



# First Congregational Church of Lebanon

United Church of Christ – Open and Affirming

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## The Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

September 13, 2020

Come, my Way, my Truth, My Life;  
Such a Way, as gives us breath;  
Such a Truth, as ends all strife;  
And such a Life, as killeth death.

–From “The Call,” by George Herbert

*All hymns are included after the order of worship, on pages 5-8.*

### Call to Worship (Unison; adapted from Psalm 114)

When Israel went out from Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language, Judah became God’s sanctuary, Israel his dominion. The sea looked and fled; Jordan turned back. The mountains skipped like rams, the hills like lambs. Why is it, O sea, that you flee? O Jordan, that you turn back? Why is it, O mountains, that you skip like rams? O hills, like lambs? Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the LORD, at the presence of the God of Jacob, who turns the rock into a pool of water, the flint into a spring of water.

Hymn 185 (See below, p. 5)    *Come, Ye Faithful, Raise the Strain*

St. Kevin

### Prayer of Invocation

God, though we worship in places near and far today, we welcome your Spirit as it joins us together as one people. Lift up our worship, inspire our prayers, infuse them with your grace, your love, your power. We pray these things in your Son’s name. Amen.

### Gloria (Unison)

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

*While we are not meeting in person, all are encouraged to stay in touch with one another by phone, email, or written cards. If you wish to organize a Zoom conference or phone meeting, please contact the Rev. Steve Silver (603-448-4281/silver@fcclb.org), and he’ll get you set up and ready to go.*

### Children’s Moment

At different points in each of our lives, we have to forgive people who have wronged us. It’s often hard to do. If we’ve been wronged, who wants to let the other person off

the hook? Our anger might well be justified. But even if it is, we should never let it consume us. Holding onto grudges isn't good for us. It can actually make us sick. By forgiving, we are not so much telling someone that what they did wrong doesn't matter—we're freeing ourselves from resentment and anger. We need not forget that we were wronged when we forgive. But we should not let that memory shape our lives and emotions. If you think about it, we've all wronged God. And he has forgiven us, so let's follow Jesus' example and do likewise.

**Hymn 388 (See below, p. 6)**    *Help Us Accept Each Other*

Aurelia

### Scripture Lessons

**Exodus 14:19-31.** <sup>19</sup>The angel of God who was going before the Israelite army moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from in front of them and took its place behind them. <sup>20</sup>It came between the army of Egypt and the army of Israel. And so the cloud was there with the darkness, and it lit up the night; one did not come near the other all night.

<sup>21</sup>Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and turned the sea into dry land; and the waters were divided. <sup>22</sup>The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. <sup>23</sup>The Egyptians pursued, and went into the sea after them, all of Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and chariot drivers. <sup>24</sup>At the morning watch the Lord in the pillar of fire and cloud looked down upon the Egyptian army, and threw the Egyptian army into panic. <sup>25</sup>He clogged their chariot wheels so that they turned with difficulty. The Egyptians said, "Let us flee from the Israelites, for the Lord is fighting for them against Egypt."

<sup>26</sup>Then the Lord said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and chariot drivers." <sup>27</sup>So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at dawn the sea returned to its normal depth. As the Egyptians fled before it, the Lord tossed the Egyptians into the sea. <sup>28</sup>The waters returned and covered the chariots and the chariot drivers, the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not one of them remained. <sup>29</sup>But the Israelites walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left.

<sup>30</sup>Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. <sup>31</sup>Israel saw the great work that the Lord did against the Egyptians. So the people feared the Lord and believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses.

**Matthew 18:21-35.** <sup>21</sup>Then Peter came and said to him, "Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?"

<sup>22</sup>Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times."

<sup>23</sup>“For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. <sup>24</sup>When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; <sup>25</sup>and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. <sup>26</sup>So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ <sup>27</sup>And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. <sup>28</sup>But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, ‘Pay what you owe.’ <sup>29</sup>Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ <sup>30</sup>But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. <sup>31</sup>When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. <sup>32</sup>Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. <sup>33</sup>Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ <sup>34</sup>And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. <sup>35</sup>So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

**Sermon**      “To Infinity and Beyond” (*See separate document*)      Stephen R. Silver

**Hymn 101** (*See below, p. 7*)      *There’s a Wideness in God’s Mercy*      In Babilone

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

*As we hold our community members in prayer, please help us maintain our weekly prayer list by contacting Rev. Silver or the church office to confirm names on the list or remove them.*

On this day we offer our ongoing prayers for Pete, Lloyd, Arlene, Ruth, Evelyn, Jim, Barbara, Greg, Jon, Larry, Edith, Jan, and Claude.

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 reconciliation and healing in this time of racial tension.

We pray for wisdom and humility from all our leaders.

