



# First Congregational Church of Lebanon

*United Church of Christ – Open and Affirming*

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## The Third Sunday of Advent

December 11, 2022

“Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, today is a gift of God,  
which is why we call it the present.”

—Bil Keane

*Kindly silence cell phones and other devices during worship. All hymns are included on pages 5-9.*

**Prelude** Two Settings of *Vom Himmel hoch*, BWV 701 and 700 J. S. Bach

**Call to Worship** Luke 1:68-70, 76-79

One: Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them.

**All:** He has raised up a mighty savior for us in the house of his servant David, as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old.

One: And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,

**All:** To give knowledge of salvation to his people by the forgiveness of their sins.

One: By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us,

**All:** To give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

**Hymn 120** (pp. 56) *There's a Voice in the Wilderness*

Ascension

**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 35:1-10.* The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus <sup>2</sup>it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God.

<sup>3</sup>Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. <sup>4</sup>Say to those who are of a fearful heart, “Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you.”

<sup>5</sup>Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; <sup>6</sup>then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; <sup>7</sup>the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp, the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

<sup>8</sup>A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God’s people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.

<sup>9</sup>No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. <sup>10</sup>And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

### **An Advent Litany**

One: Let all Creation rejoice!

**All: Our God is coming!**

One: The prophet tells those who fear: Be not afraid!

**All: Our God is coming to save us.**

One: Our Lord has shown us the way.

**All: He will not let any of us go astray.**

One: Those who are lost will be found. Those who mourn will be comforted.

**All: Let us ready ourselves to see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God!**

### **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**

What do you hope for? A spaceship? A video game? A doll or action figure? All of those things are cool, but the Christian faith encourages us to hope for something bigger—imagine a world where *everybody* feels they are important, where everybody is valued, where everybody gets along, where we all live in peace. That’s the kind of world that Jesus wants for you and for me. Sound impossible? Well, with God it’s not.

Hope is something we can dream about and pray for. Hope can inspire us to work for what we desire. Hope can help us get through tough times. It's not denying reality but hoping for the improbable. And what's improbable is NOT impossible, especially with God by our side.

**Hymn 106** (p. 7) *Prepare the Way, O Zion*

Bereden väg för Herran

### Scripture Lessons

*James 5:7-10.* <sup>7</sup>Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. <sup>8</sup>You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. <sup>9</sup>Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! <sup>10</sup>As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

*Matthew 11:2-11.* <sup>2</sup>When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples <sup>3</sup>and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" <sup>4</sup>Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: <sup>5</sup>the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. <sup>6</sup>And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

<sup>7</sup>As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? <sup>8</sup>What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. <sup>9</sup>What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. <sup>10</sup>This is the one about whom it is written, 'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.' <sup>11</sup>Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.[...]"

**Sermon** "Hopey, Changey Stuff"

Stephen R. Silver

**Hymn 109** (p. 8) *Watchman, Tell Us of the Night*

Aberystwyth

### 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, Garrett, Penny, Sue, and Rick.

O God of Advent, we know that you are coming, that you will be with us. We say this with confidence, knowing that you will keep your promises to your people. We see how you have been steadfast and faithful to our forebears, and we believe that you will be so with us. Though we may doubt, though we may stray, we do want to be your people, to be loved and embraced by you, to be the ones who hear your word and follow your way, to be disciples of the One whose birth we will celebrate in two weeks.

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**

*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**                      *A Choral Hymn for Advent*

Henry G. Ley

### **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, in gratitude for the community into which you have gathered us, with thanks for the grace you have shown us, and in response to the love with which you have embraced us, we present these gifts. Amen.

**Hymn 110** (p. 9)              *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

Veni Emmanuel

### **Benediction**

**Postlude**                      *Noël Étranger*

Louis-Claude d'Aquin

\* \* \*

### *Leading Worship This Week*

The Rev. Stephen R. Silver, Pastor

Ernie Drown, Organist • Laurel Stavis, Alto • The FCC Choir • Linda Jacobs, Liturgist  
Marcia Corkins and Pete Mason, 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](mailto:prayer@fccleb.org) or speak with Rev. Silver directly.*

## **Christmas Party and Carol Sing at the Parsonage**

**Today! 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.*

*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.

