



# First Congregational Church of Lebanon

United Church of Christ – Open and Affirming

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## The Second Sunday of Advent

December 8, 2024

One lesson that we Christians have not learned in the last 2,000+ years is that Jesus had no political control over the Roman Empire and he still changed the entire world. We keep trying to change the world the Roman Empire did, instead of the way Jesus did.

–Mike Donio

*Kindly silence cell phones and other devices during worship. All hymns are included on pages 5-7.*

**Prelude**                      *Noël sûr les Flûtes*                      Louis-Claude d'Aquin

**Call to Worship**                      Adapted from Luke 1:68-79

One: Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them.

**All:** He has raised up a mighty savior for us in the house of his servant David, as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old.

One: And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,

**All:** To give knowledge of salvation to his people by the forgiveness of their sins.

One: By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us,

**All:** To give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

**Hymn 104** (p. 5)                      *Comfort, Comfort Ye My People*

Psalm 42

**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.

**A Liturgy for Advent**

**Presentation of the Advent Banner**

**An Advent Reading**

*Isaiah 11:1-10.* A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. <sup>2</sup>The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. <sup>3</sup>His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; <sup>4</sup>but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. <sup>5</sup>Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

<sup>6</sup>The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. <sup>7</sup>The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. <sup>8</sup>The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. <sup>9</sup>They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. <sup>10</sup>On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

### An Advent Litany

One: There is one crying out in the wilderness!

**All: He brings news of the One who will deliver us.**

One: He comes to baptize with water,

**All: So that the people may be ready to be baptized with the Spirit.**

One: He tells us to be fruit worthy of repentance.

**All: Open our hearts, O God, and let us confess our sins to you.**

One: He shares his message so that we may be prepared for the Good News.

**All: Let us prepare ourselves for the Good News. Let us ready ourselves for God's New Creation. Let us prepare the way of the Lord. Let us make his paths straight.**

### The Lighting of the Advent Candle

#### An Advent Prayer (*Unison*)

Holy God, in this season of anticipation, help us to be patient. Loving God, in this time of watching, help us to see clearly. Healing God, in these weeks of preparation, make ready our hearts for the arrival of the Light of the World.

### Words of Welcome; Our Ministry and Mission

**Musical Offering**     *I Wonder as I Wander*

John Jacob Niles

### Children's Moment

Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love are the traditional themes of Advent. These are the things we wait for as we make ready for the arrival of the Baby Jesus. But why must we wait? My hope is that we all experience hope, peace, joy, and love in our lives right now, on this very day. I honestly don't think God wants us to wait for hope, peace, joy, and love. After all, Jesus is already here. And we should embrace these gifts now.

**Hymn 105** (p. 6)     *Hail to the Lord's Anointed*

Ellacombe

## Scripture Lessons

*Malachi 3:1-4.* See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. <sup>2</sup>But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; <sup>3</sup>he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness. <sup>4</sup>Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years

*Luke 3:1-6.* In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, <sup>2</sup>during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. <sup>3</sup>He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, <sup>4</sup>as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. <sup>5</sup>Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; <sup>6</sup>and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'"

<b>Sermon</b>	"Insistent Messaging"	Stephen R. Silver
<b>Hymn 115</b> (p. 6)	<i>On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry</i>	Winchester New

## 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, Priscilla, Ron, Lauren, Brian, Micah, Al, Steve, Denzil, Jacobe, and Chris.

