

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  
ANASTASIA GAUTHIER, LAY READER

SEPTEMBER 19, 2021

**PRELUDE** *Reflection* - Kerry J. Beaumont

**OPENING WORDS** (responsive)

Our help is in the name of the Lord.

**God watches over all creation.**

Let us give thanks to God for all good things this day.

**We praise God for our life and blessings.**

**\*HYMN** *Praise Ye the Lord, the Almighty* 482

The text's author, Joachim Neander, took the Calvinist faith seriously but also lived a "rather unruly existence" before his pastor and others influenced him to make some changes in his life. In 1674 he became a grammar school headmaster. 66 of his hymn texts were published in 1691. The valley Neanderthal, where he took long walks, was named in his honor (and was where the famous skeleton was discovered 200 years later in 1856). The tune may have had secular origins but was used by J.S. Bach in three cantatas and an organ setting, as well as Neander's hymn.

**OPENING PRAYER** (unison)

Most holy and merciful God,

We confess to you and to one another,

that we have sinned against you

by what we have done,

and by what we have left undone.

We have not loved you with our  
whole heart and mind and strength.

We have not fully loved our neighbors as ourselves.

We have not always had in us the mind of Christ.

You alone know how often we have grieved you  
by wasting your gifts, by wandering from your ways.

Forgive us, we pray you, most merciful God;

And free us from our sin.

Renew in us the grace and strength of your Holy Spirit,  
for the sake of Jesus Christ your Son our Savior. Amen.

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

**FIRST LESSON** James 3:13-4:8 p. 982

**\*HYMN** *God's Law Is Perfect and Gives Life* 167

This metrical rendering of Psalm 19:7-14 is by Christopher L. Webber. It is from A New Metrical Psalter (1986), which attempts to "follow closely the original texts as they are presented in the Book of Common Prayer, 1979." According to the Common Lectionary, these verses of Psalm 19 are for use on the Third Sunday after Epiphany, Year C; the Third Sunday in Lent, Year B; and on the Sunday between September 11 and 17, Year A.

**SECOND LESSON** Mark 9:30-37 p. 821

**SERMON** The Argument

**\*HYMN** *O Word of God Incarnate* 327

The text was written by William Walsham How. William How (1823-1897) was born in Shrewsbury, England and educated at Wadham College, Oxford and was ordained in 1846. He wrote all his hymns while in the parish of Whittington and was joint editor of several hymnals including *Psalms and Hymns* (1854), Supplement to *Psalms and Hymns* (1867), and *Church Hymns* (1871). He died while on vacation in Ireland.

**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** *This Day* - Bob Chilcott

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

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

**\*HYMN** *I Walk the Unfrequented Road* insert

Frederick Lucian Hosmer was born at Framingham, Mass., in 1840, and educated at Harvard, where he graduated B.A. in 1869. Entering the Unitarian Ministry in 1872 he has held charges in Quincy, Ill.; Cleveland, Ohio; St. Louis; and Berkeley, CA. During his life he wrote many hymns which were published jointly by him and W.C. Gannett. Hosmer died in 1929.

**BENEDICTION**

**POSTLUDE** Epilogue: Was Gott Tut - Alfred V. Fedak  
"This truth remains unshaken"

\* Stand if able

**We welcome all visitors and hope you will return! Please fill out a visitor's card found in the pew and be sure to identify yourself so we can present you with a gift bag.**

Deacons on call this month are Beverly Cohen and Marsha Pilachowski. Ushers and greeters for today's service are David and Laurel Varker.

All are invited to the church picnic at the Castellanos' home, 11 Monument Avenue following worship today

Flowers for worship are provided by Marsha Pilachowski. If you would like to provide flowers or host coffee hour some Sunday please sign up on the enclosed BLOG.

