

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

AUGUST 23, 2020

PRELUDE *Andante tranquillo from Sonata III* - Felix Mendelssohn

OPENING WORDS (responsive)

Let us gather to worship and praise the Lord.

For the goodness of this life and the promise of each day.

Let us remember God's guiding spirit and give thanks.

For works of mercy, love and peace we have known.

HYMN *Let the Whole Creation Cry* 256

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

This hymn is based on Psalm 148. The liberal views of the author, Stopford Brooke, a priest in Ireland and London, led him to leave the Anglican church in 1880. Jacob Hintze, town musician of Barnam, Germany, may have written the tune, first published in 1678. J. S. Bach harmonized it.

OPENING PRAYER (unison)

Almighty and merciful God, from whom comes all that is good, we praise you for your mercies, for your goodness that has created us, your grace that has sustained us, your patience that has borne with us, and your love that has redeemed us. Forgive our misdeeds or neglects. Help us to love you, and to be thankful for all your gifts by serving you and delighting to do your will, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND GLORIA PATRI (579)

FIRST LESSON Isaiah 51:1-6 p. 594

HYMN *Now Israel May Say* 236

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

Old 124th is from the Genevan Psalter (1551), where it is the setting for Psalm 124. Though many arrangements of the tune are available, the present one is from *The Hymnal* (1933), which is a slight modification of the arrangement in *The English Hymnal* (1906). It is said that when the Duke of Savoy was defeated in his attack against Geneva, December 12, 1602, the grateful people sang Psalm 124 to this tune.

SECOND LESSON Romans 12:1-8 p. 922

SERMON The Quarry

HYMN *As Those of Old Their Firstfruits Brought* 414

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

Written in 1960, this text by Frank von Christierson was first published in *Ten New Stewardship Hymns* (1961) by the Hymn Society of America. It is well-known as an anthem arranged by Austin Lovelace. The original first line, "As men of old their first fruits brought" was altered by Christierson to "As saints of old their first fruits brought" for the *Lutheran Book of Worship* (1978).

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 *Verset* - Leon Boellmann

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

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

HYMN *In Christ There Is No East or West* 440

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

The text was originally from a play, "The Pageant of Darkness and Light," written for the London Missionary Society exhibition on the Orient in 1908. The author was a wholesale grocer and writer of 42 novels and 25 collections of poetry and hymns, including "Hymns for Men at the Front," which sold 8 million copies in World War I. The spiritual tune was the setting for "I Know the Angel's Done Changed My Name" in an 1884 hymn collection "Jubilee Songs," and was later adapted and named for Elmer McKee, rector of St. George's Protestant Episcopal Church in New York City in the 1930's.

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *Fuguing Tune* - Franklin D. Ashdown

Deacons on call this month are Sandy Bechtel and Laurel Varker.

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:

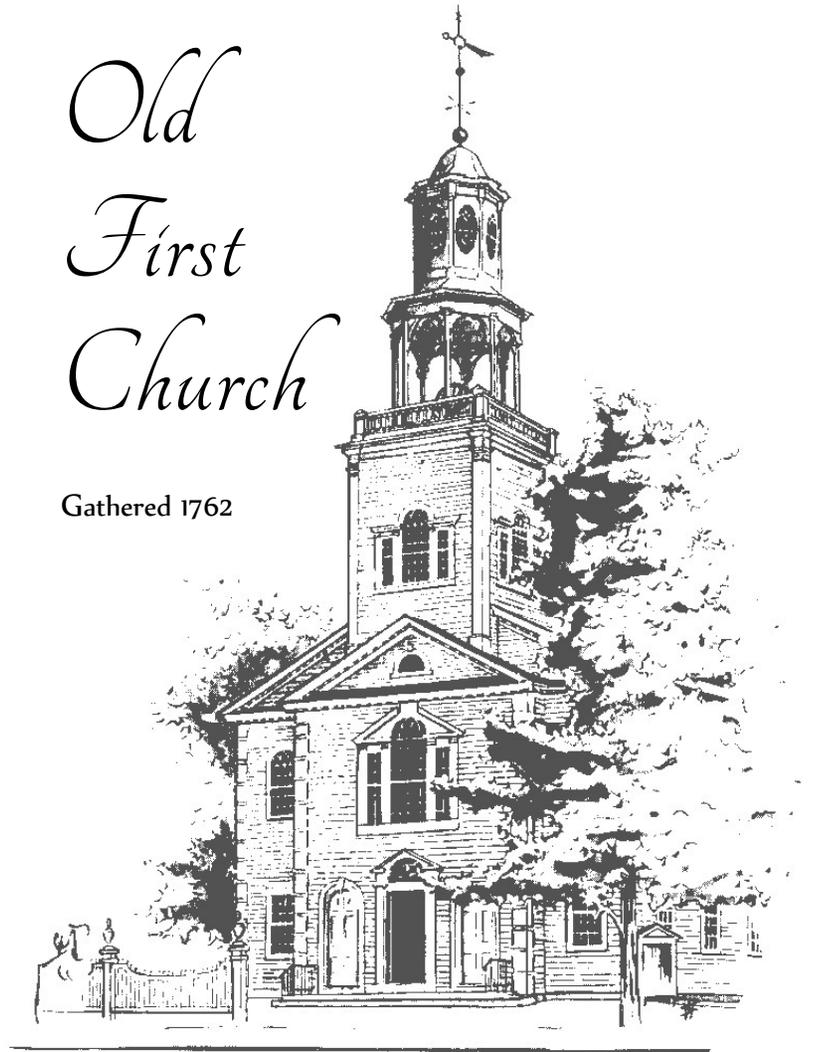
<http://oldfirstchurchbenn.org/worship/worship-here-and-now/>