O God of Advent: We say we want peace—but just how much? Do we know what we are praying for? Just what do we mean by "peace"? Do we merely look for an absence of violence? Can we imagine a world without war? Without violent crime? Without relationship abuse? Oh, we claim to want these things, but are we willing to make the sacrifices necessary to realize them? Be with us, we pray, during this season of hope, and let us remember the joy of the shepherds the night of your birth. Prepare us, O God, to welcome your peace into our hearts. 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

*People Look East*

Besançon Carol, arr. Malcolm Archer

## 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*)

During this season of giving, let us remember the old adage that it is indeed better to give than to receive. Let us live into the truth of this hoary old saying by sharing some of what we have with your people, especially those in need, here in the Upper Valley, on the far side of the world, and everywhere in between. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

## Hymn 120 (p. 7)

*There's a Voice in the Wilderness*

Ascension

## Benediction

## Postlude

The Children's Community Corner

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### *Leading Worship This Week*

The Rev. Stephen R. Silver, Pastor

Ernie Drown, Organ/Piano • The FCC Choir • Betsy Alexander, Soprano  
Stacey Steele, Liturgist • Courtney and Ellen Buzzell, Ushers • Linda Jacobs, Zoom Greeter

## Christmas Carol Sing and Potluck at the Parsonage

This Sunday, December 8, 4:00-6:00 pm—15 Kimball St, Lebanon

All are warmly invited to our annual congregational Christmas party! We'll gather round the fireplace for festive fellowship and favorite carols. *Bring a favorite dish or holiday treat to share.*



## CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES AT FCC

*In the Sanctuary and on Zoom*

**Family Service with Pageant, 5:00 PM**—Our beloved service for families and the young-at-heart, with a nativity pageant and living creche! All are welcome to attend; if you or your children are interested in participating, please contact Rachel Silver at [rachelsilver@live.com](mailto:rachelsilver@live.com).

**Service of Lessons and Carols, 8:00 PM**—The story of Christ's birth in Scripture and traditional carols. Steve Silver will preach and our choir will sing, as we gather at the manger together.

## Comfort, Comfort Ye My People

Based on Isaiah 40:1-8

Johann Olearius, 1611-1684

Tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827-1878, alt.

PSALM 42 8.7.8.7.7.8.8.

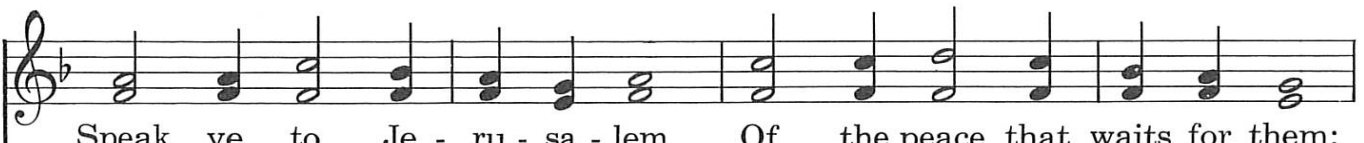
"Genevan Psalter," 1551



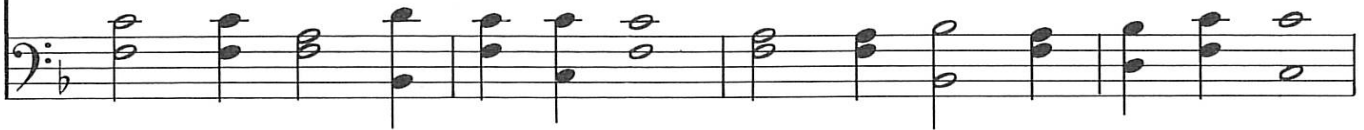
1 Com - fort, com - fort ye my peo - ple, Speak ye peace, thus saith our God;  
 2 Hark, the voice of one that cri - eth In the des - ert far and near,  
 3 Make ye straight what long was crook - ed, Make the rough - er pla - ces plain;



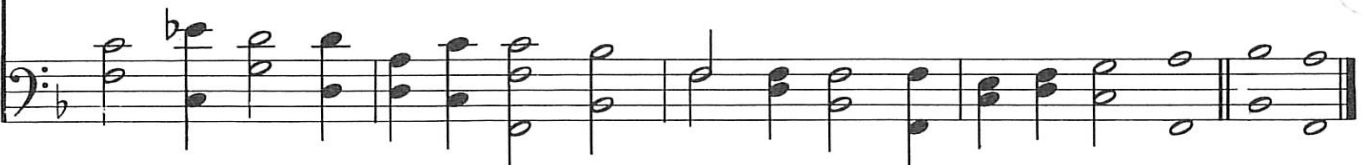
Com - fort those who sit in dark - ness Mourn - ing 'neath their sor - rows' load.  
 Bid - ding all men to re - pent - ance Since the king - dom now is here.  
 Let your hearts be true and hum - ble, As be - fits his ho - ly reign.



