

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
DAVID VARKER, LAY READER
GENE MARIE CALLAHAN, ORGANIST

SEPTEMBER 5, 2021

PRELUDE *Prelude on Aurelia* - PJ Janson

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** *Morning Has Broken* **469**

Eleanor Farjeon, the author of nursery rhymes and singing games, wrote the text for this tune. It was first published in 1931. A more recent popular recording by Cat Stevens made the song popular in this country. *Bunessan* is a Gaelic melody first published in 1888. The present arrangement was made for the Christian Reformed Church hymnal in 1985.

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 Proverbs 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23 p. 527

***HYMN** *When in the Night I Meditate* **165**

The tune, *St. Flavian* was first published in John Day's *Psalter* (1562) as the first half of the tune of Psalm 132. The present form of the tune and harmonization is from Richard Redhead's *Ancient Hymn Melodies and Other Church Tunes* (1853). In *Hymns Ancient and Modern* (1861) it was titled *Redhead 29*, but in the revised edition of 1875 it bore the title *St. Favian*.

SECOND LESSON James 2:1-17 p. 981

SERMON Mercy Triumphs

***HYMN** *Come, Risen Lord* **503**

This text was one of sixteen contributed to the volume *Songs of Praise* (1931), where the last line of stanza I was altered to read "In this our sacrament of bread and wine." *The Presbyterian Hymnal* (1990) has restored the original text.

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 *Eucharistia* - G. Winston Cassler

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

SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER (insert)

The congregation is invited to participate in the service as found in the insert included in this order of service. *(Please note that grape juice is on the outer circle only and wine inside. We partake together after all have been served.)*

COMMUNION VOLUNTARY

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

***HYMN** *Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah* **281**

The text was written by the 18th century William Williams, known as the "Sweet Singer of Wales." He was a deacon in the Church of England who identified with the Calvinist Methodist movement and traveled throughout Wales, preaching, for 50 years. He wrote more than 800 Welsh hymns. The tune was written for a Welsh singing festival at Capel Rhonda in 1905 or 1907. The composer, John Hughes, was an active member of the Salem Baptist Church in Wales who succeeded his father as deacon and precentor (singing leader).

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *Postlude on Coronation* - Elizabeth A. Krouse

* 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 and ushers, greeters and Communion servers for today's service are Beverly Cohen and Marsha Pilachowski.

Please join us after worship today for coffee hour in the Narthex provided by Pat Ross and Marsha Pilachowski.

Thank you to Betsy Ehrenfreund for providing flowers for worship today. If you would like to host coffee hour or provide flowers some Sunday please sign up on the BLOG.

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS: *(All meetings are open to members of the church)*

9/12: Choir practice resumes, 9:45 AM in the choir loft

9/13: Deacon meeting, 4:00 PM, church parlor and remotely

9/13: Trustee meeting, 5:30 PM, church parlor and remotely

9/19: Church Picnic at Kristin Castellanos' home following worship

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 fill out the enclosed BLOG or contact the Open Church team: Betsy Ehrenfreund, Vicky Prints or Jane Radocchia.

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

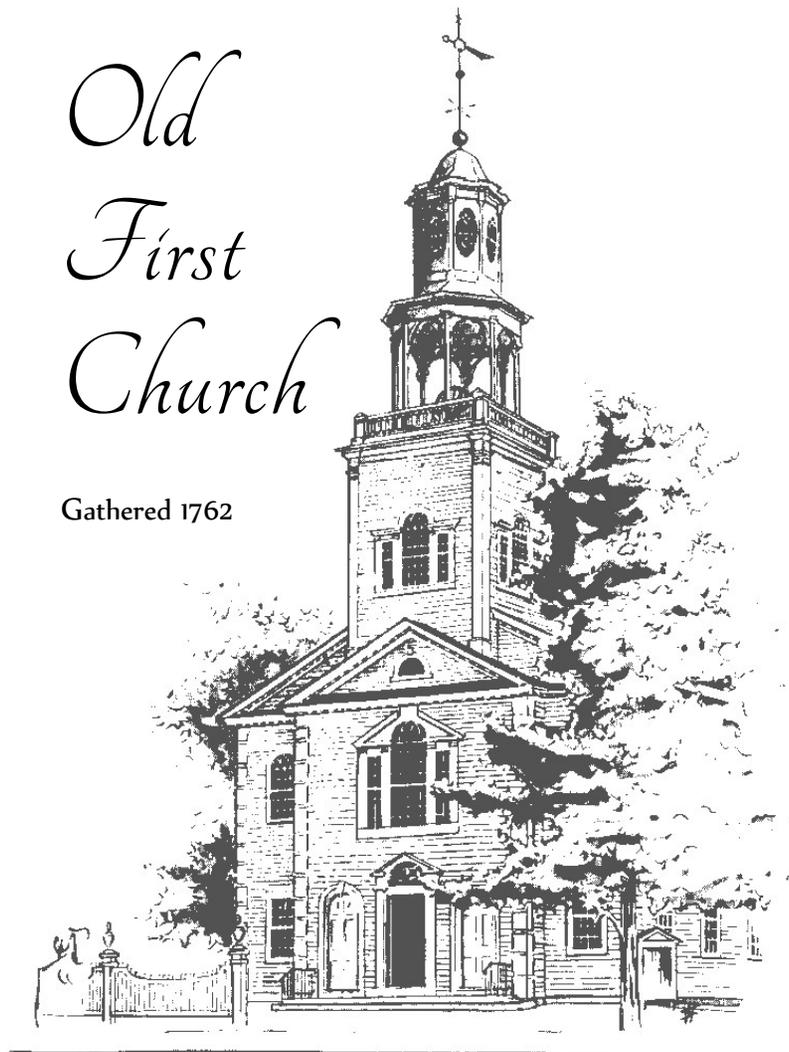
(OLD FIRST CHURCH)

