh, beautiful for heroes proved
In liberating strife,
Who more than self their country loved,
And mercy more than life!
America! America!
May God thy gold refine,
Till all success be nobleness,
And every gain divine.

Oh, beautiful for patriot dream
That sees beyond the years
Thine alabaster cities gleam,
Undimmed by human tears!
America! America!
God shed His grace on thee,
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea.

**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.