



First Congregational Church of Lebanon

United Church of Christ – Open and Affirming

BAPTISM OF CHRIST • First Sunday after Epiphany

January 10, 2021

“In the ritual of baptism, our ancestors acted out the bizarre truth of the Christian identity: We are people who stand totally exposed before evil and death and declare them powerless against love. There’s nothing normal about that.”

–Rachel Held Evans

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

Prelude

Christ unser Herr zum Jordan kam

J. S. Bach

In this setting of the Lutheran hymn “Christ Our Lord to the Jordan Came,” Bach is at his pictorial best. One voice in this chilly, murky piece is jumpy and jagged; another rolls turgidly up and down minor scales in a disquieting way. The tune, such as it is, is in the pedals. Together they give a musical impression of the difficult life that Christ was facing, and a vivid idea of the unpleasantness of immersion in the Jordan.

Call to Worship (Unison; Psalm 29)

Ascribe to the LORD, O heavenly beings, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.
Ascribe to the LORD the glory of his name; worship the LORD in holy splendor. The voice of the LORD is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the LORD, over mighty waters. The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is full of majesty. The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars; the voice of the LORD breaks the cedars of Lebanon. He makes Lebanon skip like a calf, Sirion like a young wild ox. The voice of the LORD flashes forth flames of fire. The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness; the LORD shakes the wilderness of Kadesh. The voice of the LORD causes the oaks to whirl, and strips the forest bare; and in his temple all say, “Glory!” The LORD sits enthroned over the flood; the LORD sits enthroned as king forever. May the LORD give strength to his people! May the LORD bless his people with peace!

Hymn (p. 5)

Lord, When You Came to Jordan

Munich

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

Children's Moment

This Sunday is known as the Baptism of Christ, marking the moment when Jesus was baptized by John in the River Jordan. One thing you'll notice is that Jesus was an adult when this took place—and most of us are baptized as children! That's okay. Baptism isn't a matter of *when* but *why*. We are baptized to show not only that we are accepted by God and are his children, but also that the church has made a commitment to help take care of each and every one of us. That's good news!

Hymn 167 (p. 6-7) *Mark How the Lamb of God's Self-Offering*

Rendez à Dieu

Scripture Lessons

Genesis 1:1-5. In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, ²the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. ³Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. ⁴And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

Mark 1:4-11. ⁴John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. ⁸I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

⁹In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. ¹¹And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

Sermon

"From the Top" (Recording available)

Stephen R. Silver

Hymn 238 (p. 7)

Come, Gracious Spirit, Heavenly Dove

Mendon

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, Arlene, Ruth, Evelyn, Jim, Barbara, Greg, Jon, Larry, Edith, Jan, Ike, and Eileen.

We pray today for Lloyd, who is recovering from surgery, and we ask for healing and strength for both Lloyd and Ginny.

We pray for Carol, Ernie Drown's mother-in-law, who is nearing the end of her life, and for Ernie and Beth during this time.

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 and political tension.

We pray for wisdom and humility from all our leaders.

Today, we also offer the following prayer:

Holy God, we come to you in a time of turmoil, our souls troubled by the pandemic and political unrest which beset us. Comfort us, we pray, in this trying time. Strengthen our resolve to follow your way of love and hope; give us the vision to see how we might create a world worthy of your Gospel; and inspire us with your Spirit to be witnesses to the power and grace of Jesus Christ.

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

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

“Prière” (Sept Pièces pour Orgue, no. 5)

T. Dubois

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*)

With water, we are marked as members of your new community.

With song, we praise your kingdom.

With joy, we present these gifts, a sign of our desire to work with the Spirit to serve our brothers and sisters, here and around the world.

In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Hymn 228 (p. 8) *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling*

Beecher

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

Trumpet Tune in D

D. N. Johnson

Leading Worship This Week

The Rev. Stephen R. Silver, Pastor

Ernie Drown, Organist • Brian Clancy, Tenor • Linda and Bob Gerlach, Liturgists

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 SOUPER BOWL IS BACK!

If the NFL can play football without fans, FCC can collect canned goods without in-person services! We are once again tackling local hunger with a collection of soup and other non-perishable items, to be split among the UV Haven, Headrest, and Listen Community Services.

Donations may be brought to the church office January 11–February 10. You may also bring them directly to any of the three beneficiaries (please let us know if you do so). THANK YOU!!

Lord, when you came to Jordan and asked to be baptized,
What was your vow and vision of love and sacrifice?
Was there a sudden splendor of prophets, priests, and kings,
A wind that stirred the waters, a blur of mighty wings?
Wast this God's crowning moment of all you had become,
The Spirit's power and blessing: "Go now, you are my Son"?
Did scripture join with scripture in words of sharp surprise:
"The Lord's Messiah shall conquer, rejected and despised"?
Faith rests content with questions of when and why and how,
But craves the gift of seeing what God is doing now.
Lord, bring us to our Jordan of newly opened eyes;
Through love, immersed in living, as you were once baptized.

