

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
OLD FIRST CHURCH CHOIR

FEBRUARY 19, 2023

PRELUDE *Prelude in E Flat Major* - Alexandre Guilmant

OPENING WORDS (responsive)

Let us gather to praise and worship God.

May this time together be filled with peace.

O God, let your spirit be with us today.

We pray that your light may lead us in all things.

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

This hymn was written by Charles Wesley and was first published in 1747. Wesley was the 18th 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 20th 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.

OPENING PRAYER (unison)

Eternal God, in whom we live and move and have our being, whose face is hidden from us by our sin, and whose mercy we forget: cleanse us from all offenses, and deliver us from proud thoughts and vain desires; that humbly we may draw near to thee, confessing our faults, confiding in thy grace, and finding in thee our refuge and our strength, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND *GLORIA PATRI (579)

FIRST LESSON Exodus 24:12-18 p. 62

***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 17:1-9 p. 798

SERMON A New Season

***HYMN** *Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us* 387

The text was written by Dorothy Ann Thrupp (1779-1847). Dorothy was born and died in Paddington Green, London. She was the editor of the series *Hymns for the Young* (1830-1836) compiled for the Religious Tract Society. Her earlier hymns were published in Mrs. Herbert Mayo's Selection of *Hymns and Poetry for the use of Infant Schools and Nurseries*, 1838. Other of her texts were published in W. Carus Wilson's *Friendly Visitor* and his *Children's Friend* under the pseudonym Iota.

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 *Give Me Jesus*
- Traditional Spiritual arr. Mark Hayes

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

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

***HYMN** *Not Always on the Mount* insert

This hymn was written by Frederick Lucian Hosmer (1840-1929). Hosmer graduated from Harvard University & Harvard Divinity School & became a Unitarian minister. He served in Northboro, Massachusetts; Quincy, Illinois; St. Louis, Missouri; and Berkeley, California. In 1880 & 1911, he helped produce editions of *Unity Hymns and Carols*. He was a recognized authority on hymnody, & taught the subject at Harvard Divinity School.

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *Loud Voluntary Number Three* - L. Boellmann

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 Janet Van Derpoel-Andrea and Sue Philpott. Ushers and greeters for today's service are Joyce Goeke and Ellen Knapp.

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

Thank you to Wendy and Tom Schmitt for providing flowers for worship this morning.

Special Collection: Donations for earthquake relief in Turkey and Syria can be placed on the offering plate. Checks should be made payable to the church with "earthquake relief" in the memo. Cash donations should be in an envelope marked "earthquake relief".

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

The 20th annual *MEDITATIONS FOR LENT* booklet, comprised of submissions from members and friends of Old First Church, can be found on the glass top table in the Narthex for those wishing to have a copy to read through the season of Lent. Lent begins this Wednesday, February 22nd. Thank you to all who submitted devotionals this year.

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS: *(All meetings are open to members of the church)*
Choir practice, Sunday mornings, 9:30 AM in the choir loft
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

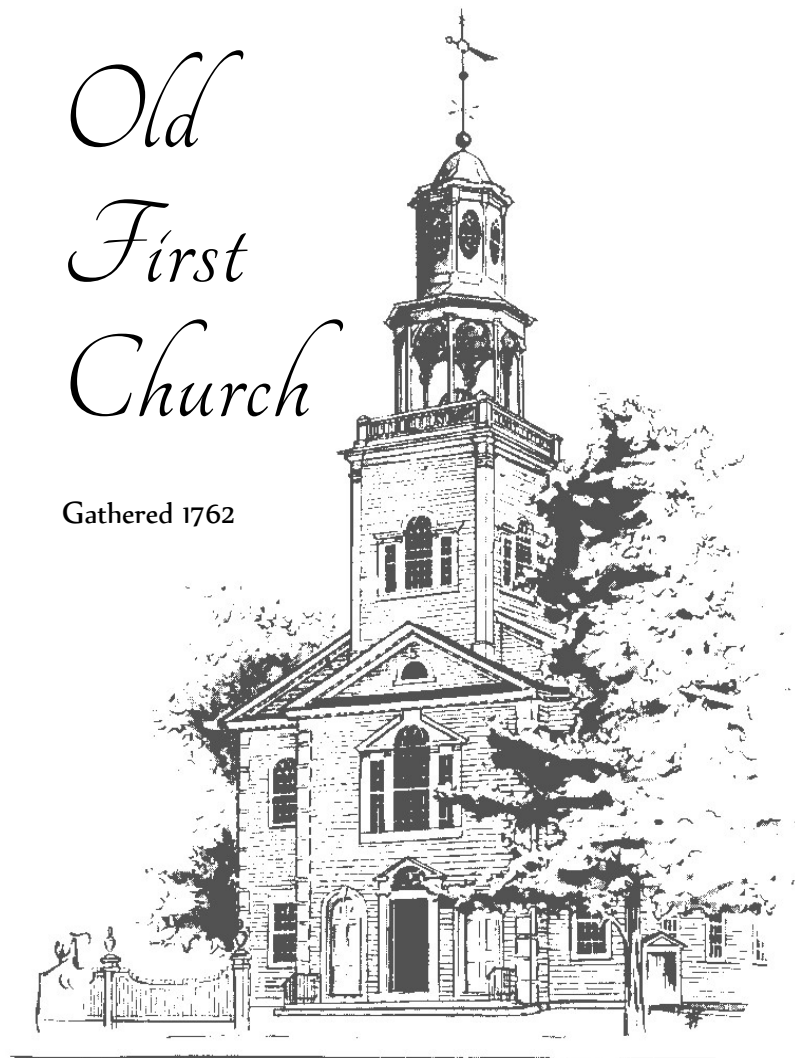
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Old First Church

Gathered 1762



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.

FIRST LESSON

Exodus 24:12-18

The Lord said to Moses, "Come up to me on the mountain, and wait there; and I will give you the tablets of stone, with the law and the commandment, which I have written for their instruction." So Moses set out with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up into the mountain of God. To the elders he had said, "Wait here for us, until we come to you again; for Aaron and Hur are with you; whoever has a dispute may go to them." Then Moses went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. The glory of the Lord settled on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days; on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the cloud. Now the appearance of the glory of the Lord was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel. Moses entered the cloud, and went up on the mountain. Moses was on the mountain for forty days and forty nights.

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 17:1-9

Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. Then Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three dwellings here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, "This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!" When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Get up and do not be afraid." And when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone. As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, "Tell no one about the vision until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us

1. Savior, like a shepherd lead us,
Much we need Thy tender care;
In Thy pleasant pastures feed us,
For our use Thy folds prepare:
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,
Thou hast bought us, Thine we are;
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,
Thou hast bought us, Thine we are.
2. Thou hast promised to receive us,
Poor and sinful though we be;
Thou hast mercy to relieve us,
Grace to cleanse, and power to free:
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,
Early let us turn to Thee;
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,
Early let us turn to Thee.
3. Early let us seek Thy favor;
Early let us do Thy will;
Blessed Lord and only Savior,
With Thy love our bosoms fill:
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,
Thou hast loved us, love us still;
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,
Thou hast loved us, love us still.

Not Always on the Mount

Not always on the mount may we
Rapt in the heavenly vision be:
The shores of thought and feeling know
The spirit's tidal ebb and flow

Yet shall one such exalted hour
Bring to the soul redeeming power,
And in new strength through after days
We travel our appointed ways.

Now all the lowly vale grows bright,
Transfigured in remembered light,
And in untiring souls we bear
The freshness of the upper air.

The mount for vision: but below
The paths of daily duty go,
And nobler life therein shall own
The pattern on the mountain shown.