



First Congregational Church of Lebanon

United Church of Christ – Open and Affirming

The Second Sunday of Advent

December 4, 2022

“We need to remember that we are saved by grace when we fail.
But we need to remember it much more when we succeed.”

–Timothy Keller

Kindly silence cell phones and other devices during worship. All hymns are included on pages 6-8.

Prelude *À la venue de Noël* Michel Corrette

Call to Worship Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19

One: Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to a king's son.

All: May he judge your people with righteousness, and your poor with justice.

One: May the mountains yield prosperity for the people, and the hills, in righteousness.

All: May he defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the needy, and crush the oppressor.

One: May he live while the sun endures, and as long as the moon, throughout all generations.

All: May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass, like showers that water the earth.

One: In his days may righteousness flourish and peace abound, until the moon is no more.

**All: Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things.
Blessed be his glorious name forever; may his glory fill the whole earth. Amen
and Amen.**

Hymn 163 (p. 6) *Wild and Lone the Prophet's Voice* Aberystwyth

Prayer of Invocation

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.

A Liturgy for Advent

Presentation of the Advent Banner

An Advent Reading

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

One: There is one crying out in the wilderness!

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

One: He comes to baptize with water,

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

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

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

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

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

This Is the Record of John

Orlando Gibbons

Children's Moment

Today we read about one of the great characters of the Bible: John the Baptist. John was courageous, in both his actions and his words. He was faithful, too. That said, what do we remember about him? Perhaps that he lived in the desert, that he ate bugs and wore animal skins. In short, he was, at least to us, strange, the kind of person we'd send away, as we wouldn't want to be bothered. But the people of Jerusalem were intrigued by what he said. The people flocked to hear John—and to be baptized by him.

All this must have been good for John's ego. But he did not let the praise, the adulation, go to his head. He focused on what mattered: God's love and what God was doing.

Hymn 114 (p. 7) *Return, My People*

Repton

Scripture Lessons

Romans 15:4-13. ⁴For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. ⁵May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, ⁶so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁷Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

⁸For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, ⁹and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, "Therefore I will confess you among the Gentiles, and sing praises to your name"; ¹⁰and again he says, "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people"; ¹¹and again, "Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples praise him"; ¹²and again Isaiah says, "The root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the Gentiles; in him the Gentiles shall hope." ¹³May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 3:1-12. In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, ²"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." ³This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.'" ⁴Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, ⁶and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

⁷But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸Bear fruit worthy of repentance. ⁹Do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ¹⁰Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

¹¹"I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹²His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

Sermon *"Is Anybody REALLY Listening?"*

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.

Today we offer our ongoing prayers for Pete, Lloyd, Arlene, Evelyn, Barbara, Greg, Edith, Jan, Eileen, Juanita, Terry, Dan, Ethan, Travis, Larry, Garrett, Penny, Sue, and Rick.

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 Jesus' name. 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 wait for your arrival, and we proclaim 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

Postlude *Noël Suisse* Louis-Claude d'Aquin

* * *

Leading Worship This Week

The Rev. Stephen R. Silver, Pastor

Ernie Drown, Organist • Laurel Stavis, Alto • The FCC Choir • Betsy Alexander, Liturgist
Linda Gerlach and Dawn Troutman, Ushers • Bob Gerlach, 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.

CHRISTMAS COMES TO ALL—LISTEN'S HOLIDAY BASKETS

Many thanks for covering everything on our wish lists! If you didn't claim an item but would still like to, LISTEN continues to have needs; please contact the church office for details.

Christmas Party and Carol Sing at the Parsonage

Next Sunday, December 11, 2:00-4:00 pm—15 Kimball St, Lebanon

All are warmly invited to the Parsonage for FCC's annual Christmas party! We'll gather round the fireplace for festive fellowship and favorite carols. *Please bring an appetizer or dessert to share.*

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!

163 Wild and Lone the Prophet's Voice



1 Wild and lone the proph-et's voice ech-oes through the des - ert still,
 2 "Bear the fruit re - pen-tance sows: lives of jus - tice, truth, and love.
 3 With such preach-ing, stark and bold, John pro-claimed sal - va - tion near,

call - ing us to make a choice, bid - ding us to do God's will:
 Trust no oth - er claim than those; set your heart on things a - bove.
 and his time-less warn-ings hold words of hope to all who hear.

"Turn from sin and be bap-tized; cleanse your heart and mind and soul.
 Soon the Lord will come in power, burn-ing clean the thresh-ing floor:
 So we dare to jour - ney on, led by faith through ways un - trod,

Quit-ting all the sins you prized, yield your life to God's con - trol.
 then will flames the chaff de - vour; wheat a - lone shall fill God's store."
 till we come at last like John to be - hold the Lamb of God.

