



# First Congregational Church of Lebanon

*United Church of Christ – Open and Affirming*

---

## THE FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY (*Observed*)

January 7, 2024

It matters not how a man dies, but how he lives.

—Samuel Johnson

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

**Prelude**                      *Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern*                      Dieterich Buxtehude

**Call to Worship** (*Unison*)                      Adapted from Psalm 72

Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to a king's son. May he judge your people with righteousness, and your poor with justice. In his days may righteousness flourish and peace abound, until the moon is no more. For he delivers the needy when they call, the poor and those who have no helper. He has pity on the weak and the needy, and saves the lives of the needy. From oppression and violence he redeems their life; and precious is their blood in his sight.

**Hymn 126** (p. 5)                      *Brightest and Best of the Sons of the Morning*                      Morning Star

**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.

**Words of Welcome; Our Ministry and Mission**

**Anthem**                      "Say, Where Is He, Born King of Judea?" (*Christus*)                      F. Mendelssohn

**Children's Moment**

Epiphany is the conclusion of Christmas. Just as we read an account of Jesus' birth in Luke, and learn of the shepherds gathered at the manger around the holy family, we now read Matthew's story of the Magi, these mysterious visitors from the East, come to bring precious gifts to the Christ-child. More important, they offer a witness grounded in a desire to know more: about the God of Israel, about the wondrous things he is doing, about the miraculous baby who has come into their world—and who comes into ours, too. Happy Epiphany!

**Hymn 143** (p. 6)                      *We Three Kings of Orient Are*                      Kings of Orient

## Scripture Lesson

*Matthew 2:1-12.* In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup>asking, “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.” <sup>3</sup>When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; <sup>4</sup>and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. <sup>5</sup>They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: <sup>6</sup>‘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.’”

<sup>7</sup>Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. <sup>8</sup>Then 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.” <sup>9</sup>When 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. <sup>10</sup>When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. <sup>11</sup>On 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. <sup>12</sup>And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

## Sermon

“Who Are These Guys?”

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, Gordon, Greg, Jan, Edith, Eileen, Waneta, Terry, Juanita, Dan, Travis, Garrett, Sue, Rick, Edward, Duane, Priscilla, Ron, Lauren, Brian, Micah, and Al.

On this day when we read of the Magi and their quest for truth, we ask that we be similarly motivated. We hope that like those travelers, we will go wherever you call us to be, that we will resist being led astray, that we will be open to your Spirit. Though we have no star to guide us, we do have your Word, and it is with gladness and thanks that we receive it and hope to share it with others.

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

Torches

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*)

Like the Magi, having heard the good news, we approach you in awe. Like the Magi, we bring gifts of thanks in response to the love you have shared with us in Jesus. And like the Magi, we will go forth to share this love with others. In the name of the one born in Bethlehem 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 138 (pp. 7-8) *Who Would Think That What Was Needed*

White Rosettes

Benediction

Postlude

*Tous les bourgeois de Chastres*

Michel Corrette

\* \* \*

### *Leading Worship This Week*

The Rev. Stephen R. Silver, Pastor

Ernie Drown, Organ/Piano • The FCC Choir

Linda Gerlach, 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](mailto:prayer@fccleb.org) or speak with Rev. Silver directly.*

### ***Please Note: CONTENT FOR THE 2023 ANNUAL REPORT DUE FRIDAY, JANUARY 12***

Materials for FCC's 2023 Annual Report must be submitted to the Church Administrator by January 12, in order to ensure timely distribution of the report prior to our Annual Meeting. Please note that reports should be as concise as possible, summarizing in the briefest possible terms only the most relevant and noteworthy items particular to your committee.

***The 2023 Annual Meeting will be Sunday, February 11, 2024***



Music  
at the  
Meetinghouse

### **Winter Concerts**

*All in the FCC Sanctuary*

#### ***Upper Valley Music Center Community Chorus—Friday, January 19, at 7:00 pm***

Directed by Annie Arrington and accompanied by Will Ögmundson, UVMC's Community Chorus is pleased to offer its debut concert! The program includes a variety of musical styles and genres, following the group's motto—Just Sing! More at [uvmusic.org/event/community-chorus-uvmc-concert](http://uvmusic.org/event/community-chorus-uvmc-concert).

