

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
PATRICE NOLAN-FOX, LAY READER
GENE MARIE CALLAHAN, ORGANIST
OLD FIRST CHURCH CHOIR

NOVEMBER 19, 2023

PRELUDE *Simple Gifts* - Russell Schulz-Widmar

OPENING WORDS (responsive)

This is the day which the Lord has made.

Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

May the God of peace hear our prayers.

Love and justice alike are the Lord's.

***HYMN** *Ye Servants of God, Your Master Proclaim* 477

The text was written by Charles Wesley as part of a hymn tract series issued for the Wesleys' class meetings. A caption to the hymn stated "To be sung in a tumult." The tract containing thirty-three hymns was titled *Hymns for Times of Trouble and Persecution* (1744).

OPENING PRAYER (unison)

Heavenly God,

We thank you for all your benefits.

You have given us body and life
and have graciously sustained us to this day.

We pray you not take your blessing from us.

Preserve us from greed,

that we may serve you only,

love you and abide in you

and not remove ourselves from you by idolatrous love

of wealth or goods, but hope and trust only in your grace;

through Jesus Christ our Lord,

who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,

one true God, now and forever.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND *GLORIA PATRI (579)

FIRST LESSON

Psalm 90:1-12

p. 476

***HYMN** *Come, All You Servants of the Lord* 242

This paraphrase of Psalm 134 by Arlo D. Duba was written after hearing the tune DANBY which was brought to the attention of the Psalter Task Force of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) by Kenneth E. Williams. It was first published in *A Psalm Sampler* (1986).

SECOND LESSON 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 p. 960

SERMON Build Up

***HYMN** *Guide My Feet* 354

Hebrews 12:1-1, "And let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith" is the basis for this African-American spiritual. According to harmonizer Wendell Phillips Whalum, the Bible, more than any other source, formed the textual basis for Black hymnody. Whalum was a noted author and conductor, and head of the music department at Morehouse College, Atlanta.

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.)

MOMENT FOR STEWARDSHIP Marsha Pilachowski

OFFERING

OFFERTORY

Come with Thanksgiving

- Bunessan harm. Dean McIntyre

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

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

***HYMN** *Live Into Hope* 332

The text was written for the United Presbyterian Women's national meeting in 1976 and is based on Luke 4:16-20. It was Huber's first hymn. Huber writes new words to familiar tunes and has worked with Presbyterian Women and the Social Justice and Peacemaking Ministry Unit of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The tune was first published as a setting in 1789 of an Isaac Watts text; but it is now probably best known as "Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates."

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *Recessional on Sanford* - Franklin D. Ashdown

* 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 Marsha Pilachowski and Wendy Schmitt. Ushers and greeters for today's service are Dave Pilachowski and Tom Schmitt.

Please join us for fellowship and refreshments in the foyer after the service. Our thanks to Jen Daks for providing coffee hour this morning.

Keep the church's blanket drive for the homeless, as well as hats, mittens, gloves, scarves, socks and jackets for the grade school kids in mind when you are shopping or doing your fall cleaning of closets. All items should be new or gently used and can be left in the Narthex for Jeannette or Anastasia to pick up and distribute to those in need.

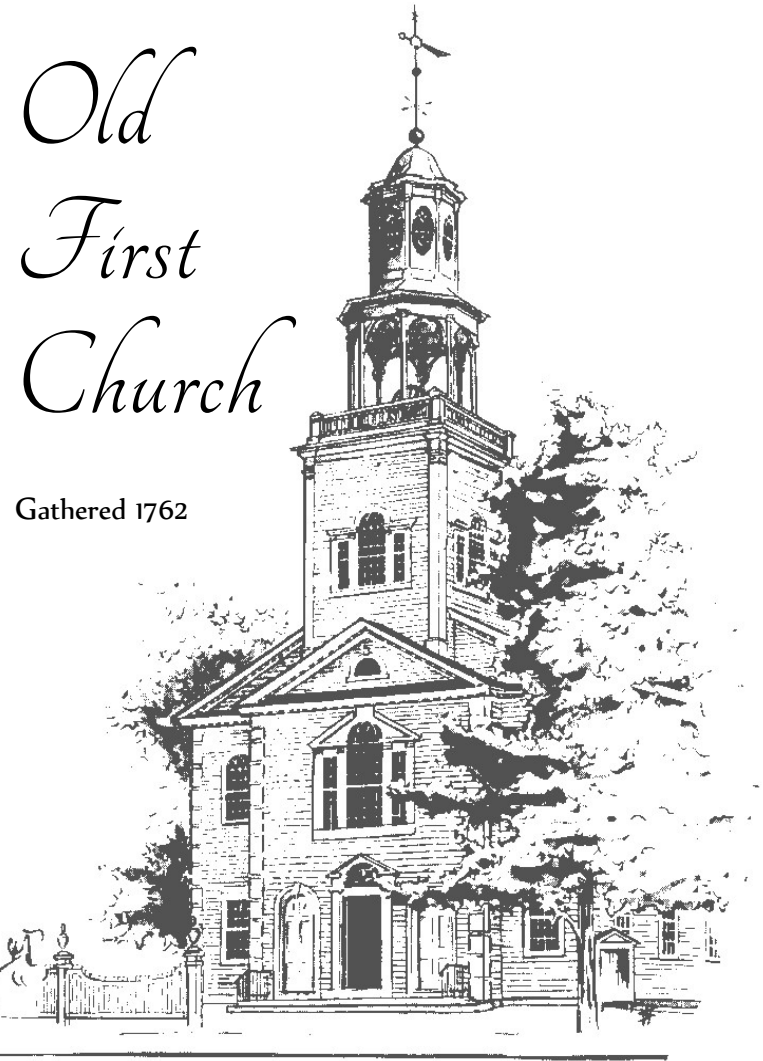
UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS: *(All meetings are open to members of the church)*
11/20: Trustee Meeting, 5:30 PM, Parlor
11/21: Monumental Music concert at the Barn, 7:00 PM

