

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
THE REV. LOUIS N. GUARINIELLO, GUEST MINISTER
DAVID VARKER, LAY READER
GENE MARIE CALLAHAN, ORGANIST OLD FIRST CHURCH CHOIR

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER
MAY 14, 2023 ~ MOTHER'S DAY

PRELUDE *A flower remembered* - John Rutter

OPENING WORDS (responsive)

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

And also with you.

In love, in joy, and thanksgiving come to worship, for God is love.

God has made us and we are God's children.

We belong to our human families, but we belong as well to the family of God.

We join with others, as a Family in worship, in prayer, in praise.

We would draw near to one another as we draw near to God.

*HYMN *Sing Praise to God, Who Reigns Above* 483

This hymn was originally titled, "Hymn of Thanksgiving." Johann Schütz was a lawyer in Frankfurt who sympathized with the pietist movement in the Lutheran Church. The translator, Frances Elizabeth Cox, was one of the foremost translators into English of German hymns. The tune is from the 1566 Bohemian Brethren's *Kirchengeseng*.

SILENT PRAYER

OPENING PRAYER (unison)

Our Parent, who by Your love has made us, and through Your love has kept us, and in Your love would make us perfect: we humbly confess that we have not loved You with all our heart and soul and mind and strength, and that we have not loved one another as Christ has loved us. Your life is within our souls, but our selfishness has hindered You. We have resisted Your spirit. We have neglected Your inspirations. Forgive what we have been; help us to amend what we are; and in your Spirit direct what we shall be, that You may come into the full glory of Your creation, in us and in all people; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND *GLORIA PATRI (579)

FIRST LESSON Psalm 66:8-20 p. 459

HYMN *How Happy Is Each Child of God* 239

The text is a paraphrase of Psalm 128 by Dwyn M. Mounger. While a pastor in Valdosta, Georgia, Mounger tried to remain faithful to the Common Lectionary's choice of Psalms and scripture lessons for Sundays. There were psalms that *The Hymnbook* (1955) did not have either to be read responsively or to be sung. He and his associate began to paraphrase the psalms and set them to familiar tunes. This text was one of those paraphrases. It became a favorite of the congregation and was sung on Christian Family Sunday every year.

SECOND LESSON The Gospel of John 14:15-21 p. 877

SERMON Mother Mary--A Model for Parenting

*HYMN *O for a World* 386

The text by Sister Miriam Therese Winter has enjoyed wide circulation since being written in 1987 and first published in our hymnal. Winter is professor of liturgy, worship and spirituality at Hartford, CT Seminary. The tune was composed in 1828 in Weissenfels, Germany by Carl Gläser, a pianist, violinist, chorus director and music store owner. Lowell Mason arranged and introduced it to this country in 1839 and named it *azmon*, the Hebrew word for "fortress."

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 *A Home of Grace* - Joseph Martin

*DOXOLOGY (592) AND PRAYER OF DEDICATION

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

*HYMN *Called as Partners in Christ's Service* 343

Jane Parker Huber was born of Presbyterian missionary parents in China and has worked on women's issues in the church. She has written several hymn texts to familiar tunes in our hymnal. For this hymn, in 1981, Huber was thinking of the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women as elders, and the 25th as ministers in her church. The tune was first published in 1870 by John Zundel, a church organist in Brooklyn and New York City.

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *Psalm of Glory* - Dorothy Wells

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 Pat Ross. Ushers and greeters for today's service are Larry and Pat Ross.

Please join us for fellowship and refreshments in the foyer after the service. Our thanks to Mary Elizabeth Groupé, Marsha Pilachowski and Pat Ross for providing coffee hour this morning.

Flowers for worship are provided by Betsy Ehrenfreund.

Sunday School will not be in session next Sunday, May 21 and will resume on the 28th. For more information contact our Christian Ed Advocate, Amber Langford at aemc412@comcast.net.

