



# First Congregational Church of Lebanon

*United Church of Christ – Open and Affirming*

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## **The Third Sunday in Lent**

March 15, 2020

“Yea, O Lord and King, grant me to see my own sin and not to judge my brother, for You are blessed from all ages to all ages. Amen.”

–St. Ephraim the Syrian

### **Call to Worship (Psalm 95:1-6)**

**Leader:** O come, let us sing to the LORD; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!

**People:** Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!

**Leader:** For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods.

**People:** In his hand are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are his also.

**Leader:** The sea is his, for he made it, and the dry land, which his hands have formed.

**People:** O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!

**Hymn 93** (Pilgrim Hymnal – Red)    *Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah*    Cwm Rhondda

### **Prayer of Invocation**

Holy and gracious God, we welcome your spirit here today. Surround us with your love and power, help us to walk faithfully with Jesus, and let us lift up your name as we share our prayers, our service, and our fellowship. In your Son's name we pray. Amen.

### **Lenten Prayer of Confession**

Merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart and mind and strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. Open our hearts to you, that we may receive your forgiveness and be redeemed by your reconciling love. Amen.

### **Assurance of Pardon**

Know that all who come before God with an open and contrite heart, that all who sincerely repent, are forgiven.

## Gloria

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

## Words of Welcome; Our Ministry and Mission

During this time, we are not meeting in person. All are encouraged to stay in touch with one another by phone, email, or written cards.

## Children's Moment

There are many stories in the Bible about who people who are afraid: David when he was fleeing Saul, Jonah in the belly of the great fish, Abraham and his family as they fled Sodom and Gomorrah. In all of these stories, these people were not alone! God was with them and saw them through their troubles. There may be times when we are afraid. And just like our forebears in the Bible, we will have God with us, providing his peace and his reassurance.

Hymn 372 (Pilgrim Hymnal – Red) *How Firm a Foundation*

Adeste Fideles

## Scripture Lessons

**Exodus 17:1-7.** From the wilderness of Sin the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed by stages, as the LORD commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. <sup>2</sup>The people quarreled with Moses, and said, “Give us water to drink.” Moses said to them, “Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the LORD?” <sup>3</sup>But the people thirsted there for water; and the people complained against Moses and said, “Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?” <sup>4</sup>So Moses cried out to the LORD, “What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me.” <sup>5</sup>The LORD said to Moses, “Go on ahead of the people, and take some of the elders of Israel with you; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. <sup>6</sup>I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink.” Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. <sup>7</sup>He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarreled and tested the LORD, saying, “Is the LORD among us or not?”

**John 4:5-42.** <sup>5</sup>So [Jesus] came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. <sup>6</sup>Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

<sup>7</sup>A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” <sup>8</sup>(His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) <sup>9</sup>The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?” (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) <sup>10</sup>Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of

God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.” <sup>11</sup>The woman said to him, “Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? <sup>12</sup>Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?” <sup>13</sup>Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, <sup>14</sup>but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.” <sup>15</sup>The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.”

<sup>16</sup>Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come back.” <sup>17</sup>The woman answered him, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband’; <sup>18</sup>for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!” <sup>19</sup>The woman said to him, “Sir, I see that you are a prophet. <sup>20</sup>Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.” <sup>21</sup>Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. <sup>22</sup>You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. <sup>23</sup>But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. <sup>24</sup>God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” <sup>25</sup>The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ). “When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.” <sup>26</sup>Jesus said to her, “I am he, the one who is speaking to you.”

<sup>27</sup>Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, “What do you want?” or, “Why are you speaking with her?” <sup>28</sup>Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, <sup>29</sup>“Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?” <sup>30</sup>They left the city and were on their way to him.

<sup>31</sup>Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, “Rabbi, eat something.” <sup>32</sup>But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you do not know about.” <sup>33</sup>So the disciples said to one another, “Surely no one has brought him something to eat?” <sup>34</sup>Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. <sup>35</sup>Do you not say, ‘Four months more, then comes the harvest’? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. <sup>36</sup>The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. <sup>37</sup>For here the saying holds true, ‘One sows and another reaps.’ <sup>38</sup>I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.”

<sup>39</sup>Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I have ever done." <sup>40</sup>So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. <sup>41</sup>And many more believed because of his word. <sup>42</sup>They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Savior of the world."

