



First Congregational Church of Lebanon

United Church of Christ – Open and Affirming

THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST • The First Sunday after Epiphany

January 12, 2025

I wish Christians in America would worry a lot less about our nation being Christian and a lot more about our actions being Christlike.

–Zach W. Lambert

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

Prelude *Lord Jesus Christ, Turn to Us*, BWV 709 Johann Sebastian Bach

Call to Worship Adapted from Psalm 29

One: Ascribe to the LORD, O heavenly beings, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.

All: Ascribe to the LORD the glory of his name; worship the LORD in holy splendor.

One: The voice of the LORD is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the LORD, over mighty waters.

All: The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is full of majesty.

One: The voice of the LORD flashes forth flames of fire. The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness; the LORD shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.

All: The voice of the LORD causes the oaks to whirl, and strips the forest bare; and in his temple all say, “Glory!”

One: The LORD sits enthroned over the flood; the LORD sits enthroned as king forever.

All: May the LORD give strength to his people! May the LORD bless his people with peace!

Hymn 547 (p. 4) *Go, My Children, with My Blessing* Ar Hyd y Nos

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 *Set Me as a Seal upon Thine Heart* William Walton

Children's Moment

Have you ever received a vote of confidence? You know, someone saying “Atta boy!” or “Atta girl!” to encourage you, to motivate you, to cheer you on? Well, I hope you have, and I hope you do in the future. Because these words mean a lot. They did to Jesus, and they will to you, too.

Hymn 83 (p. 5) *If Thou but Suffer God to Guide Thee*

Neumark

Scripture Lessons

Isaiah 43:1-7. But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. ²When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. ³For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. I give Egypt as your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba in exchange for you. ⁴Because you are precious in my sight, and honored, and I love you, I give people in return for you, nations in exchange for your life. ⁵Do not fear, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you; ⁶I will say to the north, “Give them up,” and to the south, “Do not withhold; bring my sons from far away and my daughters from the end of the earth—⁷everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.”

Luke 3:15-22. ¹⁵As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, ¹⁶John answered all of them by saying, “I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

¹⁸So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people. ¹⁹But Herod the ruler, who had been rebuked by him because of Herodias, his brother's wife, and because of all the evil things that Herod had done, ²⁰added to them all by shutting up John in prison.

²¹Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, ²²and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”

Sermon *“Wash Away Your Sins? Really?”*

Stephen R. Silver

Hymn 234 (p. 6) *Breathe on Me, Breath of God*

Trentham

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, Priscilla, Ron, Lauren, Brian, Micah, Al, Steve, Denzil, Ashley, Reg, Chris, and Deserai.

We also lift up our hopes for this year, and while we look for things to be better, we are... wary. The new year began with terrible violence here at home. Whether we consider politics or indulge worries about the economy, one is tempted to despair. Help us to remember that we do not stand by ourselves, that we are not alone in facing life's challenges. You are with us, now and always, and for that we offer our thanks and praise.

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 Lovely Are the Messengers* Felix Mendelssohn

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*)

God of the mighty waters, God of the tiny raindrop: we come before you this day thankful for blessings great and small, seen and unseen, past, present, and future. We present our gifts as a sign of our baptismal vows to be and serve your people. In the name of Jesus we pray, Amen.

Hymn 463 (p. 7) *How Firm a Foundation* Foundation

Benediction and Choral Response

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Leading Worship This Week

The Rev. Stephen R. Silver, Pastor

Ernie Drown, Organ/Piano • The FCC Choir • Betsy Bowse, Liturgist
Barb Jones and Barb Teeter, Ushers • Linda Jacobs, Zoom Greeter

Go, My Children, with My Blessing 547

1 "Go, my chil - dren, with my bless - ing, nev - er a - lone.
 2 "Go, my chil - dren, sins for - giv - en, at peace and pure.
 3 "Go, my chil - dren, fed and nour - ished, clos - er to me.

Wak - ing, sleep - ing, I am with you, you are my own.
 Here you learned how much I love you, what I can cure.
 Grow in love and love by serv - ing, joy - ful and free.

In my love's bap - tis - mal riv - er I have made you mine for -
 Here you heard my dear Son's sto - ry; here you touched him, saw his
 Here my Spir - it's pow - er filled you; here my ten - der com - fort

ev - er. Go, my chil - dren, with my bless - ing, you are my own."
 glo - ry. Go, my chil - dren, sins for - giv - en, at peace and pure."
 stilled you. Go, my chil - dren, fed and nour - ished, joy - ful and free."

Because this Welsh melody usually sets evening texts, the author was asked to create one for use in daytime. His recasting of the Aaronic blessing in Numbers 6:22–27 imagines that passage as a benediction that might be spoken by God at the conclusion of a worship service.

