



The Fourth Sunday in Lent

If you want a religion to make you feel comfortable,
I certainly don't recommend Christianity.

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

Call to Worship

Adapted from Psalm 107

All: Let us offer our thanksgiving, and tell of God's deeds with songs of joy.

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

God So Loved the World

John Stainer

Children's Moment

Today is Laetare Sunday. *Laetare* is a Latin word that means “rejoice” and is drawn from the Catholic mass, or service, for the day. It’s rooted in the Catholic liturgical calendar and is observed by some Episcopal churches, but it has no official standing in the UCC because, well, Congregationalists dispensed with most everything Catholic. But some traditions are worth holding onto.

Laetare Sunday is a call for us to look forward, to be filled with joy about what will happen on Easter Sunday. The season of penitence will end, and God’s triumph over death will be celebrated.

Hymn 208 (p. 5)

God Loved the World

Rockingham

Scripture Lessons

Numbers 21:4-9. ⁴From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; but the people became impatient on the way. ⁵The people spoke against God and against Moses, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food.” ⁶Then the Lord sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. ⁷The people came to Moses and said, “We have sinned by speaking against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord to take away the serpents from us.” So Moses prayed for the people. ⁸And the Lord said to Moses, “Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live.” ⁹So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

John 3:14-21. [Jesus said,] ¹⁴“And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. ¹⁶“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

¹⁷“Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. ¹⁹And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. ²¹But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.”

Sermon

“A World of Possibility”

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.

Today we offer ongoing prayers for Pete, Arlene, Evelyn, Gordon, Greg, Jan, Edith, Eileen, Waneta, Terry, Juanita, Dan, Travis, Garrett, Sue, Rick, Edward, Duane, Priscilla, Ron, Lauren, Brian, Micah, Al, and Steve.

God of infinite power, we rejoice as we think of what you have done, are doing, and will do for us and for all creation. Where death reigned, life will triumph. This is what you did some 2000 years ago, and we will celebrate this in just three weeks. Still, we know that simply rejoicing is not enough. You call on us to act, to make good on your word, to be your people in both worship and service. Be with us, give us courage, and renew our commitment to follow the path of Jesus, in whose name we pray, 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 *O Saviour of the World*

John Goss

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 life, God of love, we offer our thanks to you for bestowing upon us the blessings of service, caring, and sharing. As you have given so freely of these in Jesus, we now respond with these gifts as a sign to do likewise with our brothers and sisters, wherever they may be. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Hymn 1 (p. 7) *Our God, Our Help in Ages Past* (vv. 1-6)

St. Anne

Benediction

Postlude *On a Theme of Orlando Gibbons*, op. 105, no. 2

C. V. Stanford

O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing 610

1 O for a thou - sand tongues to sing my
 2 The name of Je - sus charms our fears, and
 3 Christ speaks, and lis - tening to his voice new
 4 My gra - cious Mas - ter and my God, as -
 5 To God all glo - ry, praise, and love be

dear Re - deem - er's praise, the glo - ries of my
 bids our sor - rows cease, sings mu - sic in the
 life the dead re - ceive; the mourn - ful wak - en
 sist me to pro - claim, to spread through all the
 now and ev - er given by saints be - low and

God and King, the tri - umphs of God's grace!
 sin - ner's ears, brings life, and health, and peace.
 to re - joice; the poor in heart be - lieve.
 earth a - broad the hon - ors of thy name.
 saints a - bove, the church in earth and heaven.

This text comes from an eighteen-stanza hymn the author wrote to mark the first anniversary of his life-changing conversion experience. It is now customarily the first hymn in Methodist hymnals worldwide. This tune, adapted from a German composer, is the usual North American setting.

TEXT: Charles Wesley, 1739, alt.; Spanish trans. Federico J. Pagura;
 Korean trans. The United Methodist Korean Hymnal Committee, 2001
 MUSIC: Carl Gotthelf Gläser, 1828; arr. Lowell Mason, 1839

AZMON
CM

John 3:16-17

Heiliges Lippen und Herzens Opfer, Stettin, 1778

Transl. August Crull, 1845; alt.

1 God loved the world, and lov - ing gave
 2 Christ Je - sus is the ground of faith,
 3 If you are sick, if death is near,
 4 Be of good cheer, for God in Christ

a won - drous gift, the lost to save,
 who was made flesh and suf - fered death;
 this truth your trou - bled heart can cheer;
 for - gives the flock, by sin en - ticed,

That all who would in Christ be - lieve
 All who con - fide in Christ a - lone
 Christ Je - sus saves us all from death;
 And jus - ti - fied by Je - sus' blood,

should ev - er - last - ing life re - ceive.
 are built on this chief cor - ner - stone.
 that is the firm - est ground of faith.
 your bap - tism grants the high - est good.

