

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

JULY 26, 2020

**PRELUDE** *The Wings of Every Hour* - James Southbridge  
(based on Isaac Watts 1719 "The wings of every hour shall bear some thankful tribute to Thine ear;  
and every setting sun shall see new works of duty done for Thee")

**OPENING WORDS** (responsive)

Make me to know your ways, O Lord.

**Teach me your paths.**

Lead me in your truth.

**The ways of the Lord are love and faithfulness.**

**HYMN** *O Splendor of God's Glory Bright* 474  
(LYRICS REPRINTED AT THE END OF THE ORDER OF SERVICE)

Scholars have attributed the original Latin text "Splendor paternae gloriae" to Ambrose of Milan. This is based on the testimony of Fulgentius, bishop of Ruspe, North Africa (d. 533), the Venerable Bede and the Benedictine editors of his works. This morning hymn addressing the Trinity was traditionally used at Lauds (sunrise) on Monday.

**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** Deuteronomy 4:15-20 p. 141

**HYMN** *How Lovely, Lord* 207

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

This paraphrase of Psalm 84 is by Arlo D. Duba. While serving on the Psalter Task Force of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in 1984, Duba was struck by the fact that metered versions of this psalm did not seem to carry with them the understanding of God's house being a wonderfully pleasing place in which to be. He thought of the peace and tranquility represented in Johannes Brahms' "How Lovely Is Thy Dwelling Place" and left the room humming MERLE'S TUNE. Duba recalls, "Once I had the first line the rest of the paraphrase just came to me."

**SECOND LESSON** Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52 p. 795

**SERMON** Look! Up In the Sky....It's...

**HYMN** *God Whose Giving Knows No Ending* 422

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

The text by Robert Edwards was one of the ten winners of the 1961 Hymn Society of America's competition for stewardship hymns. The tune first appeared in the 1844 Philadelphia publication, *Sacred Harp*, by B.F. White and Elisha King; the 1958 harmony is by James Wood.

**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** *Renew My Soul, O Lord* - Edward Broughton

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

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

**HYMN** *Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee* 464

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

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 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> measures has been restored in our hymnal.

**BENEDICTION**

**POSTLUDE** *Festive Praise* - George Blake

Deacons on call this month are Marietta Hibbard, Jeannette Lesser and Amy Tronsen.

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:

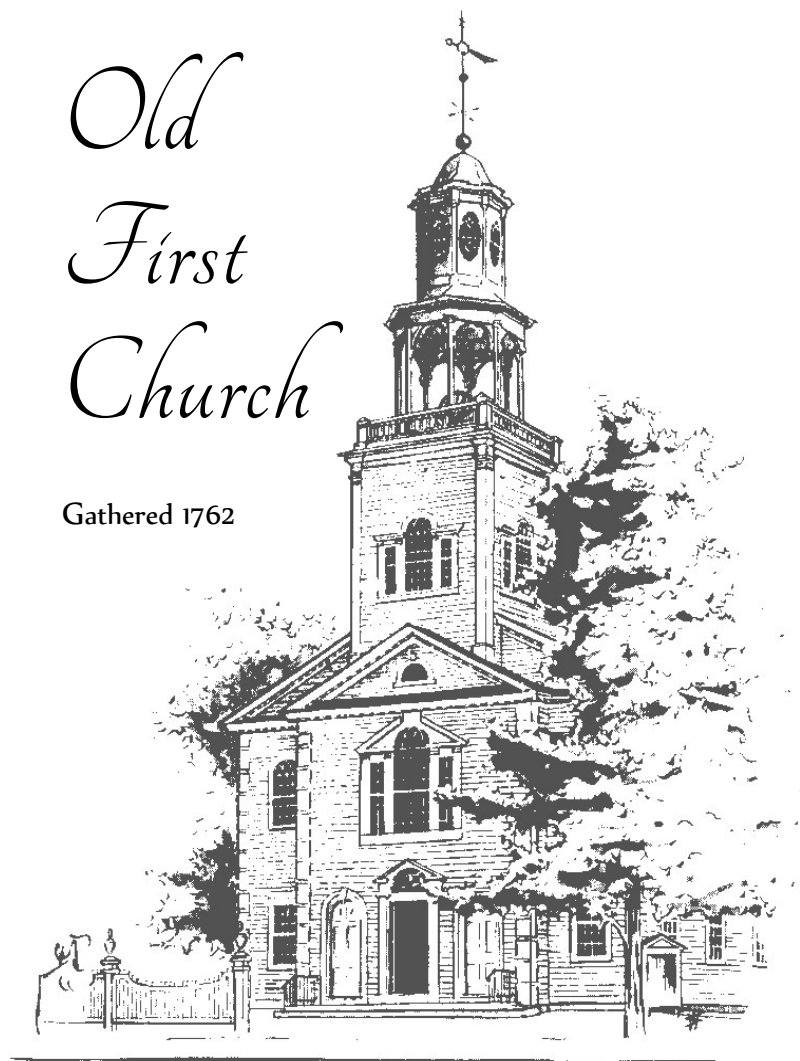
<http://oldfirstchurchbenn.org/worship/worship-here-and-now/>

