

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  
NOAH LANGFORD, LAY READER  
SANDRA MANGSEN, GUEST ORGANIST

OCTOBER 22, 2023

**PRELUDE** *Toccata Quinta per l'organo* - Girolamo Frescobaldi

**OPENING WORDS** (responsive)

Sing to the Lord a new song.

**Sing to the Lord, all the earth.**

Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice.

**In the peace of this hour may God's word comfort us.**

**\*HYMN** *Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty* 489  
Benjamin Schmolck (1672-1737), the author of this text, was born in Silesia, in Central Europe, and was considered a splendid preacher, poet, and the best-loved hymn writer of his day and wrote nine hundred hymns. He was crowned poet laureate in 1697. The present hymn was included in his *Kirchen-Gefährte* (1732). The English translation of this hymn is by Catherine Winkworth.

**OPENING PRAYER** (unison)

Eternal God, in whom we live and move and have our being, whose face is hidden from us by our sin, and whose mercy we forget: cleanse us from all offenses, and deliver us from proud thoughts and vain desires; that humbly we may draw near to thee, confessing our faults, confiding in thy grace, and finding in thee our refuge and our strength, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND \*GLORIA PATRI (579)**

**FIRST LESSON** Matthew 22:15-22 p. 803

**\*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** Exodus 33:12-23 p. 70

**SERMON** Passing By

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

This hymn was written by Charles Wesley and was first published in 1747. Wesley was the 18<sup>th</sup> 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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.

**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** *Adagio, BWV 555* - J. S. Bach

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

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

**\*HYMN** *Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee* 464  
The text was written in 1907 when Henry van Dyke was guest preacher at Williams College. He said it should be sung to this tune, from Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. Beethoven's original rhythm for the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> measures has been restored in our hymnal.

**BENEDICTION**

**POSTLUDE** *Prelude and Fugue in A Minor, BWV 559*  
- J. S. Bach

**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 Lou & Marie Guariniello.

Please join us up at the Barn following worship today for our annual Harvest Meal gathering.

Flowers for worship are provided by Courtney and Tara Cowan.

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

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

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

11/9: Deacon Meeting, 4:00 PM at the Barn

11/12: Council Meeting following worship at the church

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

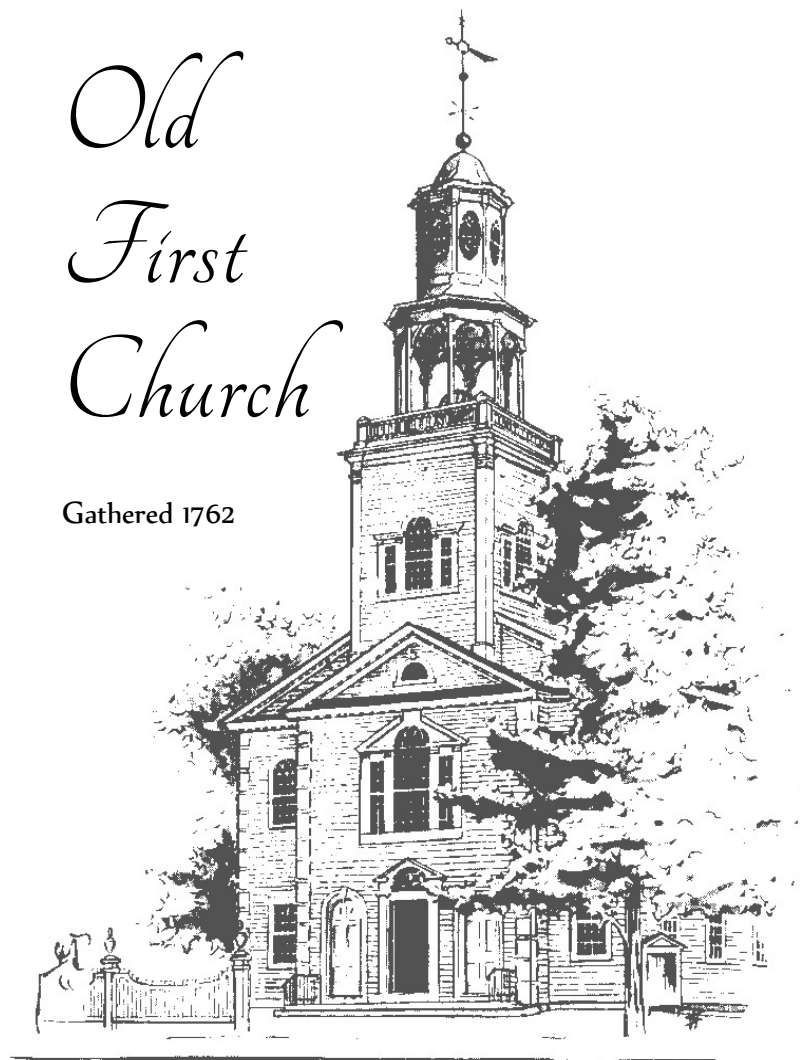
### MAILING ADDRESS & CONTACT INFORMATION

