



First Congregational Church of Lebanon

United Church of Christ – Open and Affirming

The Second Sunday in Lent

March 5, 2023

“When God speaks and we respond with faith, we are born into a new life.”

–Rudolf Bultmann

Kindly silence cell phones and other devices during worship. All hymns are included on pages 5-7.

Prelude

Les Barricades Mystérieuses

François Couperin

Call to Worship

Psalm 121

One: I lift up my eyes to the hills—from where will my help come?

All: My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth.

One: He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber.

All: He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.

One: The LORD is your keeper; the LORD is your shade at your right hand.

All: The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night.

One: The LORD will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life.

All: The LORD will keep your going out and your coming in from this time on and forevermore.

Hymn 14 (p. 5)

The God of Abraham Praise

Leoni

Prayer of Invocation

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

Alma Redemptoris Mater

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina

“Loving mother of the Redeemer, who remains the open gateway to Heaven and star of the sea, give aid to your fallen people who strive to rise. O thou who bore thy holy Creator, while all nature marveled, Virgin before and after, receiving that ‘hail’ from the mouth of Gabriel, have mercy on sinners.”

Children’s Moment

Do you look up to anyone? Is there an adult you admire? A classmate? A public figure? An athlete? Perhaps it’s somebody who hasn’t always been seen as “cool.”

One person I have admired over the years is Jimmy Carter, our nation’s 39th President, and what I look up to is what he has done in the years since he left office. I do not agree with every political position he has taken, but I have tremendous respect for the work he has done to help Habitat for Humanity—he builds houses for people—and the Carter Center, which has, among other things, worked to eliminate some awful diseases around the world.

No movie deals. No hanging out with celebrities. No high-paying board positions or media deals. Instead, Jimmy Carter has devoted the last decades of his life to helping people. Not a bad way to spend his time, is it?

Hymn 211 (p. 6) *Jesus, Lover of My Soul*

Aberystwyth

Scripture Lessons

Genesis 12:14a. Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. ²I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

⁴So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. [...]

John 3:1-17. Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. ²He came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.” ³Jesus answered him, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.” ⁴Nicodemus said to him, “How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother’s womb and be born?” ⁵Jesus answered, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. ⁶What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Do not be astonished that I said to you, ‘You must be born from above.’ ⁸The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born

of the Spirit.” ⁹Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?” ¹⁰Jesus answered him, “Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

¹¹“Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. ¹²If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? ¹³No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. ¹⁴And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

¹⁶“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

¹⁷“Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. [...]”

Sermon

“Fumbling in the Dark”

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, Arlene, Evelyn, Barbara, Greg, Edith, Jan, Eileen, Juanita, Terry, Dan, Ethan, Travis, Garrett, Sue, Rick, and Terry.

O patient God, we, like Nicodemus, are searching for answers. We are searching for enlightenment. We are searching for the truth. And, also like Nicodemus, we are searching in the dark, at a time when we hope to be unseen, and nobody will know. We are worried of what others may think, of confessing our doubt and uncertainty, of being found out. But still we search. And as we engage in our quest for truth and grace, inspire us, embolden us to look to your Son, even if the wider world looks elsewhere. Help us to stand with Jesus, to bear witness to his work on the cross, to receive your Holy Spirit, that we may know you and glorify you, and know your Truth.

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

Draw Us in the Spirit’s Tether

Harold Friedell

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*)

Called to be your people, we respond with joy.
Called to a new place, we follow you.
Called to Christ's ministry, we serve others.
In gratitude for your call to us, O God, we present these gifts, praying that they will help to spread your love and light in the world. In the name of Christ 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 348 (p. 7) My Faith Looks Up to Thee

Olivet

Benediction

Postlude

Sinfonia in G Minor, BWV 797

Johann Sebastian Bach


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@fccleeb.org or speak with Rev. Silver directly.

The God of Abraham Praise

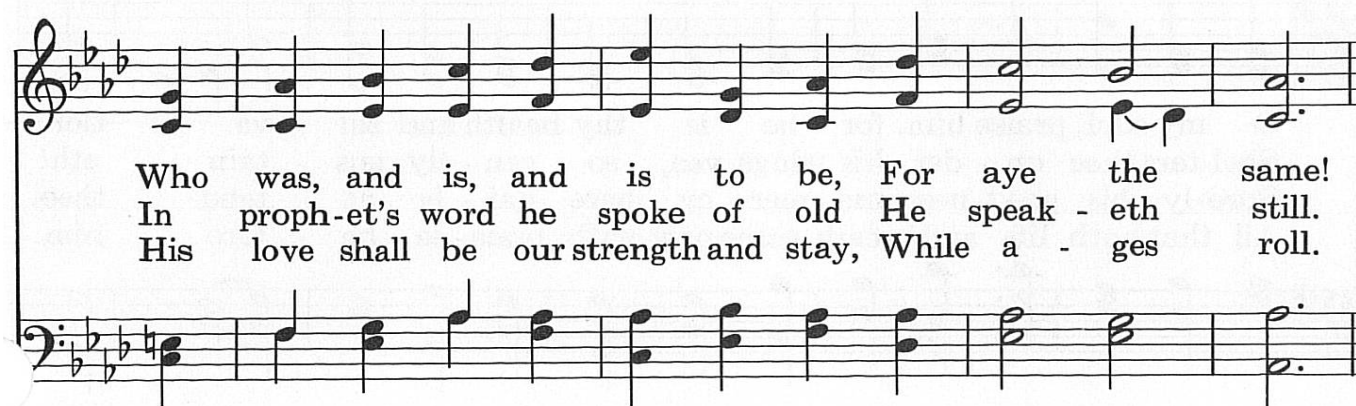
14

Revised Version of the "Yigdal"
Daniel ben Judah, c.1400
Tr. Newton Mann, 1836-1926,
and Max Landsberg, 1845-1928

LEONI 6.6.8.4.D.
Traditional Hebrew Melody
Adapted by Meyer Lyon, 1751-1797



1 The God of A-braham praise, All prais - ed be his name,
 2 His spir - it flow - eth free, High surg - ing where it will;
 3 He hath e - ter - nal life Im - plant - ed in the soul;



Who was, and is, and is to be, For aye the same!
 In proph-et's word he spoke of old He speak - eth still.
 His love shall be our strength and stay, While a - ges roll.



The one e - ter - nal God, Ere aught that now ap - pears;
 Es - tab - lished is his law, And change-less it shall stand,
 Praise to the liv - ing God! All prais - ed be his name



The First, the Last: be - yond all thought His time - less years!
 Deep writ up - on the hu - man heart, On sea, or land.
 Who was, and is, and is to be, For aye the same! A-men.

Jesus, Lover of My Soul

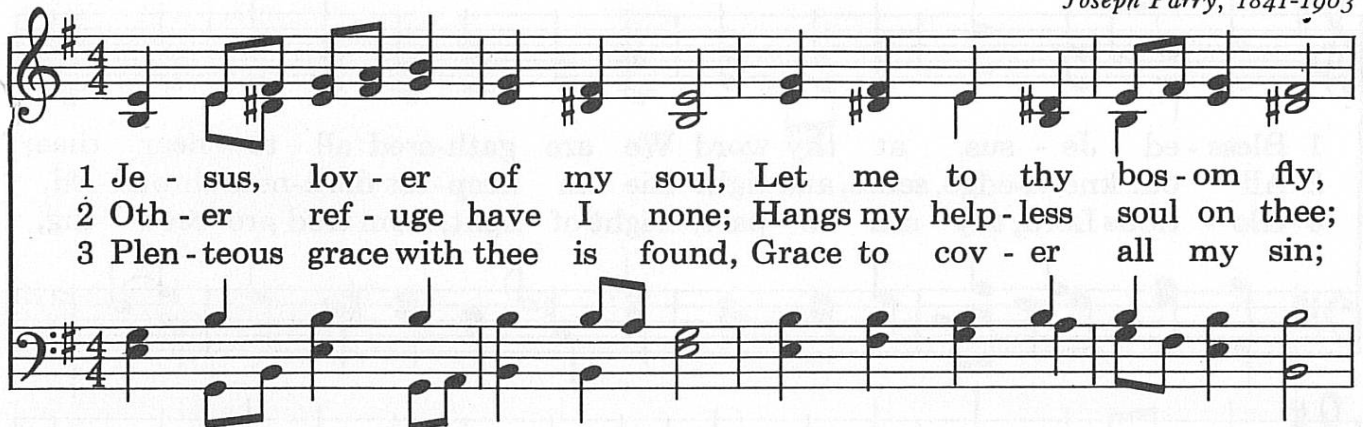
Second Tune

211

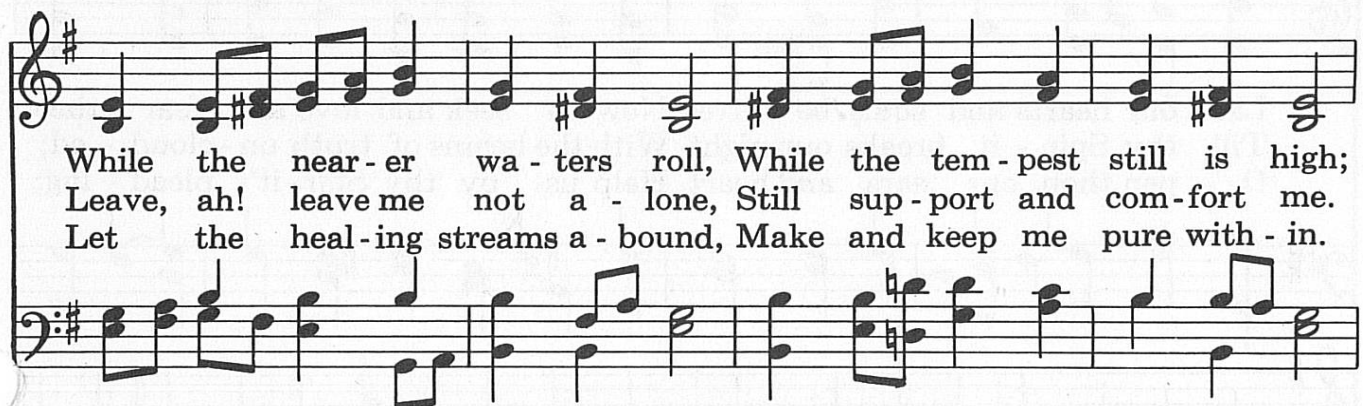
Charles Wesley, 1707-1788

ABERYSTWYTH 7.7.7.7.D.

Joseph Parry, 1841-1903



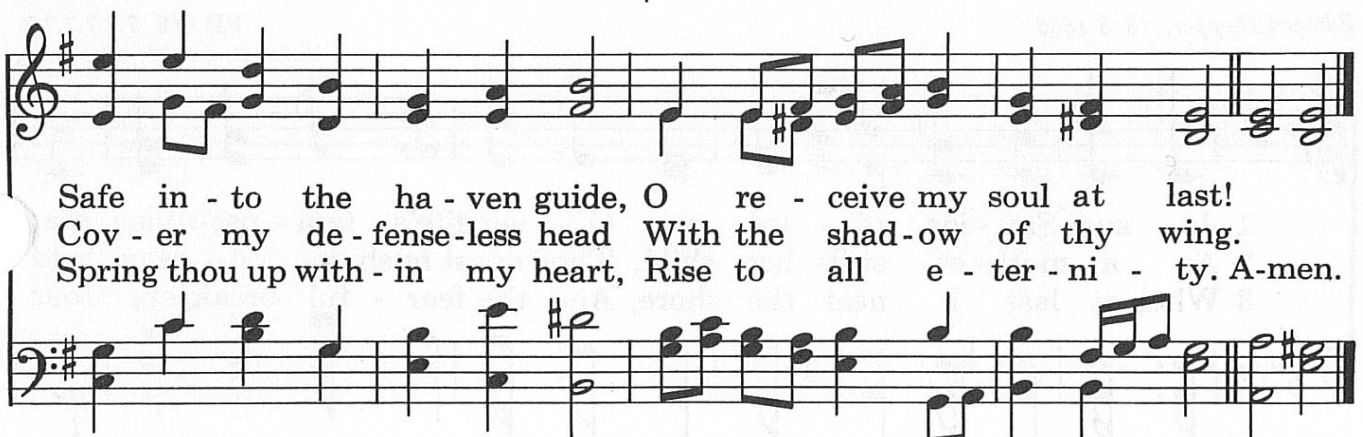
1 Je - sus, lov - er of my soul, Let me to thy bos - om fly,
2 Oth - er ref - uge have I none; Hangs my help - less soul on thee;
3 Plen - teous grace with thee is found, Grace to cov - er all my sin;



While the near - er wa - ters roll, While the tem - pest still is high;
Leave, ah! leave me not a - lone, Still sup - port and com - fort me.
Let the heal - ing streams a - bound, Make and keep me pure with - in.