#### ***The Anonymous Coffeehouse—Fridays, Jan. 26, Feb. 9 and 23, Mar. 8 and 22, all 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](http://anoncoffee.org).

#### ***Cantabile Women's Voices: Northern Exposure—Sunday, January 28, at 3:00 pm***

Kathy Sherlock-Green brings back this outstanding chorus with an exploration of music from across northern Europe and Canada. They'll sing music of Eriks Esenvalds, Kim André Arnesen, Jean Sibelius, Canadians Eleanor Daley and Donald Patriquin, and an original piece by Kim Baryluk based on Native Canadian Mi'kmaq chant. Adults \$15, seniors \$10, students (13+) \$5, under 13 free. Advance purchase preferred; more at [www.cantabilewomen.org](http://www.cantabilewomen.org).

#### ***Benjamin Kulp, Cello, and Chenyu Wang, Piano—Sunday, February 11, at 3:00 pm***

UVMC's longtime cellist Ben Kulp joins new faculty member Chenyu Wang for a concert of short works for cello and piano. More at [uvmusic.org/event/ben-kulp-cello-and-chenyu-wang-piano](http://uvmusic.org/event/ben-kulp-cello-and-chenyu-wang-piano).

# 126 Brightest and Best of the Sons of the Morning

Reginald Heber, 1783-1826, alt.

MORNING STAR 11.10.11.10.  
James (John) P. Harding, ?-1911

1 Bright - est and best of the sons of the morn - ing,  
2 Cold on his cra - dle the dew - drops are shin - ing,  
3 Say, shall we yield him, in cost - ly de - vo - tion,  
4 Vain - ly we of - fer each am - ple ob - la - tion;  
5 Bright - est and best of the sons of the morn - ing,

Dawn on our dark - ness, and lend us thine aid;  
Low lies his head with the beasts of the stall;  
O - dors of E - dom and of - ferings di - vine,  
Vain - ly with gifts would his fa - vor se - cure;  
Dawn on our dark - ness, and lend us thine aid;

Star of the east, the ho - ri - zon a - dorn - ing,  
An - gels a - dore him, in slum - ber re - clin - ing,  
Gems of the moun - tain, and pearls of the o - cean,  
Rich - er by far is the heart's ad - o - ra - tion,  
Star of the east, the ho - ri - zon a - dorn - ing,

Guide where our in - fant Re - deem - er is laid!  
Mak - er, and Mon - arch, and Sav - ior of all.  
Myrrh from the for - est, or gold from the mine?  
Dear - er to God are the prayers of the poor.  
Guide where our in - fant Re - deem - er is laid! A - men.

## We Three Kings of Orient Are

John H. Hopkins, Jr., 1820-1891, alt.

KINGS OF ORIENT 8.8.8.6. with Refrain  
John H. Hopkins, Jr.; 1820-1891

In unison



1 We three kings of O - ri - ent are, Bear - ing gifts we trav - erse a - far  
 2 Born a king on Beth - le - hem's plain, Gold I bring to crown him a - gain,  
 3 Frank - in - cense to of - fer have I, In - cense owns a de - i - ty nigh;  
 4 Myrrh is mine; its bit - ter per - fume Breathes a life of gath - er - ing gloom:  
 5 Glo - rious now be - hold him a - rise, King and God and Sac - ri - fice;



Field and foun - tain, moor and moun - tain, Fol - low - ing yon - der star.  
 King for - ev - er, ceas - ing nev - er O - ver us all to reign.  
 Prayer and prais - ing, all men rais - ing, Wor - ship him, God on high.  
 Sor - rowing, sigh - ing, bleed - ing, dy - ing, Sealed in the stone - cold tomb.  
 Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! Sounds through the earth and skies



