

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, ORGANIST
OLD FIRST CHURCH CHOIR

JUNE 11, 2023

PRELUDE *Prelude Modal* - Jean Langlais

OPENING WORDS (responsive)

Make a joyful noise all the earth.

Let us worship the Lord with gladness.

For the Lord is good, God's love endures forever.

God's Spirit is in all times and generations.

*HYMN *Awake, My Soul, and with the Sun* 456

Thomas Ken (1637-1711) was born at Little Berkhamstead, Hertfordshire, England, but went to live with his brother-in-law, Isaak Walton, after his parents died when Ken was nine years old. He was educated at Winchester and New College, Oxford. He was curate for Little Easton in Essex for three years after his ordination in 1662 and served for one year as a domestic chaplain to Bishop Morley. King James II of England declared the author of this hymn, Thomas Ken, the most eloquent preacher among Protestants of his time.

OPENING PRAYER (unison)

God of grace and truth,

in Jesus Christ you came among us

as light shining in darkness.

We confess that we have not always welcomed the light,
or trusted good news to be good.

We have closed our eyes to glory in our midst,
expecting little, and hoping for less.

Forgive our doubt, and renew our hope,

so that we may receive the fullness of your grace,

and live in the truth of Christ the Lord. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND *GLORIA PATRI (579)

FIRST LESSON

Romans 4:13-25

p. 916

*HYMN *Not Unto Us, O Lord of Heaven* 227

This hymn originally in German was written by Johann Heermann and titled "A Daily Prayer." It was published in *Devoti Musica Hordis, Hauss- und Hertz-Musica* (1630). Heermann (1585-1647) was born in Raudten, Silesia, the youngest and only surviving child of five born to his parents. As a child, Heermann was quite ill and his mother vowed if God would spare him, she would dedicate the child's life to the ministry.

SECOND LESSON

Matthew 9:9-13; 18-26

p. 790

SERMON

Send Away the Flute Players

*HYMN *Live Into Hope* 332

The text was written for the United Presbyterian Women's national meeting in 1976 and is based on Luke 4:16-20. It was Huber's first hymn. Huber writes new words to familiar tunes and has worked with Presbyterian Women and the Social Justice and Peacemaking Ministry Unit of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The tune was first published as a setting in 1789 of an Isaac Watts text; but it is now probably best known as "Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates."

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

Beautiful Savior

- Robert Lee

*DOXOLOGY (592) AND PRAYER OF DEDICATION

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

p. 16

*HYMN *O Day of Peace* 450

The tune was a choral song by Hubert Parry based in 1916 on William Blake's poem, *Jerusalem*. Parry was a professor of music at Oxford and was knighted in 1898. Richard Proulx, the director of music at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Chicago, wrote the harmonization in 1986. The words were written by Carl Daw, Jr. in 1982; he is vicar-chaplain at St. Mark's Episcopal Chapel at the University of Connecticut.

*BENEDICTION

*POSTLUDE

God is Our Refuge and Strength

- Paul Davis

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 Jeannette Lesser and Amy Tronsen. Ushers and greeters for today's service are Joyce Goeke and Jeannette Lesser.

Please join us for fellowship and refreshments in the foyer after the service. Our thanks to Jeannette Lesser and Betsy Ratelle for providing coffee hour this morning.

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 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

6/15: Deacon meeting, 4:00 PM, Barn

6/19: Trustee meeting, 5:30 PM, Parlor

6/25: Church Picnic to be held at the Ross' house, 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!

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.

