

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

SEPTEMBER 17, 2023

PRELUDE *Arioso* - Douglas Wagner

OPENING WORDS (responsive)

Our help is in the name of the Lord.

God watches over all creation.

Let us give thanks to God for all good things this day.

We praise God for our life and blessings.

*HYMN *Praise Ye the Lord, the Almighty* 482

The text's author, Joachim Neander, took the Calvinist faith seriously but also lived a "rather unruly existence" before his pastor and others influenced him to make some changes in his life. In 1674 he became a grammar school headmaster. 66 of his hymn texts were published in 1691. The valley Neanderthal, where he took long walks, was named in his honor (and was where the famous skeleton was discovered 200 years later in 1856). The tune may have had secular origins but was used by J.S. Bach in three cantatas and an organ setting, as well as Neander's hymn.

OPENING PRAYER (unison)

Most holy and merciful God,

We confess to you and to one another,

that we have sinned against you

by what we have done,

and by what we have left undone.

We have not loved you with our

whole heart and mind and strength.

We have not fully loved our neighbors as ourselves.

We have not always had in us the mind of Christ.

You alone know how often we have grieved you

by wasting your gifts, by wandering from your ways.

Forgive us, we pray you, most merciful God;

And free us from our sin.

Renew in us the grace and strength of your Holy Spirit,

for the sake of Jesus Christ your Son our Savior. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND *GLORIA PATRI (579)

FIRST LESSON Genesis 50:15-21 p. 42

*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 Romans 14:1-12 p. 923

SERMON Only Vegetables

*HYMN *O Word of God Incarnate* 327

The text was written by William Walsham How. William How (1823-1897) was born in Shrewsbury, England and educated at Wadham College, Oxford and was ordained in 1846. He wrote all his hymns while in the parish of Whittington and was joint editor of several hymnals including *Psalms and Hymns* (1854), Supplement to *Psalms and Hymns* (1867), and *Church Hymns* (1871). He died while on vacation in Ireland.

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 *Laudate Dominum* - Raymond H. Haan

*DOXOLOGY (592) AND PRAYER OF DEDICATION

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

*HYMN *I Walk the Unfrequented Road* insert

Frederick Lucian Hosmer was born at Framingham, Mass., in 1840, and educated at Harvard, where he graduated B.A. in 1869. Entering the Unitarian Ministry in 1872 he has held charges in Quincy, Ill.; Cleveland, Ohio; St. Louis; and Berkeley, CA. During his life he wrote many hymns which were published jointly by him and W.C. Gannett. Hosmer died in 1929.

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *Rondo Giocoso* - Douglas Wagner

* 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 Joyce Goeke and Darlene Munson.

Please join us for fellowship and refreshments in the foyer after the service, thank you to Pat and Larry Ross for setting up.

Flowers for worship have been provided by Joyce Goeke in memory of her husband George.

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!

