

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
MARIE GUARINIELLO, LAY READER
GENE MARIE CALLAHAN, ORGANIST
OLD FIRST CHURCH CHOIR

OCTOBER 1, 2023

PRELUDE *Verset de Procession sur l'Adoro Te*
- Leon Boellmann

OPENING WORDS (responsive)

The presence of God is love and peace.

Grant us the gifts of faith and service.

Be with us, O Lord, in our work and home.

Stay with us and be our help in all times.

*HYMN *O God, Our Faithful God* 277

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.

OPENING PRAYER (unison)

**Almighty and most merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against you
in what we have done
and in what we have left undone.**

**We have not trusted in your goodness
and have allowed fear to rule us.**

**We have been silent when we should have spoken,
we have been deaf to the calls of the poor,
and unresponsive when we should have acted more decisively.**

**We have not lived with the same grace
that you have always shown us.**

**Forgive us and help us to serve you
by serving your world with generous spirits.
In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.**

ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND *GLORIA PATRI (579)

FIRST LESSON Matthew 21:23-32 p. 802

*HYMN *When Morning Lights the Eastern Skies* 250

This metrical rendering of Psalm 143 was published in 1912 in *The Psalter*. The composer was an 18th century English cleric who was interested in music and science. His controversial *Essay on the First Principles of Natural Philosophy* led Oxford to rescind his Master of Arts degree, but Sidney Sussex College in Cambridge then gave him one! He named the tune after his favorite saint.

SECOND LESSON Philippians 2:1-13 p. 954

SERMON Complete Joy

*HYMN *Now to Your Table Spread* 515

The author is editor and executive secretary of the New Zealand Hymnbook Trust and in addition to being a pianist and organist, has served with Amnesty International, and a research unit of the New Zealand Parliament's Labor party. The tune was composed for the text of hymn #76 in 1918 by John Ireland on the back of a menu, during a lunch when a friend passed him a poem, asking that he write a tune for it. Ireland was an organist and prolific composer in England.

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 *Compassion Hymn* - arr. Craig Courtney

*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 *The Spacious Firmament on High* insert

Joseph Addison (1672-1719) was an English poet, politician, public official, and essayist, major contributor to *The Spectator*, 1711-12, for which he furnished 274 of the 555 daily issues. This hymn has been in all editions of the Protestant Episcopal Hymnal since 1789.

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *St. Anne* - arr. Healey Willan

* 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 Sandy Bechtel and Sue Philpott. Ushers for today's service are Sandy Bechtel, Sue Philpott, and Dahlia Pecor. Communion servers are Jeannette Lesser and Sue Philpott.

Please join us for fellowship and refreshments in the foyer after the service. Our thanks to Susan Katz and Vicky Printz for providing coffee hour this morning and thanks to Pat & Larry Ross for setting up.

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

10/12: Deacon's meeting, 4:00 PM, Barn

10/18: Docent Wrap Up Meeting, 2:00 PM at the Church

10/22: Harvest Meal following worship (set up on Sat. at Noon)

