



First Congregational Church of Lebanon

United Church of Christ – Open and Affirming

The First Sunday after Christmas

December 29, 2024

Christmas is not a time nor a season, but a state of mind. To cherish peace and goodwill, to be plenteous in mercy, is to have the real spirit of Christmas.

—Calvin Coolidge

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

Prelude *Vom Himmel hoch, da komm ich her*, BWV 701 Johann Sebastian Bach

Call to Worship Adapted from Psalm 148

One: Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD from the heavens; praise him in the heights!

All: Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his host!

One: Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars!

All: Praise him, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens!

One: Let them praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted;

All: His glory is above earth and heaven. Praise the LORD!

Hymn 117 (p. 4) *Angels, From the Realms of Glory* Regent Square

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

Children's Moment

Today we read about precocious children in Scripture—not just Jesus, but Samuel, too. And there have been kids who have had really interesting takes on things all throughout history. Sometimes, youthful ideas will be uninformed. But sometimes, they are rich and worth considering. Why? Because kids were made by God, just like older folks. And while we adults may have more experience, we know in our hearts that experience, while often helpful and grounding, can also be a burden. So, we ask that the Holy Spirit will open our ears and our hearts, regardless of our age, to the love and grace of God.

Hymn 132 (p. 5) *Good Christian Friends, Rejoice* In Dulci Jubilo

Scripture Lessons

1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26. ¹⁸Samuel was ministering before the Lord, a boy wearing a linen ephod. ¹⁹His mother used to make for him a little robe and take it to him each year, when she went up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. ²⁰Then Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, and say, “May the Lord repay you with children by this woman for the gift that she made to the Lord”; and then they would return to their home. [...] ²⁶Now the boy Samuel continued to grow both in stature and in favor with the Lord and with the people.

Luke 2:41-52. ⁴¹Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. ⁴²And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. ⁴³When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. ⁴⁴Assuming that he was in the group of travelers, they went a day’s journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. ⁴⁵When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. ⁴⁶After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, “Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety.” ⁴⁹He said to them, “Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” ⁵⁰But they did not understand what he said to them. ⁵¹Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart. ⁵²And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor.

Sermon “Das Wunderkind” Stephen R. Silver

Hymn 126 (p. 6) *Brightest and Best of the Sons of the Morning* Morning Star

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, Reg, Chris, and Deserai.

A Christmas Affirmation of Faith (*Unison*)

I believe that Christmas is more than a time for parties and ornaments; it is a time for remembering Jesus, the incarnation of God’s love in human flesh.

I believe that there are gifts more important than the ones beneath the tree, such as the things we teach our children, the way we share ourselves with friends, and the efforts by which we set about reshaping the world in which we live.

I believe that the finest carols are often sung by the poorest voices, from hearts made warm by the wonder of this season.

I believe in the angels' message that we should not be afraid—that the Child of Bethlehem is able to overcome all anxieties, fears, and insecurities.

I believe in prayer and quietness as a way of approaching Christmas—that if I wait in silence, I will experience the presence of the one born in the manger, for He lives today as surely as He lived then.

I believe in going away from Christmas as the Magi went, “another way.” I want to be different when these days are past—more centered, more thoughtful, more caring.

And I believe that God will help me and sustain me in my belief, this day and forevermore. 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

Il n'est rien de plus tendre

Jean-François Dandrieu

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*)

Dear God, like the shepherds, like the Magi, we come from different places and varying situations to worship the newborn king. While some of us bring skills, some of us bring money, and some of us bring time, all of us bring deep gratitude and a commitment to honor the Christ child by serving your people. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Hymn 130 (p. 7)

Joy to the World! The Lord Is Come

Antioch

Benediction

Postlude

Variations on "Adeste Fideles"

Raynor Taylor

* * *

Leading Worship This Week

The Rev. Stephen R. Silver, Pastor

Ernie Drown, Organ/Piano • Bob Gerlach, Liturgist

Courtney and Ellen Buzzell, Ushers • Stacey Steele and Dominic Watson, Zoom Greeters

