



The First Sunday of Advent

The idea of waiting for something makes it more exciting.

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

Prelude *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland*, BWV 659 Johann Sebastian Bach

Call to Worship Adapted from Psalm 80

All: Stir up your might, and come to save us!

One: Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved.

All: Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved.

One: But let your hand be upon the one at your right hand, the one whom you made strong for yourself.

All: We will never turn back from you; give us life, and we will call on your name.

Hymn 348 (p. 6) *Lo, He Comes with Clouds Descending* Helmsley

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 2:1-5. The word that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. ²In days to come the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills; all the nations shall stream to it. ³Many peoples shall come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that

we may walk in his paths.” For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. ⁴He shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. ⁵O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord!

An Advent Litany

One: O come, O come, Emmanuel!

All: **The Christ child is coming!**

One: O come, O come, Emmanuel!

All: **Let us prepare for his arrival.**

One: O come, O come, Emmanuel!

All: **We open ourselves to you.**

One: O come, O come, Emmanuel!

All: **Let us prepare the way with prayer to God and service to his people!**

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

E'en So, Lord Jesus, Quickly Come

Paul Manz

Children's Moment

Happy New Year! While you might be expecting us to kick off 2024 in a few weeks, today we begin Advent, and that means a new liturgical cycle, or series of readings from Scripture. Advent comes every year, and it's always four Sundays before Christmas.

Four weeks of waiting, or anticipation, which is sort of waiting-with-enthusiasm. I hope you're anticipating Christmas and all that the holiday promises us—which is a lot. So, once again, Happy New Year! Let's make the most of it.

Hymn 357 (p. 7)

The Days Are Surely Coming

Llangloffan

Scripture Lessons

Isaiah 64:1-9. O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence—²as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil—to make your name known to your adversaries, so that the nations might tremble at your presence! ³When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence. ⁴From ages past no

one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him. ⁵You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember you in your ways. But you were angry, and we sinned; because you hid yourself we transgressed. ⁶We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. ⁷There is no one who calls on your name, or attempts to take hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us, and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity. ⁸Yet, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand. ⁹Do not be exceedingly angry, O Lord, and do not remember iniquity forever. Now consider, we are all your people.

Mark 13:24-37. ²⁴[Jesus continued,] “But in those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, ²⁵and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. ²⁶Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power and glory. ²⁷Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

²⁸“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. ²⁹So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. ³⁰Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. ³¹Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

³²“But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come.

³⁴It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. ³⁵Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, ³⁶or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. ³⁷And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.”

Sermon

“Anticipation”

Stephen R. Silver

Sharing of Joys and Concerns; Pastoral Prayer

As we hold community members in prayer, please exercise care and discretion when sharing. Help keep our prayer list current by contacting Rev. Silver or the church office to add or remove names.

Today we offer ongoing prayers for Pete, Arlene, Evelyn, Barbara, Gordon, Greg, Jan, Edith, Eileen, Waneta, Terry, Juanita, Travis, Garrett, Sue, Rick, Edward, Duane, Priscilla, Ron, Lauren, Brian, Micah, and Al.

O God of our redemption, the one whose arrival we anticipate, as we begin this season of Advent, this time of already-not-yet, we contemplate the wonder of your coming to be with us. We do so with excitement, and hope, and faith. But we also do so with hesitancy and trepidation. For we know that your arrival should signify change—real change in our lives and in the world—and we know that we are often what obstructs it.

We acknowledge that change is sometimes welcome, other times feared, but it is always, always inevitable. So, allow us to open ourselves to your possibilities in our lives and the world in which we live. And let us do so with anticipation and open hearts.

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

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*)

God who comes to us in grace and peace, we respond with gratitude, presenting these gifts as a sign of our desire to share your love with all the world. 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

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 107 (p. 8) *Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence* Picardy

Benediction

Postlude *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland*, BWV 661 Johann Sebastian Bach

* * *

Leading Worship This Week

The Rev. Stephen R. Silver, Pastor

Ernie Drown, Organ/Piano • The FCC Choir • Linda Jacobs, Liturgist
Corrine Erskine and Linda Gerlach, 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.

It's Advent—'Tis the Season to Decorate!