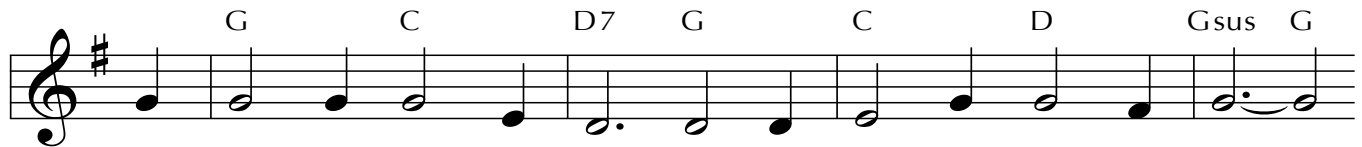
*Please contribute as you're able to this vital denominational offering, either by check to FCC (memo "Christmas Fund") or online at [www.pbucc.org/index.php/christmas-fund-home](http://www.pbucc.org/index.php/christmas-fund-home). Thanks!*



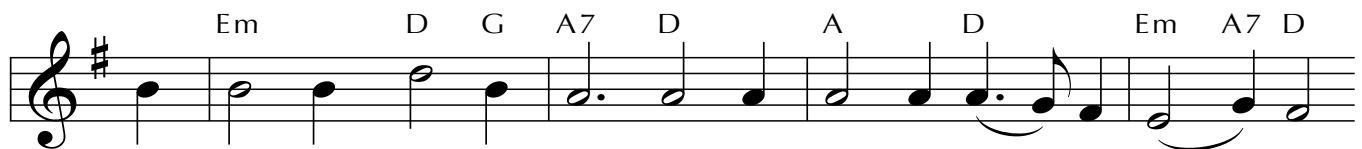
# Prepare the Way, O Zion 106



1 Pre - pare the way, O Zi - on, your Christ is draw-ing near!  
 2 He brings God's rule, O Zi - on; he comes from heaven a - bove.  
 3 Fling wide your gates, O Zi - on; your Sav - ior's rule em - brace,



Let ev - ery hill and val - ley a lev - el way ap - pear.  
 His rule is peace and free - dom, and jus - tice, truth, and love.  
 and ti - dings of sal - va - tion pro-claim in ev - ery place.



Greet One who comes in glo - ry, fore-told in sa - cred sto - ry.  
 Lift high your praise re-sound-ing, for grace and joy a - bound - ing.  
 All lands will bow re - joic - ing, their ad - o - ra - tion voic - ing.



O blest is Christ who came in God's most ho - ly name.

*Guitar chords do not correspond with keyboard harmony.*

This engaging Advent text based on Isaiah 40:3–5 and Psalm 24:7–10 has been in use in the Church of Sweden for almost two hundred years. It is set to a version of an even older Swedish tune, which in turn seems to be derived from a German folktune that spread to Scandinavia.

TEXT: Frans Mikael Franzen, 1812, rev. 1819; trans. Augustus Nelson, 1958;  
 adapt. Charles P. Price, 1980, alt.  
 MUSIC: *Then Svenska Psalmboken*, 1697; arr. *American Lutheran Hymnal*, 1930  
 Text © 1982 Hope Publishing Company

BEREDEN VÄG FÖR HERRAN  
 7.6.7.6.7.7 with refrain



## CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES AT FCC

*In the Sanctuary (masks and distancing required) and on Zoom*

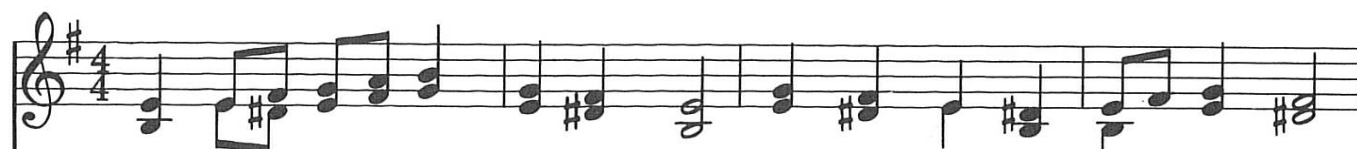
**Family Service with Pageant, 5:00 PM**—Our beloved service for families and the young-at-heart, once again in a live format! All are welcome to attend; if you or your children are interested in participating, please contact Nan Parsons at [nlp3721@yahoo.com](mailto:nlp3721@yahoo.com).

