

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  
REG JONES, LAY READER  
GENE MARIE CALLAHAN, ORGANIST  
OLD FIRST CHURCH CHOIR

JUNE 25, 2023

**PRELUDE** *All Who Love and Serve Your City*  
- setting by Wilbur Held

**OPENING WORDS** (responsive)

God's goodness is over all creation.

**Let us give thanks and praise.**

In love and compassion God's spirit is known.

**Let us offer prayers of peace and goodwill.**

**\*HYMN** *Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee* 464

The text was written in 1907 when Henry van Dyke was guest preacher at Williams College. He said it should be sung to this tune, from Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. Beethoven's original rhythm for the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> measures has been restored in our hymnal.

**OPENING PRAYER** (unison)

O Lord our God,

you know us better than we know ourselves.

As we come before you now,

believers and doubters alike,

we all share a deep need,

for we are all lost without your grace.

Search us, O God, and know our hearts,

test us and know our troubled thoughts.

Give us true repentance.

Forgive us all our wrongs.

Transform us by your Spirit to live for you each day,

to learn to serve each other

and, through the grace of Jesus Christ our Lord,

to come at last to heaven.

This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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

**FIRST LESSON** Psalm 86:1-10; 16-17 p. 473

**\*HYMN** *O My Soul, Bless Your Redeemer* 223  
(verses 1-4)

This paraphrase of Psalm 103 first appeared in *The Book of Psalms* of the United Presbyterian Church of North America in 1871. The tune, *Stuttgart*, first appeared in Christian Friedrich Witt's *Psalmodia Sacra* (1715) and was revised for the 1861 *Hymns Ancient and Modern*.

**SECOND LESSON** Matthew 10:24-39 p. 791

**SERMON** Hard Words at the Lost and Found

**\*HYMN** *Come Down, O Love Divine* 313

Bianco da Siena wrote the words in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. He lived in Venice and was a member of an unordained order that followed the rule of St. Augustine. The translation was made by Richard Littledale, an Irish priest, for his 1867 *People's Hymnal*. Ralph Vaughan Williams wrote the tune for this text for the 1906 *The English Hymnal*, which he edited. Vaughan Williams was the most important English composer of his generation.

**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** *To Be God's People* - Charles F. Brown

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

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

**\*HYMN** *When in Our Music God Is Glorified* 264

The hymn text is by Fred Pratt Green, who has been credited with starting the twentieth century's hymn explosion. It was written at the request of John Wilson, who wanted a hymn for a Festival of praise or choir anniversary set to the tune ENGLEBERG.

**\*BENEDICTION**

**\*POSTLUDE** *I Love Thy Kingdom Lord* - Flor Peeters

\* 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 Jeannette Lesser and Amy Tronsen. Ushers and greeters for today's service are Dave and Marsha Pilachowski.

Please join us after worship today for our annual church picnic, this year being held at the home of Pat and Larry Ross, 1534 Bluestone Rd Bennington (directions can be found on the marble top table in the foyer).

The Choir of Old First Church celebrates its final Sunday of the 2022-23 season this morning, having led congregational singing and provided anthems each Sunday, September through June. Our thanks to our Organist and Choir Director Gene Marie Callahan and choir members John Carson, Jim Dilley, Susan Kachmar, Wayne Kachmar and Carol Poppe. Special thanks to Mary Elizabeth Groupé for enhancing our music with her viola.

**Sunday School** will be on break for the summer months. Thank you to Amber Langford for leading the classes each Sunday.

**We switch to our summer worship schedule of 10:00 a.m. next Sunday, July 2**

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!

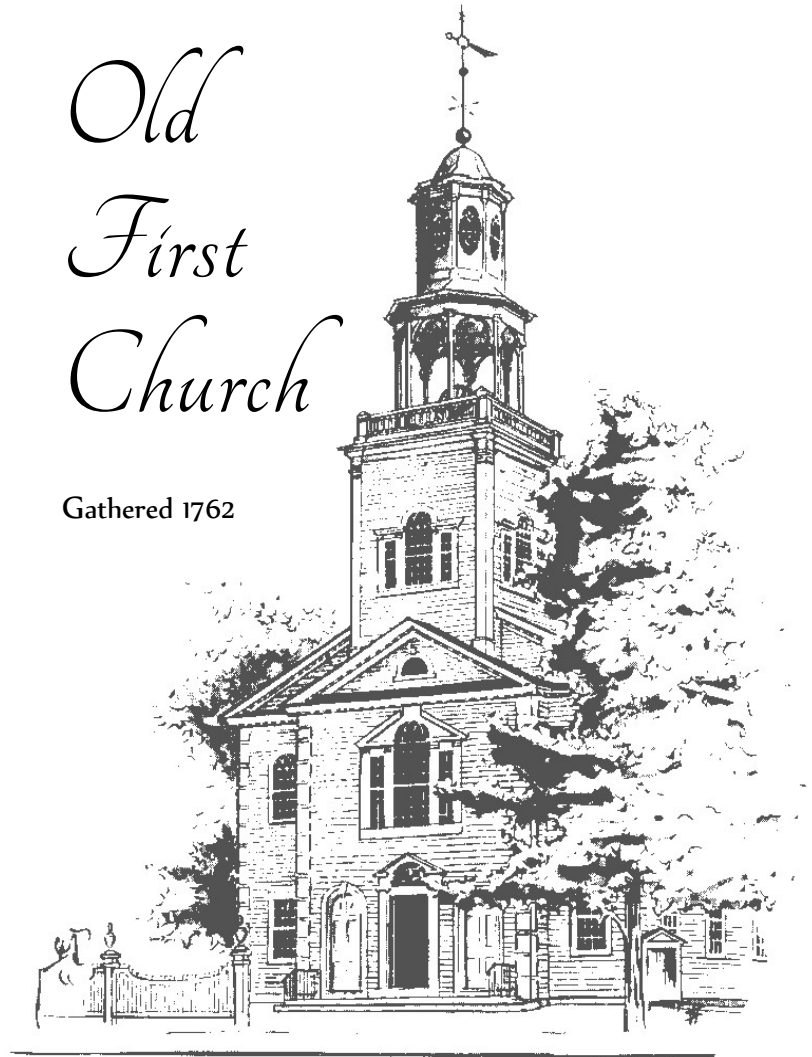
To maintain the healthiest standards for public gathering, indoor air is constantly being exchanged with fresh air with a LifeBreath circulation system operating during the service today.

