

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  
KRISTIN ROESSNER, LAY READER  
GENE MARIE CALLAHAN, ORGANIST  
OLD FIRST CHURCH CHOIR

MARCH 12, 2023

**PRELUDE** *Largo* (from *Concerto in A Minor*)

- Antonio Vivaldi

**OPENING WORDS** (responsive)

Let us come and worship God.

**O God be with us in this time.**

Let hope and love lead us.

**In this season let us begin anew.**

**\*HYMN** *Praise Ye the Lord, the Almighty* **482**

The text's author, Joachim Neander, took the Calvinist faith seriously but also lived a "rather unruly existence" before his pastor and others influenced him to make some changes in his life. In 1674 he became a grammar school headmaster. 66 of his hymn texts were published in 1691. The valley Neanderthal, where he took long walks, was named in his honor (and was where the famous skeleton was discovered 200 years later in 1856). The tune may have had secular origins but was used by J.S. Bach in three cantatas and an organ setting, as well as Neander's hymn.

**OPENING PRAYER** (unison)

Look to this day!

For it is life, the very life of life.

In its brief course

Lie all the verities and realities of your existence:

The bliss of growth;

The glory of action;

The splendor of achievement;

For yesterday is but a dream,

And tomorrow is only a vision;

But today, well lived, makes every yesterday

a dream of happiness,

And every tomorrow a vision of hope.

Be with us, O Lord, we pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

**ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND \*GLORIA PATRI (579)**

**FIRST LESSON**

Exodus 17:1-7

p. 47

**\*HYMN** *O Come and Sing Unto the Lord* **214**

This versification of Psalm 95 is from *The Psalter* (1912), where it is number 256. In *The Hymnbook* (1955) the original text was altered to remove the word "Jehovah" in the first line of stanzas 1 and 3. Jane Parker Huber made further alterations of stanzas 3 and 4 in *The Presbyterian Hymnal* (1990).

**SECOND LESSON**

John 4:5-42

p. 864

**SERMON**

Thirsty Again

**\*HYMN** *Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days* **81**

The text, written by Claudia Hernaman, who was the daughter of an Anglican priest in Surrey, England, and who also married a minister, was one of over 150 hymns she wrote, many of whom were for children. It was first published in *Child's Book of Praise* (1873). The tune was published in 1562 for the first half of a hymn for Psalm 132 and adapted for an 1853 hymnal, *Ancient Hymn*

**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.)

**RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS** (see insert)

**OFFERING**

**OFFERTORY**

*Ave Verum*

- W. A. Mozart

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

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

**\*HYMN** *In Christ There Is No East or West* **440**

The text was originally from a play, "The Pageant of Darkness and Light," written for the London Missionary Society exhibition on the Orient in 1908. The author was a wholesale grocer and writer of 42 novels and 25 collections of poetry and hymns, including "Hymns for Men at the Front," which sold 8 million copies in World War I. The spiritual tune was the setting for "I Know the Angel's Done Changed My Name" in an 1884 hymn collection "Jubilee Songs," and was later adapted and named for Elmer McKee, rector of St. George's Protestant Episcopal Church in New York City in the 1930's.

**BENEDICTION**

**POSTLUDE**

*Adagio* (from *Concerto for Two Violins*)

- Antonio Vivaldi

\* 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 Marsha Pilachowski. Ushers and greeters for today's service are Fischer Gauthier and Jim Pullman.

Please join us for fellowship and refreshments in the foyer after the service. Our thanks to Janet Andrea and Wendy Schmitt for providing coffee hour this morning.

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

We continue to collect new or gently used blankets for the homeless. Used blankets must be clean and no electric blankets please.

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

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

3/12: Old First hosts the Free Sunday Supper at 2<sup>nd</sup> Congo, 4:00 PM

3/16: Deacon meeting, 4:00 PM, at the Barn

3/18: Setup of the Barn for the luncheon, 12:00 PM. Anyone can help!

3/19: St. Patrick's Luncheon following worship

3/21: Trustee meeting, 5:30 PM, church parlor

3/26: Monumental Tag Sale organizational meeting, following worship

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)

