

First Congregational Church of Lebanon

United Church of Christ - Open and Affirming

The Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost October 13, 2024

Obstacles are those frightful things you see when you take your eyes off your goal.

-Henry Ford

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

Prelude

Prelude in C Minor/Major

Thomas Attwood Walmisley

Call to Worship

Adapted from Psalm 22

One: My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?

All: O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer; and by night, but find no rest.

One: Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel.

All: In you our ancestors trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them. To you they cried, and were saved; in you they trusted, and were not put to shame.

One: It was you who took me from the womb; you kept me safe on my mother's breast.

All: On you I was cast from my birth, and since my mother bore me you have been my God.

Hymn 7 (p. 5)

Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise

St. Denio

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

O That I Knew Where I Might Find Him

W. Sterndale Bennett

Children's Moment

Today, we read again from the Hebrew Bible about Job, an unlucky character who had everything bad possible happen to him. To make matters worse, he has some friends who offer their help—by telling him that he clearly did something wrong. Really? Is this what Job needed? No. And his friends were wrong. God does not function this way. If you don't believe me, how about the Gospel of John, which tells us, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but

have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him." (John 3:16-17) So, there you have it. God sent Jesus to help us, not to punish us.

Hymn 404 (p. 6) Take My Life and Let It Be

Vienna

Scripture Lessons

Job 23:1-9, 16-17. Then Job answered: ²"Today also my complaint is bitter; his hand is heavy despite my groaning. ³Oh, that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his dwelling! ⁴I would lay my case before him, and fill my mouth with arguments. ⁵I would learn what he would answer me, and understand what he would say to me. ⁶Would he contend with me in the greatness of his power? No; but he would give heed to me. ⁷There an upright person could reason with him, and I should be acquitted forever by my judge.

⁸"If I go forward, he is not there; or backward, I cannot perceive him; ⁹on the left he hides, and I cannot behold him; I turn to the right, but I cannot see him. […] ¹⁶God has made my heart faint; the Almighty has terrified me; ¹⁷If only I could vanish in darkness, and thick darkness would cover my face!"

Mark 10:17-31. ¹⁷As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" ¹⁸Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. ¹⁹You know the commandments: 'You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; You shall not defraud; Honor your father and mother.'" ²⁰He said to him, "Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth." ²¹Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, "You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." ²²When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

²³Then Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" ²⁴And the disciples were perplexed at these words. But Jesus said to them again, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." ²⁶They were greatly astounded and said to one another, "Then who can be saved?" ²⁷Jesus looked at them and said, "For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible."

²⁸Peter began to say to him, "Look, we have left everything and followed you." ²⁹Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news, ³⁰who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age—houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. ³¹But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first."

Sermon "Road Hazards"

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 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, and Jacobe.

On this early October Sunday, we are challenged: what do we remember? What do we honor? What do we do about our future, both our individual paths and the one we hold in common? There is so much to decide, too much information to sift through. We feel that we are alone, facing a new situation.

But Mark's Gospel reminds us otherwise. We may feel that we are faced with grave, unprecedented choices, but then we remember the young man who was told that is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than it is for a person to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Tough, even insurmountable choices have long been before us. We remember this, and we remember that we are not alone, that God holds us, cares for us, in all we do. For this strength, for this love, we give God thanks.

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 Tu Pauperum Refugium

Josquin des Prez

"You are a refuge for the poor, the cure for infirmity, the hope of exiles, the strength of workers, the path for the wanderer, truth and life. And now, Redeemer God, I take refuge with you alone. I worship you, true God, I hope in you, I trust in you. Jesus Christ, my salvation, help me that my soul should never fall asleep in death."

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)

Almighty God, ruler of all: we present these gifts as a pledge to use the money, skills, and time with which you have blessed us to help with the building of your new creation, here in the Upper Valley and around the world. In the name of your Son, our Savior, we pray. Amen.

Hymn 725 (p. 8) O Jesus, I Have Promised

Nyland

Benediction

Postlude A Benediction (God Be in My Head)

Alec Rowley

Leading Worship This Week

The Rev. Stephen R. Silver, Pastor Ernie Drown, Organ/Piano • The FCC Choir • Phil Hammond, Liturgist Linda and Bob Gerlach, Ushers • Sue Pratt, Zoom Greeter

The 2024 Lebanon CROP Walk—This 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).

Do Your Part to Fill the Cart!