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Old
First
Church

Gathered 1762



Morning Has Broken

Morning has broken like the first morning,
Blackbird has spoken like the first bird.
Praise for the singing! Praise for the morning!
Praise for them, springing fresh from the Word!

Sweet the rain's new fall sunlit from heaven,
Like the first dew fall on the first grass.
Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden,
Sprung in completeness where God's feet pass.

Mine is the sunlight! Mine is the morning
Born of the one light Eden saw play!
Praise with elation, praise every morning,
God's recreation of the new day!

FIRST LESSON

Proverbs 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23

A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches,
and favor is better than silver or gold.
The rich and the poor have this in common:
the LORD is the maker of them all.
Whoever sows injustice will reap calamity,
and the rod of anger will fail.
Those who are generous are blessed,
for they share their bread with the poor.
Do not rob the poor because they are poor,
or crush the afflicted at the gate;
for the LORD pleads their cause
and despoils of life those who despoil them.

When in the Night I Meditate

1. When in the night I meditate
on mercies multiplied,
my grateful heart inspires my tongue
to bless the Lord, my guide.
2. Forever in my thought the Lord
before my face shall stand;
secure, unmoved I shall remain,
with God at my right hand.
3. My inmost being thrills with joy
and gladness fills my breast;
because on God my trust is stayed,
my flesh in hope shall rest.
4. I know that I shall not be left
forgotten in the grave,
and from corruption, Thou, O Lord,
Thy holy one wilt save.
5. The path of life Thou showest me;
of joy a boundless store
is ever found at Thy right hand,
and pleasures evermore.

SECOND LESSON

James 2:1-17

My brothers and sisters, do you with your acts of favoritism really believe in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ? For if a person with gold rings and in fine clothes comes into your assembly, and if a poor person in dirty clothes also comes in, and if you take notice of the one wearing the fine clothes and say, "Have a seat here, please," while to the one who is poor you say, "Stand there," or, "Sit at my feet," have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? Listen, my beloved brothers and sisters. Has not God chosen the poor in the world to be rich in faith and to be heirs of the kingdom that he has promised to those who love him? But you have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who oppress you? Is it not they who drag you into court? Is it not they who blaspheme the excellent name that was invoked over you?

You do well if you really fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." But if you show partiality, you commit sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it. For the one who said, "You shall not commit adultery," also said, "You shall not murder." Now if you do not commit adultery but if you murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. For judgment will be without mercy to anyone who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.

What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill," and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.

Come, Risen Lord

Come, risen Lord, and deign to be our guest;
nay, let us be Thy guests; the feast is Thine;
Thyself at Thine own board make manifest
in Thine own sacrament of bread and wine.

We meet as in the upper room they met;
Thou at the table, blessing, yet dost stand;
“This is my body”; so Thou givest yet:
faith still receives the cup as from Thy hand.

One body we, one body who partake,
one church united in communion blessed;
one name we bear, one bread of life we break,
with all Thy saints on earth and saints at rest.

One with each other, Lord, for one in thee,
who art one Savior and one living head;
then open Thou our eyes, that we may see;
be known to us in breaking of the bread.

Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah

Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah,
Pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but Thou art mighty;
Hold me with Thy powerful hand;
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven,
Feed me till I want no more,
Feed me till I want no more.

Open now the crystal fountain,
Whence the healing stream doth flow;
Let the fire and cloudy pillar
Lead me all my journey through;
Strong deliverer, strong deliverer,
Be Thou still my strength and shield,
Be Thou still my strength and shield.

When I tread the verge of Jordan,
Bid my anxious fears subside;
Death of death and hell's destruction,
Land me safe on Canaan's side;
Songs of praises, songs of praises
I will ever give to Thee,
I will ever give to Thee.