



First Congregational Church of Lebanon

United Church of Christ – Open and Affirming

The Fifth Sunday of Easter

May 2, 2021

“Easter was when Hope in person surprised the whole world
by coming forward from the future into the present.”

–N. T. Wright

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

Prelude

Prelude in A Major, BWV 536

Johann Sebastian Bach

Call to Worship (Unison)

Psalm 22:25-31

From you comes my praise in the great congregation; my vows I will pay before those who fear him. The poor shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek him shall praise the LORD. May your hearts live forever! All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD; and all the families of the nations shall worship before him. For dominion belongs to the LORD, and he rules over the nations. To him, indeed, shall all who sleep in the earth bow down; before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, and I shall live for him. Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the Lord, and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn, saying that he has done it.

Hymn 16 (p. 5)

Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven

Praise My Soul

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 meeting, please contact the church office.

Children's Moment

This may seem like a cop-out, but I'm being serious when I say that God is love, and if we want to know God, we must love. That's the lesson in today's letter from 1 John.

There we are told, in chapter 4, verses 7-8, “Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love.” In other words, to know, we must do. Loving is not always easy, but it’s vital, and we can see why today. People who hate, who fear, who plot don’t know God, because if they did, they would love, they would have courage, and they’d spend their time and energy on developing relationships with their fellow people, who are also children of God.

Hymn 391 (p. 6) *Be Thou My Vision*

Slane

Scripture Lessons

Acts 8:26-40. ²⁶Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Get up and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” (This is a wilderness road.) ²⁷So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship ²⁸and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. ²⁹Then the Spirit said to Philip, “Go over to this chariot and join it.” ³⁰So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” ³¹He replied, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. ³²Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this: “Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb silent before its shearer, so he does not open his mouth. ³³In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth.” ³⁴The eunuch asked Philip, “About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?” ³⁵Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. ³⁶As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?” ³⁸He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. ³⁹When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. ⁴⁰But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

John 15:1-8. [Jesus continued,] “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. ²He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. ³You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. ⁵I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and

burned. ⁷If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.”

Sermon

“AAA for the Soul”

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, 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.

Finally, we offer the following prayer:

Holy, loving God, we ask that you open our hearts to loving the stranger, the outsider, the person who does not look like us or talk like us, this sibling, who is also our brother and sister. We take this message from Scripture, from the example of Jesus, that we are one people, and that we are called to love one another, no questions asked, no matter our preferences, no matter the difficulty. Help us, as individuals and as a community, to make this sentiment a reality, to live out your teachings, to do as Jesus did. In his name we pray, Amen.

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

Schmücke dich, O liebe Seele

Johannes Brahms

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*)

Bountiful God: we ask that you receive our gifts and fill them with your grace, your love, and your healing power, making them a blessing to others. We pray in the name of Jesus, who called us to love one another, to share the Gospel, to serve our brothers and sisters, and to be your people. 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

Ho - ly, Ho - ly Ho - ly, Lord God of Hosts:
Heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Glo - ry be to you, O Lord most
High. Bless-ed is the one that comes in the name of the
Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est, Ho - san - na in the high - est, Ho -
san - na in the high - est.

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 485 (p. 7) *We Know That Christ Is Raised*

