



First Congregational Church of Lebanon

United Church of Christ – Open and Affirming

The Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

July 25, 2021

“A small river full of fish is better than a large sea full of none.”

–*Matshona Dhliwayo*

Kindly silence cell phones and other devices during worship. All hymns are included on pages 5-8.

Prelude *Romanze, op. 28, no. 2* Robert Schumann

Call to Worship Psalm 14

Leader: Fools say in their hearts, “There is no God.” They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds; there is no one who does good.

People: **The LORD looks down from heaven on humankind to see if there are any who are wise, who seek after God.**

Leader: They have all gone astray, they are all alike perverse; there is no one who does good, no, not one.

People: **Have they no knowledge, all the evildoers who eat up my people as they eat bread, and do not call upon the LORD?**

Leader: There they shall be in great terror, for God is with the company of the righteous.

People: **You would confound the plans of the poor, but the LORD is their refuge.**

All: **O that deliverance for Israel would come from Zion! When the LORD restores the fortunes of his people, Jacob will rejoice; Israel will be glad.**

Hymn 70 (p. 5) *God Is Here!* Abbot’s Leigh

Prayer of Invocation

God, though we worship in places near and far today, we know your Spirit is with us, joining us together as one people. Lift up our worship, inspire our prayers, infuse them with your grace, your love, your power. We pray this 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

Children’s Moment

Today’s story from the Hebrew Bible tells us of how David, the great king, did a very bad thing. Sometimes, temptation is strong, and while we want to resist, we may give in.

It's at moments like that we need God and God's people, who can help us stay on the path of right living—to see that what looks good may actually be bad for us and those around us.

Hymn 349 (*p. 8*) *I Come with Joy*

Land of Rest

Scripture Lessons

2 Samuel 11:1-15. In the spring of the year, the time when kings go out to battle, David sent Joab with his officers and all Israel with him; they ravaged the Ammonites, and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem. ²It happened, late one afternoon, when David rose from his couch and was walking about on the roof of the king's house, that he saw from the roof a woman bathing; the woman was very beautiful. ³David sent someone to inquire about the woman. It was reported, "This is Bathsheba daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite." ⁴So David sent messengers to get her, and she came to him, and he lay with her. (Now she was purifying herself after her period.) Then she returned to her house. ⁵The woman conceived; and she sent and told David, "I am pregnant."

⁶So David sent word to Joab, "Send me Uriah the Hittite." And Joab sent Uriah to David. ⁷When Uriah came to him, David asked how Joab and the people fared, and how the war was going. ⁸Then David said to Uriah, "Go down to your house, and wash your feet." Uriah went out of the king's house, and there followed him a present from the king. ⁹But Uriah slept at the entrance of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and did not go down to his house. ¹⁰When they told David, "Uriah did not go down to his house," David said to Uriah, "You have just come from a journey. Why did you not go down to your house?" ¹¹Uriah said to David, "The ark and Israel and Judah remain in booths; and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are camping in the open field; shall I then go to my house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? As you live, and as your soul lives, I will not do such a thing." ¹²Then David said to Uriah, "Remain here today also, and tomorrow I will send you back." So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day. On the next day, ¹³David invited him to eat and drink in his presence and made him drunk; and in the evening he went out to lie on his couch with the servants of his lord, but he did not go down to his house.

¹⁴In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah. ¹⁵In the letter he wrote, "Set Uriah in the forefront of the hardest fighting, and then draw back from him, so that he may be struck down and die."

John 6:1-21. After this Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. ²A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. ³Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. ⁴Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. ⁵When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?" ⁶He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. ⁷Philip answered him, "Six months' wages would not buy enough bread

for each of them to get a little.”⁸ One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to him,⁹ “There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?”¹⁰ Jesus said, “Make the people sit down.” Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about five thousand in all.¹¹ Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted.¹² When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, “Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost.”¹³ So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets.¹⁴ When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, “This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world.”

¹⁵When Jesus realized that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself.¹⁶ When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea,¹⁷ got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them.¹⁸ The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing.¹⁹ When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were terrified.²⁰ But he said to them, “It is I; do not be afraid.”²¹ Then they wanted to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the land toward which they were going.

Sermon

“Not Another Fish Story”

Stephen R. Silver

Hymn 175 (p. 6)

Seek Ye First

Lafferty

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 the church office to confirm or remove names on the list.

Today we offer our ongoing prayers for Pete, Lloyd, Arlene, Evelyn, Barbara, Greg, Larry, Edith, Jan, Eileen, James, Sandy, Jimmy, and Jean.

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

Today we also offer the following prayer:

God, you look after us, care for us, and provide for our every need. Though our wants and our desires may be greater, you know what it is we need to live. Grant us perspective and an ability to enjoy what we have. May our ambitions be to improve ourselves, to help our neighbors, to do what we are capable of doing, and not just to get more. Help us to resist temptation, and the path that might beckon to us though it leads to danger.

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.

Offertory *Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr*, BWV 677 Johann Sebastian Bach

Doxology (*Unison*)

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,
Praise God, all creatures here below,
Praise God above, ye heavenly host,
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayer of Dedication (*Unison*)

Holy God, though we come from different places and backgrounds, we do so in the knowledge that we are united in and through our desire to serve Jesus and share the Gospel. With thanks for the many ways in which your one Church makes itself known, we offer our gifts with the hope and conviction that the ministry they enable will reflect faithfully your steadfast love for all the world. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Hymn 377 (pp. 7-8) *I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light* Houston

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 *Allemande*, from *French Suite No. 4*, BWV 815 J. S. Bach

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Leading Worship This Week

The Rev. Stephen R. Silver, Pastor
Ernie Drown, Organist • Brian Clancy, Tenor and Liturgist

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If you wish to have a joy, concern, or prayer request lifted up in the service, or if you know of someone who may need special prayers, a card or phone call, or some other form of pastoral care, please email prayer@fccleb.org or speak with Rev. Silver directly.