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.

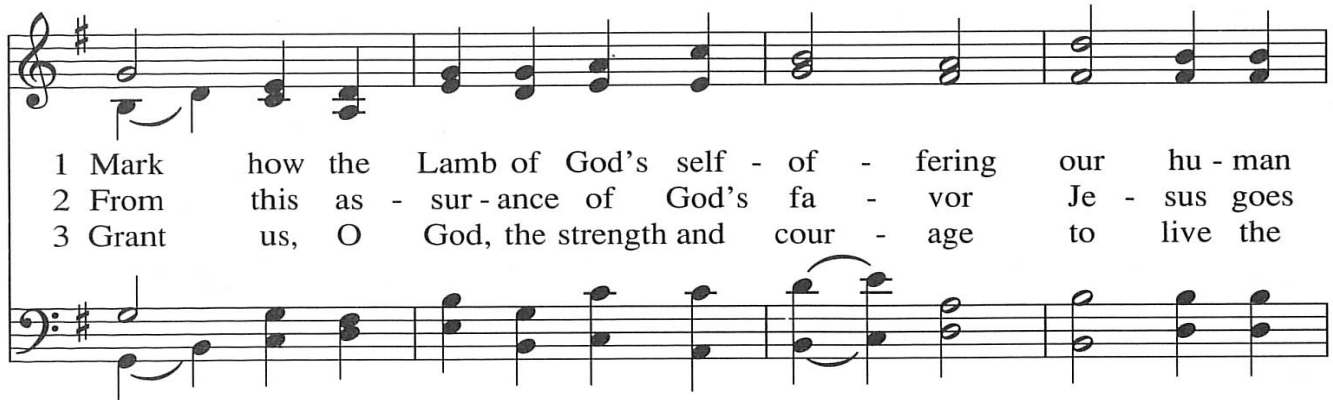
Please return your pledge forms to the church office by mail (or submit your information by email if you'd rather). If you'd like to use offering envelopes for 2021, you may pick up your boxed set (#1-25) at the church office during the week.

Reminder: CONTENT FOR THE 2020 ANNUAL REPORT DUE THIS WEEK
The 2021 Annual Meeting will be Sunday, February 14, 2021 (on Zoom)

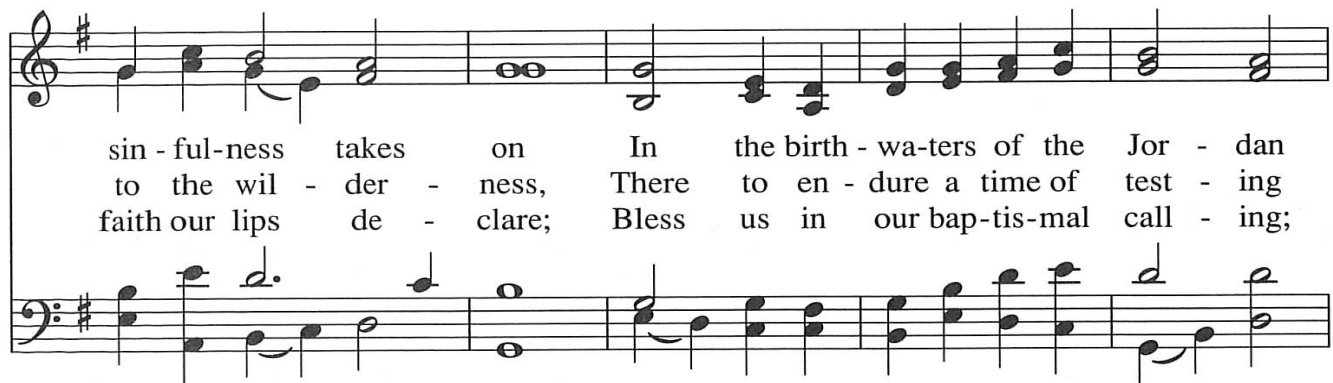
Please note that Church Council has suspended on-site, indoor worship and other events at FCC until April, continuing to follow abundant caution amid COVID-19 concerns.

