



First Congregational Church of Lebanon

United Church of Christ – Open and Affirming

THE FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY

January 3, 2021

“It matters not how a man dies, but how he lives.”

—Samuel Johnson

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

Prelude

Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern

D. Buxtehude

Dietrich Buxtehude (c. 1637-1707) was the greatest German church composer in the generation before J. S. Bach—and the only teacher Bach had, beyond his own family. He spent most of his famous life in Lübeck.

Call to Worship (Unison; adapted from Psalm 72)

Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to a king's son. May he judge your people with righteousness, and your poor with justice. In his days may righteousness flourish and peace abound, until the moon is no more. For he delivers the needy when they call, the poor and those who have no helper. He has pity on the weak and the needy, and saves the lives of the needy. From oppression and violence he redeems their life; and precious is their blood in his sight.

Hymn 126 (p. 5)

Brightest and Best of the Sons of the Morning

Morning Star

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@fccleb.org), and he'll get you set up and ready to go.

Children's Moment

Epiphany is the conclusion of Christmas. Just as we read an account of Jesus' birth in Luke, and learn of the shepherds gathered at the manger around the holy family, we now read Matthew's story of the Magi, these mysterious visitors from the East, come to bring precious gifts to the Christ-child. More important, they offer a witness grounded in a desire to know more: about the God of Israel, about the wondrous things he is doing, about the miraculous baby who has come into their world—and who comes into ours, too. Happy Epiphany!

Hymn 144 (p. 6) *What Star Is This, With Beams So Bright* Puer Nobis Nascitur

Scripture Lesson

Matthew 2:1-12. In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, ²asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." ³When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: ⁶"And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.'"

⁷Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." ⁹When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹²And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Sermon *"Hope or Fear?"* 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, Ike, and Eileen.

We pray for Walter, a dear friend of Larry Doyle's, who passed away on Christmas.

We remember Closey Dickey, a beloved long-time member of our congregation, who passed away this week, and we hold all her family and friends in prayer.

We pray for all those fighting the coronavirus or other illnesses, whether of mind, body, or spirit.

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.

And finally, we offer the following prayer:

On this day when we read of the Magi and their quest for truth, we ask that we be similarly motivated. We hope that like those travelers, we will go wherever you call us to be, that we will resist being led astray, that we will be open to your Spirit.

Though we have no star to guide us, we do have your Word, and it is with gladness and thanks that we receive it and hope to share it with others.

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

Offertory

Puer Nobis Nascitur

J.-F. Dandrieu

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)

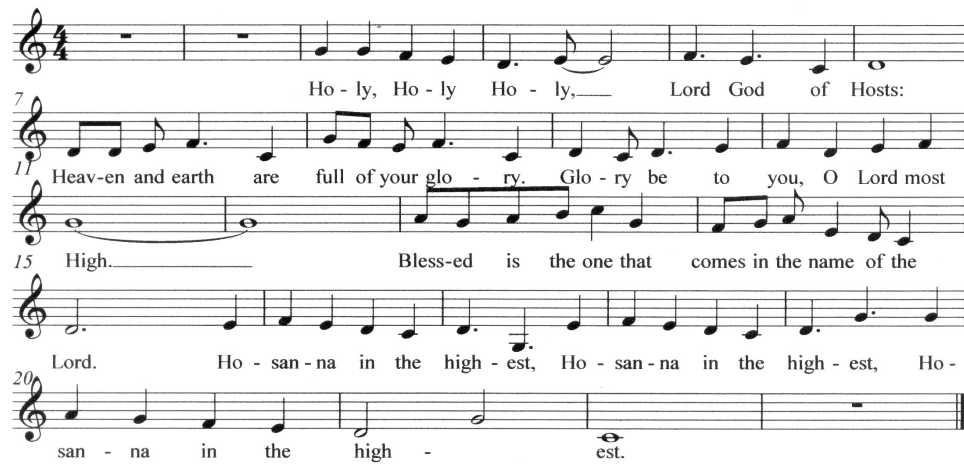
Like the Magi, having heard the good news, we approach you in awe. Like the Magi, we bring gifts of thanks in response to the love you have shared with us in Jesus. And like the Magi, we will go forth to share this love with others. In the name of the one born in Bethlehem we pray, Amen.

The Sacrament of Holy Communion

For communion, you are invited to have some bread and juice on hand. We will share in the bread and cup at the appointed time. If you would like to receive a blessing, please let the officiant know.

