



First Congregational Church of Lebanon

United Church of Christ – Open and Affirming

The Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

September 22, 2024

Any concern too small to be turned into a prayer is too small to be turned into a burden.

–Corrie ten Boom

Kindly silence cell phones and other devices during worship. All hymns are included on pages 4-7.

Prelude *Aria* Paul Manz

Call to Worship Psalm 1

One: Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or take the path that sinners tread, or sit in the seat of scoffers;

All: **But their delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law they meditate day and night.**

One: They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper.

All: **The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away.**

One: Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;

All: **For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.**

Hymn 839 (p. 4) *Blessed Assurance, Jesus Is Mine!* Assurance

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 *Looke Downe, O Lord* William Byrd

Children's Moment

Hymn 702 (p. 5) *Christ Be Beside Me* Bunessan

Scripture Lessons

James 3:13-4:3, 7-8. ¹³Who is wise and understanding among you? Show by your good life that your works are done with gentleness born of wisdom. ¹⁴But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not be boastful and false to the truth. ¹⁵Such wisdom does not come down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish. ¹⁶For where there is envy and selfish ambition, there will also be disorder and wickedness of every kind. ¹⁷But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. ¹⁸And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace.

^{4:1}Those conflicts and disputes among you, where do they come from? Do they not come from your cravings that are at war within you? ²You want something and do not have it; so you commit murder. And you covet something and cannot obtain it; so you engage in disputes and conflicts. You do not have, because you do not ask. ³You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, in order to spend what you get on your pleasures. [...] ⁷Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. [...]

Mark 9:30-37. ³⁰They went on from there and passed through Galilee. He did not want anyone to know it; ³¹for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again." ³²But they did not understand what he was saying and were afraid to ask him.

³³Then they came to Capernaum; and when he was in the house he asked them, "What were you arguing about on the way?" ³⁴But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another who was the greatest. ³⁵He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all." ³⁶Then he took a little child and put it among them; and taking it in his arms, he said to them, ³⁷"Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me."

Sermon "Fighting for First Place" Stephen R. Silver

Hymn 459 (p. 6) O Word of God Incarnate Munich

Sharing of Joys and Concerns; Pastoral Prayer

As we hold community members in prayer, please exercise care and discretion when sharing.

Today we offer our ongoing prayers for Pete, Marcia, Arlene, Evelyn, Greg, Jan, Edith, Eileen, Waneta, Terry, Juanita, Dan, Travis, Garrett, Sue, Rick, Edward, Duane, Priscilla, Ron, Lauren, Brian, Micah, Al, Steve, Denzil, Jacobe, and June.

Holy One, we come before you, faithful, doubting, sure-minded, confused. Though these words may describe us as a community, they also describe each of us as individuals. We seek certainty, but we must deal with dissonance. We seek answers, but we find only more questions. We can find guidance in Scripture, but when we don't like what

we read, we all too often ignore it. Help us to be discerning and attentive, receptive to wisdom that is born of experience, and open to the insight that comes from others. In short, help us to follow Jesus, not blindly but faithfully.

We pray this, and all the joys and concerns we hold in our hearts, in the name of Jesus Christ, 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 *How Shall I Sing That Majesty* Charles Beaudrot

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*)

O God who came to us in Jesus, accept these gifts as symbols of our desire to serve others as Jesus served us. Be with us, be with our church, as we feed the hungry, welcome those in need of comfort, help them to buy food and gas. Be with us in all the various ways our desire to serve is made possible by our gifts to your church. In Jesus' name we pray, with gratitude. Amen.

Hymn 457 (p. 7) *How Happy Are the Saints of God* Wareham

Benediction

Postlude *Trumpet Tune* David N. Johnson

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Leading Worship This Week

The Rev. Stephen R. Silver, Pastor

Ernie Drown, Organ/Piano • The FCC Choir • Bob Gerlach, Liturgist
Corrine Erskine and Barb Teeter, Ushers • Sue Pratt, 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.

839 Blessed Assurance, Jesus Is Mine!

1 Bless - ed as - sur - ance, Je - sus is mine! O what a
 2 Per - fect sub - mis - sion, per - fect de - light, vi - sions of
 3 Per - fect sub - mis - sion, all is at rest; I in my

fore - taste of glo - ry di - vine! Heir of sal - va - tion,
 rap - ture now burst on my sight; an - gels de - scend - ing,
 Sav - ior am hap - py and blest, watch - ing and wait - ing,

pur - chase of God, born of his Spir - it, washed in his blood.
 bring from a - bove ech - oes of mer - cy, whis - pers of love.
 look - ing a - bove, filled with his good - ness, lost in his love.

