

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

AUGUST 20, 2023

PRELUDE *Jesus is the Sunlight - A Meditation for Organ*
by Carson Cooman

OPENING WORDS (responsive)

This is the day which the Lord has made.

Let us rejoice, and be glad in it.

Guide us in the way of wisdom.

Be with us in worship and prayer.

***HYMN** *Come, Thou Font of Every Blessing* 356

This text was written by Robert Robinson (1735-1790) about 1758 and was included in *A Collection of Hymns Used by the Church of Christ in Angel-Alley, Bishopsgate* (1759). It was later included with the tune NETTLETON in John Wyeth's *Repository of Sacred Music, Part Second* (1813).

OPENING PRAYER (unison)

Almighty and merciful God, from whom comes all that is good, we praise you for your mercies, for your goodness that has created us, your grace that has sustained us, your patience that has borne with us, and your love that has redeemed us. Forgive our misdeeds or neglects. Help us to love you, and to be thankful for all your gifts by serving you and delighting to do your will, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND *GLORIA PATRI (579)

FIRST LESSON Isaiah 56:1, 6-8 p. 599

***HYMN** *O Come and Sing Unto the Lord* 214

This versification of Psalm 95 is from *The Psalter* (1912), where it is number 256. In *The Hymnbook* (1955) the original text was altered to remove the word "Jehovah" in the first line of stanzas 1 and 3. Jane Parker Huber made further alterations of stanzas 3 and 4 in *The Presbyterian Hymnal* (1990).

SECOND LESSON Matthew 15:10-20; 21-28 p. 797

SERMON Sending Away

***HYMN** *Come, O Spirit* 127

The author, a Presbyterian minister, wrote this hymn when the worship committee of Wabash Valley Presbytery wanted to highlight Pentecost within the presbytery's churches. The tune is from an 1837 book which compiled many unwritten tunes in general use in the Methodist, Baptist and Presbyterian traditions.

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 *Christ Jesus Who Maketh Us Glad* - Marcel Dupré

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

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

***HYMN** *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling* 376

This hymn was written by Charles Wesley and was first published in 1747. Wesley was the 18th child of Samuel and Susanna ("She Must Have Been a Saint") Wesley. Charles was an Anglican priest, dedicated to the Methodist movement, and he wrote between 6,000 and 6,500 hymns. Rowland Hugh Pritchard wrote the Welsh tune *Hyfrydol* in 1831 before his 20th birthday. He was an assistant loom tender for the Welsh Flannel Manufacturing Company. An interesting point about the melody is that with one exception, it lies within the first five notes of the scale.

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *Winchester New* - Flor Peeters

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 Joyce Goeke and Ellen Knapp. Ushers and greeters for today's service are Dave and Laurel Varker.

Please join us for fellowship and refreshments in the foyer after the service. Our thanks to Betsy Ehrenfreund and Pat and Larry Ross for hosting.

Flowers for worship have been provided by Amber and Noah Langford.

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)