Matt. 3:13–17; 4:1–2; Mark 1:9–13; Luke 3:21–22;
Acts 10:34–38; 2:38–42

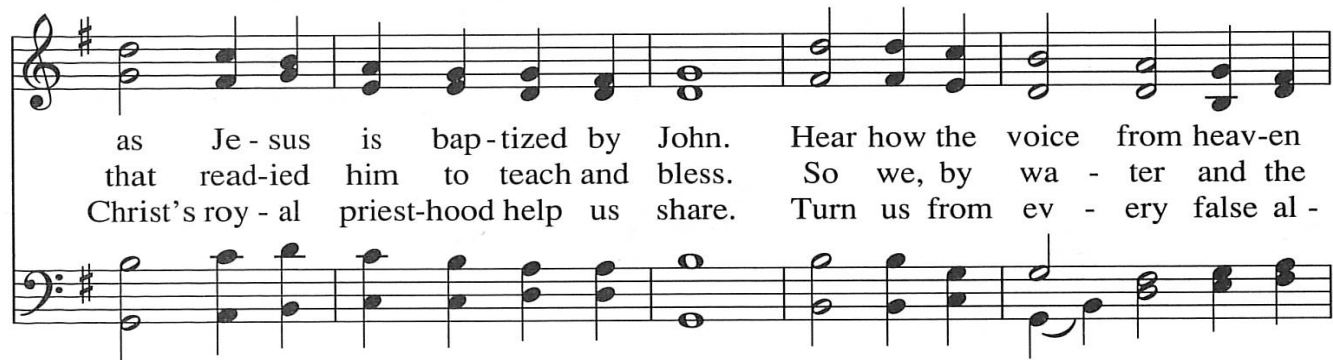
Carl P. Daw, Jr., 1990



1 Mark how the Lamb of God's self - of - fer ing our hu - man
2 From this as - sur - ance of God's fa - vor Je - sus goes
3 Grant us, O God, the strength and cour - age to live the



sin - ful - ness takes on In the birth - wa - ters of the Jor - dan
to the wil - der - ness, There to en - dure a time of test - ing
faith our lips de - clare; Bless us in our bap - tis - mal call - ing;



as Je - sus is bap - tized by John. Hear how the voice from heav - en
that read - ied him to teach and bless. So we, by wa - ter and the
Christ's roy - al priest - hood help us share. Turn us from ev - ery false al -



thun - ders, "Lo, this is my be - lov - ed Son." See how in
Spir - it bap - tized in - to Christ's min - is - try, Are of - ten
le - giance, that we may trust in Christ a - lone: Raise up in

Regarding this hymn for the first Sunday after the Epiphany, hymnwriter Carl P. Daw, Jr., writes that "the Baptism of Christ is one of the regular occasions for baptisms and for the making and renewing of baptismal vows."

Tune: RENDEZ À DIEU 9.8.9.8.D.
Louis Bourgeois (c. 1510–c. 1561)
Trente quatre Pseaumes, Geneva, 1551

dove-like form the Spir - it de - scends on God's A-noint-ed One.
 led to paths of ser - vice through maz - es of ad-ver - si - ty.
 us a cho - sen peo - ple trans - formed by love to be your own.

Come, Gracious Spirit, Heavenly Dove

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Simon Browne, 1680-1732, alt.

MENDON L.M.

German Melody

Arr. by Samuel Dyer, 1785-1835

1 Come, gra-cious Spir - it, heaven - ly Dove, With light and com - fort
 2 The light of truth to us dis - play And make us know and
 3 Lead us to Christ, the liv - ing Way, Nor let us from his
 4 Lead us to heaven, that we may share Ful - ness of joy for

from a - bove; Be thou our guard - ian, thou our guide,
 choose thy way; Plant ho - ly fear in ev - ery heart,
 pre - cepts stray; Lead us to ho - li - ness, the road
 ev - er there; Lead us to God, our fi - nal rest,

O'er ev - ery thought and step pre - side.
 That we from thee may ne'er de - part.
 That we must take to dwell with God.
 To be with him for ev - er blest. A - men.


Charles Wesley, 1707-1788, alt.

BEECHER 8.7.8.7.D.
John Zundel, 1815-1882


1 Love di - vine, all loves ex - cel - ling, Joy of heaven, to earth come down,
2 Breathe, O breathe thy lov - ing Spir - it In - to ev - ery trou - bled breast;
3 Come, al - might - y to de - liv - er, Let us all thy life re - ceive;
4 Fin - ish, then, thy new cre - a - tion; Pure and spot - less let us be;



Fix in us thy hum - ble dwell - ing, All thy faith - ful mer - cies crown;
Let us all in thee in - her - it, Let us find thy prom - ised rest;
Sud - den - ly re - turn, and nev - er, Nev - er - more thy tem - ples leave.
Let us see thy great sal - va - tion Per - fect - ly re - stored in thee;



Je - sus, thou art all com - pas - sion, Pure, un - bound - ed love thou art;
Take a - way the love of sin - ning; Al - pha and O - me - ga be;
Thee we would be al - ways bless - ing, Serve thee as thy hosts a - bove,
Changed from glo - ry in - to glo - ry, Till in heaven we take our place,



Vis - it us with thy sal - va - tion, En - ter ev - ery trem - bling heart.
End of faith, as its be - gin - ning, Set our hearts at lib - er - ty.
Pray, and praise thee with - out ceas - ing, Glo - ry in thy per - fect love.
Till we cast our crowns be - fore thee, Lost in won - der, love, and praise. 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 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