**Sermon**

*"The Other Side of the Coin"*

Stephen R. Silver

**Hymn 376** (Pilgrim Hymnal – Red) *Lead Us, O Father*

Langran

### **Sharing of Joys and Concerns; Pastoral Prayer**

On this day we offer our ongoing prayers for Pete, Lloyd, Jessica, Martha, Micah, Joanne, Max, Kelee, Janice, Tammy, Arlene, Ruth, Ryle, Emily, John, Shirley, Dan, Roger, Jim, Beth, Evelyn, Susan, Barbara, and Max. We pray for Nicholas Cole, partner of Rebecca Dunbar, who died last Saturday. We pray for all those affected by the coronavirus, especially those who are suffering from the virus and those who are fighting and treating it.

This day we offer a prayer, whose author is unknown, but which speaks to our current moment:

May we who are merely inconvenienced  
Remember those whose lives are at stake.

May we who have no risk factors  
Remember those most vulnerable.

May we who have the luxury of working from home  
Remember those who must choose between preserving their health or making their rent.

May we who have the flexibility to care for our children when their schools close  
Remember those who have no options.

May we who have to cancel our trips  
Remember those who have no safe place to go.

May we who are losing margin money in the tumult of the economic market  
Remember those who have no margin at all.

May we who settle in for a quarantine at home  
Remember those who have no home.

As fear grips our country,  
Let us choose love.

During this time when we cannot physically wrap our arms around each other,  
Let us yet find ways to be the loving embrace of God to our neighbors.

We pray all this, and the joys and concerns we hold in our hearts, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

## The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

## Offering of Gifts

In times like this, it is especially fitting that we remember those who are without, those who are often ignored, those who are in need. In this spirit, we invite your support of this church, its mission, and its ministry.

## Doxology

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,  
Praise Him, all creatures here below,  
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host,  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

## Prayer of Dedication

You have called us to comfort our neighbors.  
You have called us to help those in faraway places.  
You have called us to nurture those we know.  
You have called us to embrace the stranger.  
Lord of all creation, you have called us to serve all your people. Take these gifts as a sign that we hear you and respond, with joy and gratitude. In Jesus' name we pray.  
Amen.

Hymn 228 (Pilgrim Hymnal – Red) *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling* Beecher

## Benediction

My friends, life is short. We do not have much time to gladden the hearts of those who walk with us. So, be swift to love, and make haste to be kind.  
Go forth with the love of God, the grace of our lord Jesus Christ, and the companionship of the Holy Spirit this day and forevermore. Amen.

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## *Leading Worship This Morning*

The Rev. Stephen R. Silver, Pastor

Susan Sorensen, Organist • Brendan Callahan, Liturgist • Linda and Ike Jacobs, Ushers

### *Joys, Concerns, and Prayer Requests*

If you wish to have a **joy, concern, or prayer request** lifted up in the service, or if you know of anyone who may need special prayers, a card or phone call, or some other form of pastoral care, please email [prayer@fccleb.org](mailto:prayer@fccleb.org), or contact the church office or the Rev. Steve Silver directly.

## HOLY WEEK AT FCC

### **Sunday, April 5—Palm Sunday**

**10 am:** Liturgy of the Palms, Children's Procession (*Sanctuary*)

### **April 9—Maundy Thursday**

**7 pm:** Service of Tenebrae, Stripping of the Altar (*Sanctuary*)

### **April 10—Good Friday**

**12-3 pm:** Quiet Meditation on the Seven Last Words (*Sanctuary*)

**7 pm:** Service of the Word and Prayer (*Sanctuary*)

### **Sunday, April 12—EASTER SUNDAY**

**6 am:** Ecumenical Sunrise Service (*Colburn Park*)

**6:30 am:** Community Breakfast (*Parish Hall; Beneficiary TBD*)

**10 am:** Festival Worship Service (*Sanctuary*), Easter Egg Hunt

## *Do Your Part to Fill the Cart!*

Greater Lebanon continues to struggle with rising poverty and food insecurity, a challenge that will only increase amid the effects of COVID-19 precautions. Our shopping-cart collection of donations in the Parish Hall helps address this need year-round.

**During the month of March**, we are still collecting non-perishable and personal-care items for the **UPPER VALLEY HAVEN**. Donations may be brought to the church during the week.

*Thanks to all for fighting local poverty and food insecurity.*

## **One Great Hour of Sharing: “Invest in Futures”—Special UCC Mission Offering**

This nationwide UCC offering funds mission initiatives around the world. It supports healthcare, education, agriculture, refugee assistance, and emergency relief in over 130 countries. OGHS funds are leveraged with local, national, and global partners to maximize their impact.

*Please consider a contribution as you are able, and thanks!*

(Payable to FCC, with “OGHS” in the memo line.)