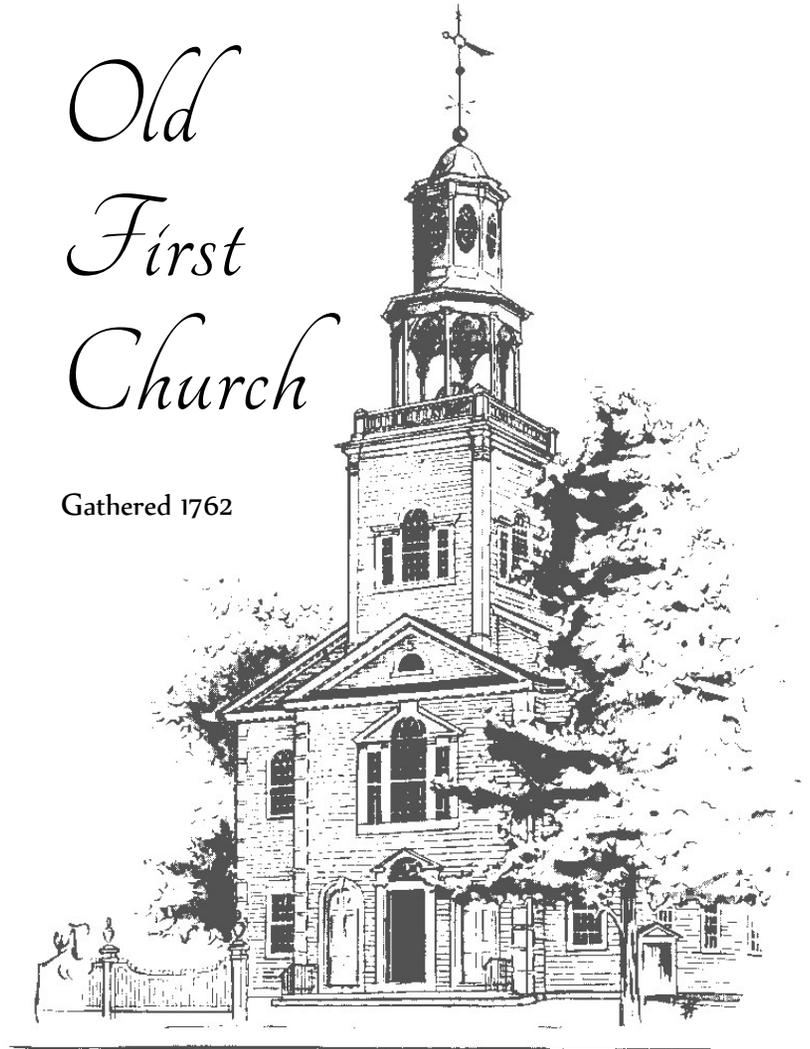
Rug raffle tickets can be purchased before and just after worship today. See Amy Tronsen. Tickets are \$5 each or 6 for \$20 (proceeds benefit the Church's Preservation Fund). Drawing on Dec. 5.

**OPEN CHURCH NEEDS YOUR HELP!** We are entering our busiest time of the Open Church season and we need your help! Our goal is to have the doors open on a daily basis so that tourists can have the experience of walking into the church, meet a welcoming guide, learn a little history, have the opportunity to buy something from our giftshop and hopefully drop a donation in the box. Open Church is a type of fundraiser that is much needed to help maintain our building and programs and we can't do it without the help of many. If you would like to be that welcoming face at the door and have a couple hours to spare on a certain day each week or fill in here and there, we encourage you to contact the Open Church team (Betsy Ehrenfreund, Vicky Printz or Jane Radocchia) to discuss how you can help.

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)

## *Praise Ye the Lord, the Almighty*

Praise ye the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!  
O my soul, praise Him, for He is thy health and salvation!  
All ye who hear, now to His temple draw near;  
join me in glad adoration!

Praise ye the Lord, who o'er all things so wondrously reigneth,  
shelters the under His wings, yea, so gently sustaineth!  
Hast thou not seen how thy desires e'er have been  
sent by his gracious ordaining?  
Granted in what He ordaineth?

