

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
DAVID VARKER, LAY READER
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OLD FIRST CHURCH CHOIR

OCTOBER 15, 2023

PRELUDE *Praeludium* - Johann Krieger

OPENING WORDS (responsive)

God is our refuge and strength

A very present help in trouble.

Therefore we will not fear.

Draw near and call on the Lord.

***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)

I believe in God the Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth:

And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord,
Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
Born of the Virgin Mary,
Suffered under Pontius Pilate,
Was crucified, dead, and buried:
He descended into hell;
The third day he rose again from the dead;
He ascended into heaven,
And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost;
The holy Catholick Church;
The Communion of Saints;
The Forgiveness of sins;

The Resurrection of the body,
And the Life everlasting.
Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND *GLORIA PATRI (579)

FIRST LESSON Philippians 4:1-9 p. 955

***HYMN** *My Shepherd Will Supply My Need* 172

Watts' collection including this hymn was first published in the U.S. by Benjamin Franklin in 1729. The tune is American folk; the harmonizer is on the faculty of Dordt College in Iowa.

SECOND LESSON Matthew 22:1-14 p. 803

SERMON The Peace of God

***HYMN** *Holy Spirit, Truth Divine* 321

This text was written by Samuel Longfellow and first published in his *Hymns of the Spirit* (1864), where it was subtitled "The Holy Spirit Desired." Samuel Longfellow (1819-1892) was born in Portland, ME and educated at Harvard College and Divinity School. He was ordained a Unitarian minister and served in churches in Fall River, MA; Brooklyn, NY; and Germantown, PA. The intervening years he spent as a freelance preacher, writer, and editor. His intermittent pastorates were caused largely by poor health. Longfellow moved to "Craigie House" to write the *Life of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow* (1886), his older brother, and *Final Memorials of H.W. Longfellow* (1887).

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 *Deo Dicamus Gratias* - Victor Johnson

English translation: To God let us say thanks. Let us give praise to the Lord.
Complete Latin: Deo dicamus gratias. Benedicamus Domino

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

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

***HYMN** *O God of Earth and Space* 274

Both text and tune were written for the 100th anniversary of Concordia Lutheran Church, Kirkwood, Missouri.

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *Toccata* - Johann Krieger

* 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 and greeters for today's service are Lucy Baldwin and Betsy Ehrenfreund.

Please join us for fellowship and refreshments in the foyer after the service. Our thanks to Janet Van Derpoel-Andrea and Vicky Printz for providing coffee hour and to Pat and Larry Ross for setting up this morning.

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

- 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
- 10/27: Monumental Music at the Barn, 7:00 PM (see the BLOG insert for more info)

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!

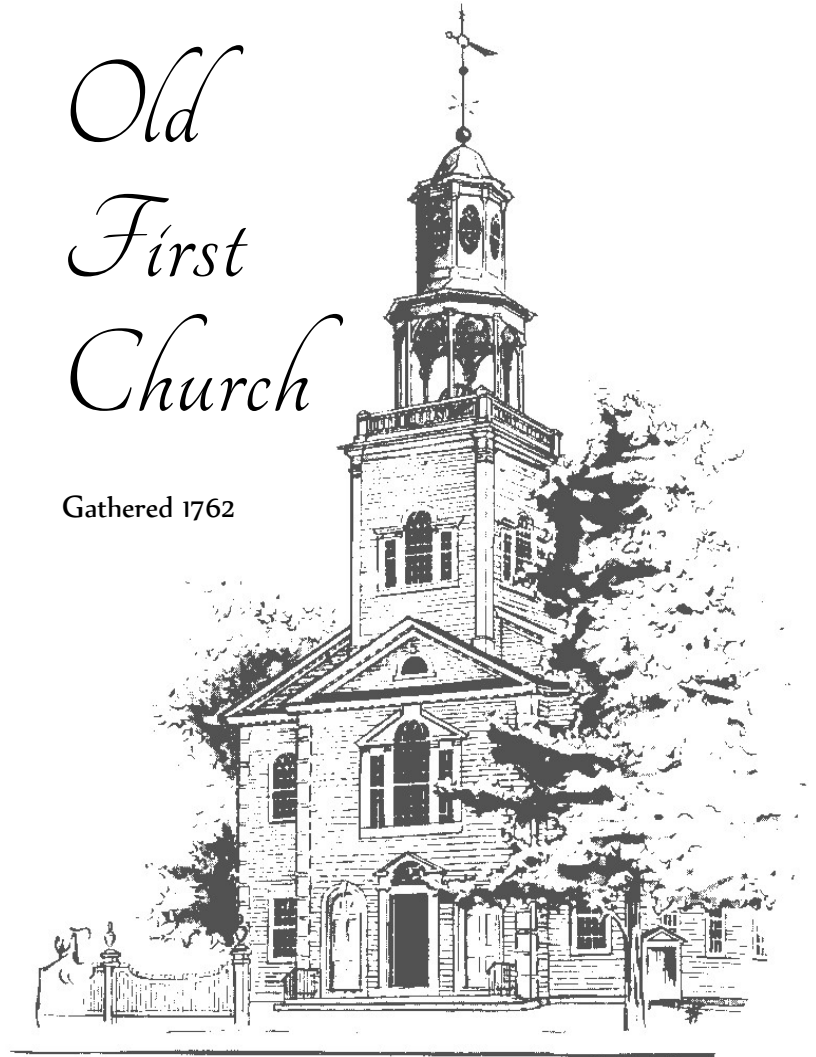
To maintain the healthiest standards for public gathering, indoor air is constantly being exchanged with fresh air with a LifeBreath circulation system operating during the service today.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
(OLD FIRST CHURCH)
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OLD BENNINGTON, VERMONT