Speak ye to Je - ru - sa - lem Of the peace that waits for them;  
 Oh, that warn - ing cry o - bey! Now pre - pare for God a way;  
 For the glo - ry of the Lord Now o'er earth is shed a - broad;



Tell her that her sins I cov - er, And her war - fare now is o - ver.  
 Let the val - leys rise to meet him And the hills bow down to greet him.  
 And all flesh shall see the to - ken That his word is nev - er bro - ken. A - men



Hail to the Lord's Anointed, great David's greater Son!  
 Hail, in the time appointed, his reign on earth begun!  
 He comes to break oppression, to set the captive free,  
 To take away transgression, and rule in equity.

He comes with succor speedy to those who suffer wrong;  
 To help the poor and needy, and bid the weak be strong;  
 To give them songs for sighing, their darkness turn to light,  
 Whose souls, condemned and dying, were precious in his sight.

He shall come down like showers upon the fruitful earth;  
 And love, joy, hope, like flowers, spring in his path to birth.  
 Before him on the mountains shall peace, the herald, go;  
 And righteousness, in fountains, from hill to valley flow.

O'er every foe victorious, he on his throne shall rest,  
 From age to age more glorious, all-blessing and all-blest;  
 The tide of time shall never his covenant remove;  
 His name shall stand forever: that name to us is Love.

## On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry

# 115

*Tune:* Charles Coffin, 1676-1749  
*Lyrics:* John Chandler, 1806-1876, *alt.*

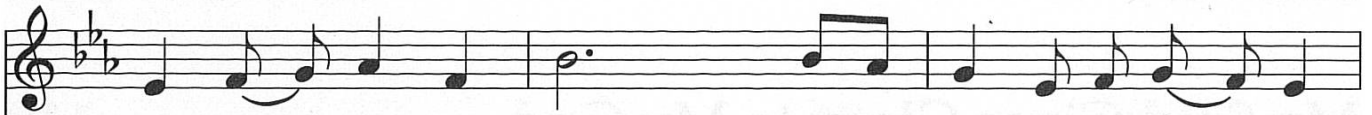
WINCHESTER NEW L.M.  
*Adapted from "Musicalisches Handbuch," Hamburg, 1690*

1 On Jor-dan's bank the Bap-tist's cry An-noun-ces that the Lord is nigh;  
 2 Then cleansed be ev - ery Chris-tian breast, And fur-nished for so great a guest!  
 3 For thou art our sal - va - tion, Lord, Our ref - uge and our great re - ward;  
 4 All praise, e - ter - nal Son, to thee, Whose ad-vent sets thy peo - ple free;

Come then and heark-en, for he brings Glad tid-ings from the King of kings.  
 Yea, let us each our hearts pre-pare For Christ to come and en-ter there.  
 Once more up - on thy peo - ple shine, And fill the world with lovedi-vine.  
 Whom with the Fa - ther we a - dore And Ho - ly Ghost for ev - er - more. A - men.

