



# First Congregational Church of Lebanon

*United Church of Christ – Open and Affirming*

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## The Second Sunday in Lent

March 16, 2025

Lent is a time for discipline, for confession, for honesty, not because God is mean or fault-finding or finger-pointing but because he wants us to know the joy of being cleaned out, ready for all the good things he now has in store.

–N. T. Wright

*Kindly silence cell phones and other devices during worship. All hymns are included on pages 5-8.*

**Prelude**

*Aria*

Paul Manz

**Call to Worship**

Adapted from Psalm 27

One: The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?

**All: The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?**

One: One thing I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: to live in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in his temple.

**All: For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble; he will conceal me under the cover of his tent; he will set me high on a rock.**

One: I believe that I shall see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.

**All: Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!**

**Hymn 14** (p. 5)

*The God of Abraham Praise*

Leoni

**Prayer of Invocation**

**Lenten Prayer of Confession** (*Unison*)

Merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart and mind and strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.

Open our hearts to you, that we may receive your forgiveness and be redeemed by your reconciling love. Amen

**Assurance of Pardon**

**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 *Jesu, Grant Me This, I Pray*

C. H. Kitson

### Children's Moment

Today, we'll read a story from the Book of Genesis, in the Hebrew Bible. You may have heard that referenced as the "Old Testament," but, frankly, that's insulting to our Jewish neighbors and friends. Further, there's nothing "Old" about it. Jesus certainly didn't think it was outdated, or that it would be superseded. The Hebrew Bible was the only Bible Jesus knew.

Now, none of this means that people would not have new interpretations or insights into the Bible, but the "new" does not mean the "old" is any less valuable or important. Remember that today, tomorrow, and throughout your lives.

Hymn 349 (p. 6) *O for a Closer Walk With God*

Caithness

### Scripture Lessons

*Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18.* After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, "Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great."<sup>2</sup>But Abram said, "O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?"<sup>3</sup>And Abram said, "You have given me no offspring, and so a slave born in my house is to be my heir."<sup>4</sup>But the word of the Lord came to him, "This man shall not be your heir; no one but your very own issue shall be your heir."<sup>5</sup>He brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your descendants be."<sup>6</sup>And he believed the Lord; and the Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness.<sup>7</sup>Then he said to him, "I am the Lord who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess."<sup>8</sup>But he said, "O Lord God, how am I to know that I shall possess it?"<sup>9</sup>He said to him, "Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon."<sup>10</sup>He brought him all these and cut them in two, laying each half over against the other; but he did not cut the birds in two.<sup>11</sup>And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.<sup>12</sup>As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram, and a deep and terrifying darkness descended upon him. [...]<sup>17</sup>When the sun had gone down and it was dark, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces.<sup>18</sup>On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, [...]."

*Luke 13:31-35.* <sup>31</sup>At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to [Jesus], "Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you."<sup>32</sup>He said to them, "Go and tell that fox for me, 'Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work.'<sup>33</sup>Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my

way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.’<sup>34</sup> Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! <sup>35</sup>See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, ‘Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.’”

**Sermon**                      “For the Birds”    Stephen R. Silver  
**Hymn 348** (p. 7)        *My Faith Looks Up to Thee*    Olivet

**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, Pam, Ellen, Tricia, Deserai, Jon, Elizabeth, Dominic, Alicia, Terri, and Mike.

O God of Abraham and Sarah, God of Jesus, and God of the faithful throughout the ages: we give thanks for your continuing presence among us, for your steadfast fidelity to humanity and to the promises you have made to each of us and all of us. Be with us during these times of uncertainty, as we wonder about our futures, and give us strength and courage for the living of these days.

We offer these prayers, with all the joys and concerns we hold in our hearts, in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ. 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**                      *Soul of My Savior*    Richard Shephard

**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*)

Holy God, Maker of Heaven and Earth, we join with your Creation in singing your praise and glorifying your name. In this spirit, we offer these gifts, in the hope that the work and service they enable will witness to your love for all the world. In our Savior's name we pray. Amen.