## REFRAIN



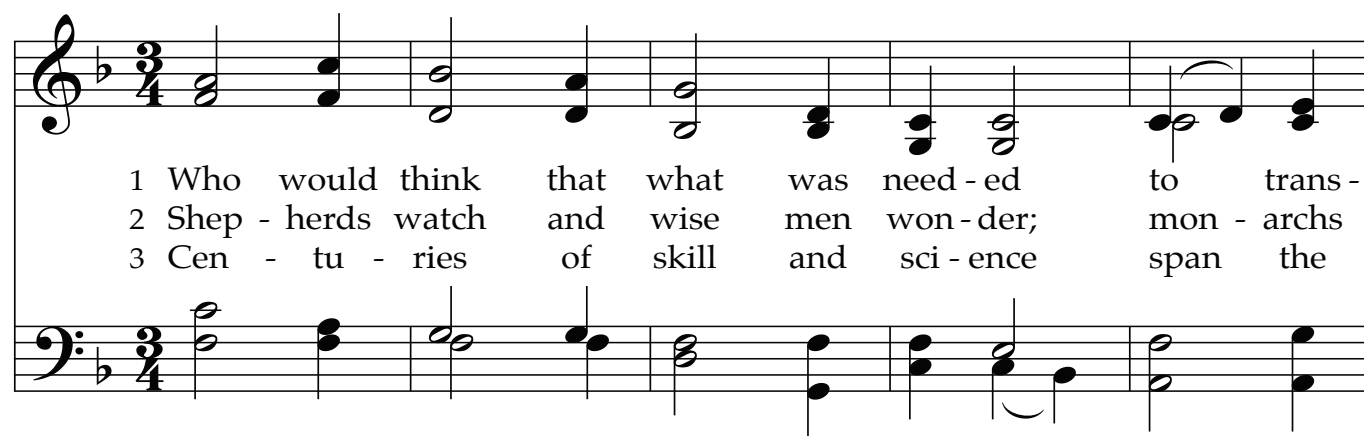
O star of won - der, star of night, Star with roy - al beau - ty bright,



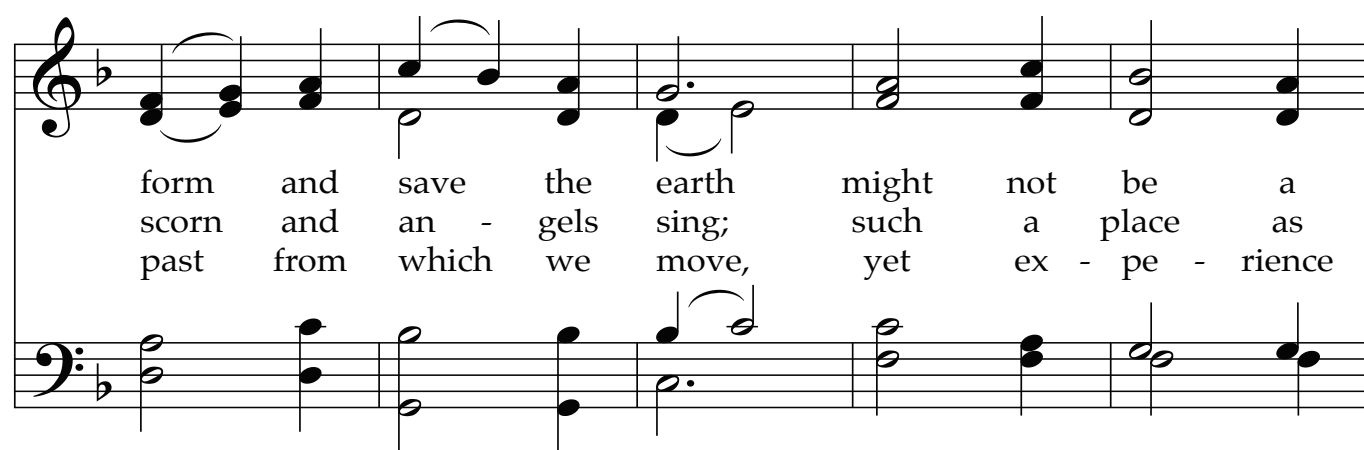
West - ward lead - ing, still pro - ceed - ing, Guide us to thy per - fect light.



