



First Congregational Church of Lebanon

United Church of Christ – Open and Affirming

THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY

December 25, 2022

“The message of Christmas—the heart of it—is that the God who the Bible says is love actually showed up and said, ‘If y’all learn to love each other, and love me while you’re at it, you can make it!’”

—Michael B. Curry

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

Prelude

Joseph est bien marié

Claude Balbastre

Call to Worship

Psalm 98

One: O sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done marvelous things. His right hand and his holy arm have gotten him victory.

All: The LORD has made known his victory; he has revealed his vindication in the sight of the nations.

One: He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel. All the ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God.

All: Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises.

One: Sing praises to the LORD with the lyre, with the lyre and the sound of melody.

All: With trumpets and the sound of the horn make a joyful noise before the King, the LORD.

One: Let the sea roar, and all that fills it; the world and those who live in it. Let the floods clap their hands;

All: Let the hills sing together for joy at the presence of the LORD, for he is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with equity.

Hymn 132 (pp. 56) O Come, All Ye Faithful

Adeste Fideles

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.

Words of Welcome; Our Ministry and Mission

Children's Moment

Why are we having church today? Shouldn't we all be at home unwrapping presents? And didn't we have church last evening? Why so much church? Well, the answer is simple: every day is worth worshiping God. Every day is worth thanking God. Especially on the birthday of Jesus, which the Western Church celebrates on this very day: December 25. So, yes, people can say I'm being a stickler that I don't think the church should skip a service, especially on a Sunday, but it's bigger than all that: we are here today to thank God for all that he has given us, especially the gift of Jesus Christ. That's worth holding a service. Thank you, God!

Hymn 116 (p. 6, 8) *Angels We Have Heard on High*

Gloria

Scripture Lessons

Isaiah 52:7-10. ⁷How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns." ⁸Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices, together they sing for joy; for in plain sight they see the return of the Lord to Zion. ⁹Break forth together into singing, you ruins of Jerusalem; for the Lord has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem. ¹⁰The Lord has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

John 1:1-14. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him.

¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. ¹⁴And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. [...]

Sermon

"Word"

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, Edith, Jan, Eileen, Juanita, Terry, Dan, Ethan, Travis, Garrett, Penny, Sue, and Rick.

A Christmas Affirmation of Faith (*Unison*)

I believe that Christmas is more than a time for parties and ornaments; it is a time for remembering Jesus, the incarnation of God's love in human flesh.

I believe that there are gifts more important than the ones beneath the tree, such as the things we teach our children, the way we share ourselves with friends, and the efforts by which we set about reshaping the world in which we live.

I believe that the finest carols are often sung by the poorest voices, from hearts made warm by the wonder of this season.

I believe in the angels' message that we should not be afraid—that the Child of Bethlehem is able to overcome all anxieties, fears, and insecurities.

I believe in prayer and quietness as a way of approaching Christmas—that if I wait in silence, I will experience the presence of the one born in the manger, for He lives today as surely as He lived then.

I believe in going away from Christmas as the Magi went, "another way." I want to be different when these days are past—more centered, more thoughtful, more caring.

And I believe that God will help me and sustain me in my belief, this night and forevermore. 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

Puer Nobis Nascitur

Jean-François Dandrieu

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*)

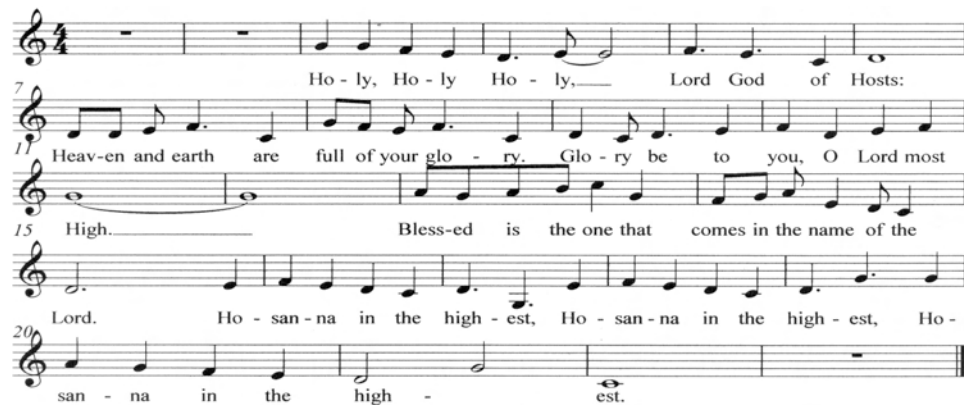
God of All Creation, though we come from many places, we gather here today as one people, presenting these gifts in gratitude for the community in Jesus that you have given us. Called to be one in Christ, we pray that this offering will not only help our brothers and sisters but also bring us closer to them and them to us. In Jesus' 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