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

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

5/21: Tag Sale meeting following worship

5/22: Trustee meeting, 5:30 PM, Church Parlor

6/4: Monumental Tag Sale kickoff luncheon, following worship

6/10: Monumental Tag Sale at the Barn 9 AM – 3 PM

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

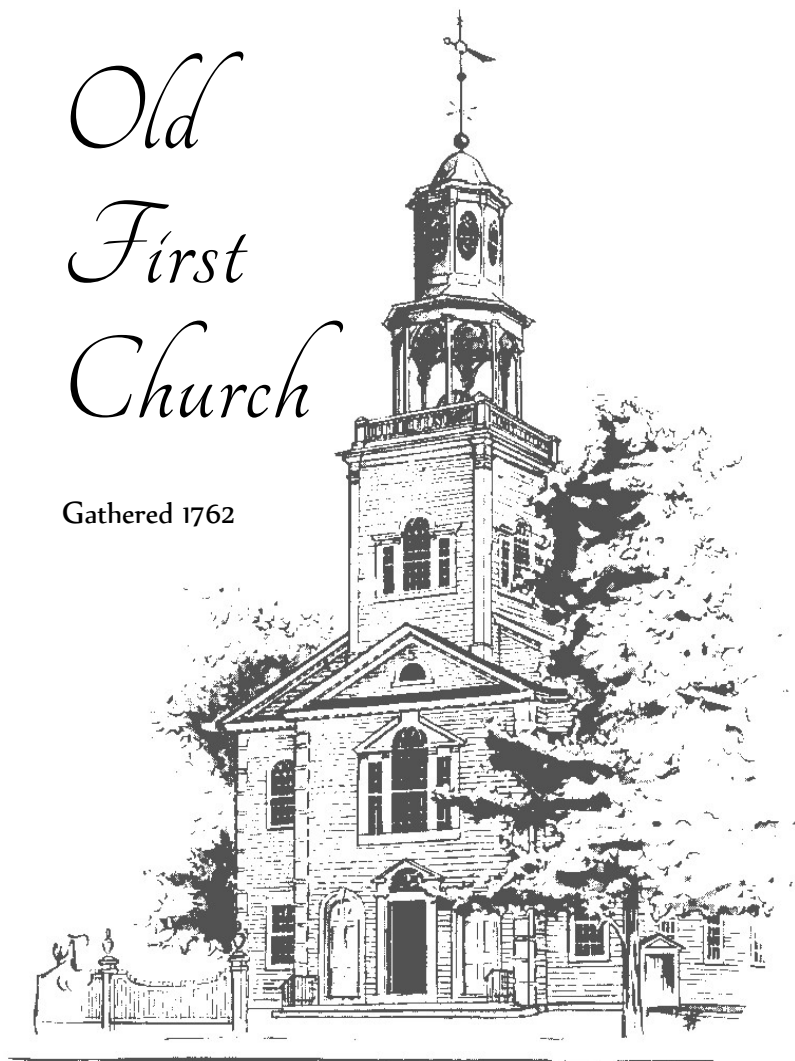
(OLD FIRST CHURCH)
VT RTE. 9 AND MONUMENT AVENUE
OLD BENNINGTON, VERMONT

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Old First Church

Gathered 1762



Sing Praise to God, Who Reigns Above

1. Sing praise to God, who reigns above,
the God of all creation,
the God of power, the God of love,
the God of our salvation;
With healing balm my soul is filled,
and every faithless murmur stilled:
To God all praise and glory!
2. What God's almighty power hath made,
God's gracious mercy keepeth;
by morning glow or evening shade
God's watchful eye ne'er sleepeth;
Within the kingdom of God's might,
Lo! All is just and all is right:
To God all praise and glory!
3. The Lord is never far away,
but through all grief distressing,
an ever present help and stay,
our peace, and joy, and blessing;
As with a mother's tender hand,
God gently leads the chosen band:
To God all praise and glory!
4. Thus all my gladsome way along,
I sing aloud Thy praises,
that all may hear the grateful song
my voice unwearied raises.
Be joyful in the Lord, my heart,
both soul and body take your part:
To God all praise and glory!

FIRST LESSON

Psalm 66:8-20

Bless our God, O peoples, let the sound of his praise be heard,
who has kept us among the living, and has not let our feet slip.
For you, O God, have tested us; you have tried us as silver is tried.
You brought us into the net; you laid burdens on our backs;
you let people ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water; yet
you have brought us out to a spacious place.
I will come into your house with burnt offerings; I will pay you my vows,
those that my lips uttered and my mouth promised when I was in trouble.
I will offer to you burnt offerings of fatlings, with the smoke of the sacrifice of
rams; I will make an offering of bulls and goats. Selah
Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will tell what he has done for me.
I cried aloud to him, and he was extolled with my tongue.
If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.
But truly God has listened; he has given heed to the words of my prayer.
Blessed be God, because he has not rejected my prayer or removed his steadfast
love from me.

How Happy Is Each Child of God

How happy is each child of God
Who walks within God's ways!
You'll reap good fruit from honest work,
And joy in life always.

With fruitful spouse you'll parent now
Your children strong, adored;
Like olive shoots they shall surround
Your laden table board!

How happy is the family
Who honors God above!
The Lord shall send all help and grace
To bless your home with love.

May God's great peace, good health and joy
Forever fill your home;
May you and your descendants know
Forever God's shalom!

SECOND LESSON

John 14:15-21

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

"I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them."

O for a World

O for a world where everyone
Respects each other's ways,
Where love is lived and all is done
With justice and with praise.

O for a world where goods are shared
And misery relieved,
Where truth is spoken, children spared,
Equality achieved.

We welcome one world family
And struggle with each choice
That opens us to unity
And gives our vision voice.

The poor are rich, the weak are strong,
The foolish ones are wise.
Tell all who mourn; outcasts belong,
Who perishes will rise.

O for a world preparing for
God's glorious reign of peace,
Where time and tears will be no more,
And all but love will cease.

Called as Partners in Christ's Service

Called as partners in Christ's service,
Called to ministries of grace,
We respond with deep commitment
Fresh new lines of faith to trace.
May we learn the art of sharing,
Side by side and friend with friend,
Equal partners in our caring
To fulfill God's chosen end.

Christ's example, Christ's inspiring,
Christ's clear call to work and worth,
Let us follow, never faltering,
Reconciling folk on earth.
Men and women, richer, poorer,
All God's people, young and old,
Blending human skills together
Gracious gifts from God unfold.

Thus new patterns for Christ's mission,
In a small or global sense,
Help us bear each other's burdens,
Breaking down each wall or fence.
Words of comfort, words of vision,
Words of challenge, said with care,
Bring new power and strength for action,
Make us colleagues, free and fair.

So God grant us for tomorrow
Ways to order human life
That surround each person's sorrow
With a calm that conquers strife.
Make us partners in our living,
Our compassion to increase,
Messengers of faith, thus giving
Hope and confidence and peace.