



First Congregational Church of Lebanon

United Church of Christ – Open and Affirming

The Fourth Sunday in Lent

March 14, 2021

“I wish it need not have happened in my time,” said Frodo.
“So do I,” said Gandalf, “and so do all who live to see such times.
But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide
is what to do with the time that is given us.”

–J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*

All hymns are included after the order of worship, on pages 6-8.

Prelude

Rockingham

Kenneth Leighton

Rockingham is the tune for today's final hymn. The renowned 20th-century English composer Kenneth Leighton (1929-1988) wrote this angsty setting for organ in 1975.

Call to Worship (Unison)

Adapted from Psalm 107:1-3,17-22

O give thanks to the LORD, for the Lord is good; God's steadfast love endures forever. Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, those whom God redeemed from trouble and gathered in from the east, west, north, and south. Some were sick through sin and endured affliction; they neared the gates of death. They cried to the LORD in their trouble; God sent out God's word and healed them, and delivered them from destruction. Let us give thanks for God's steadfast love, for God's wonderful works to humankind. Let us offer our thanksgiving, and tell of God's deeds with songs of joy.

Hymn 101 (p. 5) *There's a Wideness in God's Mercy*

In Babilone

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.

Lenten Prayer of Confession (Unison)

Merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart and mind and strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. Open our hearts to you, that we may receive your forgiveness and be redeemed by your reconciling love. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

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 meeting, please contact the church office.

Children's Moment

I'm glad you're all here today. As you know, this is when we "spring ahead"—that's right: daylight saving time has arrived! It's also Pi Day, because it's March 14, or 3/14. Now, you may wonder what numbers have to do with our faith. The answer: a lot! Seven days of creation, 12 disciples, and most important: three persons of the Trinity. The people of Jesus' day were just like us: they wanted to control things. Think about time. The truth is, our control is far less than we imagine. We can reset time to accommodate train schedules or modern living, but there are still 24 hours in a day. The sun will rise, the sun will set, period. And we are called to worship God, no matter the hour, through our songs, our prayers, our lives—even when we have a piece of pie.

Hymn 177 (p. 6) *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*

Hamburg

Scripture Lessons

Numbers 21:4-9. ⁴From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; but the people became impatient on the way. ⁵The people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food." ⁶Then the Lord sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. ⁷The people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned by speaking against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord to take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. ⁸And the Lord said to Moses, "Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live." ⁹So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

John 3:14-21. [Jesus said,] ¹⁴"And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

¹⁶"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

¹⁷"Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸Those who believe in him are not

condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. ¹⁹And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. ²¹But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.”

Sermon “John’s Troublemaking Verse” Stephen R. Silver

Hymn 223 (p. 7) *What Wondrous Love Is This* Wondrous Love

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, Barbara, Greg, Larry, Edith, Jan, Eileen, and James.

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

We pray for the healthcare workers and first responders who are on the front line dealing with this pandemic.

We pray for all those struggling with financial challenges, reduced hours and unemployment, and fears about the future.

And finally, we offer the following prayer:

God, our help of ages past—and present, and future—we give thanks for your presence, your consistency, your solidarity with humanity through all that happens. As we begin this spring season, we prepare for Easter, and we are eager for what the holiday means: new life and redemption. We confess that your generosity is amazing, and it is without merit on our part. Help us to live faithful lives, to be worthy of your love, in all we think, all we say, and all we do.

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

God So Loved the World

John Goss

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.

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)

God of life, God of love, we offer our thanks to you for bestowing upon us the blessings of service, caring, and sharing. As you have given so freely of these in Jesus, we now respond with these gifts as a sign to do likewise with our brothers and sisters, wherever they may be. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Hymn 208 (p. 8)

God Loved the World

Rockingham

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

Chorale Prelude on Rockingham

C.H.H. Parry

Leading Worship This Week

The Rev. Stephen R. Silver, Pastor

Ernie Drown, Organist • Brian Clancy, Tenor • Karen and Chris Chase, Liturgists

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.

