

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 12, 2020
SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

PRELUDE *Prelude from Suite in A* - Charles Callahan

OPENING WORDS (responsive)

The Lord is gracious and full of compassion.

The Lord is good to all.

O Lord, open thou our lips.

And our mouth shall show forth thy praise.

HYMN *Father, We Praise Thee* 459

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

This hymn text is attributed to Gregory the Great although speculation surrounding the authorship exists. Some say it was written by Alcuin. The hymn is preserved in several eleventh-century manuscripts. The translation was prepared by Percy Dearmer for *The English Hymnal* (1906), which he edited with Ralph Vaughan Williams.

OPENING PRAYER (unison)

God of all creation, our chief end is to glorify you, and enjoy you forever. Our deep delight is in your presence, our fondest thoughts are of you, our strongest longing is for your house. In this hour of worship, help us to become who we are meant to be — a community that breathes thankfulness, voicing your praise in all we do. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND GLORIA PATRI (579)

FIRST LESSON Genesis 25:19-34 p. 19

HYMN *To Bless the Earth* 200

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

This paraphrase of Psalm 65 first appeared in *The Psalter* (1912), a publication of a joint committee of nine churches representing the Reformed tradition in the U.S. and Canada. The tune is an old one, by Melchior Vulpius, in 1609. He was the leading German composer of his day, a schoolmaster and musicologist, composing over 200 motets and 400 hymns for Lutheran worship.

SECOND LESSON Matthew 13:1-9; 18-23 p. 794

SERMON No Roots

HYMN *Eternal Light, Shine in My Heart* 340

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

The Latin text of this hymn is from a prayer attributed to Alcuin (c. 735-804). Born in Northumbria, he was educated at the Cathedral school in York, where he spent most of his life. He became master of the school in 766 and at the time of his death was abbot of the monastery of St. Martin at Tours. Alcuin was a counselor and cultural adviser to Charlemagne and inspired the Carolingian Renaissance. He revised the Roman lectionary in Gaul and composed votive masses. He is also credited with the introduction of the Feast of All Saints.

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 *All Things Bright and Beautiful* - Wilbur Held

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

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

HYMN *Great God, We Sing That Mighty Hand* 265

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

This text was written by Philip Doddridge (1702-1751). Doddridge was born in London and was one of twenty children and was orphaned at an early age. He became a nonconformist minister and wrote more than four hundred hymns. All were published after his death from Tuberculosis.

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *Alleluia! Sing to Jesus* - Winston Cassler

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:

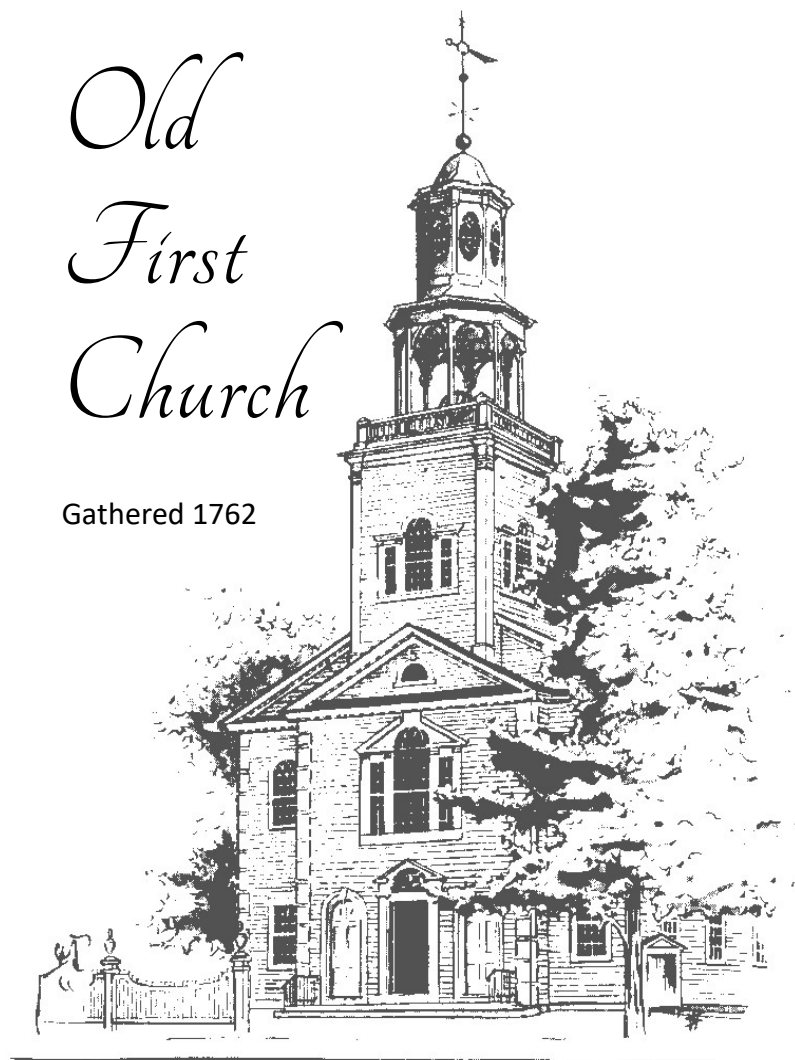
<http://oldfirstchurchbenn.org/worship/worship-here-and-now/>

