

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
GENE MARIE CALLAHAN, ORGANIST

APRIL 26, 2020

PRELUDE *For the Beauty* - David Paxton

OPENING WORDS (responsive)

Let us be joyful in the word of God.

Let us walk in the way of peace.

Let us give ourselves to joy this day.

May the love of God tune our hearts and minds.

HYMN *The God of Abraham Praise* 488

(LYRICS REPRINTED AT THE END OF THE ORDER OF SERVICE)

The text in our hymnal is quite close to one in *The Union Hymnal* edited by the Central Conference of American Rabbis. The 1885 translation is based on a Jewish creedal statement by Moses Maimonides (1130-1205) and set to meter by Daniel ben Judah (14th century). Maimonides wrote the 13 articles of the Jewish creed known as the *Yigdal*. The tune, LEONI (a.k.a. YIGDAL) was introduced into Christian worship around 1770. Thomas Olivers, a Wesleyan minister, heard cantor Meyer Lyon sing the *Yigdal* at Great Duke's Synagogue, Alegate, London. Lyon transcribed the melody for Olivers, who named it LEONI.

OPENING PRAYER (unison)

Creator of the universe, You made the world in beauty, and restore all things in glory through the work of Christ. We pray that, wherever this creation is disfigured by poverty, sickness, selfishness, war and greed, the new creation in Jesus Christ may appear in justice, love, and peace, to the glory of Your name. In our daily path guide us and make us anew. Forgive us when we have not had that justice, love and peace within us or toward our neighbor, in Jesus' name, Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND GLORIA PATRI (579)

FIRST LESSON Acts 3:1-10 p. 886

HYMN *O Thou, My Soul, Return in Peace* 228
(verses 1-4)

(LYRICS REPRINTED AT THE END OF THE ORDER OF SERVICE)

This metrical rendering of Psalm 16 is a composite. Stanzas 1 and 2 are from the Murrayfield Psalms (1950). The remaining four stanzas are from The Psalter (1912) (no. 313). Stanza 4 of the original has been omitted. A few additional alterations were made by the Presbyterian Hymnal Committee.

SECOND LESSON 1 Peter 5:1-11 p. 986

SERMON Waiting by the Gate

HYMN *Jesus, Our Divine Companion* 305

(LYRICS REPRINTED AT THE END OF THE ORDER OF SERVICE)

Van Dyke graduated from Princeton University, 1873, and from Princeton Theological Seminary, 1877 and served as a professor of English literature at Princeton between 1899 and 1923. By appointment of President Wilson he became Minister to the Netherlands and Luxembourg in 1913. He chaired the committee that wrote the first Presbyterian printed liturgy, The Book of Common Worship of 1906. Among his popular writings are the two Christmas stories *The Other Wise Man* (1896) and *The First Christmas Tree* (1897). Various religious themes of his work are also expressed in his poetry, hymns and essays. He wrote the lyrics to the popular hymn, "Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee" (1907), sung to the tune of Beethoven's "Ode to Joy."

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.)

OFFERING

OFFERTORY *Interlude in G Major* - L. Mourian

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

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

HYMN *O Lord of Every Shining Constellation* 297

(LYRICS REPRINTED AT THE END OF THE ORDER OF SERVICE)

This text was written by Albert F. Bayly (1901-0651) and appeared in his first collected volume, *Rejoice, O People* (1951). Albert Frederick Bayly (1901-0651) was born in Sussex, England. He was ordained in 1929 after studying for the ministry at Mansfield College, Oxford and served in several Congregational churches in England. Bayly was made a fellow of Westminster Choir College, Princeton, NJ and honored at Westminster Abbey in 1978. His hymns were published in several hymnals.

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *Creation's Praise* - Dennis Eliot

Deacons on call this month are Bill Gordon and Jeannette Lesser.

Worship and life at Old First is changing in response to the need to reduce activity as we work to get through the challenge of the COVID-19 presence in our life. Our prayers and thoughts go to everyone immediately affected and thanks go to all people who work to provide care and supply our needs in this time. An audio version of our weekly worship services can be found on the church's website by clicking on the "Worship" tab and selecting "Worship Here and Now". Or simply paste the following into your computer's browser at the top of the page:

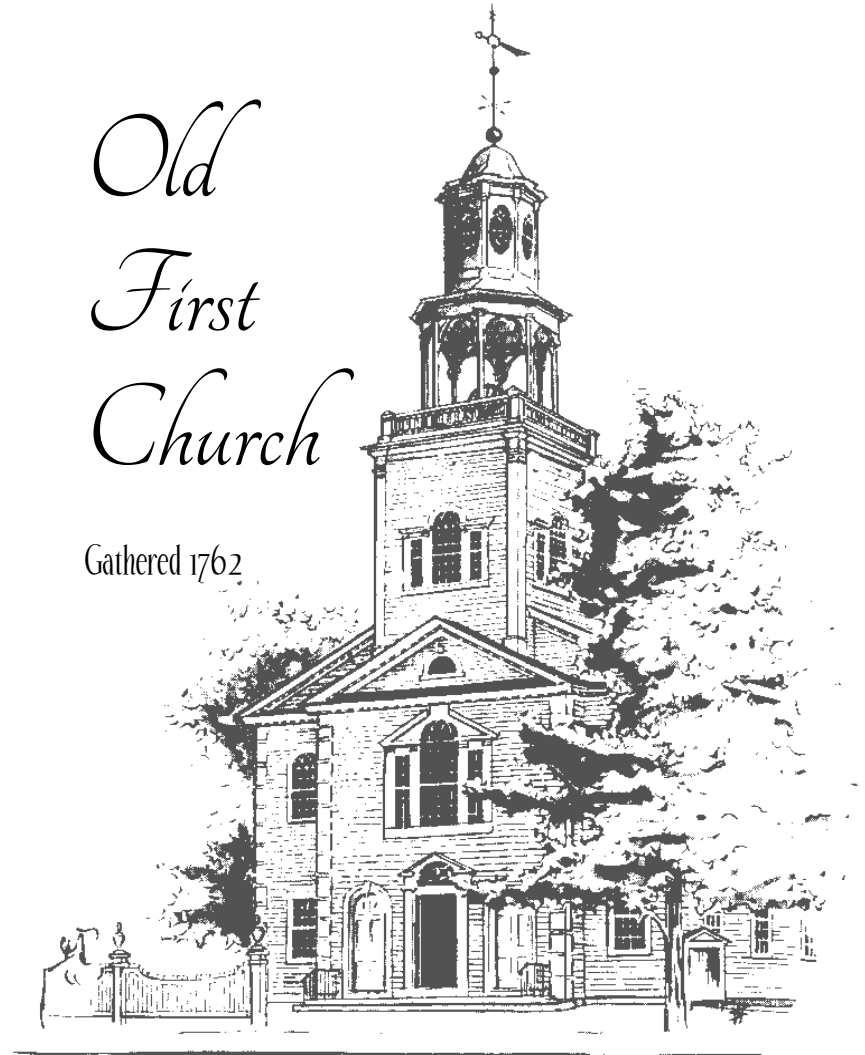
<http://oldfirstchurchbenn.org/worship/worship-here-and-now/>

If this link appears in blue on the device you are using to read this, you can also just "click on the link" and you will be there! The church office has been temporarily moved to the home of our office administrator. Please use email, phone or U.S. Mail for correspondence.

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!

Old First Church

Gathered 1762



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

(OLD FIRST CHURCH)

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The God of Abraham Praise

1. The God of Abraham praise,
Who reigns enthroned above;
The ancient of eternal days,
The God of love!
The Lord, the great I Am,
By earth and heaven confessed,
We bow before Your holy name,
Forever blest.
2. Your spirit till flows free,
High surging where it will;
In prophet's word You spoke of old
Any You speak still.
Established is Your law,
And changeless it shall stand,
Deep writ upon the human heart,
On sea, or land.
3. You have eternal life
Implanted in the soul;
Your love shall be our strength and stay,
While ages roll.
We praise You, living God!
We praise Your holy name;
The first, the last, beyond all thought,
And still the same!

O Thou, My Soul, Return in Peace

1. O thou, my soul, return in peace
To thine untroubled rest,
For thee the bounty of the Lord
Abundantly hath blest.
2. God did indeed redeem my soul
That else in death had slept;
God hath mine eyes from tears set free,
My feet from stumbling kept.
3. What shall I render to the Lord,
What shall my offering be,
For all the gracious benefits
God hath bestowed on me?
4. Salvation's cup my soul shall take
While to the Lord I pray,
And with God's people I will meet,
My thankful vows to pay.

Jesus, Our Divine Companion

Jesus, our divine companion,
By your lowly human birth
You have come to join the workers,
Burden bearers of the earth.
You, the carpenter of Nazareth
Toiling for your daily food,
By your patience and your courage,
You have taught us work is good.

Where the many toil together,
There You are among Your own;
Where the solitary labor,
You are there with them alone.
You, the peace that passes knowledge,
Dwelling in the daily strife;
You, the Bread of heaven, are broken
In the sacrament of life

O Lord of Every Shining Constellation

O Lord of every shining constellation
That wheels in splendor through the midnight sky,
Grant us Your spirit's true illumination
To read the secrets of Your work on high.

You, Lord, have made the atom's hidden forces,
Your laws its mighty energies fulfill;
Teach us, to whom You give such rich resources,
In all we use, to serve Your holy will.

You, Lord, have stamped Your image on Your creatures,
And though they mar that image, love them still;
Lift up our eyes to Christ, that in His features
We may discern the beauty of Your will.

Acts 3:1-10

One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, at three o'clock in the afternoon. And a man lame from birth was being carried in. People would lay him daily at the gate of the temple called the Beautiful Gate so that he could ask for alms from those entering the temple. When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked them for alms. Peter looked intently at him, as did John, and said, "Look at us." And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. But Peter said, "I have no silver or gold, but what I have I give you; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, stand up and walk." And he took him by the right hand and raised him up; and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. Jumping up, he stood and began to walk, and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. All the people saw him walking and praising God, and they recognized him as the one who used to sit and ask for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

1 Peter 5:1-11

Now as an elder myself and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as one who shares in the glory to be revealed, I exhort the elders among you to tend the flock of God that is in your charge, exercising the oversight, not under compulsion but willingly, as God would have you do it—not for sordid gain but eagerly. Do not lord it over those in your charge, but be examples to the flock. And when the chief shepherd appears, you will win the crown of glory that never fades away.

In the same way, you who are younger must accept the authority of the elders. And all of you must clothe yourselves with humility in your dealings with one another, for "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble." Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you.

Discipline yourselves, keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour. Resist him, steadfast in your faith, for you know that your brothers and sisters in all the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering.

And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the power forever and ever. Amen.