Today we offer the following prayer:

Holy One, though you are known by many names, you showed us in your Son that you are indeed the purest love, comforting us, animating us, nurturing us, wishing us to make amends when we fall short, joining us together in your Creation. The words we use to describe you are limited and cannot fully describe your nature, but they are all we have—and we take solace from the knowledge that though we are but finite creatures, you share your boundless power and grace with us all.

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 (*Unison*)**

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's mission, ministry, and ongoing work in and for the community. Please mail in your offering as you are able.*

### **Doxology (*Unison*)**

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 (*Unison*)**

Liberating, ever faithful God: we give thanks this day for your many blessings, those seen and those unseen. With joy and gratitude, we respond to your generosity with our own gifts, asking that you make them instruments of your renewing, reconciling, redeeming love. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

**Hymn 93 (See below, p. 8)**      *Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah*      Cwm Rhondda

### **Benediction**

My friends, life is short. We do not have too much time to gladden the hearts of those who travel the way with us. So, be swift to love, and make haste to be kind.

Now go forth with the love of God, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, this day and forevermore. Amen.

#### ***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.


***Please note that on-site, indoor worship and other events at FCC remain suspended through at least Sunday, October 18, at which point Church Council will reassess COVID-19 concerns.***

## Come, Ye Faithful, Raise the Strain


First Tune

*Attr. to John of Damascus, c.696-c.754*  
*Tr. John M. Neale, 1818-1866*

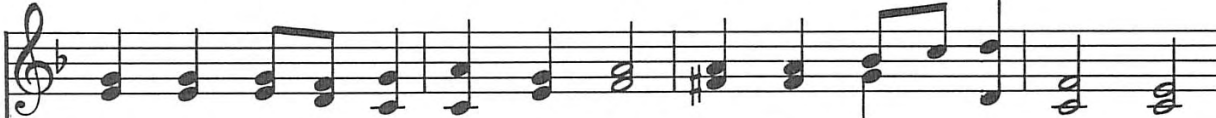
ST. KEVIN 7.6.7.6.D.  
*Arthur S. Sullivan, 1842-1900*




1 Come, ye faith - ful, raise the strain Of tri - umph - ant glad - ness;  
 2 'Tis the spring of souls to - day; Christ hath burst his pris - on,  
 3 Now the queen of sea - sons, bright With the day of splen - dor,  
 4 Neith - er might the gates of death, Nor the tomb's dark por - tal,



God hath brought his Is - ra - el In - to joy from sad - ness;  
 And from three days' sleep in death As a sun hath ris - en;  
 With the roy - al feast of feasts, Comes its joy to ren - der;  
 Nor the watch - ers, nor the seal Hold thee as a mor - tal;



Loosed from Pha - raoh's bit - ter yoke Ja - cob's sons and daugh - ters;  
 All the win - ter of our sins, Long and dark, is fly - ing  
 Comes to glad Je - ru - sa - lem Who with true af - fec - tion  
 But to - day a - midst the twelve Thou didst stand, be - stow - ing



Led them with un-moist-ened foot Through the Red Sea wa - ters.  
 From his light, to whom we give Laud and praise un - dy - ing.  
 Wel-comes in un-wea-ried strains Je - sus' res - ur - rec - tion.  
 That thy peace which ev - er - more Pass - eth hu - man know - ing. A-men.

# Help Us Accept Each Other

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*Fred Kaan, 1974; alt.*

*John 15:12; 17:20–23; Eph. 4:1–6, 11–16*

- 1 Help us ac-cept each oth-er  
as Christ ac-cept-ed us;  
teach us as sis-ter, broth-er,  
each per-son to em-brace.  
Be pres-ent, God, a-mong us,  
and bring us to be-lieve  
we are our-selves ac-cept-ed  
and meant to love and live.
- 2 Teach us, O God, your les-sons,  
as in our dai-ly life  
we strug-gle to be hu-man  
and search for hope and faith.  
Teach us to care for peo-ple,  
for all, not just for some,  
to love them as we find them,  
or as they may be-come.
- 3 Let your ac-cep-tance change us,  
so that we may be moved  
in liv-ing sit-u-a-tions  
to do the truth in love;  
To prac-tice your ac-cep-tance,  
un-til we know by heart  
the ta-ble of for-give-ness  
and laugh-ter's heal-ing art.
- 4 God, for to-day's en-coun-ters  
with all who are in need,  
who hun-ger for ac-cep-tance,  
for righ-teous-ness and bread,  
Bring us new eyes for see-ing,  
new hands for hold-ing on;  
re-new us with your Spir-it;  
God! Free us, make us one!

