

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

MAY 11, 2025
MOTHER'S DAY

PRELUDE *Blest Be the Tie That Binds*
- setting by Kimberly Kondal Patterson

OPENING WORDS (responsive)

This is the day which the Lord has made.

Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

We gather to give thanks for all creation.

We gather to serve and live in God's word.

***HYMN** *Now Thank We All Our God* 555

This hymn, known as the German Te Deum, was written near the close of the Thirty Years' War and is still sung in German churches on New Year's Eve. The text's author was a minister in Ellenburg, Saxony who in 1637 buried half of the 8,000 who died in an epidemic there. The tune first appeared with this text. The composer was a hymnal editor and adapted the harmonization of this tune from Mendelssohn's "Lobgesang".

OPENING PRAYER (unison)

Eternal God, in whom we live and move and have our being, whose face is hidden from us by our sin, and whose mercy we forget: cleanse us from all offenses, and deliver us from proud thoughts and vain desires; that humbly we may draw near to thee, confessing our faults, confiding in thy grace, and finding in thee our refuge and our strength, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND *GLORIA PATRI (579)

FIRST LESSON John 10:22-30 p. 873

***HYMN** *My Shepherd Will Supply My Need* 172

Watts' collection including this hymn was first published in the U.S. by Benjamin Franklin in 1729. The tune is American folk; the harmonizer is on the faculty of Dorcht College in Iowa.

SECOND LESSON Acts 9:36-43 p. 894

SERMON The Shepherd's Voice

***HYMN** *Oh, Give Us Pleasure in the Flowers Today* insert

Robert Frost (1875- 1963) was a New England poet of simple, colloquial verse. He was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for New Hampshire in 1924, for *Collected Poems* in 1931, and for *A Further Range* in 1937. He served as professor of poetry at Amherst College for many years, and also taught at Harvard. This text comes from Frost's first collection of poems, *A Boy's Will*, 1913.

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 *A Home of Grace* - arr. Joseph M. Martin

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

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

***HYMN** *Now I Recall My Childhood* insert

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) was a Hindu poet, dramatist, musician, painter, and author of religious and philosophic writings. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1913 and was active in educational and social reform in India. Knighted by the British in 1915, he renounced the honor in 1919, in protest against repressive measures by the British.

***BENEDICTION**

***POSTLUDE** *Fanfare and March* - Henry Purcell

* 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 Sandy Bechtel and Pat Ross. Ushers for today's service are Anastasia and Fischer Gauthier.

Please join us for fellowship and refreshments in the foyer after the service. Our thanks to Janet Van Derpoel-Andrea, Mary Elizabeth Groupé, Kate Musso, and Audrey Pietrucha for providing coffee hour this morning.

Flowers for worship are provided by Audrey Pietrucha.

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

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

5/15, 5/21, 5/29: Bible Study, 6:30 PM, Parlor

5/18: Council meeting, following worship, Parlor

5/20: Deacon's Meeting, 4:00 PM, Barn

5/22: 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!

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)

