

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
PATRICE NOLAN-FOX, LAY READER
GENE MARIE CALLAHAN, ORGANIST
OLD FIRST CHURCH CHOIR

JANUARY 29, 2023

PRELUDE *Andante in E Minor* - Samuel Sebastian Wesley

OPENING WORDS (responsive)

O Lord your glory shines anew day.

Be near to us in all times.

Hear us when we call to you, O Lord.

Open hearts this day.

***HYMN** *The Spacious Firmament on High* insert
Joseph Addison (1672-1719) was an English poet, politician, public official, and essayist, major contributor to *The Spectator*, 1711-12, for which he furnished 274 of the 555 daily issues. This hymn has been in all editions of the Protestant Episcopal Hymnal since 1789.

OPENING PRAYER (unison)

Almighty and most merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against you
in what we have done
and in what we have left undone.
We have not trusted in your goodness
and have allowed fear to rule us.
We have been silent when we should have spoken,
we have been deaf to the calls of the poor,
and unresponsive when we should have acted more decisively.
We have not lived with the same grace
that you have always shown us.
Forgive us and help us to serve you
by serving your world with generous spirits.
In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND *GLORIA PATRI (579)

FIRST LESSON Matthew 5:1-12 p. 785

***HYMN** *This Is the Day the Lord Hath Made* 230

This paraphrase of Psalm 118 by Isaac Watts was first published in *The Psalms of David* (1719), where he headed it "Hosanna; The Lord's Day; or Christ's Resurrection, and Our Salvation." Watts's intention was for it to be sung on Easter Day or on Sundays.

SECOND LESSON Micah 6:1-8 p. 757

SERMON On the Mount

***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 *Blest Are They* - David Haas

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

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

***HYMN** *I've Got Peace Like a River* 368

This text with its tune is an African-American spiritual. The text portrays peace, joy, and love as like a river, a fountain, and an ocean. It conveys a sense of the moving, refreshing vastness of God's presence. Most directly it picks up the language of Galatians 5:22 as love, joy, and peace are cited as the first three in the list of the "fruit[s] of the Spirit."

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *Chacone in F Major* - Louis Couperan

* 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 Joyce Goeke and Ellen Knapp. Ushers and greeters for today's service are Betsy Ehrenfreund and Susan Katz.

Please join us for fellowship and refreshments in the foyer after the service. Our thanks to Mary Elizabeth Groupé, Reg Jones, Audrey Pietrucha, Vicky Printz and Jane Radocchia for providing coffee hour this morning and to Wendy Schmitt for setting up.

ANNUAL MEETING WARNING: The Church Council has set the Annual Meeting date for **Sunday, February 5** to be held in the church sanctuary following worship and a brief (but "beefed up") coffee hour. It will be a time to receive reports from advocates and boards as well as a report from the nominating committee electing people to various responsibilities within the life of the church. All members of the church are encouraged to attend this important meeting.

Annual Reports are available on the glass-top table for members to take home for review. Please bring your copy back for the meeting next Sunday.

We are still collecting new or gently used blankets for the homeless. Gently used blankets must be clean and no electric blankets please. Queen size is preferred.

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

Choir practice, Sunday mornings, 9:30 AM in the choir loft
2/5: Annual Meeting, following worship in the church sanctuary
2/16: Deacon Meeting, 4:00 PM at the Barn
2/20: Trustee Meeting, 5:00 PM in the church 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!

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)

