

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
ANASTASIA GAUTHIER, LAY READER
GENE MARIE CALLAHAN, ORGANIST
OLD FIRST CHURCH CHOIR

JUNE 22, 2025

PRELUDE Variations on "Lord Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word"
- PJ Janson

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** *Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee* 464
The text was written in 1907 when Henry van Dyke was guest preacher at Williams College. He said it should be sung to this tune, from Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. Beethoven's original rhythm for the 12th and 13th measures has been restored in our hymnal.

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 Galatians 3:23-29 p. 947

***HYMN** *Bless the Lord, My Soul and Being* 224
(verses 1-4)

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. C. Hubert Parry was a prolific composer in latter 19th-century England. The tune, *Rustington*, was named for the town where he lived in Sussex, England towards the end of his life.

SECOND LESSON Luke 8:26-39 p. 841

SERMON Declaration of Dependence

***HYMN** *Come Down, O Love Divine* 313

Bianco da Siena wrote the words in the 15th century. He lived in Venice and was a member of an unordained order that followed the rule of St. Augustine. The translation was made by Richard Littledale, an Irish priest, for his 1867 *People's Hymnal*. Ralph Vaughan Williams wrote the tune for this text for the 1906 *The English Hymnal*, which he edited. Vaughan Williams was the most important English composer of his generation.

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 *Dona Nobis Pacem* - arr. Hal Hopson

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

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

***HYMN** *When in Our Music God Is Glorified* 264

The hymn text is by Fred Pratt Green, who has been credited with starting the twentieth century's hymn explosion. It was written at the request of John Wilson, who wanted a hymn for a Festival of praise or choir anniversary set to the tune ENGLEBERG.

***BENEDICTION**

***POSTLUDE** Fanfare and Chorale on "Crown Him with Many Crowns"
- Michael Fontana

* 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 Joyce Goeke and Sue Philpott. Ushers for today's service are Dave and Marsha Pilachowski.

Please join us for fellowship and refreshments in the foyer after the service provided by the Deacons, Susan Kachmar, Kate Musso, and Marsha Pilachowski.

Flowers for worship are provided by Betsy Ehrenfreund in honor of her husband Hal's birthday.

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

6/25: Bible Study, 6:30 PM, Parlor

6/26: Trustee's meeting, 5:30 PM, Parlor

6/28: Phase I celebration, 4:00 – 7:00 PM, at the church

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)