Hymn 212 (p. 8)      *O Jesus Christ, May Grateful Hymns*      Charterhouse

## Benediction

Postlude      *Dialogue*      Louis Marchand

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### *Leading Worship This Week*

The Rev. Stephen R. Silver, Pastor  
Ernie Drown, Organ/Piano • The FCC Choir • Linda Jacobs, Liturgist  
Phil Hammond and Bob Ross, Ushers • Barb Jones, Zoom Greeter



## SPRING CONCERTS

*All in the FCC Sanctuary*

*The Anonymous Coffeehouse—Fridays, Mar. 14 and 28, Apr. 11 and 25, May 9, 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](http://anoncoffee.org).*

### *Classicopia: Blowin' in the Winds—Friday, April 4, at 7:30 pm*

In an uncommon but expressive combination, pianist Dan Weiser joins oboist Margaret Herlehy and bassoonist Janet Polk for a selection of trios. Dan will also remember his Classicopia co-founder Marcia Colligan (1931-2025). *Adults \$20, FCC members \$15, children free; more at [classicopia.org](http://classicopia.org).*

### *The Apple Hill String Quartet—Saturday, April 5, at 4:00 pm*

The Apple Hill Center for Chamber Music in Nelson, NH, is one of our state's musical treasures. Its renowned resident quartet offers eclectic programs, ranging from canonical works to new compositions and globally inspired pieces. *Adults \$25, under-18 free; more at [uvmusic.org](http://uvmusic.org).*

### *Revels North Spring Sing with Andy Davis—Sunday, April 6, at 7:00 pm*

Celebrate the arrival of spring with the Revels Spring Chorale and special guest Andy Davis of Nowell Sing We Clear. Their program will offer a magical blend of traditional and modern folk songs—with plenty of audience participation! *Sliding-scale donation; tickets and more at [revelsnorth.org](http://revelsnorth.org).*

### *Franz Joseph Haydn: The Seven Last Words of Christ—Palm Sunday, April 13, at 4:00 pm*

FCC welcomes a performance that has been a Holy Week tradition across Vermont for over three decades. Four singers (Martha Peck, Cara Hill, Brian Clancy, Jose Schmidt) join a string quartet (Susan Janes, Jane Tulloh, Jody Racht, Melissa Perley) for Haydn's bracingly dramatic, sublimely poignant portrayal of Christ's final hours on the cross. *Free-will donation; beneficiary TBD.*

# The God of Abraham Praise

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Revised Version of the "Yigdal"  
 Daniel ben Judah, c.1400  
 Tr. Newton Mann, 1836-1926,  
 and Max Landsberg, 1845-1928

LEONI 6.6.8.4.D.  
 Traditional Hebrew Melody  
 Adapted by Meyer Lyon, 1751-1797

1 The God of A-braham praise, All prais - ed be his name,  
 2 His spir - it flow - eth free, High surg - ing where it will;  
 3 He hath e - ter - nal life Im - plant - ed in the soul;

Who was, and is, and is to be, For aye the same!  
 In proph-et's word he spoke of old He speak - eth still.  
 His love shall be our strength and stay, While a - ges roll.

The one e - ter - nal God, Ere aught that now ap - pears;  
 Es - tab - lished is his law, And change-less it shall stand,  
 Praise to the liv - ing God! All prais - ed be his name

The First, the Last: be - yond all thought His time - less years!  
 Deep writ up - on the hu - man heart, On sea, or land.  
 Who was, and is, and is to be, For aye the same! A-men.

