

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
NOAH LANGFORD, LAY READER
GENE MARIE CALLAHAN, ORGANIST

AUGUST 13, 2023

PRELUDE

Minuetto II from Sonata I

- Anne Louise Boyvin d'Hardancourt Brillon de Jouy

OPENING WORDS (responsive)

The Lord is gracious and full of compassion.

The Lord is good to all.

O Lord, open thou our lips.

And our mouth shall show forth thy praise.

*HYMN *God of the Ages, Whose Almighty Hand* 262

The author of the text was vicar of St. Paul's Church, Concord, New Hampshire. He wrote it for a Fourth of July, 1876 Centennial celebration in Brandon, Vermont to the tune called "Russian Hymn." But soon after that (for the Constitution's centennial) it was set to the present tune written for it by George Warren, an acclaimed organist in Albany and New York City, at whose funeral no music was played to indicate there was no longer anyone to lead the music at his church.

OPENING PRAYER (unison)

God of all creation,
our chief end is to glorify you,
and enjoy you forever.
Our deep delight is in your presence,
our fondest thoughts are of you,
our strongest longing is for your house.
In this hour of worship,
help us to become who we are meant to be--
a community that breathes thankfulness,
voicing your praise in all we do.
In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND *GLORIA PATRI (579)

FIRST LESSON

Psalms 85:8-13

p. 473

*HYMN *Our God, Our Help in Ages Past* 210

Isaac Watts, the "father of English hymnody" based this hymn on Psalm 90:1-5. He wrote his first hymn at 15, and thus began a revolution in Reformed worship using contemporary words or loosely translated Psalms. The tune, *St. Anne*, is named for St. Anne's Church, Soho, England, where composer William Croft was organist, and was used by Handel and Bach.

SECOND LESSON

Matthew 14:22-33

p. 796

SERMON

Take Heart

*HYMN *Lord, While for All Mankind We Pray* Insert

Author, John Reynell Wreford, an English Unitarian minister, was born December 12, 1800, at Barnstaple; educated at Manchester College, and in 1826 became pastor of a Church in Birmingham. In 1831, on account of the failure of his voice, he withdrew from the active work of the ministry and, in conjunction with Rev. Hugh Hutton, established a school at Edgbaston. He wrote a History of Presbyterian Nonconformity in Birmingham, 1832, and Lays of Loyalty, 1837. He contributed fifty-five hymns to Rev. J. R. Beard's Collection, 1837. His most popular and valuable hymn is the one given in this book. The last years of his life were spent in retirement at Bristol, where he died in 1891.

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 or hand it to an usher after the service.)

OFFERING

OFFERTORY

O Rest in the Lord from Elijah

- Felix Mendelssohn, Audrey Pietrucha, soloist

*DOXOLOGY (592) AND PRAYER OF DEDICATION

SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

(insert)

The congregation is invited to participate in the service as found in the insert included in this order of service. *(Please note that grape juice is on the outer circle only and wine inside. We partake together after all have been served.)*

COMMUNION VOLUNTARY

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

p. 16

*HYMN *O Beautiful for Spacious Skies* 564

Katherine Lee Bates, Wellesley College professor of literature, was inspired to write the text after an 1893 visit to the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, where she felt a patriotic feeling, and afterwards wrote, "We went on, my New England eyes delighting in the wind-waved gold of the vast wheat fields." It was after seeing amber skies from Pikes Peak that she then wrote the hymn in Colorado Springs. Samuel Augustus Ward, a Newark, NJ music supply, piano and organ salesperson, wrote the tune in 1882. First used for the hymn, *O Mother Dear, Jerusalem*, his widow gave permission for it to be used with Bates' text in 1912.

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

On the Wings of Thy Song

- arr. Gordon Myers

* 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 and ushers for today's service are Joyce Goeke and Ellen Knapp. Communion servers for today's service are Joyce Goeke and Marsha Pilachowski.

Please join us for fellowship and refreshments in the foyer after the service. Our thanks to Janet Van Derpoel-Andrea and Marsha Pilachowski for providing coffee hour this morning.

