

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

AUDREY PIETRUCHA, LAY READER

GENE MARIE CALLAHAN, ORGAN

OLD FIRST CHURCH CHOIR

CATHERINE SHERIDAN, TRUMPET

APRIL 9, 2023  EASTER SUNDAY

PRELUDE *An Easter Medley* - arr. Gary Lanier

EASTER PROCLAMATION (responsive)

This is the day of resurrection! Let us rejoice and be glad.

Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed.

This is the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in our eyes.

Let us rejoice and be glad!

HYMN *Come, Ye Faithful, Raise the Strain* 114

This hymn was written in the middle of the eighth century by John of Damascus. It was used on the first Sunday after Easter (St. Thomas Sunday). The ode originated in an Old Testament canticle "The Song of Moses" from Exodus 15.

OPENING PRAYER (unison)

We believe in God:

Who has created and is creating,

Who has come in Jesus,

The word made flesh,

To reconcile and make new,

Who works in us and others

By the spirit.

We trust in God.

We are called to be the church:

To celebrate God's presence,

To live with respect in creation,

To love and serve others,

To seek justice and resist evil,

To proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,

Our judge and our hope.

In life, in death, in life beyond death,

God is with us.

We are not alone,

Thanks be to God. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND GLORIA PATRI (579)

FIRST LESSON Acts 10: 34-43 p. 895

HYMN *Jesus Christ Is Risen Today* 123
(verses 1, 2 and 4)

The first three stanzas are from the 14th century, first published in the 1708 "Collection of Divine Songs and Hymns, partly newly composed, partly translated from the High German and Latin Hymns; and set to easy and pleasant tunes." The tune is the only surviving tune from this hymnal.

SECOND LESSON John 20: 1-18 p. 882

SERMON Not Understanding Scripture

HYMN *I Know that My Redeemer Lives!* Insert
(verses 1-4)

This hymn is set to the tune DUKE STREET which was composed by John Warrington Hatton (b. Warrington, England, c. 1710; d. St. Helen's, Lancaster, England, 1793). Hatton supposedly lived on Duke Street in Lancashire, from where his famous tune name comes. Very little is known about him, but he was most likely a Presbyterian, and the story goes that he was killed in a stagecoach accident.

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 *An Easter Celebration*
- setting by Craig Courtney

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

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

HYMN *All Creatures of Our God and King* 455
(verses 1, 2 and 6)

The text is based on St. Francis' *Canticle of the Sun*, considered the first religious Italian poem, written in 1255, one year before Francis' death, when he was blind and ill. The translator and adapter, William Draper, was an Anglican priest. The composer is unknown, although the first line is the same as a 16th century tune. Ralph Vaughan Williams wrote the harmony in 1906 for the hymn, "Ye Watchers and Ye Holy Ones".

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE Improvisation - Toccata: "The Strife Is O'er"
- Alfred V. Fedak

*Standing, if able



The annual **Easter egg hunt** will take place after worship today. Children should take a bag and balloon from the windowsill right after worship and go into the narthex. After everyone has left the Sanctuary, we will close the doors, do some “hiding” and then invite the children back in.

Deacons of the Month are Joyce Goeke and Wendy Schmitt. Ushers and greeters for today’s service are Marsha and Dave Pilachowski and Wendy and Tom Schmitt.

Please join us after worship today for coffee hour graciously provided by Janet Andrea, Anastasia Gauthier, Mary Elizabeth Groupé, Audrey Pietrucha, and Vicky Printz. If you would like to host coffee hour or provide flowers some Sunday please sign up on the BLOG.

This Easter we are especially thankful for the skills and participation of our church choir and its director and our organist, Gene Marie Callahan. Special thanks to our guest musician Catherine Sheridan providing musical accompaniment today.

Sunday School runs every Sunday morning from 10:30 - 11:00 AM in the parlor. This informal "drop in" program is ideally geared for children under the age of 6. For more information contact Amber Langford at aemc412@comcast.net.

Thank you to those who provided memorial Easter lilies and flowers this year. Donors are encouraged to take flowers home after worship today.

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!

To maintain the healthiest standards for public gathering, indoor air is constantly being exchanged with fresh air with a LifeBreath circulation system operating during the service today.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