Engelberg

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

Basse et Dessus de Trompette

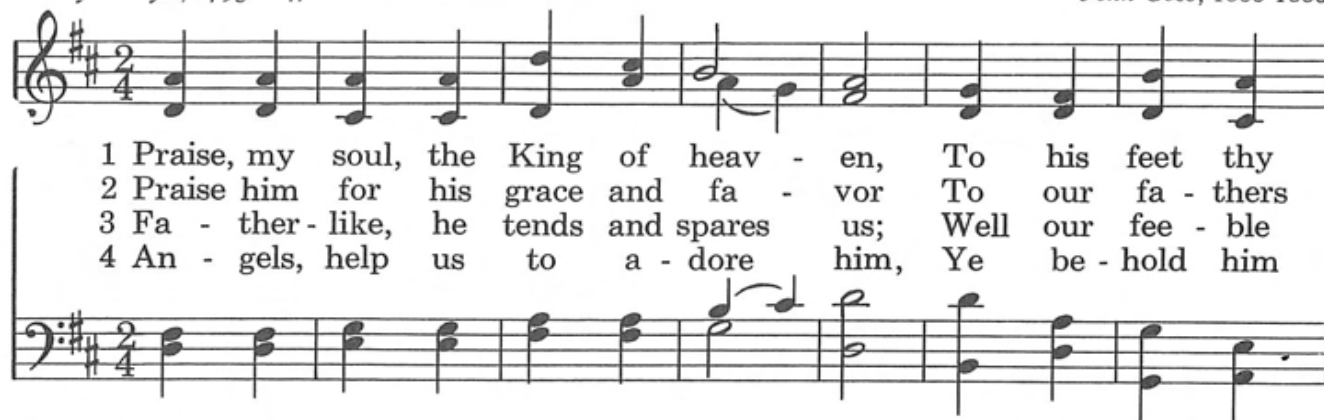
Louis-Nicolas Clérambault

Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven

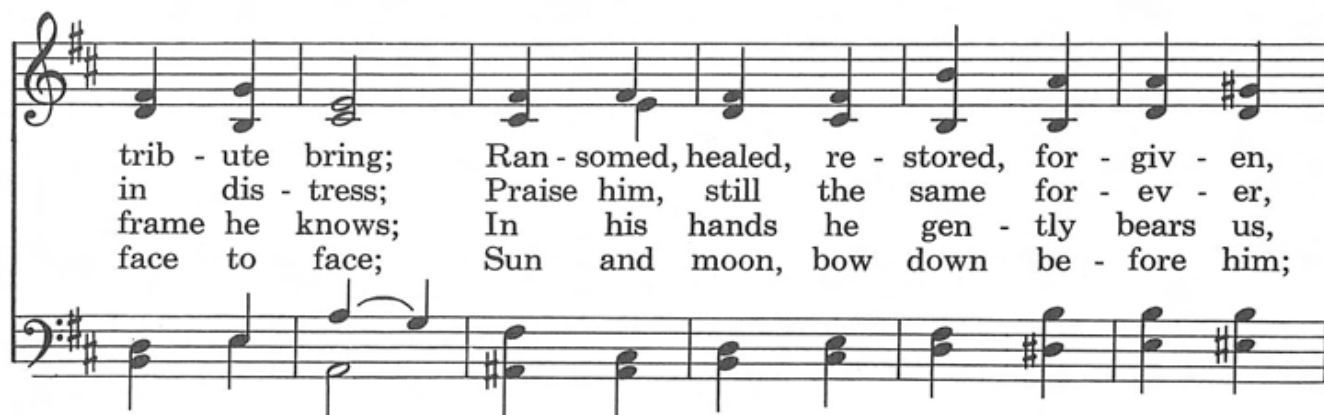
16

Based on Psalm 103
Henry F. Lyle, 1793-1847

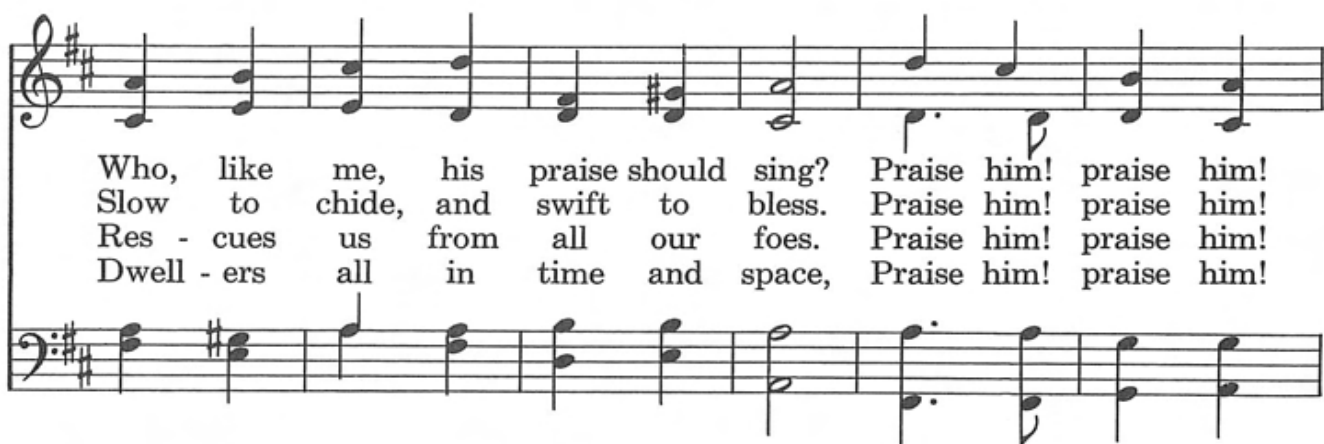
PRAISE MY SOUL 8.7.8.7.8.7.
John Goss, 1800-1880



