

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  
AMBER LANGFORD, LAY READER  
GENE MARIE CALLAHAN, ORGANIST

JANUARY 1, 2023

**PRELUDE** *Epiphany Road* - Ben Logan

**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** *Go, Tell It on the Mountain* 29

After hearing the refrain, John Wesley Work II wrote the stanzas around 1900. It was included in the collection, *American Negro Songs and Spirituals* (1940). Work and his brother were leading figures in the preservation, performance and study of African-American spirituals. This carol was arranged by Work's son, who continued the work (!) begun by his father and uncle. The harmony is by the chair of the committee that organized this hymnal, Melva Costen.

**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** Isaiah 63:7-9 p. 605

**\*HYMN** *Let the Whole Creation Cry* 256

This hymn is based on Psalm 148. The liberal views of the author, Stopford Brooke, a priest in Ireland and London, led him to leave the Anglican church in 1880. Jacob Hintze, town musician of Barnam, Germany, may have written the tune, first published in 1678. J. S. Bach harmonized it.

**SECOND LESSON** Matthew 2:13-23 p. 784

**SERMON** Steadfast Love

**\*HYMN** *Be Known to Us in Breaking Bread* 505

This hymn is one of four hundred written by James Montgomery. It was published in both *The Christian Psalmist* (1825), where it was titled "The Family Table." The stanzas refer to the Emmaus road incident in Luke 24.

**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** *Kings of Orient* - John A. Stallsmith

**\*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** *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling* 376

This hymn was written by Charles Wesley and was first published in 1747. Wesley was the 18<sup>th</sup> child of Samuel and Susanna ("She Must Have Been a Saint") Wesley. Charles was an Anglican priest, dedicated to the Methodist movement, and he wrote between 6,000 and 6,500 hymns. Rowland Hugh Pritchard wrote the Welsh tune *Hyfrydol* in 1831 before his 20<sup>th</sup> birthday. He was an assistant loom tender for the Welsh Flannel Manufacturing Company. An interesting point about the melody is that with one exception, it lies within the first five notes of the scale.

**BENEDICTION**

**POSTLUDE** *March of the Kings* - Robert W. Thygerson

**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 Joyce Goeke and Ellen Knapp. Ushers, greeters and communion servers for today's service are Joyce Goeke and Mary Elizabeth Groupé.

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

Thank you to those who provided memorial poinsettias this year. Everyone should feel free to take one (or more!) home today. Plastic sleeves are available on the bench to help protect them from the cold.

Weekly offering envelopes are available on the glass top table in the foyer. Be sure to indicate the envelope number located on the front of the envelope box along with your name on the sign out sheet.

The Church's Annual Meeting is scheduled for Sunday, February 5 following worship. If you are a Chair or Advocate on the Church Council, please prepare a 2022 year-end report and email, mail or drop it in the mail slot at the Barn by January 20.