Yes, ADVENT! After worship this week we're going to decorate FCC for the season, and all are warmly invited to stay and help. We'll hang wreaths, string lights, trim our tree, and have fun as we prepare the church for the festive season of Advent. *Let's celebrate the season!*

Christmas Carol Sing and Potluck at the Parsonage

Sunday, December 17, 12:00-2:00 pm—15 Kimball St, Lebanon

All are warmly invited to our annual congregational Christmas party! We'll gather round the fireplace for festive fellowship and favorite carols. *Bring a favorite dish or holiday treat to share.*

Don't Bury Your Treasure *Many Thanks for Your 2024 Stewardship Pledges*
"For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance." —Matthew 25:29

All are invited to prayerfully consider their commitment to FCC's mission and ministry in the coming year. We have so far received 20 pledges for 2024, and we will gratefully continue to accept more 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.
Box sets (#1-20) of offering envelopes for 2024 should be available next Sunday.*

348 Lo, He Comes with Clouds Descending

1 Lo, he comes with clouds de - scend - ing,
 2 Now re - demp - tion, long ex - pect - ed,
 3 Yea, a - men, let all a - dore thee,

once for our sal - va - tion slain; thou - sand,
 comes in sol - emn splen - dor near; all the
 high on thine e - ter - nal throne; Sav - ior,

thou - sand saints at - tend - ing to the
 saints this world re - ject - ed thrill the
 take the power and glo - ry; claim the

sing the glad re - frain: Al - le -
 trum - pet sound to hear: Al - le -
 king - dom as thine own. Come, Lord

lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le -
 lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le -
 Je - sus; come, Lord Je - sus; come, Lord

lu - ia! Christ the Lord re - turns to reign.
 lu - ia! See the day of God ap - pear!
 Je - sus. Thou shalt reign, and thou a - lone!

Despite unclear musical origins, the result here is a characteristic early Methodist hymn tune, notable for its breadth and range. It effectively sets a text of similarly mixed sources, one that Charles Wesley regarded as related to "Thy Kingdom come" in the Lord's Prayer.

TEXT: Stanzas 1, 3, Charles Wesley, 1758, alt.; stanza 2, John Cennick, 1752, alt.
 MUSIC: Thomas Olivers, 1763; harm. Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1906

HEIMLEY
 8.7.8.7.4.4.7

The Days Are Surely Coming 357



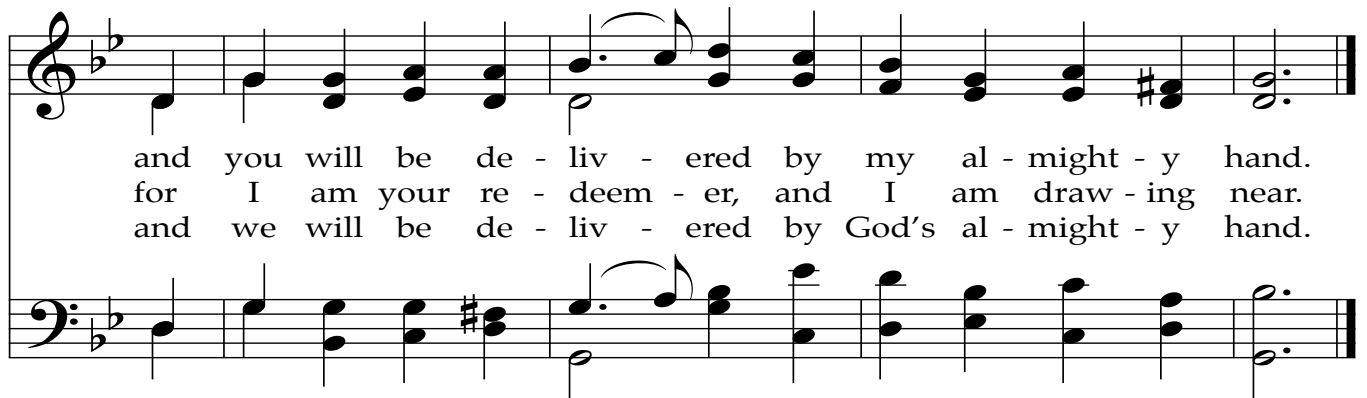
1 The days are sure - ly com - ing, says God to all the earth,
 2 The days are sure - ly com - ing, says Christ, the prom-ised one,
 3 The days are sure - ly com - ing when we will know at last



when you will see my prom - ise: sal - va - tion come to birth.
 when you will read my warn - ing in moon and stars and sun.
 the full - ness of God's pres - ence, God's prom - ise, come to pass.



My righ-teous-ness and jus - tice will spread through-out the land
 Though earth and heav - en trem-ble, stand up and do not fear,
 Then righ-teous-ness and jus - tice will spread through-out the land



and you will be de - liv - ered by my al - might - y hand.
 for I am your re - deem - er, and I am draw - ing near.
 and we will be de - liv - ered by God's al - might - y hand.

This text uses imagery from Jeremiah 33:14–16 and Matthew 24:29–36/Mark 13:24–32/Luke 21:25–36. These passages are especially associated with the beginning of Advent, a season that looks forward to Christ's second coming while also preparing us to remember his first coming.