God Is Here! As We Your People Meet

Fred Pratt Green, 1978; alt.

1 God is here! As we your peo-ple meet to of - fer praise and prayer,
 2 Here are sym-bols to re - mind us of our life - long need of grace;
 3 Here our chil-dren find a wel-come in the Shep - herd's flock and fold;
 4 Sov - ereign God, of earth and heav-en, in an age of change and doubt

May we find in full - er mea-sure what it is in Christ we share.
 Here are ta - ble, font, and pul - pit, here the cross has cen - tral place.
 Here as bread and wine are tak - en, Christ sus - tains us as of old.
 Keep us faith - ful to the gos - pel, help us work your pur - pose out.

Here, as in the world a - round us, all our var - ied skills and arts
 Here in hon - es - ty of preach - ing, here in si - lence, as in speech,
 Here the ser - vants of the Ser - vant seek in wor - ship to ex - plore
 Here, in this day's ded - i - ca - tion, all we have to give, re - ceive;

wait the com - ing of the Spir - it in - to o - pen minds and hearts.
 here, in new - ness and re - new - al, God the Spir - it comes to each.
 what it means in dai - ly liv - ing to be - lieve and to a - dore.
 we, who can - not live with - out you, we a - dore you! We be - lieve!

Though he retired in 1969, this distinguished British poet has continued to write hymns. In addition to administering several circuits and local congregations, Fred Pratt Green published plays, translations, and poems. Emory University in Atlanta awarded him an honorary doctorate.

Tune: ABBOT'S LEIGH 8.7.8.7.D.
 Cyril V. Taylor, 1941

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Seek Ye First

1 Seek ye first the king - dom of God
 2 Ask, and it shall be giv - en un - to you;
 3 You shall not live by bread a - lone,

and its righ - teous - ness,
 seek, and you shall find;
 but by ev - ery word

and all these things shall be add - ed un - to you.
 knock, and the door shall be o - pened un - to you.
 that pro - ceeds from the mouth of God.

Al - le - lu, al - le - lu - ia!

The author and composer wrote the first stanza and folk-style tune after attending a Bible study on Matthew 6:33. The later stanzas, based respectively on Matthew 7:7 and Matthew 4:4 emerged anonymously. Such meditative singing of scripture is an important form of sung prayer.

TEXT: Stanza 1, Karen Lafferty, 1971, alt.; stanzas 2-3, anon.; Spanish trans. anon.;

Korean trans. The United Methodist Korean Hymnal Committee

MUSIC: Karen Lafferty, 1971

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LAFFERTY

Irregular

377 I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light

1 I want to walk as a child of the light. I want to fol - low
 2 I want to see the bright-ness of God. I want to look at
 3 I'm look-ing for the com - ing of Christ. I want to be with

Je - sus. God set the stars to give light to the world. The
 Je - sus. Clear Sun of righ-teous-ness, shine on my path, and
 Je - sus. When we have run with pa-tience the race, we

Refrain

star of my life is Je - sus.
 show me the way to the Fa - ther. In him there is no dark-ness at
 shall know the joy of Je - sus.

all. The night and the day are both a - like. The Lamb is the

The author-composer of this unrhymed hymn regards it as a meditation and prayer deeply rooted in many scriptures, most connected with the theme of light: Genesis 1:17; Psalm 139:12; Isaiah 60:19; Malachi 4:2; John 14:8; Ephesians 5:8; Hebrews 12:1-2; 1 John 1:5; Revelation 21:23.



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Hymn 349 (Black) *I Come with Joy*

TUNE: Land of Rest

I come with joy, a child of God, forgiven, loved and free,
The life of Jesus to recall, in love laid down for me, in love laid down for me.

I come with Christians far and near to find, as all are fed,
The new community of love in Christ's communion bread, in Christ's communion bread.

As Christ breaks bread, and bids us share, each proud division ends.
The love that made us, makes us one, and strangers now are friends, and strangers now
are friends.

And thus we meet, and better know the Presence, ever near,
And join our hearts and sing with joy that Christ is risen here, that Christ is risen here.

Together met, together bound, in friendship we will stay,
And go with joy to love the world and live the way we pray, and live the way we pray.

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Do Your Part to Fill the Cart!

Greater Lebanon continues to struggle with poverty and food insecurity. Exacerbated by the challenges of the COVID-19 shutdown, local need remains high and will persist as pandemic benefits are phased out. We are resuming the monthly collection of items in our shopping cart!

JULY—personal hygiene and laundry supplies for the residents of DISMAS HOUSE
AUGUST—non-perishable food and personal-care items for LISTEN COMMUNITY SERVICES

STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH—SPECIAL UCC OFFERING

Inspired this year by a simple theme—“**Renew!**”—the Strengthen the Church offering supports the growth of ministry and local congregations across the country. By renewing older faith communities, building new ones, and funding fellowships for young, emerging leaders in our church, this program is vital to the health of our denomination.

Please give as you are able to this nationwide effort to support church growth. We will accept contributions (payable to FCC, memo “Strengthen the Church”) until Labor Day. Thank you!



First Congregational Church of Lebanon

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Weekly Worship Resources Enclosed!

DATED MATERIAL—Please Deliver Promptly

Do you use email? Contact church@fcclieb.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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