Refrain

This is my sto - ry; this is my song, prais - ing my Sav - ior

Sometimes this prolific 19th-century hymnwriter wrote texts for others to set, and sometimes she created words for tunes others had composed. This text was of the second kind, and the resulting close fit between words and music has made them both popular and inseparable.

all the day long; this is my sto - ry; this is my

song, prais - ing my Sav - ior all the day long.

Christ Be Beside Me 702

C Am Dm G Dm G C

1 Christ be be - side me; Christ be be - fore me; Christ be be -
 2 Christ on my right hand, Christ on my left hand, Christ all a -
 3 Christ be in all hearts think - ing a - bout me; Christ be on

Em Am Em F G C Am F C

hind me, King of my heart. Christ be with - in me; Christ be be -
 round me, shield in the strife. Christ in my sleep - ing, Christ in my
 all tongues tell - ing of me. Christ be the vi - sion in eyes that

Am G C G Am G7 C

low me; Christ be a - bove me, nev - er to part.
 sit - ting, Christ in my ris - ing, Light of my life.
 see me; in ears that hear me Christ ev - er be.

This text adapts part of a traditional Irish prayer associated with St. Patrick (see also no. 6). Such a prayer for protection is known as a *lorica*, from a Latin word for “breastplate” or “armor.” It is set to a Gaelic melody that gained wide popularity in the 1970s.

459 O Word of God Incarnate

1 O Word of God in - car - nate, O Wis - dom from on high,
 2 The church from you, dear Sav - ior, re - ceived this gift di - vine;
 3 O make your church, dear Sav - ior, a lamp of pur - est gold

O Truth un - changed, un - chang - ing, O Light of our dark sky:
 and still that light is lift - ed on all the earth to shine.
 to bear be - fore the na - tions your true light, as of old;

we praise you for the ra - diance that from the hal - lowed page,
 It is the chart and com - pass that, all life's voy - age through,
 O teach your wan - dering pil - grims by this our path to trace,

a lan - tern to our foot - steps, shines on from age to age.
 a - mid the rocks and quick - sands still guides, O Christ, to you.
 till, clouds and storms thus end - ed, we see you face to face.

The opening four lines of this hymn celebrate attributes of Christ that are revealed through holy Scripture, which serves as a lantern, a chart, and a compass for the church in seeking to know Christ better. The setting of the tune comes from Felix Mendelssohn's *Elijah*.

TEXT: William Walsham How, 1867, alt.
 MUSIC: *Neuvermehrtes Meinungisches Gesangbuch*, 1693; adapt. Felix Mendelssohn, 1847

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457 How Happy Are the Saints of God

(Psalm 1)

1 How hap - py are the saints of God who do not
 2 Like deep - ly root - ed trees, they stand be - side an
 3 While wick - ed ones are whisked a - way like straw be -

heed the wick - ed way; de - light - ing in the
 ev - er - flow - ing stream. Their fruit is plen - ti -
 fore the driv - ing wind, the saints are firm - ly

ho - ly Word they seek God's wis - dom night and day.
 ful and good; their leaves are al - ways grow - ing green.
 plant - ed still, and God will keep them to the end.

This paraphrase of Psalm 1 celebrates the permanence of God's way in contrast with the transience of wickedness. While the wicked are dried up and scattered, the holy people of God are rooted and nourished. They bear much good fruit and are blessed with an enduring legacy.



Roots and Branches: Music for Piano, Cello, and Birbyne—Saturday, Sept. 21, at 7:00 pm
Pianist Elizabeth Borowsky and her mother, renowned cellist Cecylia Barczyk, present a soulful musical journey with special guest Vytautas Kiminius, a virtuoso on the enchanting Lithuanian *birbyne*. The program weaves together Eastern-European folk music and classical compositions in a captivating tapestry of sound. *More at intermusearts.org/vytautas-kiminius-tour-2024.html.*

The Anonymous Coffeehouse—Saturday, Sept. 28, and Fridays, Oct. 11 and 25, 7:30 pm
Our comfy community venue for live folk music opens its fifth season! Come and go as you please; food and drink available. *Free admission. For performers and more, visit anoncoffee.org.*

Jacqueline Schwab, Piano: Tunes for Troubled Times—Sunday, October 6, at 4:30 pm
Known for playing exquisitely on over a dozen of Ken Burns' acclaimed documentaries, Jacqueline Schwab offers a program to soothe souls, inspire reflection, and encourage agency and action in a challenging world. She'll share vintage music from American, Celtic, Ukrainian, and Latin traditions. *Adults \$20 suggested donation; more on Jacqueline Schwab at www.jacquelineschwab.com.*

Community Dinners Return This Sunday, September 22

Many thanks to Dawn Troutman for her efforts to lead the revival of our monthly dinners! The hope is that our congregation can offer guidance, with the hard work shared by outside volunteers. And all are welcome to come, eat, and share fellowship, regardless of need or affiliation.