Praise ye the Lord! O let all that is in me adore Him!  
All that hath life and breath, come now with praises before Him!  
Let the amen sound from His people again;  
gladly for aye we adore Him.

## **FIRST LESSON**

**James 3:13-4:8**

Who is wise and understanding among you? Show by your good life that your works are done with gentleness born of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not be boastful and false to the truth. Such wisdom does not come down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish. For where there is envy and selfish ambition, there will also be disorder and wickedness of every kind. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace.

Those conflicts and disputes among you, where do they come from? Do they not come from your cravings that are at war within you? You want something and do not have it; so you commit murder. And you covet something and cannot obtain it; so you engage in disputes and conflicts. You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, in order to spend what you get on your pleasures. Adulterers! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. Or do you suppose that it is for nothing that the scripture says, "God yearns jealously for the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"? But he gives all the more grace; therefore it says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble." Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

## *God's Law Is Perfect and Gives Life*

- 1). God's law is perfect and gives life,  
Revives the weary soul;  
God's testimonies all are sure,  
Wisdom for all to hold.  
The statues of the Lord are just  
And give the heart delight;  
God's precepts are direct and pure  
And give the eyes clear sight.
- 2). The fear of God is always clean,  
Enduring as the sun;  
The judgements of the Lord are true  
And righteous, every one.  
And even more to be desired  
Than gold, the finest gold,  
And sweeter than the honeycomb,  
The words God spoke of old.
- 3). Your servant finds enlightenment  
By means of them, O Lord;  
And in the keeping of Your law,  
There is a great reward.  
But who can tell how often they  
Offend unknowingly?  
From all my secret faults, O Lord,  
I ask You to cleanse me.
- 4). Lord, keep me from presumptuous sins;  
Let them not rule my soul;  
Then I shall not commit great wrongs,  
I shall be sound and whole.  
Let all my words and all my thoughts,  
My Lord, Redemer, Might,  
Find favor now, and always win  
Acceptance in Your sight.

## **SECOND LESSON**

**Mark 9:30-37**

They went on from there and passed through Galilee. He did not want anyone to know it; for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again." But they did not understand what he was saying and were afraid to ask him.

Then they came to Capernaum; and when he was in the house he asked them, "What were you arguing about on the way?" But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another who was the greatest. He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all." Then he took a little child and put it among them; and taking it in his arms, he said to them, "Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me."

### *O Word of God Incarnate*

O Word of God incarnate,  
O Wisdom from on high,  
O Truth unchanged, unchanging,  
O Light of our dark sky:  
We praise You for the radiance  
That from the hallowed page,  
A lantern to our footsteps,  
Shines on from age to age.

The church from You, dear Savior,  
Received this Gift divine,  
And still that light is lifted  
On all the earth to shine.  
It is the chart and compass  
That, all life's voyage through,  
Amid the rocks and quick-sands,  
Still guides, O Christ, to You.

O make Your church, dear Savior,  
A lamp of purest gold  
To bear before the nations  
Your true light, as of old;  
O teach Your wandering pilgrims  
By this our path to trace,  
Till, clouds and storms thus ended,  
We see You face to face.

### *I Walk the Unfrequented Road*

- 1). I walk the unfrequented road  
with open eye and ear;  
I watch a field the farmer load  
the bounty of the year.
- 2). I filch the fruit of no man's toil –  
no trespasser am I—  
and yet I reap from every soil  
and from the unmeasured sky.
- 3). I gather where I did not sow,  
and bind the mystic sheaf,  
the amber air, the river's flow,  
the rustle of the leaf.
- 4). A beauty springtime never knew  
haunts all the quiet ways,  
and sweeter shines the landscape through  
its veil of autumn haze.
- 5). I face the hills, the streams, the wood,  
and feel with all akin;  
my heart expands, their fortitude  
and peace and joy flow in.