*Dutch theologian Fred Kaan was ordained in the United Reformed Church in England and Wales and has served as an international church administrator. Author of more than 200 hymns, Kaan frequently has addressed contemporary issues in his texts.*

Tune: AURELIA 7.6.7.6.D.  
*Samuel S. Wesley, 1864*

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## **KICK-OFF SUNDAY IS NEXT WEEK!**

### **Outdoor Service Planned for Sunday, September 20**

Next Sunday we will again worship together on FCC's front lawn, for our annual celebration of a new program year for the **Children's Community Corner**—a bit different this year, but still joyful! We ask for your patience and understanding with safety measures and changes in liturgical practice. **Attendees will have to RSVP in advance** and follow requirements such as health screening, physical distancing, and mask use. There will be no coffee hour.

*To RSVP, or ask any questions, please contact the church office or Rev. Steve Silver.*

## **STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH—INVEST IN THE VISION**

The UCC's Strengthen the Church special offering supports the growth of ministry and local congregations across the country. Renewing older faith communities, building new ones, and funding fellowships for young, emerging leaders in our church, the program is vital to the health of our denomination—inspired this year by the vision and Holy Spirit of Pentecost.

*Please contribute as you're able to this nationwide effort to support church growth. Thank you!*

## There's a Wideness in God's Mercy

First Tune

Frederick W. Faber, 1814-1863

IN BABILONE 8.7.8.7.D.  
Traditional Dutch Melody

1 There's a wide-ness in God's mer-cy, Like the wide - ness of the sea;  
2 For the love of God is broad-er Than the meas - ure of man's mind;

There's a kind-ness in his jus - tice, Which is more than lib - er - ty.  
And the heart of the E - ter - nal Is most won - der - ful - ly kind.

There is no place where earth's sor-rows Are more felt than up in heaven;  
If our love were but more sim - ple, We should take him at his word;

There is no place where earth's fail-ings Have such kind-ly judg-ment given.  
And our lives would be all sun-shine In the sweet-ness of our Lord. A-men.

**Uncovering Racism—A Racial-Justice Reading Group (Starts This Weds, 7:00)**

We believe that as Christians, we are called to work for racial justice. The faith perspective of *Uncovering Racism*, by Kathryn Goering Reid and Stephen Breck Reid, helps us see how racism persists as an issue we must all confront. *All are invited to participate! Books provided free of charge, but advance reservation is required. Please email Rev. Steve Silver (silver@fccleeb.org) with questions or to RSVP.*



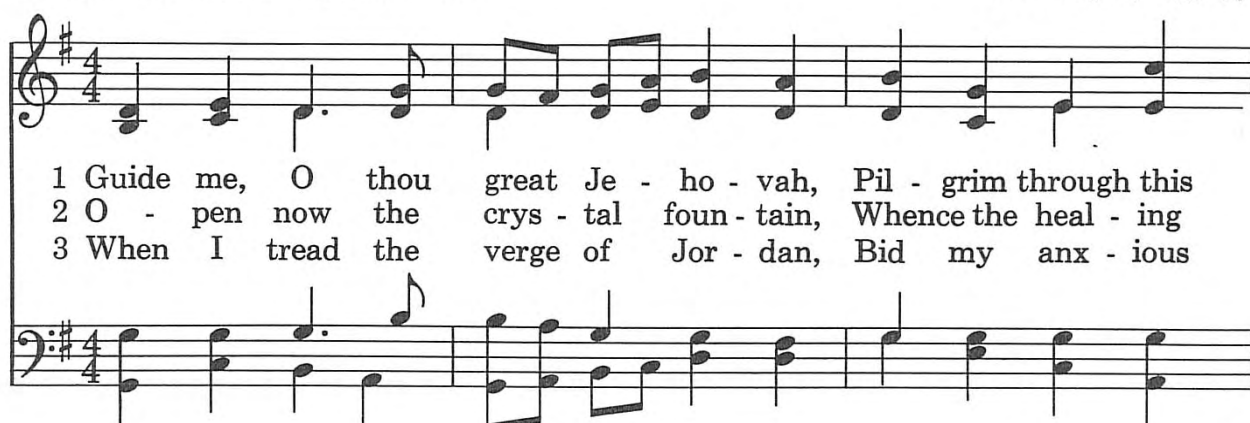
## Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah

