

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
AUDREY PIETRUCHA, LAY READER
EDWIN LAWRENCE, ORGANIST

MAY 3, 2026

PRELUDE *Praeludium in F* - Vincent Lübeck

OPENING WORDS (responsive)

Make a joyful noise all the earth.

Let us worship the Lord with gladness.

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

God's Spirit is in all times and generations.

*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 12th and 13th measures has been restored in our hymnal.

OPENING PRAYER (unison)

Lord, let us not dwell in the past, nor worry about the future. We cannot undo what is done. We cannot foresee what will come. Let us instead dwell in your peace, love and be loved, heal and be healed. We give the past to you and rest in your forgiveness. We give the future to you and rest in your love. We live in your light, open our eyes that we may see. We live in your love, let your love flow through us, to the fulfillment of your kingdom. This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND *GLORIA PATRI (579)

FIRST LESSON 1 Peter 2:2-10 p. 984

*HYMN *In You, Lord, I Have Put My Trust* 183

This paraphrase of Psalm 31 was written by Adam Reissner (1496-c 1575), born in Bavaria and educated at Wittenberg. He later studied Hebrew and Greek under Johann Reuchlin, a noted language scholar and writer (1521).

SECOND LESSON John 14:1-14 p. 877

SERMON Sticks and Stones

*HYMN *Come, Risen Lord* 503

This text was one of sixteen contributed to the volume Songs of Praise (1931), where the last line of stanza I was altered to read "In this our sacrament of bread and wine." The Presbyterian Hymnal (1990) has restored the original text.

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 In dich hab' ich gehoffet, Herr
(In You, Lord, I Have Put My Trust)
- Johann Pachelbel

*DOXOLOGY (592) AND PRAYER OF DEDICATION

SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER (insert)

The congregation is invited to participate in the service as found in the insert included in this order of service. (Please note that grape juice is on the outer circle only and wine inside. We partake together after all have been served.)

COMMUNION VOLUNTARY

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

*HYMN *Now Once Again the Heaven Turns* insert

The author of this hymn, Kenneth Leo Patton (August 25, 1911-December 25, 1994), born in a small town in western Michigan, identified as one of the major poets and a prophet of contemporary liberal religion, was a voice for a poetic, naturalistic humanism at a time when most humanists were defining a religion of reason. Minister and scholar David Bumbaugh has summed up Patton's work: "It was he who taught a monotone rationalism how to sing; it was he who taught a stumble-footed humanism how to dance; it was he who cried 'Look!' and taught our eyes to see the glory in the ordinary."

*BENEDICTION

*POSTLUDE *Vivace in D (Praelambeln und Interludien, IV)*
- Hermann Schroeder

* 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 and ushers, greeters and communion servers for today's service are Janet Van Derpoel-Andrea and Kate Musso.

Please join us for coffee hour after worship today graciously provided by JW and Mary Brooks and Audrey Pietrucha.

Flowers for worship are provided by JW and Mary Brooks in honor of our church family.

Game Night: Audrey and Larry Pietrucha will host another game night Friday, May 15 at 6:00 p.m. Everyone is welcome, even if you just want to watch and socialize (and eat - there are always good snacks!). We have a large supply of games, but feel free to bring your own favorites. Please let Audrey know in person or by text or email (dreypie@gmail.com) if you'd like to come.

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

NO Bible Study this Wednesday (May 6)

5/10: Old First hosts the Free Sunday Supper (see BLOG to sign up)

5/15: Game night at the Pietrucha's, 6:00 PM

5/17: Deacon's meeting, following worship

5/21: Trustee meeting, 5:30 PM, Parlor

5/30: Memorial service for Pat Guerrero, 11:00 a.m.

