

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
GENE MARIE CALLAHAN, ORGANIST
OLD FIRST CHURCH CHOIR

NOVEMBER 26, 2023

PRELUDE *Come, Ye Thankful People* arr. Brian Joyce

OPENING WORDS (responsive)

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth!

Worship the Lord with gladness,

Come into God's presence with thanksgiving,

For the Lord is good, God's steadfast love endures forever.

***HYMN** *We Gather Together* **559**

This 17th C. folk hymn was written during Holland's struggle for independence with Spain. The political environment is reflected in the text. The tune is named for Eduard Kremser (1838-1914), a Viennese composer and choir director, who discovered the hymn after it had been forgotten for two centuries.

OPENING PRAYER (unison)

Gracious God,
you have given us so much,
but too often we take those gifts for granted,
or as something to which we are by skill entitled.

You call us to live in love,
but too often we place our wants and needs first,
and those of others a distant second.

You call us to share
but we are think that there may not be enough,
You call us to understand, but we do not take time to listen.

Let us know the joy of giving thanks
and the peace found in discovering the source of all good gifts.

For all the times when we mistreat and misuse what we have,
for all the times when we forget the gift and neglect the giver,
forgive us and lead us back to the path of wisdom.

In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND *GLORIA PATRI (579)

FIRST LESSON Luke 17:11-19 p. 852

***HYMN** *To Bless the Earth* **200**

This paraphrase of Psalm 65 first appeared in *The Psalter* (1912), a publication of a joint committee of nine churches representing the Reformed tradition in the U.S. and Canada. The tune is an old one, by Melchior Vulpius, in 1609. He was the leading German composer of his day, a schoolmaster and musicologist, composing over 200 motets and 400 hymns for Lutheran worship.

SECOND LESSON Deuteronomy 8:7-18 p. 145

SERMON Fast or Feast

***HYMN** *We Plow the Fields and Scatter* **Insert**

TUNE: WIR PFLÜGEN

The original text was from a 1782 German poem which tells of a harvest festival in north Germany in which the people sing this song on their way to a thanksgiving celebration. The original song by Matthias Claudius had 17 verses, each sung by a soloist, with all joining in the refrain. Claudius was a literary editor, commissioner of agriculture, and poet. The English translation by Jane Campbell was first published in *The Garland of Songs* (1862).

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 *For the Fruit of All Creation* - Emma Lou Diemer

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

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

***HYMN** *Now Thank We All Our God* **555**

This hymn, known as the German Te Deum, was written near the close of the Thirty Years' War and is still sung in German churches on New Year's Eve. The text's author was a minister in Ellenburg, Saxony who in 1637 buried half of the 8,000 who died in an epidemic there. The tune first appeared with this text. The composer was a hymnal editor and adapted the harmonization of this tune from Mendelssohn's "Lobgesang".

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *Now Thank We All Our God* arr. Brian Joyce

* 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 Joyce Goeke and Darlene Munson.

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

Thank you to Kate Musso for providing flowers for worship 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)*

12/3: Hanging of the Greens/breakfast at the church, 9:30 AM

12/10: Candlelight Service, 7:00 PM

12/14: Deacon's Meeting, 4:00 PM Barn

12/18 Trustee Meeting, 5:30 PM, Church

12/24: Christmas Eve service, 5:00 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!

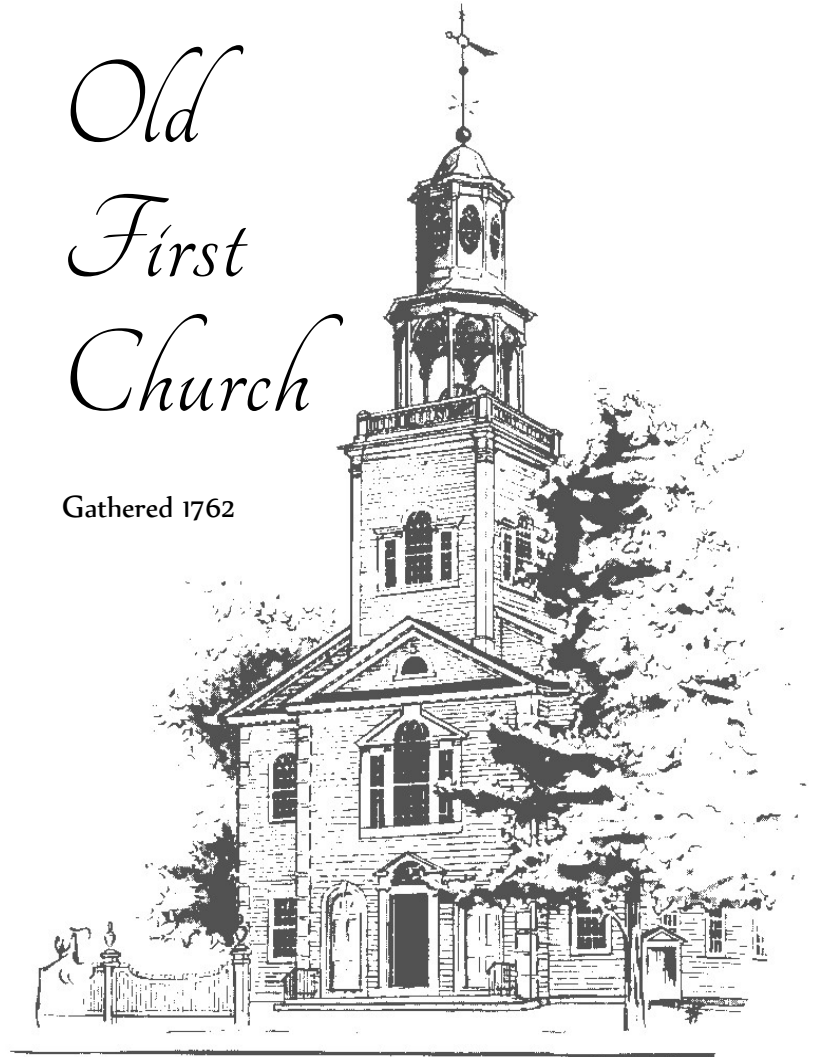
To maintain the healthiest standards for public gathering, indoor air is constantly being exchanged with fresh air with a LifeBreath circulation system operating during the service today.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
(OLD FIRST CHURCH)
VT RTE. 9 AND MONUMENT AVENUE
OLD BENNINGTON, VERMONT

