



First Congregational Church of Lebanon

United Church of Christ – Open and Affirming

The Fifth Sunday in Lent

March 29, 2020

“The cross is not the suffering tied to natural existence, but the suffering tied to being Christians. The cross is never simply a matter of suffering, but a matter of suffering and rejection for the sake of Jesus Christ, not for the sake of some other arbitrary behavior or confession.”

–Dietrich Bonhoeffer

All hymns are included after the order of worship, on pages 7-10.

Call to Worship (Adapted from Psalm 130)

Leader: O LORD, hear our voices!

People: Let your ears be attentive to the voices of our supplications!

Leader: We wait for the LORD, our souls wait, and in his word we hope.

People: Our souls wait for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning.

Leader: O Israel, hope in the LORD!

People: For with the LORD there is steadfast love, and with him is great power to redeem.

Hymn 12 (New Century; see p. 7) *I Sing the Mighty Power of God* Ellacombe

Prayer of Invocation

God, though we worship in different locations this day, we know your Spirit is with us, joining us together as one people. Lift up our worship, inspire our prayers, infuse them with your grace, your love, your power. We pray this in your Son's name. 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. If you would like to organize a Zoom teleconference or telephone meeting, please be in touch with the Rev. Steve Silver (603-448-4281/silver@fccleeb.org), and he'll get you set up and ready to go.

Children's Moment

Sometimes we read a story in Scripture and we're left with so many questions. Today's lesson about Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead is such a story. One question I've always had is, "What was it like for Lazarus to return to the land of the living?" The Bible doesn't tell us. Is it wrong then to wonder, to ask? I don't think so. God gave us brains, and Jesus often asked questions as part of his teaching. I believe that as long as we ask questions in good faith, we are being the people of God. So, go ahead. Ask a question.

Hymn 208 (New Century; see p. 8) *God Loved the World*

Rockingham

Scripture Lessons

Ezekiel 37:1-14. The hand of the LORD came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. ²He led me all round them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. ³He said to me, "Mortal, can these bones live?" I answered, "O Lord GOD, you know." ⁴Then he said to me, "Prophesy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. ⁵Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. ⁶I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the LORD."

⁷So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. ⁸I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. ⁹Then he said to me, "Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." ¹⁰I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

¹¹Then he said to me, "Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.' ¹²Therefore

prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. ¹³And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. ¹⁴I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken and will act, says the LORD.”

John 11:1-45. Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ²Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. ³So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, “Lord, he whom you love is ill.” ⁴But when Jesus heard it, he said, “This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God’s glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.” ⁵Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, ⁶after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

⁷Then after this he said to the disciples, “Let us go to Judea again.” ⁸The disciples said to him, “Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?” ⁹Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. ¹⁰But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them.” ¹¹After saying this, he told them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him.” ¹²The disciples said to him, “Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right.” ¹³Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. ¹⁴Then Jesus told them plainly, “Lazarus is dead. ¹⁵For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.”

¹⁶Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.”

¹⁷When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days.

¹⁸Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, ¹⁹and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. ²⁰When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. ²¹Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²²But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.” ²³Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” ²⁴Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” ²⁵Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, ²⁶and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” ²⁷She said to him, “Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.”

²⁸When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, “The Teacher is here and is calling for you.” ²⁹And when she heard it, she

got up quickly and went to him. ³⁰Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. ³¹The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. ³²When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” ³³When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. ³⁴He said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to him, “Lord, come and see.” ³⁵Jesus began to weep. ³⁶So the Jews said, “See how he loved him!” ³⁷But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?” ³⁸Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. ³⁹Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, “Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days.” ⁴⁰Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?” ⁴¹So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, “Father, I thank you for having heard me. ⁴²I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.” ⁴³When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” ⁴⁴The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.” ⁴⁵Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

Sermon *“The Light and the Dark”* (see separate document) Stephen R. Silver

Hymn 209 (New Century; see **p. 9**) *O Love, How Vast, How Flowing Free* Deo Gracias

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 Jon Scott, who is dealing with some health issues.

We pray for Steve Teeter, who is dealing with some health issues.

We remember Carol Mistretta, daughter of Barbara and Gordon Sargent, who passed away a year ago, and we hold the Sargents’ whole family in prayer.

We pray for all those struggling with financial challenges, reduced hours and unemployment, and fears about the future.

We pray for the healthcare workers and first responders who are on the front line dealing with this pandemic.