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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Let the Whole Creation Cry

Let the whole creation cry,
"Glory to the Lord on high."
Heaven and earth, awake and sing,
"God is our eternal King."
Praise God, all ye hosts above,
ever shining forth in love;
sun and moon, uplift your voice;
night and stars, in God rejoice!

Men and women, young and old,
raise the anthem manifold;
join with children's song of praise
worship God through length of days.
From the north to southern pole
let the mighty chorus roll:
"Holy, holy, holy One,
glory be to God alone!"

Now Israel May Say

Now Israel may say, and that in truth:
if that the Lord had not our right maintained,
if that the Lord had not with us remained
when cruel foes against us rose to strive,
we surely had been swallowed up alive.

Yea, when their wrath against us fiercely rose,
the swelling tide had o'er us spread its wave,
the raging stream had then become our grave,
the surging flood, in proudly swelling roll,
most surely then had overwhelmed our soul.

Blest be the Lord, who made us not their prey;
as from the snare a bird escapeth free,
their net is rent and so escaped are we;
our only help is in God's holy name,
who made the earth and all the heavenly frame.

As Those of Old Their Firstfruits Brought

As those of old their firstfruits bought
of vineyard, flock, and field
to God, the giver of all good,
the source of bounteous yield,
so we today our firstfruits bring,
the wealth of this good land:
of farm and market, shop and home,
of mind and heart and hand.

A world in need now summons us
to labor, love, and give,
to make our life an offering
to God, that all may live.
The church of Christ is calling us
to make the dream come true:
a world redeemed by Christ-like love,
all life in Christ made new.

In gratitude and humble trust
we bring our best today
to serve your cause and share your love
with all along life's way.
O God, who gave yourself to use
in Jesus Christ your Son,
teach us to give ourselves each day
until life's work is done.

In Christ There Is No East or West

1. In Christ there is no east or west,
In Him no south or north;
But one great fellowship of love
Throughout the whole wide earth.

2. In Christ shall true hearts everywhere
Their high communion find;
His service is the golden cord
Close binding humankind.

3. Join hands, disciples in the faith,
Whate'er your race may be.
All children of the living God
Are surely kin to me.

4. In Christ now meet both east and west,
In Him meet south and north;
All Christly souls are one in Him
Throughout the whole wide earth.

Isaiah 51:1-6

Listen to me, you that pursue righteousness, you that seek the LORD. Look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the quarry from which you were dug. Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who bore you; for he was but one when I called him, but I blessed him and made him many. For the LORD will comfort Zion; he will comfort all her waste places, and will make her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song.

Listen to me, my people, and give heed to me, my nation; for a teaching will go out from me, and my justice for a light to the peoples. I will bring near my deliverance swiftly, my salvation has gone out and my arms will rule the peoples; the coastlands wait for me, and for my arm they hope. Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look at the earth beneath; for the heavens will vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment, and those who live on it will die like gnats; but my salvation will be forever, and my deliverance will never be ended.

Romans 12:1-8

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect. For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.