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 120 (p. 7-8) *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*

Mendelssohn

Benediction

Postlude

Variations on Adeste Fideles

Raynor Taylor

* * *

Leading Worship This Week

The Rev. Stephen R. Silver, Pastor

Ernie Drown, Organist • Brian Clancy, Liturgist

Barb Jones, Head Usher • Rachel Silver, Zoom Greeter

* * *

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!

O Come, All Ye Faithful

Latin: John F. Wade, 1711-1786

Tr. Frederick Oakeley, 1802-1880, and others

ADESTE FIDELES Irregular

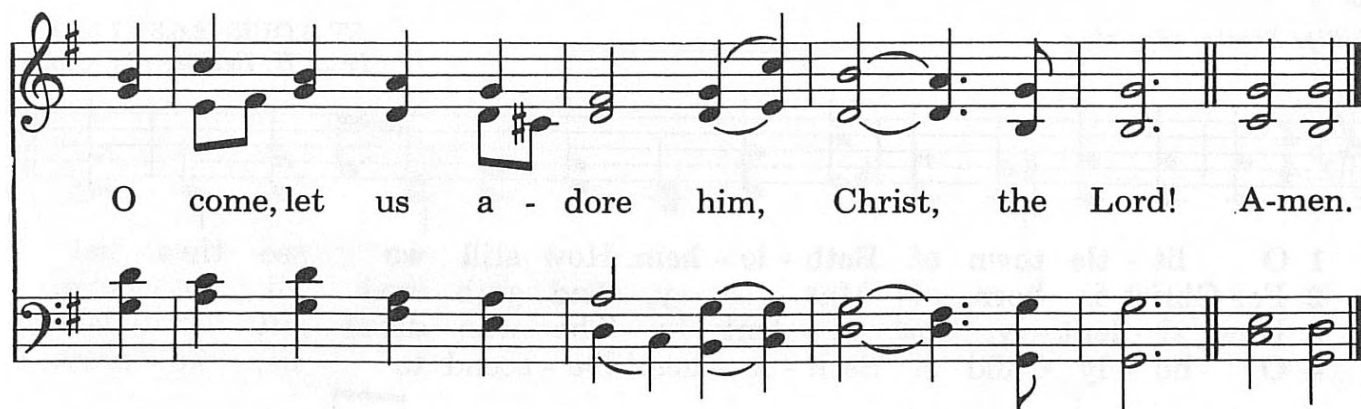
John F. Wade's "Cantus Diversi," 1751

1 O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant, O
 2 Sing, choirs of an - gels, sing in ex - ul - ta - tion,
 3 Child, for us sin - ners poor and in the man - ger,
 4 Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this hap - py morn - ing,

come ye, O come ye to Beth - le - hem;
 Sing, all ye cit - i - zens of heaven a - bove!
 We would em - brace thee, with love and awe;
 Je - sus, to thee be all glo - ry given;

Come and be - hold him, born the King of an - gels;
 Glo - ry to God, all glo - ry in the high - est;
 Who would not love thee, lov - ing us so dear - ly?
 Word of the Fa - ther, now in flesh ap - pear - ing;

O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let us a - dore him,



Music
at the
Meetinghouse

Upcoming Concerts

Masks, distanced seating, and proof of vaccination required.