William Williams, 1717-1791

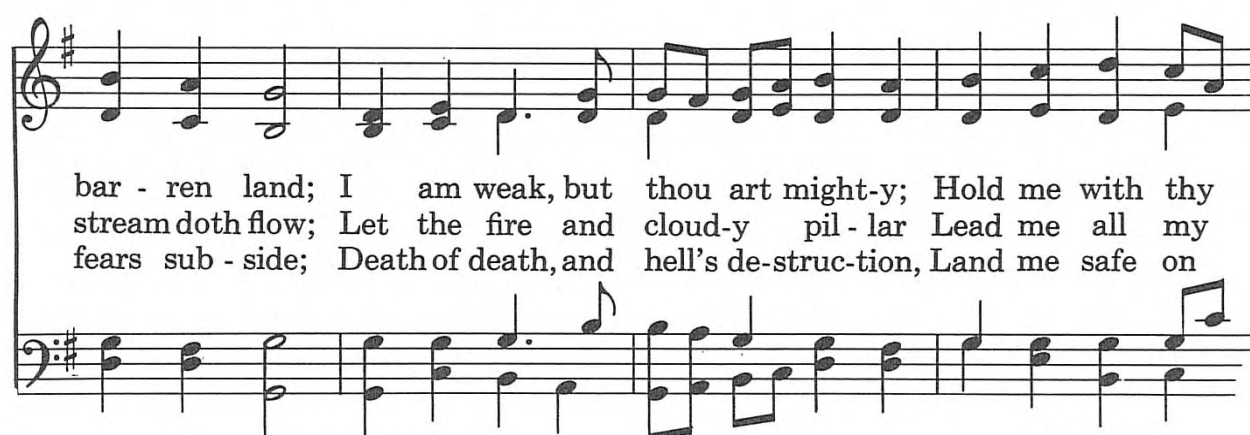
Tr. Peter Williams, 1727-1796, and others

CWM RHONDDA 8.7.8.7.8.7.7.

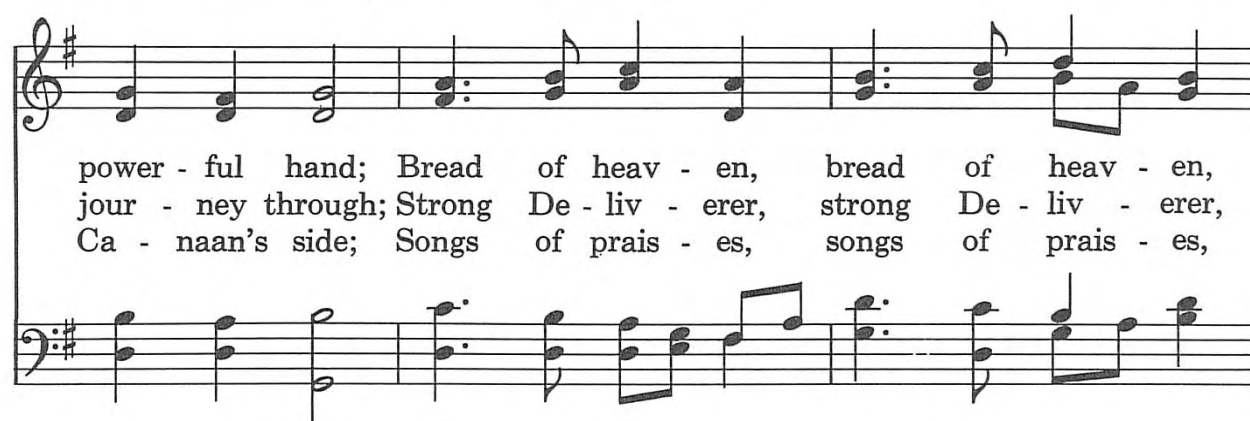
John Hughes, 1873-1932



1 Guide me, O thou great Je - ho - vah, Pil - grim through this  
 2 O - pen now the crys - tal foun - tain, Whence the heal - ing  
 3 When I tread the verge of Jor - dan, Bid my anx - ious



bar - ren land; I am weak, but thou art might-y; Hold me with thy  
 stream doth flow; Let the fire and cloud-y pil - lar Lead me all my  
 fears sub - side; Death of death, and hell's de - struc - tion, Land me safe on



power - ful hand; Bread of heav - en, bread of heav - en,  
 jour - ney through; Strong De - liv - erer, strong De - liv - erer,  
 Ca - naan's side; Songs of prais - es, songs of prais - es,



Feed me till I want no more, Feed me till I want no more.  
 Be thou still my strength and shield, Be thou still my strength and shield.  
 I will ev - er give to thee, I will ev - er give to thee. A - men.





**First Congregational Church of Lebanon**

PO Box 230  
10 South Park St  
Lebanon NH 03766

**Weekly Worship Resources Enclosed!**

*DATED MATERIAL—Please Deliver Promptly*

***Do you use email? Contact [church@fccleb.org](mailto: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](mailto:church@fccleb.org) • [prayer@fccleb.org](mailto:prayer@fccleb.org) • [music@fccleb.org](mailto:music@fccleb.org) • [www.fccleb.org](http://www.fccleb.org)**