# 138 Who Would Think That What Was Needed



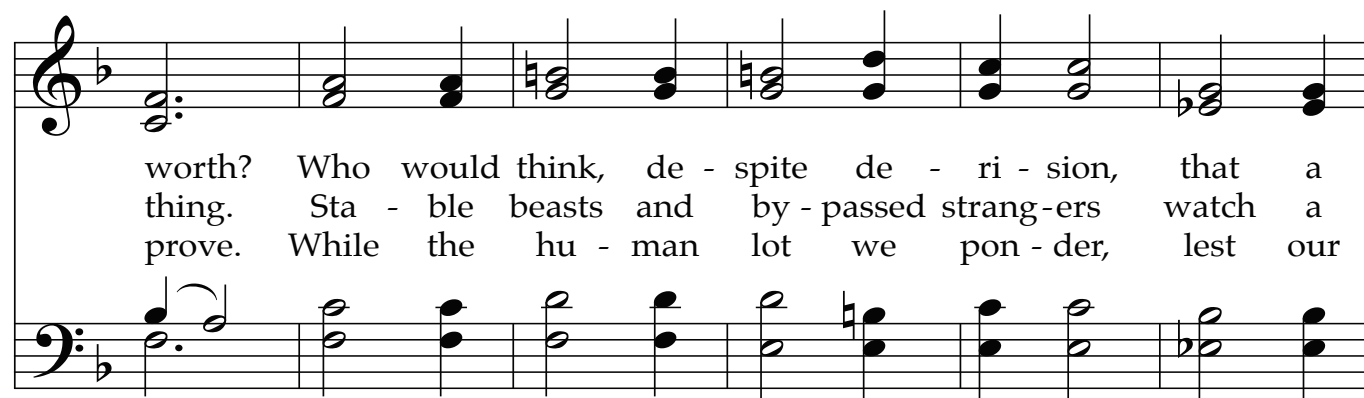
1 Who would think that what was need - ed to trans -  
 2 Shep - herds watch and wise men won - der; mon - archs  
 3 Cen - tu - ries of skill and sci - ence span the



form and save the earth might not be a  
 scorn and an - gels sing; such a place as  
 past from which we move, yet ex - pe - rience



plan or ar - my, proud in pur - pose, proved in  
 none would reck - on hosts a ho - ly help - less  
 ques - tions wheth - er, with such prog - ress, we im -



worth? Who would think, de - spite de - ri - sion, that a  
 thing. Sta - ble beasts and by - passed strang - ers watch a  
 prove. While the hu - man lot we pon - der, lest our



child should lead the way?  
ba - by laid in hay; God sur - pris - es earth with  
hopes and hu - mor fray,

heav - en, com - ing here on Christ - mas Day.

Hindsight is nearly always clearer than foresight, and with gentle good humor this Christmas hymn points out how great was the gap between human expectation and God's actual way of providing a means of salvation for us. God's ways continually exceed our claims to comprehend them.

TEXT: John L. Bell and Graham Maule, 1987

MUSIC: John L. Bell, 2005

Text and Music © 1987, 2005 WGRG, Iona Community (admin. GIA Publications, Inc.)

WHITE ROSETTES

8.7.8.7.D

**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 26 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 are available in the Parish Hall.*

## THE SOUPER BOWL IS BACK!

With pro football's championship game happening next month, it's time once again to support this year's **SOUPER BOWL**! We will tackle local hunger with a collection of soup and other non-perishable items, to be split among our neighbors at **HEADREST**, the **UPPER VALLEY HAVEN**, and **LISTEN COMMUNITY SERVICES**.

*Donations may be left in the boxes in the Parish Hall until February 12. You may also bring them directly to any of the three beneficiaries (please let us know if you do so). THANK YOU!!*





**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](mailto: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](mailto:church@fcclieb.org) • [prayer@fcclieb.org](mailto:prayer@fcclieb.org) • [music@fcclieb.org](mailto:music@fcclieb.org) • [www.fcclieb.org](http://www.fcclieb.org)**