10/24: Trustee Meeting, 5:30 PM, Parlor

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

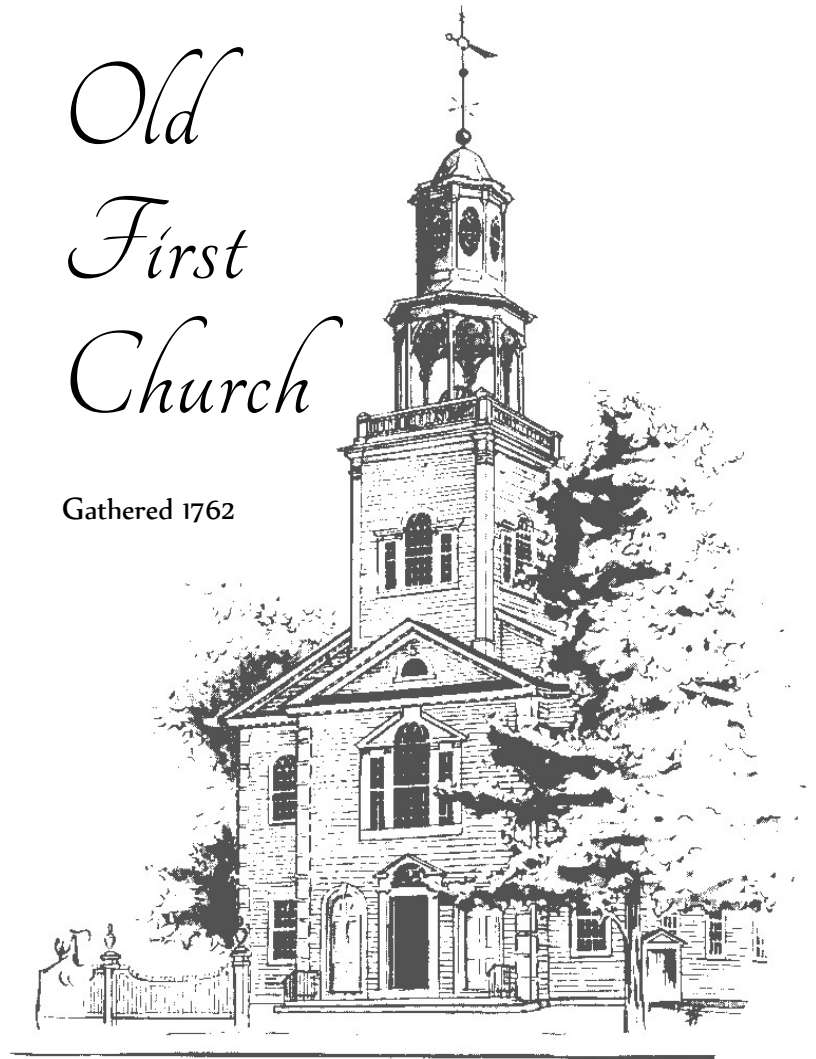
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Old First Church

Gathered 1762



O God, Our Faithful God

O God, our faithful God,
O fountain ever flowing,
without whom nothing is,
all perfect gifts bestowing,
grant us a faithful life,
and give us, Lord, within
commitment free from strife,
a soul unhurt by sin.

God, grant us strength to do
with ready heart and willing,
whatever You command,
our calling here fulfilling;
And do it when we ought,
with zeal and joyfulness;
And bless the work we've wrought,
for You must give success.

If dangers gather round,
still keep us calm and fearless;
Help us to bear the cross
when life is bleak and cheerless,
to overcome our foes
with words and actions kind;
O God, Your will disclose,
Your counsel let us find.

FIRST LESSON

Matthew 21:23-32

When he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" Jesus said to them, "I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?" And they argued with one another, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?' But if we say, 'Of human origin,' we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet." So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

"What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' He answered, 'I will not'; but later he changed his mind and went. The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, 'I go, sir'; but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.

When Morning Lights the Eastern Skies

When morning lights the eastern skies,
O Lord, Thy Mercy show;
On Thee alone my hope relies,
Let me Thy kindness know.

Teach me the way that I should go;
I lift my soul to Thee;
For refuge from cruel foe
To Thee, O Lord, I flee.

Thou art my God; to Thee I pray:
Teach me Thy will to heed;
And in the right and perfect way
May Thy good Spirit lead.

For Thy name's sake, O gracious Lord,
Revive my soul and bless,
Ad in Thy faithfulness and love
Redeem me from distress.

SECOND LESSON

Philippians 2:1-13

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking

the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

Now to Your Table Spread

Now to Your table spread
we come, each one in faith
that You alone provide the words of life or death:
in wine and bread,
in promised food
we find Your loving heart, O God.

Hands of the world stretch out
Your mystery to touch
in longing to believe a truth beyond our reach,
to sing in joy,
to cry in grief,
to know Your meaning for our life.

Here is our common wealth
in sharing what is good,
as though all humankind around one table stood,
this bread to break,
this wine to taste:
one people in the name of Christ.

The Spacious Firmament on High

The spacious firmament on high,
with all the blue ethereal sky,
and spangled heavens, a shining frame,
their great Original proclaim.
The unwearied sun from day to day
does his Creator's power display,
and publishes to every land
the work of an almighty hand.

Soon as the evening shades prevail
the moon takes up the wondrous tale,
and nightly to the listening earth
repeats the story of her birth;
whilst all the stars that round her burn,
and all the planets in their turn,
confirm the tidings, as they roll,
and spread the truth from pole to pole.

What though in solemn silence all
move round the dark terrestrial ball?
What though no real voice nor sound
amid their radiant orbs be found?
In reason's ear they all rejoice,
and utter forth a glorious voice,
forever singing as they shine,
“The hand that made us is divine.”

**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.