



First Congregational Church of Lebanon

United Church of Christ – Open and Affirming

The Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

September 26, 2021

“When I say it’s you I like, I’m talking about that part of you that knows that life is far more than anything you can ever see or hear or touch. That deep part of you that allows you to stand for those things without which humankind cannot survive. Love that conquers hate, peace that rises triumphant over war, and justice that proves more powerful than greed.”

–Fred Rogers

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

Prelude

Ave Maria von Arcadelt

Franz Liszt

Franz Liszt (1811-86) transcribed this Ave Maria from a tender motet by Flemish Renaissance composer Jacques Arcadelt (1507-68).

Introit

What Is This Place?

Dutch Hymn (Komt nu met zang)

Call to Worship

Adapted from Psalm 124

Leader: If it had not been the LORD who was on our side—let Israel now say—

People: If it had not been the LORD on our side, when our enemies attacked us,

Leader: Then they would have swallowed us up alive, when their anger was kindled against us.

People: Then the flood would have swept us away, the torrent would have gone over us; then over us would have gone the raging waters.

Leader: Blessed be the LORD, who has not given us as prey to their teeth.

People: We have escaped like a bird from the snare of the fowlers.

Leader: The snare is broken, and we have escaped.

People: Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth.

Hymn 1 (p. 5)

Our God, Our Help in Ages Past

St. Anne

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

Anthem

There's a Wideness in God's Mercy (1999)

Maurice Bevan

Children's Moment

One of the most difficult aspects of the Bible for people is that it has many instances of violence, including in today's story from Esther. We cannot ignore this, nor should we pretend it's not there. But we need not take these stories as license to bully or hurt people. We should instead try to understand what is going on here, to get a sense of why God is so angry that he is depicted as "smiting" people. Then we need to remember that these stories were written and passed down by people, just like you and me. We need to understand them, too. Then, as we try to chart our own way forward, we can look to Jesus—who taught us, "Blessed are the peacemakers"—and try to follow his example.

Hymn 376 (p. 6)

Lead Us, O Father, in the Paths of Peace

Langran

Scripture Lessons

Esther 7:1-6, 9-10, 9:20-22. So the king and Haman went in to feast with Queen Esther. ²On the second day, as they were drinking wine, the king again said to Esther, "What is your petition, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to the half of my kingdom, it shall be fulfilled." ³Then Queen Esther answered, "If I have won your favor, O king, and if it pleases the king, let my life be given me—that is my petition—and the lives of my people—that is my request. ⁴For we have been sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be annihilated. If we had been sold merely as slaves, men and women, I would have held my peace; but no enemy can compensate for this damage to the king." ⁵Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther, "Who is he, and where is he, who has presumed to do this?" ⁶Esther said, "A foe and enemy, this wicked Haman!" Then Haman was terrified before the king and the queen. [...] ⁹Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs in attendance on the king, said, "Look, the very gallows that Haman has prepared for Mordecai, whose word saved the king, stands at Haman's house, fifty cubits high." And the king said, "Hang him on that." ¹⁰So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the anger of the king abated.

^{9:20}Mordecai recorded these things, and sent letters to all the Jews who were in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, both near and far, ²¹enjoining them that they should keep the fourteenth day of the month Adar and also the fifteenth day of the same month, year by year, ²²as the days on which the Jews gained relief from their enemies, and as the month that had been turned for them from sorrow into gladness and from mourning into a holiday; that they should make them days of feasting and gladness, days for sending gifts of food to one another and presents to the poor.

Mark 9:38-50. ³⁸John said to [Jesus], “Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us.” ³⁹But Jesus said, “Do not stop him; for no one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. ⁴⁰Whoever is not against us is for us. ⁴¹For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward.

⁴²“If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea. ⁴³If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than to have two hands and to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. ⁴⁵And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame than to have two feet and to be thrown into hell. ⁴⁷And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into hell, ⁴⁸where their worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched.

⁴⁹“For everyone will be salted with fire. ⁵⁰Salt is good; but if salt has lost its saltiness, how can you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.”

Sermon *“What Is Going On Here?”* Stephen R. Silver

Hymn 408 (p. 7) *All My Hope on God Is Founded* Michael

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, Jimmy, and Jean.

God, we have confessed before our frustration with the way things are. Inspire us not to give in to despair or complacency, and empower us to follow the Way of Jesus, to never accept that we are unable to change things. We *are* able, with your love and grace, to make all things new. Be with us as we do your work, in the name of your Son our Savior.