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

MAILING ADDRESS & CONTACT INFORMATION  
1 MONUMENT CIRCLE • BENNINGTON, VERMONT 05201 • (802) 447-1223  
[office@oldfirst.comcastbiz.net](mailto:office@oldfirst.comcastbiz.net) • [www.oldfirstchurchbenn.org](http://www.oldfirstchurchbenn.org)

Old  
First  
Church

Gathered 1762



## *Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee*

Joyful, joyful, we adore Thee,  
God of glory, Lord of love;  
Hearts unfold like flowers before Thee,  
Opening to the sun above.  
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness;  
Drive the gloom of doubt away;  
Giver of immortal gladness,  
Fill us with the light of day.

All Thy works with joy surround Thee,  
Earth and heaven reflect Thy rays,  
Stars and angels sing around Thee,  
Center of unbroken praise.  
Field and forest, vale and mountain,  
Flowery meadow, flashing sea,  
Chanting bird and flowing fountain,  
Call us to rejoice in Thee.

Mortals, join the happy chorus  
Which the morning stars began;  
Lord divine is reigning o'er us,  
Joining all in heaven's plan.  
Ever singing, march we onward,  
Victors in the midst of strife,  
Joyful music leads us sunward  
In the triumph song of life.

## **FIRST LESSON**

### **Psalm 86**

Incline your ear, O LORD, and answer me, for I am poor and needy.

Preserve my life, for I am devoted to you; save your servant who trusts in you.  
You are my God;

be gracious to me, O Lord, for to you do I cry all day long.

Gladden the soul of your servant, for to you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love to all  
who call on you.

Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer; listen to my cry of supplication.

In the day of my trouble I call on you, for you will answer me.

There is none like you among the gods, O Lord, nor are there any works like  
yours.

All the nations you have made shall come and bow down before you, O Lord,  
and shall glorify your name.

For you are great and do wondrous things; you alone are God.

Turn to me and be gracious to me; give your strength to your servant; save the  
child of your serving girl.

Show me a sign of your favor, so that those who hate me may see it and be put  
to shame, because you, LORD, have helped me and comforted me.

## *O My Soul, Bless Your Redeemer*

O my soul, bless your Redeemer;  
All within me bless God's name;  
Bless the Savior, and forget not  
All God's mercies to proclaim;

God forgives all your transgressions,  
All diseases gently heals;  
God redeems you from destruction,  
And with you so kindly deals.

Far as east from west is distant,  
God has put away our sin;  
Like the pity of a father  
Has the Lord's compassion been.

As it was without beginning,  
So it lasts without an end;  
To their children's children ever  
Shall God's righteousness extend:

“A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master; it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher, and the slave like the master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household! “So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known. What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops. Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. And even the hairs of your head are all counted. So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows. “Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven. “Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and one’s foes will be members of one’s own household. Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.

### *Come Down, O Love Divine*

Come down, O Love divine, Seek out this soul of mine  
And visit it with Your own ardor glowing;  
O Comforter, draw near, within my heart appear,  
And kindle it, Your holy flame bestowing.

O let it freely burn, till earthly passions turn  
To dust and ashes in its heat consuming;  
And let Your glorious light shine ever on my sight,  
And clothe me round, the while my path illuming.

And so the yearning strong with which the soul will long  
Shall far out-pass the power of human telling;  
For none can guess God’s grace, till love creates a place  
Where in the Holy Spirit makes a dwelling.

### *When in Our Music God Is Glorified*

When in our music God is glorified,  
And adoration leaves no room for pride,  
It is as though the whole creation cried: Alleluia!

How often, making music, we have found  
A new dimension in the world of sound,  
As worship moved us to a more profound Alleluia!

So has the church, in liturgy and song,  
In faith and love, through centuries of wrong,  
Borne witness to the truth in every tongue: Alleluia!

Let every instrument be tuned for praise!  
Let all rejoice who have a voice to raise!  
And may God give us faith to sing always: Alleluia! Amen.