Invitation and Communion Prayer

Sanctus



Sharing of the Bread and Cup

Communion Prayer of Thanksgiving (*Unison*)

Because the broken bread has meant our healing, because the outpoured cup has meant our life, because our common sharing has meant the communion of our souls, and because we have here been graced by your presence, God, we give you thanks and pray that our lives may be renewed in the life and the love of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Hymn 117 (p. 7) *Angels, From the Realms of Glory*

Regent Square

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

À minuit fut fait un réveil

J.-F. Dandrieu

Leading Worship This Week

The Rev. Stephen R. Silver, Pastor

Ernie Drown, Organist • Brian Clancy, Tenor • Susan Pratt, Liturgist

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.

126 Brightest and Best of the Sons of the Morning

Reginald Heber, 1783-1826, alt.

MORNING STAR 11.10.11.10.
James (John) P. Harding, ?-1911

1 Bright - est and best of the sons of the morn - ing,
2 Cold on his cra - dle the dew - drops are shin - ing,
3 Say, shall we yield him, in cost - ly de - vo - tion,
4 Vain - ly we of - fer each am - ple ob - la - tion;
5 Bright - est and best of the sons of the morn - ing,

Dawn on our dark - ness, and lend us thine aid;
Low lies his head with the beasts of the stall;
O - dors of E - dom and of - ferings di - vine,
Vain - ly with gifts would his fa - vor se - cure;
Dawn on our dark - ness, and lend us thine aid;

Star of the east, the ho - ri - zon a - dorn - ing,
An - gels a - dore him, in slum - ber re - clin - ing,
Gems of the moun - tain, and pearls of the o - cean,
Rich - er by far is the heart's ad - o - ra - tion,
Star of the east, the ho - ri - zon a - dorn - ing,

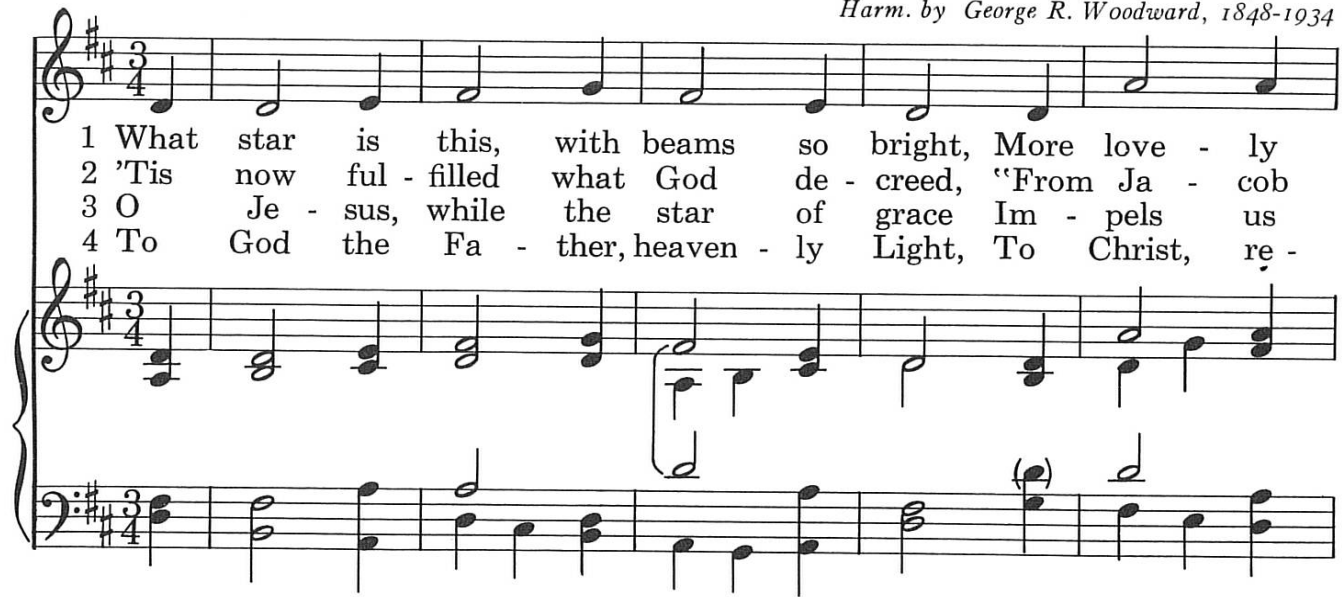
Guide where our in - fant Re - deem - er is laid!
Mak - er, and Mon - arch, and Sav - ior of all.
Myrrh from the for - est, or gold from the mine?
Dear - er to God are the prayers of the poor.
Guide where our in - fant Re - deem - er is laid! A - men.