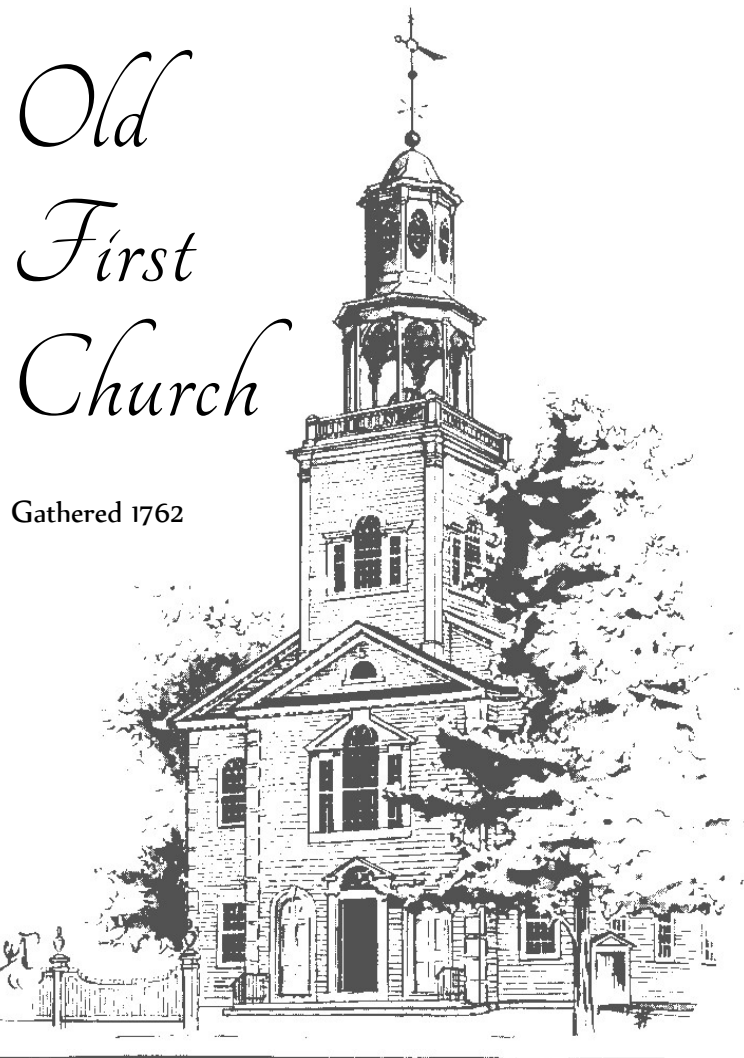
VT RTE. 9 AND MONUMENT AVENUE

OLD BENNINGTON, VERMONT

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Now Thank We All Our God

Now thank we all our God
With heart and hands and voices,
Who wondrous things hath done,
In whom this world rejoices;
Who, from our mothers' arms,
Hath blessed us on our way
With countless gifts of love,
And still is ours today.

O may this bounteous God
Through all our life be near us,
With ever joyful hearts
And blessed peace to cheer us;
And keep us in God's grace,
And guide us when perplexed,
And free us from all ills
In this world and the next.

All praise and thanks to God,
Who reigns in highest heaven,
To Father and to Son
And Spirit now be given.
The one eternal God,
Whom heaven and earth adore,
The God who was, and is,
And shall be ever more.

FIRST LESSON

John 10:22:30

At that time the festival of the Dedication took place in Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the portico of Solomon. So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, "how long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly." Jesus answered, "I have told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name testify to me; but you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep. My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. What my Father has given me is greater than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father's hand. The Father and I are one."

My Shepherd Will Supply My Need

1. My Shepherd will supply my need;
Jehovah is His name:
In pastures fresh He makes me feed,
Beside the living stream.
He brings my wandering spirit back,
When I forsake His ways;
And leads me, for His mercy's sake,
In paths of truth and grace.

2. When I walk through the shades of death
Your presence is my stay;
One word of Your supporting breath
Drives all my fears away.
Your hand, in sight of all my foes,
Does still my table spread;
My cup with blessings over flows,
Your oil anoints my head.

3. The sure provisions of my God
Attend me all my days;
O may Your House be my abode,
And all my work be praise.
There would I find a settled rest,
While others go and come;
No more a stranger, or a guest,
But like a child at home.

SECOND LESSON

Acts 9:36-43

Now in Joppa there was a disciple whose name was Tabitha, which in Greek is Dorcas. She was devoted to good works and acts of charity. At that time she became ill and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in a room upstairs. Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, who heard that Peter was there, sent two men to him with the request, "Please come to us without delay." So Peter got up and went to them; and when he arrived, they took him to the room upstairs. All the widows stood beside him, weeping and showing tunics and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was with them. Peter put all of them outside, and then he knelt down and prayed. He turned to the body and said, "Tabitha, get up." Then she opened her eyes, and seeing Peter, she sat up. He gave her his hand and helped her up. Then calling the saints and widows, he showed her to be alive. This became known throughout Joppa, and many believed in the Lord. Meanwhile he stayed in Joppa for some time with a certain Simon, a tanner.

Oh, Give Us Pleasure in the Flowers Today

Oh, give us pleasure in the flowers today;
And give us not to think so far away
As the uncertain harvest; keep us here
All simply in the springing of the year.

Oh, give us pleasure in the orchard white
Like nothing else by day, like ghosts by night;
And make us happy in the happy bees,
The swarm dilating round the perfect trees.

And make us happy in the darting bird
That suddenly above the bees is heard,
The meteor that thrusts in with needle bill,
And off a blossom in mid-air stands still.

For this is love and nothing else is love,
The which it is reserved for God above
To sanctify to what far ends he will,
But which it only needs that we fulfill.

Now I Recall My Childhood

Now I recall my childhood when the sun
Burst to my bedside with the day's surprise;
Faith in the marvelous bloomed anew each dawn,
Flowers bursting fresh within my heart each day.

Looking upon the world with simple joy,
On insects, birds, and beasts, and common weeds,
The grass and clouds had fullest wealth of awe;
My mother's voice gave meaning to the stars.

Now when I turn to think of coming death,
I find life's song in star-songs of the night,
In rise of curtains and new morning light,
In life reborn in fresh surprise of love.