

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

JANUARY 31, 2021
Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

PRELUDE *O That I had a Thousand Voices* - Jeffrey Blersch

OPENING WORDS (responsive)

O Lord, in your light we see light.

By your love our world is made new.

Let us sing with thanks and praise to God.

Your faithfulness extends to all creation.

HYMN *O Worship the King, All Glorious Above!* 476

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

Robert Grant paraphrased Psalm 104 for this hymn. Born and died in India, he was a British member of Parliament who introduced a bill in 1833 emancipating the Jews. The text of verse two has been altered to be closer to the language of the Psalm ("chariots of wrath," which some may remember, isn't in the Psalm!) It is not certain that Johann Michael Haydn, Franz Joseph's brother, was the composer. A number of pieces by both contain the first line. Johann was a singer who supposedly had a range of three octaves.

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 your grace
to come at last to heaven. This we pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND GLORIA PATRI (579)

FIRST LESSON Deuteronomy 18:15-20 p. 153

HYMN *Lord, Let Your Mercy Be on Us* 185

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

This psalm is classified by scholars as a hymn that was probably sung at the Autumn Festival in ancient Israel. While it is difficult to date the original hymn, many believe it to be postexilic. The text is from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible (1989), the version we use in our church. The psalm may be read responsively or chanted.

SECOND LESSON Mark 1:21-28 p. 812

SERMON Prophets and Healers

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 *O Christ, You are the Light and Day* - Samuel Scheidt

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

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

HYMN *Earth and All Stars* 458

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

The confirmation class picked this hymn out of the morning and opening hymns section of our hymnal because of the very concrete imagery. Herbert Brokering, a Lutheran minister and education consultant, wrote the text for the 90th anniversary of St. Olaf College, Northfield, MN in 1964. David Johnson composed the tune for this text. He has been professor of music at Arizona State University, organist at Trinity Episcopal Church, Phoenix and at Syracuse University and St. Olaf College.

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *Psalm of Glory* - Dorothy Wells

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

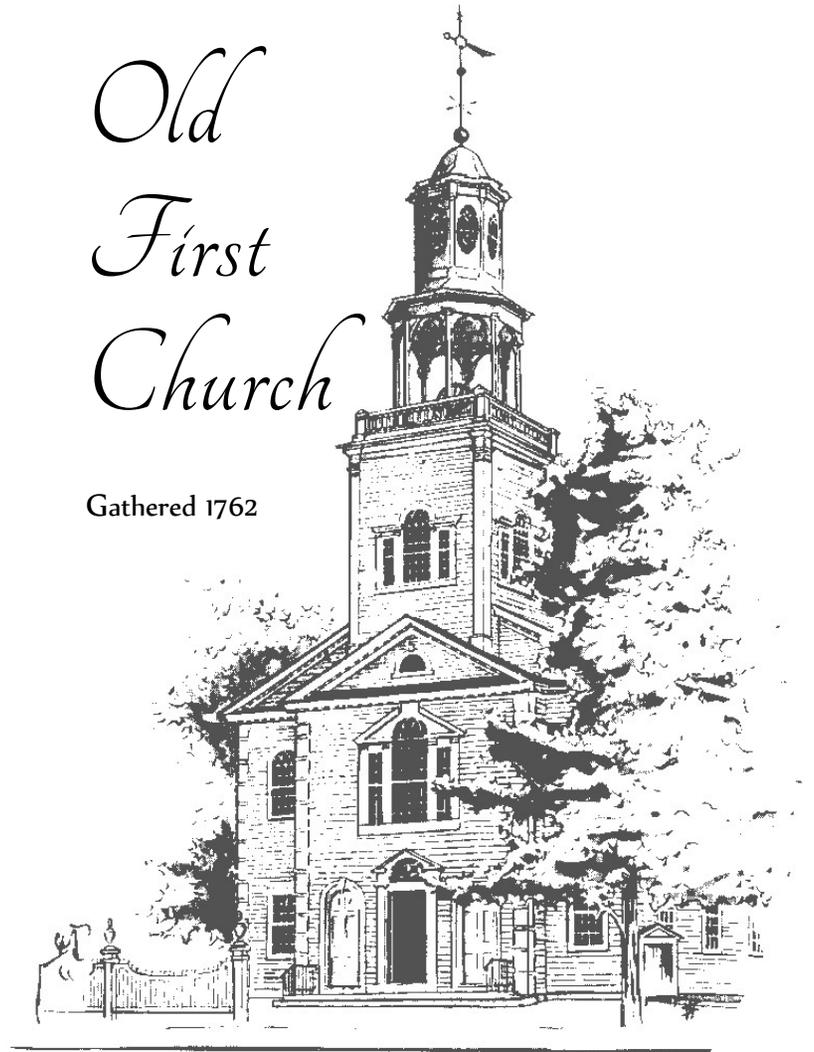
Worship and life at Old First is changing in response to the need to reduce activity as we work to get through the challenge of the COVID-19 presence in our life. Our prayers and thoughts go to everyone immediately affected and thanks go to all people who work to provide care and supply our needs in 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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O Worship the King, All Glorious Above!