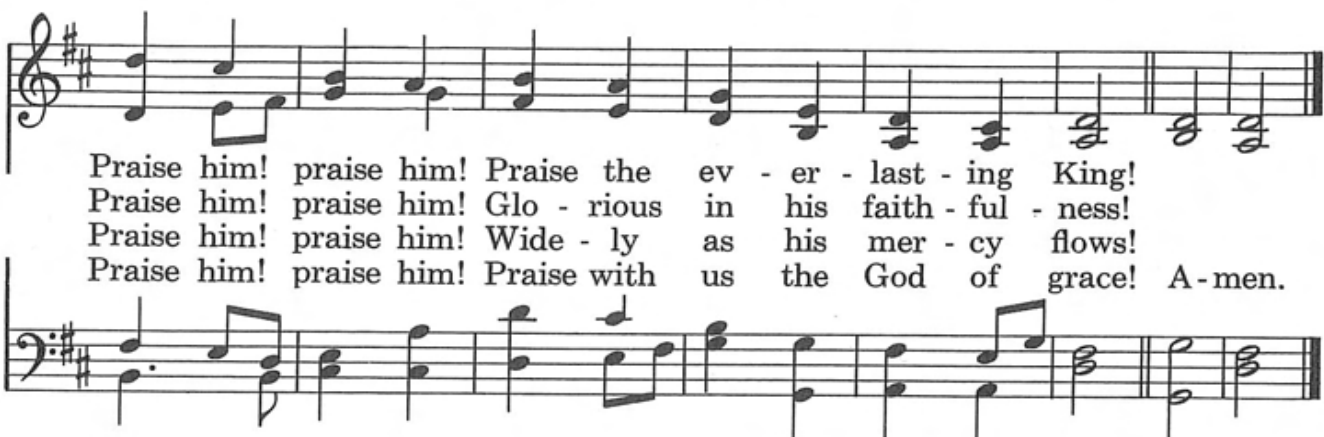
1 Praise, my soul, the King of heav - en, To his feet thy
2 Praise him for his grace and fa - vor To our fa - thers
3 Fa - ther - like, he tends and spares us; Well our fee - ble
4 An - gels, help us to a - dore him, Ye be - hold him



trib - ute bring; Ran - sored, healed, re - stored, for - giv - en,
in dis - tress; Praise him, still the same for - ev - er,
frame he knows; In his hands he gen - tly bears us,
face to face; Sun and moon, bow down be - fore him;



Who, like me, his praise should sing? Praise him! praise him!
Slow to chide, and swift to bless. Praise him! praise him!
Res - cues us from all our foes. Praise him! praise him!
Dwell - ers all in time and space, Praise him! praise him!



Praise him! praise him! Praise the ev - er - last - ing King!
Praise him! praise him! Glo - rious in his faith - ful - ness!
Praise him! praise him! Wide - ly as his mer - cy flows!
Praise him! praise him! Praise with us the God of grace! A - men.

Ancient Irish

Tr. by Mary E. Byrne, 1880-1931

Versified by Eleanor H. Hull, 1860-1935

SLANE 10.10.9.10.

Traditional Irish Melody

Harm. by David Evans, 1874-1948

In unison

1 Be thou my vi - sion, O Lord of my heart;
 2 Be thou my wis - dom, and thou my true word;
 3 Rich - es I heed not, nor man's emp - ty praise,
 4 High King of heav - en, my vic - to - ry won,

Nought be all else to me save that thou art.
 I ev - er with thee and thou with me, Lord;
 Thou mine in - her - it - ance, now and al - ways;
 May I reach heaven's joys, O bright heav - en's Sun!

Thou my best thought, by day or by night,
 Thou my great Fa - ther, I thy true son;
 Thou and thou on - ly, first in my heart,
 Heart of my own heart, what - ev - er be - fall,

Wak - ing or sleep - ing, thy pres - ence my light.
 Thou in me dwell - ing, and I with thee one.
 High King of heav - en, my treas - ure thou art.
 Still be my vi - sion, O Rul - er of all. A - men.

