



# First Congregational Church of Lebanon

*United Church of Christ – Open and Affirming*

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## CHRISTMAS EVE 2024

Service of Lessons and Carols, with Holy Communion, 8:00 pm

*Please silence cell phones and other devices.*

*\*Those who are able are invited to stand. All of this evening's carols come from the Pilgrim Hymnal.*

**Prelude**                      *Noël Grand jeu et Duo*                                      Louis-Claude Daquin

### Words of Welcome

**\*Carol 132**                      *O Come, All Ye Faithful*                                      Adeste Fideles

- (1) O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,  
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;  
Come and behold him, born the King of angels.  
*(Refrain:)* O come, let us adore him; O come, let us adore him;  
O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!
- (2) Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,  
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!  
Glory to God, all glory in the highest! *(Refrain)*
- (3) Child, for us sinners poor and in the manger,  
We would embrace thee, with love and awe;  
Who would not love thee, loving us so dearly? *(Refrain)*
- (4) Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning,  
Jesus, to thee be all glory given;  
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing. *(Refrain)*

### Call to Worship

One: Come away, come away, come today to Bethlehem.

**All: Come adore on bended knee, one whose birth the angels sing.**

One: Come away, come away, from your noisy celebration, to a place of quietness and peace.

**All: Come with wonder, come with awe. Take your place among the sheep and cattle.**

One: Sing with joy, praise God, for the time of promise has come. Sing the good news of Emmanuel: God-with-us! The Christ has come!

**All: Come away, come away, come today to Bethlehem.**

### Prayer of Invocation

## The Lighting of the Christ Candle

### Prayer

#### The First Lesson *The Birth of Christ Foretold*

Luke 1:26-35

<sup>26</sup>In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, <sup>27</sup>to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup>And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." <sup>29</sup>But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup>The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup>And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. <sup>32</sup>He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. <sup>33</sup>He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." <sup>34</sup>Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" <sup>35</sup>The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God.

#### \*Carol 120 *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*

Mendelssohn

- (1) Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King;  
Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"  
Joyful, all ye nations, rise, join the triumph of the skies;  
With the angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"  
(*Refrain:*) Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"
- (2) Christ, by highest heaven adored; Christ, the everlasting Lord!  
Late in time behold him come, offspring of the Virgin's womb.  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; hail the incarnate Deity,  
Pleased as man with men to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel. (*Refrain*)
- (3) Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of righteousness!  
Light and life to all he brings, risen with healing in his wings.  
Mild he lays his glory by, born that man no more may die,  
Born to raise the sons of earth, born to give them second birth. (*Refrain*)

#### The Second Lesson *The Birth of Our Savior*

Luke 2:1-20

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup>This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup>All went to their own towns to be registered. <sup>4</sup>Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. <sup>5</sup>He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup>While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. <sup>7</sup>And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

<sup>8</sup>In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup>Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup>But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: <sup>11</sup>to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup>This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” <sup>13</sup>And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, <sup>14</sup>“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”

<sup>15</sup>When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” <sup>16</sup>So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup>When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; <sup>18</sup>and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. <sup>19</sup>But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. <sup>20</sup>The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

**Carol**                                      *Infant Holy, Infant Lowly*                                      Polish, arr. David Willcocks

**The Third Lesson**                      *The Magi Follow the Star to Jesus*                                      Matthew 2:1-11

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.

**Carol**                                      *Mater Ora Filium*                                      Charles Wood

“Mother, pray to the Son that after our exile, he may grant us the joy of all the blessed ones.”

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.  
<sup>2</sup>He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup>All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being <sup>4</sup>in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

[...] <sup>14</sup>And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. <sup>15</sup>(John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") <sup>16</sup>From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. <sup>17</sup>The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

**\*Carol 130**

*Joy to the World! The Lord Is Come*

Antioch

- (1) Joy to the world! the Lord is come: let earth receive her King;  
Let every heart prepare him room, and heaven and nature sing,  
And heaven and nature sing; and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.
- (2) Joy to the earth! the Savior reigns: let men their songs employ;  
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat the sounding joy; repeat, repeat the sounding joy.
- (3) He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove  
The glories of his righteousness, and wonders of his love,  
And wonders of his love; and wonders, wonders of his love.

**Meditation**

Stephen R. Silver

**Carol**

*Jesus, Jesus, Rest Your Head*

Appalachian, arr. Arthur Warrell

**A Christmas Prayer**

**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.

**The Offering of Our Gifts**

**The Call to Stewardship**

**Offertory**            *In the Bleak Midwinter*

Harold Darke

**\*Doxology** (*Unison*)

Old Hundredth

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*)

May these gifts bear testimony to the light we have received in Jesus Christ. May the grace and truth communicated to us be shared with others. Bless and multiply our giving, to your honor and glory and the service of all your people, here and throughout the world. Amen.