Angels, From the Realms of Glory

117

James Montgomery, 1771-1854

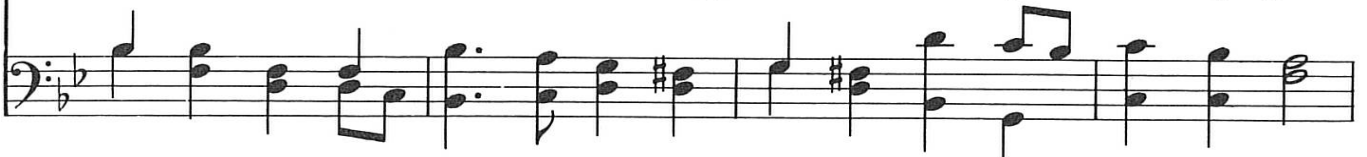
REGENT SQUARE 8.7.8.7.8.7
Henry T. Smart, 1813-1879



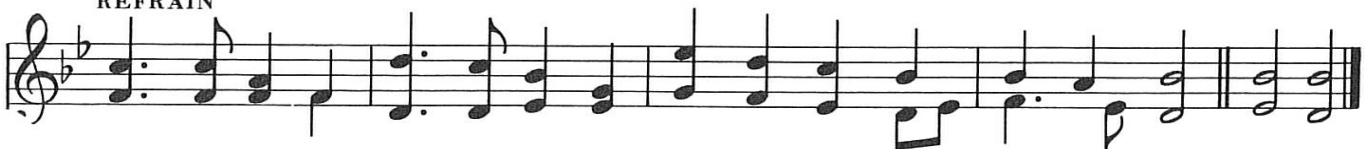
1 An - gels, from the realms of glo - ry, Wing your flight o'er all the earth;
2 Shep - herds, in the fields a - bid - ing, Watch - ing o'er your flocks by night,
3 Sag - es, leave your con - tem - pla - tions, Bright - er vi - sions beam a - far;
4 Saints be - fore the al - tar bend - ing, Watch - ing long in hope and fear,



Ye who sang cre - a - tion's sto - ry, Now pro - claim Mes - si - ah's birth:
God with man is now re - sid - ing, Yon - der shines the in - fant light:
Seek the great De - sire of na - tions, Ye have seen his na - tal star:
Sud - den - ly the Lord, de - scend - ing, In his tem - ple shall ap - pear:



REFRAIN



Come and wor - ship, come and wor - ship, Wor - ship Christ, the new - born King. A - men.



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.

Last Call for Contributions to **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. Thanks!

132 Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

1 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joi-ce with heart and soul and voice;
 2 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joi-ce with heart and soul and voice;
 3 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joi-ce with heart and soul and voice;

give ye heed to what we say: Je - sus Christ is born to - day;
 now ye hear of end - less bliss: Je - sus Christ was born for this!
 now ye need not fear the grave: Je - sus Christ was born to save!

ox and ass be - fore him bow, and he is in the man - ger now.
 He has o - pened heav - en's door, and we are blest for - ev - er - more.
 Calls you one and calls you all to gain the ev - er - last - ing hall.

Christ is born to - day! Christ is born to - day!
 Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!
 Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

Carols using two languages, like this one dating from at least the 14th century, belong to a special group called "macaronic," the original languages here being German and Latin. Though the present version is only in English, it is sung to the traditional German folk melody.

TEXT: Medieval Latin; trans. and para. John Mason Neale, 1853, alt.
 MUSIC: German folk melody, 14th cent.; harm. David Hugh Jones, 1953
 Music Harm. © 1955, ren. 1983 John Ribble (admin. Westminster John Knox Press)

IN DULCI JUBILO
 6.6.7.7.7.8.5.5

126 Brightest and Best of the Sons of the Morning

Reginald Heber, 1783-1826, alt.