Flowers for worship are provided by Patrice Nolan-Fox in memory of her mother.

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

- 8/21: Trustee meeting, 5:30 PM, Church Parlor
- 9/10: Return to 11:00 AM worship time
- 9/10: Choir practice resumes, 9:45 AM in the choir loft
- 9/10: OFC hosting the Free Sunday Supper @ 2nd Congregational
- 9/14: Deacon's meeting, 4:00 PM, Barn

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

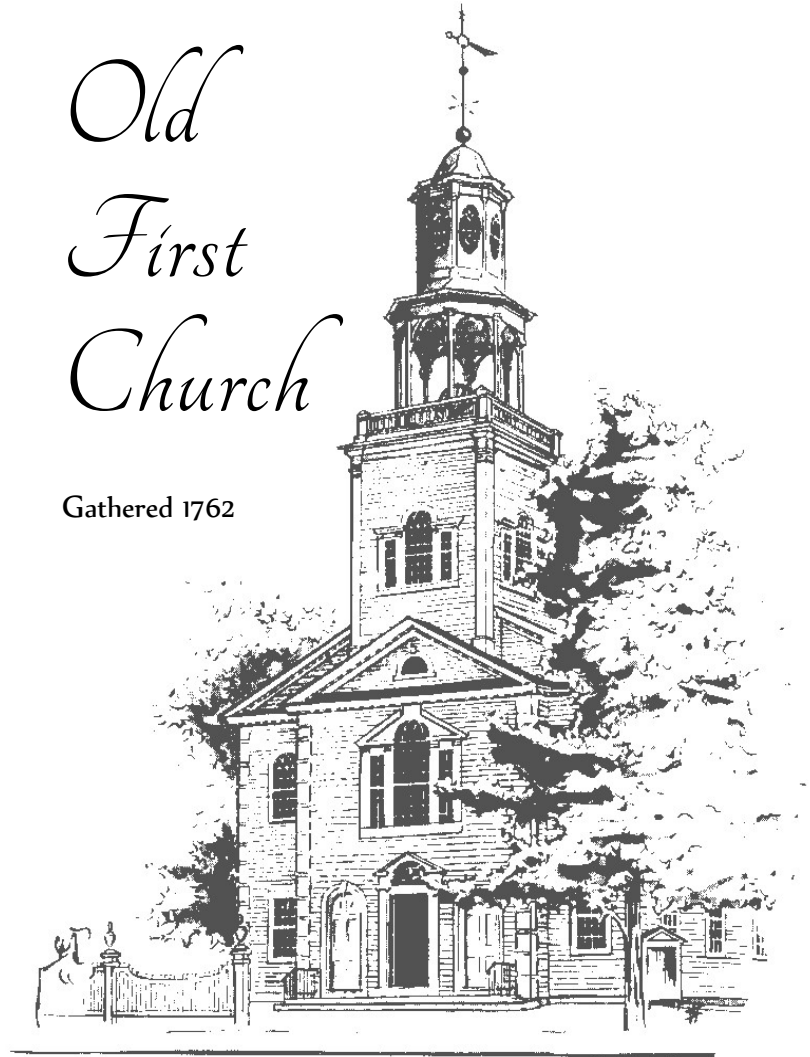
(OLD FIRST CHURCH)
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OLD BENNINGTON, VERMONT

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*Old
First
Church*

Gathered 1762



God of the Ages, Whose Almighty Hand

God of the ages, whose almighty hand
leads forth in beauty all the starry band
of shining worlds in splendor through the skies,
our grateful songs before thy throne arise.

Thy love divine hath led us in the past;
in this free land with thee our lot is cast;
be thou our ruler, guardian, guide, and stay,
Thy word our law, Thy paths our chosen way.

From war's alarms, from deadly pestilence,
be Thy strong arm our ever sure defense;
Thy true religion in our hearts increase;
Thy bounteous goodness nourish us in peace.

Refresh Thy people on their toilsome way;
lead us from night to never-ending day;
fill all our lives with love and grace divine,
and glory, laud, and praise be ever Thine.

