



First Congregational Church of Lebanon

United Church of Christ – Open and Affirming

The First Sunday after Christmas

December 27, 2020

“How many observe Christ’s birthday. How few, His precepts.”

—Benjamin Franklin

All hymns are included after the order of worship, on pages 5-7.

Prelude

Variations on Adeste Fideles

R. Taylor

Call to Worship (*Unison*; Psalm 148:1-4,13)

Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD from the heavens; praise him in the heights! Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his host! Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars! Praise him, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens! Let them praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted; his glory is above earth and heaven.

Hymn 130 (p. 5) *Joy to the World! The Lord Is Come*

Antioch

Prayer of Invocation

God incarnate, be present with us during this time of prayer and song. Fill us with your Holy Spirit, inspiring and empowering us so that all we do in worship, fellowship, and service gives glory to your name and reflects to the wider world what you have done, and are doing, in and through Jesus. 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@fccleb.org), and he’ll get you set up and ready to go.

Children's Moment

Merry Christmas! I'd like all of us to remember that Christmas isn't just an evening, or a day. Liturgically, it's twelve days long, and in truth, if we look at the themes of Christmas—Joy, Peace, Love—it's something that will go on for the entire year. So, once again, a merry Christmas to you all!

Musical Offering *O Holy Night*

A. Adam

Scripture Lesson

Luke 2:22-40. ²²When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³(as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord"), ²⁴and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."

²⁵Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. ²⁶It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. ²⁷Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, ²⁸Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, ²⁹"Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; ³⁰for my eyes have seen your salvation, ³¹which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, ³²a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel."

³³And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him.

³⁴Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed ³⁵so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too."

³⁶There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, ³⁷then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. ³⁸At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

³⁹When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

Reflection

"What Do You See?"

Stephen R. Silver

Sharing of Joys and Concerns; Pastoral Prayer

As we hold our community members in prayer, please exercise care and discretion when sharing, as what seems public for you may be private for others. Help us keep our weekly prayer list current by contacting Rev. Silver or the church office to confirm or remove names on the list.

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

A Christmas Affirmation of Faith (Unison)

I believe that Christmas is more than a time for parties and ornaments; it is a time for remembering Jesus, the incarnation of God's love in human flesh.

I believe that there are gifts more important than the ones beneath the tree, such as the things we teach our children, the way we share ourselves with friends, and the efforts by which we set about reshaping the world in which we live.

I believe that the finest carols are often sung by the poorest voices, from hearts made warm by the wonder of this season.

I believe in the angels' message that we should not be afraid—that the Child of Bethlehem is able to overcome all anxieties, fears, and insecurities.

I believe in prayer and quietness as a way of approaching Christmas—that if I wait in silence, I will experience the presence of the one born in the manger, for He lives today as surely as He lived then.

I believe in going away from Christmas as the Magi went, "another way." I want to be different when these days are past—more centered, more thoughtful, more caring.

And I believe that God will help me and sustain me in my belief, this night and forevermore. 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

Remembering those who are without, who are in need, who are often ignored, we invite your support of our ongoing ministry in and for the community. Please mail in your offering as you are able.

Offertory

Grand Déi, Ribon-Ribeine

C. Balbastre

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*)

Dear God, like the shepherds, like the Magi, we come from different places and varying situations to worship the newborn king. While some of us bring skills, and some of us bring money, and some of us bring time, all of us bring deep gratitude and a commitment to honor the Christ child by serving your people. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Hymn 120 (p. 6) *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*

Mendelssohn

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

Joseph est Bien Marié

C. Balbastre

Leading Worship This Week

The Rev. Stephen R. Silver, Pastor

Ernie Drown, Organist • Elizabeth Montmagny, Soprano • Brian Clancy, Tenor

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.

THE CHRISTMAS FUND

We are grateful to accept donations to the UCC's Christmas Fund, also known as the Fund for the Veterans of the Cross or Emergency Fund. This program offers compassionate, grateful support for retired clergy and their families with pension, healthcare, and emergency assistance.

Please contribute as you're able to this vital denominational offering, either by check to FCC (memo "Christmas Fund") or online at www.pbucc.org/index.php/christmas-fund-home. Thanks!

Joy to the World! the Lord Is Come

Isaac Watts, 1674-1748

ANTIOCH C.M.

Attr. to Georg F. Handel, 1685-1759

Arr. by Lowell Mason, 1792-1872

1 Joy to the world! the Lord is come: Let earth re -
 2 Joy to the earth! the Sav - ior reigns: Let men their
 3 He rules the world with truth and grace, And makes the

ceive her King; Let ev - ery heart pre - pare him room,
 songs em - ploy; While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
 na - tions prove The glo - ries of his right - eous - ness,

And heaven and na - ture sing, And heaven and na - ture
 Re - peat the sound - ing joy, Re - peat the sound - ing
 And won - ders of his love, And won - ders of his

And heaven and na - ture sing, And
 Re - peat the sound - ing joy, Re -
 And won - ders of his love, And

sing, And heaven, and heaven and na - ture sing.
 joy, Re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
 love, And won - ders, won - ders of his love. A - men.

