



First Congregational Church of Lebanon

United Church of Christ – Open and Affirming

The Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

February 2, 2025

Give me such love for God and men as will blot out all hate and bitterness.
–Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Kindly silence cell phones and other devices during worship. All hymns are included on pages 4-8.

Prelude *Schmücke dich, o liebe Seele*, BWV 654 Johann Sebastian Bach

Call to Worship Psalm 71:1-6

One: In you, O LORD, I take refuge; let me never be put to shame.

All: In your righteousness deliver me and rescue me; incline your ear to me and save me.

One: Be to me a rock of refuge, a strong fortress, to save me, for you are my rock and my fortress.

All: Rescue me, O my God, from the hand of the wicked, from the grasp of the unjust and cruel.

One: For you, O LORD, are my hope, my trust, O LORD, from my youth.

All: Upon you I have leaned from my birth; it was you who took me from my mother's womb. My praise is continually of you.

Hymn 397 (p. 4) *Lord, Speak to Me, That I May Speak* Canonbury

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 Taste and See* John Goss

Children's Moment

Today is... Candlemas! And yes, it's also Groundhog Day. The first is a feast day on the Christian calendar; the latter, not so much. Candlemas is a feast day of the Catholic church, the feast of the Presentation of Jesus at the Temple. But there was a tradition in some European countries that if a badger, or possibly a bear, saw its shadow on this day, there would be six more weeks of winter. No shadow? Early spring.

So, where does the Groundhog come in? Thank immigrants to the Pennsylvania Dutch Country. Candlemas was an important date in Germany, Hungary, and other European countries. The tradition made its way to America with immigrants from those places. The badger and the bear became the local groundhog, and, well, the rest is history.

Today, in our Protestant tradition, we do not formally observe Candlemas, nor do we observe Groundhog Day. But we can be grateful for the young Jesus, who was a source of joy and pride to his parents, who presented him at the Temple, a Jewish custom which we remember on this feast day. And while this may sound silly, let us be thankful for groundhogs, who are creatures of God.

Hymn 399 (p. 6) *O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go*

St. Margaret

Scripture Lessons

1 Corinthians 13:1-13. If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ²And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

⁴Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant ⁵or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁶it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. ⁷It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

⁸Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. ⁹For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; ¹⁰but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end.

¹¹When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. ¹²For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. ¹³And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

Luke 4:21-30. [...] ²¹Then he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." ²²All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, "Is not this Joseph's son?" ²³He said to them, "Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, 'Doctor, cure yourself!' And you will say, 'Do here also in your hometown the things that we have heard you did at Capernaum.'"

²⁴And he said, "Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet's hometown.

²⁵But the truth is, there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a severe famine over all the land; ²⁶yet Elijah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon.

²⁷There were also many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian." ²⁸When they heard this, all in the syna-

gogue were filled with rage. ²⁹They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff. ³⁰But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way.

Sermon *"I Don't Think It Means What You Think It Means"* 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.

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, Deserai, Tricia, Ellen, Pam, and Jon.

We ask, O Gracious God, that we will have the faith to listen to others, to not lash out as those people did in Nazareth so long ago. We know that we may hear unwelcome things, but we pray for the grace, the maturity to respond with charity and humility, not raised voices and clenched fists. Oh yes, we know how easy it is to throw the first stone, but give us the strength to be peacemakers, to walk the path of Jesus, who did so much for your people.

We pray this, and all the joys and concerns we hold in our hearts, in the name of your Son, 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 *The Gift of Love* Hal Hopson

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)

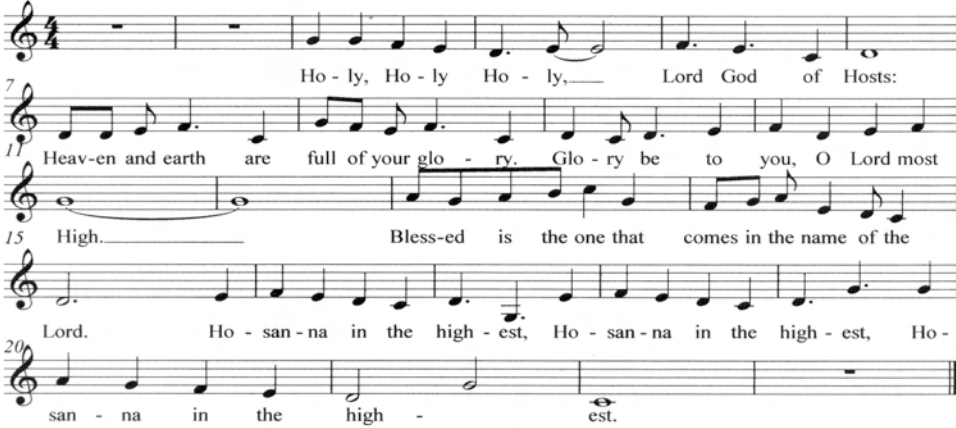
Bountiful God, you have blessed us, as individuals and as a community, with so many wonderful gifts. We present this offering as a sign of our desire to use what you have given us to serve your people in faith, hope, and love. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

The Sacrament of Holy Communion

For communion, you are invited to have some bread and juice on hand. We will share in the bread and cup at the appointed time. If you would like to receive a blessing, please let the officiant know.

