



The Second Sunday of Advent

“Openness to God demands our growing acceptance that we cannot create blueprints for our own lives. Though God’s character is unchanging, the ways of God are unpredictable, and there is a difference between arbitrariness and unpredictability.”

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

Call to Worship

Adapted from Luke 1

Isaiah 11:1-10. A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. ²The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. ³His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; ⁴but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. ⁵Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

⁶The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. ⁷The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. ⁸The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. ⁹They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. ¹⁰On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

An Advent Litany

Leader: There is one crying out in the wilderness!

People: He brings news of the One who will deliver us.

Leader: He comes to baptize with water,

People: So that the people may be ready to be baptized with the Spirit.

Leader: He tells us to be fruit worthy of repentance.

People: Open our hearts, O God, and let us confess our sins to you.

Leader: He shares his message so that we may be prepared for the Good News.

People: Let us prepare ourselves for the Good News. Let us ready ourselves for God's New Creation.

All: Let us prepare the way of the Lord. Let us make his paths straight.

The Lighting of the Advent Candle

An Advent Prayer (*Unison*)

Holy God, in this season of anticipation, help us to be patient.

Loving God, in this time of watching, help us to see clearly.

Healing God, in these weeks of preparation, make ready our hearts for the arrival of the Light of the World.

Words of Welcome; Our Ministry and Mission

Anthem "Every Valley Shall Be Exalted" and George Frideric Handel
 "And the Glory of the Lord" (from *Messiah*)

Children's Moment

Are you waiting? Are you watching? What for, you might ask. Well, this has long been a theme for Advent, that the faithful, both young and old, should be alert and attentive, for Baby Jesus is coming! Now, we know that Jesus was born some 2,000 years ago, and

this is something that happened long ago in the past. But we remember this event, and make it a focus of our faith, because it is so important to us. Just think about how important this is to us: Jesus is coming. To us. Are you ready? It's okay to say you're not. I know I need some time to get ready and I'm prepared to admit this. What's important is what I will do next, I can confess my lack of preparedness, and then I can pray, I can think about what God is doing and will do for us, and I can shift my attention to God's impending arrival.

Hymn 107 (p. 6) *Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence*

Llangloffan

Scripture Lessons

Malachi 3:1-4. See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. ²But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; ³he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness. ⁴Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years.

Luke 3:1-6. In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, ²during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. ³He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, ⁴as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. ⁵Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; ⁶and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'"

Sermon *"The People Who Matter"*

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. Help us keep our prayer list current by contacting the church office to add or remove names.

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

O God of the wilderness, we hear a voice crying out, one calling us to make ready for your arrival. We say we welcome you, but in truth we live as if your coming is something that should be done to meet our needs, that should fit our schedules and be part of our to-do lists. Help us, we pray, to set aside our egos, to see that our focus should be on you and your salvific work, and to make a place in our hearts for your love, your grace, and your power.

We pray this, and all the joys and concerns we hold in our hearts, in the name of your Son, our Savior. 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

The Eyes of All Wait Upon Thee

Jean Berger

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*)

Dear God, in this season of anticipation, we wait and we proclaim. We anticipate your arrival, and we share your good news. We offer our gifts of time, skills, and money, witnessing to our belief that your promise of new life is fulfilled in Jesus, in whose name we pray, 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 115 (p. 8) *On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry* Winchester New

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 *À minuit fut fait un réveil* Louis-Claude d'Aquin

* * *

Leading Worship This Week

The Rev. Stephen R. Silver, Pastor

Ernie Drown, Organ/Piano • Brian Clancy, Tenor • The FCC Choir

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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.



“Poinsettia Fund” for Advent and Christmas **TO BENEFIT THE OPEN DOOR MINISTRY**

For many years our congregation has offered poinsettias for the Sanctuary in honor or memory of family and friends. While we will have a few live poinsettias again this year, we will not be purchasing individual plants for each dedication. **We invite you instead to honor your loved ones at Christmas, with a contribution to our Open Door Ministry for community assistance.**

If you would like to offer a dedication in honor or memory of someone, please complete this form and mail it to the church office, with a contribution (\$5 minimum, payable FCC, memo “Open Door Poinsettia Fund”). Dedications received by Thursday, December 16, will be listed in worship bulletins on Sunday, December 19, and Christmas Eve.

