



The Third Sunday of Advent

For outlandish creatures like us, on our way to a heart, a brain, and courage, Bethlehem is not the end of our journey but only the beginning—not home but the place through which we must pass if ever we are to reach home at last.

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

Three Settings of *Vom Himmel hoch*

Johann Sebastian Bach

Psalm 126

One: When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream.

All: Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy;
then it was said among the nations, “The LORD has done great things for them.”

One: The LORD has done great things for us, and we rejoiced.

All: Restore our fortunes, O LORD, like the watercourses in the Negeb.

One: May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy.

All: Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, carrying their sheaves.

Hymn 115 (p. 5)

On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry

Winchester New

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 ²it 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.

³Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. ⁴Say 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.”

⁵Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; ⁶then 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; ⁷the 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.

⁸A 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.

⁹No 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. ¹⁰And 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

Today is *Gaudete Sunday*, or “Rejoice” Sunday. That’s why we have a pink candle. I could tell you about Advent’s roots in Lent, and how this was a season in which we fast, but instead, today, we’ll focus on rejoicing. Christmas is just over a week away, and the children of our Children’s Community Corner will now sing “Go Tell it On the Mountain.” The congregation is invited to join in singing the refrain.

Scripture Lessons

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11. The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; ²to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; ³to provide for those who mourn in Zion— to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory. ⁴They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations. [...]

⁸For I the Lord love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. ⁹Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed. ¹⁰I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. ¹¹For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

John 1:6-8, 19-28. 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. [...]

¹⁹This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" ²⁰He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." ²¹And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." ²²Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" ²³He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,'" as the prophet Isaiah said.

²⁴Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. ²⁵They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" ²⁶John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, ²⁷the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." ²⁸This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

Sermon "The Gospel of Joe Isuzu....?"

Stephen R. Silver

Hymn 103 (p. 7) Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

Stuttgart

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, Dan, Travis, Garrett, Sue, Rick, Edward, Duane, Priscilla, Ron, Lauren, Brian, Micah, and Al.

O God of Advent: we eagerly await Christmas, the Feast of the Nativity, anticipating the arrival of hope and possibility. Though we know you were born 2,000 years ago, we will celebrate your birth and, with it, the start of what we pray is a season of joy and hope. As we observe this season, we pray that we will be inspired and empowered to make the promises of Christmas an enduring reality—one in which joy, love, grace, and hope are not aspirations, but realities for all of your people.

We pray this, and all the joys and concerns we hold in our hearts, in the name of the Christ-child. 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 *There Is No Rose of Such Virtue* John Joubert

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. 8) *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* Veni Emmanuel

Benediction

Postlude *Noël Suisse* Louis-Claude d'Aquin

* * *

Leading Worship This Week

The Rev. Stephen R. Silver, Pastor

Ernie Drown, Organ/Piano • Laurel Stavis, Alto • The FCC Choir

Bob Ross, Liturgist • Linda and Ike Jacobs, 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.

Christmas Potluck and Carol Sing at the Parsonage

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



CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES AT FCC

In the Sanctuary and on Zoom

Family Service with Pageant, 5:00 PM—Our beloved service for families and the young-at-heart, with a nativity pageant and living creche! All are welcome to attend; if you or your children are interested in participating, please contact Rachel Silver at rachelsilver@live.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.

On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry

115

*Melody: Charles Coffin, 1676-1749
Lyrics: John Chandler, 1806-1876, alt.*

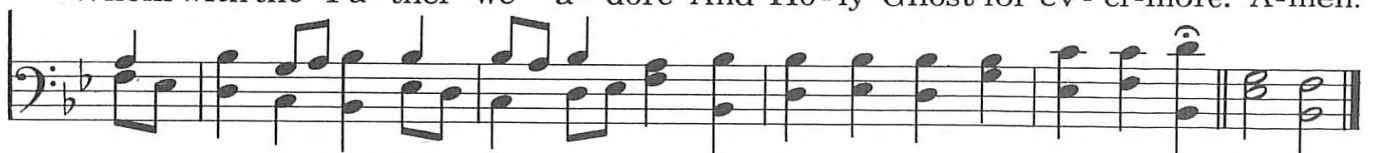
WINCHESTER NEW L.M.
Adapted from "Musicalisches Handbuch," Hamburg, 1690