heaven and na - ture sing.
 peat the sound - ing joy,
 won - ders of his love,

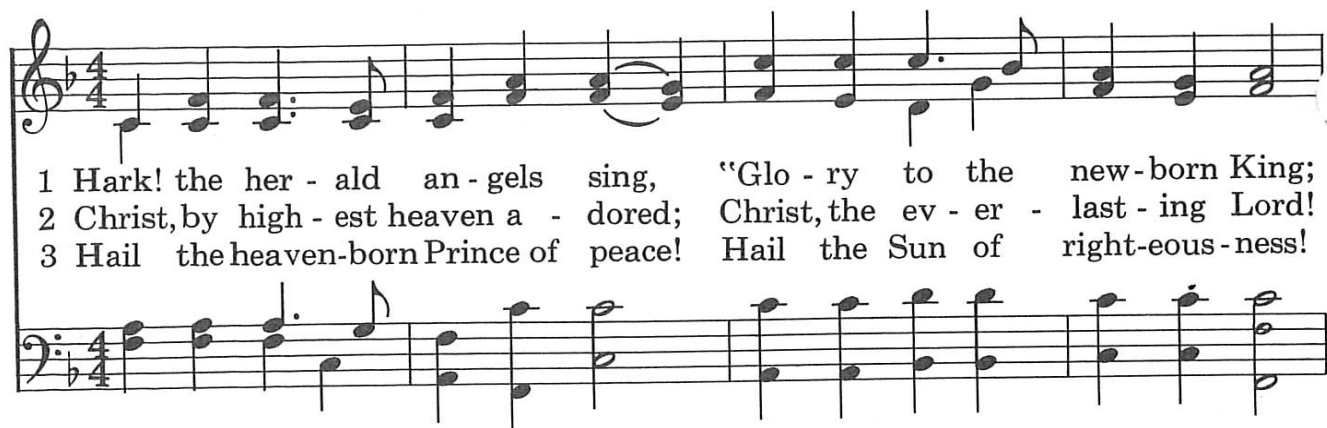
Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Charles Wesley, 1707-1788, alt.

