

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

OCTOBER 11, 2020
NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

PRELUDE *Melody* - Carl Czerny

OPENING WORDS (responsive)

Sing to the Lord a new song.

Sing to the Lord, all the earth.

Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice.

In the peace of this hour may God's word comfort us.

HYMN *For the Beauty of the Earth* 473
(verses 1-4)

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

The text's author was briefly a headmaster and literature teacher at a college in England, but an inheritance allowed him to spend the rest of his life traveling and writing. This text was originally written as a communion hymn to infuse a note of joy into the then otherwise solemn service. The tune's original author was choirmaster and organist at Stuttgart, and modified to be the setting of William Dix's "As With Gladness Men of Old."

OPENING PRAYER (unison)

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:

where there is hatred, let me sow love;

where there is injury, pardon;

where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light;

where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek

to be consoled as to console,

to be understood as to understand,

to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive,

it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,

and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND GLORIA PATRI (579)

FIRST LESSON Exodus 32:1-14 p. 69

HYMN *Psalm 23* 173

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

This paraphrase of Psalm 23 was written in 1984 for the Psalter Task Force of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) by Robert J. Moore, a member of the task force. Moore was born in Phoenix in 1952 and educated in Arizona and California. He is an ordained Presbyterian minister and served in churches in California, New Mexico and Arizona before returning to graduate school.

SECOND LESSON Philippians 4:1-9 p. 955

SERMON "Dead Reckoning"

HYMN *All Creatures of Our God and King* 455
(verses 1-3, and 6)

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

The text is based on St. Francis' *Canticle of the Sun*, considered the first religious Italian poem, written in 1255, one year before Francis' death, when he was blind and ill. The translator and adapter, William Draper, was an Anglican priest. The composer is unknown, although the first line is the same as a 16th century tune (see #226 and 253). Ralph Vaughan Williams wrote the harmony in 1906 for the hymn, "Ye Watchers and Ye Holy Ones" (#451).

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 *Offertory* - S. Heller

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

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

HYMN *Wherever I May Wander* 294

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

This children's hymn was written by Ann B. Snow in 1959. It was published in *Songs and Hymns for Primary Children* (1963) by Westminster Press for the United Presbyterian Church U.S.A. The tune NEW ENGLAND is a folk melody from New England. The present arrangement was first published by the Unitarian Universalist Association.

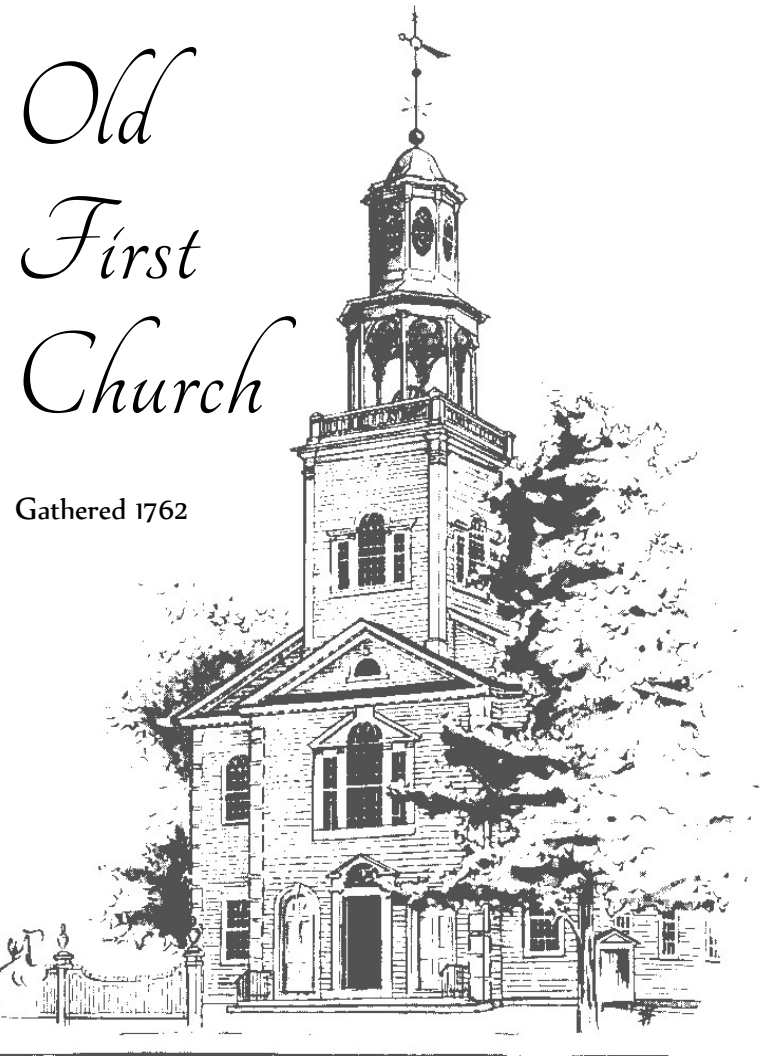
BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *Voluntary* - Reinagle