1 On Jor-dan's bank the Bap-tist's cry An-noun-ces that the Lord is nigh;
2 Then cleansed be ev-ery Chris-tian breast, And fur-nished for so great a guest!
3 For thou art our sal-va-tion, Lord, Our ref-uge and our great re-ward;
4 All praise, e-ter-nal Son, to thee, Whose ad-vent sets thy peo-ple free;

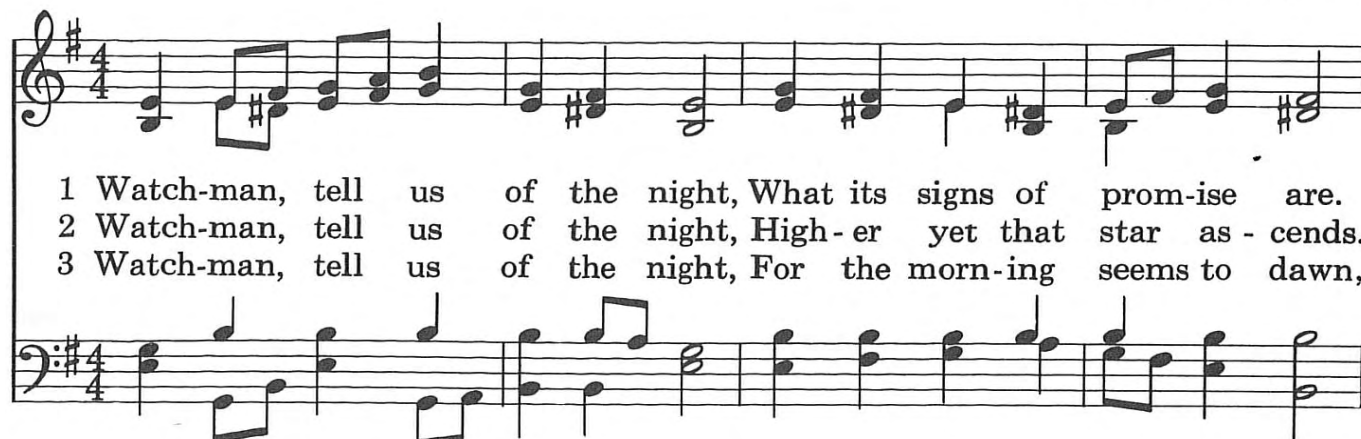


Come then and heark-en, for he brings Glad tid-ings from the King of kings.
Yea, let us each our hearts pre-pare For Christ to come and en-ter there.
Once more up-on thy peo-ple shine, And fill the world with lovedi-vine.
Whom with the Fa-ther we a-dore And Ho-ly Ghost for ev-er-more. A-men.