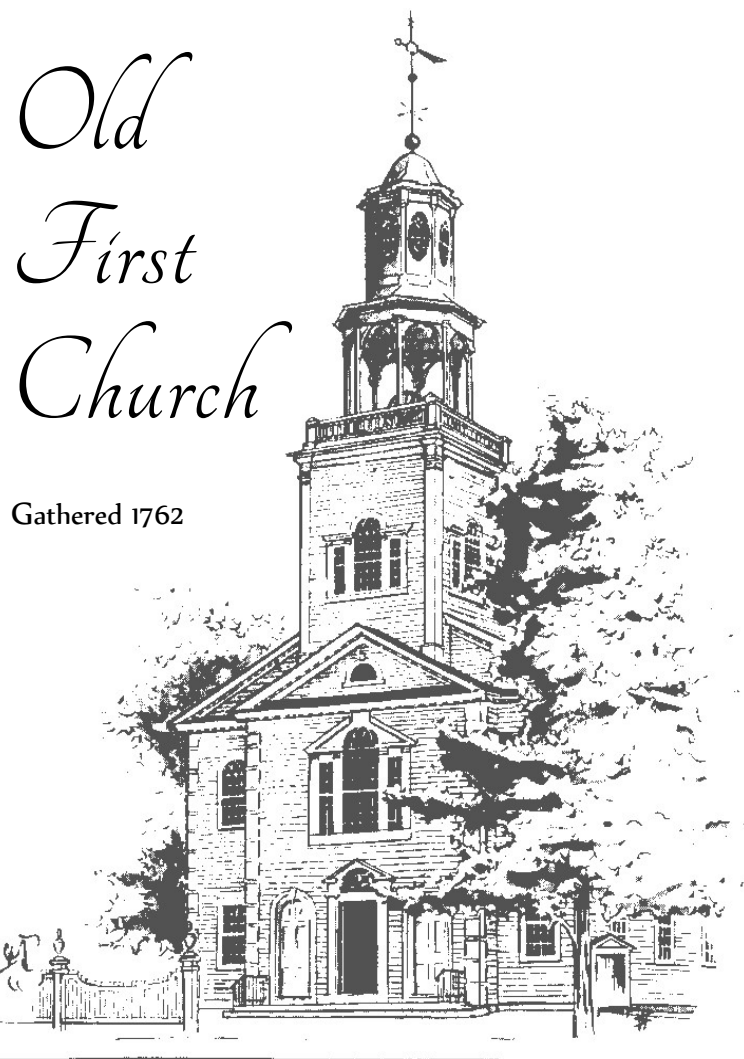
VT RTE. 9 AND MONUMENT AVENUE

OLD BENNINGTON, VERMONT

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### *Praise Ye the Lord, the Almighty*

Praise ye the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!  
O my soul, praise Him, for He is thy health and salvation!  
All ye who hear, now to His temple draw near;  
join me in glad adoration!

Praise ye the Lord, who o'er all things so wondrously reigneth,  
shelters the under His wings, yea, so gently sustaineth!  
Hast thou not seen how thy desires e'er have been  
sent by his gracious ordaining?  
Granted in what He ordaineth?

Praise ye the Lord! O let all that is in me adore Him!  
All that hath life and breath, come now with praises before Him!  
Let the amen sound from His people again;  
gladly for aye we adore Him.

### **FIRST LESSON**

#### **Exodus 17:1-7**

From the wilderness of Sin the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed by stages, as the Lord commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. The people quarreled with Moses, and said, "Give us water to drink." Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?" But the people thirsted there for water; and the people complained against Moses and said, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?" So Moses cried out to the Lord, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me." The Lord said to Moses, "Go on ahead of the people, and take some of the elders of Israel with you; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink." Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarreled and tested the Lord, saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?"

### *O Come and Sing Unto the Lord*

O come and sing unto the Lord,  
To God our voices raise;  
Let us in our most joyful songs  
The Lord, our Savior, praise.

Before God's presence let us come  
With praise and thankful voice;  
Let us sing psalms to God with grace,  
With grateful hearts rejoice.

The Lord our God is King of kings,  
Above all gods enthroned;  
The depths of earth and mountains high  
By God alone are owned.

To God the spacious sea belongs;  
God made its waves and tides,  
And by God's hand the rising land  
Was formed, and still abides.

O come, and bowing down to God  
Our worship let us bring;  
Yea, let us kneel before the Lord,  
Our Maker and our King.

### **SECOND LESSON**

#### **John 4:5-42**

So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon. A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." The woman said to him, "Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?" Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty

again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.” The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.” Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come back.” The woman answered him, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband’; for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!” The woman said to him, “Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.” Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ). “When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.” Jesus said to her, “I am he, the one who is speaking to you.”

Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, “What do you want?” or, “Why are you speaking with her?” Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, “Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?” They left the city and were on their way to him. Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, “Rabbi, eat something.” But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you do not know about.” So the disciples said to one another, “Surely no one has brought him something to eat?” Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. Do you not say, ‘Four months more, then comes the harvest’? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, ‘One sows and another reaps.’ I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.” Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I have ever done.” So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, “It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Savior of the world.”

### *Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days*

Lord, who throughout these forty days  
For us didst fast and pray,  
Teach us with Thee to mourn our sins,  
And close by Thee to stay.

As Thou with Satan didst contend,  
And didst the victory win,  
O give us strength in Thee to fight,  
In Thee to conquer sin.

And through these days of penitence,  
And through Thy Passiontide,  
Yea, evermore, in life and death,  
O Lord, with us abide.

Abide with us, that so, this life  
Of suffering overpast,  
An Easter of unending joy  
We may attain at last!

### *In Christ There Is No East or West*

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|---|--|
| <p>1) In Christ there is no east or west,<br/>In Him no south or north;<br/>But one great fellowship of love<br/>Throughout the whole wide earth.</p> | <p>3) Join hands, disciples in the faith,<br/>Whate'er your race may be.<br/>All children of the living God<br/>Are surely kin to me.</p>                    |
| <p>2) In Christ shall true hearts everywhere<br/>Their high communion find;<br/>His service is the golden cord<br/>Close binding humankind.</p>       | <p>4) In Christ now meet both east and west,<br/>In Him meet south and north;<br/>All Christly souls are one in Him<br/>Throughout the whole wide earth.</p> |

## MEMBERSHIP RECEPTION

We prepare to welcome into our membership today, **Renny Ponvert, Hillary Stewart, Elizabeth Warner** by reaffirmation of faith.

### THE CONFIRMATION OF FAITH

In presenting yourself for membership in the First Congregational Church of Bennington, do you affirm your trust in God as the creative source of life and power?

#### **I DO**

Are you willing to accept the example and teachings of Jesus Christ and seek to make them the guiding principles of your life?

#### **I AM**

Will you be loyal to this Church and support it by your prayer, your presence, and your service?

#### **I WILL**

### THE WELCOME OF THE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH

We, the members of the First Congregational Church, hereby affirm your reception, *Renny, Hillary* and *Liz* into the full membership of our communion. We pledge to you our mutual care, support, and prayers. God grant that loving and being loved, serving, and being served, blessing and being blessed, we may prepare ourselves, while we dwell together on earth, for the age that is to come.

### READING OF THE CHURCH COVENANT (front cover of hymnal)