While all four gospels identify John the Baptist with the prophecy of Isaiah 40:3, this text (well set to a vigorous Welsh tune) draws on the report of his preaching in Matthew 3:1–12. The final lines recall that he was the first to name Jesus "the Lamb of God" (John 1:29, 36).

*Joel 2:12-23; Isa. 11:1-12**James F. D. Martin, 1981; alt.*

1 Re - turn, my peo - ple, Is - ra - el, with pen - i - ten - tial tear;
 2 Fear not, be - lov - ed, hear - ken now: our God has done great things!
 3 Then to the faith - ful of the earth the call of God rings clear:

just as the proph-et did fore - tell the ad - vent of Em-man-u - el,
 Your vin - di - ca - tion shall pour down like rain up-on the bar - ren ground,
 "Re - turn, my peo - ple, claim your worth, pre-par - ing for your Sav - ior's birth;

God's reign on earth is near! God's reign on earth is near!
 glad tid - ings to you bring, glad tid - ings to you bring.
 my reign on earth is near. My reign on earth is near."

This new Advent text by United Church of Christ minister James Martin is set to a tune by British composer Charles Hubert Hastings Parry, who is also known for his symphonies, organ works, and cantatas.

Tune: REPTON 8.6.8.8.6.6.
C. Hubert H. Parry, 1888
 Alternate tune: REST

On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry

115

Melody: Charles Coffin, 1676-1749
Lyrics: 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.



"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. Rather than purchasing individual plants for each dedication, we once again invite you to honor your loved ones at Christmas with a **modest 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 return it either by mail or offering plate, with a contribution (\$5 minimum, payable FCC, memo "Poinsettia Fund"). Dedications received by Thursday, December 15, will be listed in worship bulletins the following Sunday, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day.

Given by _____ Contribution _____

In honor of _____

In memory of _____



The Anonymous Coffeehouse—Fridays, Dec. 2, Jan. 6 and 20, all 7:30 pm

Come enjoy our popular community venue for live local music! An informal “listening room” for emerging musicians, each show features several acoustic acts. Patrons come and go as they please; food and drink available. *Free admission. For performer info and more, visit anoncoffee.org.*

Lebanon Downtown Celebration / UVMC Holiday Festival—Saturday, December 3

As Lebanon Recreation and local businesses offer an array of festivities around the Green, the Upper Valley Music Center presents student recitals in FCC’s Sanctuary all afternoon. *Events all day at various times and locations around town. More details at lebanonnh.gov and uvmusic.org.*

Classicopia: Four-Hand Holiday—Sunday, December 4, at 2:00 pm

Pianists Daniel Weiser and Elizabeth Borowsky renew this seasonal tradition with a selection of favorites in exciting, four-hand arrangements—from “Sleigh Ride” and “White Christmas” to *The Nutcracker Suite*. *Adults \$20, FCC mems \$15, children free; visit classicopia.org/concert/four-hand-holiday-3/.*

Bel Canto Chamber Singers: Winter Dreams—Saturday, Dec. 10, 7:30 / Sunday, Dec. 11, 4:00

Director Jane Woods leads Bel Canto in its ever-popular holiday program, this year featuring a cantata by Norwegian composer Ola Gjeilo and music of Hans Leo Hassler, Felix Mendelssohn, Eric Whitacre, and more. *Adults \$15, students \$10, under 13 free; for more, visit www.belcantosingers.org.*

MUSE: 'Tis the Season of Harmony—Friday, December 16, at 7:00 pm

Directed by the inimitable Glee Charlestream, the Hanover-based Mosaic Union String Ensemble (MUSE) features student musicians of diverse ages and backgrounds. They share a short, festive holiday program in their FCC debut! *Freewill donation. More at www.mosaicunionstringensemble.org.*

Upper Valley Music Center Messiah Sing!—Sunday, December 18, at 3:30 pm

UVMC brings back its annual performance of G. F. Handel’s beloved oratorio, with student soloists and chamber orchestra. All are welcome to join the chorus (scores available!) or just listen. *Suggested \$20 donation. More at uvmusic.org/event/messiah-sing.*

Dream Big *Many Thanks for Your 2023 Stewardship Pledges*

“For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind.” (Isaiah 65:17)

Thanks to all for prayerfully considering a commitment to FCC’s mission and ministry in the coming year. We have so far received 18 pledges, and we gratefully continue to accept them.

Please either place your pledge form in the offering plate or return it to the church office by mail.

Offering envelopes for 2023 (in boxed sets #1-20) are available in the Parish Hall.



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@fcclb.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@fcclb.org • prayer@fcclb.org • music@fcclb.org • www.fcclb.org