Deacons on call this month are Bill Gordon and Marie Guariniello.

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!



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

(OLD FIRST CHURCH)

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For the Beauty of the Earth

For the beauty of the earth,
For the glory of the skies,
For the love which from our birth
Over and around us lies.

Refrain: Lord of all to Thee we raise
This our hymn of grateful praise.

For the wonder of each hour,
Of the day and of the night,
Hill and vale, and tree and flower,
Sun and moon, and stars of light. (*Refrain*)

For the joy of ear and eye,
For the heart and mind's delight,
For the mystic harmony
Linking sense to sound and sight, (*Refrain*)

For the joy of human love,
Brother, sister, parent, child,
Friends on earth and friends above,
For all gentle thoughts and mild. (*Refrain*)

Psalm 23

Refrain: My shepherd is the Lord, nothing indeed shall I want.

The Lord is my Shepherd,
I will never be in need.
In the fresh green meadow
my Shepherd will make me lie down,
And to the still water will guide me,
Find refreshment for my spirit. *Refrain.*

Guiding me to greener pastures,
You are true to Your word.
Though I walk through the darkest of shadows,
What danger could I fear?
You will always go with me,
Your rod and staff will lead me. *Refrain.*

You spread a table before me,
Before all my foes.
You anoint my head with oil,
Fill my cup to overflowing. *Refrain.*

Surely goodness and kindness wait for me
every day of my life.
In the house of the Lord will I live,
Forever and forever. *Refrain.*

All Creatures of Our God and King (verses 1, 3 and 6)

All creatures of our God and King,
lift up your voice and with us sing,
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Thou burning sun with golden beam,
thou silver moon with softer gleam,
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Thou flowing water, pure and clear,
Make music for thy Lord to hear,
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Thou fire so masterful and bring,
That givest us both warmth and light,
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

All creatures, your Creator bless,
and worship God in humbleness.
O sing ye! Alleluia!
Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son,
and praise the Spirit, Three in One!
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Wherever I May Wander

Wherever I may wander,
Wherever I may be,
I'm certain of my Maker's love;
God's care is over me.
God made the great high mountains,
And made the wide blue sea;
God made the sky where airplanes fly;
God made the world, and me.

Throughout the whole creation
I see God's loving care
For everyone in every land,
God's children everywhere.
Wherever I may wander,
Wherever I may be,
I'm certain of my Maker's love
God's care is over me.

EXODUS 32:1-14

When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered around Aaron, and said to him, “Come, make gods for us, who shall go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.” Aaron said to them, “Take off the gold rings that are on the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me.” So all the people took off the gold rings from their ears, and brought them to Aaron. He took the gold from them, formed it in a mold, and cast an image of a calf; and they said, “These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!” When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation and said, “Tomorrow shall be a festival to the LORD.” They rose early the next day, and offered burnt offerings and brought sacrifices of well-being; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to revel.

The LORD said to Moses, “Go down at once! Your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have acted perversely; they have been quick to turn aside from the way that I commanded them; they have cast for themselves an image of a calf, and have worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said, ‘These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!’” The LORD said to Moses, “I have seen this people, how stiff-necked they are. Now let me alone, so that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them; and of you I will make a great nation.” But Moses implored the LORD his God, and said, “O LORD, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians say, ‘It was with evil intent that he brought them out to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth’? Turn from your fierce wrath; change your mind and do not bring disaster on your people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, how you swore to them by your own self, saying to them, ‘I will multiply your descendants like the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.’” And the LORD changed his mind about the disaster that he planned to bring on his people.

PHILIPPIANS 4:1-9

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved. I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. Yes, and I ask you also, my loyal companion, help these women, for they have struggled beside me in the work of the gospel, together with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life. Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.