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)
VT RTE. 9 AND MONUMENT AVENUE
OLD BENNINGTON, VERMONT

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Ye Servants of God, Your Master Proclaim

Ye servants of God, your Master proclaim,
and publish abroad His wonderful name;
the name all-victorious of Jesus extol;
his kingdom is glorious, He rules over all.

God ruleth in the height, almighty to save;
and still He is nigh – His presence we have;
the great congregation His triumph shall sing,
ascribing salvation to Jesus our King.

"Salvation to God, who sits on the throne,"
let all cry aloud, and honor the Son;
the praises of Jesus the angels proclaim,
fall down on their faces, and worship the Lamb.

Then let us adore, and give Him His right,
all glory and power, all wisdom and might,
all honor and blessing, with angels above,
and thanks never ceasing, and infinite love.

FIRST LESSON

Psalm 90

Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations.

Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

You turn us back to dust, and say, "Turn back, you mortals."

For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is past, or like a watch in the night.

You sweep them away; they are like a dream, like grass that is renewed in the morning;

in the morning it flourishes and is renewed; in the evening it fades and withers.

For we are consumed by your anger; by your wrath we are overwhelmed.

You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your countenance.

For all our days pass away under your wrath; our years come to an end like a sigh.

The days of our life are seventy years, or perhaps eighty, if we are strong; even then their span is only toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly away.

Who considers the power of your anger? Your wrath is as great as the fear that is due you.

So teach us to count our days that we may gain a wise heart.

Come, All You Servants of the Lord

Come, all you servants of the Lord,
Who work and pray by night, by day,
Come, bless the Lord within this place;
With lifted hands your homage pay.

The Lord now bless from heaven above
And shine on you with radiant face;
The Lord who heaven and earth has made
Illumine you with peace and grace.

SECOND LESSON

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. When they say, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness.

So then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober; for those who sleep sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him.

Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

Guide My Feet

Guide my feet while I run this race,
Guide my feet while I run this race,
Guide my feet while I run this race,
For I don't want to run this race in vain!

Hold my hand while I run this race,
Hold my hand while I run this race,
Hold my hand while I run this race,
For I don't want to run this race in vain!

Stand by me while I run this race,
Stand by me while I run this race,
Stand by me while I run this race,
For I don't want to run this race in vain!

I'm Your child while I run this race,
I'm Your child while I run this race,
I'm Your child while I run this race,
For I don't want to run this race in vain!

Search my heart while I run this race,
Search my heart while I run this race,
Search my heart while I run this race,
For I don't want to run this race in vain!

Guide my feet while I run this race,
Guide my feet while I run this race,
Guide my feet while I run this race,
For I don't want to run this race in vain!

Live Into Hope

Live into hope of captives freed,
Of sight regained, the end of greed.
The oppressed shall be the first to see
The year of God's own jubilee!

Live into hope the blind shall see
With insight and with clarity,
Removing shades of pride and fear
A vision of our God brought near.

Live into hope of liberty,
The right to speak, the right to be,
The right to have one's daily bread,
To hear God's word and thus be fed.

Live into hope of captives freed
From chains of fear or want or greed.
God now proclaims our full release
To faith and hope and joy and peace.