

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
NOAH LANGFORD, LAY READER
GENE MARIE CALLAHAN, ORGANIST

AUGUST 7, 2022

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

OPENING WORDS (responsive)

Let us recall things of joy and gladness.

May God open our hearts this season.

Renew our spirit and lift us from any darkness.

In the beauty of the morning may God's truth shine.

***HYMN** *Come, Thou Font of Every Blessing* **356**

This text was written by Robert Robinson (1735-1790) about 1758 and was included in *A Collection of Hymns Used by the Church of Christ in Angel-Alley, Bishopsgate* (1759). It was later included with the tune NETTLETON in John Wyeth's *Repository of Sacred Music, Part Second* (1813).

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 the grace of Jesus Christ our Lord,
to come at last to heaven.
This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND *GLORIA PATRI (579)

FIRST LESSON Hebrews 11:1-3; 8-16 p. 977

HYMN *Let Us with a Gladsome Mind* **244**

John Milton wrote this paraphrase of Psalm 136 in 1623 at the age of 15. He was an English Puritan. While touring France he met the imprisoned Galileo in 1638. Upon returning, he opened a school at Aldersgate. He was Latin Secretary to the Council of State of Oliver Cromwell from 1649-59. By age 44 (1652) he was blind, and he had to dictate his greatest literary works. He wrote 19 Psalm paraphrases. The tune was first published in 1704 with no attributed

SECOND LESSON Luke 12:32-40 p. 847

SERMON Strangers and Foreigners

***HYMN** *For the Bread Which You Have Broken* **508**

Louis Benson wrote the text in 1924. Benson started his career as a lawyer, but abandoned it after seven years to become a Presbyterian minister, after which he became editor of several hymnals, and taught hymnody at Auburn and Princeton Seminaries. The tune was written in 1959 by V. Earle Copes, a 1940 graduate of Davidson College. Copes is a Methodist minister, and has served as minister of music in a number of churches and on college faculties.

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 or hand it to an usher after the service.)

OFFERING

OFFERTORY *He Shall Feed His Flock*

- G.F. Handel, arr. Duncan
- Mary Elizabeth Groupé, viola

***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** *How Clear Is Our Vocation, Lord* **419**

Fred Pratt Green wrote the text in 1981, in response to a request for a hymn on vocation. Green has been credited with starting the 20th century's hymn-writing explosion. C. Hubert Parry wrote the tune for an oratorio, *Judith*, in 1888. Parry was director of the Royal College of Music, professor of music at Oxford, and was knighted in 1898.

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *Vivace* - J.S. Bach

* Stand if able

We extend a warm welcome to our guests and visitors and we are delighted to have you worship with us. 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 Sandy Bechtel and Bill Gordon. Ushers, greeters and communion servers for today's service are Sandy Bechtel and Amy Tronsen.

Please join us for fellowship and refreshments in the foyer after the service. Our thanks to Marsha Pilachowski for providing coffee hour this morning.

Flowers for worship are provided by Betsy Ehrenfreund.

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

8/21: Council meeting following worship, Parlor

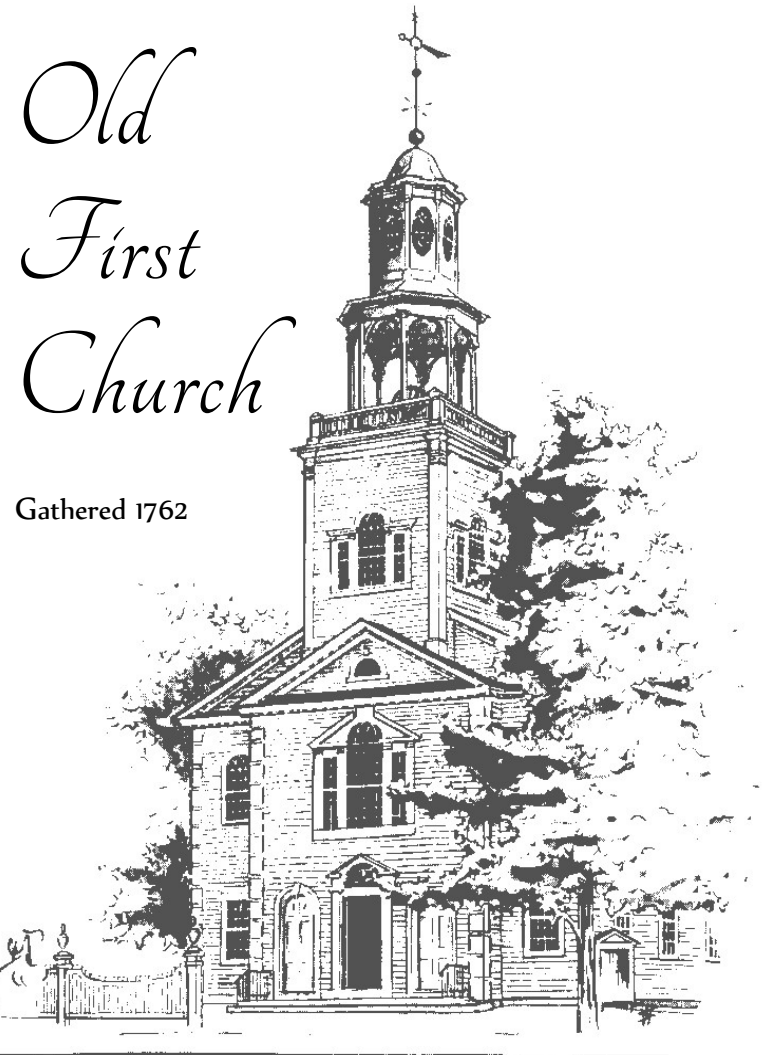
8/22: Trustee meeting, 5:30 PM, Parlor

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!

