



First Congregational Church of Lebanon

United Church of Christ – Open and Affirming

The Third Sunday in Lent

March 20, 2022

“Every saint has a past and every sinner has a future.”

–Oscar Wilde

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

Prelude

Benedictus

Alec Rowley

Call to Worship

Psalm 63:1-8

Leader: O God, you are my God, I seek you, my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

People: So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory.

Leader: Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you.

People: So I will bless you as long as I live; I will lift up my hands and call on your name.

Leader: My soul is satisfied as with a rich feast; my mouth praises you with joyful lips,

People: When I think of you on my bed, and meditate on you in the watches of the night;

Leader: For you have been my help, and in the shadow of your wings I sing for joy.

People: My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me.

Hymn 800 (p. 5)

Sometimes a Light Surprises

Salley Gardens

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

Anthem

Lord, For Thy Tender Mercy's Sake

Richard Farrant

Children's Moment

Today, we read a powerful story in Luke about people who wonder if those who died in an accident were being punished for their sins by God. “No!” says Jesus. That is not how God operates. Sadly, bad things happen to good people. We should not assume that they somehow deserved what happened to them. At the same time, we shouldn’t assume that God is absent. He is paying attention, and will see that justice is served.

Hymn 208 (p. 6)

God Loved the World

Rockingham

Scripture Lessons

Isaiah 55:1-9. Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. ²Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. ³Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live. I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. ⁴See, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples. ⁵See, you shall call nations that you do not know, and nations that do not know you shall run to you, because of the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you.

⁶Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near; ⁷let the wicked forsake their way, and the unrighteous their thoughts; let them return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. ⁸For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord. ⁹For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Luke 13:1-9. At that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. ²He asked them, “Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? ³No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did. ⁴Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them—do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? ⁵No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did.”

⁶Then he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. ⁷So he said to the gardener, ‘See here! For three

years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?" ⁸He replied, 'Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. ⁹If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.'"

Sermon "Towering Inferno?" Stephen R. Silver

Hymn 197 (p. 7) *At the Name of Jesus* King's Weston

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, Edith, Jan, Eileen, Jean, Michelle, Stephanie, Paulette, and Carolin.

O Merciful God, O Father of the nations, we look at the world and wonder, "Why?" Why are innocent people killed? Why does war rage? What can be done? We pray that we will acknowledge, recognize, and combat evil; that we will strive not to be complicit; that we will follow the path of Jesus and forge a world that is grounded in love and service. Give us strength, renew our faith, and imbue us with the power of your Holy Spirit, this day and always.

We pray this, and all the joys and concerns we hold in our hearts, in the name of Jesus Christ, 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

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 *Tune Thy Music to Thy Heart* Alec Rowley

*Tune thy music to thy heart, Sing thy joy with thanks, and so thy sorrow:
Though Devotion needs not Art, Sometimes of the poor the rich may borrow.
Strive not yet for curious ways: Concord pleaseth more, the less 'tis strained,
Zeal affects not outward praise, Only strives to show a love unfeigned.
Love can wondrous things effect, Sweetest sacrifice all wrath appeasing,
Love the Highest doth respect, Love alone to Him is ever pleasing.*

—Thomas Campion (1567-1620)

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*)

Lord of Creation, inspired by your grace, humbled by this season of renewal, grateful for all you have done, do, and will do through Jesus, we respond with this morning's offering. In our Savior's name we pray, Amen.

Hymn 161 (p. 8) *Before the Cross of Jesus*

St. Christopher

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 *Fugue in C Minor, BWV 549*

Johann Sebastian Bach

* * *

Leading Worship This Week

The Rev. Stephen R. Silver, Pastor

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

Linda and Bob Gerlach, Ushers • Dawn Troutman, Zoom Greeter

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.

Ecumenical Prayer Service for Ukraine—This Tuesday, March 22, at 7:00

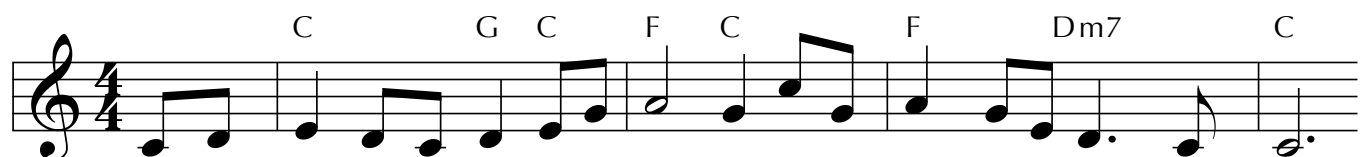
All are welcome—regardless of church affiliation—to gather in our Sanctuary for this opportunity to reflect, pray, and stand in solidarity with the people of Ukraine. (*Zoom available; contact FCC.*)