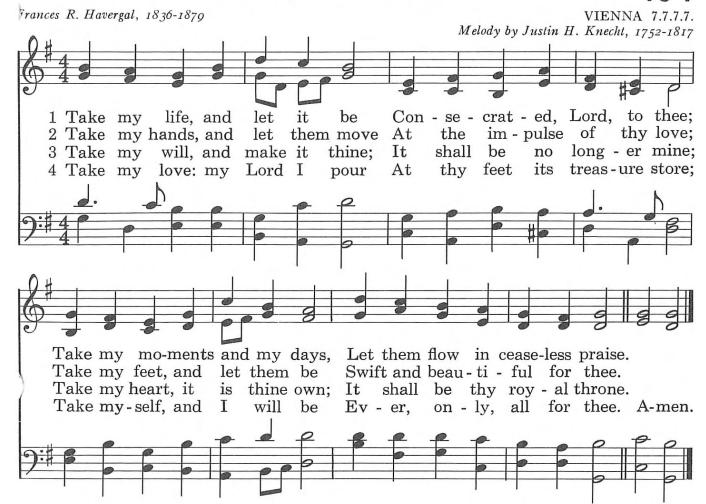
Currently, we are collecting non-perishable food and personal-care items on behalf of: THE UPPER VALLEY HAVEN

For a list of current and ongoing needs, please visit uppervalleyhaven.org/current-wish-lists/ or see the list that is attached to the shopping cart itself.

Direct financial contributions to any Upper Valley service organization are always needed and much appreciated. Thanks for fighting local poverty and hunger!



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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!

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.



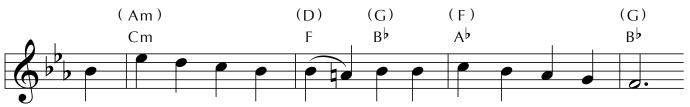
O Jesus, I Have Promised 72.5



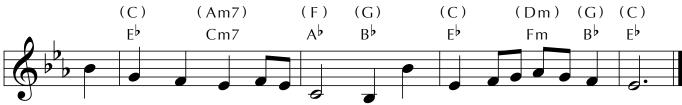
1 O Je - sus, I have prom - ised to serve you to the end: 2 O let me feel you near me! The world is ev - er near: 3 O let me hear you speak - ing in ac - cents clear and still, Ο Je - sus, you have prom - ised to who fol - low you all



be now and al - ways near me, my Mas - ter and my friend; Ι see the sights that daz - zle; the tempt-ing sounds I hear. a - bove the storms of self - will; pas - sion, the mur - murs of that where you are in glo - ry your ser - vant shall be too.



shall not fear the bat tle if you are by side, my My foes are ev - er a - round me and with - in; near me, speak to re - as sure has - ten con - trol; me, to or Je - sus, Ι the And, have prom - ised to serve you to end;



wan - der from the path - way if will my guide. nor you be Ie - sus, draw still near - er and shield my soul from sin. but, speak, and make me lis - ten, true guard-ian my soul. of Mas - ter now give me grace to fol - low, my my friend. and

This hymn written by an Anglican clergyman for the confirmation of his children in Victorian times appears here in updated language that may help to make its challenging commitments more immediate. The tune is named for the province in Finland from which it comes.

Music at the Meetinghouse

FALL CONCERTS

All in the FCC Sanctuary

The Anonymous Coffeehouse—Fridays, Oct. 11 and 25, Nov. 8 and 22, Dec. 6, all 7:30 pm Our comfy community venue for live folk music continues its fifth season! Come and go as you please; food and drink available. Free admission. For performers and more, visit anoncoffee.org.

Classicopia: Fabulous Four-Hand Frolic—Saturday, October 12, at 7:30 pm Pianists Dan Weiser and Elizabeth Borowsky share the keyboard for this thrilling four-hand program of French and American composers. Music of Georges Bizet, Gabriel Fauré, and NH's own Amy Beach, along with George Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue, which celebrates its centennial this year. Adults \$20, FCC members \$15, children free; more at classicopia.org.

Cameo Baroque: An All-Bach Benefit for the Open Door—Sunday, October 27, at 2:00 pm Four superb musicians (Ernie Drown, Beth Hilgartner, Leslie Stroud, and Laurie Rabut) celebrate the music of Johann Sebastian Bach in this fall program. Freewill donation to benefit FCC's Open Door Ministry for community assistance. More on Cameo Baroque at cameoarts.org.

Sunflower Woodwind Quintet (Presented by UVMC)—Sunday, November 10, at 1:00 pm This excellent wind ensemble offers musical variety from classical showpieces to dance tunes and a new commission, "Turning Toward." Freewill donation benefits UVMC tuition assistance; more at wmusic.org.

Classicopia: Jewish Jazz—Saturday, November 16, at 7:30 pm UVMC Community Chorus—Saturday, November 23, at 4:00 pm Henry Danaher, Organ—Saturday, November 23, at 7:00 pm

Cameo Baroque: Benefit for the UV Haven's 19 Days-Saturday, November 30, at 7:00 pm

"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 223nd 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.



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@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) 603-448-4281 • church@fccleb.org • prayer@fccleb.org • music@fccleb.org • www.fccleb.org