



First Congregational Church of Lebanon

United Church of Christ – Open and Affirming

The Second Sunday of Easter

April 27, 2025

We demand rigidly defined areas of doubt and uncertainty!

–Douglas Adams

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

Prelude *Nun freut euch, lieben Christen*, BWV 734 Johann Sebastian Bach

Call to Worship Psalm 150

One: Praise the LORD! Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty firmament!

All: Praise him for his mighty deeds; praise him according to his surpassing greatness!

One: Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp!

All: Praise him with tambourine and dance; praise him with strings and pipe!

One: Praise him with clanging cymbals; praise him with loud clashing cymbals!

All: Let everything that breathes praise the LORD! Praise the LORD!

Hymn 181 (p. 4) *Alleluia! The Strife Is O'er* Victory

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 Sons and Daughters* 15th-c. French, arr. Alice Parker

Children's Moment

We are all “Easter People”—which means that we are people of the Resurrection, followers of the way of Jesus. That means we should be filled with joy, and we should share that joy with others. We should be concerned about the state of our world, because we are God’s people, called to care about everything God has made. And we should be humble and faithful, ready to do God’s work, today and every day. That sounds like a big job, but guess what? God believes that we are *all* ready to be his Easter People. All of us.

Hymn 256 (p. 5) *These Things Did Thomas Count as Real* Kedron

Scripture Lessons

Revelation 1:4-8. ⁴John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, ⁵and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood, ⁶and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. ⁷Look! He is coming with the clouds; every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and on his account all the tribes of the earth will wail. So it is to be. Amen. ⁸“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

John 20:19-31. ¹⁹When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” ²⁰After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. ²¹Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” ²²When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”

²⁴But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.”

²⁶A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” ²⁷Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.” ²⁸Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” ²⁹Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.”

³⁰Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. ³¹But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

Sermon “*Entertaining Doubts*” Stephen R. Silver

Hymn 817 (p. 6) *We Walk by Faith and Not by Sight* Dunlap’s Creek

Sharing of Joys and Concerns; Pastoral Prayer

As we hold community members in prayer, please exercise care and discretion when sharing.

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, Stacey, Juliet, Alicia, Terri, and Mike.

God of the Resurrection, we confess that we are like Thomas, that we have doubts, that we are skeptical. We also know that is not necessarily bad, for the ability to ask questions, to wonder, is a gift from you. But as we are like Thomas, let us also be open to your Spirit, to the evidence of your presence in our lives. Give us the faith and the courage to wait for things, to bide time as we await the unfolding of the Easter miracle. Help us to recognize that the events of that long-ago day in Jerusalem are unfolding all around us, even now—as we pray, as we seek, and as we serve. May the promise of Easter, the promise of new life, continue to inspire and encourage us in all the ways we live.

We offer these prayers, with 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 *Es ist das Heil*, BWV 638 Johann Sebastian Bach

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*)

We come to you this morning bearing not only our gifts, but also our doubts; not only our commitments, but also our fears; not only our faith, but also our anxieties. We know that no matter what, you welcome us and our offerings and our efforts on behalf of your good news. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Hymn 192 (p. 7) *The Day of Resurrection* Lancashire

Benediction

Postlude *Rigaudon* André Campra

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Leading Worship This Week

The Rev. Stephen R. Silver, Pastor

Ernie Drown, Organ/Piano • The FCC Choir • Betsy Alexander, Liturgist
Corrine Erskine and Bob Ross, Ushers • Linda Jacobs, Zoom Greeter

Alleluia! The Strife Is O'er

Latin: 17th century
Tr. Francis Pott, 1832-1909

VICTORY 8.8.8. with Alleluias
Arr. from G. P. Sante da Palestrina, 1525-1594
William H. Monk, 1823-1889

Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

1 The strife is o'er, the bat - tle done; The vic - to - ry of
2 The powers of death have done their worst, But Christ their le - gions
3 The three sad days are quick - ly sped, He ris - es glo - rious
4 Lord, by the stripes which wound - ed thee, From death's dread sting thy

life is won; The song of tri - umph has be - gun:
hath dis - persed; Let shouts of ho - ly joy out - burst:
from the dead; All glo - ry to our ris - en Head!
serv - ants free, That we may live and sing to thee:

Al - le - lu - ia! A - men.