The Anonymous Coffeeshouse—Fridays, January 6 and 20, February 3 and 17, all 7:30 pm

The Becker Sisters: Northern Legend—Saturday, January 21, at 7:00 pm

Cantabile Women's Chorus: All Shall Be Well—Sunday, January 22, at 3:00 pm

Upper Valley Baroque: The Italian Concerto—Saturday, Jan. 28, 7:00 / Sunday, Jan. 29, 3:00

Please Note: CONTENT FOR THE 2022 ANNUAL REPORT DUE MONDAY, JANUARY 9

Materials for FCC's 2022 Annual Report must be submitted to the Church Administrator by January 9, in order to ensure timely distribution of the report prior to our Annual Meeting.

The 2023 Annual Meeting will be Sunday, February 12, 2023

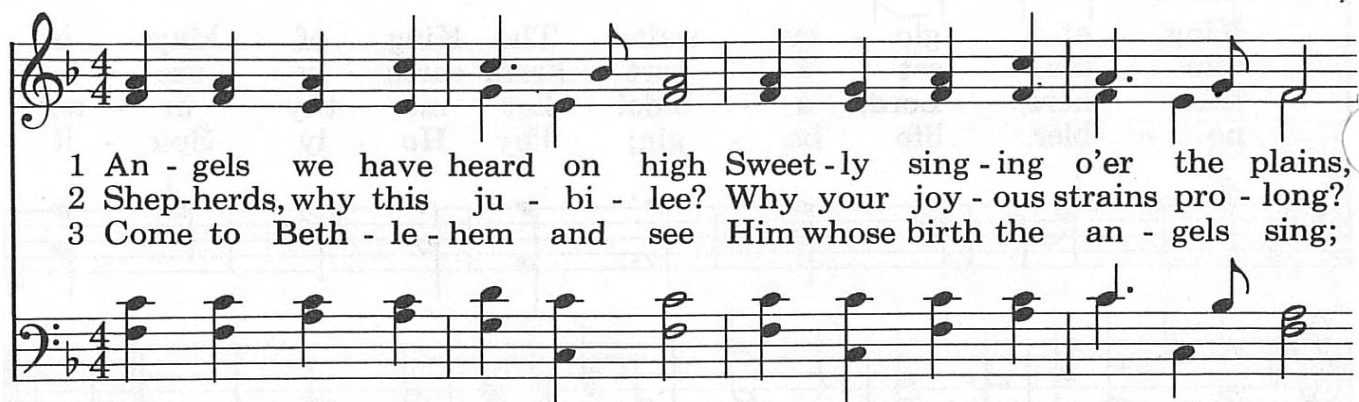
Dream Big *Many Thanks for Your 2023 Stewardship Pledges*

Many thanks for the 27 pledges we have already received for 2023! We will gratefully continue to accept pledges anytime in the coming weeks. Thank you for your support of our church!

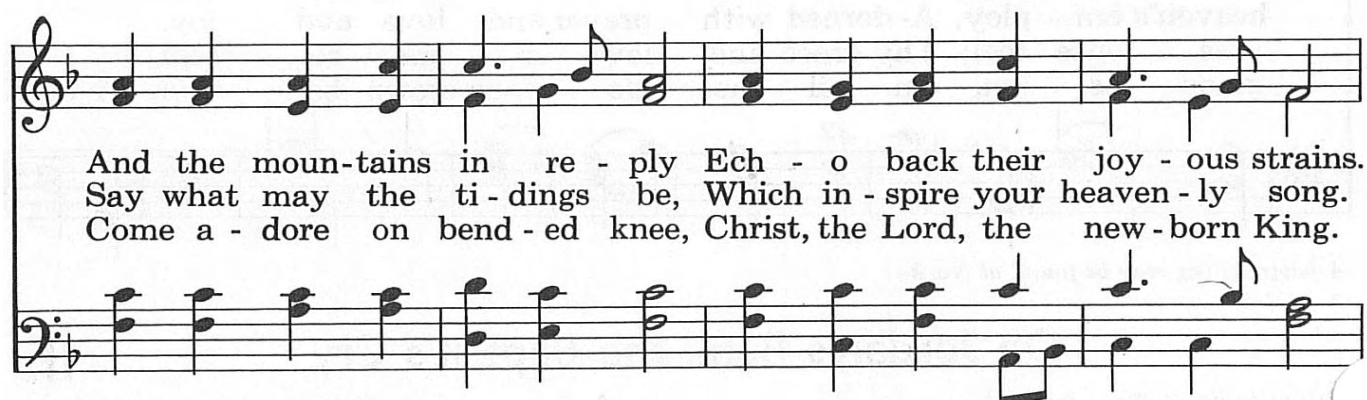
Please either place your pledge form in the offering plate or return it to the church office by mail.

