



First Congregational Church of Lebanon

United Church of Christ – Open and Affirming

CHRISTMAS EVE 2023

Service of Lessons and Carols, 8:00 pm

Please silence cell phones and other devices. Masks are encouraged, but not required.

**Those who are able are invited to stand. All of this evening's carols come from the Pilgrim Hymnal.*

Prelude Noël: Votre Bonté, Grand Dieu Marc-Antoine Charpentier

Words of Welcome

***Carol 132** O Come, All Ye Faithful Adeste Fideles

- (1) O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold him, born the King of angels.
(Refrain) O come, let us adore him, O come let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!
- (2) Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest! (Refrain)
- (3) Child, for us sinners poor and in the manger,
We would embrace thee, with love and awe;
Who would not love thee, loving us so dearly? (Refrain)
- (4) Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning,
Jesus, to thee be all glory given;
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing. (Refrain)

*Call to Worship

One: Come away, come away, come today to Bethlehem.

All: Come adore on bended knee, one whose birth the angels sing.

One: Come away, come away, from your noisy celebration, to a place of quietness and peace.

All: Come with wonder, come with awe. Take your place among the sheep and cattle.

One: Sing with joy, praise God, for the time of promise has come. Sing the good news of Emmanuel: God-with-us! The Christ has come!

All: Come away, come away, come today to Bethlehem.

*Prayer of Invocation

The Lighting of the Christ Candle

Prayer

The First Lesson *The Birth of Christ Foretold*

Luke 1:26-35

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." ²⁹But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³²He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God."

*Carol 120 *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*

Mendelssohn

- (1) Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations, rise, join the triumph of the skies;
With the angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"
- (2) Christ, by highest heaven adored; Christ, the everlasting Lord!
Late in time behold him come, offspring of the Virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; hail the incarnate Deity,
Pleased as man with men to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel.
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"
- (3) Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings, risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by, born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth, born to give them second birth.
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"

The Second Lesson *The Birth of Our Savior*

Luke 2:1-20

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was

descended from the house and family of David. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, ¹⁴“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”

¹⁵When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Carol

Love Came Down at Christmas

John Rutter

The Third Lesson *The Magi Follow the Star to Jesus*

Matthew 2:1-11

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, ²asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.” ³When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: ⁶“And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.”

⁷Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.” ⁹When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw that the star had stopped, they were over-

whelmed with joy. ¹¹On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Carol *What Is That Lovely Fragrance?* French, arr. Healey Willan

The Fourth Lesson *The Revelation of God's Grace* John 1:1-5,14-17

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.

[...] 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. ¹⁵(John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") ¹⁶From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

***Carol 130** *Joy to the World! The Lord Is Come* Antioch

- (1) Joy to the world! the Lord is come: let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare him room, and heaven and nature sing;
And heaven and nature sing, and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.
- (2) Joy to the earth! the Savior reigns: let men their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy;
Repeat the sounding joy; repeat, repeat the sounding joy.
- (3) He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness, and wonders of his love;
And wonders of his love; and wonders, wonders of his love.

Meditation Stephen R. Silver

Carol *Long, Long Ago* Richard Shephard

A Christmas Prayer

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.

The Offering of Our Gifts

The Call to Stewardship

Offertory *The Infant King*

Basque, arr. David Willcocks

*Doxology (*Unison*)

Old Hundredth

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*)

May these gifts bear testimony to the light we have received in Jesus Christ. May the grace and truth communicated to us be shared with others. Bless and multiply our giving, to your honor and glory and the service of all your people, here and throughout the world. Amen.

*Sharing the Light of Christ

Taking the light from the Christ Candle, the minister will light the ushers' candles. The ushers will move down the center aisle, lighting the candles of those seated on the aisle. Spreading out from the center, please carefully pass on the light to the next person in your row.

After joining together in singing "Silent Night," please extinguish your candles. You may deposit them by the door after the service.

*Carol 138

Silent Night, Holy Night

Stille Nacht

- (1) Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright,
Round yon virgin mother and child. Holy infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.
- (2) Silent night, holy night, shepherds quake at the sight,
Glories stream from heaven afar, heavenly hosts sing alleluia;
Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!
- (3) Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from thy holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace.
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

*Charge and Dismissal

One: Go in peace, to love and serve the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Postlude

In Dulci Jubilo, BWV 729

Johann Sebastian Bach

* * *

Leading Worship This Evening

The Rev. Stephen R. Silver, Pastor
Ernie Drown, Organ and Piano • The FCC Choir



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*

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

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*

THE CHRISTMAS FUND

We invite you to consider a donation to the UCC's Christmas Fund, also known as the Fund for 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 at www.pbucc.org/index.php/christmas-fund-home. Thanks!

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@fccleb.org • prayer@fccleb.org • music@fccleb.org • www.fccleb.org

...and a Happy New Year!