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 *Nun bitten wir den heiligen Geist*, BUXWV 208 Dieterich Buxtehude

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 your presence was not evident to them, you were with Esther and Mordecai and their people when they faced annihilation. You gave them the wits and courage to deal with the crisis before them. Help us to remain true to who we are called to be. Equip us to address the challenges before us and assist our brothers and sisters, as they confront the problems that face them, all with confidence in the knowledge that we have not been abandoned. Amen.

Hymn 344 (p. 8) *Lead Us, Heavenly Father, Lead Us* Dulce Carmen

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 *Der Papst-Hymnus* Franz Liszt

* * *

Leading Worship This Week

The Rev. Stephen R. Silver, Pastor

Ernie Drown, Organist • The FCC Choir • Dawn Troutman, Liturgist

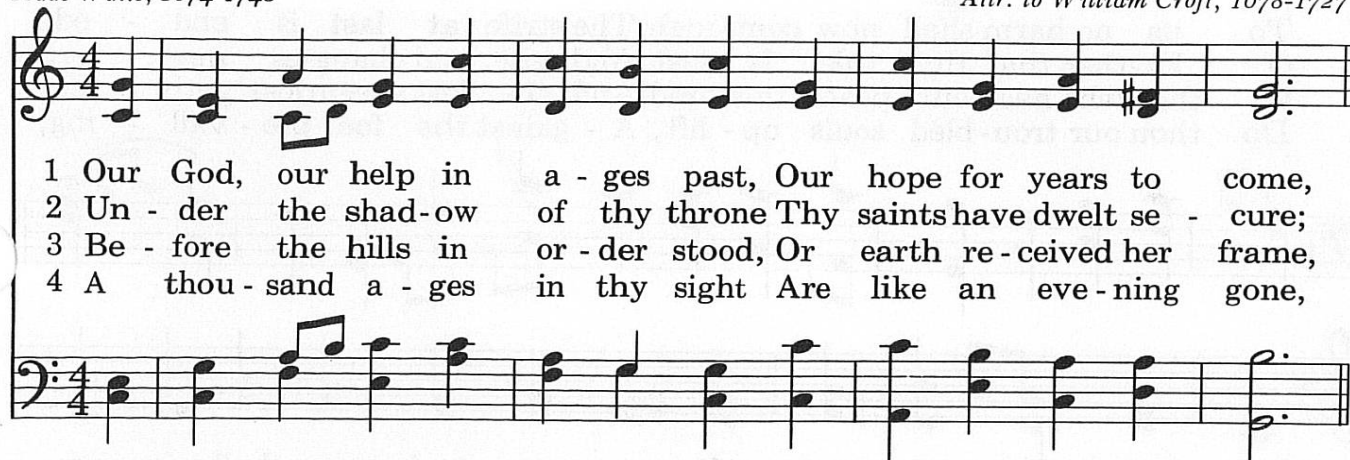
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If you wish to have a joy, concern, or prayer request lifted up in the service, or if you know of someone who may need special prayers, a card or phone call, or some other form of pastoral care, please email prayer@fccleb.org or speak with Rev. Silver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