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If Thou but Suffer God to Guide Thee

Georg Neumark, 1621-1681
Tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827-1878

NEUMARK 9.8.9.8.8.8.
Melody by Georg Neumark, 1621-1681

1 If thou but suf - fer God to guide thee, And hope in
2 On - ly be still, and wait his lei - sure In cheer - ful
3 Sing, pray, and keep his ways un - swerv - ing; So do thine

him through all thy ways, He'll give thee strength, what-e'er be - tide thee,
hope, with heart con - tent To take what-e'er thy Fa - ther's pleas - ure
own part faith - ful - ly, And trust his word, though un - de - serv - ing;

And bear thee through the e - vil days; Who trusts in God's un -
And all - de - serv - ing love have sent; Nor doubt our in - most
Thou yet shalt find it true for thee; God nev - er yet for -

chang - ing love Builds on the rock that nought can move.
wants are known To him who chose us for his own.
sook at need The soul that trust - ed him in - deed. A - men.

Breathe on Me, Breath of God

Edwin Hatch, 1835-1889, alt.

Second Tune

TRENTHAM S.M.
Robert Jackson, 1840-1914

1 Breathe on me, Breath of God, Fill me with life a - new,
 2 Breathe on me, Breath of God, Un - til my heart is pure,
 3 Breathe on me, Breath of God, Till I am whol - ly thine,
 4 Breathe on me, Breath of God, So shall I nev - er die,

That I may love what thou dost love, And do what thou wouldst do.
 Un - til with thee I will one will To do and to en - dure.
 Un - til this earth - ly part of me Glows with thy fire di - vine.
 But live with thee the per - fect life Of thine e - ter - ni - ty. 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.

THE SOUPER BOWL IS HERE!

With pro football's championship game coming up early next month, it's time once again for the **SOUPER BOWL**! We'll tackle local hunger with a collection of soup and other non-perishable items, to be split among **HEADREST**, the **UV HAVEN**, and **LISTEN COMMUNITY SERVICES**.

Donations may be left in the boxes in the Parish Hall until February 9. You may also bring them directly to any of the three beneficiaries (please let us know if you do so). THANK YOU!!

Please Note: CONTENT FOR THE 2024 ANNUAL REPORT DUE MONDAY, JANUARY 13

Thanks so much to all who have already submitted material for FCC's 2023 Annual Report! Please note that reports should be as concise as possible, summarizing in the briefest possible terms *only* the most relevant and noteworthy items particular to your committee.

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

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How Firm a Foundation

1 How firm a foun - da - tion, ye saints of the Lord,
 2 "Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dis - mayed,
 3 "When through the deep wa - ters I call thee to go,
 4 "When through fi - ery tri - als thy path - way shall lie,
 5 "The soul that on Je - sus hath leaned for re - pose,

is laid for your faith in God's ex - cel - lent Word!
 for I am thy God, and will still give thee aid;
 the riv - ers of sor - row shall not o - ver - flow;
 my grace, all suf - fi - cient, shall be thy sup - ply;
 I will not, I will not de - sert to its foes;

What more can be said than to you God hath said,
 I'll strength - en thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
 for I will be near thee, thy trou - bles to bless,
 the flame shall not hurt thee; I on - ly de - sign
 that soul, though all hell should en - deav - or to shake,

to you who for ref - uge to Je - sus have fled?
 up - held by my righ - teous, om - nip - o - tent hand.
 and sanc - ti - fy to thee thy deep - est dis - tress.
 thy dross to con - sume, and thy gold to re - fine.
 I'll nev - er, no, nev - er, no, nev - er for - sake."

It seems odd now to think of singing this text to ADESTE FIDELES, but mainline churches did so well into the 20th century because of a cultural bias against shape note music. The vigor of the present tune seems especially right for the final line's reference to Hebrews 13:5.



Benjamin Kulp, Cello: Sign of the Times—This 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 an update of 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.*

The Anonymous Coffeehouse—Fridays, Jan. 17 and 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.*

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

Directed by Allison Pollard and accompanied by Will Ögmundson, this delightful ensemble of kids shares an informal concert with family and friends. *Free admission; more at uvmusic.org.*

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

This superb ensemble offers choral music celebrating the simple beauty in the passing hours of an ordinary day. Music of Sergei Rachmaninoff, Irving Berlin, Jocelyn Hagen, Gwyneth Walker, Eric Whitacre, and more. *Adults \$15 suggested donation, online or at the door; more at cantabilewomen.org.*

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

Reviving our pre-pandemic relationship across the Green, Lebanon Opera House brings us Dom Flemons, Grammy-winning cofounder of the Carolina Chocolate Drops. A versatile musician, scholar, and historian, "The American Songster" will share his influential take on folk, blues, bluegrass, and old-time country music. *General admission \$27; tickets and more at lebanonoperahouse.org.*

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 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