256 These Things Did Thomas Count as Real

1 These things did Thom - as count as real: the warmth of
 2 The vi - sion of his skep - tic mind was keen e -
 3 His rea - soned cer - tain - ties de - nied that one could
 4 May we, O God, by grace be - lieve and thus the

blood, the chill of steel, the grain of wood, the heft of
 nough to make him blind to an - y un - ex - pect - ed
 live when one had died, un - til his fin - gers read like
 ris - en Christ re - ceive, whose raw im - print - ed hands reached

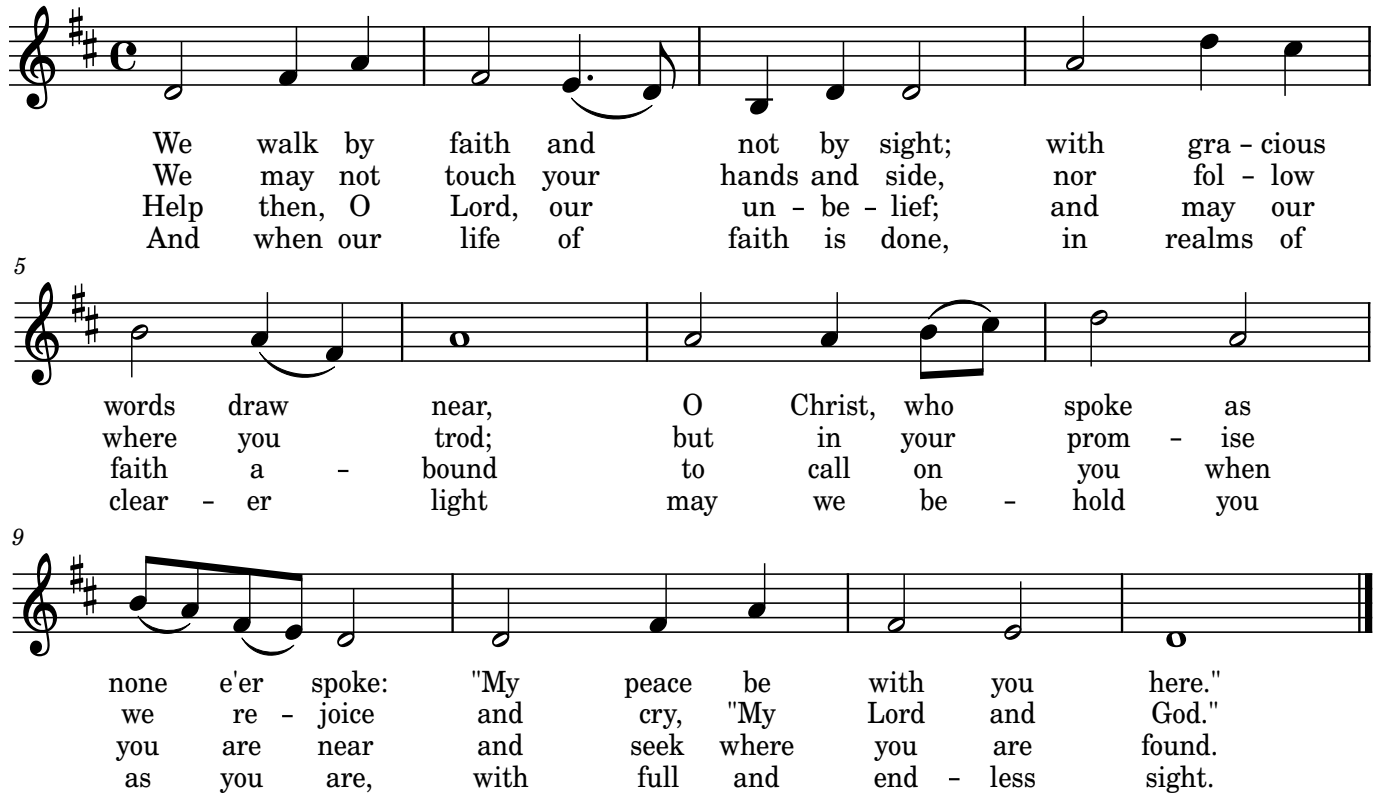
stone, the last frail twitch of blood and bone.
 act too large for his small world of fact.
 Braille the mark - ings of the spear and nail.
 out and beck - oned Thom - as from his doubt.

This 20th-century text provides a helpful corrective to a long history of negative attitudes toward Thomas for failing to believe the other disciples' report that Christ had risen. His fact-seeking "skeptical mind" sounds remarkably modern and makes him a more sympathetic figure.

TEXT: Thomas H. Troeger, 1984
 MUSIC: Attr. Elkanah Kelsay Dare; harm. Pillsbury's *United States Harmony*, 1799, alt.
 Text © 1986 Oxford University Press

KEDRON
 LM

817 We Walk by Faith and Not by Sight



We walk by faith and not by sight; with gra - cious
We may not touch your hands and side, nor fol - low
Help then, O Lord, our un - be - lief; and may our
And when our life of faith is done, in realms of
5 words draw near, O Christ, who spoke as
where you trod; but in your prom - ise
faith a - bound to call on you when
clear - er light may we be - hold you
9 none e'er spoke: "My peace be with you here."
we re - joice and cry, "My Lord and God."
you are near and seek where you are found.
as you are, with full and end - less sight.