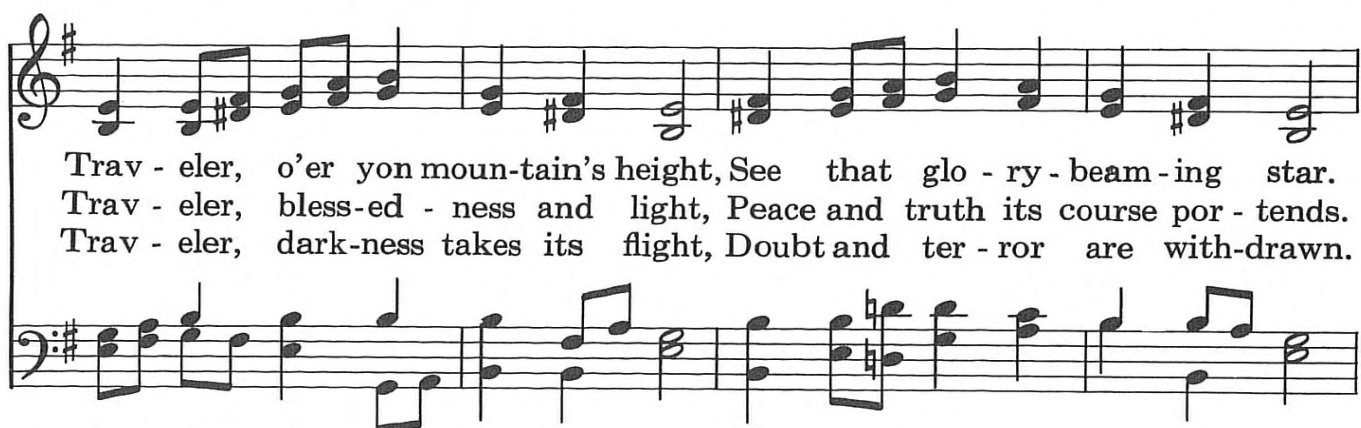


John Bowring, 1792-1872

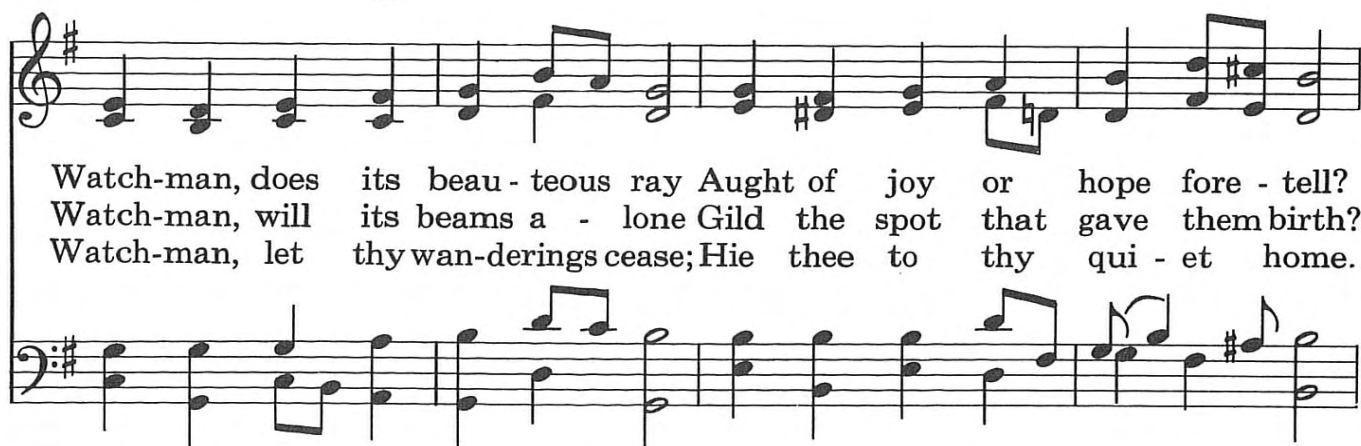
ABERYSTWYTH 7.7.7.7.D.