Given by _____ Contribution _____

In honor of _____

In memory of _____

*Isa. 40:3-11; Ps. 103:15-17**J. Lewis Milligan, 1925; alt.*

1 There's a voice in the wil - der - ness cry - ing, a
 2 O Zi - on, who of - fers good tid - ings, to the
 3 But the word of our God is for - ev - er, our De -

call from the ways un - trod: Pre - pare in the des - ert a
 height of the moun - tains dare! Lift your voice to the cit - ies of
 fend - er's will is strong; God stands in the midst of

high - way, a high - way for our God! The
 Ju - dah: "Be - hold your God!" de - clare. Like the
 na - tions, to ren - der right the wrong. Then

Before moving to Canada, J. Lewis Milligan was a successful British journalist and poet. This text was written in 1925 to celebrate the union of three churches into The United Church of Canada, a body he served as public relations director.

Tune: ASCENSION Irr.
 H. Hugh Bancroft, 1938

val - leys shall be ex - alt - ed, the loft - y hills brought
 flowers of the field we per - ish, our hu - man works de -
 God shall be as a shep-herd, the lambs gath-ered to God's

low: make straight all the crook - ed pla - ces
 cay, the power and pomp of na - tions
 breast; and pas - tures of peace shall greet them,

where Em - man - u - el may go!
 shall pass like a dream a - way.
 to give to the wea - ry rest.

THE CHRISTMAS FUND

We invite you to consider a donation to the UCC's Christmas Fund, also known as the Fund for the Veterans of the Cross or Emergency Fund. This program offers compassionate, grateful support for retired clergy and their families with pension, healthcare, and emergency assistance.

Please contribute as you're able to this vital denominational offering, either by check to FCC (memo "Christmas Fund") or online at www.pbucc.org/index.php/christmas-fund-home. Thanks!

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

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Liturgy of St. James
Tr. Gerard Moultrie, 1829-1885

PICARDY 8.7.8.7.8.7.
Traditional French Carol

1 Let all mor-tal flesh keep si-lence, And with fear and trem-bling stand;
2 King of kings, yet born of Mar-y, As of old on earth he stood,
3 Rank on rank the host of heav-en Spreads its van-guard on the way,
4 At his feet the six-winged ser-aph; Cher-u-bim, with sleep-less eye,

Pon-der noth-ing earth-ly - mind-ed, For with bless-ing in his hand,
Lord of lords, in hu-man ves-ture, In the bod-y and the blood,
As the Light of light de-scend-eth From the realms of end-less day,
Veil their fa-cies to the pres-ence, As with cease-less voice they cry,