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

Traditional French Carol

GLORIA 7.7.7.7. with Refrain
French Carol Melody


1 An - gels we have heard on high Sweet - ly sing - ing o'er the plains,
2 Shep - herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro - long?
3 Come to Beth - le - hem and see Him whose birth the an - gels sing;



And the moun - tains in re - ply Ech - o back their joy - ous strains.
Say what may the ti - dings be, Which in - spire your heaven - ly song.
Come a - dore on bend - ed knee, Christ, the Lord, the new - born King.

REFRAIN



Glo - - - - - ri - a



in ex - cel - sis De - o, Glo - - - - -

ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.

120

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Charles Wesley, 1707-1788, alt.

MENDELSSOHN 7.7.7.D. with Refrain

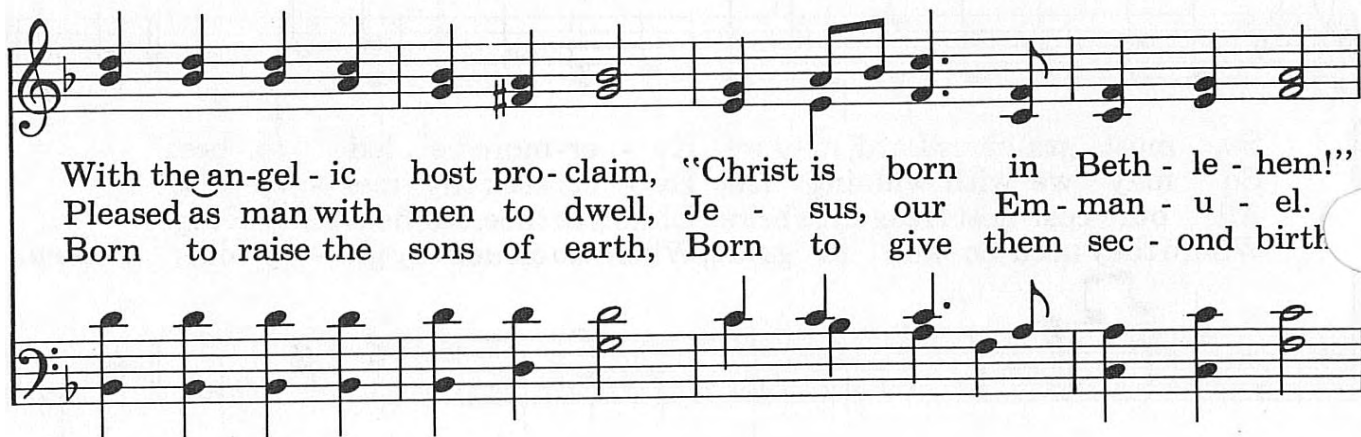
Felix Mendelssohn, 1809-1847

Arr. by William H. Cummings, 1831-1915

1 Hark! the her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new-born King;
2 Christ, by high - est heaven a - dored; Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord!
3 Hail the heaven-born Prince of peace! Hail the Sun of right-eous-ness!

