

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 19, 2020

PRELUDE *He's Risen, He's Risen* - Walther

OPENING WORDS (responsive)

Let us be joyful in the word of God.

Let us walk in the way of peace.

Let us remember the Lord is with us.

And let us rejoice in the blessing of life renewed.

HYMN *Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven* 478
(Verses 1 and 2)

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

Anglican Henry Lyte wrote this paraphrase of Psalm 103 for his congregation in the small fishing village of Lower Brixham, Devonshire, in 1834. The tune was composed in 1869 for this text by John Goss, an organist, and professor of music harmony who was knighted in 1872.

OPENING PRAYER (unison)

Look to this day!

For it is life, the very life of life.

In its brief course

Lie all the verities and realities of your existence:

The bliss of growth;

The glory of action;

The splendor of achievement;

For yesterday is but a dream,

And tomorrow is only a vision;

But today, well lived, makes every yesterday

a dream of happiness,

And every tomorrow a vision of hope.

Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND GLORIA PATRI (579)

FIRST LESSON 1 Peter 1:3-9 p. 983

HYMN *When in the Night I Meditate* 165

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

The tune, *St. Flavian* was first published in John Day's *Psalter* (1562) as the first half of the tune of Psalm 132. The present form of the tune and harmonization is from Richard Redhead's *Ancient Hymn Melodies and Other Church Tunes* (1853). In *Hymns Ancient and Modern* (1861) it was titled *Redhead 29*, but in the revised edition of 1875 it bore the title *St. Favian*.

SECOND LESSON John 20:19-31 p. 883

SERMON The Challenge

HYMN *Breathe on Me, Breath of God* 316

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

The text was written by Edwin Hatch and published in the pamphlet *Between Doubt and Prayer* (1878). It later appeared in *Towards Fields of Light* (1890). The tune TRENTHAM was composed by Robert Jackson in 1894 and was named after the small village of Trentham in Staffordshire, England.

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 *Voluntary No. Four* - Boellman

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

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

HYMN *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling* 376
(Verses 1 and 4)

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

This hymn was written by Charles Wesley and was first published in 1747. Wesley was the 18th child of Samuel and Susanna ("She Must Have Been a Saint") Wesley. Charles was an Anglican priest, dedicated to the Methodist movement, and he wrote between 6,000 and 6,500 hymns. Rowland Hugh Pritchard wrote the Welsh tune *Hyfrydol* in 1831 before his 20th birthday. He was an assistant loom tender for the Welsh Flannel Manufacturing Company. An interesting point about the melody is that with one exception, it lies within the first five notes of the scale.

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *Epilogue from Resurrection Suite* - Wyton

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:

