



First Congregational Church of Lebanon

United Church of Christ – Open and Affirming

The Fourth Sunday in Lent • Laetare Sunday

March 19, 2023

“Lent is a time for discipline, for confession, for honesty, not because God is mean or fault-finding or finger-pointing but because he wants us to know the joy of being cleaned out, ready for all the good things he now has in store.”

–N. T. Wright

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

Prelude *Fantasia in C Minor, BWV 906* Johann Sebastian Bach

Call to Worship Psalm 23

One: The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

All: He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

One: He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

All: Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

One: Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

All: Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

Hymn 68 (p. 5) *I Sing the Mighty Power of God* Ellacombe

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 *Call to Remembrance* Richard Farrant

Children's Moment

Today, the fourth Sunday in Lent, is known as *Laetare Sunday*. “Laetare” is Latin for “Rejoice!” That’s right—a command to celebrate, to be joyful, in the middle of Lent. The church knows that we can go overboard in whatever we do, and that includes Lent, which has a reputation for being a gloomy time. When we repent, it’s not to punish ourselves. God does not call us to feel bad about ourselves. Instead, God wants us to be the best people we can be; sometimes that means changing our behavior. So during this season of Lent, we rejoice today—for the love of God; for Jesus, who came to be with us; for the Holy Spirit who comforts us; for the people in our lives whom we love. Rejoice today!

Hymn 343 (p. 6) *In Heavenly Love Abiding*

Nyland

Scripture Lessons

1 Samuel 16:1-13. The Lord said to Samuel, “How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons.” ²Samuel said, “How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me.” And the Lord said, “Take a heifer with you, and say, ‘I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.’” ³Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you.” ⁴Samuel did what the Lord commanded, and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said, “Do you come peaceably?” ⁵He said, “Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.” And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

⁶When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, “Surely the Lord’s anointed is now before the Lord.” ⁷But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.” ⁸Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. He said, “Neither has the Lord chosen this one.” ⁹Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, “Neither has the Lord chosen this one.” ¹⁰Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, “The Lord has not chosen any of these.” ¹¹Samuel said to Jesse, “Are all your sons here?” And he said, “There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep.” And Samuel said to Jesse, “Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here.” ¹²He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome. The Lord said, “Rise and anoint him; for this is the one.” ¹³Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the presence of his brothers; and the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.

John 9:1-41. As [Jesus] walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. ²His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” ³Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him. ⁴We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. ⁵As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” ⁶When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man’s eyes, ⁷saying to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. ⁸The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, “Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?” ⁹Some were saying, “It is he.”

Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am the man." ¹⁰But they kept asking him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" ¹¹He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' Then I went and washed and received my sight." ¹²They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know."

¹³They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. ¹⁴Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. ¹⁵Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see." ¹⁶Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And they were divided. ¹⁷So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened." He said, "He is a prophet."

¹⁸The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight ¹⁹and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" ²⁰His parents answered, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; ²¹but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself." ²²His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. ²³Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

²⁴So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, "Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner." ²⁵He answered, "I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." ²⁶They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" ²⁷He answered them, "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?" ²⁸Then they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. ²⁹We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." ³⁰The man answered, "Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. ³¹We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. ³²Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. ³³If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." ³⁴They answered him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?" And they drove him out.

³⁵Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" ³⁶He answered, "And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him." ³⁷Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he." ³⁸He said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped him. ³⁹Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgment so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind." ⁴⁰Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, "Surely we are not blind, are we?" ⁴¹Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, 'We see,' your sin remains."

Sermon "Can You See?"

Stephen R. Silver

Hymn 84 (p. 7) *The Lord's My Shepherd*

Crimond

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.

On this Laetare Sunday, we turn to you, O God, with joy. Not because we ignore the challenges of life, or our problems, but because we know that you are with us. You are our constant companion, walking with us throughout life, hearing our prayers, and knowing our needs. We, however, often forget or, sometimes, ignore this truth. Help us, during this Lent, to turn to you with faith and confidence.

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 "For the Mountains Shall Depart," from *Elijah* Felix Mendelssohn

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 Jesus you have granted us a fresh start, a second chance, a new life. In gratitude, we offer our prayers and songs, our time, talents, and money. We pray that all of these gifts will transform both those who receive them and those who give them, all in the service of the Good News of love with which we are blessed. In the name of Christ we pray, Amen.

