

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
AUDREY PIETRUCHA, LAY READER
GENE MARIE CALLAHAN, ORGANIST OLD FIRST CHURCH CHOIR

FEBRUARY 20, 2022

PRELUDE *Voluntary* - Maurice Greene

OPENING WORDS (responsive)

This is the day which the Lord has made.

Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Let love and faithfulness never leave us.

Write them on the tablet of your heart.

***HYMN** *When the Morning Stars Together* **486**

The text's author was a Congregational minister in England from 1929 to 1972, was made a fellow of Westminster Choir College, Princeton, N.J., and honored at Westminster Abbey. The tune was a folk song that first appeared in a 1741 Cologne hymnal.

OPENING PRAYER (unison)

Loving God, we come this morning with our lives, our thoughts, our hope and our fears. We come with our plans, our dreams, our memories. We come with our time, our gifts and our skills. We come with our family, our friends, and we come with ourselves. We come to offer to you everything we have and are. We come to glorify your holy name. Be with us as we pray together here and be with us in days ahead refreshed by this time of quiet, wisdom and peace which is found in your word. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND *GLORIA PATRI (579)

* Stand if able

FIRST LESSON Genesis 45:3-11, 15 p. 37

***HYMN** *Within Your Shelter, Loving God* **212**

The tune *Abbey* is one of the twelve common tunes from the Scottish Psalter, *CL Psalms of David* (1615). This collection was the work of Andro Hart (d. 1621), a Scottish bookseller and printer. It was the first psalter to name tunes.

SECOND LESSON Luke 6:27-38 p. 838

SERMON Do unto Others

***HYMN** *God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending* **422**

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 *Voluntary* - Charles Zeuner

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

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

***HYMN** *Our God, to Whom We Turn* **278**

The text was written by Edward Grubb (1854-1939) and published in *The Light of Life: Hymns of Faith and Consolation* (1925). Grubb was an English Quaker. The present setting includes four of the five stanzas from *The Hymnbook* (1955).

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *Voluntary* - John Stanley

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.

~ANNOUNCEMENTS~

Deacons on call this month are Beverly Cohen and Bill Gordon. Ushers and greeters for today's service are Wendy and Tom Schmitt.

Please join us after worship today for coffee hour provided by Janet Andrea and Mary Elizabeth Groupé.

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

Choir practice, Sunday mornings, 9:30 AM in the choir loft

2/27: Council meeting following worship and coffee hour. Meeting in the Parlor and online for those who can't make it in person.

3/6: Deacon's training session, 9:00 a.m. at the church

3/8: Deacon's meeting, 4:00 p.m.

3/15: Trustee meeting, 5:30 p.m.

3/20: St. Patrick's Luncheon, following worship, lunch at the Barn

Thank you to everyone who donated to the Souper Bowl of Caring fundraiser last Sunday. \$214 was collected in the Ram's soup pot and \$278 in the Bengals soup pot. The GBICs food pantry is the real winner with a total of \$492 going to this very important program which assists with food insecure individuals in our community!

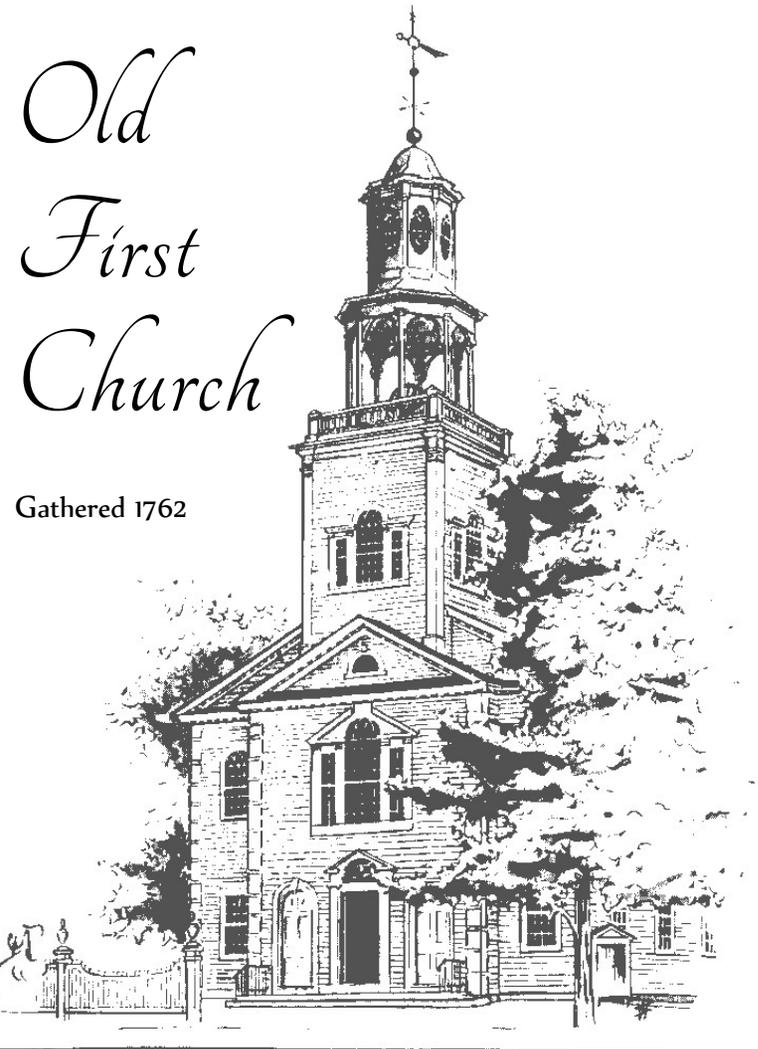
If you are interested in discussing matters of faith and want to inquire about Christian membership in the church, please contact Rev. Clarke. We welcome the chance to have you join us in our historic, but active-in-the-world, community of faith!