*Isa. 40:3-11; Ps. 103:15-17**J. Lewis Milligan, 1925; alt.*

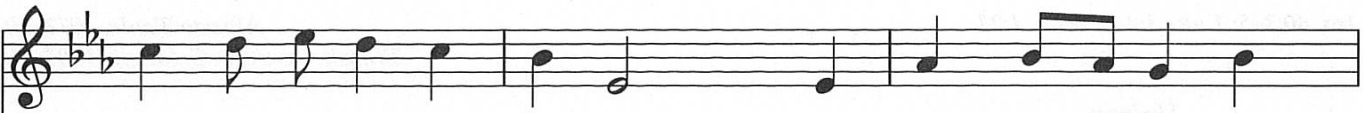
1 There's a voice in the wil - der - ness cry - ing, a  
 2 O Zi - on, who of - fers good tid - ings, to the  
 3 But the word of our God is for - ev - er, our De -



call from the ways un - trod: Pre - pare in the des - ert a  
 height of the moun - tains dare! Lift your voice to the cit - ies of  
 fend - er's will is strong; God stands in the midst of



high - way, a high - way for our God! The  
 Ju - dah: "Be - hold your God!" de - clare. Like the  
 na - tions, to ren - der right the wrong. Then



val - leys shall be ex - alt - ed, the loft - y hills brought  
 flowers of the field we per - ish, our hu - man works de -  
 God shall be as a shep - herd, the lambs gath - ered to God's



low: make straight all the crook - ed pla - ces  
 cay, the power and pomp of na - tions  
 breast; and pas - tures of peace shall greet them,



where Em - man - u - el may go!  
 shall pass like a dream a - way.  
 to give to the wea - ry rest.

*Before moving to Canada, J. Lewis Milligan was a successful British journalist and poet. This text was written in 1925 to celebrate the union of three churches into The United Church of Canada, a body he served as public relations director.*

Tune: ASCENSION Irr.  
 H. Hugh Bancroft, 1938



***The Anonymous Coffeeshouse—Fridays, Dec. 6, Jan. 3, 17, and 31 (etc.), all at 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](http://anoncoffee.org).*

***Upper Valley Voices: Spirits of Yule—Saturday, December 7, at 7:00 pm***

This premier choral ensemble (formerly Thetford Chamber Singers) creatively programs repertoire drawn from around the world. *Spirits of Yule* explores the magical, mystical beings associated with the season. *Advance \$15 (at the door \$20), students \$10, under-13 free; more at [uppervalleyvoices.org](http://uppervalleyvoices.org).*

***Classicopia: Four-Hand Holiday—Sunday, December 8, at 2:00 pm***

Good friends Dan Weiser and Philip Liston-Kraft share the keyboard for some festive, four-hand arrangements of seasonal favorites, from the Blue Danube Waltz and the Nutcracker Suite to jazzy carols and show tunes. *Adults \$20, FCC members \$15, children free; more at [classicopia.org](http://classicopia.org).*

***Bel Canto Chamber Singers: In Dulci Jubilo—Sat., Dec. 14, 7:30 pm / Sun., Dec. 15, 4:00 pm***

Bel Canto celebrates the winter season with music for choir, strings, and piano—Antonio Vivaldi’s *Magnificat*, pieces by Ola Gjeilo and Eric Whitacre, and settings of traditional English, Spanish, German, and Nigerian carols. *Admission by donation (\$15 suggested); more at [belcantosingers.org](http://belcantosingers.org).*

***Upper Valley Music Center Messiah Sing!—Sunday, December 22, at 3:00 pm***

Organized by UVMC’s voice faculty and directed by Mark Nelson, this annual performance of G. F. Handel’s beloved oratorio features student soloists and chamber orchestra. All are welcome to join the chorus (scores are available!) or just listen. *Free-will donation (\$20 suggested); more at [uvmusic.org](http://uvmusic.org).*

## THE CHRISTMAS FUND

We invite you to consider a donation to the UCC’s Christmas Fund, also known as the Fund for the 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 online at [www.pbucc.org/index.php/christmas-fund-home](http://www.pbucc.org/index.php/christmas-fund-home). Thanks!*

### Doing What Is Right and Just *Many Thanks for Your 2025 Stewardship Pledges*

*“To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.” —Proverbs 21:3*

All are invited to prayerfully consider their commitment to FCC’s mission and ministry in the coming year. We’ll gratefully accept your 2025 pledges anytime in the coming weeks. Thank you!

*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 2025 are available in the Parish Hall.*





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