Our God, Our Help in Ages Past

Our God, our help in ages past,
our hope for years to come,
our shelter from the stormy blast,
and our eternal home:

Before the hills in order stood,
or earth received its frame,
from everlasting Thou art God,
to endless years the same.

A thousand ages in Thy sight
are like an evening gone;
short as the watch that ends the night
before the rising sun.

Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
soon bears us all away;
We fly forgotten, as a dream
dies at the opening day.

Our God, our help in ages past,
our hope for years to come,
be Thou our guard while life shall last,
and our eternal home.

FIRST LESSON

Psalm 85:8-13

Let me hear what God the LORD will speak, for he will speak peace to his people, to his faithful, to those who turn to him in their hearts.

Surely his salvation is at hand for those who fear him, that his glory may dwell in our land.

Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will kiss each other.

Faithfulness will spring up from the ground, and righteousness will look down from the sky.

The LORD will give what is good, and our land will yield its increase.

Righteousness will go before him, and will make a path for his steps.

SECOND LESSON

Matthew 14:22-33

Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid." Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

Lord, While for All Mankind We Pray

Lord, while for all mankind we pray.
Of Every clime and coast,
O hear us for our native land,
The land we love the most!

O guard our shores from every foe,
With peace our borders bless;
With prosperous times our cities crown,
Our fields with plenteousness.

Unite us in the sacred love
Of knowledge, truth, and thee;
And let our hills and valleys shout
The songs of liberty.

Lord of the nations, thus to thee
Our country we commend;
Be thou her refuge and her trust,
Her everlasting Friend.

O Beautiful for Spacious Skies

Oh, beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
Above the fruited plain!
America! America!
God shed His grace on thee,
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea.

Oh, beautiful for pilgrim feet,
Whose stern, impassioned stress
A thoroughfare of freedom beat
Across the wilderness!
America! America!
God mend thine every flaw,
Confirm thy soul in self-control,
Thy liberty in law.

Oh, beautiful for heroes proved
In liberating strife,
Who more than self their country loved,
And mercy more than life!
America! America!
May God thy gold refine,
Till all success be nobleness,
And every gain divine.

Oh, beautiful for patriot dream
That sees beyond the years
Thine alabaster cities gleam,
Undimmed by human tears!
America! America!
God shed His grace on thee,
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea.

**Order of Service for
The Lord's Supper or Communion
At the First Congregational Church
Bennington, Vermont**

Scripture Sentences

Opening Words and Invocation

Prayer of Confession (read by the Minister and People in Unison)

We come not into thy presence, most holy Lord God, trusting in our own righteousness but in thy manifold and abiding mercies. Remembering this day the great heart and passion of a son of man of long ago, we are conscious of our shortcomings. We would here be turned to the way of his brave and tender spirit, and find that wholeness of life which shall be at once a divine blessing for us and a divine ministry from us. Forgive our failures and shortcomings, and by thy grace strengthen our desire for goodness, that we may henceforth serve thee without fear and without shame, all the days of our lives. Amen.

Responsive Reading

Let us hear the words of Jesus which speak of the way of blessedness.

Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

BLESSED ARE THEY THAT MOURN; FOR THEY SHALL BE COMFORTED.

Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth.

BLESSED ARE THEY WHICH DO HUNGER AND THIRST AFTER RIGHTEOUSNESS; FOR THEY SHALL BE FILLED.

Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy.

BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART; FOR THEY SHALL SEE GOD.

Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God.

BLESSED ARE THEY WHICH ARE PERSECUTED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS' SAKE; FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

THIS IS THE FIRST AND GREAT COMMANDMENT.

And the second is like unto it, namely this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

ON THESE TWO COMMANDMENTS HANG ALL THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS.

Offertory and Communion Prayer

The Lord be with you.

AND ALSO WITH YOU.

Lift up your hearts

WE LIFT THEM TO THE LORD.

It is right to give our thanks and praise

LET US GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD OUR GOD

Words of Institution

The Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread; and, when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said: This is my body which is broken for you. This do in remembrance of me.

After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood. This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

Take and eat this in remembrance of Christ.

Take and drink this in remembrance of Christ.

Silent Prayer

The service continues and concludes as found in today's order of service.