The opening line here is essentially a quotation of 2 Corinthians 5:7, but that affirmation is fleshed out by references to the appearance of the risen Christ to Thomas (John 20:19–29). The shape note tune, named for a stream in Fayette County, Pennsylvania, adds resolution to the words.

TEXT: Henry Alford, 1844, alt.

MUSIC: Samuel McFarland, c. 1814; harm. Richard Proulx, 1986

DUNLAP'S CREEK
CM

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.

Do Your Part to Fill the Cart!

Join the fight against poverty and food insecurity in the Upper Valley by leaving contributions in our shopping cart in the Parish Hall, benefiting a variety of local service organizations.

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

THE UPPER VALLEY HAVEN

For a list of current and ongoing needs, please visit uppervalleyhaven.org/current-wish-lists/ or see the list that is attached to the shopping cart itself.

Direct financial contributions to any Upper Valley service organization are always needed and much appreciated. Thanks for fighting local poverty and hunger!

The Day of Resurrection

192

John of Damascus, c.696-c.754
Tr. John M. Neale, 1818-1866, alt.

LANCASHIRE 7.6.7.6.D.
Henry T. Smart, 1813-1879

1 The day of res - ur - rec - tion! Earth, tell it out a - broad;
2 Our hearts be pure from e - vil, That we may see a - right
3 Now let the heavens be joy - ful, Let earth her song be - gin,

The Pass - o - ver of glad - ness, The Pass - o - ver of God.
The Lord in rays e - ter - nal Of res - ur - rec - tion light;
The round world keep high tri - umph, And all that is there - in;

From death to life e - ter - nal, From earth un - to the sky,
And, lis - tening to his ac - cents, May hear so calm and plain
Let all things seen and un - seen Their notes of glad - ness blend,

Our Christ hath brought us o - ver With hymns of vic - to - ry.
His own "All hail," and, hear - ing, May raise the vic - tor - strain.
For Christ the Lord is ris - en, Our joy that hath no end. A - men.



The Anonymous Coffeeshouse—Fridays, April 25 and May 9, 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.*

Upper Valley Music Center CelloFest—Saturday, April 26, at 6:00 pm

Upper Valley Music Center is excited to welcome Sara Bennett Wolfe's advanced Cello Choir from Connecticut for a collaborative concert with Ben Kulp and other UVMC faculty and students. The program ranges from J. S. Bach to Nirvana and Neil Diamond. *Free admission; more at uvmusic.org.*

Young Traditions Vermont Touring Group—Sunday, April 27, at 2:00 pm

UVMC hosts this ensemble of talented teenage musicians and singers for a concert and jam session on their New England tour. A program of Vermont Folklife, the group nurtures youth involvement in traditional music and dance. *Suggested \$10-20 donation, under-18 free; more at uvmusic.org.*

Bel Canto Chamber Singers: On Beauty—Saturday, May 3, at 7:00 / Sunday, May 4, at 4:00

In music for choir, piano, strings, and percussion, Bel Canto responds to inhumanity with the beauty of nature and spirit. The program spans classical to contemporary, spirituals to folk and shape-note, with an array of poetic texts. *Admission by donation (\$15 suggested); more at belcantosingers.org.*

Cameo Baroque Benefit Concert: Handel and His Rivals—Saturday, May 10, at 7:00 pm

This superb ensemble explores the world of G. F. Handel, offering his music alongside pieces by John F. Lampe, Thomas Arne, and G. B. Bonocini, as well as selections from *The Beggar's Opera*. *Free-will donation to benefit Vermont Foodbank; more at vtfoodbank.org and cameoarts.org.*



Mother's Day
is
Blanket Sunday

We are pleased to participate once again in Church World Service's CWS BLANKETS program, a special mission project that provides blankets and essential supplies to people in crisis worldwide. (For more, please visit www.cwsblankets.org.)

If you'd like to honor or remember the mother(s) in your life with a contribution to CWS BLANKETS, please complete this form and either put it in the offering plate or mail it to the church (PO Box 230, Lebanon, NH 03766). The suggested minimum donation is \$10, but any amount is welcome.

Dedications must be received by noon on THURSDAY, MAY 8 to be included in the bulletin for MOTHER'S DAY, MAY 11.

Given by _____

In honor of _____

Please send a card (include address on back)

In memory of _____

∞ Contribution: _____ (payable to FCC, memo "Blanket Sunday")



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