

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 10, 2021
Third Sunday after Christmas Day

PRELUDE *To God on High be Praise* - J.S. Bach

OPENING WORDS (responsive)

This is the day which the Lord has made.

Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Teach us the ways of peace and the path of kindness.

Be with us, O Lord, in all we do and say.

HYMN *O Splendor of God's Glory Bright* 474

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

Scholars have attributed the original Latin text "Splendor paternae gloriae" to Ambrose of Milan. This is based on the testimony of Fulgentius, bishop of Ruspe, North Africa (d. 533), the Venerable Bede and the Benedictine editors of his works. This morning hymn addressing the Trinity was traditionally used at Lauds (sunrise) on Monday.

OPENING PRAYER (unison)

Most merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against you
and against one another,
in thought, and word, and deed.
We are truly sorry for our pride,
and for our lack of faith, of understanding and of love.
We repent of our narrow-mindedness,
of our bitterness and our prejudices.
Pardon and forgive us,
save us and renew us,
that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND GLORIA PATRI (579)

FIRST LESSON Genesis 1:1-5 p. 1

HYMN *This Is the Day the Lord Hath Made* 230

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

This paraphrase of Psalm 118 by Isaac Watts was first published in *The Psalms of David* (1719), where he headed it "Hosanna; The Lord's Day; or Christ's Resurrection, and Our Salvation." Watts's intention was for it to be sung on Easter Day or on Sundays.

SECOND LESSON Acts 19:1-7 p. 903

SERMON In the Beginning

HYMN *Midnight Stars Make Bright the Sky* 65

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

This hymn was written by Ching-chiu Yank (1912-1966) in 1930. It was translated by Mildred Kathryn Artz Wiant and first appeared in *Worship Materials from the Chinese* published by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. (NCC) in 1969. It later appeared in *Hymns of Universal Praise* (1936, rev., 1977).

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 *Sollt ich meinem Gott nicht singen*
(Shall I not sing to my God) - Johann Ernst Rembt

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

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

HYMN *Brightest and Best of the Stars of the Morning* 67

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

This Epiphany text was written by Bishop Reginald Heber. Heber (1783-1826) was born in Malpas, England, and educated at Brasenose College, Oxford, where he won prizes for his poetry. He was ordained in 1807 and became vicar of the family estate at Hodnet, Shropshire. In 1823, Heber was appointed bishop of Calcutta and ordained the first native Christian there. Heber died suddenly at the end of a day in which he had baptized forty-two people. He wrote all his hymns before he went to India.

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *Voluntary* - Samuel Priestly Taylor

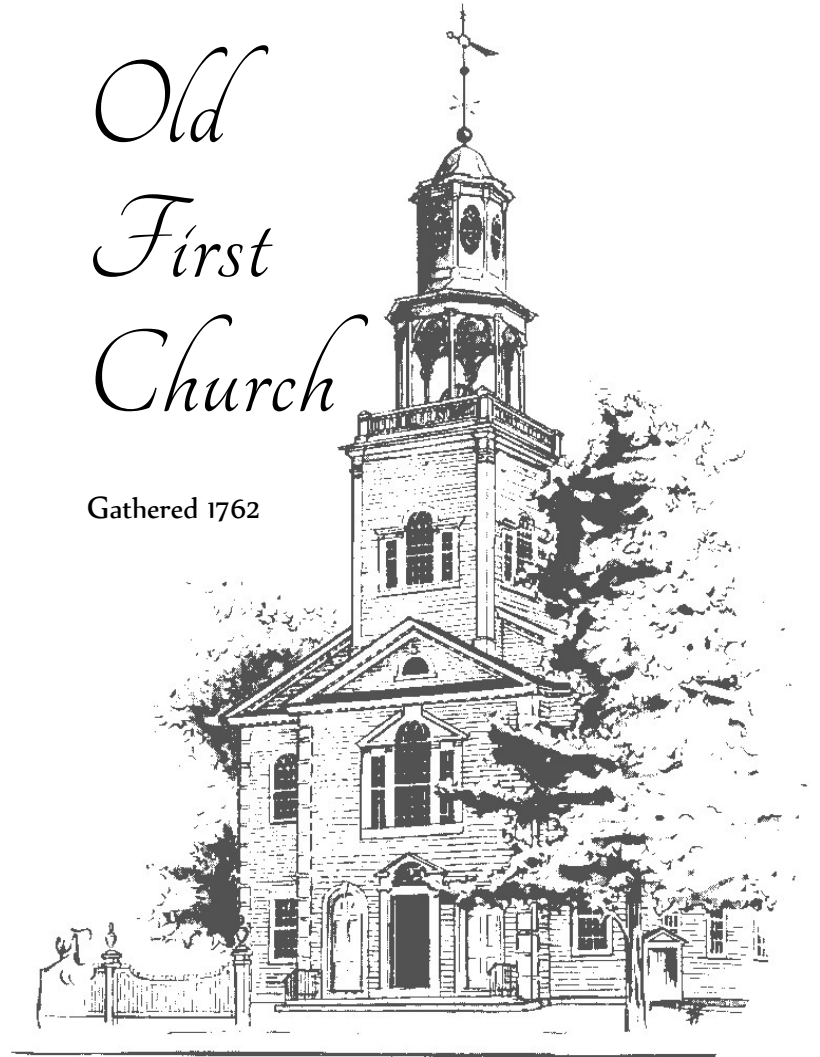
Deacons on call this month are Sandy Bechtel and Laurel Varker.