Invitation and Communion Prayer

Sanctus



Ho - ly, Ho - ly Ho - ly, Lord God of Hosts:
7 Heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Glo - ry be to you, O Lord most
11 High. Bless-ed is the one that comes in the name of the
15 Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est, Ho - san - na in the high - est, Ho -
20 san - na in the high - est.

Sharing of the Bread and Cup

Prayer of Thanksgiving (*Unison*)

Because the broken bread has meant our healing, because the outpoured cup has meant our life, because our common sharing has meant the communion of our souls, and because we have here been graced by your presence, God, we give you thanks and pray that our lives may be renewed in the life and the love of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Hymn 404 (p. 8) *Take My Life and Let It Be* Vienna

Benediction

Choral Response *The Lord Bless You and Keep You* Peter Lutkin

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Leading Worship This Week

The Rev. Stephen R. Silver, Pastor

Ernie Drown, Organ/Piano • The FCC Choir • Chris Chase, Liturgist

Bob Ross and Dawn Troutman, Ushers • Bob Gerlach, Zoom Greeter

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.

FCC's 2025 Annual Meeting is Next Sunday, February 9, at 11:30 (Sanctuary/Zoom)

Please see the meeting warrant below; the **2024 Annual Report** is available in the Parish Hall.

Lord, Speak to Me, That I May Speak

397

Frances R. Havergal, 1836-1879

CANONBURY L.M.

Arr. from Robert A. Schumann, 1810-1856

1 Lord, speak to me, that I may speak In
2 O strength - en me, that while I stand Firm
3 O teach me, Lord, that I may teach The
4 O fill me with thy full - ness, Lord, Un -

liv - ing ech - oes of thy tone; As thou hast sought, so
on the rock, and strong in thee, I may stretch out a
pre - cious things thou dost im - part; And wing my words, that
til my ver - y heart o'er - flow In kin - dling thought and

let me seek Thy err - ing chil - dren lost and lone.
lov - ing hand To wres - tlers with the trou - bled sea!
they may reach The hid - den depths of man - y a heart!
glow - ing word, Thy love to tell, thy praise to show! A - men.

NOTICE of ANNUAL MEETING – Sunday, February 9, 11:30 am (Sanctuary/Zoom)

The Annual Meeting of First Congregational Church of Lebanon, NH, will be held in the Sanctuary (with remote participation available on Zoom) on **SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2025, AT 11:30 AM**, after that morning's worship service, for the following purposes:

1. To hear the reports of all officers, committees, and organizations, as required under the CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS of the church.
2. The election of all officers provided for under the CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS of the church.
3. To consider and act upon any other matters relating to the general church welfare that may properly come before this meeting.

O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go

399

George Matheson, 1842-1906

ST. MARGARET 8.8.8.6.

Albert L. Peace, 1844-1912

1 O Love that wilt not let me go,
2 O Light that fol - lowest all my way,
3 O Joy that seek - est me through pain,
4 O Cross that lift - est up my head,

I rest my wea - ry soul in thee;
I yield my flick - ering torch to thee;
I can - not close my heart to thee;
I dare not ask to fly from thee;

I give thee back the life I owe,
My heart re - stores its bor - rowed ray,
I trace the rain - bow through the rain,
I lay in dust life's glo - ry dead,

That in thine o - cean depths its flow May rich - er, full - er be.
That in thy sun - shine's blaze its day May bright - er, fair - er be.
And feel the prom - ise is not vain That morn shall tear - less be.
And from the ground there blos - soms red Life that shall end - less be. A - men.

Take My Life and Let It Be

404

Frances R. Havergal, 1836-1879

VIENNA 7.7.7.7.

Melody by Justin H. Knecht, 1752-1817

1 Take my life, and let it be Con - se - crat - ed, Lord, to thee;
2 Take my hands, and let them move At the im - pulse of thy love;
3 Take my will, and make it thine; It shall be no long - er mine;
4 Take my love: my Lord I pour At thy feet its treas - ure store;

Take my mo - ments and my days, Let them flow in cease-less praise.
Take my feet, and let them be Swift and beau - ti - ful for thee.
Take my heart, it is thine own; It shall be thy roy - al throne.
Take my - self, and I will be Ev - er, on - ly, all for thee. A - men.

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!!

Prepared to Serve 2025—Saturday, February 22, Pembroke NH

Prepared to Serve is a day-long training event open to all congregations of the NH Conference (UCC), offering workshops on topics ranging from stewardship, lay leadership, and church finances to service, mission, and Christian education. **All are invited to participate in this enriching day of classes, exhibits, and worship with our conference friends.**

FCC will pay for anyone interested to attend! Online registration open until February 10; fee includes meals and meeting resources. A conference booklet is available for review in the Parish Hall. For more information, please visit www.nhcucc.org/events/pts-2025.

The Anonymous Coffeehouse—Fridays, Jan. 31, Feb. 14, 28, Mar. 14, 28 (etc.), 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.*

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.*

Potluck Lunch Theater: *The Chosen*—Sunday, March 2, at 11:30

All are invited to Potluck Lunch Theater after church on March 2! While enjoying a delicious meal, we'll watch the first episode of the acclaimed series *The Chosen*. A groundbreaking historical drama based on the life of Jesus as seen through the eyes of those who knew him, it's set against the backdrop of Roman oppression in first-century Palestine. *The episode lasts approximately one hour.*

We hope you will join us for this time of food, fellowship, and film!

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