**Service of Lessons and Carols, 8:00 PM**—The story of Christ's birth in Scripture and traditional carols. Steve Silver will preach and our choir will sing, as we gather at the manger together.


## Watchman, Tell Us of the Night

*John Bowring, 1792-1872*

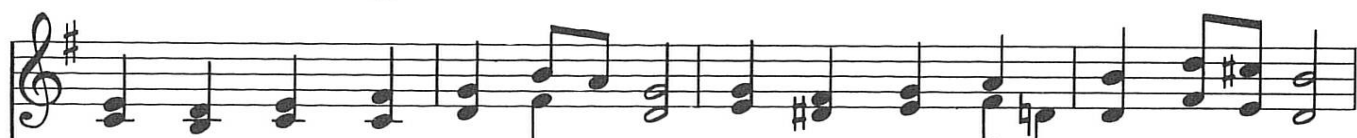
ABERYSTWYTH 7.7.7.7.D.

*Joseph Parry, 1841-1903*



1 Watch-man, tell us of the night, What its signs of prom-ise are.  
 2 Watch-man, tell us of the night, High-er yet that star as-cends.  
 3 Watch-man, tell us of the night, For the morn-ing seems to dawn,



Trav-eler, o'er yon moun-tain's height, See that glo-ry-beam-ing star.  
 Trav-eler, bless-ed-ness and light, Peace and truth its course por-tends.  
 Trav-eler, dark-ness takes its flight, Doubt and ter-ror are with-drawn.



Watch-man, does its beau-teous ray Aught of joy or hope fore-tell?  
 Watch-man, will its beams a-lone Gild the spot that gave them birth?  
 Watch-man, let thy wan-derings cease; Hie thee to thy qui-et home.



Trav-eler, yes; it brings the day, Prom-ised day of Is-ra-el.  
 Trav-eler, a-ges are its own; See, it bursts o'er all the earth.  
 Trav-eler, lo, the Prince of peace, Lo, the Son of God is come. A-men.



# O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

110

Latin: c.9th century

Tr. John M. Neale, 1818-1866, Sts. 1, 2, all.

Tr. Henry S. Coffin, 1877-1954, Sts. 3, 4

VENI EMMANUEL 8.8.8.8.8.

Adapted from Plainsong

Thomas Helmore, 1811-1890

*In unison*

1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, And ran - som cap - tive  
 2 O come, thou Day-spring, come and cheer Our spir - its by thine  
 3 O come, thou Wis - dom from on high, And or - der all things,  
 4 O come, De - sire of na - tions, bind All peo - ples in one

Is - ra - el, That mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here, Un -  
 ad - vent here; Dis - perse the gloom - y clouds of night, And  
 far and nigh; To us the path of knowl - edge show, And  
 heart and mind; Bid en - vy, strife and quar - rels cease; Fill

**REFRAIN**

til the Son of God ap - pear.  
 death's dark shad - ows put to flight.  
 cause us in her ways to go. Re - joice! Re - joice! Em -  
 the whole world with heav - en's peace.

man - u - el Shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el! 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 \_\_\_\_\_



Music  
at the  
Meetinghouse

### **Concerts for the Season!**

*Masks, distanced seating, and proof of vaccination required.*

**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](http://www.belcantosingers.org).*

**MUSE: *’Tis the Season of Harmony*—Next 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! *Free-will donation. More at [www.mosaicunionstringensemble.org](http://www.mosaicunionstringensemble.org).*

**Upper Valley Music Center *Messiah Sing!*—Next 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](http://uvmusic.org/event/messiah-sing).*

### **Dream Big** *Many Thanks for Your 2023 Stewardship Pledges*

Many thanks for the 26 pledges we have already received for 2023! As you prayerfully consider a commitment to FCC’s mission and ministry in the coming year, we will gratefully continue to accept pledges anytime in the coming weeks. Thank you for your support of our church!

*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](mailto: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](mailto:church@fcclb.org) • [prayer@fcclb.org](mailto:prayer@fcclb.org) • [music@fcclb.org](mailto:music@fcclb.org) • [www.fcclb.org](http://www.fcclb.org)**