## O for a Closer Walk With God

First Tune

William Cowper, 1731-1800

CAITHNESS C.M.  
"Scottish Psalter," 1635

1 O for a clos - er walk with God, A calm and heaven-ly frame,  
 2 Where is the bless - ed - ness I knew When first I saw the - Lord?  
 3 Re - turn, O ho - ly Dove, re - turn, Sweet mes-sen-ger of rest!  
 4 The dear-est i - dol I have known, What-e'er that i - dol be,  
 5 So shall my walk be close with God, Calm and se - rene my frame;

A light to shine up - on the road That leads me to the Lamb!  
 Where is the soul-re - fresh-ing view Of Je - sus and his word?  
 I hate the sins that made thee mourn And drove thee from my breast.  
 Help me to tear it from thy throne, And wor-ship on - ly thee.  
 So pur - er light shall mark the road That leads me to the Lamb. A-men.

### It's Time for the Lenten Lunch Bag Offering

Lent once again brings the **Children's Community Corner** Lunch Bag Offering! We ask for your participation in this annual collection of savings from a regular sacrifice during Lent. The total collection on Palm Sunday (April 13) will be split between **WISE of the Upper Valley** and **Epilogos Charities**. (*Decorated paper bags will be available, but not required to participate.*)

*The Children's Community Corner thanks you for supporting this stewardship project!*

### Be the Light: One Great Hour of Sharing UCC Mission Offering

This annual, nationwide UCC offering funds mission initiatives around the world. It supports healthcare, education, agriculture, refugee assistance, and disaster relief in over 130 countries. OGHs funds are leveraged with local, national, and global partners to maximize their impact.

*Please consider a contribution as you are able, and thank you for SHARING!*

(Payable to FCC, with "OGHS" in the memo line. Contributions gratefully accepted until Easter.)

# My Faith Looks Up to Thee

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Ray Palmer, 1808-1887, alt.

OLIVET 6.6.4.6.6.6.4.  
Lowell Mason, 1792-1872

1 My faith looks up to thee, Thou Lamb of Cal - va - ry,  
2 May thy rich grace im - part Strength to my faint - ing heart,  
3 While life's dark maze I tread, And griefs a - round me spread,  
4 When ends life's tran - sient dream, When death's cold; sul - len stream

Sav - ior di - vine! Now hear me while I pray; Take all my  
My zeal in - spire; As thou hast died for me, Oh, may my  
Be thou my guide; Bid dark - ness turn to day; Wipe sor - row's  
Shall o'er me roll, Blest Sav - ior, then, in love, Fear and dis -

guilt a - way; Oh, let me from this day Be whol - ly thine.  
love to thee Pure, warm, and changeless be, A liv - ing fire.  
tears a - way; Nor let me ev - er stray From thee a - side.  
trust re - move; Oh, bear me safe a - bove, A ran - somed soul. 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](mailto:prayer@fccleb.org) or speak with Rev. Silver directly.

If you would like to receive daily devotional reflections from Rev. Steve Silver during Lent, please contact the church office or email him directly at [silver@fccleb.org](mailto:silver@fccleb.org).

\* † \* HOLY WEEK IS APRIL 13-20 \* † \*

*Matt. 23:37-39; Luke 13:34-35**Bradford Gray Webster, 1954; alt.*

1 O Je-sus Christ, may grate-ful hymns be ris-ing, in ev-ery  
 2 Grant us new cour-age, nev-er proud, but hum-ble, strong in your  
 3 Show us your Spir-it, brood-ing o'er each cit-y, as you once

cit-y for your love and care; In-spire our wor-ship, grant the  
 strength to ven-ture and to dare; To lift the fall-en, guide the  
 wept a-bove Je-ru-sa-lem, Seek-ing to gath-er all in

glad sur-pris-ing that your blessed Spir-it rous-es ev-ery-where.  
 ones who stum-ble, seek out the lone-ly and God's mer-cy share.  
 love and pit-y, and heal-ing those who touch your gar-ment's hem.

*This text, written for a Convocation of Urban Life in America, was chosen by The Hymn Society for publication in Five New Hymns on the City. Bradford Webster, a Methodist minister, served churches in his native New York state for forty years.*

Tune: CHARTERHOUSE 11.10.11.10.  
*David Evans, 1927*

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**First Congregational Church of Lebanon**

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**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)*

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