

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
DAVID VARKER, LAY READER
LYNN RALEY, ORGANIST

FEBRUARY 15, 2026

PRELUDE *Humbly I Adore Thee* - Myron Casner (1908-1992)

OPENING WORDS (responsive)

Let us gather to praise and worship God.

May this time together be filled with peace.

O God, let your spirit be with us today.

We pray that your light may lead us in all things.

***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)

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. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND *GLORIA PATRI (579)

FIRST LESSON Exodus 24:12-18 p. 62

***HYMN** *All People That on Earth Do Dwell* 220

The metrical version of Psalm 100 was published in 1561 in the Anglo-Geneva Psalter by William Kethe. He was a Scotsman who fled to the continent during the reign of Mary, was a chaplain to English soldiers at Havre, and was one of the Geneva Bible translators. The tune *Old Hundredth* by Louis Bourgeois was first the setting of a 1551 version of Psalm 134; but since 1562 it has been linked with this Psalm. Bourgeois got into trouble in Geneva for changing tunes of Psalms people already knew. Of course, we sing this tune each week as a Doxology, as well.

SECOND LESSON Matthew 17:1-9 p. 798

SERMON Overcome by Fear

***HYMN** *Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies* 462

The text was written by Charles Wesley, the youngest son of the nineteen Wesley children. Together with his brother John Charles Wesley led one of the greatest revivals in English history. He traveled hundreds of miles on horseback, preached to crowds of thousands in open fields and city streets. Charles is said to have written as many as 6,500 hymns. This hymn was published in 1740.

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 *O For a Closer Walk with God*
- Gerhard Krapf (1924-2008)

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

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

***HYMN** *Not Always on the Mount* insert

This hymn was written by Frederick Lucian Hosmer (1840-1929). Hosmer graduated from Harvard University & Harvard Divinity School & became a Unitarian minister. He served in Northboro, Massachusetts; Quincy, Illinois; St. Louis, Missouri; and Berkeley, California. In 1880 & 1911, he helped produce editions of *Unity Hymns and Carols*. He was a recognized authority on hymnody, & taught the subject at Harvard Divinity School.

***BENEDICTION**

***POSTLUDE** *Impromptu in B minor, Op. 5 No. 5*
- Jean Sibelius (1865-1957)

NOTE FROM LYNN RALEY: I was introduced to this work by the Rev. Howard Reed, who told me that he heard in it the musical expression of the emotions Jesus' disciples must have felt at his Transfiguration, celebrated today, the Sunday before Lent.

* 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 Pat Ross and Wendy Schmitt. Ushers for today's service are Kate Musso and Sherry Schreiber.

Flowers for worship are provided by Kate Musso in honor of Betsy Ehrenfreund's 94th birthday.

Please join us after worship today for coffee hour provided by Nancy Andrews, JW and Mary Brooks, Betsy Ehrenfreund, Joyce Goeke, Mary Elizabeth Groupé, Darlene Munson, Kate Musso, Marsha Pilachowski, Vicky Printz, Pat Ross, and Wendy Schmitt.

The Church's Annual Meeting follows worship today. All members of the church are expected to meet in the sanctuary after coffee hour.

MEDITATIONS FOR LENT: The 23rd annual Lenten devotional booklet, comprised of submissions from members and friends of Old First, can be found in the Narthex for those wishing to have a copy to read through the season of Lent. Lent begins on Wednesday, February 18. Thank you to all who submitted devotionals this year.