5/31: Tag Sale Luncheon, following worship

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

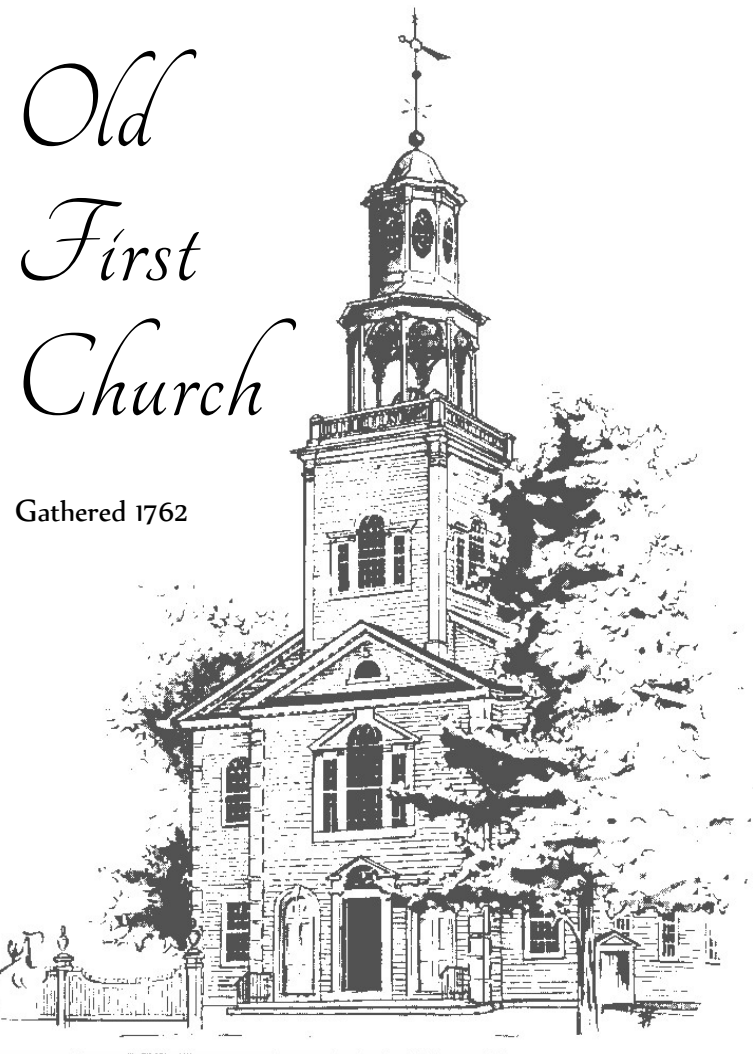
VT RTE. 9 AND MONUMENT AVENUE

OLD BENNINGTON, VERMONT

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Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

1. 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.
2. 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.

3. 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.

FIRST LESSON

1 Peter 2:2-10

Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation—if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good. Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and like living stones let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

For it stands in scripture: "See, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame." To you then who believe, he is precious; but for those who do not believe, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the very head of the corner," and "A stone that makes them stumble and a rock that makes them fall." They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do. But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

In You, Lord, I Have Put My Trust

In You, Lord, I have put my trust;
Leave me not helpless in the dust,
Let me not be confounded.
Let in Your Word
My faith, O Lord,
Be always firmly grounded.

O listen, Lord, most graciously
And hear my cry, my prayer, my plea,
Make haste for my protection;
For woes and fear
Surround me here.
Help me in my affliction.

You are my strength, my shield, my rock,
My fortress that withstands each shock,
My help, my life, my tower,
My battle sword;
Almighty Lord,
What can resist Your power?

With You, Lord, I have cast my lot;
O faithful God, forsake me not,
To You my soul commending.
Lord, be my stay
And lead the way
Now and when life is ending.

SECOND LESSON

John 14:1-14

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going." Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him."

Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, but if you do not, then believe because of the works themselves. Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.

Come, Risen Lord

Come, risen Lord, and deign to be our guest;
Nay, let us be Thy guests, the feast is Thine;
Thyself at Thine own board make manifest
In Thine own sacrament of bread and wine.

We meet, as in that upper room they met,
Thou at the table, blessing, yet dost stand;
"This is My body"; so Thou givest yet:
Faith still receives the cup as from Thy hand.

One body we, one body who partake,
One church united in communion blest;
One name we bear, one bread of life we break,
With all Thy saints on earth and saints at rest.

One with each other, Lord, for one in Thee,
Who art one Savior and one living head;
Then open Thou our eyes, that we may see;
Be known to us in breaking of the bread.

Now Once Again the Heaven Turns

Now once again the heaven turns
To bring again the verdant year.
And once again the old sun burns
To freshen up the earth to bear.

Anon, anon, the seeds will burst
From swelling in the warming soil.
The rains will quench the season's thirst;
The tillers will resume their toil.

And, answering, the heart of man
Will waken from its old despair,
And glory in what spring it can,
To make the human season fair.

Then will the blossoms of our hope,
Arranged with blossoms of the year,
So beautify the festive scope,
The heart will triumph over fear.

**Order of Service for
The Lord's Supper or Communion**

Scripture Sentences

Opening Words and Invocation

Prayer of Confession (read by the Minister and People in Unison)

We come not into thy presence, most holy Lord God, trusting in our own righteousness but in thy manifold and abiding mercies. Remembering this day the great heart and passion of a son of man of long ago, we are conscious of our shortcomings. We would here be turned to the way of his brave and tender spirit, and find that wholeness of life which shall be at once a divine blessing for us and a divine ministry from us. Forgive our failures and shortcomings, and by thy grace strengthen our desire for goodness, that we may henceforth serve thee without fear and without shame, all the days of our lives. Amen.

Responsive Reading

Let us hear the words of Jesus which speak of the way of blessedness.

Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

BLESSED ARE THEY THAT MOURN; FOR THEY SHALL BE COMFORTED.

Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth.

BLESSED ARE THEY WHICH DO HUNGER AND THIRST AFTER RIGHTEOUSNESS; FOR THEY SHALL BE FILLED.

Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy.

BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART; FOR THEY SHALL SEE GOD.

Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God.

BLESSED ARE THEY WHICH ARE PERSECUTED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS' SAKE; FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

THIS IS THE FIRST AND GREAT COMMANDMENT.

And the second is like unto it, namely this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

ON THESE TWO COMMANDMENTS HANG ALL THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS.

Offertory and Communion Prayer

The Lord be with you.

AND ALSO WITH YOU.

Lift up your hearts

WE LIFT THEM TO THE LORD.

It is right to give our thanks and praise

LET US GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD OUR GOD

Words of Institution

The Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread; and, when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said: This is my body which is broken for you. This do in remembrance of me.

After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood. This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

Take and eat this in remembrance of Christ.

Take and drink this in remembrance of Christ.

Silent Prayer

The service continues and concludes as found in today's order of service.