TEXT: David Gambrell, 2009

MUSIC: Welsh folk melody; *Llwybrau Moliant*, 1872; harm. *The English Hymnal*, 1906

Text © 2011 David Gambrell (admin. Presbyterian Publishing Corp.)

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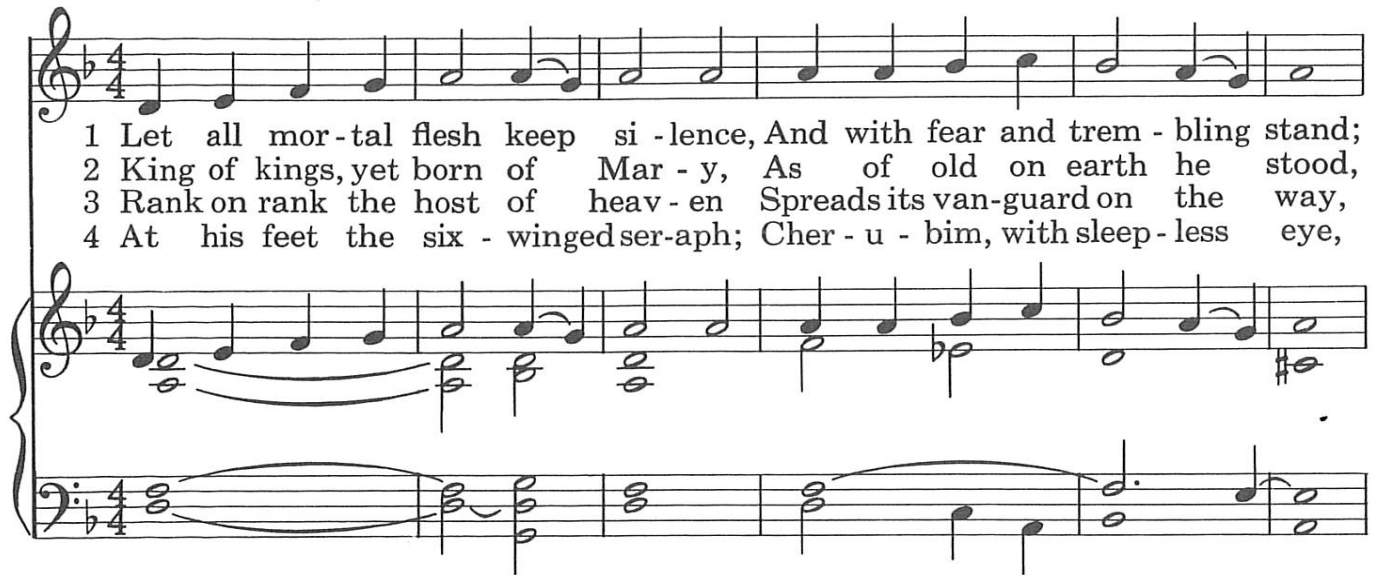
7.6.7.6.D

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

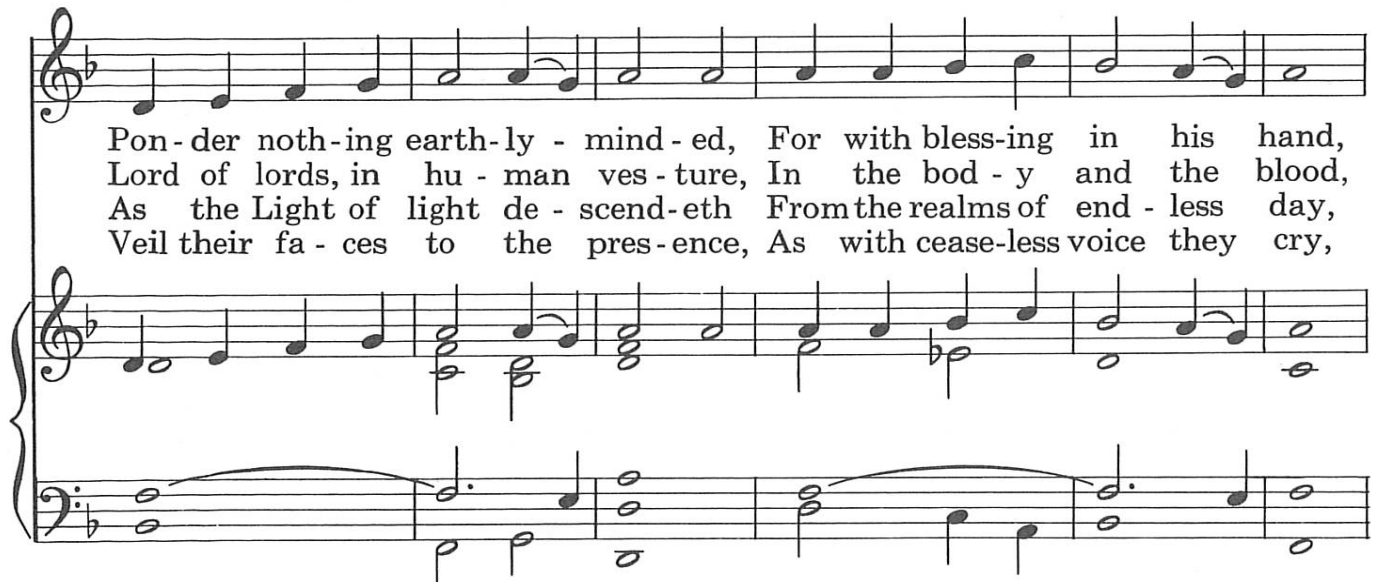
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Liturgy of St. James
Tr. Gerard Moultrie, 1829-1885

