

**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

LYNN RALEY, ORGANIST

JEFF BENTLEY, TROMBONE

ALAN BURNS, TROMBONE

APRIL 5, 2026  EASTER SUNDAY

**PRELUDE** *Easter Suite* - Phil Lehenbauer (b. 1960)  
Alan Burns and Jeff Bentley, trombones

**EASTER PROCLAMATION** (responsive)

This is the day of resurrection! Let us rejoice and be glad.

**Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed.**

This is the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in our eyes.

**Let us rejoice and be glad!**

**\*HYMN** *Come, Ye Faithful, Raise the Strain* 115

John of Damascus wrote this hymn in the middle 8<sup>th</sup> century. He was ordained a priest of the Jerusalem church and was canonized by both the Greek and Roman branches of the Church. The words were translated into English and published in 1859 by John Mason Neale who had a deep interest in the early Latin and Greek hymns. The composer, Arthur Sullivan, wrote hymn tunes in England in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, but is better known for his comic opera collaborations with W.S. Gilbert.

**OPENING PRAYER** (unison)

We believe in God:

who has created and is creating,

who has come in Jesus,

the word made flesh,

to reconcile and make new,

who works in us and others

by the spirit.

We trust in God.

We are called to be the church:

to celebrate God's presence,

to live with respect in creation,

to love and serve others,

to seek justice and resist evil,

to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,

our judge and our hope.

In life, in death, in life beyond death,

God is with us.

We are not alone,

thanks be to God. Amen.

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

**FIRST LESSON** Acts 10:34-43 p. 895

**\*HYMN** *Jesus Christ Is Risen Today* (vs. 1, 2 and 4) 123

The first three stanzas are from the 14<sup>th</sup> century, first published in the 1708 "Collection of Divine Songs and Hymns, partly newly composed, partly translated from the High German and Latin Hymns; and set to easy and pleasant tunes." The tune is the only surviving tune from this hymnal.

**SECOND LESSON** Matthew 28:1-10 p. 811

**SERMON** While It Was Still Dark

**\*HYMN** *I Know that My Redeemer Lives!* (vs. 1-4) **Insert**

This hymn is set to the tune DUKE STREET which was composed by John Warrington Hatton. Hatton supposedly lived on Duke Street in Lancashire, from where his famous tune name comes. Very little is known about him, but he was most likely a Presbyterian, and the story goes that he was killed in a stagecoach accident.

**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.)

**OFFERING**

**OFFERTORY** *The Son of God Has Come*  
- Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

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

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

**\*HYMN** *All Creatures of Our God and King* (vs. 1, 2, and 6) 455

The text is based on St. Francis' *Canticle of the Sun*, considered the first religious Italian poem, written in 1255, one year before Francis' death, when he was blind and ill. The translator and adapter, William Draper, was an Anglican priest. The composer is unknown, although the first line is the same as a 16<sup>th</sup> century tune. Ralph Vaughan Williams wrote the harmony in 1906 for the hymn, "Ye Watchers and Ye Holy Ones".

**BENEDICTION**

**POSTLUDE** *He Is Risen*  
- C.W. F. Walther (1811-1887), arr. by Mark Rippe  
Alan Burns and Jeff Bentley, trombones

\*Standing, if able

The annual **Easter egg hunt** will take place after worship today.

Children should take a bag and balloon from the windowsill right after worship and go into the foyer. After everyone has left the Sanctuary, we will close the doors, do some “hiding” and then invite the children back in.



Deacons of the Month are Pat Ross and Amy Tronsen. Ushers and greeters for today’s service are Kate Musso, Audrey and Larry Pietrucha, and Amy Tronsen.

Please join us after worship today for coffee hour graciously provided by Mary Brooks, Anastasia Gauthier, Mary Elizabeth Groupé, Kate Musso, and Marsha Pilachowski. If you would like to host coffee hour or provide flowers some Sunday please sign up on the BLOG.

Special thanks to our guest musicians Jeff Bently and Alan Burns who are providing musical accompaniment today.

Thank you to those who provided memorial Easter lilies and flowers this year. Donors are encouraged to take flowers home after worship today.