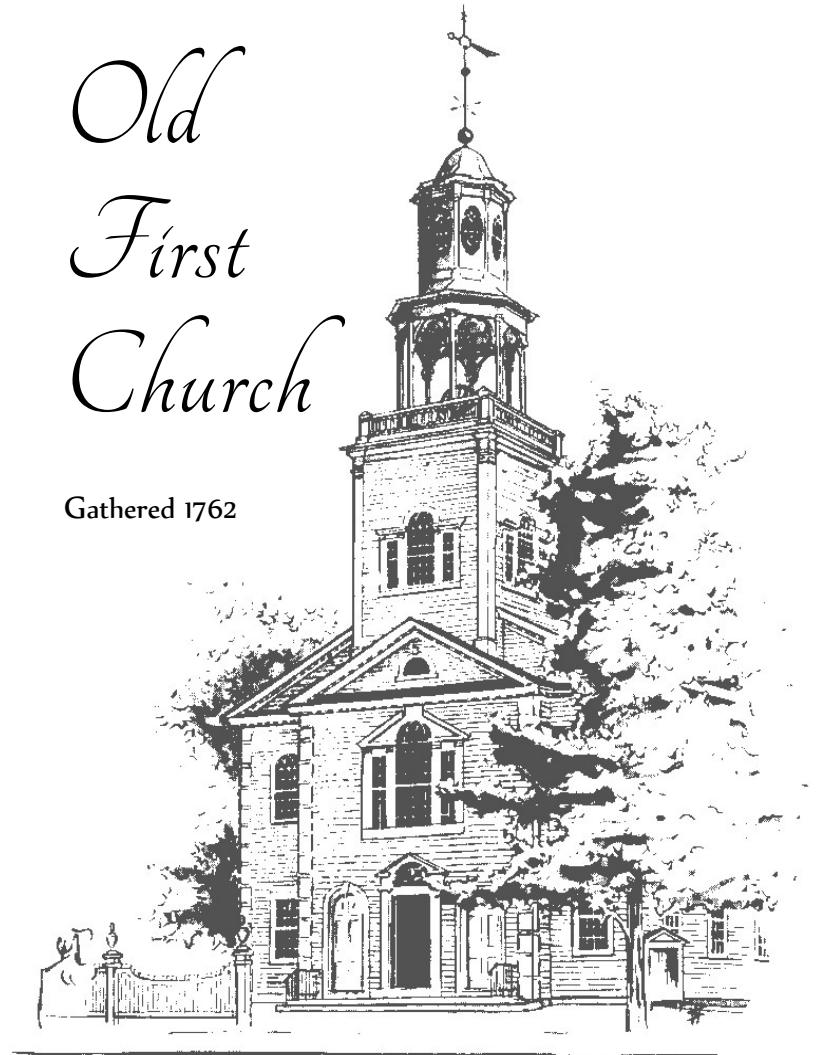
To maintain the healthiest standards for public gathering, indoor air is constantly being exchanged with fresh air with a LifeBreath circulation system operating during the service today.

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(OLD FIRST CHURCH)
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Old First Church

Gathered 1762



Praise Ye the Lord, the Almighty

Praise ye the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!
O my soul, praise Him, for He is thy health and salvation!
All ye who hear, now to His temple draw near;
join me in glad adoration!

Praise ye the Lord, who o'er all things so wondrously reigneth,
shelters thee under His wings, yea, so gently sustaineth!
Hast thou not seen how thy desires e'er have been
Granted in what He ordaineth?

Praise ye the Lord! O let all that is in me adore Him!
All that hath life and breath, come now with praises before Him!
Let the amen sound from His people again;
gladly for aye we adore Him.

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.

FIRST LESSON

Genesis 50:15-21

Realizing that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers said, "What if Joseph still bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong that we did to him?" So they approached Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this instruction before he died, 'Say to Joseph: I beg you, forgive the crime of your brothers and the wrong they did in harming you.' Now therefore please forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father." Joseph wept when they spoke to him. Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, "We are here as your slaves." But Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today. So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones." In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

SECOND LESSON

Romans 14:1-12

Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat; for God has welcomed them. Who are you to pass judgment on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand. Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. Those who observe the day, observe it in honor of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honor of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honor of the Lord and give thanks to God. We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living. Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. For it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God." So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

O Word of God Incarnate

O Word of God incarnate,
O Wisdom from on high,
O Truth unchanged, unchanging,
O Light of our dark sky:
We praise You for the radiance
That from the hallowed page,
A lantern to our footsteps,
Shines on from age to age.

The church from You, dear Savior,
Received this Gift divine,
And still that light is lifted
On all the earth to shine.
It is the chart and compass
That, all life's voyage through,
Amid the rocks and quick-sands,
Still guides, O Christ, to You.

O make Your church, dear Savior,
A lamp of purest gold
To bear before the nations
Your true light, as of old;
O teach Your wandering pilgrims
By this our path to trace,
Till, clouds and storms thus ended,
We see You face to face.

I Walk the Unfrequented Road

I walk the unfrequented road
with open eye and ear;
I watch a field the farmer load
the bounty of the year.

I filch the fruit of no man's toil –
no trespasser am I—
and yet I reap from every soil
and from the unmeasured sky

I gather where I did not sow,
and bind the mystic sheaf,
the amber air, the river's flow,
the rustle of the leaf.

A beauty springtime never knew
haunts all the quiet ways,
and sweeter shines the landscape through
its veil of autumn haze.

I face the hills, the streams, the wood,
and feel with all akin;
my heart expands, their fortitude
and peace and joy flow in.