Hymn 649 (p. 8) *Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound* New Britain

Benediction

Postlude *Sarabande, French Suite No. 5, BWV 816* Johann Sebastian Bach

* * *

Leading Worship This Week

The Rev. Stephen R. Silver, Pastor

Ernie Drown, Piano • The FCC Choir • Brian Clancy, Baritone • Chris Chase, Liturgist
Linda and Bob Gerlach, Ushers • Dawn Troutman, Zoom Greeter

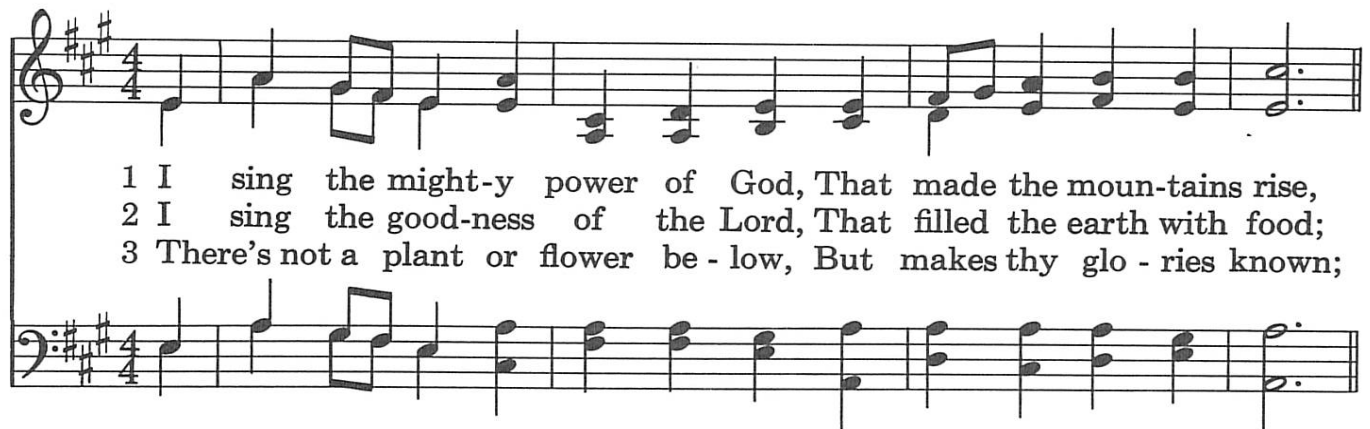
If you wish to have a joy, concern, or prayer request lifted up in the service, or if you know of someone who may need special prayers, a card or phone call, or some other form of pastoral care, please email prayer@fccleb.org or speak with Rev. Silver directly.