One Great Hour of Sharing: “Let Love Flow” – Special UCC Mission Offering

This annual, nationwide UCC offering funds mission initiatives around the world. It supports healthcare, education, agriculture, refugee assistance, and emergency relief in over 130 countries. OGHS funds are leveraged with local, national, and global partners to maximize their impact.

Please consider a contribution as you are able, and thank you for sharing!

(Payable to FCC, with “OGHS” in the memo line. Contributions gratefully accepted until Easter.)

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.

* * * HOLY WEEK IS MARCH 28-APRIL 4, 2021 * * *

Please join us Easter morning at 6:00 for an ecumenical sunrise service in Colburn Park; then at 10:00 we hope to worship outdoors on FCC's front lawn. *Stay tuned for details.*

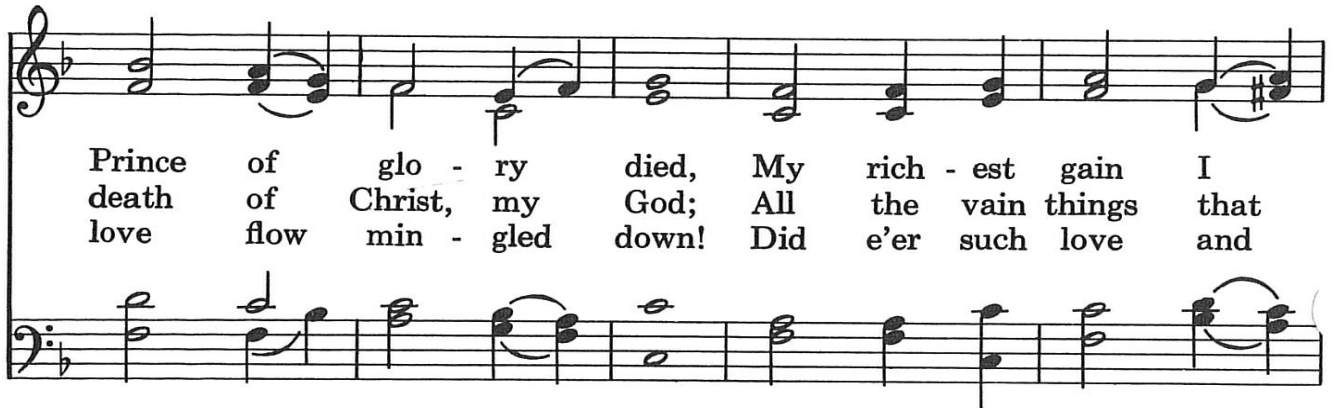
Isaac Watts, 1674-1748

HAMBURG L.M.