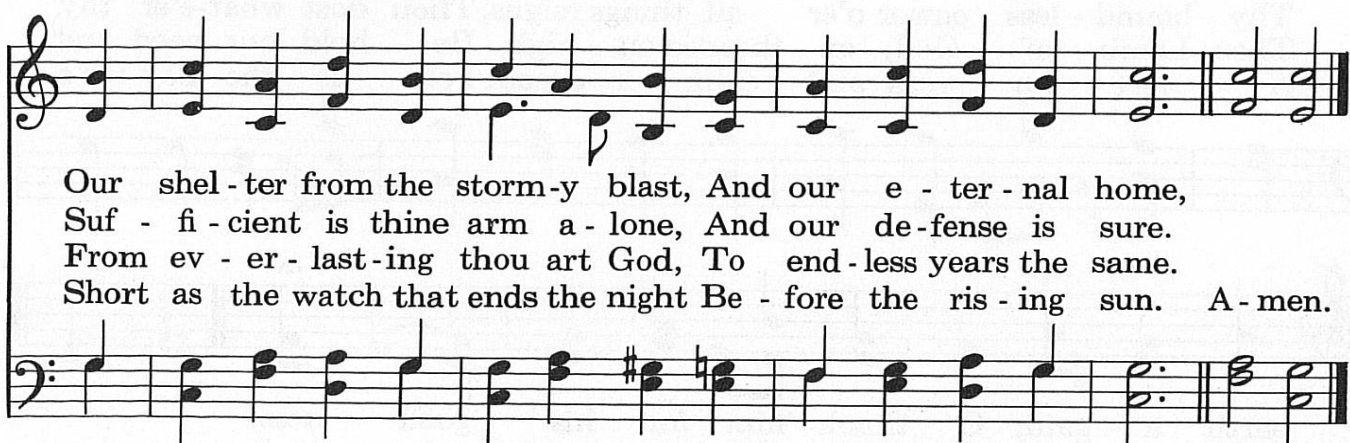
Our God, Our Help in Ages Past

Based on Psalm 90
Isaac Watts, 1674-1748

ST. ANNE C.M.
Attr. to William Croft, 1678-1727



1 Our God, our help in a - ges past, Our hope for years to come,
2 Un - der the shad - ow of thy throne Thy saints have dwelt se - cure;
3 Be - fore the hills in or - der stood, Or earth re - ceived her frame,
4 A thou - sand a - ges in thy sight Are like an eve - ning gone,



Our shel - ter from the storm - y blast, And our e - ter - nal home,
Suf - fi - cient is thine arm a - lone, And our de - fense is sure.
From ev - er - last - ing thou art God, To end - less years the same.
Short as the watch that ends the night Be - fore the ris - ing sun. A - men.

5 Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
Bears all its sons away;
They fly, forgotten, as a dream
Dies at the opening day.

6 Our God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Be thou our guard while troubles last,
And our eternal home.

The 2021 Lebanon CROP Walk—Sunday, October 10

Every year thousands of walkers across the country join the CROP Hunger Walk, organized by Church World Service to fight hunger, food insecurity, and poverty worldwide. First held in Bismarck, ND, in October 1969, the CROP Walk has become a community event in over 2000 towns, as churches and other local organizations collaborate to attract sponsors, advocate for hunger relief, and share the fellowship of a crisp fall afternoon outdoors.

This year's walk will happen in-person as in past years. Due to covid concerns, however, we will once again be unable to host our usual hot lunch here at FCC. **All contributions should be made online, rather than by cash or check through FCC. Here's what you can do:**

Walk!—Walk on your own or form a small group with family and friends, and register online at www.crophungerwalk.org/lebanonnh/. Then, invite sponsors to donate in your name.

Donate!—Sponsor a walker, or give directly online at www.crophungerwalk.org/lebanonnh/.

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Lead Us, O Father

William H. Burleigh, 1812-1871

LANGRAN 10.10.10.10.
James Langran, 1835-1909

1 Lead us, O Fa - ther, in the paths of peace;
2 Lead us, O Fa - ther, in the paths of truth;
3 Lead us, O Fa - ther, in the paths of right;
4 Lead us, O Fa - ther, to thy heaven - ly rest,

With - out thy guid - ing hand we go a - stray,
Un - helped by thee, in er - ror's maze we grope,
Blind - ly we stum - ble when we walk a - lone,
How - ev - er rough and steep the path may be,

And doubts ap - pall, and sor - rows still in - crease;
While pas - sion stains and fol - ly dims our youth,
In - volved in shad - ows of a mor - tal night;
Through joy or sor - row, as thou deem - est best,

Lead us through Christ, the true and liv - ing Way.
And age comes on un - cheered by faith and hope.
On - ly with thee we jour - ney safe - ly on.
Un - til our lives are per - fect - ed in thee. A - men.

All My Hope on God Is Founded

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Joachim Neander, c. 1680

Ps. 62:5-8; 1 Tim. 6:17

Paraphr. by Robert Bridges, 1899; alt.

1 All my hope on God is found - ed: who else can my hope re-new?
2 Well does the al - might-y Giv - er boun-teous gifts on us be-stow!
3 In glad hymns to God e - ter - nal sac - ri - fice of praise be done,

Still through change and chance God guides me, on - ly good and on - ly true.
With de - light our souls are nour-ished; plea-sure leads us where we go.
high a - bove all prais - es prais - ing for the love in Christ made known.

God un - known, grace a - lone, calls my heart to be God's own.
At God's hand does love stand; joy a - waits each new com - mand.
Hear Christ's call, one and all; those who fol - low shall not fall.