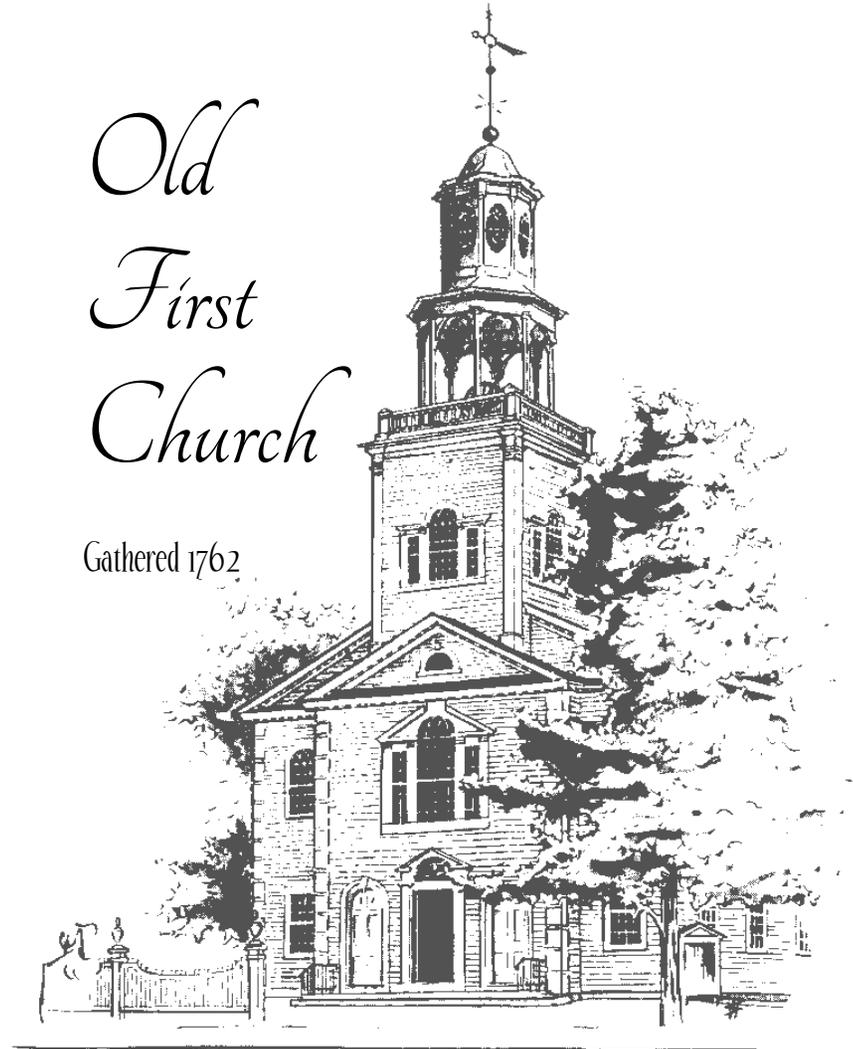
<http://oldfirstchurchbenn.org/worship/worship-here-and-now/>

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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Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven

(Verses 1 and 2)

Praise, my soul, the King of Heaven;
To His feet thy tribute bring;
Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,
Evermore His praises sing:
Alleluia! Alleluia! Praise the everlasting King.

Praise Him for His grace and favor
To His people in distress;
Praise Him still the same as ever,
Slow to chide, and swift to bless.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Glorious in His faithfulness.

When in the Night I Meditate

1. When in the night I meditate
on mercies multiplied,
my grateful heart inspires my tongue
to bless the Lord, my guide.
2. Forever in my thought the Lord
before my face shall stand;
secure, unmoved I shall remain,
with God at my right hand.
3. My inmost being thrills with joy
and gladness fills my breast;
because on God my trust is stayed,
my flesh in hope shall rest.
4. I know that I shall not be left
forgotten in the grave,
and from corruption, Thou, O Lord,
Thy holy one wilt save.
5. The path of life Thou showest me;
of joy a boundless store
is ever found at Thy right hand,
and pleasures evermore.

Breathe on Me, Breath of God

1. Breathe on me, Breath of God,
fill me with life anew,
that I may love Thou dost love,
and do what Thou wouldst do.
2. Breathe on me, Breath of God,
until my heart is pure,
until with Thee I will one will,
to do and to endure.
3. Breathe on me, Breath of God,
Till I am wholly Thine,
Until this earthly part of me
Glows with Thy fire divine.
4. Breathe on me, Breath of God,
so shall I never die,
but live with Thee the perfect life
Of Thine eternity.

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

(Verses 1 and 4)

Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heaven, to earth come down,
Fix in us Thy humble dwelling,
All Thy faithful mercies crown!
Jesus, Thou art all compassion,
Pure, unbounded love Thou art;
Visit us with Thy salvation,
Enter every trembling heart.

Finish, then, Thy new creation;
Pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see Thy great salvation
Perfectly restored in Thee;
Changed from glory into glory,
Till in heaven we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before Thee,
Lost in wonder, love and praise.

1 Peter 1:3-9

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith—being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

John 20:19-31

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.” But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.”

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.” Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.” Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.