I Sing the Mighty Power of God

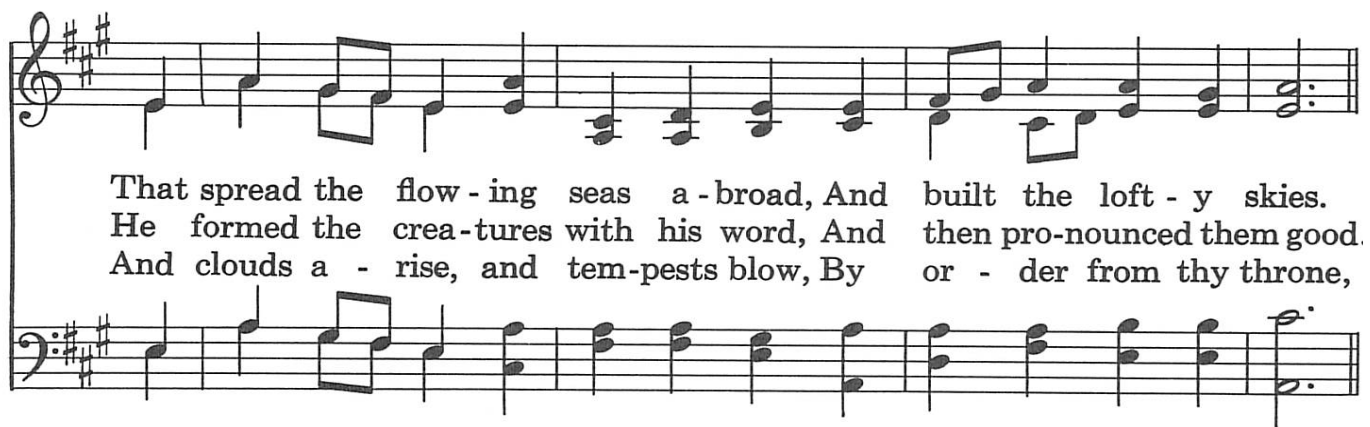
68

Isaac Watts, 1674-1748, *all.*

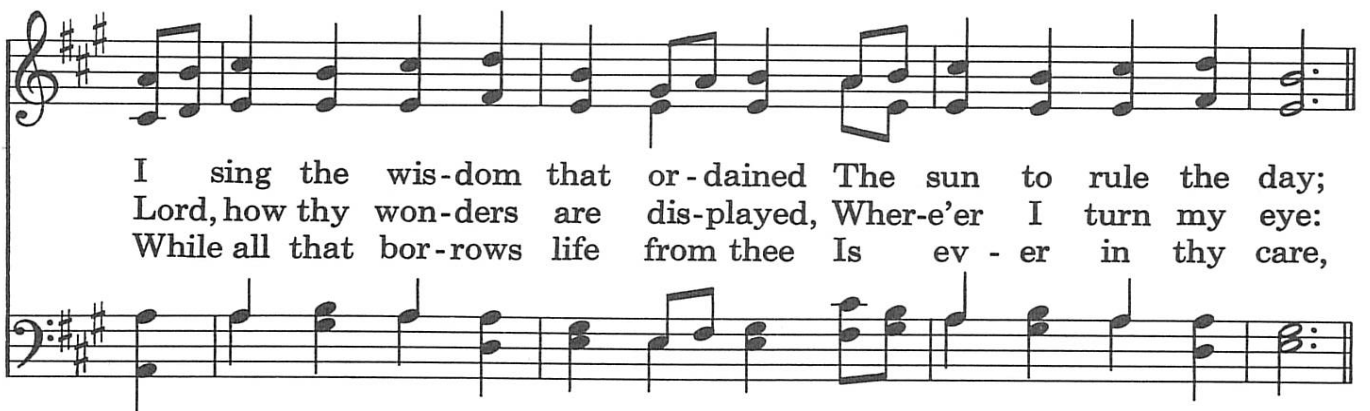
ELLACOMBE C.M.D.
"Gesangbuch," Wirtemberg, 1784



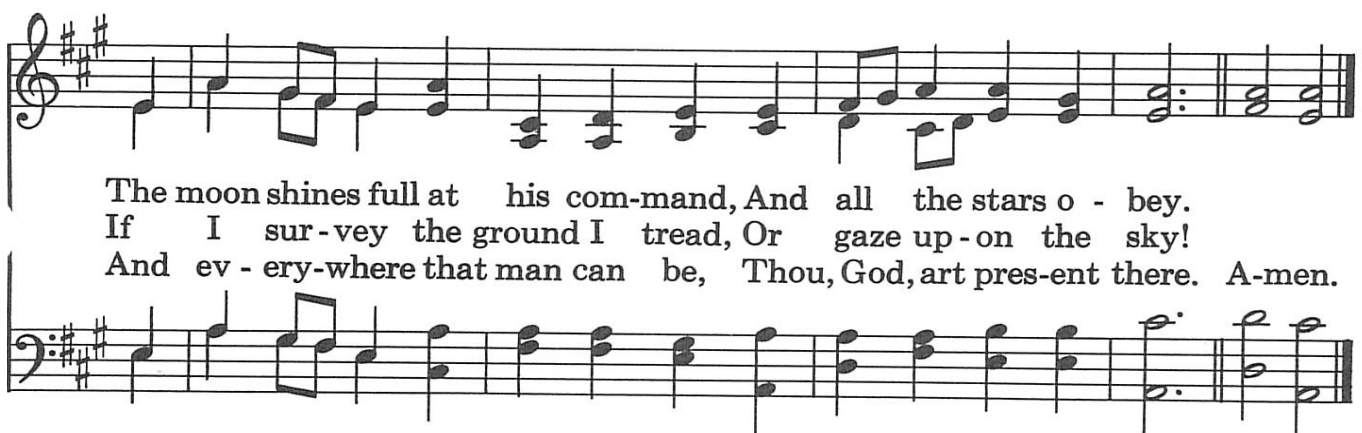
1 I sing the might-y power of God, That made the moun-tains rise,
2 I sing the good-ness of the Lord, That filled the earth with food;
3 There's not a plant or flower be - low, But makes thy glo - ries known;