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

(OLD FIRST CHURCH)

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When the Morning Stars Together

When the morning stars together
Their Creator's glory sang,
And the angel host all shouted
Till with joy the heavens rang,
Then Your wisdom and Your greatness
Their exultant music told,
All the beauty and the splendor
Which Your mighty works unfold.

When in synagogue and temple
Voices raised the psalmists' songs,
Offering the adoration
Which alone to You belongs,
When the singers and the cymbals
With the trumpet made accord,
Glory filled the house of worship,
And all knew Your presence, Lord.

Voice and instrument in union
Through the ages spoke Your praise,
Plainsong, tuneful hymns, and anthems
Told Your faithful, gracious ways,
Choir and orchestra and organ
Each sacred offering brought,
While, inspired by Your own Spirit,
Poet and composer wrought.

Lord, we bring our gift of music;
Touch our lips and fire our hearts,
Teach our minds and train our senses,
Fit us for these sacred arts.
Then with skill and consecration
We would serve You, Lord, and give
All our powers to glorify You,
And in serving fully live.

FIRST LESSON

Genesis 45:3-11, 15

Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?" But his brothers could not answer him, so dismayed were they at his presence. Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come closer to me." And they came closer. He said, "I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. For the famine has been in the land these two years; and there are five more years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. So it was not you who sent me here, but God; he has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not delay. You shall settle in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children, as well as your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. I will provide for you there—since there are five more years of famine to come—so that you and your household, and all that you have, will not come to poverty.' And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them; and after that his brothers talked with him.

Within Your Shelter, Loving God

1. Within Your shelter, loving God,
My refuge and my tower,
I safely walk by day and night
Beneath Your guiding power.
2. Because I trust in You alone,
No evil shall come near.
The strong defender of my home,
With You I have no fear.
3. Your holy angels bear me up
And keep my feet secure.
Though fierce and angry foes assail,
I You my way is sure.
4. As often as I call to You,
You kindly hear my prayer.
In times of trouble and distress
I rest in Your own care.
5. All those who know Your name on earth
Shall life abundant know.
On all abiding in Your love
Your saving grace bestow.

SECOND LESSON

Luke 6:27-38

“But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. Do to others as you would have them do to you. “If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

“Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.”

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.

Our God, to Whom We Turn

1. Our God, to whom we turn
When weary with illusion,
Whose stars serenely burn
Above this earth's confusion,
Thine is the mighty plan,
The steadfast order sure,
In which the world began,
Endures, and shall endure.
2. Thou art thyself the truth;
Though we, who fain would find Thee,
Have tried, with thoughts uncouth,
In feeble words to bind Thee,
It is because Thou art
We're driven to the quest;
Till truth from falsehood part,
Our souls can find no rest.
3. All beauty speaks of Thee:
The mountains and the rivers,
The line of lifted sea,
Where spreading moonlight quivers,
The deep-toned organ blast
That rolls through arches dim,
Hints of the music vast
Of Thine eternal hymn.
4. Thou hidden fount of love,
Of peace, and truth, and beauty,
Inspire us from above
With joy and strength for duty;
May Thy fresh light arise
Within each clouded heart,
And give us open eyes
To see Thee as Thou art.