Joseph Parry, 1841-1903


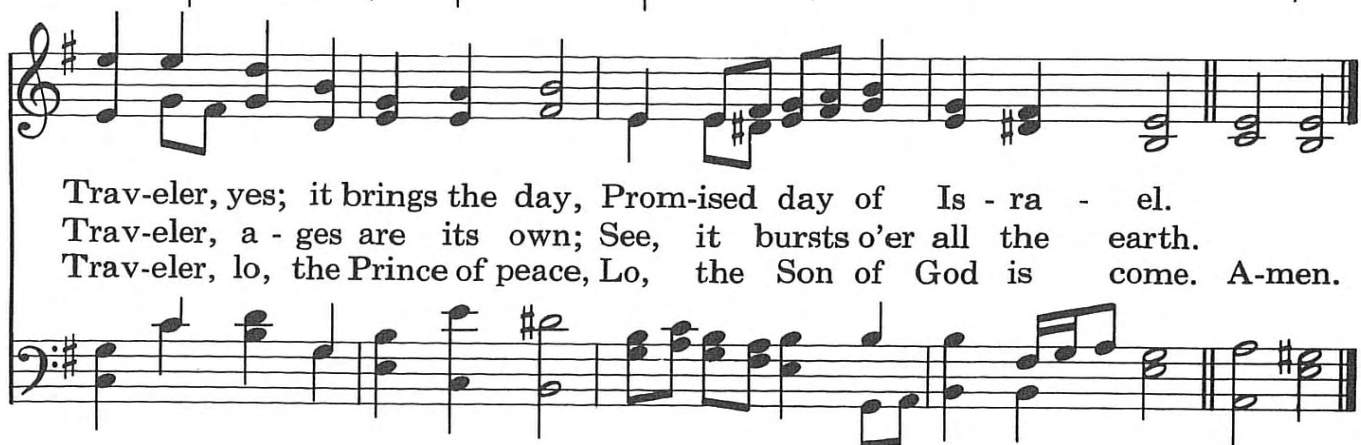
1 Watch-man, tell us of the night, What its signs of prom-ise are.
 2 Watch-man, tell us of the night, High-er yet that star as-cends.
 3 Watch-man, tell us of the night, For the morn-ing seems to dawn,



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.

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

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Charles Wesley, 1707-1788, alt.

STUTTGART 8.7.8.7.
Melody attr. to Christian F. Witt, 1660-1716
"Psalmodia Sacra," Goltha, 1715

1 Come, thou long-expect-ed Je-sus, Born to set thy peo-ple free;
2 Is-rael's strength and con-so-la-tion, Hope of all the earth thou art;
3 Born thy peo-ple to de-liv-er, Born a child, and yet a king,
4 By thine own e-ter-nal Spir-it Rule in all our hearts a-lone;

From our fears and sins re-lease us; Let us find our rest in thee.
Dear de-sire of ev-ery na-tion, Joy of ev-ery long-ing heart.
Born to reign in us for-ev-er, Now thy gra-cious king-dom bring.
By thine all-suf-fi-cient mer-it Raise us to thy glo-rious throne. A-men.

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!



Music
at the
Meetinghouse

Christmas Music!

All in the FCC Sanctuary

Upper Valley Music Center Messiah Sing!—This 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!—Next 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. **And don't miss ice sculptor Tony Perham's work that afternoon (12:00-4:00) in the front yard of the church!** Free-will donation for UV Haven; more at 88keys.my.canva.site/christmas23.

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

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Latin: c.9th century

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

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.



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*

Ike's mom, Betty Adams; Ike's aunt, Terri Reese; our children Carey Jacobs and Craig Jacobs; and dear friend Terry Grigsby—*Linda and Ike Jacobs*

Des and Walter, Hannah and James, Aunti Em, Grandma Kathy, and Gg—*Deb and Jon Scott*

JoAnn and Alan Smith—*Rachel, Steve, and Chip Silver*

IN MEMORY OF...

My aunt Gloria—*Ron Bailey*

Charles E. Baldwin III—*Lola Baldwin*

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

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

Our parents—*Marcia Corkins and Pete Mason*

Jean Gerlach, Elsa and Ben Hopkins, and Izetta and Ted Hopkins—*Linda and Bob Gerlach*

Gloria P. Hammond—*Philip Hammond*

Linda's parents, Barbara and Maurice Sumner; Linda's grammy, Ruby Sumner; Linda's aunt, Betty Sumner King; Ike's dad, Raymond Adams; and dear friends, loved and missed: Betty and Ellis Howard, Laura and Doc Place, Helen Smith, and Gracie Morse—*Linda and Ike Jacobs*

Marilyn—*Pete Mason*

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

Grandpas Jim, Roger, and Ken—*Deb and Jon Scott*

Ruth and S. F. Silver, and Moms—*Steve, Rachel, and Chip Silver*

Ginger—*Wendell Smith*

Frances and Robert Richmond, Doris and Roscoe Stone, and the Rev. Norman and Doris Dubie—*Carol and Chuck Stone*



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@fcclieb.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@fcclieb.org • prayer@fcclieb.org • music@fcclieb.org • www.fcclieb.org