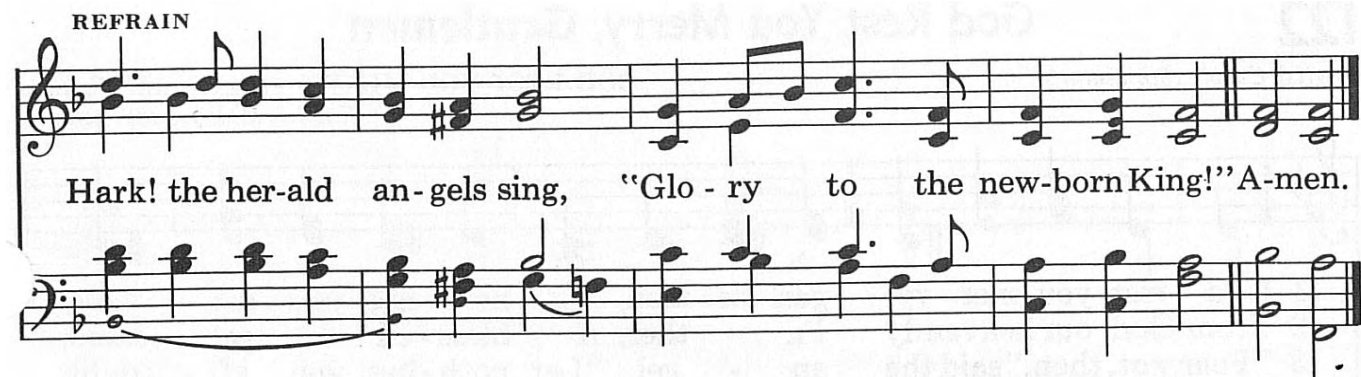
Peace on earth, and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled!"
Late in time be - hold him come, Off - spring of the Vir - gin's womb.
Light and life to all he brings, Risen with heal - ing in his wings,

Joy - ful, all ye na - tions, rise, Join the tri - umph of the skies;
Veiled in flesh the God-head see; Hail the in - car - nate De - i - ty,
Mild he lays his glo - ry by, Born that man no more may die,



With the an-gel - ic host pro-claim, "Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!"
 Pleased as man with men to dwell, Je - sus, our Em-man - u - el.
 Born to raise the sons of earth, Born to give them sec - ond birth

REFRAIN



Hark! the her-ald an-gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new-born King!" A-men.



Merry Christmas!

Many, many thanks to all those who generously offered contributions to our **OPEN DOOR MINISTRY** for community assistance, in honor or memory of their loved ones listed below.

IN HONOR OF...

DeAnn/Mom/Mema—*Brian, Amy, Katie, and Grace*

Linda Jean—*Isaac, Loving Husband*

Ike's mom, Betty Adams; Ike's aunt, Terri Reese; Carey Jacobs; and Craig Jacobs—*Linda and Ike Jacobs*

The good, hard-working members of this church family—*Barb Jones*

Our mothers, Phyllis and Kathy, and stepdad Ron—*Deb and Jon Scott*

Our families and loved ones—*The Silver Family*

Kenneth W. Smith; and Linda and Ike Jacobs, for the many wonderful things they do that make a difference in this little corner of the world and beyond—*Rachel Smith-Jones, Travis Jones, Thad, and Elias*

Juliet Marion, mother and grandmother extraordinaire—*Dominic and Stacey*

My parents, Lanny and Jack Natcher; and Corgette and John Troutman—*Dawn Troutman*

IN MEMORY OF...

My son Dan—*Ron Bailey*

Family and friends who have passed on—*Kathy and Warren Belding*

Our parents, Dorothy and Roy Ford and Lula and Royal Bennett—*Ginny and Lloyd Bennett*

Sandy Driscoll, Bill Driscoll, and Maury Clancy—*Brian, DeAnn, Amy, Katie, and Grace*

Laura and Gordon "Doc" Place—*Sue and Ken Gould and Family*

Linda's family: Barbara and Maurice Sumner, Ruby Sumner, Betty Sumner King, Donna Lee King Castle, and Alicia Ann King; and Ike's dad, Raymond Adams—*Linda and Ike Jacobs*

My parents, the Rev. A. Bertram Miller and Mary Margaret Robarts Miller—*Elizabeth Nestler*

Larry Kirkpatrick (Grandpap)—*Kailyn Rappaport and Nan Parsons*

Aunt Jeanie and our grandparents—*Deb and Jon Scott*

Ginger—*Wendell Smith*

My Nana, Helen Elizabeth Kelley Smith—*Rachel Smith-Jones*

Beloved friends Lynn Anderson, Laura and Gordon Place, and Betty and Ellis Howard—*Rachel Smith-Jones and Travis Jones*

Great-grandma Gladys; Great-grandpa Hezekiah; Grandpa Keith; Aunts Dor, Heather, Sonia, Dulcey; and Uncle Noel—*Dominic and Stacey*



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