MORNING STAR 11.10.11.10.
James (John) P. Harding, ?-1911

1 Bright - est and best of the sons of the morn - ing,
2 Cold on his cra - dle the dew - drops are shin - ing,
3 Say, shall we yield him, in cost - ly de - vo - tion,
4 Vain - ly we of - fer each am - ple ob - la - tion;
5 Bright - est and best of the sons of the morn - ing,

Dawn on our dark - ness, and lend us thine aid;
Low lies his head with the beasts of the stall;
O - dors of E - dom and of - ferings di - vine,
Vain - ly with gifts would his fa - vor se - cure;
Dawn on our dark - ness, and lend us thine aid;

Star of the east, the ho - ri - zon a - dorn - ing,
An - gels a - dore him, in slum - ber re - clin - ing,
Gems of the moun - tain, and pearls of the o - cean,
Rich - er by far is the heart's ad - o - ra - tion,
Star of the east, the ho - ri - zon a - dorn - ing,

Guide where our in - fant Re - deem - er is laid!
Mak - er, and Mon - arch, and Sav - ior of all.
Myrrh from the for - est, or gold from the mine?
Dear - er to God are the prayers of the poor.
Guide where our in - fant Re - deem - er is laid! A - men.

130

Joy to the World! the Lord Is Come

Isaac Watts, 1674-1748

ANTIOCH C.M.

Attr. to Georg F. Handel, 1685-1759

Arr. by Lowell Mason, 1792-1872

1 Joy to the world! the Lord is come: Let earth re -
 2 Joy to the earth! the Sav - ior reigns: Let men their
 3 He rules the world with truth and grace, And makes the

ceive her King; Let ev - ery heart pre - pare him room,
 songs em - ploy; While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
 na - tions prove The glo - ries of his right - eous - ness,

And heaven and na - ture sing, And heaven and na - ture
 Re - peat the sound - ing joy, Re - peat the sound - ing
 And won - ders of his love, And won - ders of his

And heaven and na - ture sing, And
 Re - peat the sound - ing joy, Re -
 And won - ders of his love, And

sing, And heaven, and heaven and na - ture sing.
 joy, Re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
 love, And won - ders, won - ders of his love. A - men.

heaven and na - ture sing.
 peat the sound - ing joy,
 won - ders of his love,



UPCOMING CONCERTS

All in the FCC Sanctuary

The Anonymous Coffeeshouse—Fridays, Jan. 3, 17, 31, Feb. 14 and 28 (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.*

Benjamin Kulp, Cello: Sign of the Times—Sunday, January 12, at 3:00 pm
UVMC cellist Ben Kulp offers a program of music reflecting the current moment, from pieces by contemporary women to a take on Jimi Hendrix. *Adults \$20, under-18 free; more at uvmusic.org.*

Jennifer Koh, Violin: Masterclass and Conversation—Tuesday, January 14, at 7:00 pm
Internationally renowned violinist Jennifer Koh joins UVMC students and faculty to explore technique, interpretation, and approaches to new repertoire. *Donations welcome; more at uvmusic.org.*

UVMC Children’s Chorus Celebration of Song—Saturday, January 25, at 2:00 pm

Cantabile Women’s Voices: Night and Day—Sunday, February 2, at 3:00 pm

LOH on Location: Dom Flemons—Saturday, February 15, at 7:30 pm

Please Note: CONTENT FOR THE 2024 ANNUAL REPORT DUE FRIDAY, JANUARY 10, 2025

Materials for FCC’s 2024 Annual Report must be submitted to the Church Administrator by January 10, in order to ensure timely distribution of the report prior to our Annual Meeting. Please note that reports should be as concise as possible, summarizing in the briefest terms *only* the most relevant and noteworthy items particular to your committee.

The 2025 Annual Meeting will be Sunday, February 9, Following Worship

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.

Do Your Part to Fill the Cart!

We’re currently collecting non-perishable food and personal-care items on behalf of:

LISTEN COMMUNITY SERVICES

For a list of current and ongoing needs, please visit listencs.org/food-pantry#itemsweneedthemost or see the list that is attached to the shopping cart itself.



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@fcclieb.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@fcclieb.org • prayer@fcclieb.org • music@fcclieb.org • www.fcclieb.org