That spread the flow - ing seas a - broad, And built the loft - y skies.
He formed the crea-tures with his word, And then pro-nounced them good.
And clouds a - rise, and tem-pests blow, By or - der from thy throne,



I sing the wis-dom that or-dained The sun to rule the day;
Lord, how thy won-ders are dis-played, Wher-e'er I turn my eye:
While all that bor-rows life from thee Is ev - er in thy care,



The moon shines full at his com-mand, And all the stars o - bey.
If I sur-vey the ground I tread, Or gaze up-on the sky!
And ev - ery-where that man can be, Thou, God, art pres-ent there. A-men.

In Heavenly Love Abiding

343

Anna L. Waring 1823-1910

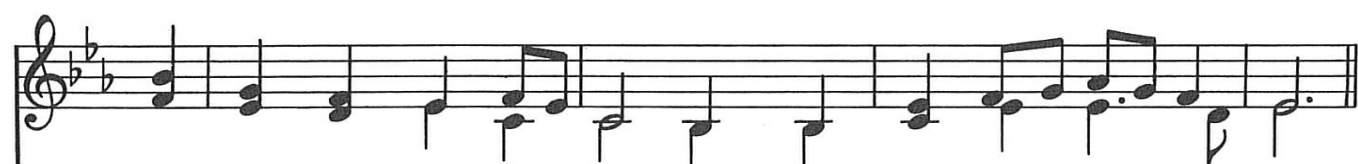
NYLAND 7.6.7.6.D.

Traditional Finnish Melody

Harm. by David Evans, 1874-1948



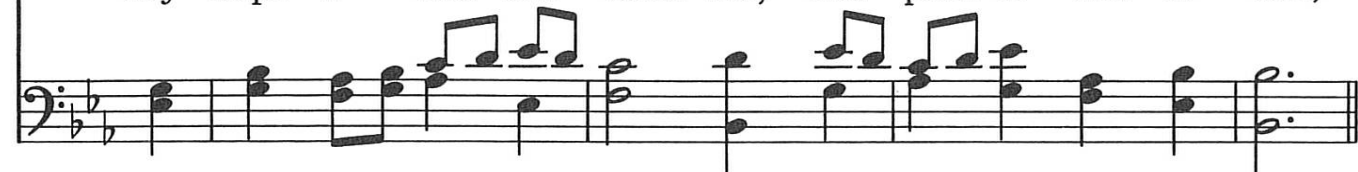
1 In heaven-ly love a - bid - ing, No change my heart shall fear,
2 Wher - ev - er he may guide me, No want shall turn me back;
3 Green pas - tures are be - fore me, Which yet I have not seen;



And safe is such con - fid - ing, For noth - ing chang-es here.
My shep-herd is be - side me, And noth - ing can I lack.
Bright skies will soon be o'er me, Where the dark clouds have been.



The storm may roar with - out me, My heart may low be laid,
His wis - dom ev - er wak - eth; His sight is nev - er dim;
My hope I can - not meas - ure; The path to life is free;



But God is round a - bout me, And can I be dis-mayed?
He knows the way he tak - eth, And I will walk with him.
My Sav - ior has my treas - ure, And he will walk with me. A-men.



The Lord's My Shepherd

84

Based on Psalm 23
"Scottish Psalter," 1650, alt.

CRIMOND C.M.