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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### *O Splendor of God's Gory Bright*

1). O Splendor of God's glory bright,  
from light eternal bringing light;  
Thou light of life, light's living spring,  
true day, all days illumining:

2). Come, Holy Sun of heavenly love,  
Shower down Thy radiance from above,  
and to our inward hearts convey  
Thy Holy Spirit's cloudless ray.

3). O joyful be the passing day  
with thoughts as clear as morning's ray,  
with faith like noontide shining bright,  
our souls unshadowed by the night.

4). O Lord, with each returning morn  
Thine image to our hearts is born;  
O may we ever clearly see  
Our Savior and our God in Thee!

### *How Lovely, Lord*

How lovely, Lord, how lovely  
Is Your abiding place;  
My soul is longing, fainting,  
To feast upon Your grace.  
The sparrow finds a shelter,  
A place to build her nest;  
And so Your temple calls us  
Within its walls to rest.

In Your blest courts to worship,  
O God, a single day  
Is better than a thousand  
If I from You should stray.  
I'd rather keep the entrance  
And claim You as my Lord  
Than revel in the riches  
The ways of sin afford.

A sun and shield forever  
Are You, O Lord Most High;  
You shower us with blessings;  
No good will You deny.  
The saints, Your grace receiving,  
From strength to strength shall go,  
And from their life shall rivers  
Of blessing overflow.

### *God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending*

God, whose giving knows no ending,  
from Your rich and endless store,  
Nature's wonder, Jesus' wisdom,  
Costly cross, grave's shattered door:  
Gifted by You, we turn to You,  
Offering up ourselves in praise;  
Thankful song shall rise forever,  
Gracious donor of our days.

Skills and time are ours for pressing  
Toward the goals of Christ, your Son:  
All at peace in health and freedom,  
Races joined, the church made one.  
Now direct our daily labor,  
Lest we strive for self alone;  
Born with talents, make us servants  
Fit to answer at Your throne.

Treasure too You have entrusted,  
Gain through powers Your grace conferred;  
Ours to use for home and kindred,  
And to spread the gospel Word.  
Open wide our hands, in sharing,  
As we heed Christ's ageless call,  
Healing, teaching, and reclaiming,  
Serving You by loving all.

### *Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee*

1). 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.

2). 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.

3). 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.

### **Deuteronomy 4:15-20**

Since you saw no form when the LORD spoke to you at Horeb out of the fire, take care and watch yourselves closely, so that you do not act corruptly by making an idol for yourselves, in the form of any figure—the likeness of male or female, the likeness of any animal that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the air, the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the water under the earth. And when you look up to the heavens and see the sun, the moon, and the stars, all the host of heaven, do not be led astray and bow down to them and serve them, things that the LORD your God has allotted to all the peoples everywhere under heaven. But the LORD has taken you and brought you out of the iron-smelter, out of Egypt, to become a people of his very own possession, as you are now.

### **Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52**

He put before them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.” He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.”

“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it. “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. “Have you understood all this?” They answered, “Yes.” And he said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”