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

Bible Study, 4:30 PM, every Wednesday in the church Parlor

4/12: Open Church docent meeting, following worship

4/16: Trustee meeting, 5:30 PM, Parlor

4/19: Tag Sale meeting, following worship

4/21: Deacon’s meeting, 3:30 PM, Parlor

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

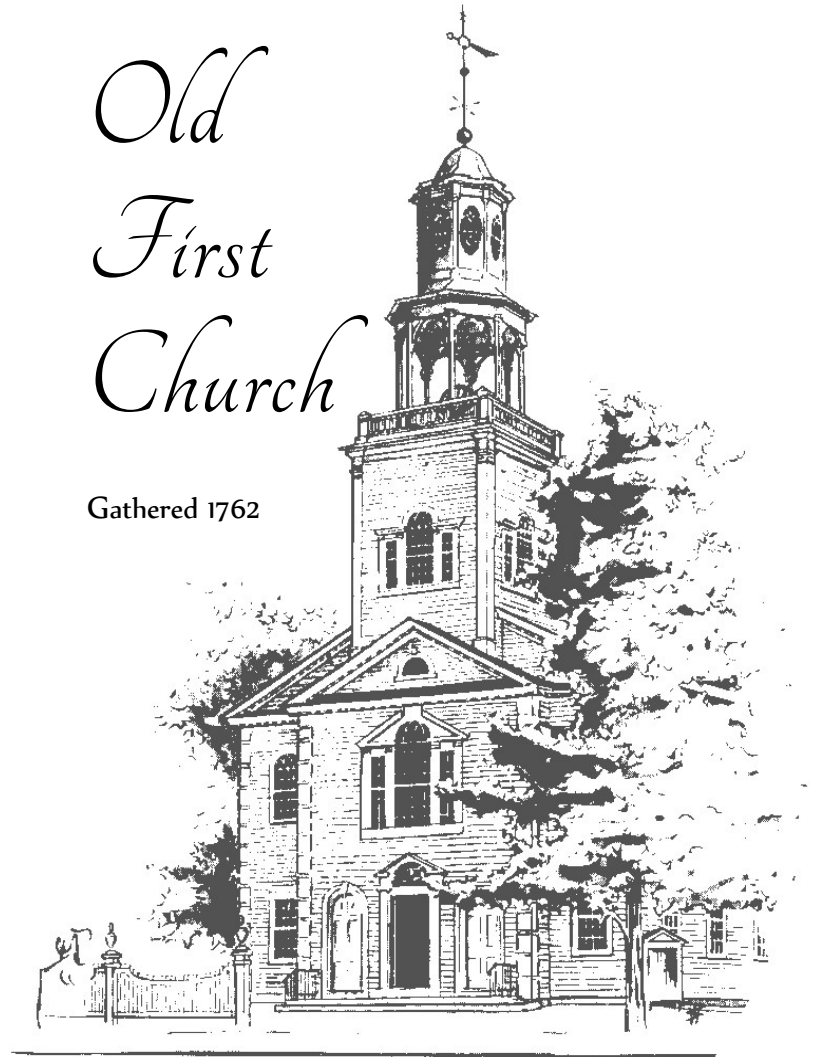
1 MONUMENT CIRCLE • BENNINGTON, VERMONT 05201 • (802) 447-1223

office@oldfirstchurchbenn.org • www.oldfirstchurchbenn.org



# Old First Church

Gathered 1762



## *Come, Ye Faithful, Raise the Strain*

Come, ye faithful, raise the strain  
of triumphant gladness;  
God hath brought forth Israel  
into joy from sadness;  
loosed from Pharaoh's bitter yoke  
Jacob's sons and daughters;  
led them, with unmoistened foot,  
through the Red Sea waters.

'Tis the spring of souls today;  
Christ hath burst His prison,  
and from three days' sleep in death  
as a sun hath risen.  
Now rejoice, Jerusalem,  
and with true affection  
welcome in unwearied strains  
Jesus' resurrection!

## *Jesus Christ Is Risen Today* (verses 1, 2 and 4)

Jesus Christ is risen today, Alleluia!  
Our triumphant holy day, Alleluia!  
Who did once upon the cross, Alleluia!  
Suffer to redeem our loss. Alleluia!

Hymns of praise then let us sing, Alleluia!  
Unto Christ, our heavenly King, Alleluia!  
Who endured the cross and grave, Alleluia!  
Sinners to redeem and save. Alleluia!

Sing we to our God above, Alleluia!  
Praise eternal as God's love; Alleluia!  
Praise our God, ye heavenly host, Alleluia!  
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Alleluia!

### **FIRST LESSON: Acts 10:34-43**

Then Peter began to speak to them: "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ--he is Lord of all. That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

### **SECOND LESSON: Matthew 28:1-10**

After the Sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning and his clothing white as snow. For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.' This is my message for you." So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

*I Know that My Redeemer Lives!*  
*(verses 1-4)*

I know that my Redeemer lives!  
What comfort this sweet sentence gives!  
He lives, he lives, who once was dead;  
He lives, my ever-living head!

He lives triumphant from the grave;  
He lives eternally to save;  
He lives exalted, throned above;  
He lives to rule his Church in love.

He lives to grant me rich supply;  
He lives to guide me with his eye;  
He lives to comfort me when faint;  
He lives to hear my soul's complaint.

He lives to silence all my fears;  
He lives to wipe away my tears;  
He lives to calm my troubled heart;  
He lives all blessings to impart.

*All Creatures of Our God and King*  
*(verses 1, 2 and 6)*

All creatures of our God and King,  
lift up your voice and with us sing,  
Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Thou burning sun with golden beam,  
thou silver moon with softer gleam,  
Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Thou rushing wind that art so strong,  
ye clouds that sail in heaven along,  
O sing ye! Alleluia!  
Thou rising morn, in praise rejoice,  
ye lights of evening, find a voice!  
Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

All creatures, your Creator bless,  
and worship God in humbleness.  
O sing ye! Alleluia!  
Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son,  
and praise the Spirit, Three in One!  
Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!