O worship the King, all-glorious above! O gratefully sing God's power and God's love; our shield and defender, the Ancient of Days, pavilioned in splendor and girded with praise.

O tell of God's might, O sing of God's grace, whose robe is the light, whose canopy space. The chariots of heaven the deep thunderclouds form, and bright is God's path on the wings of the storm.

The earth with its store of wonders untold, almighty, Thy power hath founded of old; hath stablished it fast by a changeless decree, and round it hath cast, like a mantle, the sea.

Thy bountiful care what tongue can recite? It breathes in the air, it shines in the light; it streams from the hills, it descends to the plain, and sweetly distills in the dew and the rain.

Frail children of dust, and feeble as frail, in Thee do we trust, nor find Thee to fail; Thy mercies how tender, how firm to the end, our maker, defender, redeemer, and friend.

Lord, Let Your Mercy Be on Us

Refrain:

Lord, let Your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in You

Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous.

Praise befits the upright.

Praise the Lord with the lyre,

Make melody to Him with the harp of ten strings! *[Refrain]*

Sing to Him a new song,

Play skillfully on the strings, with loud shouts.

For the word of the Lord is upright;

And all His work is done in faithfulness. *[Refrain]*

He loves righteousness and justice;

The earth is full of the steadfast love of the Lord.

By the word of the Lord the heavens were made,

And all their host by the breath of His mouth. *[Refrain]*

He gathered the waters of the sea as in a bottle;

He put the deeps in storehouses.

Let all the earth fear the Lord,

Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. *[Refrain]*

For He spoke, and it came to be;

He commanded, and it stood firm.

The Lord brings the counsel of the nations to nothing;

He frustrates the plans of the peoples. *[Refrain]*

God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending

1. 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.
2. 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.

3. 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.

Earth and All Stars

Earth and all stars, loud rushing planets

Sing to the Lord a new song!

Hail, wind, and rain, loud blowing snowstorm

Sing to the Lord a new song!

Refrain

God has done marvelous things.

We will sing praises with a new song!

Steel and machines, loud pounding hammers

Sing to the Lord a new song!

Limestone and beams, loud building workers

Sing to the Lord a new song! *[Refrain]*

Classrooms and labs, loud boiling test tubes

Sing to the Lord a new song!

Athlete and band, loud cheering people

Sing to the Lord a new song! *[Refrain]*

Knowledge and truth, loud sounding wisdom

Sing to the Lord a new song!

Daughter and son, loud praying members

Sing to the Lord a new song! *[Refrain]*

DEUTERONOMY 18:15-20

The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you shall heed such a prophet. This is what you requested of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said: “If I hear the voice of the LORD my God any more, or ever again see this great fire, I will die.” Then the LORD replied to me: “They are right in what they have said. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their own people; I will put my words in the mouth of the prophet, who shall speak to them everything that I command. Anyone who does not heed the words that the prophet shall speak in my name, I myself will hold accountable. But any prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, or who presumes to speak in my name a word that I have not commanded the prophet to speak—that prophet shall die.”

MARK 1:21-28

They went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out, “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.” But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent, and come out of him!” And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, “What is this? A new teaching—with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.” At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.