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

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

1/16: Deacon meeting, 4:00 PM, at the Barn

1/16: Trustee meeting, 5:00 PM, church parlor

1/22: Council meeting, following worship, church parlor

2/5: Annual Meeting, following worship in the church sanctuary

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**

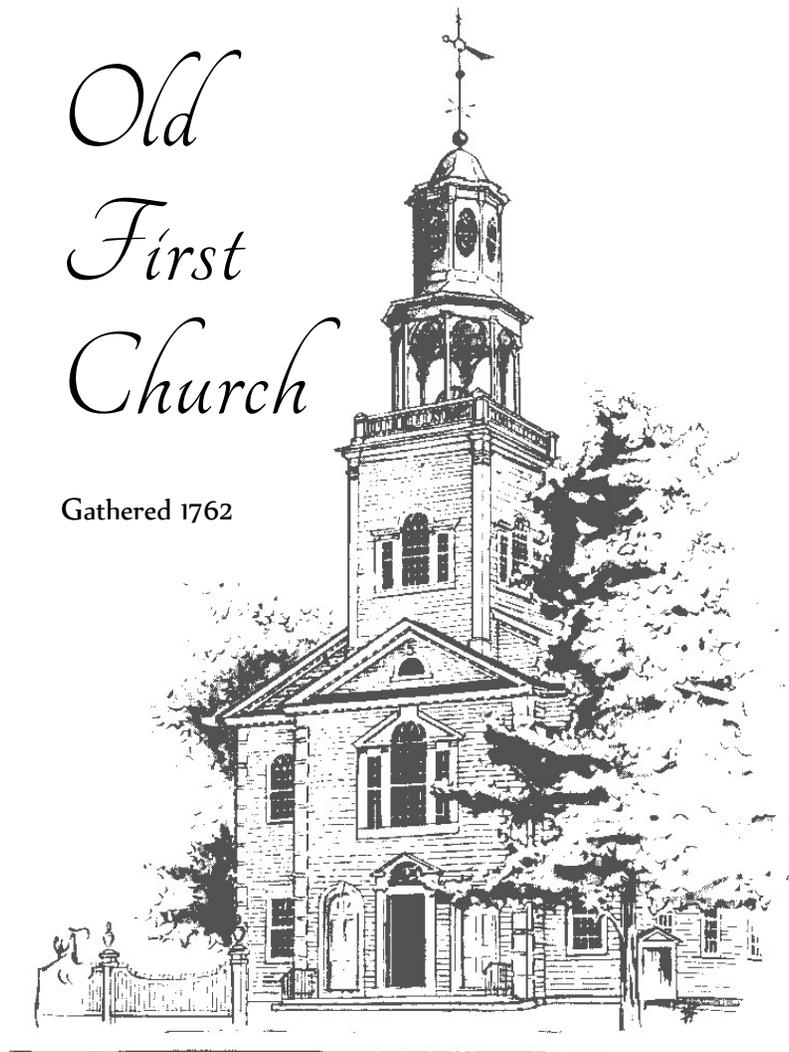
(OLD FIRST CHURCH)  
VT RTE. 9 AND MONUMENT AVENUE  
OLD BENNINGTON, VERMONT

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*Old  
First  
Church*

Gathered 1762



## ***Go, Tell It on the Mountain***

### ***Refrain:***

Go, tell it on the mountain  
Over the hills and everywhere;  
Go, tell it on the mountain  
That Jesus Christ is born!

While shepherds kept their watching  
O'er silent flocks by night,  
Behold throughout the heavens  
There shone a Holy light. *[Refrain]*

The shepherds feared and trembled  
When lo! Above the earth,  
Rang out the angel chorus  
That hailed our Savior's birth. *[Refrain]*

Down in a lowly manger  
The humble Christ was born,  
And God sent us salvation  
That blessed Christmas morn. *[Refrain]*

## **FIRST LESSON**

### **Isaiah 63:7-9**

I will recount the gracious deeds of the LORD, the praiseworthy acts of the LORD, because of all that the LORD has done for us, and the great favor to the house of Israel that he has shown them according to his mercy, according to the abundance of his steadfast love. For he said, "Surely they are my people, children who will not deal falsely"; and he became their savior in all their distress. It was no messenger or angel but his presence that saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

## ***Let the Whole Creation Cry***

Let the whole creation cry,  
"Glory to the Lord on high."  
Heaven and earth, awake and sing,  
"God is our eternal King."  
Praise God, all ye hosts above,  
ever shining forth in love;  
sun and moon, uplift your voice;  
night and stars, in God rejoice!

Men and women, young and old,  
raise the anthem manifold;  
join with children's song of praise  
worship God through length of days.  
From the north to southern pole  
let the mighty chorus roll:  
"Holy, holy, holy One,  
glory be to God alone!"

## **SECOND LESSON**

### **Matthew 2:13-23**

Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son."

When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah: "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more."

When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead." Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, "He will be called a Nazorean."

### *Be Known to Us in Breaking Bread*

Be known to us in breaking bread,  
But do not then depart;  
Savior, abide with us,  
And spread Thy table in our heart.

There sup with us in love divine:  
Thy body and Thy blood,  
That living bread, that heavenly wine,  
Be our immortal food.

### *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling*

Love divine, all loves excelling,  
Joy of heaven to earth come down,  
Fix in us Thy humble dwelling,  
All Thy faithful mercies crown!  
Jesus, Thou art all compassion,  
Pure, unbounded love Thou art;  
Visit us with Thy salvation,  
Enter every trembling heart.

Breathe, O breathe Thy loving Spirit  
Into every troubled breast!  
Let us all in Thee inherit,  
Let us find the promised rest;  
Take away the love of sinning;  
Alpha and Omega be;  
End of faith, as its beginning,  
Set our hearts at liberty.

Come, Almighty to deliver,  
Let us all Thy life receive;  
Suddenly return, and never,  
Never more Thy temples leave.  
Thee we would be always blessing,  
Serve Thee as Thy host above;  
Pray, and praise Thee without ceasing,  
Glory in Thy perfect love.

Finish, then, Thy new creation;  
Pure and spotless let us be;  
Let us see Thy great salvation  
Perfectly restored in Thee;  
Changed from glory into glory,  
Till in heaven we take our place,  
Till we cast our crowns before Thee  
Lost in wonder, love, and praise.

**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.