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# Old First Church

Gathered 1762



### *Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty*

Open now thy gates of beauty,  
Zion, let me enter there,  
where my soul in joyful duty  
waits for God who answers prayer;  
O how blessed is this place,  
filled with solace, light, and grace.

Gracious God, I come before Thee,  
come Thou also down me;  
where we find Thee and adore Thee,  
there a heaven on earth must be;  
To my heart O enter Thou,  
let it be Thy temple now.

Speak, O Lord, and I will hear Thee,  
let thy will be done indeed;  
may I undisturbed draw near Thee,  
while Thou dost Thy people feed.  
Here of life the fountain flows,  
here is balm for all our woes.

### **FIRST LESSON**

### **Matthew 22:15-22**

Then the Pharisees went and plotted to entrap him in what he said. So they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, “Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality. Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?” But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, “Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites? Show me the coin used for the tax.” And they brought him a denarius. Then he said to them, “Whose head is this, and whose title?” They answered, “The emperor’s.” Then he said to them, “Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” When they heard this, they were amazed; and they left him and went away.

### *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.

### **SECOND LESSON**

### **Exodus 33:12-23**

Moses said to the Lord, “See, you have said to me, ‘Bring up this people’; but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. Yet you have said, ‘I know you by name, and you have also found favor in my sight.’ Now if I have found favor in your sight, show me your ways, so that I may know you and find favor in your sight. Consider too that this nation is your people.” He said, “My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.” And he said to him, “If your presence will not go, do not carry us up from here. For how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people, unless you go with us? In this way, we shall be distinct, I and your people, from every people on the face of the earth.” The Lord said to Moses, “I will do the very thing that you have asked; for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name.” Moses said, “Show me your glory, I pray.” And he said, “I will make all my goodness pass before you, and will proclaim before you the name, ‘The Lord’; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. But,” he said, “you cannot see my face; for no one shall see me and live.” And the Lord continued, “See, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock; and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by; then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back; but my face shall not be seen.”

### *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.

### *Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee*

Joyful, joyful, we adore Thee,  
God of glory, Lord of love;  
Hearts unfold like flowers before Thee,  
Opening to the sun above.  
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness;  
Drive the gloom of doubt away;  
Giver of immortal gladness,  
Fill us with the light of day.

All Thy works with joy surround Thee,  
Earth and heaven reflect Thy rays,  
Stars and angels sing around Thee,  
Center of unbroken praise.  
Field and forest, vale and mountain,  
Flowery meadow, flashing sea,  
Chanting bird and flowing fountain,  
Call us to rejoice in Thee.

Mortals, join the happy chorus  
Which the morning stars began;  
Lord divine is reigning o'er us,  
Joining all in heaven's plan.  
Ever singing, march we onward,  
Victors in the midst of strife,  
Joyful music leads us sunward  
In the triumph song of life.