Hide me, O my Sav - ior, hide, Till the storm of life is past;
All my trust on thee is stayed, All my help from thee I bring;
Thou of life the foun - tain art, Free - ly let me take of thee;



Safe in - to the ha - ven guide, O re - ceive my soul at last!
Cov - er my de - fense - less head With the shad - ow of thy wing.
Spring thou up with - in my heart, Rise to all e - ter - ni - ty. A - men.

My Faith Looks Up to Thee

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Ray Palmer, 1808-1887, alt.

OLIVET 6.6.4.6.6.6.4.
Lowell Mason, 1792-1872

1 My faith looks up to thee, Thou Lamb of Cal - va - ry,
2 May thy rich grace im - part Strength to my faint - ing heart,
3 While life's dark maze I tread, And griefs a - round me spread,
4 When ends life's tran - sient dream, When death's cold, sul - len stream

Sav - ior di - vine! Now hear me while I pray; Take all my
My zeal in - spire; As thou hast died for me, Oh, may my
Be thou my guide; Bid dark - ness turn to day; Wipe sor - row's
Shall o'er me roll, Blest Sav - ior, then, in love, Fear and dis -

guilt a - way; Oh, let me from this day Be whol - ly thine.
love to thee Pure, warm, and changeless be, A liv - ing fire.
tears a - way; Nor let me ev - er stray From thee a - side.
trust re - move; Oh, bear me safe a - bove, A ran - somed soul. A - men.

* * *

Leading Worship This Week

The Rev. Stephen R. Silver, Pastor

Ernie Drown, Piano • The FCC Choir • Bob Ross, Liturgist

Chris Chase and Ike Jacobs, Ushers • Linda Jacobs, Zoom Greeter

If you would like to receive daily devotional reflections from Rev. Steve Silver during Lent, please contact the church office or email him directly at silver@fccleb.org.

* * * HOLY WEEK IS APRIL 2-9, 2023 * * *

One Great Hour of Sharing: “Time to Share”—Special UCC Mission Offering

This annual, nationwide UCC offering funds 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.)

It’s Time for the Lenten Lunch Bag Offering

The season of Lent 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 2) 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!



Music
at the
Meetinghouse

UPCOMING CONCERTS!

Masks and vaccination recommended.

The Anonymous Coffeehouse—Fridays, March 3, 17, 31, April 14 and 28, all 7:30 pm

Our popular community venue for live local music! Patrons come and go as they please; baked goods and beverages available. *Free admission. For performer info and more, visit anoncoffee.org.*

Upper Valley Music Center Faculty Showcase—Sunday, March 19, at 3:00 pm

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: Black Brilliance (Celebrating Black Composers)—Saturday, March 25, at 7:30 pm

Pianist Dan Weiser and Borowsky siblings Emmanuel (violin) and Frances (cello) offer a superb program in celebration of Black History Month, from ragtime and spirituals to blues-inspired compositions. Music of Scott Joplin, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, Undine Smith Moore, Florence Price, and William Grant Still. *Adults \$20, FCC members \$15, children free; more at classicopia.org.*

BIBLE STUDY: THE BOOK OF DANIEL—STARTS MARCH 22 ON ZOOM

You may remember “the writing on the wall.” Or the men who survive a fiery furnace. Perhaps Belshazzar’s Feast rings a bell. One of the later books of the Hebrew Bible, Daniel offers political lessons for a people in exile and apocalyptic insights into the future for the Jewish people in a world of turmoil. The early Church understood this book as pointing to Jesus.

Please join us to explore this fascinating book over the course of five weeks, led by the Rev. Steve Silver. We’ll see what Daniel said to people in the past and what he has to say to us today.

All you need is a bible, your faith, and some curiosity! RSVP to the church or silver@fccleb.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@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