Health note: Indoor air is constantly exchanged with fresh air with a LifeBreath circulation system operating during the service to maintain the healthiest standards for public gathering.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
(OLD FIRST CHURCH)
VT RTE. 9 AND MONUMENT AVENUE
OLD BENNINGTON, VERMONT

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Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing

1. Come, Thou Fount of every blessing,
tune my heart to sing Thy grace;
streams of mercy, never ceasing,
call for songs of loudest praise.
Teach me some melodious sonnet,
sung by flaming tongues above;
praise the mount! I'm fixed upon it,
mount of God's unchanging love!
2. Here I raise my Ebenezer,
hither by Thy help I'm come;
and I hope, by Thy good pleasure,
safely to arrive at home.
Jesus sought me when a stranger,
wandering from the fold of God;
He, to rescue me from danger,
Interposed His precious blood.
3. O to grace how great a debtor
daily I'm constrained to be!
Let that grace now, like a fetter,
bind my wandering heart to Thee:
prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
prone to leave the God I love;
here's my heart, O take and seal it;
seal it for Thy courts above.

FIRST LESSON

Hebrews 11:1-3; 8-16

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Indeed, by faith our ancestors received approval. By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible. By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to set out for a place that he was to receive as an inheritance; and he set out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he stayed for a time in the land he had been promised, as in a foreign land, living in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked forward to the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God. By faith he received power of procreation, even though he was too old—and Sarah herself was barren—because he considered him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one person, and this one as good as dead, descendants were born, “as many as the stars of heaven and as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.” All of these died in faith without having received the promises, but from a distance they saw and greeted them. They confessed that they were strangers and foreigners on the earth, for people who speak in this way make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of the land that they had left behind, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; indeed, he has prepared a city for them.

Let Us with a Gladsome Mind

Let us, with a gladsome mind
praise the Lord, who is so kind:
for God's mercies shall endure,
ever faithful, ever sure.

God, with all-commanding might,
filled the new-made world with light:
for God's mercies shall endure,
ever faithful, ever sure.

All things living God does feed,
with full measure meets their need:
for God's mercies shall endure,
ever faithful, ever sure.

Let us with a gladsome mind
praise the Lord who is so kind:
for God's mercies shall endure,
ever faithful, ever sure.

SECOND LESSON

Luke 12:32-40

“Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions, and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. “Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit; be like those who are waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, so that they may open the door for him as soon as he comes and knocks. Blessed are those slaves whom the master finds alert when he comes; truly I tell you, he will fasten his belt and have them sit down to eat, and he will come and serve them. If he comes during the middle of the night, or near dawn, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves. “But know this: if the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.”

For the Bread Which You Have Broken

For the bread which You have broken,
For the wine which You have poured,
For the words which You have spoken,
Now we give You thanks, O Lord.

By this promise that You love us,
By Your gift of peace restore,
By Your call to heaven above us,
Hallow all our lives, O Lord.

With the saints who now adore You
Seated at the heavenly board,
May the church still waiting for You
Keep love's tie unbroken, Lord.

In Your service, Lord, defend us;
In our hearts keep watch and ward;
In the world to which You send us
Let Your kingdom come, O Lord.

How Clear Is Our Vocation, Lord

How clear is our vocation, Lord,
When once we heed Your call:
To live according to Your word,
And daily learn, refreshed, restored,
That You are Lord of all
and will not let us fall.

But if, forgetful, we should find
Your yoke is hard to bear,
If worldly pressures fray the mind
and love itself cannot unwind
Its tangled skein of care:
Our inward life repair.

We mark Your saints, how they become
In hindrances more sure,
Whose joyful virtues put to shame
The casual way we wear Your name,
And by our faults obscure
Your power to cleanse and cure.

In what You give us, Lord, to do,
Together or alone,
In old routines or ventures new,
May we not cease to look to You -
The cross You hung upon -
All you endeavored done.

**Order of Service for
The Lord's Supper or Communion
At the First Congregational Church
Bennington, Vermont**

Scripture Sentences

Opening Words and Invocation

Prayer of Confession (read by the Minister and People in Unison)

We come not into thy presence, most holy Lord God, trusting in our own righteousness but in thy manifold and abiding mercies. Remembering this day the great heart and passion of a son of man of long ago, we are conscious of our shortcomings. We would here be turned to the way of his brave and tender spirit, and find that wholeness of life which shall be at once a divine blessing for us and a divine ministry from us. Forgive our failures and shortcomings, and by thy grace strengthen our desire for goodness, that we may henceforth serve thee without fear and without shame, all the days of our lives. Amen.

Responsive Reading

Let us hear the words of Jesus which speak of the way of blessedness.

Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

BLESSED ARE THEY THAT MOURN; FOR THEY SHALL BE COMFORTED.

Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth.

BLESSED ARE THEY WHICH DO HUNGER AND THIRST AFTER RIGHTEOUSNESS; FOR THEY SHALL BE FILLED.

Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy.

BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART; FOR THEY SHALL SEE GOD.

Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God.

BLESSED ARE THEY WHICH ARE PERSECUTED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS' SAKE; FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

THIS IS THE FIRST AND GREAT COMMANDMENT.

And the second is like unto it, namely this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

ON THESE TWO COMMANDMENTS HANG ALL THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS.

Offertory and Communion Prayer

The Lord be with you.

AND ALSO WITH YOU.

Lift up your hearts

WE LIFT THEM TO THE LORD.

It is right to give our thanks and praise

LET US GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD OUR GOD

Words of Institution

The Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread; and, when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said: This is my body which is broken for you. This do in remembrance of me.

After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood. This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

Take and eat this in remembrance of Christ.

Take and drink this in remembrance of Christ.

Silent Prayer

The service continues and concludes as found in today's order of service.