UCC Emergency Appeal for Ukrainian Refugee Assistance

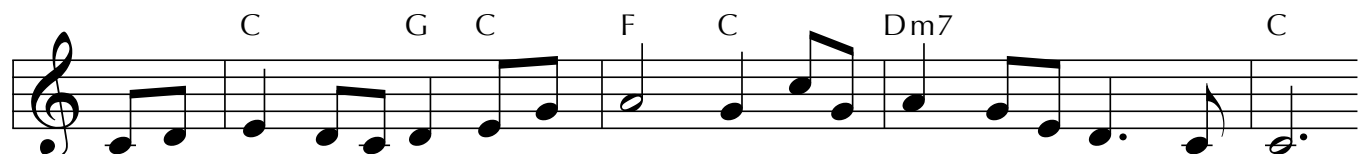
The UCC is working both as a member of the ACT Alliance and through the relief agency of the Reformed Church in Hungary. Visit www.ucc.org/global-h-o-p-e/ukraine-emergency-appeal/.

* * * **HOLY WEEK IS APRIL 10-17, 2022** * * *

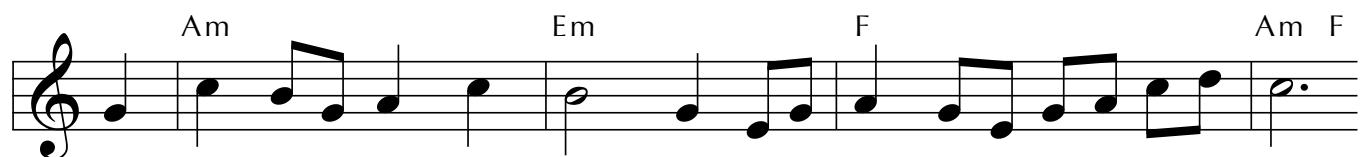
800 Sometimes a Light Surprises



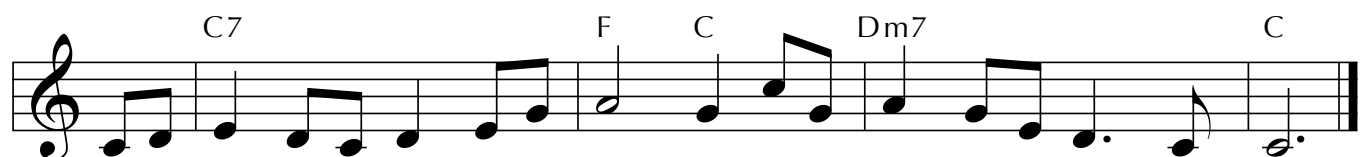
1 Some - times a light sur - pris - es the child of God who sings;
 2 In ho - ly con - tem - pla - tion we sweet - ly then pur - sue
 3 It can bring with it noth - ing but he will bear us through;
 4 Though vine nor fig tree nei - ther their longed-for fruit should bear,



it is the Lord who ris - es with heal - ing in his wings;
 the theme of God's sal - va - tion and find it ev - er new;
 who gives the lil - ies cloth - ing will clothe his peo - ple, too;
 though all the fields should with - er, nor flocks nor herds be there,



when com - forts are de - clin - ing, he grants the soul a - gain
 set free from pres - ent sor - row, we cheer - ful - ly can say,
 be - neath the spread - ing heav - ens no crea - ture but is fed;
 yet God the same a - bid - ing, his praise shall tune my voice;



a sea - son of clear shin - ing to cheer it af - ter rain.
 "Let the un - known to - mor - row bring with it what it may."
 and he who feeds the ra - vens will give his chil - dren bread.
 for while in him con - fid - ing, I can - not but re - joice.

This is one of the few hymns rooted in what can happen during worship, and that experience—gaining a spiritual insight while singing—is no less possible now than when this text was written in the 18th century. It is set here to a folk song variously labeled Irish or English.

TEXT: William Cowper, 1779, alt.
 MUSIC: Irish folk melody; arr. Alfred V. Fedak, 2011
 Music Arr. © 2011 Alfred V. Fedak

SALLEY GARDENS
 7.6.7.6.D

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

Caroline M. Noel, 1817-1877

KING'S WESTON 6.5.6.5.D.
R. Vaughan Williams, 1872-1958

In unison

1 At the name of Je - sus Ev - ery knee shall bow,
 2 At his voice cre - a - tion Sprang at once to sight
 3 Hum-bled for a sea - son, To re - ceive a name
 4 Bore it up tri - umph - ant, With its hu - man light,
 5 In your hearts en - throne him; There let him sub - due

Ev - ery tongue con - fess him King of glo - ry now;
 All the an - gel fa - ces, All the hosts of light,
 From the lips of sin - ners, Un - to whom he came.
 Through all ranks of crea - tures, To the cen - tral height,
 All that is not ho - ly, All that is not true.