Anyone can lend a hand with dinner setup, serving, and cleanup—family, friends, coworkers, neighbors, ANYONE! And if you're interested in leading a month, menu resources are available, and the church can reimburse costs; please contact the office.

Signups posted in the Parish Hall. Please help with this important meal for our neighbors!

The 2024 Lebanon CROP Walk—Sunday, October 13

Every year thousands across the country join the CROP Hunger Walk, organized by Church World Service to fight hunger, food insecurity, and poverty worldwide. First held in Bismarck, ND, in October 1969, the walk has become a community event in over 2000 towns, as local organizations advocate for hunger relief and share fellowship on a crisp fall afternoon.

All are welcome to participate in this year's walk—in any or all of these ways:

WALK!—Whether on your own or as a group of family and friends, register online at events.crophungerwalk.org/cropwalks/event/hanovernh. Then, invite donations in your name.

SERVE!—FCC will offer light food and refreshments on the front lawn, renewing a long tradition of post-walk hospitality. Volunteers may contribute food and/or help with set-up (*details TBD*).

DONATE!—Sponsor a walker or give at events.crophungerwalk.org/cropwalks/event/hanovernh.

Please note that all contributions should be made online (not through FCC).

FCC Outing Club—Fall Foliage on Farnum Hill, Lebanon

Next Sunday, September 29—Meet at Trailhead on Rolling Ridge Rd at 12:30 pm

All are welcome—regardless of ability!—to enjoy this low-impact hike, led as always by ranger-extraordinaire **Ron Bailey**. We'll follow a route we've not taken before, walking the Farnum Hill ridge to Middle and North Peaks, which afford great views for foliage season. Ron may offer a brief geology lecture, at no extra charge! *To reach trailhead, take Poverty Lane to Foliage View Rd, then left on Rolling Ridge Rd; trailhead is about 100 yards up on the right. Park along road, off pavement. Bring water, lunch or snacks, bug/tick repellent, and appropriate clothing.*

Bring your friends, family, and/or dogs, and share this experience of God's creation!

Neighbors in Need Special UCC Offering—Mental-Health Justice for All!

The UCC's Neighbors in Need program supports ministries of justice and compassion across the country. Two-thirds of the collection funds the UCC's **Justice and Witness Ministries** in local and national initiatives, advocacy efforts, and the fight against systemic injustice. The rest goes to the **Council for American Indian Ministry**, a voice for Native Americans in the UCC, sustaining a proud denominational tradition of support. **This year, NIN focuses on mental-health justice, treating mental health as a God-given right and dismantling the shame and stigma around it.**

Please contribute as you're able to this vital mission program, by cash or check (payable to FCC, memo "Neighbors in Need") or online at www.ucc.org/nin. Thank you!

"Into the Potter's Hands" NHC-UCC Annual Meeting, October 26

All are invited—lay or ordained leaders, congregation members, friends, and visitors—to participate in the **223rd Annual Meeting** of the NH Conference of the UCC, at Geneva Point Center in Moultonborough. This year's theme, **"Into the Potter's Hands: Regeneration and Renewal,"** draws inspiration from Jeremiah 18:6, and the keynote speaker is Rev. Darrell Goodwin, who has served the UCC in various roles in conferences across the country.

In addition to worship, the business meeting, and other plenary events on October 26, several optional connecting sessions are available online October 15-29.

FCC will pay for up to four delegates to attend (in person or online); contact the church office if you're interested. Online registration open through Tuesday, October 8. For full schedule and more details, please visit www.nhcucc.org/events/am-2024.

Do Your Part to Fill the Cart!

Currently, we are collecting non-perishable food and personal-care items on behalf of:

THE UPPER VALLEY HAVEN

For a list of current and ongoing needs, please visit uppervalleyhaven.org/current-wish-lists/.



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