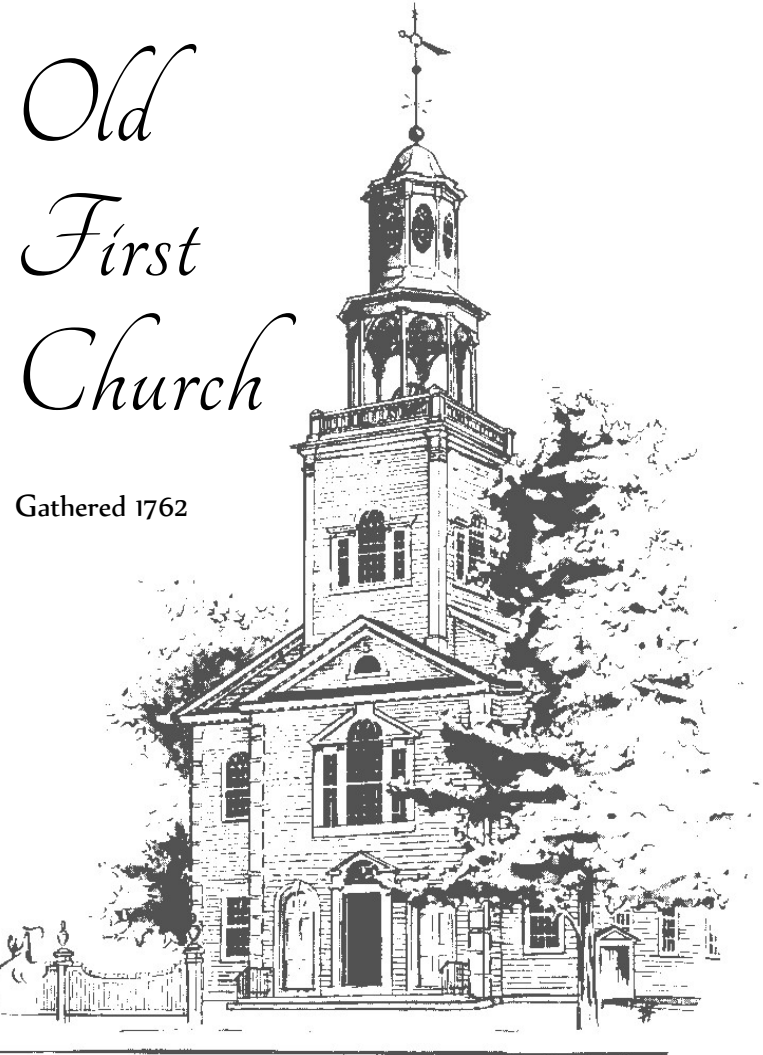
VT RTE. 9 AND MONUMENT AVENUE

OLD BENNINGTON, VERMONT

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Gathered 1762

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

Joyful, joyful, we adore Thee,
God of glory, Lord of love;
Hearts unfold like flowers before Thee,
Opening to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness;
Drive the gloom of doubt away;
Giver of immortal gladness,
Fill us with the light of day.

All Thy works with joy surround Thee,
Earth and heaven reflect Thy rays,
Stars and angels sing around Thee,
Center of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain,
Flowery meadow, flashing sea,
Chanting bird and flowing fountain,
Call us to rejoice in Thee.

Mortals, join the happy chorus
Which the morning stars began;
Lord divine is reigning o'er us,
Joining all in heaven's plan.
Ever singing, march we onward,
Victors in the midst of strife,
Joyful music leads us sunward
In the triumph song of life.

FIRST LESSON

Galatians 3:23-29

Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith.

As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek; there is no longer slave or free; there is no longer male and female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.

Bless the Lord, My Soul and Being

Bless the Lord, my soul and being!
Lord my God, You have such might,
Cloaked with honor, grand and glorious,
You are clothed with purest light.
Stretching out the heavens like tent cloth,
You are chambered on the deep.
Riding on the wings of wind-storm,
Flame and fire Your bidding keep.

Lord, You laid the earth's foundation
That it would be always sound.
By the word of Your commanding,
You set forth each ocean's bound.
Springs gush forth at Your own bidding,
Giving drink to every field.
Bird and beast and all Your creatures
In that coolness find thirst healed.

Grass You cause to grow for cattle
Plants for us to cultivate.
Food You bring forth from our labor,
Wine for joy and bread for plate.
Trees you give the birds for shelter,
Mountain rock and cave for beast.
Sun and moon both mark the seasons,
In their light we work and feast.

Lord, how great are all Your workings,
Wisdom marks them through and through.
All the earth is Your possession,
Great and small belong to You.
Food You give in each due season,
At Your hand come all good things.
By Your Spirit You create us;
Lord, Your breath renewal brings.

SECOND LESSON

Luke 8:26-39

Then they arrived at the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. As he stepped out on land, a man of the city who had demons met him. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he did not live in a house but in the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he fell down before him, shouting, at the top of his voice, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me," for Jesus had commanded the unclean spirit to

come out of the man. (For many times it had seized him; he was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the wilds.) Jesus then asked him, "What is your name?" He said, "Legion," for many demons had entered him. They begged him not to order them to go back into the abyss.

Now there on the hillside a large herd of swine was feeding, and the demons begged Jesus to let them enter these. So he gave them permission. Then the demons came out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd stampeded down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned. When the swineherds saw what had happened, they ran off and told it in the city and in the country. Then people came out to see what had happened, and when they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid.

Those who had seen it told them how the one who had been possessed by demons had been healed. Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them, for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned. The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, "Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you." So he went away, proclaiming throughout the city how much Jesus had done for him.

Come Down, O Love Divine

Come down, O Love divine, Seek out this soul of mine
And visit it with Your own ardor glowing;
O Comforter, draw near, within my heart appear,
And kindle it, Your holy flame bestowing.

O let it freely burn, till earthly passions turn
To dust and ashes in its heat consuming;
And let Your glorious light shine ever on my sight,
And clothe me round, the while my path illuming.

And so the yearning strong with which the soul will long
Shall far out-pass the power of human telling;
For none can guess God's grace, till love creates a place
Where in the Holy Spirit makes a dwelling.

When in Our Music God Is Glorified

When in our music God is glorified,
And adoration leaves no room for pride,
It is as though the whole creation cried: Alleluia!

How often, making music, we have found
A new dimension in the world of sound,
As worship moved us to a more profound Alleluia!

So has the church, in liturgy and song,
In faith and love, through centuries of wrong,
Borne witness to the truth in every tongue: Alleluia!

Let every instrument be tuned for praise!
Let all rejoice who have a voice to raise!
And may God give us faith to sing always: Alleluia! Amen.