



United Church of Christ – Open and Affirming

Ash Wednesday Service

February 14, 2024

The power of choosing between good and evil is within us all.

– Origen

Please silence cell phones and other devices during worship.

**Those who are able are invited to stand. Both hymns are included after the order of service.*

Prelude

Jesu, meine Freude, BWV 610

Johann Sebastian Bach

Call to Worship

Adapted from Psalm 51

One: Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.

All: Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

One: For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

All: Against you, you alone, have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are justified in your sentence and blameless when you pass judgment.

One: Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.

All: Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me.

*Hymn 314

Lord Jesus, Think on Me (vv. 1-4)

Southwell

*Prayer of Invocation

First Reading

Joel 2:1-2,12-17

2 Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy mountain!

Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming, it is near—

² a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness!

Like blackness spread upon the mountains a great and powerful army comes;

their like has never been from of old, nor will be again after them in ages to come. [...]

¹²Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart,

with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;¹³ rend your hearts and not your clothing.

Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful,

slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing.

¹⁴Who knows whether he will not turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind him, a grain-offering and a drink-offering for the Lord, your God?

¹⁵ Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast;
 call a solemn assembly; ¹⁶ gather the people.
 Sanctify the congregation; assemble the aged;
 gather the children, even infants at the breast.
 Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her canopy.
¹⁷ Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep.
 Let them say, "Spare your people, O Lord, and do not make your heritage a mockery,
 a byword among the nations.
 Why should it be said among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'"

Second Reading

2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

...[W]e entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.
 6 As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. ²For he says, "At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you." See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation!
³We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, ⁴but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, ⁵beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; ⁶by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, ⁷truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; ⁸in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; ⁹as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; ¹⁰as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

Third Reading

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

6 "Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.
²"So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ³But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.
⁵"And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ⁶But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. [...]

¹⁶“And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

¹⁹“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal.

²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Reflection

Stephen R. Silver

Interlude

Andante tranquillo, *Sonata No. 3*, op. 65

Felix Mendelssohn

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

*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.

Invitation to the Observation of the Lenten Discipline

Lenten Prayer of Penitence (*Unison*)

Merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by 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. In your mercy forgive what we have been, help us amend what we are, and direct what we shall be, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

Imposition of Ashes

*Hymn 209

Abide With Me (vv. 1-5)

Eventide

*Benediction

Postlude

Prelude on "Eventide"

C.H.H. Parry

* * *

Leading Worship This Evening

The Rev. Stephen R. Silver, Pastor • Ernie Drown, Organist

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Tonight's offering will support the Upper Valley Haven.

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Lord Jesus, Think on Me

314

Synesius of Cyrene, c.375-430

Tr. Allen W. Chatfield, 1808-1896, alt.

SOUTHWELL S.M.

Adapted from Damon's "Psalmes," 1579

1 Lord Je - sus, think on me, And purge a - way my sin;
2 Lord Je - sus, think on me, A - mid the bat - tle's strife;
3 Lord Je - sus, think on me, Nor let me go a - stray;

From earth-born pas-sions set me free, And make me pure with - in.
In all my pain and mis - er - y Be thou my health and life.
Through dark-ness and per - plex - i - ty Point thou the heaven-ly way. A - men.

4 Lord Jesus, think on me,
That, when this life is past,
I may the eternal brightness see,
And share thy joy at last.

Abide With Me

209

Henry F. Lyte, 1793-1847, alt.

EVENTIDE 10.10.10.10.
William H. Monk, 1823-1889



1 A - bid with me; fast falls the e - ven - tide; The dark-ness deep - ens,
2 Swift to its close ebbs out life's lit - tle day; Earth's joys grow dim, its
3 I need thy pres - ence ev - ery pass - ing hour; What but thy grace can
4 I fear no foe, with thee at hand to bless; Ills have no weight, and



Lord, with me a - bid; When oth - er help - ers fail, and com - forts flee,
glo - ries pass a - way; Change and de - cay in all a - round I see;
foil the temp - ter's power? Who like thy - self my guide and stay can be?
tears no bit - ter - ness; Where is death's sting? where, grave, thy vic - to - ry?



Help of the help - less, O a - bid with me.
O thou who chang - est not, a - bid with me.
Through cloud and sun - shine, O a - bid with me.
I tri - umph still if thou a - bid with me. A - men.



5 Hold thou thy cross before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies;
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.



First Congregational Church of Lebanon

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Weekly Worship Resources Enclosed!

DATED MATERIAL—Please Deliver Promptly

Do you use email? Contact church@fccleb.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)

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