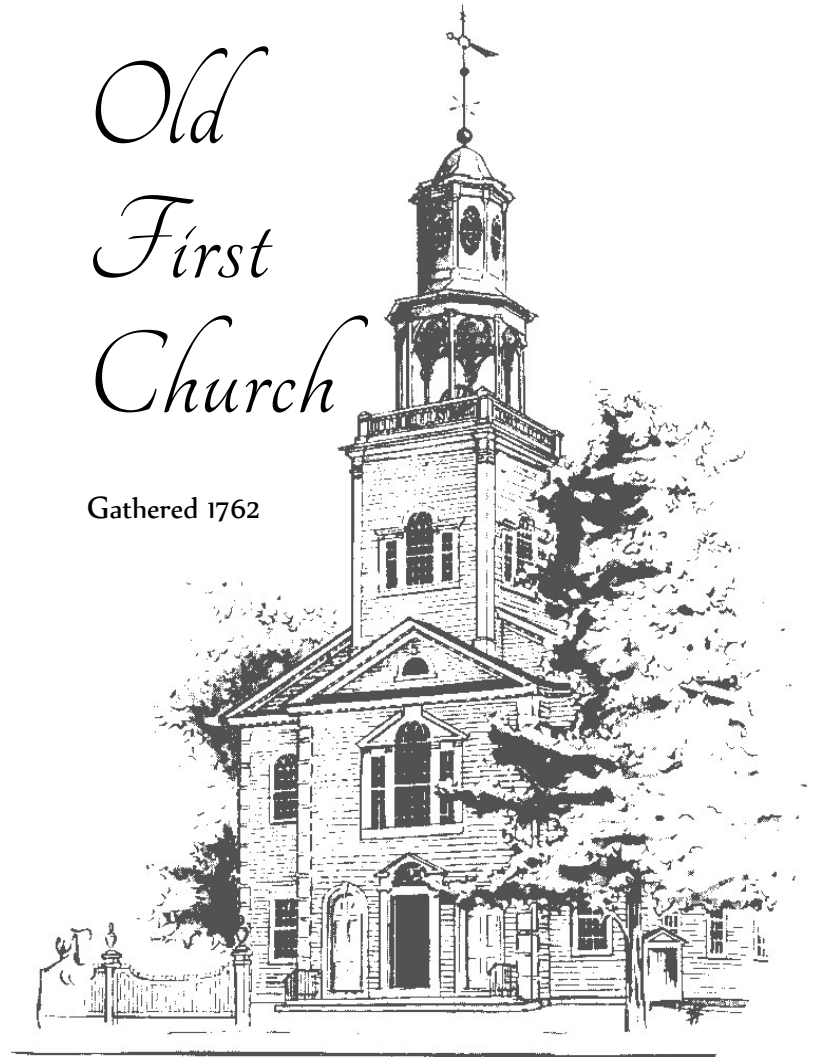
(OLD FIRST CHURCH)

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Old First Church

Gathered 1762



Come, Ye Faithful, Raise the Strain

Come, ye faithful, raise the strain
of triumphant gladness;
God hath brought forth Israel
into joy from sadness;
loosed from Pharaoh's bitter yoke
Jacob's sons and daughters;
led them, with unmoistened foot,
through the Red Sea waters.

'Tis the spring of souls today;
Christ hath burst His prison,
and from three days' sleep in death
as a sun hath risen.
Now rejoice, Jerusalem,
and with true affection
welcome in unwearied strains
Jesus' resurrection!

FIRST LESSON: Acts 10:34-43

Then Peter began to speak to them: "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

Jesus Christ Is Risen Today (verses 1, 2 and 4)

Jesus Christ is risen today, Alleluia!
Our triumphant holy day, Alleluia!
Who did once upon the cross, Alleluia!
Suffer to redeem our loss. Alleluia!

Hymns of praise then let us sing, Alleluia!
Unto Christ, our heavenly King, Alleluia!
Who endured the cross and grave, Alleluia!
Sinners to redeem and save. Alleluia!

Sing we to our God above, Alleluia!
Praise eternal as God's love; Alleluia!
Praise our God, ye heavenly host, Alleluia!
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Alleluia!

SECOND LESSON: John 20:1-18

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to their homes.

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." When she had

said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?” Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.” Jesus said to her, “Mary!” She turned and said to him in Hebrew, “Rabbouni!” (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, “Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’” Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord”; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

I Know that My Redeemer Lives!
(verses 1-4)

I know that my Redeemer lives!
What comfort this sweet sentence gives!
He lives, he lives, who once was dead;
He lives, my ever-living head!

He lives triumphant from the grave;
He lives eternally to save;
He lives exalted, throned above;
He lives to rule his Church in love.

He lives to grant me rich supply;
He lives to guide me with his eye;
He lives to comfort me when faint;
He lives to hear my soul’s complaint.

He lives to silence all my fears;
He lives to wipe away my tears;
He lives to calm my troubled heart;
He lives all blessings to impart.

All Creatures of Our God and King
(verses 1, 2 and 6)

All creatures of our God and King,
lift up your voice and with us sing,
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Thou burning sun with golden beam,
thou silver moon with softer gleam,
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Thou rushing wind that art so strong,
ye clouds that sail in heaven along,
O sing ye! Alleluia!
Thou rising morn, in praise rejoice,
ye lights of evening, find a voice!
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

All creatures, your Creator bless,
and worship God in humbleness.
O sing ye! Alleluia!
Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son,
and praise the Spirit, Three in One!
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!