

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 30, 2020

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**PRELUDE** *Prelude II* - Paul Sheftel

**OPENING WORDS** (responsive)

We delight in the word of God.

**May we hear God's voice in each day.**

May we raise our voices in praise and hope.

**God's promised love is sure and unfailing.**

**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 (14<sup>th</sup> 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 the tune LEONI.

**OPENING PRAYER** (unison)

Lord, let us not dwell in the past,  
nor worry about the future.

We cannot undo what is done.

We cannot foresee what will come.

Let us instead dwell in your peace,  
love and be loved,  
heal and be healed.

We give the past to you  
and rest in your forgiveness.

We give the future to you  
and rest in your love.

We live in your light,  
open our eyes that we may see.

We live in your love,  
let your love flow through us,  
to the fulfilment of your kingdom. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

**ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND GLORIA PATRI (579)**

**FIRST LESSON** Exodus 3:1-15 p. 44

**HYMN** *Not Unto Us, O Lord of Heaven* 227

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

This metrical renting of Psalm 115 was first published in *The Psalter* (1912), where it had five stanzas. *The Presbyterian Hymnal* (1990) contains the first three stanzas from the earlier collection. The language has been slightly altered from the original.

**SECOND LESSON** Matthew 16:21-28 p.798

**SERMON** Who Am I

**HYMN** *O God, Our Faithful God* 277

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

This hymn originally in German was written by Johann Heermann and titled "A Daily Prayer." It was published in *Devoti Musica Hordis, Hauss- und Hertz-Musica* (1630). Heermann (1585-1647) was born in Raudten, Silesia, the youngest and only surviving child of five born to his parents. As a child, Heermann was quite ill and his mother vowed if God would spare him, she would dedicate the child's life to the ministry.

**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** *Berceuse* - Louis Vierne

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

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

**HYMN** *Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound* 280

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

The text was written for the people of Olney, Buckinghamshire, England by the pastor. In 1748 he had been captain of a slave ship, where a storm at sea brought a spiritual awakening. The tune's origin is unknown, but it may be based on an African melody.

**BENEDICTION**

**POSTLUDE** *Fugue in D Minor* - W.A. Palmer

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

**FREE SUNDAY SUPPER:** Our church will be hosting the Free Sunday Supper on **September 13<sup>th</sup>**. We are in need of food for the dinner as well as hosts to help with the packing of the take-out meals. Needed: Baked ziti with meat sauce or meatballs, 3 loaves of sliced Italian bread, butter and desserts. Food donations should be brought “ready to be packaged” to Second Congregational Church at 4:00 PM September 13<sup>th</sup> and hosts should plan to arrive around 4:15 PM.

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:

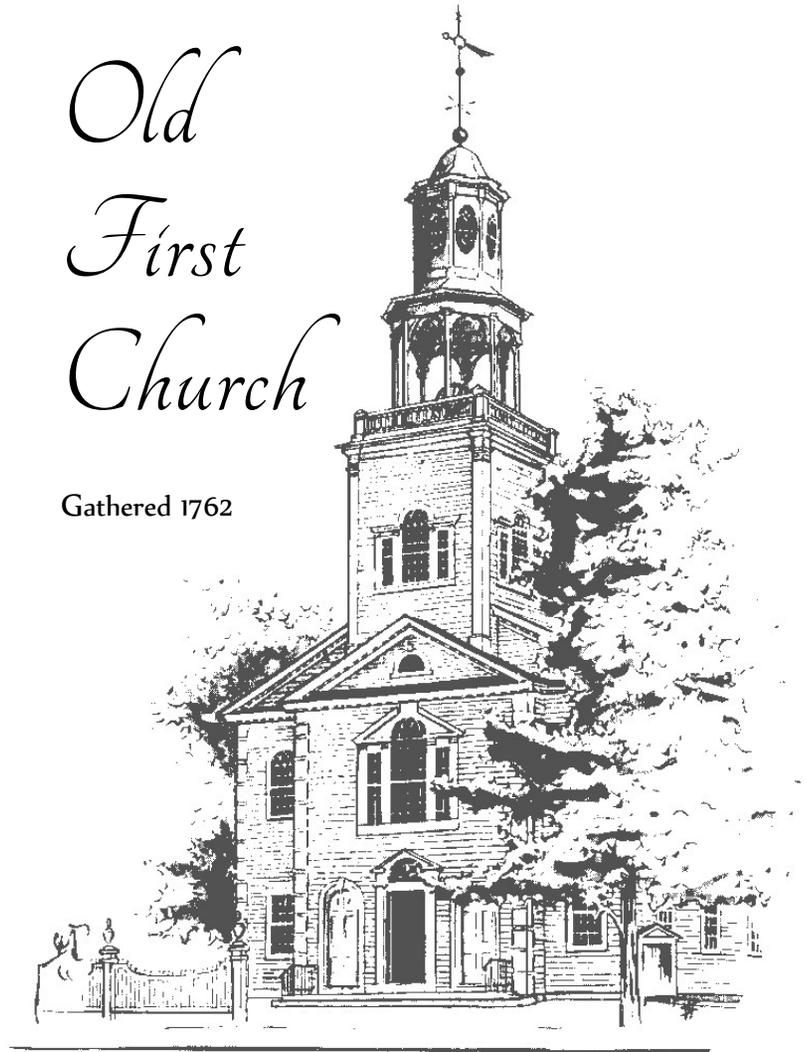
<http://oldfirstchurchbenn.org/worship/worship-here-and-now/>