MAILING ADDRESS & CONTACT INFORMATION
1 MONUMENT CIRCLE • BENNINGTON, VERMONT 05201 • (802) 447-1223
office@oldfirst.comcastbiz.net • www.oldfirstchurchbenn.org

Old First Church

Gathered 1762



We Gather Together

We gather together to ask the Lord's blessing;
He chastens and hastens His will to make known;
The wicked oppressing now cease from distressing,
Sing praises to His name; He forgets not His own.

Beside us to guide us, our God with us joining,
Ordaining, maintaining His kingdom divine;
So from the beginning the fight we were winning;
Thou, Lord, wast at our side; all glory be Thine!

We all do extol thee, thou leader triumphant,
And pray that thou still our defender wilt be.
Let thy congregation escape tribulation;
Thy name be ever praised! O Lord, make us free!

To Bless the Earth

To bless the earth, God sends us
From heaven's abundant store
The waters of the springtime,
Enriching it once more.

The seed by God provided
Is sown o'er hill and plain,
And then come gentle showers
To bless the springing grain.

God crowns the year with goodness,
The earth God's mercy fills,
The wilderness is fruitful,
And joyful are the hills.

With grain the fields are covered,
The flocks in pastures graze;
All nature joins in singing
A joyful song of praise.

FIRST LESSON

Luke 17:11-19

On the way to Jerusalem Jesus was going through the region between Samaria and Galilee. As he entered a village, ten lepers approached him. Keeping their distance, they called out, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" When he saw them, he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were made clean. Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice. He prostrated himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him. And he was a Samaritan. Then Jesus asked, "Were not ten made clean? But the other nine, where are they? Was none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" Then he said to him, "Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well."

SECOND LESSON

Deuteronomy 8:7-18

For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land with flowing streams, with springs and underground waters welling up in valleys and hills, a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey, a land where you may eat bread without scarcity, where you will lack nothing, a land whose stones are iron and from whose hills you may mine copper.

You shall eat your fill and bless the Lord your God for the good land that he has given you. Take care that you do not forget the Lord your God, by failing to keep his commandments, his ordinances, and his statutes, which I am commanding you today. When you have eaten your fill and have built fine houses and live in them, and when your herds and flocks have multiplied, and your silver and gold is multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied, then do not exalt yourself, forgetting the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, who led you through the great and terrible wilderness, an arid wasteland with poisonous snakes and scorpions. He made water flow for you from flint rock, and fed you in the wilderness with manna that your ancestors did not know, to humble you and to test you, and in the end to do you good. Do not say to yourself, "My power and the might of my own hand have gotten me this wealth." But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, so that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your ancestors, as he is doing today.

We Plow the Fields and Scatter

1. We plow the fields and scatter
The good seed on the land,
But it is fed and watered
By God's almighty hand;
God sends the snow in winter,
The warmth to swell the grain,
The breezes and the sunshine,
And soft, refreshing rain.
2. You only are the Maker
Of all things near and far;
You paint the wayside flower,
You light the evening star;
The winds and waves obey You,
By You the birds are fed;
Much more to us, Your children,
You give our daily bread.
3. We thank You, then Creator,
For all things bright and good,
The seed-time and the harvest,
Our life, our health, our food;
Accept the gifts we offer,
For all Your love imparts,
And what You most would welcome,
Our humble, thankful hearts.

Now Thank We All Our God

Now thank we all our God
With heart and hands and voices,
Who wondrous things hath done,
In whom this world rejoices;
Who, from our mothers' arms,
Hath blessed us on our way
With countless gifts of love,
And still is ours today.

O may this bounteous God
Through all our life be near us,
With ever joyful hearts
And blessed peace to cheer us;
And keep us in God's grace,
And guide us when perplexed,
And free us from all ills
In this world and the next.

All praise and thanks to God,
Who reigns in highest heaven,
To Father and to Son
And Spirit now be given.
The one eternal God,
Whom heaven and earth adore,
The God who was, and is,
And shall be ever more.