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 Splendor of God's Gory Bright

O Splendor of God's glory bright,
from light eternal bringing light;
Thou light of life, light's living spring,
true day, all days illumining:

Come, Holy Sun of heavenly love,
Shower down Thy radiance from above,
and to our inward hearts convey
Thy Holy Spirit's cloudless ray.

O joyful be the passing day
with thoughts as clear as morning's ray,
with faith like noontide shining bright,
our souls unshadowed by the night.

O Lord, with each returning morn
Thine image to our hearts is born;
O may we ever clearly see
Our Savior and our God in Thee!

This Is the Day the Lord Hath Made

This is the day the Lord hath made;
The hours are all God's own;
Let Heaven rejoice, let earth be glad,
And praise surround the throne.

Hosanna to the anointed King,
To David's holy Son!
Help us, O Lord; descend and bring
Salvation from the throne.
Blest be the Lord, who comes in power
With messages of grace,
Who comes in this accepted hour
To save our sinful race.

Hosanna in the highest strains
The church on earth can raise!
The highest heavens, in which God reigns
Shall now resound with praise.

Midnight Stars Make Bright the Sky

- 1). Midnight stars make bright the skies,
Bethlehem in slumber lies;
Glistening heaven sends forth the great light,
Shepherds see a wondrous sight!
Angel ranks in chorus sing,
Silken sounds from heaven ring,
Frightened shepherds hear them say:
"Christ comes down to earth today!"
Glory be to God on high,
Blest are all beneath the sky.
- 2). Midnight slumber lies o'er all;
One lone bright lamp lights the stall.
Choose old clothing, wrap Him warmly,
Manger shall His cradle be.
Born to save us from our sin,
Word made flesh, our lives to win,
Came to earth from heaven's throne,
Mortals' sin to bear alone.
Glory be to God on high,
Blest are all beneath the sky.

- 3). Wisemen long foretold the way,
Saw the strange star's shining ray,
Knew a child was born in Jewry,
Worship would be joy for aye!
Took strong camels hurrying,
Crossing desert sought their King,
Reverently to Him present
Gold and myrrh and frankincense.
Glory be to God on high,
Blest are all beneath the sky.

Brightest and Best of the Stars of the Morning

Brightest and best of the stars of the morning,
dawn on our darkness and lend us thine aid;
star of the east, the horizon adorning,
guide where our infant Redeemer is laid.

Cold on His cradle the dew-drops are shining,
low lies His head with the beasts of the stall;
angels adore Him in slumber reclining,
Maker and Monarch and Savior of all!

Shall we then yield Him, in costly devotion,
odors of Edom and offerings divine,
gems of the mountain and pearls of the ocean,
myrrh from the forest, or gold from the mine?

Vainly we offer each ample oblation,
vainly with gifts would His favor secure;
richer by far is the heart's adoration,
dearer to God are the prayers of the poor.

GENESIS 1:1-5

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.

Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

ACTS 19:1-7

While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul passed through the interior regions and came to Ephesus, where he found some disciples. He said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?” They replied, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.” Then he said, “Into what then were you baptized?” They answered, “Into John’s baptism.” Paul said, “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, in Jesus.” On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied— altogether there were about twelve of them.