Edward Miller, a skilled flutist in G. F. Handel's orchestra,
 adapted Rockingham from the tune Tunbridge. Miller named it
 for the Marquis of Rockingham, a patron and friend, and prime
 minister of Great Britain.

Tune: ROCKINGHAM L.M.

Anon.

Adapt. Edward Miller, 1790

W. Russell Bowie, 1882-

MIT FREUDEN ZART 8.7.8.7.8.8.7.
Bohemian Brethren's "Kirchengesänge," 1566

1 Lord Christ, when first thou cam'st to men, Up - on a cross they bound thee,
 2 O awe - ful love, which found no room In life where sin de - nied thee,
 3 New ad - vent of the love of Christ, Shall we a - gain re - fuse thee,
 4 O wound - ed hands of Je - sus, build In us thy new cre - a - tion;



And mocked thy sav - ing king - ship then By thorns with which they crowned thee;
 And, doomed to death, must bring to doom The power which cru - ci - fied thee,
 Till in the night of hate and war We per - ish as we lose thee?
 Our pride is dust; our vaunt is stilled; We wait thy rev - e - la - tion.



And still our wrongs may weave thee now New thorns to pierce that
 Till not a stone was left on stone, And all a na - tion's
 From old un - faith our souls re - lease To seek the king - dom
 O love that tri - umphs o - ver loss, We bring our hearts be -



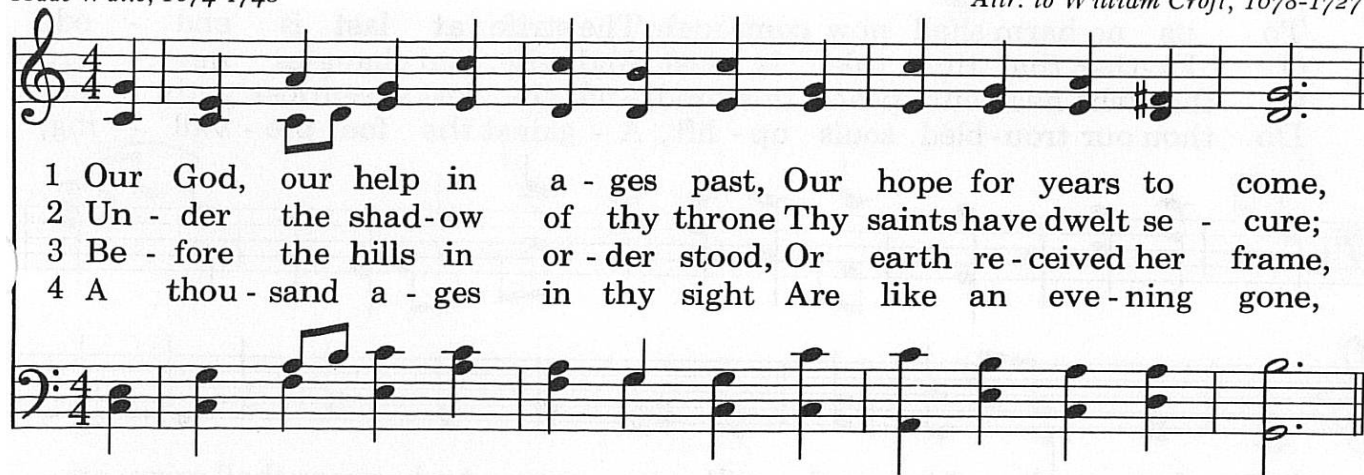
stead - y brow, And robe of sor - row round thee.
 pride o'erthrown, Went down to dust be - side thee!
 of thy peace, By which a - lone we choose thee.
 fore thy cross, To fin - ish thy sal - va - tion. A-men.