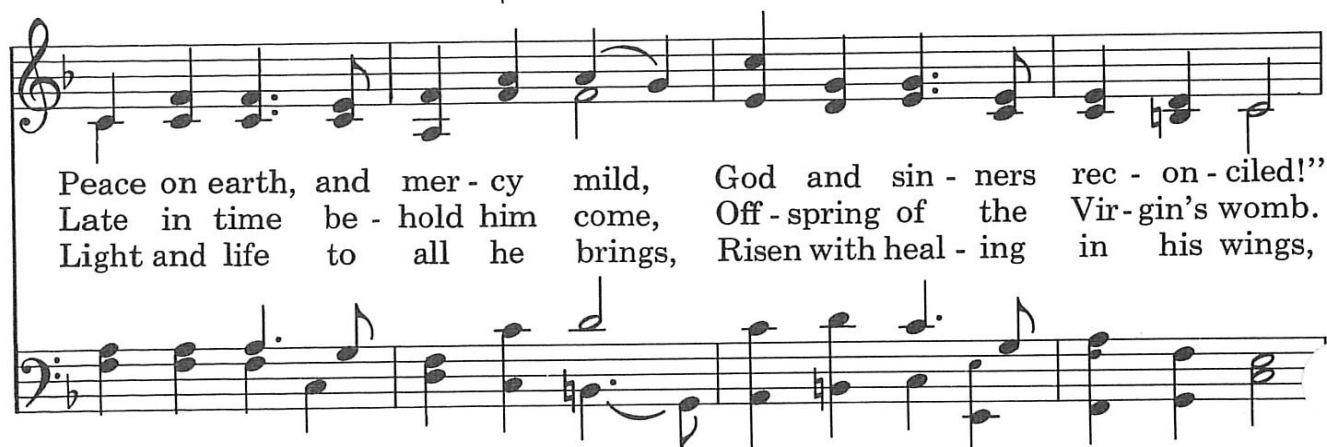
MENDELSSOHN 7.7.7.7.D. with Refrain

Felix Mendelssohn, 1809-1847

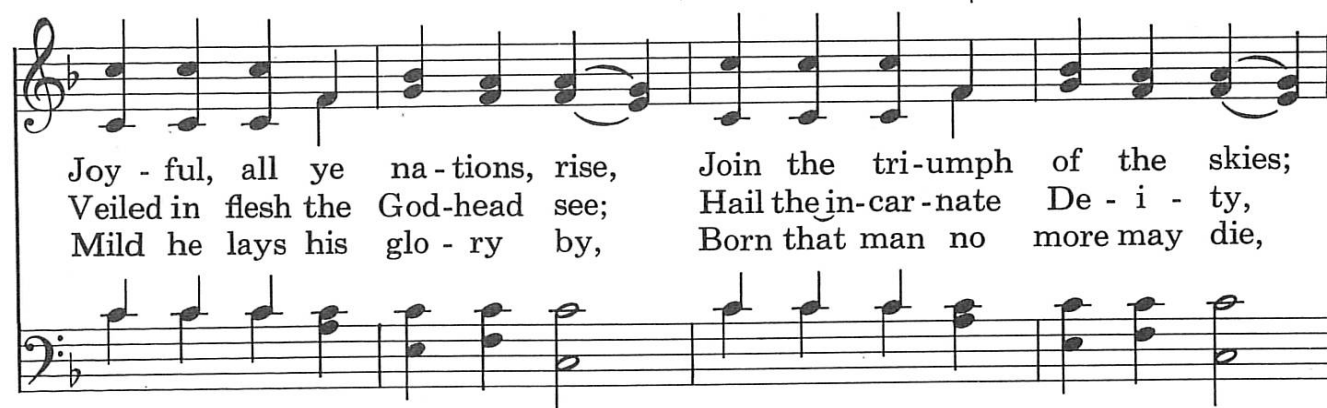
Arr. by William H. Cummings, 1831-1915



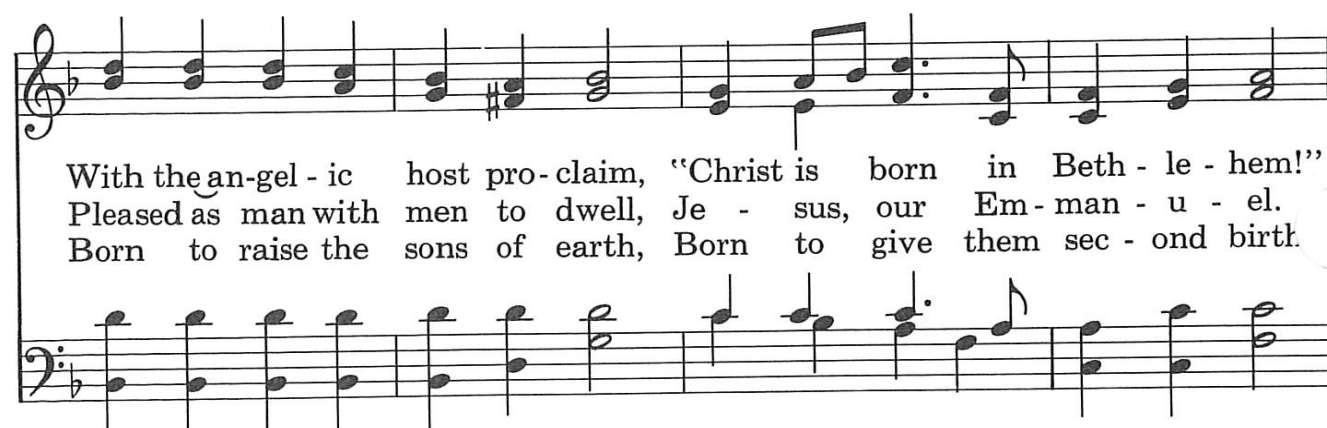
1 Hark! the her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new-born King;
 2 Christ, by high - est heaven a - dored; Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord!
 3 Hail the heaven-born Prince of peace! Hail the Sun of right-eous-ness!



Peace on earth, and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled!"
 Late in time be - hold him come, Off - spring of the Vir - gin's womb.
 Light and life to all he brings, Risen with heal - ing in his wings,



Joy - ful, all ye na - tions, rise, Join the tri-umph of the skies;
 Veiled in flesh the God-head see; Hail the in-car-nate De - i - ty,
 Mild he lays his glo - ry by, Born that man no more may die,



With the an - gel - ic host pro - claim, "Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!"
 Pleased as man with men to dwell, Je - sus, our Em - man - u - el.
 Born to raise the sons of earth, Born to give them sec - ond birth.



Please Note: CONTENT FOR THE 2020 ANNUAL REPORT DUE FRIDAY, JANUARY 8

Materials for FCC's 2020 Annual Report must be submitted to the Church Administrator by January 8, in order to ensure timely distribution of the report prior to our Annual Meeting.

If you're unsure whether you're responsible for a report, please contact the church office.

The 2021 Annual Meeting will be Sunday, February 14, 2021 (on Zoom)

By the Grace of God *Stewardship 2021*

"Do not say to yourself, 'My power and the might of my own hand have gained me this wealth.' But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, so that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your ancestors, as he is doing today." (Deuteronomy 8:17-18)

While today we do not believe that wealth is a sign of divine favor, each of us has been blessed with unmerited gifts that we may use in life. One way to describe this is *grace*—we haven't done anything to earn these blessings; God has given them to us. How we use them is our choice, and with it comes the question: Will we share what we have to advance God's Kingdom?

All are invited to prayerfully consider their commitment to FCC's mission and ministry in the coming year. We will gratefully accept 2021 pledges anytime in the coming weeks.

Please return your pledge forms to the church office by mail (or submit your information by email if you'd rather). If you'd like to use offering envelopes for 2021, you may pick up your boxed set (#1-25) at the church office during the week.

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Please note that Church Council has suspended on-site, indoor worship and other events at FCC until April, continuing to follow abundant caution amid 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 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 • prayer@fccleb.org • music@fccleb.org • www.fccleb.org