What Star Is This, With Beams So Bright

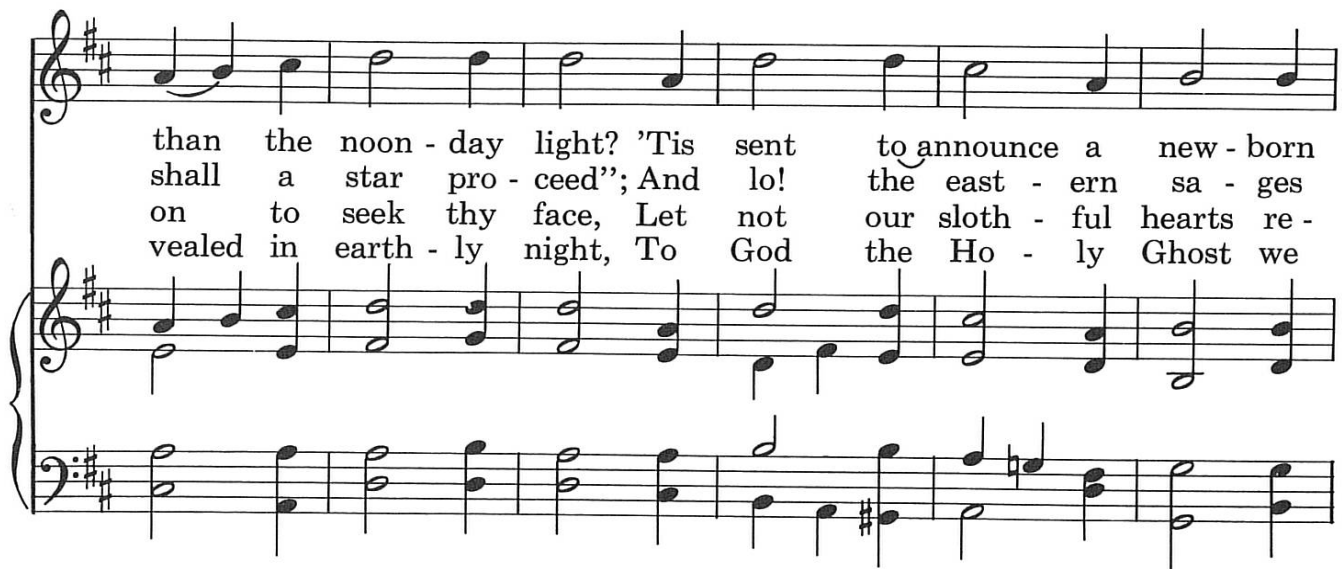
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Charles Coffin, 1676-1749
Tr. John Chandler, 1806-1876, alt.

PUER NOBIS NASCITUR L.M.
Adapted by Michael Praetorius, 1571-1621
Harm. by George R. Woodward, 1848-1934



1 What star is this, with beams so bright, More love - ly
2 'Tis now ful - filled what God de - creed, "From Ja - cob
3 O Je - sus, while the star of grace Im - pels us
4 To God the Fa - ther, heaven - ly Light, To Christ, re -



than the noon - day light? 'Tis sent to announce a new - born
shall a star pro - ceed"; And lo! the east - ern sa - ges
on to seek thy face, Let not our sloth - ful hearts re -
vealed in earth - ly night, To God the Ho - ly Ghost we



king, Glad ti - dings of our God to bring.
stand, To read in heaven the Lord's com - mand.
fuse The guid - ance of thy light to use.
raise An end - less song of thank - ful praise! A - men.

Angels, From the Realms of Glory

117

James Montgomery, 1771-1854

REGENT SQUARE 8.7.8.7.8.7.

Henry T. Smart, 1813-1879

1 An - gels, from the realms of glo - ry, Wing your flight o'er all the earth;
2 Shep - herds, in the fields a - bid - ing, Watch - ing o'er your flocks by night,
3 Sag - es, leave your con - tem - pla - tions, Bright - er vi - sions beam a - far;
4 Saints be - fore the al - tar bend - ing, Watch - ing long in hope and fear,

Ye who sang cre - a - tion's sto - ry, Now pro - claim Mes - si - ah's birth:
God with man is now re - sid - ing, Yon - der shines the in - fant light:
Seek the great De - sire of na - tions, Ye have seen his na - tal star:
Sud - den - ly the Lord, de - scend - ing, In his tem - ple shall ap - pear:

REFRAIN

Come and wor - ship, come and wor - ship, Wor - ship Christ, the new - born King. A - men.

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)

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