\* \* \*

**The Sacrament of Holy Communion**

**The Invitation and Prayer of Confession** (*Unison*)

Light of the World: you gave us the transforming birth of the child Jesus as a light for our path. Yet we confess that we shut our eyes to the light. We admit that we do not want to see the gift you have given us. We acknowledge our reluctance to see and share our gifts with our sisters and brothers. We are often dazzled and distracted by the glitter and tinsel the world has made of Christ's birth. We pray that your Spirit be lit within us, that we may share your life-giving gifts of peace and justice with all people. We seek to receive and share the gift of Christ's birth and death, again and again. Amen.

**Words of Assurance**

**A Litany of Remembrance and Consecration**

One: God of Light, in whom there is no shadow, your gifts to us are from the beginning of time.

**All: They began with Creation, when your spirit gave form to the chaos of energy and matter, when your word brought forth light on the face of the earth.**

One: They continued with our ancient forebears, like Noah, whom you blessed with the radiant promise of the rainbow,

**All: And like Sarah and Abraham, whom you blessed with a child whose descendants, as many as the stars in the sky, were to be a light to the nations.**

One: In the desert, you gave the gifts of manna and living water to the weary pilgrims, whom you led by a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. At last, you sent your light into the world in the form of a tiny child, fragile and vulnerable, who grew to be the very Light of Light, full of grace and truth, revealing your glory on earth.

**All: We thank you, O God, that you have sent Jesus Christ to bring true life and the life everlasting to light. Help us to receive your gifts with joy and humility. As we share this bread and cup, may we open our hearts to receive your love and grace in Jesus Christ, and receive the love and support of one another. Be born among us, that we may give Christ's love to the world, through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

## Gathering at the Table

*The elements will be served by intinction. You are invited to come forward to share in the bread and cup. If you would like a blessing, please come to the table with your arms folded across your chest.*

## The Prayer of Thanksgiving (Unison)

As we receive the gift of the bread and cup, O God, we give you thanks that you have come to us in Jesus Christ, both in the midst of time and history in Bethlehem and in the timeless presence of Christ's spirit. Send us out into the world rejoicing, ready to share your love with the people we meet, through the grace of your Son, whose birth we remember this night. Amen.

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## \*Sharing the Light of Christ

*Taking the light from the Christ Candle, the minister will light the ushers' candles. The ushers will move down the center aisle, lighting the candles of those seated on the aisle. Spreading out from the center, please carefully pass on the light to the next person in your row.*

*After joining together in singing "Silent Night," please extinguish your candles. You may deposit them by the door after the service.*

## \*Carol 138

*Silent Night, Holy Night*

Stille Nacht

- (1) Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright,  
Round yon virgin mother and child. Holy infant so tender and mild,  
Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.
- (2) Silent night, holy night, shepherds quake at the sight,  
Glories stream from heaven afar, heavenly hosts sing alleluia;  
Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!
- (3) Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love's pure light  
Radiant beams from thy holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace.  
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

## \*Charge and Dismissal

One: Go in peace, to love and serve the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

## Postlude

*In Dulci Jubilo, BWV 729*

Johann Sebastian Bach

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*Leading Worship This Evening*

The Rev. Stephen R. Silver, Pastor  
Ernie Drown, Organ and Piano • The FCC Choir



# Merry Christmas!

Many, many thanks to all those who generously offered contributions to our **OPEN DOOR MINISTRY** for community assistance, in honor or memory of their loved ones listed below.

## IN HONOR OF...

Mom/DeAnn/Mema—*Brian, Amy, Katie, and Grace*

Duncan Hilton—*Karen and George Hilton*

Craig Jacobs (our son), Carey Jacobs (our daughter), Betty Adams (Ike's mom), Terri Reese (Ike's aunt), and our dear friend Ginny Bennett—*Linda and Ike Jacobs*

Our caring, hard-working, and loving congregation—*Barb Jones*

Our family and loved ones—*The Silver Family*

Juliet and Dominic, God's greatest gifts to me—*Stacey Steele*

## IN MEMORY OF...

Barbara Fisher Nevel—*Ron Bailey*

Mary Fortmiller Cornwell—*Lola Baldwin*

Sandy Driscoll, Bill Driscoll, and Maury Clancy—*Brian, DeAnn, Amy, Katie, and Grace*

Laura and Gordon Place—*Sue and Ken Gould and Family*

Gloria P. Hammond, Pike Ancestors, and Hammond Ancestors—*Phil Hammond*

Barbara and Maurice Sumner (Linda's parents), Ruby Sumner (Linda's Gram), Betty Sumner King (Linda's aunt), Raymond Adams (Ike's dad)—*Linda and Ike Jacobs*

Our family and loved ones—*The Silver Family*

Grandpa Hezekiah, Grandma Gladys, Uncle Noel, and Aunts Dulcey, Heather, Sonia, and Doris—*Juliet Steele, Stacey Steele, and Dominic Watson*

## THE CHRISTMAS FUND

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

### *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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*...and a Happy New Year!*