'Tis the Fa - ther's pleas - ure We should call him Lord,
 Thrones and dom - i - na - tions, Stars up - on their way,
 Faith - ful - ly he bore it, Spot - less to the last,
 To the throne of God - head, To the Fa - ther's breast;
 Crown him as your cap - tain In temp - ta - tion's hour;

Who from the be - gin - ning Was the might - y Word.
 All the heaven - ly or - ders, In their great ar - ray.
 Brought it back vic - to - rious, When from death he passed;
 Filled it with the glo - ry Of that per - fect rest.
 Let his will en - fold you In its light and power. A-men.

Before the Cross of Jesus

161

Ferdinand Q. Blanchard, 1876-

ST. CHRISTOPHER 7.6.8.6.8.6.8.6.

Frederick C. Maker, 1844-1927

1 Before the cross of Jesus
Our lives are judged today;
The meaning of our eager strife
Is tested by his Way.
Across our restless living
The light streams from his cross,
And by its clear, revealing beams
We measure gain and loss.

2 The hopes that lead us onward,
The fears that hold us back,
Our will to dare great things for God,
The courage that we lack,
The faith we keep in goodness,
Our love, as low or pure,
On all, the judgment of the cross
Falls steady, clear, and sure.

3 Yet humbly, in our striving,
O God, we face its test.
We crave the power to do thy will
With him who did it best.
On us let now the healing
Of his great Spirit fall,
And make us brave and full of joy
To answer to his call. Amen.

It's Time for the Lenten Lunch Bag Offering

Lent once again brings the **Children's Community Corner** Lunch Bag Offering! We ask for your participation in this annual collection of savings from a regular sacrifice during Lent. The total collection on Palm Sunday (April 10) will be split between **Epilogos Charities** and **WISE of the Upper Valley**. (*Decorated paper bags are available, but not required to participate.*)

The Children's Community Corner thanks you for supporting this stewardship project!

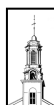
One Great Hour of Sharing: "Love Remains"—Special UCC Mission Offering

And now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love. —1 Cor 13:13

This annual, nationwide offering funds a range of mission initiatives around the world. It supports healthcare, education, agriculture, refugee assistance, and disaster 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.)



Classicopia: The Dancing Cello—Sunday, March 20, at 2:00

Our friend Elizabeth Borowsky brings back her mother, famed cellist Cecylia Barczyk, to usher in spring with bright, brilliant music for piano and cello. The program includes rhapsodies and dances by Ludwig van Beethoven, Frédéric Chopin, Claude Debussy, and more. *Adults \$20, FCC members \$15, children free; advance tickets and more at www.classicopia.org/concert/1091/.*

The Anonymous Coffeehouse—Fridays, March 25 and April 8, and Sat., April 23, all 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.*

Muskeg Music Presents Atlantic Crossing—Saturday, March 26, at 7:30

Enchanting contra-dance halls throughout New England for over two decades, Vermont-based Atlantic Crossing draws from both Celtic traditions of the British Isles and the music of Maritime and French Canada. Join us for this special concert rooted in a rich heritage of music and dance. (Rescheduled from March 12.) *Adults \$15, under 18 free; for more details, visit atlanticcrossingvt.com.*

Upper Valley Music Center Faculty Showcase—Saturday, April 2, at 4:00

Come enjoy a diverse program featuring the vocal and instrumental excellence of the faculty next door at UVMC. *Free-will donation; all proceeds benefit tuition assistance fund. More at www.uvmusic.org.*

Classicopia: Fabulous Females (Celebrating Women Composers)—Friday, April 22, at 7:30

Hanover's own virtuoso violinist Roseminna Watson joins pianist Dan Weiser for a program of great music by women composers, including Clara Schumann, Florence Price, Pauline Viardot, and NH's own Amy Beach. *Adults \$20, FCC members \$15, children free; more at www.classicopia.org.*

Cameo Arts Presents Stroud, Zay, and Odell—Sunday, April 24, at 2:00

Flautist Leslie Stroud joins cellist Peter Zay and pianist Matthew Odell for a benefit program featuring J. S. Bach, Felix Mendelssohn, and Michel Merlet. *Free-will donation; beneficiary TBD.*

Bel Canto Chamber Singers—Saturday, April 30, at 7:30 / Sunday, May 1, at 4:00

We're delighted to have Bel Canto return to our Sanctuary under the direction of Jane Woods! The program features music for choir, strings, timpani, and piano, including a premiere by NH composer Travis Ramsey. *Adults \$15, students \$10, under 13 free; more at www.belcantosingers.org.*

Classicopia: Broadway Violin Encore!—Saturday, May 14, at 7:30

Violinist Tim Schwartz returns for a reprise of last summer's popular "Broadway Violin" concert with pianist Dan Weiser. *Adults \$20, FCC members \$15, children free; more at www.classicopia.org.*



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
Jon Scott, Chair of Church Council • Linda Gerlach, Chair of Deacons • 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