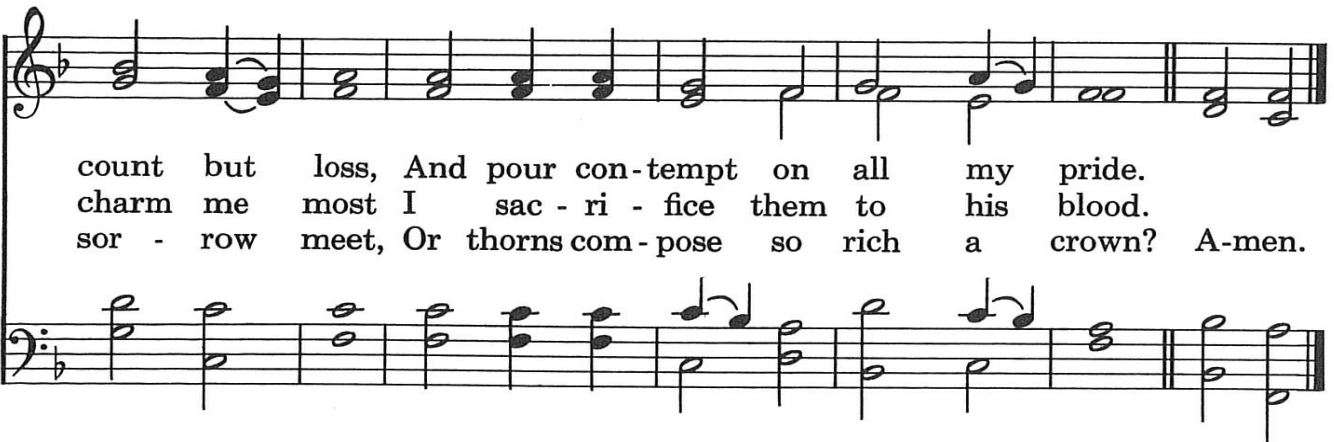
Arr. by Lowell Mason, 1792-1872



1 When I sur - vey the won - drous cross On which the
 2 For - bid it, Lord, that I should boast, Save in the
 3 See, from his head, his hands, his feet, Sor - row and



Prince of glo - ry died, My rich - est gain I
 death of Christ, my God; All the vain things that
 love flow min - gled down! Did e'er such love and



count but loss, And pour con - tempt on all my pride.
 charm me most I sac - ri - fice them to his blood.
 sor - row meet, Or thorns com - pose so rich a crown? A-men.

4 Were the whole realm of nature mine,
 That were a present far too small;
 Love so amazing, so divine,
 Demand's my soul, my life, my all.

It's Time for the Lenten Lunch Bag Offering

Lent again brings the Children's Community Corner Lunch Bag Offering! Please consider participating in this annual collection of savings from a regular sacrifice during Lent. The total collection on Easter will be split between Epilogos Charities and WISE of the Upper Valley.

Many thanks for helping FCC's children help other children near and far!

*John 19:17; Rev. 5:13**19th century, United States; alt.
First published in Mercer's Cluster, 1836*

1 What won-drous love is this, O my soul! O my soul! What
 2 To God and to the Lamb I will sing, I will sing, to
 3 And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing on, and

won-drous love is this, O my soul! What won-drous love is
 God and to the Lamb, I will sing; To God and to the
 when from death I'm free, I'll sing on! And when from death I'm

this! that Christ should come in bliss to bear the heav-y cross for my
 Lamb who is the great I Am, while mil-lions join the theme, I will
 free, I'll sing and joy-ful be, and through e-ter-ni-ty I'll sing

soul, for my soul, to bear the heav-y cross for my soul!
 sing, I will sing; while mil-lions join the theme, I will sing.
 on, I'll sing on, and through e-ter-ni-ty I'll sing on!

This anonymous folk hymn, with its modal (dorian) tune, has appeared in many versions. William Walker, compiler of Southern Harmony, one of the most important nineteenth-century tune books in the United States, lived and died in Spartanburg, South Carolina.

Tune: WONDROUS LOVE 12.9.12.12.9.
 (CHRISTOPHER)
*Appendix to Wm. Walker's Southern Harmony, c. 1843
 Harm. The New Century Hymnal, 1993*

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*John 3:16-17**Heiliges Lippen und Herzens Opfer, Stettin, 1778**Transl. August Crull, 1845; alt.*

1 God loved the world, and lov - ing gave
 2 Christ Je - sus is the ground of faith,
 3 If you are sick, if death is near,
 4 Be of good cheer, for God in Christ

a won - drous gift, the lost to save,
 who was made flesh and suf - fered death;
 this truth your trou - bled heart can cheer;
 for - gives the flock, by sin en - ticed,

That all who would in Christ be - lieve
 All who con - fide in Christ a - lone
 Christ Je - sus saves us all from death;
 And jus - ti - fied by Je - sus' blood,

should ev - er - last - ing life re - ceive.
 are built on this chief cor - ner - stone.
 that is the firm - est ground of faith.
 your bap - tism grants the high - est good.

*Edward Miller, a skilled flutist in G. F. Handel's orchestra,
 adapted Rockingham from the tune Tunbridge. Miller named it
 for the Marquis of Rockingham, a patron and friend, and prime
 minister of Great Britain.*

Tune: ROCKINGHAM L.M.

Anon.

Adapt. Edward Miller, 1790



First Congregational Church of Lebanon

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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, Children's Community Corner
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)

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