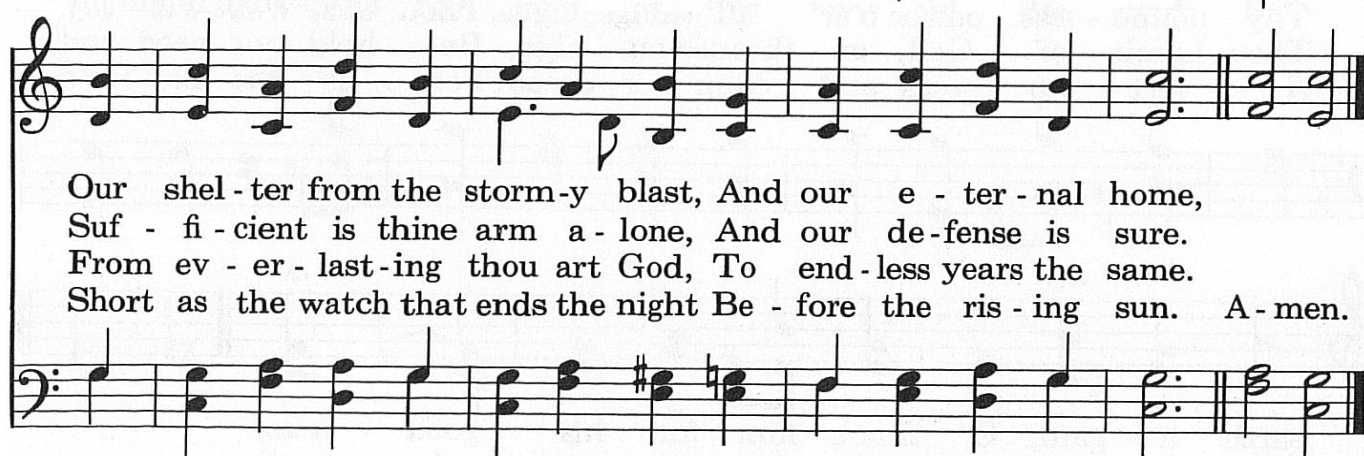
Our God, Our Help in Ages Past

Based on Psalm 90
Isaac Watts, 1674-1748

ST. ANNE C.M.
Attr. to William Croft, 1678-1727



1 Our God, our help in a - ges past, Our hope for years to come,
2 Un - der the shad - ow of thy throne Thy saints have dwelt se - cure;
3 Be - fore the hills in or - der stood, Or earth re - ceived her frame,
4 A thou - sand a - ges in thy sight Are like an eve - ning gone,



Our shel - ter from the storm - y blast, And our e - ter - nal home,
Suf - fi - cient is thine arm a - lone, And our de - fense is sure.
From ev - er - last - ing thou art God, To end - less years the same.
Short as the watch that ends the night Be - fore the ris - ing sun. A - men.

- 5 Time, like an ever-rolling stream, 6 Our God, our help in ages past,
Bears all its sons away; Our hope for years to come,
They fly, forgotten, as a dream Be thou our guard while troubles last,
Dies at the opening day. And our eternal home.

* * *

Leading Worship This Week

The Rev. Stephen R. Silver, Pastor

Ernie Drown, Organ/Piano • The FCC Choir • Linda Jacobs, Liturgist
Corrine Erskine and Linda Gerlach, 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.

* † * **HOLY WEEK IS MARCH 24-31, 2024** * † *



The Anonymous Coffeehouse—Fridays, Mar. 8 and 22, Apr. 5, 19, and 26, all 7:30

Our comfy community venue for live folk music is thriving in its fourth season! Come and go as you please; food and drink available. *Free admission. For performers and more, visit anoncoffee.org.*

Upper Valley Music Center Faculty Showcase—Saturday, March 9, at 4:00 pm

This popular annual program features the vocal and instrumental excellence of the faculty next door at UVMC, in classical repertoire, traditional and folk genres, and original compositions.

Free-will donation; all proceeds benefit UVMC tuition assistance fund. More at uvmusic.org.

Classicopia: Wind Power—Saturday, March 23, at 2:00 pm

In an unusual but expressive combination, pianist Dan Weiser welcomes back oboist Margaret Herlehy and bassoonist Janet Polk for trios by W. A. Mozart, Franz Schubert, Astor Piazzolla, and more. *Adults \$20, FCC members \$15, children free; more at classicopia.org/concert/wind-power.*

Do Your Part to Fill the Cart!

Greater Lebanon continues to struggle with poverty and food insecurity, and we have resumed collection of items in our shopping cart in the Parish Hall, to support a variety of beneficiaries.

CURRENT BENEFICIARY—UPPER VALLEY HUMANE SOCIETY

Many who struggle with financial insecurity manage can't afford to care for their beloved pets, whose companionship is vital in difficult times. We can help with donations to UVHS—most needed are wet/dry pet food, cat litter, and soft dog treats; full wish list at uvhs.org/give/.

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

It's Time for the Lenten Lunch Bag Offering

The arrival of Lent 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 (March 24) 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!

One Great Hour of Sharing: "Time to Share the Light"—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.)



The Easter Lily Fund to Benefit the Open Door Ministry

On Easter morning, we'll have an array of fresh flowers on the Sanctuary altar. As in past years, we invite you to honor or remember beloved family and friends with a modest contribution to our **OPEN DOOR MINISTRY** for community assistance.

If you'd like to offer a dedication in honor or memory of loved ones, please return this form in the offering plate or by mail, with a contribution (\$5 minimum, payable to FCC, memo "Open Door Lily Fund"). All dedications received by noon on **THURSDAY, MARCH 28**, will be listed in the worship bulletin on Easter Sunday, March 31. (Contributions payable after that date. Please note that we will **not** be purchasing flowers for each individual dedication.)

Given by _____ Contribution _____

In honor of _____

In memory of _____



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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@fccleb.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@fccleb.org • prayer@fccleb.org • music@fccleb.org • www.fccleb.org