We pray for wisdom and humility from all our leaders.

This day we offer a prayer, from the church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields in London, which speaks to the uncertainty of our current moment:

God of gentle presence,
you knew the ultimate separation
when on the cross Christ felt he was forsaken;
be with all who feel their Good Friday has come today.
Comfort those who have the virus.
Empower all who care for those in distress,
through medicine, acts of kindness, or imaginative communication.
Be present to any who feel utterly alone,
without companion or health or hope.
Show us your face amid grief and bewilderment.
Inspire us to find new ways to be one with one another and with you.
And bring this time of trial to an end.
In Christ our Lord. Amen.

We pray this, and all 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. Please mail in your offering as you are able, in support of this church's continuing work in and for the community.

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

In Jesus we are granted a fresh start, a second chance, a new life. In gratitude, we offer our prayers and our songs, our time, our talents, and our money. We pray that all of these gifts will transform both those who receive them and those who give them, all in the service of the Good News of love with which we are blessed. In the name of Christ we pray, Amen.

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.

Please note that we have suspended worship services through at least Easter Sunday, April 12.

While we recognize that Holy Week is a crucial time of the liturgical year, the needs of our community require us to avoid the public-health risks of gathering in person.

In the meantime, we will continue to provide worship resources online and in print as far as possible, in order to offer everyone the opportunity to participate in the journey of Holy Week, through Christ's Passion, Crucifixion, and Resurrection.

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, or contact the church office or the Rev. Steve Silver directly.

Do Your Part to Fill the Cart!

Greater Lebanon has been struggling with rising poverty and food insecurity for some time, and these challenges have only increased as COVID-19 precautions have reduced employment and income. Our shopping-cart collection in the Parish Hall helps address this need.

During March, we are collecting items for the UPPER VALLEY HAVEN. Current needs include: hand sanitizer, toilet paper, paper towels, toothbrushes/paste, hand soap, diapers, feminine hygiene products, electric blankets, sweatpants, grocery bags, cereal, peanut butter, tuna, pasta, canned vegetables/fruit, canned soups/sauces. 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.)

I Sing the Mighty Power of God

Ps. 136:5-9; James 1:17

Isaac Watts, 1715; alt.

Descant

3 On earth there's not a plant or flower but makes your glo - ry known.

1 I sing the might - y power of God that made the moun - tains rise,
 2 I sing the good - ness of our God that filled the earth with food;
 3 On earth there's not a plant or flower but makes your glo - ry known.

The clouds a - rise and spread their showers by or - der from your throne.

That spread the flow - ing seas a - broad, and built the loft - y skies.
 God formed the crea - tures with a word, and then pro - nounced them good.
 The clouds a - rise and spread their showers by or - der from your throne.

All life is but a gift from you and ev - er in your care;

I sing the wis - dom that or - dained the sun to rule the day;
 Oh, how your won - ders are dis - played, wher - e'er I turn my eye:
 All life is but a gift from you and ev - er in your care;

The tune Ellacombe was named for a place in Devonshire, England. It was first published in a collection of tunes used in the private chapel of the Duke of Wirtemberg, and was possibly sung with the text "Ave Maria, klärer."

Tune: ELLACOMBE C.M.D.
 Gesangbuch der herzoglichen
 Wirtembergischen katholischen Hofkapelle, 1784
Descant, The New Century Hymnal, 1993

John 3:16-17

Heiliges Lippen und Herzens Opfer, Stettin, 1778
Transl. August Crull, 1845; alt.

1 God loved the world, and lov - ing gave
 2 Christ Je - sus is the ground of faith,
 3 If you are sick, if death is near,
 4 Be of good cheer, for God in Christ

a won - drous gift, the lost to save,
 who was made flesh and suf - fered death;
 this truth your trou - bled heart can cheer;
 for - gives the flock, by sin en - ticed,

That all who would in Christ be - lieve
 All who con - fide in Christ a - lone
 Christ Je - sus saves us all from death;
 And jus - ti - fied by Je - sus' blood,

should ev - er - last - ing life re - ceive.
 are built on this chief cor - ner - stone.
 that is the firm - est ground of faith.
 your bap - tism grants the high - est good.

Edward Miller, a skilled flutist in G. F. Handel's orchestra,
 adapted Rockingham from the tune Tunbridge. Miller named it
 for the Marquis of Rockingham, a patron and friend, and prime
 minister of Great Britain.