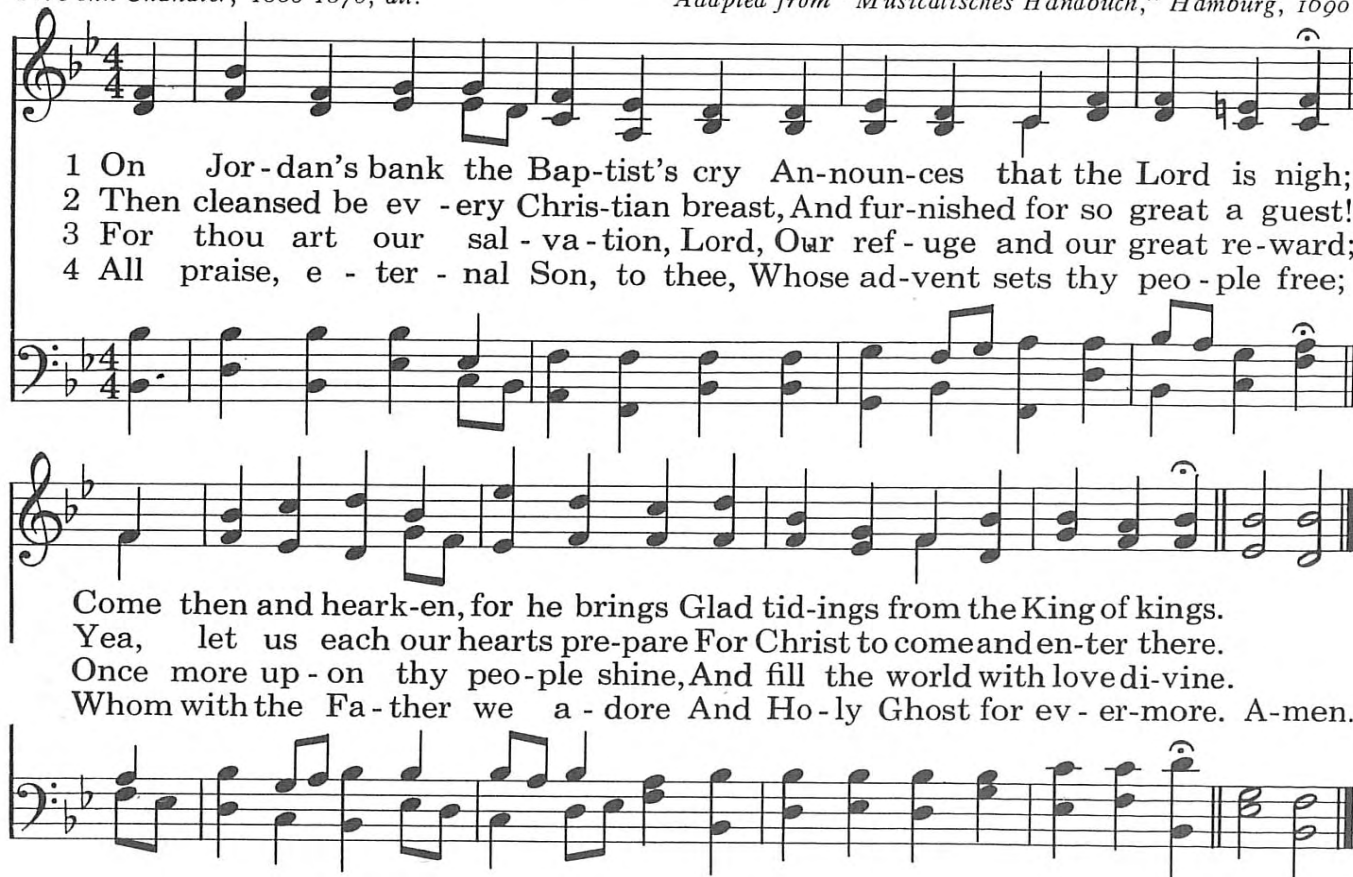
Christ our God to earth de-scend - eth, Our full hom-age to de-mand.
He will give to all the faith-ful His own self for heav-en-ly food.
That the powers of hell may van-ish As the dark-ness clears a-way.
Al-le-lu-ia, Al-le-lu-ia, Al-le-lu-ia, Lord Most High! A-men.

On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry

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Latin: Charles Coffin, 1676-1749
 Mr. John Chandler, 1806-1876, alt.

WINCHESTER NEW L.M.
 Adapted from "Musicalisches Handbuch," Hamburg, 1690



1 On Jor-dan's bank the Bap-tist's cry An-noun-ces that the Lord is nigh;
 2 Then cleansed be ev-ery Chris-tian breast, And fur-nished for so great a guest!
 3 For thou art our sal-va-tion, Lord, Our ref-uge and our great re-ward;
 4 All praise, e-ter-nal Son, to thee, Whose ad-vent sets thy peo-ple free;

Come then and heark-en, for he brings Glad tid-ings from the King of kings.
 Yea, let us each our hearts pre-pare For Christ to come and en-ter there.
 Once more up-on thy peo-ple shine, And fill the world with lovedi-vine.
 Whom with the Fa-ther we a-dore And Ho-ly Ghost for ev-er-more. A-men.



Music
 at the
 Meetinghouse

Live Music at FCC!

Masks, distanced seating, and proof of vaccination required.

Classicopia: Four-Hand Holiday—Sunday, December 5, at 1:00

Pianists Daniel Weiser and Elizabeth Borowsky collaborate on a program of seasonal favorites arranged for four-hand piano, from *Sleigh Ride* and *Jingle Bells* to Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker Suite*.

Adults \$20, FCC members \$15, children free; for advanced tickets and more, visit classicopia.org.

Cameo Baroque Concert for 19 Days of the Valley—Sunday, December 12, at 3:00

As their annual benefit for the Upper Valley Haven's "19 Days of the Valley" campaign, Ernie Drown and friends return with a new baroque program featuring G. F. Handel, Henry Purcell, G. P. Telemann, William Boyce, and others. Free-will donation; more at cameoarts.org.

(*Bel Canto Chamber Singers*—Saturday, Dec. 11, at 7:30 / Sunday, Dec. 12, at 4:00)

Please note that these concerts have been moved to the Norwich Congregational Church.

UVMC Messiah Sing (Abridged)—Sunday, December 19, at 2:00

G. F. Handel's beloved oratorio in a reduced, covid-safe format, thanks to our neighbors at UVMC. Student soloists perform selected arias, and we'll enjoy a community sing of the Hallelujah chorus.



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