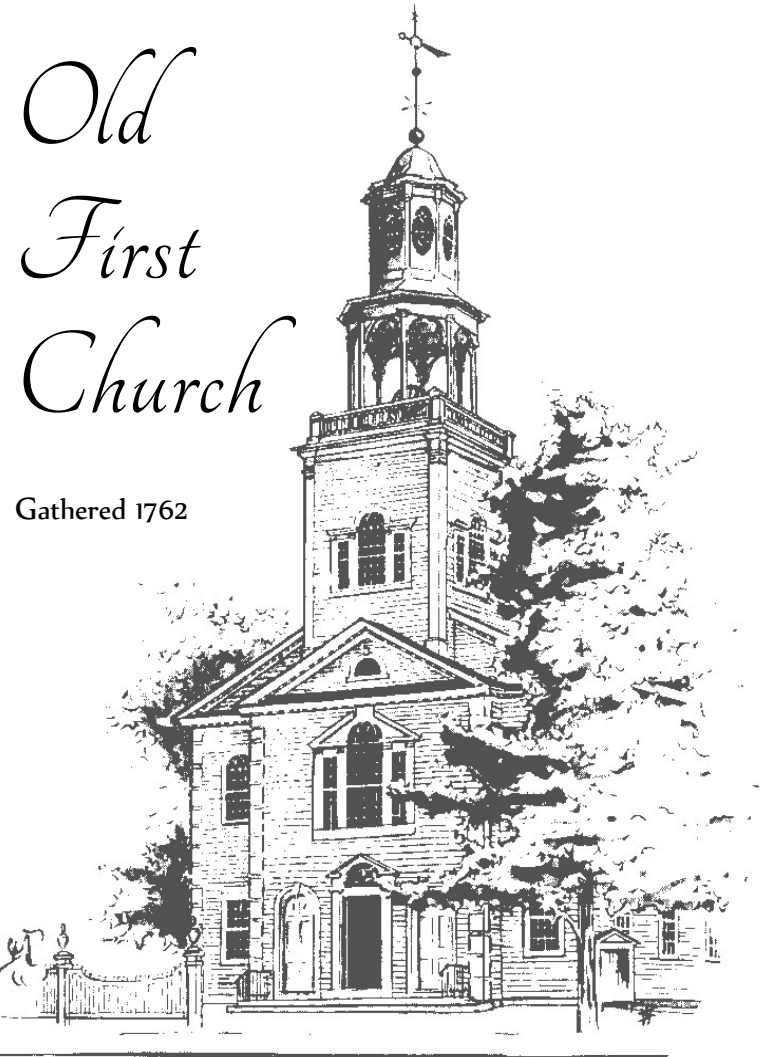
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The Spacious Firmament on High

The spacious firmament on high,
with all the blue ethereal sky,
and spangled heavens, a shining frame,
their great Original proclaim.
The unwearied sun from day to day
does his Creator's power display,
and publishes to every land
the work of an almighty hand.

Soon as the evening shades prevail
the moon takes up the wondrous tale,
and nightly to the listening earth
repeats the story of her birth;
whilst all the stars that round her burn,
and all the planets in their turn,
confirm the tidings, as they roll,
and spread the truth from pole to pole.

What though in solemn silence all
move round the dark terrestrial ball?
What though no real voice nor sound
amid their radiant orbs be found?
In reason's ear they all rejoice,
and utter forth a glorious voice,
forever singing as they shine,
“The hand that made us is divine.”

FIRST LESSON

Matthew 5:1-12

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. “Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. “Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

This Is the Day the Lord Hath Made

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|--|---|
| 1 This is the day the Lord has made;
He calls the hours His own;
let heav'n rejoice, let earth be glad,
and praise surround the throne. | 3 Hosanna to th' anointed King,
to David's holy Son.
help us, O LORD, descend and bring
salvation from Your throne. |
| 2 Today He rose and left the dead,
and Satan's empire fell;
today the saints His triumphs spread,
and all His wonders tell. | 4 Blest be the Lord, who comes to us
with messages of grace;
who comes, in God His Father's name,
to save our sinful race. |

SECOND LESSON

Micah 6:1-8

Hear what the Lord says: Rise, plead your case before the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice. Hear, you mountains, the controversy of the Lord, and you enduring foundations of the earth; for the Lord has a controversy with his people, and he will contend with Israel. “O my people, what have I done to you? In what have I wearied you? Answer me! For I brought you up from the land of Egypt, and redeemed you from the house of slavery; and I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. O my people, remember now what King Balak of Moab devised, what Balaam son of Beor answered him, and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal, that you may know the saving acts of the Lord.”

“With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?” He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

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've Got Peace Like a River

I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river in a my soul.
I've got river in a my soul.

I've got joy like a fountain ,
I've got joy like a fountain,
I've got joy like a fountain in a my soul.
I've got joy fountain in a my soul.

I've got love like an ocean,
I've got love like an ocean,
I've got love like an ocean in a my soul.
I've got ocean in a my soul.