Melody by Jessie S. Irvine, 1836-1887



1 The Lord's my shep - herd, I'll not want; He makes me down to lie
2 My soul he doth re - store a - gain; And me to walk doth make
3 Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale, Yet will I fear no ill,
4 My ta - ble thou hast fur - nish - ed In pres - ence of my foes;
5 Good-ness and mer - cy all my life Shall sure - ly fol - low me;

In pas - tures green; he lead - eth me The qui - et wa - ters by.
With - in the paths of right - eous - ness, E'en for his own name's sake.
For thou art with me, and thy rod And staff me com - fort still.
My head thou dost with oil a - noint, And my cup o - ver - flows.
And in God's house for ev - er - more My dwell - ing - place shall be. A - men.

* * *

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.)

'Tis the Season 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!

649 Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound

1 A - maz - ing grace, how sweet the sound, that
 2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and
 3 Through man - y dan - gers, toils, and snares, I
 4 The Lord has prom - ised good to me; his
 5 When we've been there ten thou - sand years, bright

saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but
 grace my fears re - lieved. How pre - cious did that
 have al - read - y come. 'Tis grace has brought me
 word my hope se - cures. He will my shield and
 shin - ing as the sun, we've no less days to

now am found, was blind, but now I see.
 grace ap - pear the hour I first be - lieved!
 safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.
 por - tion be as long as life en - dures.
 sing God's praise than when we'd first be - gun.

As was his custom, the author wrote this hymn to accompany his sermon on 1 Chronicles 17:16–17, preached on January 1, 1773; he called it “Faith’s Review and Expectation.” Much of its current popularity comes from this now-familiar tune, an association that began in 1835.

TEXT: Stanzas 1–4, John Newton, 1772; stanza 5, *A Collection of Sacred Ballads*, 1790; Navaho, Albert Tsosie

AMAZING GRACE

MUSIC: *Columbian Harmony*, 1829; arr. Edwin O. Excell, 1910, alt.

CM

Text Phonetic Transcr. Cherokee, Kiowa, Creek, and Choctaw © Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference;

Phonetic Transcr. Navaho © Albert Tsosie



The Anonymous Coffeehouse—Fridays, March 17 and 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
This popular annual program features the vocal and instrumental excellence of the faculty next door at UVMC, ranging from classical repertoire to traditional and folk genres and original compositions. *Free-will donation; all proceeds benefit the 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.*

UVMC Cello Festival—Saturday, April 1, at 6:00 pm (rehearsals starting at 3:00)

Acacia Chamber Music (Stroud, Donahue, and Odell)—Friday, April 21, at 7:30 pm

Classicopia: Virtuoso Violin—Sunday, April 30, at 2:00 pm

UVMC Faculty Recital: Jennifer Turbes, Viola—Saturday, May 6, at 1:00 pm

Bel Canto Chamber Singers—Sat., May 6, at 7:30 pm / Sun., May 7, at 4:00 pm

UVMC Sing & Play Festival—Saturday, May 20 (various times and locations)

Classicopia: Musical Mothers—Sunday, May 28, at 2:00 pm

Cantabile Women's Chorus—Sunday, June 4, at 4:00 pm

Register Now for Classicopia's Music Camp at FCC/UVMC!—August 14-19, 9a-3p Daily

This immersive program offers instrumental and vocal instruction to students aged 8-18, with outstanding faculty and guest artists. *More details and registration at classicopia.org/summer-camp/.*

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.



The Easter Lily Fund to Benefit the Open Door Ministry

We will be back in our Sanctuary on Easter morning, with an array of fresh flowers on the altar. As in past years, we invite you to honor or remember beloved family and friends with a modest contribution to our **Open Door Ministry** for community assistance.

If you'd like to offer a dedication in honor or memory of loved ones, please return this form in the offering plate or by mail, with a contribution (\$5 minimum, payable to FCC, memo "Open Door Lily Fund"). All dedications received by noon on **THURSDAY, APRIL 6**, will be listed in the worship bulletin on Easter Sunday, April 9. (Contributions payable after that date. Please note that we will **not** be purchasing flowers for each individual dedication.)

Given by _____ Contribution _____

In honor of _____

In memory of _____



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In honor of _____

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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