

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
CAROL POPPE, LAY READER
GENE MARIE CALLAHAN, ORGANIST

AUGUST 27, 2023

PRELUDE *God Has Spoken by His Prophets*
- setting by Donald Johns

OPENING WORDS (responsive)

We gather in the light of day.

Let us listen for the spirit's voice.

Give praise for all good things.

The love of God is sure and unfailing.

***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)

Lord, let us not dwell in the past,
nor worry about the future.

We cannot undo what is done.

We cannot foresee what will come.

Let us instead dwell in your peace,

love and be loved,

heal and be healed.

We give the past to you

and rest in your forgiveness.

We give the future to you

and rest in your love.

We live in your light,

open our eyes that we may see.

We live in your love,

let your love flow through us,

to the fulfillment of your kingdom.

In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND *GLORIA PATRI (579)

FIRST LESSON Romans 12:1-8 p. 922

***HYMN** *Now Israel May Say* 236

Old 124th is from the Genevan Psalter (1551), where it is the setting for Psalm 124. Though many arrangements of the tune are available, the present one is from *The Hymnal* (1933), which is a slight modification of the arrangement in *The English Hymnal* (1906). It is said that when the Duke of Savoy was defeated in his attack against Geneva, December 12, 1602, the grateful people sang Psalm 124 to this tune.

SECOND LESSON Matthew 16:13-20 p. 798

SERMON A Measure of Faith

***HYMN** *Eternal Light, Shine in My Heart* 340

The Latin text of this hymn is from a prayer attributed to Alcuin (c. 735-804). Born in Northumbria, he was educated at the Cathedral school in York, where he spent most of his life. He became master of the school in 766 and at the time of his death was abbot of the monastery of St. Martin at Tours. Alcuin was a counselor and cultural adviser to Charlemagne and inspired the Carolingian Renaissance. He revised the Roman lectionary in Gaul and composed votive masses. He is also credited with the introduction of the Feast of All Saints.

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 *Song Without Words*

- Felix Mendelssohn arr. Craig Duncan
Mary Elizabeth Groupé, viola

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

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

***HYMN** *All Things Bright and Beautiful* 267

The text was written by a Sunday school teacher to teach her children the truth of the beginning of the Apostles' Creed. She contributed to many hymnals in her day and established a school for the deaf in Ireland. The tune is an English folk melody which Martin Shaw, known for editing several hymnals and for encouraging the revival of English folk music, adapted in 1915.

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *Celebration* - Charles Callahan

* 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 Joyce Goeke and Ellen Knapp. Ushers and greeters for today's service are Joyce Goeke and Pat Ross.

Please join us for fellowship and refreshments in the foyer after the service. Our thanks to Audrey Pietrucha and Pat Ross for hosting.

Flowers for worship have been provided by Audrey and Larry Pietrucha.

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

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

9/11: Trustee meeting, 5:30 PM, Parlor

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

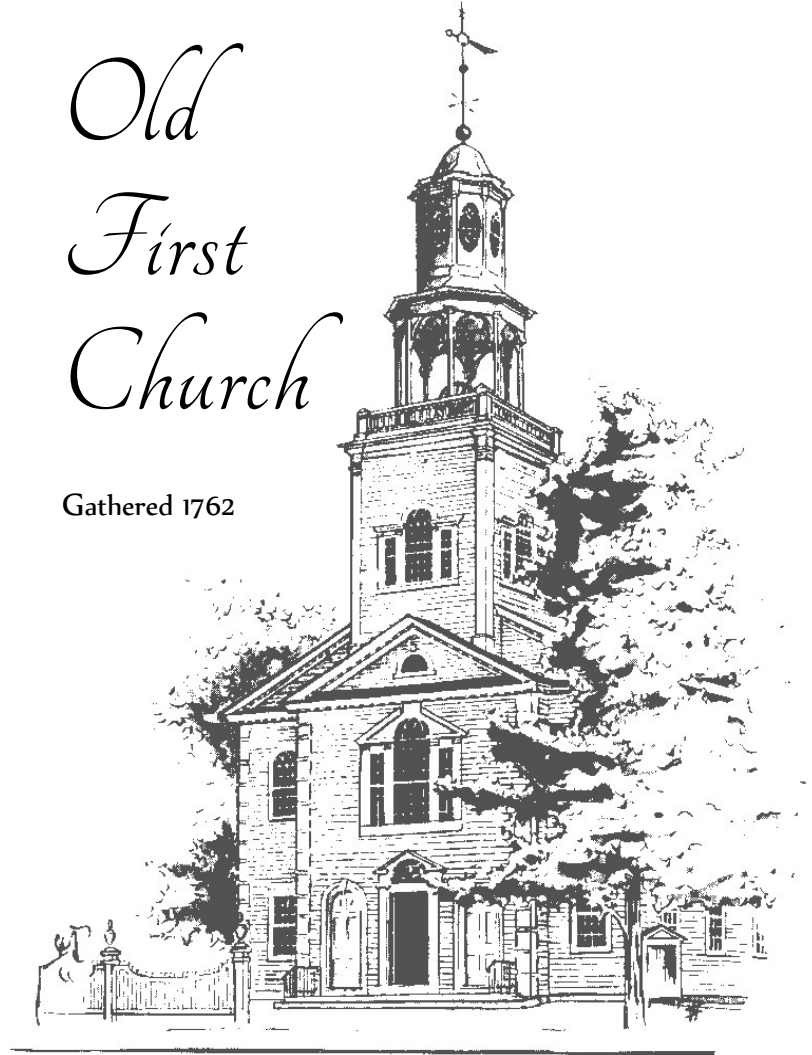
MAILING ADDRESS & CONTACT INFORMATION

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

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

Old First Church

Gathered 1762



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.

Now Israel May Say

Now Israel may say, and that in truth:
if that the Lord had not our right maintained,
if that the Lord had not with us remained
when cruel foes against us rose to strive,
we surely had been swallowed up alive.

Yea, when their wrath against us fiercely rose,
the swelling tide had o'er us spread its wave,
the raging stream had then become our grave,
the surging flood, in proudly swelling roll,
most surely then had overwhelmed our soul.

Blest be the Lord, who made us not their prey;
as from the snare a bird escapeth free,
their net is rent and so escaped are we;
our only help is in God's holy name,
who made the earth and all the heavenly frame.

FIRST LESSON

Romans 12:1-8

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect. For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

SECOND LESSON

Matthew 16:13-20

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

Eternal Light, Shine in My Heart

Eternal light, shine in my heart;
eternal hope, lift up my eyes;
eternal power, be my support;
eternal wisdom, make me wise.

Eternal life, raise me from death;
eternal brightness, help me see;
eternal Spirit, give me breath;
eternal Savior, come to me:

Until by Your most costly grace,
invited by Your holy word,
at last I come before Your face
to know You, my eternal God.

All Things Bright and Beautiful

Refrain:

All things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful:
The Lord God made them all.

Each little flower that opens,
Each little bird that sings:
God made their glowing colors.
God made their tiny wings. (*refrain*)

The purple headed mountain,
The river running by,
The sunset, and the morning
That brightens up the sky, (*refrain*)

The cold wind in the winter,
The pleasant summer sun,
The ripe fruits in the garden:
God made them every one. (*refrain*)

God gave us eyes to see them,
And lips that we might tell
How great is God Almighty,
Who has made all things well. (*refrain*)