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Old First Church

Gathered 1762



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 the under His wings, yea, so gently sustaineth!
Hast thou not seen how thy desires e'er have been
sent by his gracious ordaining?
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.

FIRST LESSON

Philippians 4:1-9

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved. I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. Yes, and I ask you also, my loyal companion, help these women, for they have struggled beside me in the work of the gospel, together with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life. Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

My Shepherd Will Supply My Need

1. My Shepherd will supply my need; Jehovah is His name: In pastures fresh He makes me feed, Beside the living stream. He brings my wandering spirit back, When I forsake His ways; And leads me, for His mercy's sake, In paths of truth and grace.	2. When I walk through the shades of death Your presence is my stay; One word of Your supporting breath Drives all my fears away. Your hand, in sight of all my foes, Does still my table spread; My cup with blessings over flows, Your oil anoints my head.
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3. The sure provisions of my God
Attend me all my days;
O may Your House be my abode,
And all my work be praise.
There would I find a settled rest,
While others go and come;
No more a stranger, or a guest,
But like a child at home.

SECOND LESSON

Matthew 22:1-14

Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying: "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. Again he sent other slaves, saying, 'Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet.' But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his slaves, mistreated them, and killed them. The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. Then he said to his slaves, 'The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.' Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests. "But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?' And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' For many are called, but few are chosen."

Holy Spirit, Truth Divine

Holy Spirit, truth divine,
dawn upon this soul of mine;
Word of God, and inward light,
wake my spirit, clear my sight.

Holy Spirit, love divine,
glow within this heart of mine;
kindle every high desire;
perish self in Thy pure fire.

Holy Spirit, power divine,
fill and nerve this will of mine;
by Thee may I strongly live,
bravely bear, and nobly strive.

Holy Spirit, right divine,
make my conscience wholly Thine;
Be my law, and I shall be
firmly bound, forever free.

O God of Earth and Space

O God of earth and space,
Of sea and fire and air,
Your providence surrounds us here
And everywhere.
In fruit and grain and tree,
In shelter from the cold,
In cooling breezes, flowing wells,
Now as of old.

Where faithfulness is shown,
Where love and truth abound,
Where beauty graces human life,
There You are found.
Inspirer of all thought!
Creative force of art!
The melody on every tongue,
In every heart!

Wherever freedom reigns,
Where sin is overthrown,
Where justice fused with mercy rules,
There You are known.
Give us the courage clear
To make the earth a home
For all to live in harmony
In Christ's shalom.

Your word commands response
And summons us to life.
We follow, strengthened by Your grace,
In calm or strife.
Our ever-present help,
Our challenge and our prod,
We praise You now and to life's end
Eternal God.