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)

1 Monument Circle • Old Bennington, Vermont 05201 • (802) 447-1223

office@oldfirst.comcastbiz.net • www.oldfirstchurchbenn.org

Father, We Praise Thee

Father, we praise Thee, now the night is over;
active and watchful, stand we all before Thee;
singing, we offer prayer and meditation:
thus we adore Thee.

Monarch of all things, fit us for thy mansions;
banish our weakness, health and wholeness sending;
bring us to heaven, where Thy saints united
joy without ending.

All-holy Father, Son and equal Spirit,
Trinity blessed, send us Thy salvation;
thine is the glory, gleaming and resounding
through all creation.

To Bless the Earth

To bless the earth, God sends us
From heaven's abundant store
The waters of the springtime,
Enriching it once more.

The seed by God provided
Is sown o'er hill and plain,
And then come gentle showers
To bless the springing grain.

God crowns the year with goodness,
The earth God's mercy fills,
The wilderness is fruitful,
And joyful are the hills.

With grain the fields are covered,
The flocks in pastures graze;
All nature joins in singing
A joyful song of praise.

Eternal Light, Shine in My Heart

Eternal light, shine in my heart;
eternal hope, lift up my eyes;
eternal power, be my support;
eternal wisdom, make me wise.

Eternal life, raise me from death;
eternal brightness, help me see;
eternal Spirit, give me breath;
eternal Savior, come to me:

Until by Your most costly grace,
invited by Your holy word,
at last I come before Your face
to know You, my eternal God.

Great God, We Sing That Mighty Hand

Great God, we sing that mighty hand
By which supported still we stand;
The opening year Your mercy shows;
That mercy crowns it till it close.

With grateful hearts the past we own;
The future, all to us unknown,
We to Your guardian care commit,
And peaceful leave before Your feet.

In scenes exalted or depressed,
You are our joy, and You our rest;
Your goodness all our hopes shall raise,
Adored through all our changing days.

Genesis 25:19-34

These are the descendants of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah, daughter of Bethuel the Aramean of Paddan-aram, sister of Laban the Aramean. Isaac prayed to the Lord for his wife, because she was barren; and the Lord granted his prayer, and his wife Rebekah conceived. The children struggled together within her; and she said, "If it is to be this way, why do I live?" So she went to inquire of the Lord. And the Lord said to her, "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples born of you shall be divided; the one shall be stronger than the other, the elder shall serve the younger." When her time to give birth was at hand, there were twins in her womb. The first came out red, all his body like a hairy mantle; so they named him Esau. Afterward his brother came out, with his hand gripping Esau's heel; so he was named Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them. When the boys grew up, Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field, while Jacob was a quiet man, living in tents. Isaac loved Esau, because he was fond of game; but Rebekah loved Jacob.

Once when Jacob was cooking a stew, Esau came in from the field, and he was famished. Esau said to Jacob, "Let me eat some of that red stuff, for I am famished!" (Therefore he was called Edom.) Jacob said, "First sell me your birthright." Esau said, "I am about to die; of what use is a birthright to me?" Jacob said, "Swear to me first." So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew, and he ate and drank, and rose and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.

Matthew 13:1-9; 18-23

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables, saying: "Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Let anyone with ears listen!" "Hear then the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty."