



# First Congregational Church of Lebanon

United Church of Christ – Open and Affirming

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## The Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

October 11, 2020

“You can safely assume you’ve created God in your own image when it turns out that God hates all the same people you do.”

—Anne Lamott

*We ask that everyone wear facial masks throughout the service. Please also refrain from singing and speaking in full voice. You may follow along with today’s hymns below on pages 5-7.*

### Prelude

*Songs Without Words, no. 1*

F. Mendelssohn

### Call to Worship

Psalm 106:1-3

Praise the LORD! O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever. Who can utter the mighty doings of the LORD, or declare all his praise? Happy are those who observe justice, who do righteousness at all times.

### Hymn 251 (p. 5)

*Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty*

Nicaea

### Prayer of Invocation

God, we welcome your Spirit as it joins us together today 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

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

Wouldn’t it be great if we could get all the answers to the questions we have? The release date of a new movie, the end of the coronavirus, the outcome of a game, a

situation going on with a friend at school. Unfortunately, there is no simple, one-stop source: not on the Internet, not in any books we have, not even in the Bible. It definitely doesn't exist within ourselves, no matter what anybody may claim. But we do have a lot of knowledge, reason, and experience to turn to, and we know that God is with us as we struggle to find answers and learn to live with uncertainty. We can rejoice in the tools to figure out problems that God gives us and Jesus shows us.

**Hymn 504 (p. 6)**     *This Is the Day the Lord Hath Made*

Nun danket all'

### Scripture Lessons

**Exodus 32:1-14.** When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered around Aaron, and said to him, "Come, make gods for us, who shall go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him." <sup>2</sup>Aaron said to them, "Take off the gold rings that are on the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me." <sup>3</sup>So all the people took off the gold rings from their ears, and brought them to Aaron. <sup>4</sup>He took the gold from them, formed it in a mold, and cast an image of a calf; and they said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!" <sup>5</sup>When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation and said, "Tomorrow shall be a festival to the Lord." <sup>6</sup>They rose early the next day, and offered burnt offerings and brought sacrifices of well-being; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to revel.

<sup>7</sup>The Lord said to Moses, "Go down at once! Your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have acted perversely; <sup>8</sup>they have been quick to turn aside from the way that I commanded them; they have cast for themselves an image of a calf, and have worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said, 'These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!'" <sup>9</sup>The Lord said to Moses, "I have seen this people, how stiff-necked they are. <sup>10</sup>Now let me alone, so that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them; and of you I will make a great nation."

<sup>11</sup>But Moses implored the Lord his God, and said, "O Lord, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? <sup>12</sup>Why should the Egyptians say, 'It was with evil intent that he brought them out to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth'? Turn from your fierce wrath; change your mind and do not bring disaster on your people. <sup>13</sup>Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, how you swore to them by your own self, saying to them, 'I will multiply your descendants like the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.'" <sup>14</sup>And the Lord changed his mind about the disaster that he planned to bring on his people.

**Matthew 22:1-14.** Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying: <sup>2</sup>“The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. <sup>3</sup>He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. <sup>4</sup>Again he sent other slaves, saying, ‘Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet.’ <sup>5</sup>But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, <sup>6</sup>while the rest seized his slaves, mistreated them, and killed them. <sup>7</sup>The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. <sup>8</sup>Then he said to his slaves, ‘The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. <sup>9</sup>Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.’ <sup>10</sup>Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests.

<sup>11</sup>“But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, <sup>12</sup>and he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?’ And he was speechless. <sup>13</sup>Then the king said to the attendants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ <sup>14</sup>For many are called, but few are chosen.”

**Sermon**

“Holy Cow!”

Stephen R. Silver

**Musical Offering**

“God Is My Shepherd,” from *Biblical Songs*, op. 99

A. Dvorák

### **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 fighting the coronavirus, and for all who are ill.

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:

God of the nations, God of history: you have witnessed humanity's actions throughout the ages. Some have reflected the love and life of Jesus, and others have

not, yet you have been with us through everything. Inspire us to be people of the Covenant, to act as Christ did, to support others as the Holy Spirit supports us.

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**

*We will not be passing an offering plate this morning, but if you wish to make a contribution, you may either leave it with the ushers on your way out after the service or mail it during the week.*

### **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**

Patient, loving God, though we rebel and wander like our forebears in ages past, you are still steadfast, awaiting our return, welcoming us in our imperfections. Called to be a people of faith, we heed your summons, setting aside our sin and taking up the work of serving you and your people. Let our gifts be a sign of our desire to have new life in your son Jesus. Amen.

**Hymn 63 (p. 7)**      *Lord, Dismiss Us With Thy Blessing*      Sicilian Mariners

### **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.

**Postlude**      *Songs Without Words*, no. 48 ("Faith")      F. Mendelssohn

### ***Leading Worship This Morning***

The Rev. Stephen R. Silver, Pastor  
Ernie Drown, Organist • Brian Clancy, Tenor  
Barbara Jones, Deb and Jon Scott, Liturgists

## Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty

Reginald Heber, 1783-1826

NICAEA 11.12.12.10.  
John B. Dykes, 1823-1876

1 Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! Lord God Al - might - y!  
 2 Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! all the saints a - dore thee,  
 3 Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! though the dark - ness hide thee,  
 4 Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! Lord God Al - might - y!

Ear - ly in the morn - ing our song shall rise to thee;  
 Cast - ing down their gold - en crowns a - round the glass - y sea;  
 Though the eye of sin - ful man thy glo - ry may not see;  
 All thy works shall praise thy name in earth and sky and sea;

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! mer - ci - ful and might - y;  
 Cher - u - bim and ser - a - phim fall - ing down be - fore thee,  
 On - ly thou art ho - ly; there is none be - side thee,  
 Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! mer - ci - ful and might - y;

God in three per - sons, bless - ed Trin - i - ty!  
 Which wert, and art, and ev - er - more shalt be.  
 Per - fect in power, in love, and pur - i - ty.  
 God in three per - sons, bless - ed Trin - i - ty! A - men.

*Isaac Watts, 1674-1748*NUN DANKET ALL' C.M.  
*Melody by Johann Crüger, 1598-1662*

1 This is the day the Lord hath made; He calls the hours his own.  
 2 Ho - san - na in the high - est strains The Church on earth can raise;

Let heaven re - joice, let earth be glad, And praise sur-round the throne.  
 The high - est heavens, in which he reigns, Shall give him no - bler praise.

### *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.

### **The Lebanon CROP Walk Continues Virtually Until October 25!**

It's not too late to support this year's CROP Hunger Walk! Begun in 1969 as a single walk in Bismarck, ND, and now involving over 2000 communities annually, the CROP Walk fights hunger, food insecurity, and poverty worldwide.

Due to the pandemic, this year's walk is happening virtually throughout the month—individuals and small groups are walking on their own, but with the same sense of communal purpose. You may still walk, donate, or both! **All contributions should be made online.**

**Walk!**—Walk on your own or form a small group with family and friends, and register online at [www.crophungerwalk.org/lebanonnh/](http://www.crophungerwalk.org/lebanonnh/). Then, invite sponsors to donate in your name.

**Donate!**—Sponsor a walker, or give directly online at [www.crophungerwalk.org/lebanonnh/](http://www.crophungerwalk.org/lebanonnh/).

## 63

## Lord, Dismiss Us With Thy Blessing

Attr. to John Fawcett, 1739/40-1817, alt.

SICILIAN MARINERS 8.7.8.7.8.7.

*Sicilian Melody*

1 Lord, dis - miss us with thy bless - ing; Fill our hearts with  
 2 Thanks we give and ad - o - ra - tion For thy gos - pel's  
 3 So that when thy love shall call us, Sav - ior, from the

joy and peace; Let us each, thy love pos - sess - ing,  
 joy - ful sound; May the fruits of thy sal - va - tion  
 world a - way, Fear of death shall not ap - pall us,

Tri - umph in re - deem - ing grace: Oh, re - fresh us,  
 In our hearts and lives a - bound: Ev - er faith - ful,  
 Glad thy sum - mons to o - bey: May we ev - er,

oh, re - fresh us, Trav - eling through this wil - der - ness.  
 ev - er faith - ful To the truth may we be found.  
 may we ev - er Reign with thee in end - less day. A - men.

## **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 consider giving to this effort to support church growth nationwide. You may either mail a check to FCC (memo "Strengthen the Church") or give online at [www.ucc.org/stc](http://www.ucc.org/stc). Thank you!*

## ***Neighbors in Need—Special Mission Offering***

The UCC's Neighbors in Need program supports ministries of justice and compassion across the country. Two-thirds of the collection is used by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries for a range of local and national initiatives, advocacy efforts, direct service projects, and the fight against systemic injustice. The rest goes to the Council for American Indian Ministries, sustaining a proud tradition of aiding Native American populations. **This year, NIN is focused on serving our immigrant neighbors and their communities.**

*Please contribute as you're able to this vital mission program. You may either mail a check to FCC (memo "Neighbors in Need") or give online at [www.ucc.org/nin](http://www.ucc.org/nin). Thank you!*

## **LISTEN'S HOLIDAY BASKETS—CHRISTMAS IN OCTOBER**

For years FCC has participated in the Holiday Basket Program organized by Listen Community Services. The economic challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic have significantly increased the demand for this program, as families struggle to provide warm clothing for their children and food for holiday meals. Health precautions, however, preclude our familiar process of fulfilling gift requests. **So this year, Listen is doing all the shopping—with our help!**

*Please consider a contribution (by 10/31) toward FCC's share in Listen's Holiday Basket Program, and thanks for helping to bring holiday cheer to local families and seniors!*

## ***Uncovering Racism—A Racial-Justice Reading Group (Wednesdays, 6:30)***

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@fcclib.org](mailto:silver@fcclib.org)) with questions or to RSVP.*

*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.*





**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

Ernie Drown, 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)**