VT RTE. 9 AND MONUMENT AVENUE

OLD BENNINGTON, VERMONT

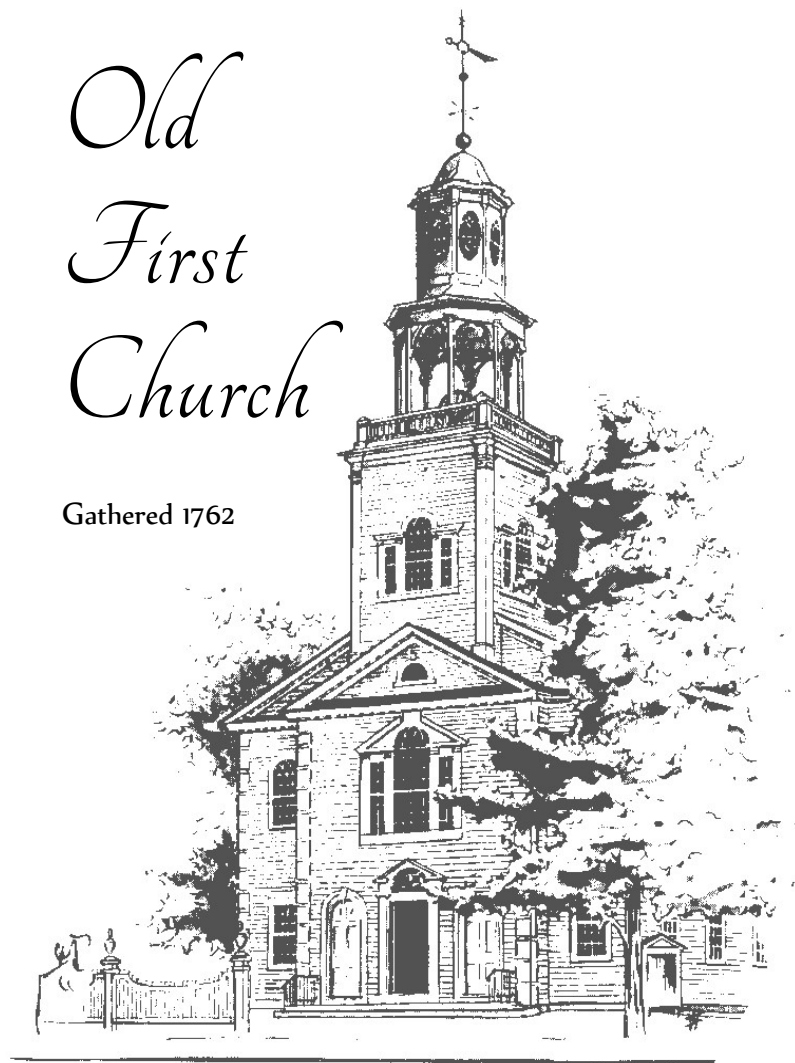
MAILING ADDRESS & CONTACT INFORMATION

1 MONUMENT CIRCLE • BENNINGTON, VERMONT 05201 • (802) 447-1223

office@oldfirst.comcastbiz.net • www.oldfirstchurchbenn.org

Old First Church

Gathered 1762



Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing

1. Come, Thou Fount of every blessing,
tune my heart to sing Thy grace;
streams of mercy, never ceasing,
call for songs of loudest praise.
Teach me some melodious sonnet,
sung by flaming tongues above;
praise the mount! I'm fixed upon it,
mount of God's unchanging love!
2. Here I raise my Ebenezer,
hither by Thy help I'm come;
and I hope, by Thy good pleasure,
safely to arrive at home.
Jesus sought me when a stranger,
wandering from the fold of God;
He, to rescue me from danger,
Interposed His precious blood.
3. O to grace how great a debtor
daily I'm constrained to be!
Let that grace now, like a fetter,
bind my wandering heart to Thee:
prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
prone to leave the God I love;
here's my heart, O take and seal it;
seal it for Thy courts above.

FIRST LESSON

Isaiah 56:1, 6-8

Thus says the Lord: Maintain justice, and do what is right, for soon my salvation will come, and my deliverance be revealed. And the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord, to minister to him, to love the name of the Lord, and to be his servants, all who keep the sabbath, and do not profane it, and hold fast my covenant— these I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples. Thus says the Lord God, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, I will gather others to them besides those already gathered.

O Come and Sing Unto the Lord

O come and sing unto the Lord,
To God our voices raise;
Let us in our most joyful songs
The Lord, our Savior, praise.

Before God's presence let us come
With praise and thankful voice;
Let us sing psalms to God with grace,
With grateful hearts rejoice.

The Lord our God is King of kings,
Above all gods enthroned;
The depths of earth and mountains high
By God alone are owned.

To God the spacious sea belongs;
God made its waves and tides,
And by God's hand the rising land
Was formed, and still abides.

O come, and bowing down to God
Our worship let us bring;
Yea, let us kneel before the Lord,
Our Maker and our King.

SECOND LESSON

Matthew 15:10-20; 21-28

Then he called the crowd to him and said to them, "Listen and understand: it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles." Then the disciples approached and said to him, "Do you know that the Pharisees took offense when they heard what you said?" He answered, "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if one blind person guides another, both will fall into a pit." But Peter said to him, "Explain this parable to us." Then he said, "Are you also still without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth enters the stomach, and goes out into the sewer? But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this is what defiles. For out of the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile."

Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon." But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, "Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us." He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." He answered, "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." Then Jesus answered her, "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed instantly.

Come, O Spirit

Come, O Spirit, with Your sound like a wind, quick rushing;
Come from heaven and stir our hearts, each disciple touching!
Mold our actions to Your will, You our service giving;
Move within our fellowship, transform now our living!

Come, O Spirit, with Your flame, leaping tongues of fire;
Come, and with Your glorious light all our thoughts inspire!
Rest upon each servant's head till each one is speaking
Of our Christ, the Holy One all the earth is seeking!

Come, O Spirit, fill Your church, making strong our mission;
Fill Your daughters and Your sons with a mighty vision,
Till the great and glorious day when the whole creation
Sings Your praise as Lord and King, giver of salvation!

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heaven to earth come down,
Fix in us Thy humble dwelling,
All Thy faithful mercies crown!
Jesus, Thou art all compassion,
Pure, unbounded love Thou art;
Visit us with Thy salvation,
Enter every trembling heart.

Breathe, O breathe Thy loving Spirit
Into every troubled breast!
Let us all in Thee inherit,
Let us find the promised rest;
Take away the love of sinning;
Alpha and Omega be;
End of faith, as its beginning,
Set our hearts at liberty.

Come, Almighty to deliver,
Let us all Thy life receive;
Suddenly return, and never,
Never more Thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
Serve Thee as Thy host above;
Pray, and praise Thee without ceasing,
Glory in Thy perfect love.

Finish, then, Thy new creation;
Pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see Thy great salvation
Perfectly restored in Thee;
Changed from glory into glory,
Till in heaven we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before Thee
Lost in wonder, love, and praise.