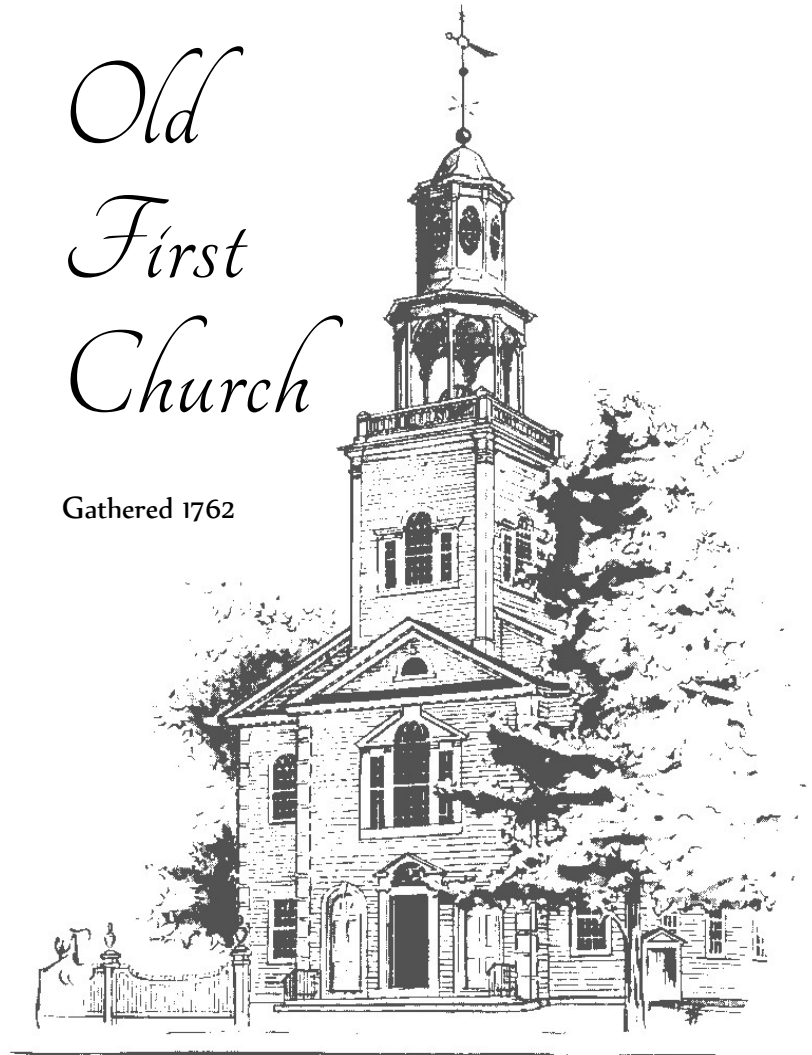
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

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Old First Church

Gathered 1762



Awake, My Soul, and with the Sun

Awake, my soul, and with the sun
your daily stage of duty run;
Shake off dull sloth, and joyful rise
To pay your morning sacrifice.

Lord, I my vows to You renew.
Disperse my sins as morning dew;
Guard my first springs of thought and will,
And with Yourself my spirit fill.

Direct, control, suggest, this day,
All I design or do or say;
That all my powers, with all their might,
in Your sole glory may unite.

FIRST LESSON

Romans 4:13-25

For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation. For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us,

as it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations”) —in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become “the father of many nations,” according to what was said, “So numerous shall your descendants be.” He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was already as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah’s womb. No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. Therefore his faith “was reckoned to him as righteousness.”

Now the words, “it was reckoned to him,” were written not for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.

Not Unto Us, O Lord of Heaven

- 1). Not unto us, O Lord of heaven,
but unto You be glory given.
In love and truth You do fulfill
the counsels of Your sovereign will;
though nations fail Your power to own,
yet You still reign, and You alone.
- 2). The idol gods of heathen lands
are but the work of human hands;
they cannot see, they cannot speak,
their ears are deaf, their hands are weak;
Like them shall be all those who hold
to gods of silver and of gold.
- 3). Let Israel trust in God alone,
the Lord whose grace and power are known;
To God your full allegiance yield,
that one will be your help and shield;
All those who fear God will be blest,
the saints have proved God’s faithfulness.

SECOND LESSON

Matthew 9:9-13; 18-26

As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, “Follow me.” And he got up and followed him. And as he sat at dinner in the house, many tax collectors and sinners came and were sitting with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” But when he heard this, he said, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners.”

While he was saying these things to them, suddenly a leader of the synagogue came in and knelt before him, saying, “My daughter has just died; but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live.” And Jesus got up and followed him, with his disciples. Then suddenly a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years came up behind him and touched the fringe of his cloak, for she said to herself, “If I only touch his cloak, I will be made well.” Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, “Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well.” And instantly the woman was made well. When Jesus came to the leader’s house and saw the flute players and the crowd making a commotion, he said, “Go away; for the girl is not dead but sleeping.” And they laughed at him. But when the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl got up. And the report of this spread throughout that district.

Live Into Hope

Live into hope of captives freed,
Of sight regained, the end of greed.
The oppressed shall be the first to see
The year of God's own jubilee!

Live into hope the blind shall see
With insight and with clarity,
Removing shades of pride and fear
A vision of our God brought near.

Live into hope of liberty,
The right to speak, the right to be,
The right to have one's daily bread,
To hear God's word and thus be fed.

Live into hope of captives freed
From chains of fear or want or greed.
God now proclaims our full release
To faith and hope and joy and peace.

O Day of Peace

O day of peace that dimly shines
Through all our hopes and prayers and dreams,
Guide us to justice, truth, and love,
Delivered from our selfish schemes.
May swords of hate fall from our hands,
Our hearts from envy find release,
Till by God's grace our warring world
Shall see Christ's promised reign of peace.

Then shall the wolf dwell with the lamb,
Nor shall the fierce devour the small;
As beasts and cattle calmly graze,
A little child shall lead them all.
Then enemies shall learn to love,
All creatures find their true accord;
The hope of peace shall be fulfilled,
For all the earth shall know the Lord.