We Know That Christ Is Raised 485

Capo 3: (D) (Asus) (A) (A/G) (D/F#)
F Csus C C/B^b F/A

1 We know that Christ is raised and dies no more.
2 We share by wa - ter in his sav - ing death.
3 The Fa - ther's splen - dor clothes the Son with life.
4 A new cre - a - tion comes to life and grows

(D) (A) (D) (E7) (A)
F C F G7 C

Em - braced by death he broke its fear - ful hold,
Re - born we share with him an Eas - ter life
The Spir - it's pow - er shakes the church of God.
as Christ's new bod - y takes on flesh and blood.

(Am) (D) (G) (Em) (Bm)
Cm F B^b Gm Dm

and our de - spair he turned to blaz - ing joy.
as liv - ing mem - bers of a liv - ing Christ.
Bap - tized we live with God the Three in One.
The u - ni - verse, re - stored and whole, will sing:

1-3 4
(Em) (D) (Asus) (A) (Em) (D)
Gm F Csus C Gm F

Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

Guitar chords do not correspond with keyboard harmony.

Beginning with an allusion to Romans 6:9, this exuberant baptismal hymn unfolds the implications of our incorporation into Christ's new life, making us "a new creation" (2 Corinthians 5:17). The text was written to fit this expansive tune by a distinguished British composer.

TEXT: John Brownlow Geyer, 1967, alt.
MUSIC: Charles Villiers Stanford, 1904
Text © 1972 John Brownlow Geyer

ENGELBERG
10.10.10.4
(this tune in a higher key, 641)

Leading Worship This Week

The Rev. Stephen R. Silver, Pastor

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

Mother's Day Is Blanket Sunday (Next Week!)

We are pleased to participate once again in Church World Service's CWS BLANKETS program, a special mission project that provides blankets and other essential supplies to people in crisis worldwide. (For more information on this program, please visit www.cwsblankets.org.)

If you'd like to honor or remember the mother(s) in your life with a contribution to CWS Blankets, please contact the church (church@fcclb.org) with your dedication information. The suggested minimum is \$10, but any amount is welcome! (Payable to FCC, memo "Blanket Sunday")

All dedications must be received by noon this THURSDAY, MAY 6, in order to be included in the worship bulletin on MOTHER'S DAY, MAY 9. (Contributions may be sent in after that date.)

Thanks to your generous contributions, CWS is able to "blanket the world with love."

Spring Clean-Up Day—Saturday, May 22, 9:00 am (Rain Date 6/5)

Please join the Board of Governors in this seasonal effort to tidy up the church yard—especially important this spring, as we prepare to reopen the church after a year's closure. We'll rake, trim hedges, and generally pick up around the grounds. Help us out with this important work!

We're Returning to Our Sanctuary on Pentecost Sunday, May 23

In-Person Worship at 10:00 (Remote Viewing Available on Zoom)—Wear Red!

Having surveyed vaccination progress and comfort levels among our congregation (all very favorable!), church leadership believes that it is safe to resume indoor, in-person worship with some basic precautions. It will have been 14 months since we closed for the pandemic—we're grateful for everyone's patience and perseverance, and we're joyful to return!

All worshippers will be required to wear masks at all times and observe physical distancing in the pews, as marked; singing and corporate prayer permitted only with masks. There will be no coffee hour, and we ask that social interaction and contact be kept to a minimum. Thank you for your cooperation—please contact the church office with any questions or concerns.

Introducing SHARe: Supporting and Helping Asylees and Refugees

Virtual Open Houses on May 7 and 20—Contact FCC for Registration

SHARe is a new local nonprofit dedicated to bringing asylum seekers to the Upper Valley and providing them with host families and support services—taking over work begun by UVIP which our congregation has supported for several years now. If you'd like to learn more about SHARe's plans and ways you can volunteer, visit an Open House, email sharevtnh@gmail.com, or contact Kathy Beckett (beckettkathleen7@gmail.com/860-392-9306).

Please join the local effort to welcome immigrants and refugees into our community!



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, 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)
603-448-4281 • church@fccleb.org • prayer@fccleb.org • music@fccleb.org • www.fccleb.org