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

2/18, 2/25: Bible Study, 4:30 PM, Parlor

2/19: Trustee meeting, 5:30 PM, Parlor

2/24: Deacon meeting, 4 PM, place tbd

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

VT RTE. 9 AND MONUMENT AVENUE
OLD BENNINGTON, VERMONT

MAILING ADDRESS & CONTACT INFORMATION

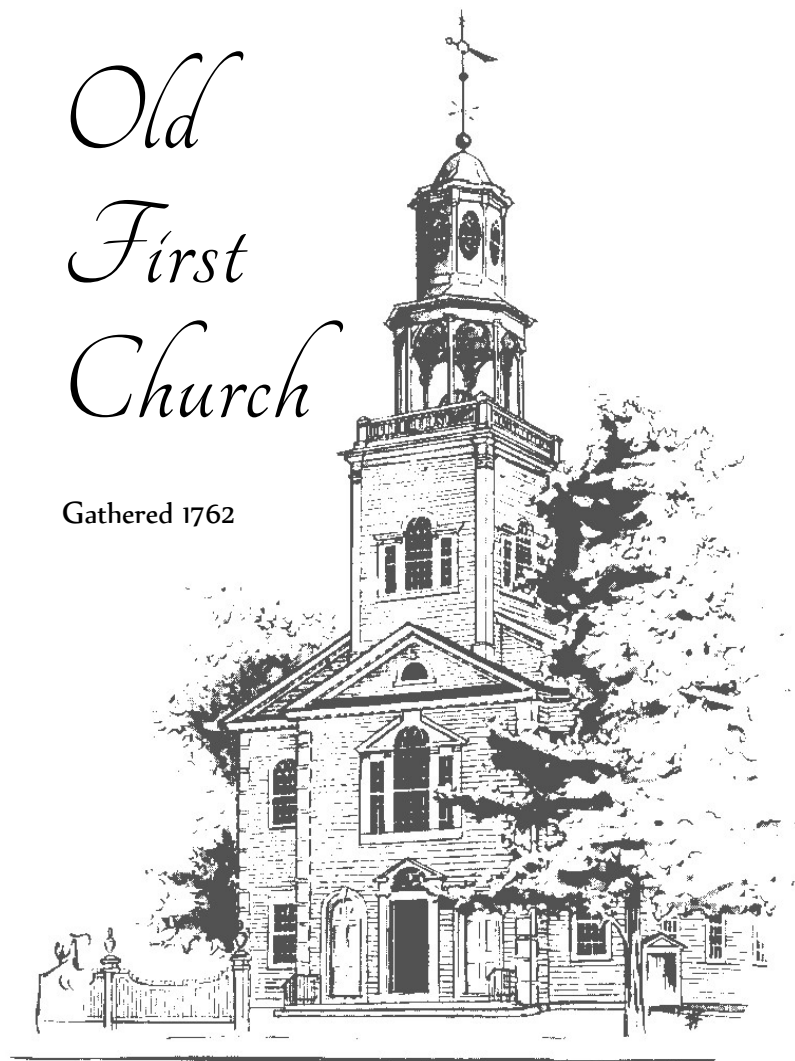
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Old First Church

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

Exodus 24:12-18

The LORD said to Moses, "Come up to me on the mountain and wait there; and I will give you the tablets of stone, with the law and the commandment, which I have written for their instruction."

So Moses set out with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up into the mountain of God.

To the elders he had said, "Wait here for us, until we come to you again; for Aaron and Hur are with you; whoever has a dispute may go to them."

Then Moses went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. The glory of the LORD settled on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days; on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the cloud.

Now the appearance of the glory of the LORD was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel.

Moses entered the cloud and went up on the mountain. Moses was on the mountain for forty days and forty nights.

All People That on Earth Do Dwell

All people that on earth do dwell,
Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice;
Him serve with mirth, His praise forth tell,
Come ye before Him and rejoice.

Know that the Lord is God indeed;
Without our aid He did us make;
We are His folk, He doth us feed,
And for His sheep He doth us take.

O enter then His gates with praise,
Approach with joy His courts unto;
Praise, laud and bless His name always,
For it is seemly so to do.

For why? The Lord our God is good,
His mercy is forever sure;
His truth at all times firmly stood,
And shall from age to age endure.

SECOND LESSON

Matthew 17:1-9

Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves.

And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white.

Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him.

Then Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three dwellings here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, "This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!"

When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Get up and do not be afraid." And when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone.

As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, "Tell no one about the vision until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies

Christ, whose glory fills the skies,
Christ, the true, the only light,
sun of Righteousness, arise,
triumph o'er the shades of night;
dayspring from on high, be near;
daystar, in my heart appear.

Dark and cheerless is the morn
unaccompanied by Thee;
joyless is the day's return
till Thy mercy's beams I see,
till they inward light impart,
cheer my eyes and warm my heart.

Visit then this soul of mine;
pierce the gloom of sin and grief;
fill me, radiance divine;
scatter all my unbelief;
more and more Thyself display,
shining to the perfect day.

Not Always on the Mount

Not always on the mount may we
Rapt in the heavenly vision be:
The shores of thought and feeling know
The spirit's tidal ebb and flow

Yet shall one such exalted hour
Bring to the soul redeeming power,
And in new strength through after days
We travel our appointed ways.

Now all the lowly vale grows bright,
Transfigured in remembered light,
And in untiring souls we bear
The freshness of the upper air.

The mount for vision: but below
The paths of daily duty go,
And nobler life therein shall own
The pattern on the mountain shown.