British composer Herbert Howells studied with Charles V. Stanford at the Royal College of Music in London and later taught there. The tune was composed for an English school and was named for Howells' son who died in childhood.

Tune: MICHAEL 8.7.8.7.3.3.7.
Herbert Howells, 1930, 1977

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Lead Us, Heavenly Father, Lead Us

James Edmeston, 1791-1867

DULCE CARMEN 8.7.8.7.8.7.
"An Essay on the Church Plain Chant," 1782

1 Lead us, heaven-ly Fa - ther, lead us O'er the world's tem -
 2 Sav - ior, breathe for - give - ness o'er us; All our weak - ness
 3 Spir - it of our God, de - scend - ing, Fill our hearts with

pes - tuous sea; Guard us, guide us, keep us, feed us,
 thou dost know; Thou didst tread this earth be - fore us;
 heaven - ly joy; Love with ev - ery pas - sion blend - ing,

For we have no help but thee, Yet pos - sess - ing
 Thou didst feel its keen - est woe; Lone and drear - y,
 Pleas - ure that can nev - er cloy; Thus pro - vid - ed,

ev - ery bless - ing, If our God our Fa - ther be.
 faint and wea - ry, Through the des - ert thou didst go.
 par-doned, guid - ed, Noth - ing can our peace de - stroy. A - men.



Live Music Returns to FCC!

All in the Sanctuary; masks, distanced seating, and proof of vaccination required.

Classicopia: Elizabeth Borowsky and Jessica Deskin—Saturday, October 2, at 7:30

Pianist and composer Elizabeth Borowsky and singer-songwriter Jessica Deskin offer a program featuring their own compositions, including a new song cycle entitled “The Nature of Life,” which Elizabeth composed for the NH Music Teachers Association. Based in Annapolis, MD, Jessica ranges musically from classical genres to jazz, musical theater, and top-40 pop. *Adults \$20, FCC members \$15, children free; for tickets and more, visit classicopia.org/concert/the-nature-of-life/.*

The Anonymous Coffeehouse—Fridays, October 8 and 22, November 5 and 19, at 7:30

This highly popular venue for established and emerging musicians features several acoustic acts, and patrons may come and go as they please; baked goods and non-alcoholic drinks are available. And it’s all free of charge, so please come and enjoy! *For more details, visit anoncoffee.org.*

Roseminna Watson, Violin, and Melody Fader, Piano—Saturday, October 9, at 7:30

Virtuoso violinist and Hanover native Roseminna Watson joins her friend Melody Fader for a richly dramatic program of both solos and duets. They’ll play J. S. Bach, Frederic Chopin, Lili Boulanger, Johannes Brahms, and contemporary American composer Missy Mazzoli. *Admission cost TBD; for more about the performers, please visit roseminnawatson.com and melodyfader.com.*

Classicopia: In Memory—Sunday, October 10, at 2:00

Thy Will Be Done—FCC Book Group Starting Mid-October on Zoom

We say it every week. Many of us say it more frequently. You know, the Lord’s Prayer. But how familiar are we with the text and what it means? Think about that phrase: “Thy Will Be Done.”

What are we asking for when we say those words? What does this prayer mean to you, to the church, to all of us? To consider these questions we will read Stephen Cherry’s “Thy Will Be Done,” an accessible, well-researched book. Interested? Please let Steve or Brian know and we’ll get you the book; we’ll schedule the sessions on Zoom once we know who’s participating.

All are invited to participate! Books provided free of charge, but advance reservation is required. Please email Rev. Steve Silver (silver@fccleb.org) with questions or to RSVP.

Neighbors in Need: Unfailing Love—Special UCC Offering

The UCC’s Neighbors in Need program supports ministries of justice and compassion across the country. Two-thirds of the collection is used by the UCC’s Justice and Witness Ministries for a range of local and national initiatives, advocacy efforts, direct service projects, and the fight against systemic injustice. The rest goes to the Council for American Indian Ministries, the voice of Native Americans in the UCC, sustaining a proud tradition of support. **This year, NIN is focused on serving homeless and immigrant neighbors and their communities.**

Please contribute as you’re able to this vital mission program, either by check payable to FCC (memo “Neighbors in Need”) or online at www.ucc.org/nin. Thank you!



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@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)

603-448-4281 • church@fcclieb.org • prayer@fcclieb.org • music@fcclieb.org • www.fcclieb.org