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](mailto:office@oldfirst.comcastbiz.net) • [www.oldfirstchurchbenn.org](http://www.oldfirstchurchbenn.org)

## *The God of Abraham Praise*

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.

Your spirit still flows free, high surging where it will;  
In prophet's word You spoke of old and You speak still.  
Established is Your law, and changeless it shall stand,  
Deep writ upon the human heart, on sea, or land.

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!

## *Not Unto Us, O Lord of Heaven*

Not unto us, O Lord of heaven,  
but unto You be glory given.  
In love and truth You do fulfill  
the counsels of Your sovereign will;  
though nations fail Your power to own,  
yet, You still reign, and You alone.

The idol-gods of heathen lands  
are but the work of human hands;  
they cannot see, they cannot speak,  
their ears are deaf, their hands are weak;  
Like them shall be all those who hold  
to gods of silver and of gold.

Let Israel trust in God alone,  
the Lord whose grace and power are known;  
To God your full allegiance yield,  
That one will be your help and shield;  
All those who fear God will be blest,  
the saints have proved God's faithfulness.

## *O God, Our Faithful God*

1). O God, our faithful God,  
O fountain ever flowing,  
without whom nothing is,  
all perfect gifts bestowing,  
grant us a faithful life,  
and give us, Lord, within  
commitment free from strife,  
a soul unhurt by sin.

2). God, grant us strength to do  
with ready heart and willing,  
whatever You command,  
our calling here fulfilling;  
And do it when we ought,  
with zeal and joyfulness;  
And bless the work we've wrought,  
for You must give success.

3). If dangers gather round,  
still keep us calm and fearless;  
Help us to bear the cross  
when life is bleak and cheerless,  
to overcome our foes  
with words and actions kind;  
O God, Your will disclose,  
Your counsel let us find.

## *Amazing Grace*

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound  
that saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost, but now I am found,  
was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,  
and grace my fears relieved;  
How precious did that grace appear  
The hour I first believed!

Through many dangers, toils and snares,  
I have already come;  
'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far,  
And grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me,  
His word my hope secures;  
He will my shield and portion be  
as long as life endures.

When we've been there ten thousand years,  
bright shining as the sun,  
we've no less days to sing God's praise  
than when we'd first begun.

## EXODUS 3:1-15

Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. Then Moses said, "I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up." When the LORD saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." Then he said, "Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." He said further, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

Then the LORD said, "I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt."

But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" He said, "I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain." But Moses said to God, "If I come to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." He said further, "Thus you shall say to the Israelites, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"  
God also said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the Israelites, 'The LORD, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you': This is my name forever, and this my title for all generations.

## MATTHEW 16:21-28

From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you." But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life? "For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."