PICARDY 8.7.8.7.8.7.
Traditional French Carol



1 Let all mor-tal flesh keep si-lence, And with fear and trem-bling stand;
2 King of kings, yet born of Mar-y, As of old on earth he stood,
3 Rank on rank the host of heav-en Spreads its van-guard on the way,
4 At his feet the six-winged ser-aph; Cher-u-bim, with sleep-less eye,



Pon-der noth-ing earth-ly-mind-ed, For with bless-ing in his hand,
Lord of lords, in hu-man ves-ture, In the bod-y and the blood,
As the Light of light de-scend-eth From the realms of end-less day,
Veil their fa-ces to the pres-ence, As with cease-less voice they cry,



Christ our God to earth de-scend-eth, Our full hom-age to de-mand.
He will give to all the faith-ful His own self for heaven-ly food.
That the powers of hell may van-ish As the dark-ness clears a-way.
Al-le-lu-ia, Al-le-lu-ia, Al-le-lu-ia, Lord Most High! A-men.



The Anonymous Coffeehouse—Fridays, December 1 and 15, at 7:30 pm

Our comfy community venue for live folk music is thriving in its fourth season! Come and go as you please; food and drink available. *Free admission. For performers and more, visit anoncoffee.org.*

Classicopia: Four-Hand Holiday—Sunday, December 3, at 2:00 pm

Longtime friends Daniel Weiser and Philip Liston-Kraft renew this festive tradition of favorite classics in fun, four-hand-piano arrangements, from “Jingle Bells” and “White Christmas” to the Blue Danube Waltz and the Nutcracker. *Adults \$20, FCC members \$15; more at classicopia.org.*

Bel Canto Chamber Singers: Wintertide—Saturday, Dec. 9, at 7:00 / Sunday, Dec. 10, at 4:00

Jane Woods leads Bel Canto in a seasonal selection of choral music with strings, flute, and piano. They’ll sing Marc-Antoine Charpentier’s *Messe de Minuit*, as well as Ola Gjeilo, John Rutter, French carols, and traditional spirituals. *Adults \$15, students \$10, under 13 free; for more, visit belcantosingers.org.*

Upper Valley Music Center Messiah Sing!—Sunday, December 17, at 3:00 pm

Our annual performance of G. F. Handel’s beloved oratorio, with student soloists. All welcome to join the chorus (scores available!) or just listen. *Suggested \$20 donation; more at uvmusic.org.*

A Christmas Concert Spectacular!—Saturday, December 23, at 7:00 pm

Pianist Elizabeth Borowsky gathers her family of virtuosi—mother Cecylia Barczyk (cello) and siblings Frances (cello) and Emmanuel (violin)—and numerous musical friends for this special program of Christmas gems. All welcome! *Free-will donation for UV Haven; more at 88keys.my.canva.site/christmas23.*

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 give as you’re able, either by check to FCC (memo “Christmas Fund”) or at www.pbucc.org.



“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. We 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, please complete this form and return it to church with a contribution (\$5 minimum, payable FCC, memo “Poinsettia Fund”). Dedications received by Friday, December 15, will be listed in worship bulletins the following Sunday and Christmas Eve.

Given by _____ Contribution _____

In honor of _____

In memory of _____



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@fcclleb.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 • Brian Clancy, Church Administrator

Jon Scott, Chair of Church Council • Linda Gerlach, Chair of Deacons • Barbara Jones, Moderator

Church Office Hours: Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, 9:00-12:00 (or by appointment as needed)

603-448-4281 • church@fcclleb.org • prayer@fcclleb.org • music@fcclleb.org • www.fcclleb.org