Tune: ROCKINGHAM L.M.
 Anon.
 Adapt. Edward Miller, 1790

O Love, How Vast, How Flowing Free

209

Latin, 15th century

Transl. The New Century Hymnal, 1994

Matt. 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13; Phil. 2:5-11;

John 17:1-26; 19:1-3, 16-18

1 O Love, how vast, how flow - ing free, O Love how
 2 Not as an an - gel vis - it - ing, nor form ce -
 3 For us bap - tized, and fast - ing long, for us was
 4 For us was beat - en, whipped, and tried, and tak - en

filled with ec - sta - sy, That God a hu - man
 les - tial or - bit - ing, But born in flesh God
 tempt - ed by the wrong, For us the pangs of
 to be cru - ci - fied, So Love all this for

form should take, and mor - tal be for mor - tals' sake.
 chose to be, robed in our own hu - man - i - ty.
 hun - ger knew; for us the Tempt - er o - ver - threw.
 us en - dured, and dy - ing, life for us pro - cured.

5 A-ris-ing from the dead a-gain,
 our Sov-ereign goes on high to reign;
 And sends the Spir-it to a-bide
 for strength and sol-ace at our side.

6 Then for God's bound-less love
 sing praise
 through end-less a-ges, count-less days;
 By Love we have been rec-on-ciled:
 sal-va-tion gained through
 God's own Child.

Recounting the life of Christ, this hymn comes from an anonymous fifteenth-century Latin hymn of twenty-three stanzas. It has been described as a precursor of Christmas and Epiphany carols.

Tune: DEO GRACIAS L.M.
 "The Agincourt Song," England, c. 1415
 For another harmonization, see 184, 259

Hope of the World

Georgia Harkness, 1954; alt.



1 Hope of the world, O Christ of great com - pas - sion,
 2 Hope of the world, God's gift of our re - demp - tion,
 3 Hope of the world, who by the cross did save us
 4 Hope of the world, O Christ, o'er death vic - to - rious,

speak to our fear - ful hearts by con - flict torn.
 bring - ing to hun - gry souls the bread of life,
 from death and sad de - spair, from sin and guilt,
 who by this sign did con - quer grief and pain,

Save us your peo - ple from con - sum - ing pas - sion,
 Still let your Spir - it un - to us be giv - en
 We ren - der back the love your mer - cy gave us;
 We would be faith - ful to your gos - pel glo - rious;

from false pur - suits through which our lives are worn.
 to heal earth's wounds and end its bit - ter strife.
 take back our lives and use them as you will.
 our Sov - ereign who for - ev - er more shall reign!

Author of many books in her field and an internationally recognized teacher, Georgia Harkness was one of the leading women theologians of her generation. This text was written for the Second General Assembly of the World Council of Churches.

Tune: ANCIENT OF DAYS 11.10.11.10
J. Albert Jeffrey, 1886
 Adapt. The New Century Hymnal, 1992



First Congregational Church of Lebanon

PO Box 230
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Lebanon NH 03766

Weekly Worship Resources Enclosed!

DATED MATERIAL—Please Deliver Promptly

Do you use email? Contact church@fccleb.org to receive this and other communication by email.

Welcome!

We are a Christ-centered community that celebrates the love of God. Although we are of varied minds, with varying measures of belief and unbelief, we are one body, bound together in Christ. We recognize the uniqueness of every individual as God's beloved child. We seek to respond faithfully to God's call for justice for all creation. We strive in word and deed to be faithful to Jesus' model of loving acceptance. We seek to create a sanctuary where all will know they are welcome and included.

No matter your age, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, race or ethnicity, physical or mental ability, or economic circumstance, you are invited into the full life and ministry of First Congregational Church of Lebanon, including its worship, sacraments, and rites.

Join us as we grow together in God's love.

First Congregational Church of Lebanon

The Rev. Stephen R. Silver, Pastor

Susan Sorensen, Interim Organist and Choir Director • Nancy Parsons, Church School Superintendent

Barbara Teeter, Chair of Deacons • Linda Jacobs, Chair of Church Council • Barbara Jones, Moderator

Brian Clancy, Church Administrator

Church Office Hours: Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, 9:00-12:00 (or by appointment as needed)

603-448-4281 • church@fccleb.org • prayer@fccleb.org • music@fccleb.org • www.fccleb.org